

Study: California homicides spiked during pandemic

17 September 2021, by Sean Coffey

	CALIFORNIA			REST OF THE US		
	2019	2020	PERCENT CHANGE	2019	2020	PERCENT CHANGE
Violent	433.5	437.0	0.8%	357.4	370.9	3.8%
Homicide	4.2	5.5	31.0%	5.1	6.3	23.5%
Rape	36.8	33.8	-8.1%	43.4	36.9	-15.0%
Robbery	130.3	112.3	-13.8%	74.8	67.8	-9.4%
Aggravated Assault	262.2	285.4	8.8%	248.5	275.3	10.8%
Property	2,290.3	2,114.4	-7.7%	2,084.9	1,919.9	-7.9%
Burglary	379.4	365.4	-3.7%	335.1	304.6	-9.1%
Larceny	1,558.8	1,326.6	-14.9%	1,548.2	1,395.0	-9.9%
Motor vehicle theft	352.2	422.4	20.0%	201.6	218.5	8.4%

Crime rates per 100,000 in California and the rest of the United States for 2019 and 2020. Credit: University of California - Berkeley

New research released today by the nonpartisan California Policy Lab (CPL) shows that as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted daily lives, crime in California and across the country also changed in dramatic ways. CPL analyzed data on violent and property crime in 2020 as compared to 2019, and compared California to the rest of the U.S.

"The overall violent crime rate in California increased only slightly between 2019 and 2020, while the violent crime rate in the rest of the US increased by a larger margin. However, when you look at specific crime types within the violent crime category, there were some diverging trends," explains Steve Raphael, a public policy professor at UC Berkeley and co-author of the analysis. "In California, homicides increased by 31 percent and aggravated assaults increased by 9 percent, while robberies decreased by 14 percent and rapes decreased by 8 percent. The increases in certain [crime rates](#), especially homicide, are troubling, though it's also important to keep in mind that California's homicide rate is 61.8 percent less than its peak in 1980."

At the same time, [property crime](#) in California

decreased by 7.7 percent in 2020, driven by decreases in burglary and larceny that offset an increase in motor vehicle thefts.

The research team analyzed [crime data](#) from 437 cities throughout California, representing 80 percent of California's population. This new research expands on a CPL analysis for the California Committee on the Revision of the Penal Code.

Crime rates per 100,000 in California and the rest of the United States for 2019 and 2020.

The research team used Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) [data](#) published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), California Department of Justice (DOJ) data, and U.S. Census data to assess the degree to which crime in 2020 changed relative to [crime](#) in 2019 in California.

More information: Crime in California during the COVID-19 Pandemic. www.capolicylab.org/crime-in-c...e-COVID-19-pandemic/

Provided by University of California - Berkeley

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