



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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### **BJS RELEASES 2020 NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY DATA**

WASHINGTON — Today, the Bureau of Justice Statistics released findings from the 2020 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which show a 22% decline in the total violent victimization rate from 2019 to 2020. The rate of violent crime dropped from 21.0 to 16.4 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older.

Violent victimization in the NCVS includes rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault. It does not include homicide as the survey is based on in-person interviews with persons age 12 or older in a representative sample of households in the United States.

The decrease in violent victimization was driven primarily by a decline in simple and aggravated assault. The rate of simple assault fell from 13.7 to 10.7 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older from 2019 to 2020, while the rate of aggravated assault decreased from 3.7 to 2.9 victimizations per 1,000. The rate of violent crime, excluding simple assault, declined 23% from 7.3 to 5.6 victimizations per 1,000.

The rates of rape or sexual assault (1.2 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older) and robbery (1.6 per 1,000) in 2020 were not significantly different from the rates in 2019.

The rate of property crime victimization declined for the second year in a row, from 101.4 to 94.5 victimizations per 1,000 households from 2019 to 2020. The decline in property crime (burglary, residential trespassing, motor vehicle theft and other types of household theft) during this period was due to decreases in the rates of burglary and trespassing. Burglary declined 19% (from 11.7 to 9.5 per 1,000), and trespassing declined 24% (from 5.5 to 4.1 per 1,000). From 2019 to 2020, there were no statistically significant changes in the rates of motor vehicle theft and other household theft.

The NCVS and FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program measure an overlapping, but not identical, set of offenses, which leads to differences in estimates of crime between the two sources. The NCVS interviews victims, while the UCR collects data on crime recorded by law enforcement agencies. Victims reported about 40% of violent victimizations and 33% of property victimizations to the police in 2020. Restricting the NCVS to violent crime reported to police, and excluding simple assault, offers a comparable measure to the UCR. From 2019 to 2020, the rate of violent crime, excluding simple assault, that victims reported to police decreased 18%, from 3.4 to 2.8 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or

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older. During this same period, the rate of property crime that victims reported to police did not change significantly (31.2 property crimes per 1,000 households reported to law enforcement in 2020). However, the rate of burglary reported to police by victims declined from 6.0 to 4.2 per 1,000 households from 2019 to 2020.

By comparison, the FBI reported an increase in violent crimes from 2019 to 2020 (3.8 to 4.0 violent crimes per 1,000 persons) and a decrease in property crimes (21.3 to 19.6 per 1,000). The FBI also reported a decrease in burglary from 2019 to 2020 (3.41 to 3.14 per 1,000 persons).

The BJS report, *Criminal Victimization, 2020* (NCJ 301775), was written by BJS statisticians Rachel E. Morgan, Ph.D., and Alexandra Thompson. The report, related documents and additional information about BJS’s statistical publications and programs are available on the BJS website at [bjs.ojp.gov](https://bjs.ojp.gov).

BJS also released a third-party report, *National Crime Victimization Survey: Assessment of Outlier Weights* (NCJ 302186), that was produced by RTI International for BJS under award number 2020-85-CX-K017 and is also available on the BJS website.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice is the principal federal agency responsible for collecting, analyzing and disseminating reliable statistics on crime and criminal justice in the United States. Doris J. James is the acting director.

The Office of Justice Programs provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance and other resources to improve the nation’s capacity to prevent and reduce crime, advance racial equity in the administration of justice, assist victims and enhance the rule of law. More information about OJP and its components can be found at [www.ojp.gov](https://www.ojp.gov).

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