

news release

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1999 MAINE CRIME STATISTICS

For the third year in a row, crime in Maine has decreased. The decrease in 1999 was 5.5% according to the Maine Department of Public Safety. The crime statistics were released by Public Safety Commissioner Michael F. Kelly, who said violent crime during 1999 dropped 18.3% and property crime decreased 5.0%. The overall 1999 drop combined with decreases in 1998 and 1997 equates to a total decrease of 15.9% during the past three years. Kelly said the only crimes to show increases last year were rape, assaults and rural crime.

The crime numbers were compiled by department's Uniform Crime Reporting Division. There were 35,868 offenses reported to police in Maine during 1999 compared to 37,957 during 1998. The 35,868 index offenses represent a **crime rate** of 29.04 offenses per 1,000 persons in Maine, the lowest number in over 20 years. The 29.04 figure compares to the national average of 46.15 offenses per 1000 persons (in 1998). Maine's 1998 crime rate was 30.73.

Offenses comprising the crime index include murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.

In the violent crime categories, **rapes** increased 19.2% in 1999 (273 cases in 1999 compared to 229 in 1998). This is the first increase in rapes in five years. Previous years numbered 252 in 1997, 266 in 1996, 268 in 1995 and 315 in 1994. **Simple assaults** increased by 2.6% from 10,268 to 10,538. Violent crime categories showing decreases were **aggravated assaults** going down 25.% (from 1051 to 788) and **robbery** decreasing 25.5% (from 263 to 196).

Domestic violence assaults decreased for the second year in a row. The category went down by 5.7% in 1999 and dropped 8.7% in 1998. There were 3,632 domestic violence assaults in 1999 compared to 3,853 in 1998 and 4,222 in 1997.

There were 25 **murders** in 1999, compared to 26 in 1998 and 19 in 1997. Of the 25 homicide cases, 16 stemmed from domestic violence (64%), involving family or household members or those involved in a relationship.

(MORE)

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For property crimes, **burglary** decreased 8.1% (from 8,286 to 7,613); **motor vehicle thefts** decreased 3.7% (from 1,513 to 1,457) and **larceny-theft** decreased 4.% (from 26,387 to 25,322). **Arson** decreased 4.% (194 cases in 1999 to 202 in 1998). Property value damaged in arson fires totaled \$1,197,275 in 1999 compared to \$2,269,086 lost in 1998.

The value of property stolen during 1999 was \$24,635,862 compared to \$23,649,356 in 1998. Police recovered \$8,658,459 of the stolen property for a 35.1% recovery rate, compared to the 1998 rate of 34.1%.

Urban areas, comprised of communities served by full time police agencies, saw a 7.1% decrease in crime. The urban areas experienced decreases in most crimes; robbery (-24.2%), arson (-2.8), burglary (-11.4%), larceny-theft (-4.9%), and motor vehicle theft (-10.1%). The only crime that saw an increase in urban areas was rape, which increased 8.9% in 1999 (from 191 cases in 1998 to 208 cases in 1999).

Rural areas, patrolled by state police and sheriff's departments, showed a slight increase in overall crime of 1.0%. The rural crime category showing the largest increase was rape that went up 71.1% (from 38 cases in 1998 to 65 cases in 1999). Other rural crimes showing increases were larceny-theft (+1.0%), motor vehicle theft (+11.7) and arson (+4.3). Rural crimes showing decreases were robbery (-46.7%), aggravated assault (-5.0%) and burglary (-1.4%).

The total number of **persons arrested**, summoned or cited by police decreased in 1999 by 1.7% (45,517 adults and 10,786 juveniles). Adult arrests decreased by .05% and juvenile arrests decreased by 7.9% during 1999.

State, county and local police agencies cleared, mostly by arrest, summons or citation, 10,473 offenses for a **clearance rate** of 29.2% in 1999 compared to the 28.1% clearance rate for 1998.

The crime rate for **violent crime** in Maine for 1999 was 1.01 offense per 1,000 population compared to the national average of 5.6 per 1,000 (for 1998).

The Uniform Crime Reporting program collects, processes and publishes reported index crime offenses from all state, county and local law enforcement agencies in Maine. Auditing of the reports will continue until actual printing of "Crime in Maine", the annual publication of reported statistics from UCR. Questions about local trends should be directed to local police chiefs, sheriffs or state police barracks for detailed local crime statistics.

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(Summaries on pages three and four)

**Maine Crime Rate
(1978 to 1999)**

1999 29.04
1998 30.73
1997 31.28
1996 34.27
1995 33.47
1994 32.95
1993 31.78
1992 35.08
1991 38.21
1990 37.58
1989 36.57
1988 36.69
1987 35.88
1986 35.28
1985 37.36
1984 36.31
1983 37.64
1982 39.32
1981 43.36
1980 47.40
1979 42.72
1978 41.69

'99, '98 & '97 Maine Crime Summaries

	1999	1998	1997
Overall Crime	-5.5%	- 1.7%	-8.7%
Rural Crime	+1.%	+10.8%	-13.2%
Urban Crime	-7.1%	-4.3%	-7.7%
Aggravated Assault	-25.%	+11.6%	-3.1%
Assault	+2.6%	+ .2%	-12.3%
Burglary	-8.1%	+2.%	-12.4%
Auto Theft	-3.7%	-6.6%	-8.4%
Larceny-Theft	- 4.%	-2.8%	-7.7%
Arson	- 4.%	-20.5%	-12.1%
Rape	+19.2%	-9.1%	-5.3%
Domestic Violence	-5.7%	-8.7%	+7.8%
Murder	25 homicides	26 homicides	19 homicides
Adult arrests	-.05%	+7.2%	- .5%
Juvenile arrests	-7.9%	-8.1%	-1.7%