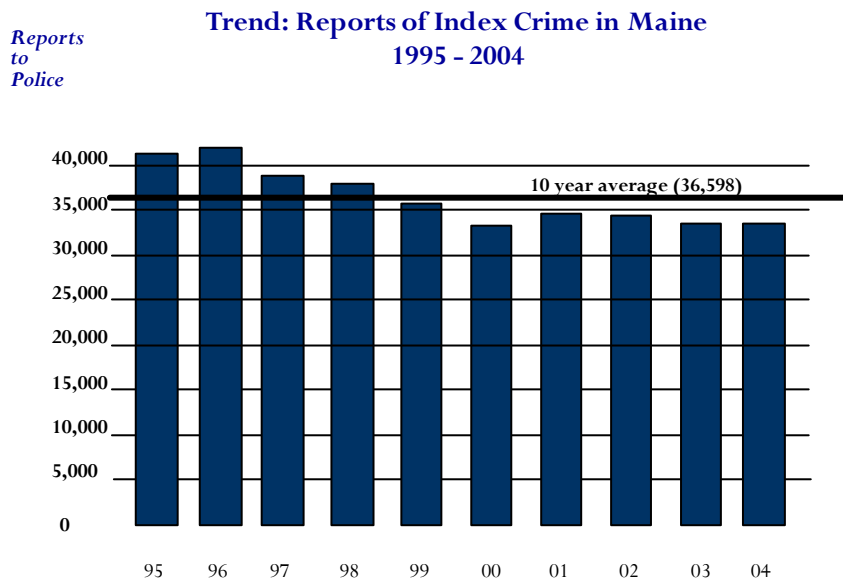


MAINE CRIME AND JUSTICE BRIEF SERIES: I

INDEX CRIMES IN MAINE

The violent crimes of murder (including non-negligent manslaughter), forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault and the property crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson are considered the most serious crimes occurring in the United States. Each state reports these crimes on an annual basis (referred together as Index crimes) to the FBI and as part of the Uniform Crime Report. This brief provides an overview of Index crimes rates in Maine over the last ten years. This analysis is part of the Maine Statistical Analysis Center's (SAC) mission to provide criminal justice information to the general public and policy makers in Maine.

The number of Index crimes reported in the 2004 Maine Uniform Crime Report was the lowest during the last ten years. Maine reported 33,276 Index crimes in 2004, which was 1.2 percent lower than 2003, and the lowest total over the past ten years. The number of Index crimes in 2004 was below the 10 year average of 36,598. Seven counties experienced declines between 2003 and 2004, led by Piscataquis (-24.8 percent), Lincoln (-16.3 percent) and York (-8.3 percent) counties. Counties with the highest one-year increase were Oxford (14.2 percent), Somerset (8.4 percent) and Washington county(6.2 percent).



Over the last ten years, Maine's falling Index crime rate has mirrored the national trend. York (-49.0 percent) and Cumberland (-39.4 percent) counties have experienced the sharpest declines in Index crime rates over the last ten years. Eleven other counties have also experienced declines in Index crime over the last ten years.

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Maine Crime & Justice Brief Series

Produced by the Maine Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), the series charts changes in crime, arrests and incarceration to present a portrait of crime and justice indicators in the state for the year 2004. The briefs include the most recent comprehensive Department of Public Safety and Department of Corrections data sets available for Maine. The series also uses 2005 data where available. The Maine Crime and Justice Brief Series is on the SAC website at:

muskie.usm.maine.edu/justiceresearch

Maine Statistical Analysis Center

The SAC serves as a clearinghouse for data collection and statistical analysis for the Maine criminal justice system, promotes a research-based approach and conducts research that support its identified priorities and objectives.



The total number of violent crimes in 2004 decreased by 4.5 percent. The number of violent crimes (1,348) in 2004 decreased by 4.5 percent from the previous year, and was the second lowest total over the last ten years. Only 1999 experienced a lower number of violent crimes (1,283). Robbery decreased by 10.8 percent from 2003 to 2004, but since 2000 has increased an overall 17.0 percent. Aggravated assaults declined by 3.6 percent to 728 in 2004, and remained below the 10 year average of 864 aggravated assaults per year. Finally, rape declined 10.8 percent to 313; but still remained higher than the 10 year average of 298 rapes per year. This year's total, however, was the sharpest one year decline in the number of reported rapes over the past 10 years.

Violent Crime Trends per 100,000 New England and US 1995-2004

	2004 Violent Index Crime rate per 100,000 population	1995-2004 change
Maine	104	-22.8%
New Hampshire	167	45.9%
Vermont	110	-5.3%
United States	466	-32.0%

Maine's 2004 violent crime rate is 22.8 percent lower than in 1995, while Vermont's and New Hampshire's decreased by 5.3 percent and increased by 45.9 percent respectively over the same time span. As of 2004, violent crime remained low in Maine, with a violent crime rate four and a half times lower than the rest of the country.

In 2004, domestic violence assaults reached a 10-year high as a share of all statewide assaults. In 2004, domestic violence represented 46.7 percent of all assaults, higher than the second highest share of 45.8 percent in 2003. In 2004, domestic violence assaults decreased 3.3 percent (176 offenses) to a total of 5,188 crimes. This total is the second highest in 10 years (after 2003) and is 17.6 percent higher than the total in 1995.

Property crime declined in 2004 to the lowest level in the last 10 years. Property crimes showed a decrease during 2003, falling by 353 reported offenses—a 1.1 percent decrease. Property crime over the last ten years follows the same pattern found in violent crimes in Maine. After peaking in the mid 1990s, property crime fell before creeping up slightly in 2001 and 2002. The 2004 total of 31,928 was the lowest total for property crimes in the last ten years and has declined by 19.5 percent since 1995.

Maine reported the second lowest rate of firearm use in violent crimes in the country in 2004. As of 2004, only 105 violent firearm crimes were committed in Maine. This total ranked fourth lowest in the nation behind North Dakota (24), Vermont (75) and South Dakota (99). As a percentage of violent crime, Maine has the second lowest rate of firearm use in the country at 10.0 percent, just behind North Dakota (7.7 percent). Maine's low rate of firearm violence is twice as low as New Hampshire (20.0 percent) and Vermont (19.4 percent), and nearly three times less than the national average of 27.0 percent.

STATE	Total # of firearm crimes	Percent of violent crimes w/ firearm	Overall chance of being a firearm victim
MAINE	105	10.0%	1 in 12,545
VERMONT	75	14.9%	1 in 7,819
NEW HAMPSHIRE	223	20.0%	1 in 4,446
UNITED STATES	250,174	27.0%	1 in 905

IMPLICATIONS

Index crime trends continue to show Maine as one of the safest states in the nation. Nevertheless, Maine continues to face challenges that need to be addressed to make the state even safer. Reducing violent crime means reducing violence against women, specifically domestic violence abuse and rape. Both of these violent crimes are high and, prior to 2004, had grown significantly at the beginning of this decade. More than half the murders in Maine over the last 10 years are the result of domestic violence abuse, and nearly half of all assaults are domestic violence related. A concentrated effort to reduce domestic violence could reduce other violent crimes as well.