



WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH CRIME IN THE REGION Crime Stats for the San Diego Region – 2003

A Report from SANDAG's Criminal Justice Research Division

On a bi-annual basis, the Criminal Justice Research Division of SANDAG compiles crime statistics for the San Diego region. These reports, which are more timely than those produced by the state, are made possible through a cooperative agreement with local law enforcement agencies and funding from SANDAG member assessments. Because crime incidents are not confined by jurisdictional boundaries, these reports are useful to public safety officials and policy makers as they allocate resources and implement crime prevention and enforcement strategies.

Was There More Violence in the Region in 2003?

The violent crime rate decreased for the second year in a row to 4.7 per 1,000 residents in 2003. This rate is only slightly higher than it was 20 years ago, when it was 4.1, but considerably lower than its highest point in 1994 when it was 9.0.

Even though the violent crime rate declined, there were increases in the number of homicides, rapes, and robberies in the region. Aggravated assault was the only Part I violent crime that decreased in number. Because assault represents about two-thirds of reported violent crime, this trend was responsible for the lower violent crime rate in 2003.

There were 130 homicides in the San Diego region in 2003, compared to 87 in 2002 – a 49 percent increase. Three-quarters of homicide victims were male and two-thirds of cases involved the use of a firearm. According to local agencies, when motive could be determined, 41 percent were gang- or drug-

related and 39 percent were related to domestic violence or other situations that involved fights or arguments.

Two rapes, on average, were reported to San Diego County law enforcement agencies per day in 2003.

Approximately one in five robberies involved the use of a firearm, as did 14 percent of assaults. Females were more likely to be victims and suspects of assault compared to the other Part I violent crimes.

There were 21,755 domestic violence incidents reported to law enforcement in 2003. This represented an 8 percent increase since 1999. These incidents include Part I crimes as well as Part II offenses, which are not included in the FBI Index crimes.

Were You More Likely to be a Victim of Property Crime in 2003?

Property crime rates increased for the third consecutive year, to 32.6 incidents per 1,000 residents. However, this rate was still lower

than it was 10 or 20 years ago. Across the region, property crime rates varied by jurisdiction from 17.2 to 56.2 in 2003.

In 2003, 1 in every 96 homes was burglarized, 1 in 55 residents was a victim of larceny, and 1 in 93 vehicles was stolen. \$236 million dollars worth of property was stolen in 2003.

Forty-seven percent (47%) of all burglaries in 2003 were committed without the use of forced entry. However, this percentage was lower than it was five years earlier, suggesting more residents have been using crime prevention techniques.

The most common type of larceny in 2003 involved theft from inside a motor vehicle.

Of the three major property crimes, the number of motor vehicles stolen increased most over the one-year period (18%). Motor vehicle theft also showed the lowest clearance rate of all FBI Index crimes (4%) in 2003.

On average, there were 1.6 arsons in the region per day in 2003.

How Safe is San Diego Compared to Other Urban Areas?

The FBI releases information about crime in major U.S. cities in the third quarter of each year for the previous year. This information is the most timely and accurate measure of how San Diego compares to other cities in terms of public safety. In 2002, San Diego was a safer place to live than ten years previously. According to the most recent national statistics (2002), the City of San Diego had the 3rd lowest FBI Index crime rate, compared to other large U.S. cities. In 1993, the City had the 6th lowest overall crime rate.

How Much of our Regional Resources are Dedicated to Public Safety?

In fiscal year 2003-04, approximately \$1.3 billion was allocated for local public safety

efforts across the region. Over half (58%) of this was allocated to law enforcement agencies, with the rest appropriated to corrections, prosecution, probation supervision, and defense. There were 1.62 sworn officers per 1,000 population across the region.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the full Crime Report, which includes statistics by jurisdiction and a special section on prisoner reentry, please access SANDAG's web site at www.sandag.org/cj or contact the Division at (619) 699-6912.

Glossary of Terms:

Part I Crimes: Seven crimes that are tracked by the FBI nationally. These include four types of violent crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, and assault) and three types of property crime (burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft).

Crime Rate: The number of reported crimes divided by the population which has been divided by 1,000. This rate allows for standardized comparisons to be made across jurisdictions and over time by factoring in population changes.

Part II Crimes: Crimes not included with the Part I offenses and not tracked nationally by the FBI. Crimes in this category include weapons violations, fraud, vandalism, and violations of liquor laws, among others.

Clearance Rate: A reported crime can be cleared when at least one person is arrested, charged, or prosecuted, or the identity of the offender has been definitely established, but circumstances preclude an arrest being made.