

Crime in California



2002

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California Department of Justice
Bill Lockyer, Attorney General
Division of California Justice Information Services

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50th
Edition

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The role of the Criminal Justice Statistics Center is to:

- *Collect, analyze, and report statistical data which provide valid measures of crime and the criminal justice process.*
- *Examine these data on an ongoing basis to better describe crime and the criminal justice system.*
- *Promote the responsible presentation and use of crime statistics.*

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ATTORNEY GENERAL ' S MESSAGE

The overall crime rate in California increased 2.4 percent in 2002. Despite the increase, it does represent a reduction from the 3.7 percent increase seen in 2001. Crime rates remain at relatively low levels when compared to the high rates experienced throughout the 1970's and 1980's. The overall violent crime rate declined for the tenth consecutive year, hitting its lowest level in nearly 30 years.

The rate for violent crime offenses decreased by 2.7 percent from 2001 to 2002.

- Homicide (1.2 percent of violent crimes) increased by 7.9 percent.
- Forcible rape (4.9 percent of violent crimes) increased by 1.4 percent.
- Robbery (31.2 percent of violent crimes) increased by 0.8 percent.
- Aggravated assault (62.8 percent of violent crime) decreased by 4.8 percent.

The rate for property crime offenses increased by 4.9 percent from 2001 to 2002.

- Burglary (51.7 percent of property crimes) increased by 1.7 percent.
- Motor vehicle theft (48.3 percent of property crimes) increased by 8.6 percent.

Notwithstanding the current economic climate, we must ensure that law enforcement has all the necessary resources available, including access to all the latest scientific technologies – particularly those involving DNA evidence – to prevent the alarming crime rates of the past from returning. I will continue to lead serious and extensive discussions involving various law enforcement experts and criminal justice researchers on developing policies and laws that implement the most efficient crime-fighting policies available. Our emphasis must not only be on apprehension and prosecution, but must also focus on the most effective strategies for preventing crimes.

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BILL LOCKYER
Attorney General

"California:
a place of many dreams,
but one shared vision;
a people of many faces,
but one family."

Bill Lockyer
Inaugural Address
January 6, 2003

Although many social phenomena play a role in determining whether crime rates go up or down during a given time period, there is no question that the diligent work of the entire law enforcement community, along with community-based organizations, community leaders and parents, play a significant role in maintaining California's relatively low crime rates.

Through these efforts, we will continue to develop, promote and implement policies that have proven to be effective in combating crime. We as Californians, already privileged to live in our nation's richest and most diverse state, deserve the safest environment possible to enjoy everything it has to offer.

HIGHLIGHTS

CRIMES (See pages 2-23.)

- *The California Crime Index (CCI) rate increased from 898.1 in 1952 to its peak of 3,922.1 in 1980. The CCI has since dropped to 1,890.1 crimes reported per 100,000 population in 2002.* (Source: Table 1.)
- *The CCI rate increased for the third consecutive year. The rate increase was seen in all six major offenses except aggravated assault, which decreased.* (Source: Table 1.)
- *The violent crime rate declined and reached its lowest level since 1974.* (Source: Table 1.)
- *In 2002, homicides increased in rate and number for the third consecutive year.* (Source: Table 1.)

ARRESTS (See pages 26-63.)

- *The 2002 total arrest rate of 5,223.8 per 100,000 population at risk reached the lowest level for which data are available.* (Source: Table 16.)
- *From 2001 to 2002, there was a slight increase of 1.0 percent in the felony arrest rate, which corresponds to the slight increase of 2.4 percent in the crime rate.* (Source: Tables 2 and 17.)
- *Since 1997, the rate of juvenile felony arrests decreased 35.0 percent and the rate of juvenile misdemeanor arrests decreased 24.8 percent. The rate of status offense arrests (truancy, incorrigibility, running away, and curfew violations) decreased 21.4 percent since 1997.* (Source: Table 17.)
- *From 1997 to 2002, the homicide arrest rate decreased 20.9 percent. The rate of juvenile arrests for homicide offenses decreased 46.7 percent since 1997.* (Source: Table 22.)
- *Since 1997, the narcotic arrest rate dropped 26.2 percent and the dangerous drug arrest rate decreased 12.6 percent.* (Source: Table 22.)

DISPOSITIONS (See pages 66-71.)

- *In 2002, 67.4 percent of adult felony arrests resulted in a conviction.* (Source: Table 39.)
- *Probation with jail continues to be the most frequent sentence given for adult felony arrests.* (Source: Table 40.)

ADULT CORRECTIONS (See pages 74-81.)

- *Since 1997, the rate of adults under state supervision has increased 1.1 percent and the rate of adults under local supervision increased 3.4 percent.* (Source: Table 42.)
- *In 2002, there was a 0.5 percent decrease in the rate of adults under supervision from 2001.* (Source: Table 42.)

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