

# Bureau of Justice Statistics Fact Sheet

## Where do the National Crime Victimization numbers come from?

These preliminary numbers are national estimates of crime in 1995, based on data collected in 1995 from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The final numbers will include information received in 1996 about crimes in 1995 and will show more detail regarding the nature of victimizations such as the victim's age, sex, race, and the relationship between offender and victim.

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is the Nation's primary source of information on criminal victimization. Twice each year, data are obtained from a nationally representative sample of roughly 49,000 households comprising about 100,000 persons on the frequency, characteristics, and consequences of criminal victimization in the United States.

The survey reports the likelihood of victimization by rape, sexual assault, robbery, assault, theft, household burglary, and motor vehicle theft for the population as a whole as well as for segments of the population such as women, the elderly, members of various racial groups, city dwellers, or other groups.

The NCVS provides the largest national forum for victims to describe the impact of crime and characteristics of violent offenders. Although the NCVS has been measuring crime since 1973, the redesigned and improved survey started reporting results in 1992.

## How do these numbers compare with the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)?

On May 5, 1996, the FBI released their preliminary 1995 estimate that violent crime (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) fell 4% and property crime fell 1%

**Table A. Comparison of NCVS and UCR preliminary estimates**

The direction of change in the NCVS preliminary estimates for 1995 is largely consistent with the preliminary 1995 estimates from the UCR:

	1994-95 percent change		
	<u>NCVS</u>	<u>NCVS reported to police</u>	<u>UCR</u>
Violent crime, including simple assault	-9.1%	-5.7%	--
Rape, robbery, aggravated assault	-17.1%	-14.1%	-4%
Burglary	-11.6%	-6.3%	-5%
Theft	-3.7%	-1.9%	+1%
Motor vehicle theft	-9.0%	-12.3%	-6%

The NCVS and UCR percent change estimates do not correspond exactly because there are confidence intervals surrounding the survey's estimates.

NCVS: National Crime Victimization Survey from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)  
 UCR: Uniform Crime Reports from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

in 1995. The UCR measures crime reported to police, while the NCVS calculates "Reported to police," as presented in table A, based on interviews with the victims.

The FBI's UCR program, which began in 1929, collects information from monthly law enforcement reports or individual crime incident records transmitted directly to the FBI or to centralized State agencies that then report to the FBI. In 1994, law enforcement agencies active in the UCR Program represented approximately 249 million U.S. inhabitants — 96% of the total population.

The UCR Program provides crime counts for the Nation as a whole, as well as for regions, States, counties, cities, and towns. This permits studies among neighboring jurisdictions and among those with similar populations and other common characteristics.

Each program has unique strengths. The UCR provides a measure of the number of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies throughout the country. The UCR's Supplemental Homicide Reports provide the most reliable, timely data on the extent and nature of homicides in the Nation. The NCVS is the primary source of information on the characteristics of criminal victimization and on the number and types of crimes not reported to law enforcement authorities.

The final NCVS estimates for 1994 reported in *Criminal Victimization 1994* (April 1996, NCJ-158022) and the press release describing them may be found at — <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>

