

OREGON
SERIOUS CRIME SURVEY

Victimization and the Cost of Crime in Oregon

FEBRUARY 1983

INTRODUCTION

This bulletin is about citizens' experiences as victims of crime in Oregon. The information comes from the annual Survey of Serious Crime conducted by the state Crime Analysis Center.

This survey has been conducted annually since 1978 and is run during March and April of each year. The survey form contains questions on three topics: victimization and cost of crimes; citizens' use of crime prevention techniques; and their perception of crime and opinions about certain criminal justice issues.

For the past five years, survey questionnaires have been mailed to a random sample of 1,500 citizens drawn from the Oregon drivers' license file. The information presented in this report is based on survey data from 1981 and 1982. In these two years, 2,098 completed questionnaires were returned -- representing 70 percent of the total sample and over 80 percent of the surveys which reached the individuals to whom they were mailed (i.e., excluding those returned as nonforwardable by the post office). This is an exceptionally high rate of return for a mail-out survey, which definitely strengthens the reliability of the resulting data.

NOTES ON
VICTIMIZATION SURVEYS

It has long been recognized that a large portion of crimes committed in our society are not reported to the law enforcement authorities.

Victimization surveys can provide a valuable supplement to officially reported crime statistics be-

cause victimization data includes incidents not reported to the police. The National Crime Survey, conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, produces victimization data for the nation as a whole. However, no data specifically pertaining to Oregon is available from this source.

The accuracy of a victimization survey is, of course, dependent on the accuracy of citizens' responses. Individuals may sometimes forget about an incident, inaccurately indicate when it occurred, or choose not to indicate the fact that they were victimized. However, a 1978 study comparing police records and victimization survey results in Portland concluded that the effect of such misrepresentations is not significant enough to invalidate the survey technique.*

It should be recognized that the rates reported in this bulletin are only estimates and may be subject to a sampling error of a few percentage points.

The estimates presented in this bulletin are based on the combined results of the 1981 and 1982 surveys (covering citizen victimization during calendar years 1980 and 1981).

In addition, the results were statistically "weighted" to control for any age or sex bias in the sample.

*Portland Forward Records Check of Crime Victims, National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, 1978.

MEASURING VICTIMIZATION

Criminal victimization may be measured in two ways: one can count the total number of times a given crime occurs within a population (the incidence of that crime), or the total number of people victimized by that crime within that population (the prevalence of a crime). These measures may yield quite different estimates, as certain individuals may be victimized repeatedly during a given time period.

The Oregon Serious Crime Survey asks questions about the following crimes: robbery, forcible rape, sexual assault, theft or larceny, assault and threatened assault (menacing), burglary, vandalism, and motor vehicle theft. These offenses are grouped into two general categories: personal crimes (robbery, rape, sexual assault, theft, assault and threatened assault/menacing) and household crimes (burglary, vandalism, and motor vehicle theft). Though the estimates presented here are based on two years of data, all rates reported are estimates for a single one-year period.

VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING
RATES FOR PERSONAL CRIMES

Survey data showed an annual violent crime rate of 64.3 incidents per 1,000 Oregonians 15 years and older. Assaults accounted for over 80 percent of these incidents, and the great majority of assaults were without the use of a weapon. The rate of threatened assaults or menacing incidents was 94.4 per 1,000. Theft was the personal crime occurring most frequently, with an annual rate of 194.9 per 1,000.

VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING RATES - HOUSEHOLD CRIMES
(Annual Rate Based on Combined 1980 and 1981 Data)

	Victimization Rate per 1,000 Households	Percentage of Offenses Reported to Police
BURGLARY		
completed	105.3	68.3%
attempted	32.9	40.6%
Total	(138.2)	61.7%
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT		
completed	12.9	59.3%*
attempted	8.6	44.4%*
Total	(21.4)	(53.3%)*
VANDALISM		
completed	152.0	41.7%
attempted	24.8	34.6%
Total	(176.8)	(40.7%)
TOTAL HOUSEHOLD CRIME	336.5	50.1%

*Number of incidents too small to project reliable rate of reporting to police

VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING RATES - PERSONAL CRIMES
(Annual Rate Based on Combined 1980 and 1981 Data)

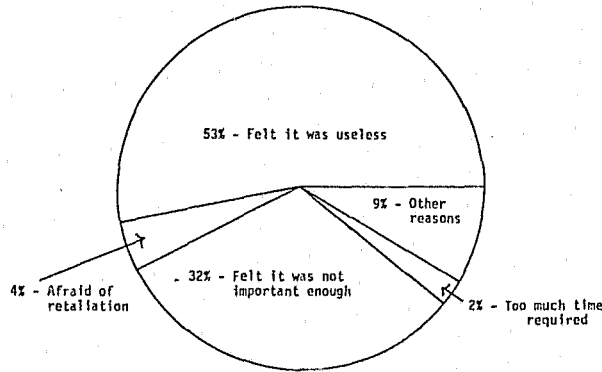
	Victimization Rate Per 1,000*	Percentage of Offenses Reported to Police
VIOLENT CRIMES		
Robbery	6.7	50.0%**
Rape	1.9	75.0%**
Sexual Assault	3.8	25.0%**
Assault		
with weapon	5.7	58.3%**
with body	46.2	17.5%
Total Assault	(52.0)	(22.0%)
Total Violent	(64.3)	(26.7%)
THREATENED ASSAULT/MENACING		
with weapon	20.5	23.3%
with body	73.9	13.5%
Total	(94.4)	(15.7%)
THEFT	194.9	43.0%

*Oregonians 15 years and over

**Number of incidents too small to project reliable rate of reporting to police

For the crimes of rape, robbery, sexual assault and assault with a weapon, the number of incidents involving survey respondents is too small to project a reliable rate of reporting to the police. Less than one-fifth of unarmed assaults were reported to law enforcement authorities, and the reporting rate for threatened assaults was slightly lower than this. Forty-three percent (43%) of all thefts were reported to the police--a somewhat higher percentage than was found in earlier surveys.

REASON FOR NOT REPORTING CRIMES TO THE POLICE



VICTIMIZATION AND REPORTING RATES FOR HOUSEHOLD CRIMES

The total annual rate for household crimes (burglary, vandalism, and motor vehicle theft) was 336.5 incidents per 1,000 households, with one-half of these offenses being reported to the police. Vandalism was the most frequent crime (176.8 incidents per 1,000 households), followed by burglary (138.2 per 1,000). Burglary was the most likely to be reported to the police (61.7%) and vandalism the least likely (40.7%). As was the case for theft, the reporting rates for burglary and vandalism were somewhat higher than found in earlier surveys. This suggests that recent increases in the number of offenses reported by law enforcement agencies may be due in part to increased reporting of certain crimes to the police by citizens.

PERCENTAGE VICTIMIZED BY AGE AND SEX

The percentage of male victims of violent crime, threatened assault, and theft was somewhat higher than the percentage of female victims. Differences by age were even more pronounced.

For all three personal crime categories (violent crime, threatened assault, and theft), persons between 15 and 24 were by far the most likely to be victimized, while persons over 50 were least likely to become victims. Other surveys have also shown that older citizens are generally less likely to be victimized, though they are more likely to alter their lifestyles due to a fear of crime.

PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS VICTIMIZED - PERSONAL CRIMES (Annual Rate Based on Combined 1980 and 1981 Data)

Offense	Percentage Victimized One or More Times During Year
VIOLENT CRIMES	
Robbery	0.4%
Forcible Rape	0.2%
Sexual Assault	0.4%
Assault (weapon or body)	2.5%
Total	2.9%
THREATENED ASSAULT/MENACING	3.5%
THEFT	13.6%

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS VICTIMIZED (Annual Rate Based on Combined 1980 and 1981 Data)

Offense	Percentage Victimized One or More Times During Year
BURGLARY	
completed	8.0%
attempted	2.9%
Total	9.6%
MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT	
(completed or attempted)	1.7%
VANDALISM	
(completed or attempted)	12.4%
TOTAL HOUSEHOLD CRIME	19.1%

PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS AND HOUSEHOLDS VICTIMIZED

Survey results indicate that less than three percent of the respondents were the victims of a violent crime during the year. Three and one-half percent (3.5%) experienced one or more threatened assaults, and 13.6 percent were the victims of theft. There are large differences between the victimization rate and the percentage of individuals victimized for assaults and threatened assaults. This reflects the fact that there are a small number of individuals who are repeatedly victimized by these crimes. The National Crime Survey classifies some of these situations as "series victimizations."

REASONS FOR NOT REPORTING CRIMES TO THE POLICE

Survey respondents who were victims of a crime which they did not report to the police were asked the major reason for not reporting the offense. The majority (53%) felt that it was useless to report as nothing could or would be done. Thirty-two percent felt the crime was not important enough to report; only 4 percent were afraid of some kind of retaliation.

Over 19 percent of the households were victimized one or more times during the year. Vandalism was the most prevalent offense, affecting 12.4 percent of all households. Burglaries occurred in 9.6 percent of the households surveyed.

PERCENTAGE VICTIMIZED BY SEX - PERSONAL CRIMES

	Male	Female
VIOLENT CRIME (Robbery, Forcible Rape, Assault with weapon or body)	3.7%	2.4%
THREATENED ASSAULT/MENACING	5.2%	2.1%
THEFT	16.5%	11.5%

PERCENTAGE VICTIMIZED BY AGE - PERSONAL CRIMES

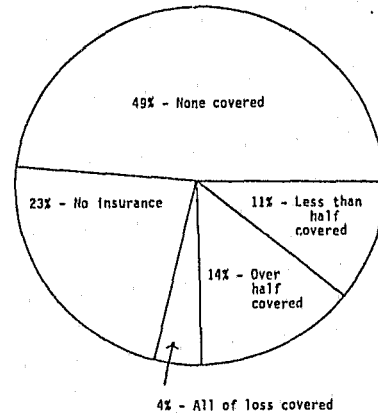
	15-24	25-34	35-49	50 and Over
VIOLENT CRIME (Robbery, Forcible Rape, Assault with weapon or body)	6.7%	4.5%	1.4%	0.7%
THREATENED ASSAULT/MENACING	6.7%	6.4%	2.1%	0.7%
THEFT	20.2%	9.0%	13.9%	8.5%

**VICTIMIZATION
BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

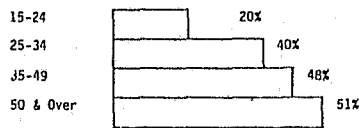
The National Crime Survey has found a direct relationship between the size of the family or household and the rate of household crime. While the pattern in Oregon is less direct or linear, households with five or more persons were significantly more likely to be victimized than households with four or less persons. Nearly 25 percent of the larger households were victimized during the year as opposed to about 19 percent of the smaller households.



INSURANCE COVERAGE



PERCENTAGE REPORTED TO POLICE - BY AGE PERSONAL CRIMES



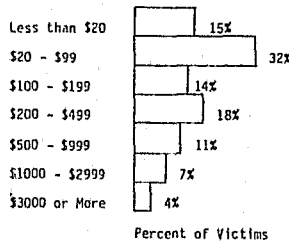
REPORTING TO POLICE BY AGE AND SEX

Previously published results from the Oregon Serious Crime Survey demonstrated that older citizens were generally the most likely to utilize crime prevention techniques. Not surprisingly, Oregonians 50 years of age and older are also the most likely to report personal crimes to the police. Individuals between 15 and 24 years old--the group with the highest rate of victimization--were least likely to report offenses to law enforcement officials. Females reported a slightly higher percentage of personal crimes than males, though the difference was not statistically significant.

**POLICE RESPONSE
TO REPORTED OFFENSES**

Respondents who reported any offenses to the police in 1981 were asked to specify the actions taken by the police in response. Two-thirds indicated that police took a face-to-face report for at least one offense, and 57 percent gave a telephone report to an enforcement agency during the year. Twenty percent of the respondents indicated that, for at least one of the offenses they reported during the year, someone was taken into custody.

LOSS OR REPLACEMENT VALUE FOR STOLEN OR DAMAGED PROPERTY



COST OF STOLEN OR DAMAGED PROPERTY

The median cost for loss or replacement value for stolen or damaged property was between \$100 and \$200. Twenty-two percent of the victims reported a total cost of over \$500, and 11% incurred property losses of over \$1,000.

The 1981 Analysis of Crime in Oregon, based on official police reports to the Law Enforcement Data System, lists the combined property loss value for the offenses of residential burglary, vandalism, motor vehicle theft, non-commercial larceny and noncommercial robbery at close to \$90 million. While the format of the questions in the survey instrument does not make it possible to make precise estimates of losses by type of crime, projections based on survey responses suggest that the actual losses incurred from the crimes studied here are closer to \$150 million per year in Oregon. This estimate does not cover commercial robberies, burglaries or vandalism, or theft from commercial businesses.

**INSURANCE COVERAGE
IF LOSS INCURRED**

Of the victims of crime in Oregon who incurred a property loss, 23 percent reported having no insurance coverage. Forty-nine percent of the victims had insurance but it did not cover any of the loss or expense resulting from the crime.

Of the remaining 28 percent, 11 percent reported that their insurance covered over one-half the loss; and only 4 percent said their insurance covered all loss and expense.

**PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL INJURY
TO VICTIMS**

Overall, three percent of the victims surveyed required treatment in a doctor's office due to crime, and another 3 percent received psychological counseling. Less than one percent required hospitalization due to crime. Fourteen percent of the victims indicated that they were psychologically disturbed as the result of a crime but received no counseling.

Not surprisingly, a much higher percentage of violent crime victims required professional treatment. Thirty percent of those individuals who were the victims of one or more violent crimes during the year reported receiving treatment in a doctor's office, treatment in a hospital, or psychological counseling.

This publication contains no data, tables, results of statistical tests, or copies of the survey form. Readers wishing to obtain more complete information than is reported here should contact the Crime Analysis Center, Executive Department, 155 Cottage Street NE, Salem OR 97310, (503) 378-4229.

Author, Survey Administration and Data Processing: Stan Woodwell

Graphics, Layout and Typing: Jeanne Bittner

Victor Atiyeh
Governor

Oregon Executive Department
Robert W. Smith, Director

Crime Analysis Center
Clinton Goff, Supervisor

This project was supported by Grant Nos. 80-BJ-CX-K009, 82-BJ-CX-0002, and 82-BJ-CX-0014, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, United States Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions stated in this publication are those of the Crime Analysis Center and do not necessarily represent the official position of the United States Department of Justice.

SUMMARY

- * There are two basic ways of measuring criminal victimization: one can count the total number of times a given crime occurs within a population (the incidence of that crime), or the total number of people victimized by that crime within that population (the prevalence of a crime). These measures often yield quite different estimates, as certain individuals may be victimized repeatedly during a given time period. The number of repeat victims is highest for assaults and threatened assaults.
- * Survey data showed an annual violent crime rate of 64.3 incidents per 1,000 Oregonians 15 years and older. Assaults accounted for over 80 percent of these incidents, and the great majority of assaults were without the use of a weapon. The annual rate of personal theft was 194.9 per 1,000.
- * The total annual rate for household crimes (burglary, vandalism, and motor vehicle theft) was 336.5 incidents per 1,000 households. Over 19 percent of the households were victimized one or more times during the year. Vandalism was the most prevalent offense, affecting 12.4 percent of all households. Burglaries occurred in 9.6 percent of the households surveyed.
- * Less than three percent of the respondents were the victims of a violent crime during the year. Three and one-half percent (3.5%) experienced one or more threatened assaults and 13.6 percent were the victims of theft.
- * Thirty percent of those individuals who were the victims of one or more violent crimes during the year reported receiving treatment in a doctor's office, treatment in a hospital, or psychological counseling.
- * Persons between 15 and 24 were by far the most likely to be victimized for all personal crime categories, while persons over 50 were least likely to become victims.
- * One-half of the household offenses were reported to the police. Burglary was the most likely to be reported to the police (61.7%) and vandalism the least likely (40.7%).
- * The reporting rates for burglary, theft, and vandalism were somewhat higher than found in earlier surveys. This suggests that recent increases in the number of offenses reported by law enforcement agencies may be due in part to increased reporting of certain crimes to the police.
- * Less than one-fifth of all unarmed assaults were reported to law enforcement authorities. The reporting rate for personal theft was 43 percent.
- * Though older citizens had a lower rate of personal victimization, they were more likely to report crimes to the police. Other studies have shown that the elderly are also most likely to use crime prevention techniques and alter their lifestyles due to fear of crime.
- * Individuals between 15 and 24 years old--the group with the highest rate of victimization--were least likely to report offenses to law enforcement officials. A majority of persons who did not report a crime to the police stated they felt that it was useless to report as nothing could or would be done. Thirty-two percent felt the crime was not important enough to report.
- * The median cost for loss or replacement value for stolen or damaged property was between \$100 and \$200. Projections based on survey responses suggest that the actual losses incurred from the crimes studied here are close to \$150 million per year in Oregon. This estimate does not include crimes against commercial businesses. Only four percent of those experiencing losses said their insurance covered all losses and expenses.

OREGON CRIME ANALYSIS CENTER
 EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
 155 Cottage Street NE
 SALEM OR 97310