

Crime and Victimization in America

2005 Statistical Overview*

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR
Victims of Crime

KEY FINDINGS

- In 2003, there were 24.2 million criminal victimizations of people over the age of 12 in the United States. Of those, 5.4 million were violent victimizations and 18.6 million were property victimizations.¹
- 48 percent of violent crime and over 38 percent of property crime was reported to the police.²
- Intimates perpetrated 19 percent of all violent crime against women, while men were more likely to be victimized by strangers than non-strangers.³
- Victims experienced 223,290 rapes and sexual assaults in 2003, and 4.6 million physical assaults.⁴
- Seven percent of violent crime victims faced an offender with a firearm. Those least likely to be victimized by an armed perpetrator were the victims of sexual assault and rape (11 percent), while the most likely to face an armed offender were the victims of robbery (45 percent).⁵
- Teenagers (12 to 19 years old) were victimized at rates much higher than other age groups.⁶
- In 2003, law enforcement agencies around the country recorded 11.8 million criminal offenses. Of these, 1,381,259 were violent offenses, and 10,435,523 were property offenses.⁷

CHILD VICTIMIZATION

- Child protective services across the country found an estimated 896,000 children to be victims of maltreatment (neglect or abuse).⁸
- Sixty-one percent of child maltreatment victims suffered neglect; 19 percent were physically abused; 10 percent were sexually abused; and 7 percent were emotionally or psychologically maltreated. In addition, 18.9 percent of victims experienced “other” types of maltreatment such as “abandonment,” “threats of harm to the child,” and “congenital drug addiction.”⁹
- Fifty-two percent of child maltreatment victims were girls and 48 percent were boys.¹⁰
- More than one-half of all child victims were white (54 percent); one-quarter (26 percent) were African-American; and one-tenth (11 percent) were Hispanic. American Indians or Alaska

Natives accounted for 2 percent of victims, and Asian-Pacific Islanders accounted for 1 percent of victims.¹¹

- Approximately 40 percent of child victims were maltreated solely by their mothers; another 19 percent were maltreated solely by their fathers; 18 percent were abused by both parents. Child victims abused by a non-parental perpetrator accounted for 13 percent of the total.¹²
- The youngest children (from birth through age 3) were the most likely to experience recurring maltreatment.¹³
- Children abused by someone other than a parent were 16 percent less likely to experience recurrence than children who were abused by their mother.¹⁴
- Victimization rates are inversely proportional to the age of the child—the older the child, the less likely he or she is to be maltreated.¹⁵
- In 2002, an estimated 1,400 children died due to child abuse or neglect.¹⁶
- Five percent of child molesters released from prison commit a new sex offense within three years of their release.¹⁷
- Twenty-nine children were murdered by their babysitters in 2003.¹⁸
- Victims of child abuse comprised 21 percent of the recipients of crime victim compensation in 2003.¹⁹
- The most significant predictor of whether a battered woman will physically abuse her child is having been physically abused by her own mother—not being battered by her partner.²⁰

COST OF CRIME

- Nearly 18 million violent and non-violent crime victimizations (77 percent of all victimizations) resulted in economic losses in 2002.²¹
- Crime is estimated to create \$105 billion in medical expenses, lost earnings, and costs for victim services. Factoring in the intangible costs, such as pain and suffering and a reduced quality of life, brings the total estimated cost of crime to \$450 billion annually.²²

**The National Center for Victims of Crime publishes Crime and Victimization in America: Statistical Overview annually. The data used in this report represent the most recent research available at the time of printing (December 2004).*

- Victims of violent crime and their families received benefits totaling \$442.3 billion in federal fiscal year 2003. While California (the largest victim compensation program in the nation) experienced a drop of close to \$43 million in fiscal year 2003, compensation in the other 51 jurisdictions (including Washington, DC, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico) grew by \$26 million.²³
- Medical expenses were 48 percent of all victim compensation payments in 2003; economic support for lost wages for injured victims and for lost support in homicides comprised 21 percent of the total; and 12 percent went toward mental health counseling for crime victims.²⁴
- In 2003, total monetary loss due to telemarketing fraud was \$1,764,433, for an average of \$1,504 for each case.²⁵
- Reported burglaries resulted in an estimated monetary loss of \$3.5 billion, with an estimated average of \$1,626 per burglary.²⁶
- In 2003, the average value of property stolen due to larceny-theft was \$698. Cumulatively, \$4.9 billion in property was stolen.²⁷
- The average monetary value of motor vehicles stolen in 2003 was \$6,797. The total value of stolen motor vehicles was \$8.6 billion.²⁸
- The average dollar loss due to arson offenses was \$11,942 per offense in 2003.²⁹
- Correctional authorities spend more than \$38 billion to maintain the nation's correctional systems in one year.³⁰

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Ten percent (521,740) of violent crimes in 2003 were committed by the victim's intimate partner. Women (19 percent) were victimized by intimate partners at a greater rate than men (3 percent).³¹
- Nine percent of murder victims in 2003 were killed by their spouse or intimate partner. Seventy-nine percent of those victims were female.³²
- Women who have experienced any type of personal violence complained of a greater number of chronic physical symptoms than those who were not abused, even though the last episode of violence occurred an average of 14 to 30 years earlier. The risk of suffering from six or more chronic physical symptoms increased with the number of forms of violence experienced.³³
- Sixteen percent of rejected firearms applications were denied because of prior domestic violence misdemeanor convictions or prior restraining orders against the applicant.³⁴
- For 7 percent of adults on probation in 2003, domestic violence was the most serious offense of which they had been convicted.³⁵

- Domestic violence victims made up 25 percent of all adult victims who received victim compensation in 2003. Thirty-five percent of all assault claims were paid to domestic violence victims.³⁶

SAME-SEX DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- In 2003, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, or transgender people (LGBT) experienced 6,523 incidents of domestic violence. Six of these incidents resulted in murder.³⁷
- Forty-four percent of the victims of LGBT domestic violence were men, 36 percent women, and 2 percent transgender. Gender identity was not recorded for 9 percent of the victims.³⁸
- For cases where the age of the victim was recorded, 58 percent were over the age of 30, while 42 percent of the victims of LGBT domestic violence were under 30.³⁹
- Forty-four percent of the victims were white, almost a quarter were Latino, 15 percent were black, 6 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 5 percent were multiracial.⁴⁰

DRUNK DRIVING

- Forty percent of fatal crashes in 2003 were alcohol-related. Fatalities in those crashes numbered 17,013.⁴¹
- The percentage of drunk drivers is highest at ages 21-24 (32 percent), followed by ages 25-34 (27 percent) and ages 35-44 (24 percent).⁴²
- In 2003, drivers with illegal Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) levels were 9 times more likely to have a prior Driving-While-Impaired conviction than were drivers with no BAC.⁴³
- Twenty-one percent of children (ages 0-14) who were killed in traffic crashes were killed in alcohol-related crashes.⁴⁴
- Driving while intoxicated was the most serious offense of which 17 percent of adults on probation in 2003 had been convicted.⁴⁵

ELDER VICTIMIZATION

- In 2003, 640 Americans over the age of 65 were murdered.⁴⁶
- Almost 69,000 elderly Americans (age 65 or older) were victims of non-fatal violent crime in 2003.⁴⁷
- Adult Protective Services substantiated 166,019 reports of elder maltreatment in 2000.⁴⁸
- Twenty percent of elder maltreatment substantiated by Adult Protective Services involved physical abuse, 13 percent involved caregiver neglect, 10 percent involved financial exploitation, 8 percent involved emotional/verbal abuse, and less than 1 percent involved sexual abuse.⁴⁹

- Of all victims reporting telemarketing fraud to the National Fraud Information Center in 2003, 34 percent were seniors (age 60 or older).⁵⁰
- Almost 4 million elderly people (age 65 or older) were victims of consumer fraud, making up 11 percent of total victims of fraud.⁵¹

FRAUD

- A survey of fraud in the United States suggests that more than 35 million adults were victims of more than 53 million incidents of fraud (including unauthorized changes in long distance service) during the year.⁵²
- The most common types of consumer fraud, in descending order of frequency, are: advance fee loan scams, buyers' club membership, credit card insurance and credit repair, and telephone slamming (unauthorized changes in long distance service).⁵³
- Native Americans are at greatest risk of being victims of fraud; almost 34 percent had been victims of fraud. The likelihood of being a victim of fraud for African Americans (17 percent) was greater than that of Hispanics (14 percent), or others (Hawaiians, Asians, and Pacific Islanders) (7 percent), with non-Hispanic whites the least likely to be fraud victims (6 percent).⁵⁴
- Individuals ages 25-34 comprised the largest percentage of fraud victims of any age group—18.4 percent.⁵⁵

GUNS AND CRIME

- Seven percent of violent crimes in 2003 involved firearms.⁵⁶
- Of robberies, 25 percent involved a firearm; of assaults, 5 percent were firearm related; and of sexual assaults, 3 percent involved a firearm.⁵⁷
- Sixteen percent of rejected firearms applications were denied because of prior domestic violence misdemeanor convictions or prior restraining orders against the applicant.⁵⁸
- In 2003, two-thirds of all homicide victims were killed with a firearm.⁵⁹
- Firearms were used in 45 percent of carjacking incidents.⁶⁰

HATE CRIME

- There were 7,489 hate crime incidents reported to law enforcement in 2003. Sixty-percent of the offenses were committed against persons, and 40 percent against property.⁶¹
- Of reported hate crimes, 50 percent were motivated by race, 18 percent by religion, 17 percent by sexual orientation, 14 percent by ethnicity, and 0.4 percent by disability.⁶²

- In 2003, 2,052 incidents of anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) violence affected 2,384 victims and were perpetrated by 3,282 offenders.⁶³
- Among anti-LGBT incidents were 705 assaults, 121 acts of vandalism, 115 sexual assaults, and 18 murders.⁶⁴
- In 2003, twenty-seven percent of anti-LGBT violence victims suffered some level of injury.⁶⁵
- The Anti-Defamation League reported 1,557 anti-Semitic incidents in the United States in 2003.⁶⁶
- Acts of harassment accounted for 60 percent (929) of all anti-Semitic incidents in 2003, and vandalism comprised 40 percent (628).⁶⁷

HOMICIDE

- In 2003, 16,503 people were murdered in the United States, a 2 percent increase over the previous year.⁶⁸
- Seventy-eight percent of murder victims in 2003 were male, and 22 percent were female.⁶⁹
- Sixty-seven percent of all murders in 2003 involved firearms. Knives were used in 13 percent of murders and personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) in 7 percent.⁷⁰
- Of known victim-offender relationships in 2003, acquaintances made up 41 percent; strangers and family members each comprised 13 percent.⁷¹
- In 2003, twenty-one percent of murder victims were killed by their spouse or intimate partner.* Seventy-nine percent of those victims were women.⁷²
- In 2003, seven percent of all murder victims were robbed prior to being killed, and 1.3 percent of all female murder victims were raped prior to being killed.⁷³
- Nationwide, more women are murdered with firearms (54 percent) than with any other type of weapon. Knives account for 19 percent of all female murders, bodily force 15 percent, and murder by blunt object 7 percent. Of the women murdered with firearms, 73 percent were killed with handguns.⁷⁴

IDENTITY THEFT

- Nearly 10 million Americans were estimated to have been victims of identity theft in 2003.⁷⁵
- Approximately 3.25 million people discovered in the past year that their personal information had been misused to open new accounts or commit other frauds or crimes.⁷⁶
- Fifteen percent of all identity theft victims reported that their information had been misused in non-financial ways.⁷⁷

*Percentage regarding murders where the victim/offender relationship was known; in 44.5 percent of the murders, the victim/offender relationship was unknown.

- Victims of identity theft lost an average of \$500 in out-of-pocket expenses related to the crime. Victims of identity theft involving the opening of new accounts or other fraud lost an average of \$1,200.⁷⁸
- In a recent survey, approximately one-quarter of identity theft victims reported the crime to the police. Thirty-eight percent did not report that they had been victims to anyone, including credit bureaus, the Federal Trade Commission, or others.⁷⁹
- The total cost of identity theft in the past year, including to businesses, was \$50 billion. The cost to victims was an estimated \$5 billion.⁸⁰

PROPERTY CRIME

- In 2003, almost 10.5 million property offenses were reported to law enforcement. These included 2.1 million burglaries, 7 million larceny-thefts, 1.3 million motor-vehicle thefts, and 64,043 arson offenses.⁸¹
- Seventeen percent of property offenses were cleared* by law enforcement in 2003.⁸²

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- In 2003, victims experienced 223,290 rapes/sexual assaults, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey.⁸³
- According to the 2003 National Crime Victimization Survey, 39 percent of all rape/sexual assaults were reported to law enforcement agencies, a 16 percent drop compared to 2002.⁸⁴
- In 2003, 89 percent of rape and sexual assault victims were female and 11 percent male.⁸⁵
- Law enforcement agencies received 93,433 reports of forcible rape in 2003.⁸⁶
- Forty-four percent of all reported forcible rape offenses were cleared* by law enforcement.⁸⁷
- Within three years following their release from prison, 5.3 percent of sex offenders were rearrested for a sex crime.⁸⁸
- Victim compensation programs paid \$11.8 million for forensic sexual assault exams in 2003.⁸⁹
- A study of sexual assault of adult males found that more than 10 percent of male victims had cognitive disabilities.⁹⁰
- Characteristics associated with a positive legal outcome in sexual assault cases include being examined within 24 hours of the assault, partner/spouse as an assailant, oral assault, and anogenital trauma.⁹¹
- A review of sexual assault cases in an emergency department found that 12 percent of cases were identified as suspected drug-facilitated sexual assaults (DFSA).⁹²

STALKING

- 1,006,970 women and 370,990 men are stalked annually in the United States.⁹³
- Researchers found stalking to be one of the significant risk factors for femicide (homicide of women) in abusive relationships.⁹⁴
- A survey of on-line harassment at a university campus found that 14 percent of students had received repeated messages via email from a significant other who threatened, insulted, or harassed them, and 11 percent had received harassing messages from significant others via instant messenger.⁹⁵
- A study found that serious violence in stalking was significantly associated with former (sexual) intimacy, previously appearing at the victim's home, absence of criminal record, and shorter duration of stalking. There was no significant association between serious violence and history of substance abuse or the presence of a personality disorder.⁹⁶
- A survey of university undergraduates revealed that 20 percent had been stalked or harassed by a current or former dating partner, 8 percent had initiated stalking or harassment, and 1 percent had been both the target and the initiator.⁹⁷
- A survey of university undergraduates found that the average age of the victim when her or his relationship with the stalker/harasser began was 17 for females and 16 for males.⁹⁸
- Undergraduate students reported that the most common methods of intrusive contact by their stalkers/harassers were: phoning; stopping by the victim's residence; calling back repeatedly; calling at inappropriate times; waiting outside the victim's residence, class or work; calling and hanging up; driving by the victim's residence; leaving notes on the victim's front door or window; and following the victim.⁹⁹

TEEN VICTIMS

- In 2003, teenagers experienced more than 1.7 million personal crimes (as opposed to crimes against property); this includes more than 171,000 robberies, 42,000 sexual assaults and rapes, and more than 48,000 incidents of personal theft.¹⁰⁰
- Persons ages 12-19 experienced violent crime at rates much higher than other age groups.¹⁰¹
- Persons ages 12-19 were raped and sexually assaulted at rates higher than other age groups.¹⁰²
- A survey of university undergraduates found that the average age of the victim when her or his relationship with the stalker/harasser began was 17 for females and 16 for males.¹⁰³
- Twelve percent of murder victims in 2003 were teenagers (ages 13-19).¹⁰⁴

*Clearances can occur by arrest or by exceptional means when some element beyond law enforcement control precludes the placing of formal charges against the offender.

- In a study of lifetime prevalence of four types of violence, researchers found that almost 40 percent of American adolescents witnessed violence. Furthermore, 17 percent were victims of physical assault; 9 percent were victims of physically abusive punishment; and 8 percent were victims of sexual assault.¹⁰⁵
- Three in four American adolescents who were sexually assaulted were victimized by someone they knew well. Thirteen percent of sexual assaults were reported to police, 6 percent to child protective services, 5 percent to school authorities, and 1.3 percent to other authorities. Eighty-six percent of sexual assaults of adolescents went unreported.¹⁰⁶

VICTIMIZATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY

- In 2003, multiracial people (of two or more races) experienced violent crime at a rate two to three times higher than any single racial or ethnic group.¹⁰⁷
- Of those who identified themselves as being of one race, African-Americans experienced violent crime at the highest rate.¹⁰⁸
- In 2003, approximately 732,668 Hispanics were victims of violent crime in the United States.¹⁰⁹
- The percentage of African-American men (47 percent) and women (60 percent) who reported their violent victimization to the police was higher than for any other racial or ethnic group in 2003.¹¹⁰
- Native Americans are at greatest risk of being victims of fraud: almost 34 percent of survey participants in this group had been victims of fraud.¹¹¹
- The likelihood of being a victim of fraud for African Americans (17 percent) was greater than that of Hispanics (14 percent), or others (Hawaiians, Asians, and Pacific Islanders) (7 percent), with non-Hispanic whites the least likely to be fraud victims (6 percent).¹¹²
- Of reported hate crimes in 2003, 50 percent were motivated by race.¹¹³

VICTIMS OF CRIME AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

- Only a third (34 percent) of the American public reports having a great deal of confidence in the criminal justice system as a whole, while 42 percent report some confidence in the system, 22 percent very little, and 1 percent none.¹¹⁴ However, almost two-thirds (64 percent) of the public has a great deal of confidence in the police, while 26 percent report having some confidence, and 10 percent very little.¹¹⁵
- A study of female domestic violence victims' experiences with the criminal justice system found that the victims perceived victim/witness advocates (36 percent) and the police (32 percent) as having been extremely helpful. Prosecutors and judges were the most likely to receive a "not at all helpful" rating—16.4 percent.¹¹⁶
- Among non-victims, 85 percent of residents approved of the job their local police were doing, while only 57 percent of crime victims felt that way.¹¹⁷

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

- In 2003, 631 murders were committed in the workplace.¹¹⁸
- Three percent of all murders committed in the workplace were committed by the victim's intimate partner (husband, wife, or boyfriend).¹¹⁹
- An average of 1.7 million violent victimizations are committed annually against persons on the job.¹²⁰
- The majority of workplace violent crimes were aggravated and simple assaults. Rape, sexual assault, robbery, and homicide accounted for 6 percent of all incidents.¹²¹
- Men were the majority of victims of workplace violence for all crimes except rape or sexual assault (women were victims in 80 percent of these cases).¹²²
- Less than a quarter of all workplace violence victims offered some type of physical resistance to the assailant.¹²³
- Twelve percent of workplace violence victims sustained injuries. More than half of these victims were not treated or did not receive medical care.¹²⁴

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