

**SOUTH CAROLINA  
UNIFORM CRIME REPORTING PROGRAM**

## **BACKGROUND OF UNIFORM CRIME REPORTING**

### **NATIONAL UCR PROGRAM**

Development of the current nationwide Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program over fifty years ago. In 1930, crime counts were first requested from local police departments with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) designated by Congress to collect, compile and analyze the statistics. The Committee on Uniform Crime Records of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) played a primary role in the origin and development of UCR and today serves in a strong advisory capacity. Standardized offense classification and counting procedures developed by the IACP are the basis for the UCR program. The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) also serves in an advisory role to the national program. The publication, Crime in the United States, is the annual report published by the FBI dealing with national crime statistics.

In recent years the FBI has actively assisted states in the development of level UCR programs compatible with the national system.

### **SOUTH CAROLINA UCR PROGRAM**

South Carolina was one of the first states to implement an operational state UCR program. The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division is the agency administering the program. The information collected and the uniform classification under which it is collected are based directly upon the guidelines developed by the IACP and FBI.

Upon initiation of the South Carolina UCR program in July, 1973, SLED, in conjunction with the FBI, held workshops around the state to instruct or refresh the county and city law enforcement agencies on the scope of the program and the mechanics of completing the forms.

Since that time, SLED, along with the local law enforcement agencies, has instituted an incident-based records management system which has greatly enhanced and improved the quality of information gathered under the Uniform Crime Reports system. Under this procedure, crime data and other information gathered by municipal and county law enforcement agencies are collected and submitted to SLED on a daily, monthly and annual basis. This new system lent itself to a more complete and accurate crime reporting system which, in most instances, alleviated some of the paperwork with which many departments had been burdened. An additional advantage of using standard incident and booking reports was realized from the uniformity of documents. Standardized reports facilitated the exchange of information between law enforcement agencies within the state. The forms have been included in the report writing classes taught at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

In 1991 South Carolina became one of the first states to implement the new National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) which was developed by the FBI, using our state as a model and demonstration site. The NIBRS is an enhanced version of the previous South Carolina system and is currently in various stages of implementation in other states. The system is expected to be in nationwide use in a few years.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The fundamental objectives of the South Carolina Uniform Crime Reporting Program are:

- (1) To inform the governor, legislature, other governmental officials and the public as to the nature of the crime problem in South Carolina.
- (2) To provide law enforcement administrators with criminal statistics for administrative and operational use.
- (3) To determine who commits crimes by age, sex, race and other attributes in order to find the proper focus for crime prevention and enforcement.
- (4) To provide base data and statistics to help measure the workload and effectiveness of the criminal justice system.
- (5) To provide base data for research to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and performance of criminal justice agencies.

A particularly important goal of the state UCR program is to return statistical information to the contributors. With implementation of the new incident reporting system, participating police agencies furnish data that are classified, coded, and then returned to each jurisdiction in the form of monthly printouts. The information enables them to make decisions in budgeting, manpower allocations and the identification of high crime areas.

This information is also forwarded by SLED to the FBI on a monthly basis for inclusion in the FBI's annual UCR publication.

## **REPORTING AND CLASSIFICATION**

In reporting offenses to the Uniform Crime Reports program, crimes are classified according to standard definitions that are used throughout the nation (given in later sections of this publication). The UCR definitions are designed to insure that offenses with different titles under the laws of the various states are appropriately classified and counted under the UCR program. Crimes are classified without regard to the findings of courts or juries, since the statistics are gathered primarily to assist in identifying areas of concern to law enforcement officers, and not meant to reflect the outcomes of inquests, hearings or trials.

## **CRIME FACTORS** \*

Each year when Crime in South Carolina is published, many entities – news media, tourism agencies, and others with an interest in crime in our State, compile rankings of cities and counties based on their Crime Index figures. These simplistic and/or incomplete analyses often create misleading perceptions which adversely affect cities and counties, along with their residents. Assessing criminality and law enforcement's response from jurisdiction to jurisdiction must encompass many elements, some of which, while having significant impact, are not readily measurable nor applicable pervasively among all locales. Geographic and demographic factors specific to each jurisdiction must be considered and applied if crime assessment is to approach completeness and accuracy. There are several sources of information which may assist the responsible researcher. The U.S. Bureau of the Census data, for example, can be utilized to better understand the makeup of a locale's population. The transience of the population, its composition by age and gender, education levels, and prevalent family structures are some factors to be considered in assessing and better understanding the crime issue.

The National League of Cities provides information regarding the economic and cultural makeup of cities and counties. Understanding a jurisdiction's industrial/economic base, its dependence upon neighboring jurisdictions, its transportation system, its economic dependence on nonresidents (such as tourists and convention attendees), its proximity to military reservations, etc., all help in better gauging and interpreting the crime known to and reported by law enforcement. More detailed information can, of course, be obtained from a city's or county's chamber of commerce, planning/information office, or other similar entity.

The strength (personnel and other resources) and the aggressiveness of a jurisdiction's law enforcement agency are also key factors. For example, one city may report more crime than a comparable one, not because there is more crime, but because its law enforcement agency through proactive efforts, such as "sting operations," identifies more offenses. Attitudes of the citizens toward crime and their crime reporting practices, especially concerning more minor offenses, have an impact on the volume of crimes known to police.

It is incumbent upon all data users to become as well educated as possible about how to categorize and quantify the nature and extent of crime in South Carolina. Valid assessments are only possible with careful study and analysis of the various unique conditions affecting each local law enforcement jurisdiction.

Historically, the causes and origins of crime have been the subjects of investigation by varied disciplines. Some factors which are known to affect the volume and type of crime occurring from place to place are:

- Population density and degree of urbanization with size of locality and its surrounding area.
- Variations in composition of the population, particularly youth concentration.
- Stability of population with respect to residents' mobility, commuting, and transient factors.
- Modes of transportation and highway system.
- Economic conditions, including median income, poverty level, and job availability.
- Cultural factors, such as educational, recreational, and religious characteristics.
- Family conditions with respect to divorce and family cohesiveness.
- Climate.
- Effective strength of law enforcement agencies.
- Administrative, investigative, and reporting emphases of law enforcement.
- Policies of other components of the criminal justice system (i.e., prosecutorial, judicial, correctional, and probational).
- Citizens attitudes toward crime.
- Crime reporting practices of citizenry.

Crime in South Carolina gives a statewide view of crime based on statistics contributed by state and local law enforcement agencies. Population size is the only correlate of crime utilized in this publication. While other factors are of concern, no attempt is made to relate them to the data presented. **The reader is, therefore, cautioned against comparing statistical data of individual cities, counties, or universities solely on the basis of their population coverage.**

\* Factors paraphrased from FBI Publication, Crime In The United States.

## **SOUTH CAROLINA CRIME INDEX**

The tabulation presented in the tables, graphs, and charts in this publication indicate the volume, fluctuation, and distribution of crime in South Carolina on the basis of a crime index. The crime figures are categorized by agency, county and state on the basis of information submitted by police agencies from these areas. The seven offenses comprising the crime index are:

- 1) Murder
- 2) Rape
- 3) Robbery
- 4) Aggravated Assault
- 5) Breaking or Entering
- 6) Larceny
- 7) Motor Vehicle Theft

Definitions of these seven offenses can be found elsewhere in this book under their separate headings.

The crime index is used as a basic measure of crime. The crimes were selected for use as an index on the basis of their serious nature, their frequency of occurrence, and the reliability of reporting from citizens to law enforcement agencies. The offenses of murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault are categorized as violent crimes. Offenses of breaking or entering, larceny and motor vehicle theft are classed as nonviolent crimes. The crime index is the total of these offenses that come to the attention of law enforcement agencies.

In reviewing crime index figures, the reader should bear in mind that there is currently no way of determining the total number of crimes committed. The crime index has been established to measure only the instances of crime which come to the attention of law enforcement agencies. It is important to remember in reviewing the tables and graphs in this report that the volume of crime in a given area or municipality is related to the crime factors previously listed in this report.

## **CRIME RATES**

The crime rate indicates the number of Index Crimes per unit of population, generally per 10,000. It should be noted that the rate only takes into consideration the numerical factor of population and does not incorporate any of the other elements which contribute to the amount of crime in a given community. The effect of changes in population on rates should be kept in mind when attempting to make a comparison of crime rates.

The population data used in this report are supplied by the State Data Center, Division of Research and Statistical Services. For the twenty year Crime in South Carolina Rates per 10,000 population table, found on pages 16-17, U.S. Bureau of the Census preliminary population estimates for South Carolina are used for the years 1985-1989, rounded to the nearest thousand. S.C. Division of Research and Statistical Services population projections as of July 1 of each year are used for the years 1990-2005, rounded to the nearest thousand, unless noted otherwise.

## **PERCENT CHANGE**

Changes in the numbers of offenses and arrests from year to year are shown in a number of tables in the publication. The percent change shown after any figure reflects a comparison to information reported the previous year.

### **PERCENT ROUNDING**

Percentages shown in this publication may not add to 100 due to gross rounding (usually shown to the nearest tenth, but sometimes to the nearest whole). Percentages under 0.5 are shown as zero percent on all pie charts.

### **UPDATED DATA INITIAL AND FINAL FIGURES**

In 1991, the SC Incident Based Reporting System (SCIBRS) adopted in to the conventions of the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). One of those conventions was the NIBRS Time Window for adding, updating, and correcting crime data reported to the state and national repositories.

Prior to 1991, under the old Summary Based UCR rules, any additions, updates, or corrections to figures for the previous year had to be made by adjusting the numbers reported during the current year. E.g., If an agency had one actual murder during a month in the current year, but then learned of another murder that had actually occurred in the previous year, then that agency would report two murders for the current month. It quickly becomes clear that this method of reporting updates negatively affects the accuracy of crime counts in both the current year and the previous year. When the increased detail of NIBRS data over UCR data is considered, the issue of accuracy is compounded.

With the adoption of the concept of the NIBRS (and SCIBRS) Time Window it became possible to freely add, update, or correct any data for an incident that occurred during the current calendar year and the previous calendar year (usually referred to as "current year minus one").

Therefore, for purposes of this annual crime report, the data for the most recent year is to be considered as "initial" data - it is still open to additions, updates, and corrections. Data for previous years is to be considered "final", since those years have passed outside the Time Window and can no longer be adjusted.

### **SOME 2001 AND 2002 DATA NOT AVAILABLE**

Due to abbreviated collection of data for the years 2001 and 2002, some data usually found in this report are not available. Where data are not available for tables and graphs displaying trends, the notation "N/A" appears.

SCIBRS returned to normal data collection procedures for the year 2003.

## DEFINITIONS

### **INDEX**

The index, or crime index, consists of the counts used as indicators of the crime picture in a given jurisdiction (state, county, city). The index does not include counts of all crimes reported, but uses seven categories (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, breaking or entering, larceny and motor vehicle theft) as pointers or indicators of the overall crime situation. Crimes in the index are selected according to their hierarchy position.

### **HIERARCHY**

The hierarchy system, or crime hierarchy, selects crimes according to their ranking or seriousness. When using the hierarchy system to obtain crime counts, only the most serious category of crime is counted in any single criminal incident. The hierarchy order of the index is murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, breaking or entering, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.

For example, if a criminal event includes both a murder and rape, only the murder will be counted in the index.

### **INCIDENT**

An incident is a single criminal event. One incident may include several categories of crimes, multiple victims, and multiple offenders.

### **VICTIM**

A victim, in this publication, is an individual person who has had a violent crime committed against him or her. (In other contexts, but not in this report, a business or organization may be described as a victim.) Victims, here, are described by age, sex, and race.

### **OFFENDER**

An offender, in this publication, is a person who has committed a crime, but who may or may not have been arrested. Offenders are described to police by victims and witnesses of crimes by age, sex, and race. (Offenders are sometimes called subjects or suspects, but those terms are not used in this report.)

### **PERSONS ARRESTED**

A person arrested is someone who has been apprehended by law enforcement officers for committing one or more crimes. A juvenile is counted as a person arrested if he or she is apprehended or otherwise officially handled by law enforcement officers for committing one or more crimes, regardless of whether the juvenile is incarcerated or even formally charged.

## **NOTICE TO THE READER**

### **NIBRS REPORTING**

South Carolina was the first state to publish an annual report using the new National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). NIBRS is currently being developed in other states, and in a few years may replace the old UCR system. While this Crime in South Carolina limits itself primarily to the usual Index that has been used for years, there are some differences in the way crimes are counted in certain tables. These are outlined below.

### **HIERARCHIED DATA**

The hierarchy system dictates that only the most serious crime in any incident may be counted. For instance, if a single incident reported a murder, a rape, and a robbery, only the murder would be counted. Unless otherwise noted, the crime counts have been tallied according to the national hierarchy system, the same as in previous years. This provides continuity in the trends.

### **INDIVIDUAL INDEX CRIME SECTIONS**

The counts for the tables within the individual crime sections (Murder, Rape, Robbery, etc.) vary according to whether the table is showing the number of weapons, premises, vehicles, or victims.

In order to provide greater detail, another factor that affects the counts in some of these tables is that the information has not been subjected to the old UCR hierarchy system. These tables often reflect different counts than the index tables, since all crimes in a given category may be counted without regard to hierarchy.

### **VICTIM AND ARRESTEE TABLES**

The Victim and Arrestee tables found in the index crime sections for Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault (pages 32, 33, 40, 41, 48, 49), and the Arrestee tables for Breaking and Entering, Larceny, and Motor Vehicle Theft (pages 56, 61, and 67) have not been subjected to the hierarchy rule. All Victims and Arrestees linked to these crimes and arrests are counted.

### **FORCIBLE RAPE, BURGLARY COUNTS**

In this publication:

SCIBRS counts both female and male victims of Forcible Rape, according to the NIBRS definition (page 29). The FBI counts only female victims.

SCIBRS counts one Burglary for each incident in which rental storage units are burglarized. The FBI counts one Burglary for each individual unit entered.