

LARCENY-THEFT

DEFINITION

Larceny-theft is the unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession or constructive possession of another. It includes crimes such as shoplifting, pocket-picking, purse-snatching, thefts from motor vehicles, thefts of motor vehicle parts and accessories, bicycle thefts, etc., in which no use of force, violence, or fraud occurs. In the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, this crime category does not include embezzlement, confidence games, forgery, and worthless checks. Motor vehicle theft is also excluded from this category inasmuch as it is a separate Crime Index offense.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of offenses</i>	<i>Rate per 100,000 inhabitants</i>
1999	6,955,520	2,550.7
2000	6,965,957	2,475.3
Percent change	+0.2	-3.0

Estimated at nearly 7 million offenses in 2000, larceny-theft made up 60 percent of the Crime Index total and 68.4 percent of the property crime total. Larceny-thefts occurred most often in August and least often in February.

Table 2.27

Larceny-theft by Month					
Percent distribution, 1996-2000					
Month	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
January	7.8	8.0	8.4	7.8	7.7
February	7.5	7.2	7.5	7.2	7.4
March	7.9	8.0	8.2	8.0	8.3
April	8.0	8.0	8.1	8.0	7.9
May	8.6	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.7
June	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.7
July	9.3	9.2	9.0	9.1	9.1
August	9.2	9.1	9.0	9.2	9.2
September	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.5	8.4
October	8.8	8.8	8.5	8.7	8.8
November	7.8	7.9	7.8	8.1	8.0
December	8.1	8.3	8.2	8.3	7.8

Remaining relatively unchanged, larceny-thefts nationwide registered a slight increase, up 0.2 percent in 2000 compared to the 1999 figure. Cities as a whole also remained nearly unchanged with a 0.1-percent increase in larceny-theft from 1999. Among city population groups, the Nation's smallest cities, those with populations of less than 50,000, rose by 1.0 percent. Among the county groupings, rural counties experienced an increase of 1.8 percent and suburban counties as a whole fell 1.7 percent. (See Table 12.)

The South, the Nation's most populous region, accounted for 40.9 percent of the larceny-theft total in 2000. The Midwest accounted for 22.9 percent of the total, the West recorded 22.2 percent, and the Northeast 14.0 percent. (See Table 3.)

Two of the Nation's four geographic regions recorded increases in larceny-theft in 2000. The Southern States reported a 0.6-percent increase, and the Western States a 0.2-percent increase. Midwestern States reported no change from the previous year, and the Northeastern States reported a 0.9-percent decline in larceny-thefts. (See Table 4.)

Despite the similarity of the larceny-theft total when compared to the previous year's total, an examination of the long-term national trends indicated a decline in larceny-theft. The 2000 larceny-theft total shows an 11.9-percent drop when compared to 1996 figures and a 14.4-percent decrease when compared to figures from 1991. (See Table 1.)

Rate

The 2000 larceny-theft rate of 2,475.3 per 100,000 population represented a 3.0-percent drop when compared to the previous year's data. The rate fell 16.9 percent below 1996 figures and was 23.3 percent lower than the

1991 rate. Rates for community types in the Nation revealed 3,125.1 reports of larceny-theft per 100,000 inhabitants in cities outside metropolitan areas, 2,631.9 for metropolitan areas, and 999.7 in rural counties. (See Tables 1 and 2.)

All four geographic regions reported declines in the 2000 larceny-theft rate per 100,000 inhabitants. The Northeast showed a 4.2-percent drop, the South and West decreased 3.2 and 3.1 percent, respectively, and the Midwest reported a 1.8-percent decline. As for larceny-theft rates in 2000, the South reported a rate of 2,842.7 larceny-thefts per 100,000 population. The Midwest registered a rate of 2,475.1, the West experienced a rate of 2,447.1, and the Northeast recorded 1,821.4 larceny-thefts per 100,000 inhabitants. (See Table 4.)

Nature

In 2000, the average value of property stolen as a result of larceny-theft was \$735, down from the 1999 value of \$913. The aggregate loss to victims, when applying the average value to the estimated number of larceny-thefts nationally, was over \$5.1 billion for the year. This estimated dollar loss is considered conservative since many offenses in the larceny category never come to the attention of law enforcement, particularly if the value of the stolen goods is small. Losses over \$200 accounted for 38.9 percent of reported larceny-thefts, and losses under \$50 comprised 37.7 percent. The remaining 23.4 percent involved losses ranging from \$50 to \$200.

By type of larceny-theft, losses of goods and property reported stolen as a result of thefts from buildings averaged \$1,176; thefts from motor vehicles had an average loss of \$712; and thefts from coin-operated machines, averaged \$500. Theft of motor vehicle accessories averaged a loss of \$445; pocket-picking resulted in an average loss of \$408; and purse-snatching, \$356. Theft of bicycles resulted in an average loss of \$276 and losses from shoplifting averaged \$181. (See Table 23.)

Table 2.28

Larceny-theft					
Percent distribution by region, 2000					
Type	United States Total	North-eastern States	Mid-western States	Southern States	Western States
Total ¹	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Pocket-picking	0.5	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.5
Purse-snatching	0.5	1.1	0.5	0.4	0.5
Shoplifting	13.8	15.0	12.4	12.8	15.6
From motor vehicles (except accessories)	25.2	21.9	23.6	23.9	30.1
Motor vehicle accessories	9.7	7.7	10.3	10.0	10.1
Bicycles	4.5	5.5	5.0	3.6	4.9
From buildings	13.1	16.2	15.3	10.9	13.2
From coin-operated machines	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7
All others	32.0	31.2	32.1	37.2	24.3

¹ Because of rounding, the percentages may not add to total.

FIGURE 2.15

LARCENY-THEFT

PERCENT CHANGE
from 1996

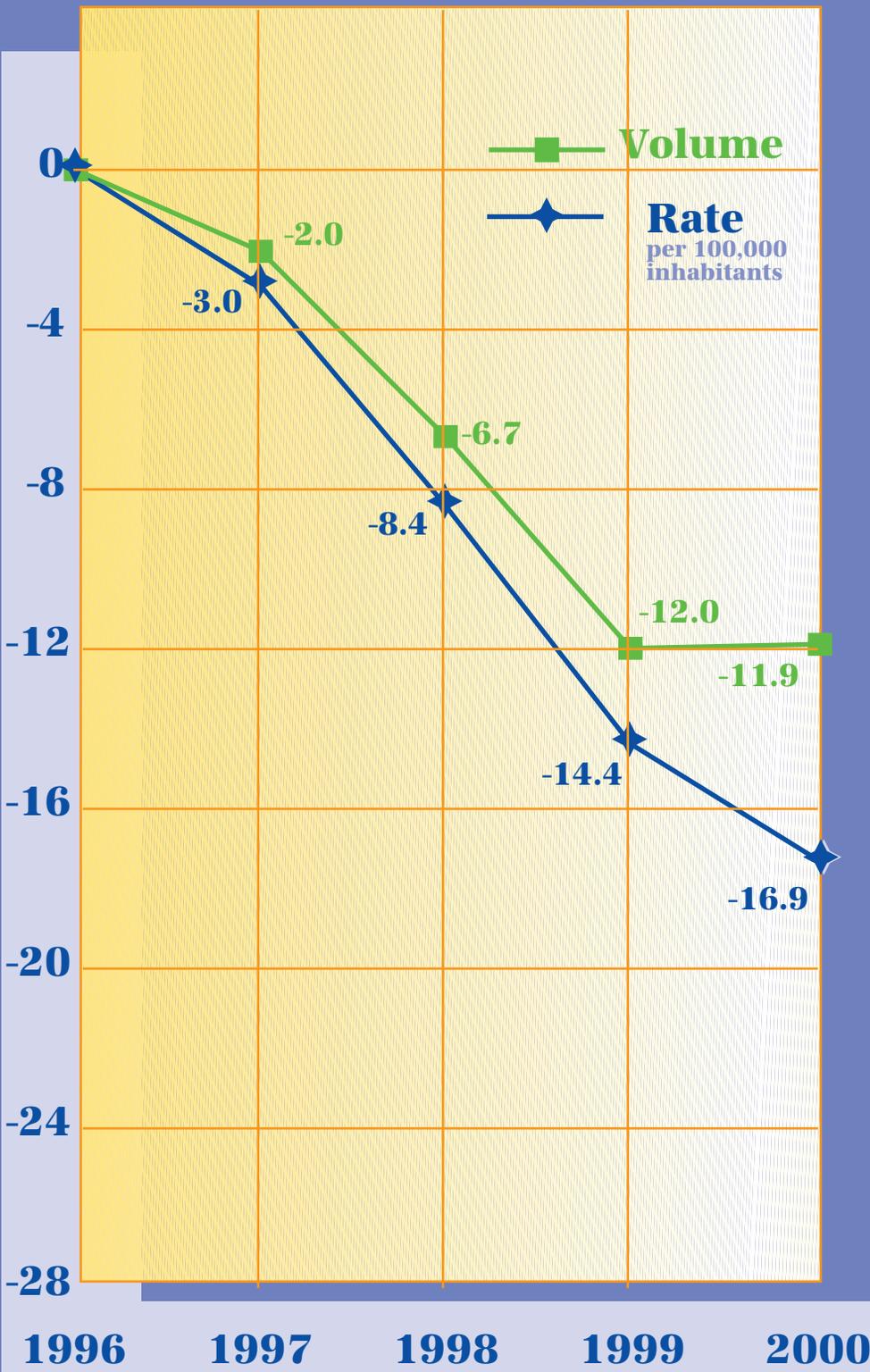


FIGURE 2.16 LARCENY-THEFT CATEGORIES

PERCENT CHANGE
from 1996

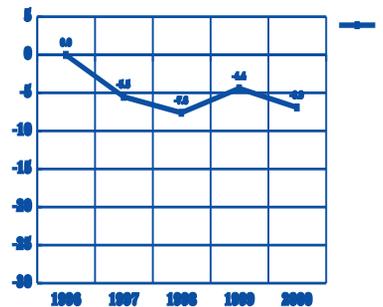
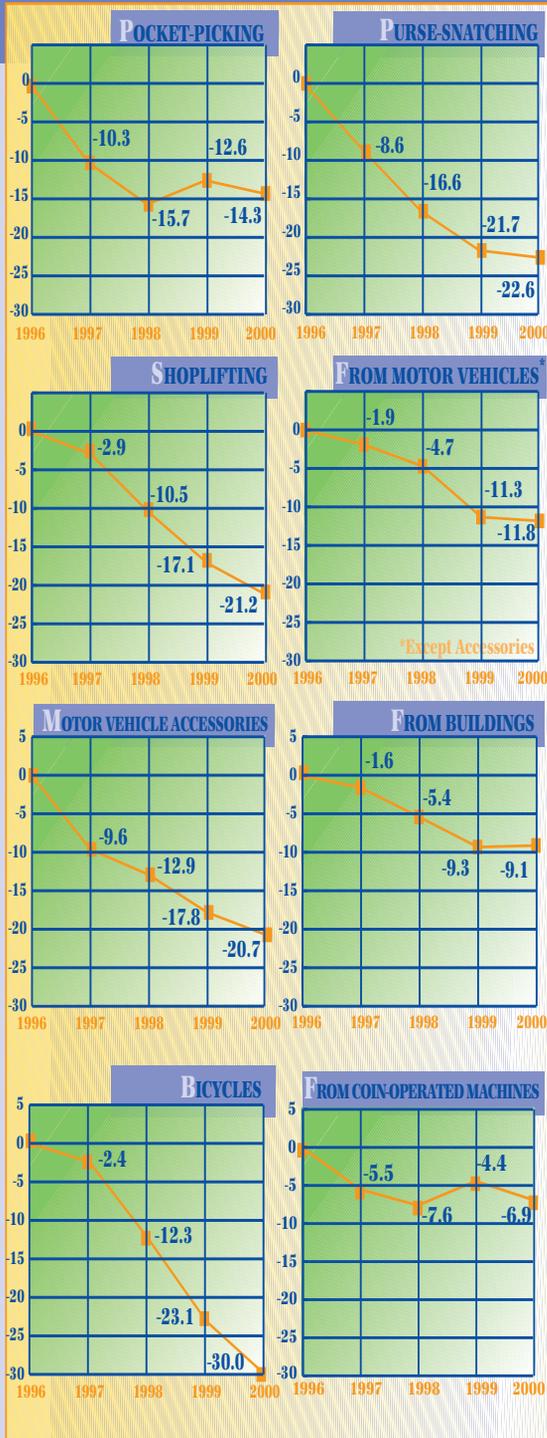
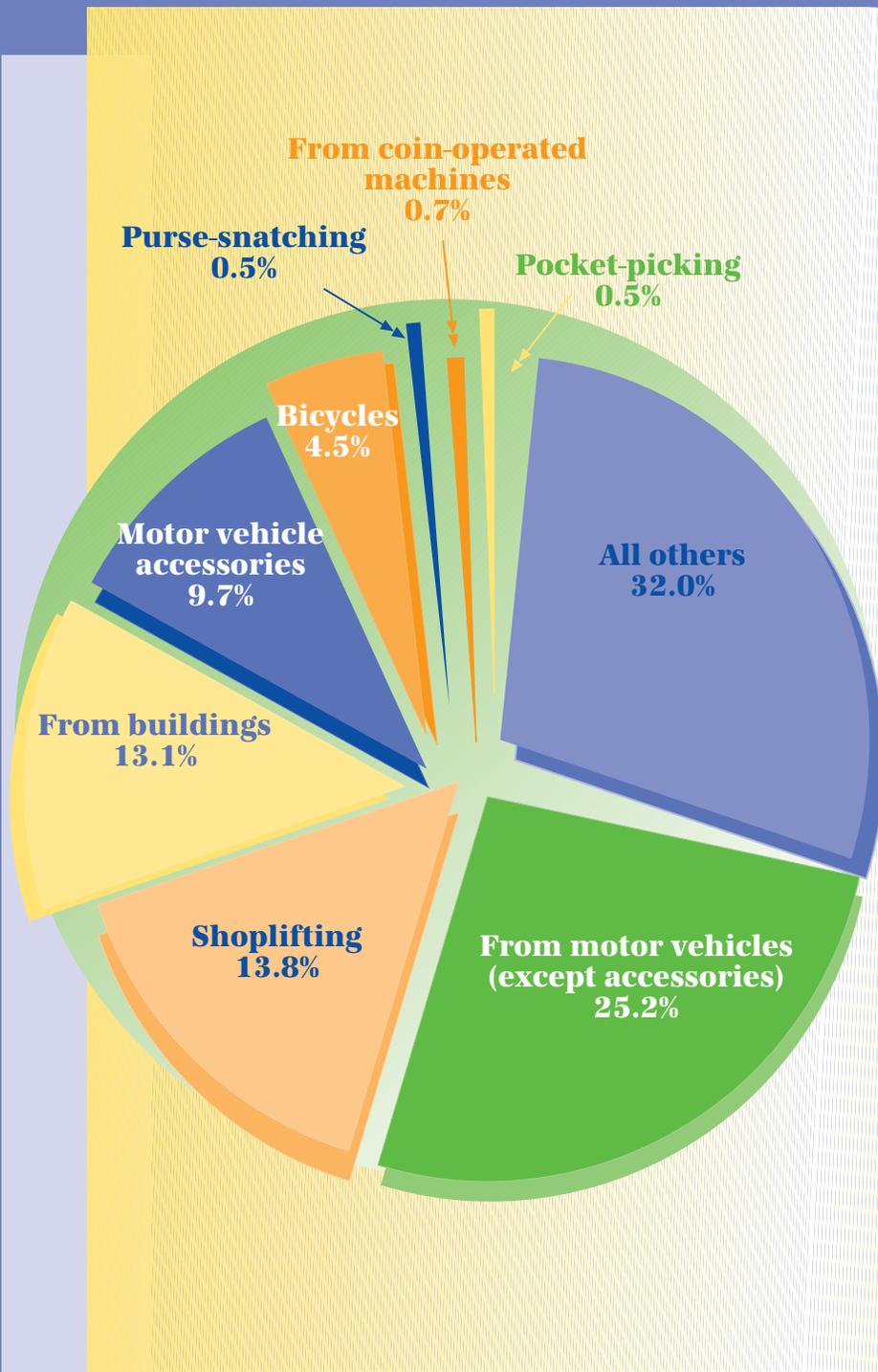


FIGURE 2.17 LARCENY-THEFT

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION
2000



Thefts of motor vehicle parts, accessories, and contents accounted for the largest segment of larceny-theft, 34.9 percent. Shoplifting made up 13.8 percent of larceny-thefts, and thefts from buildings, 13.1 percent. The remainder of larceny-thefts were attributed to pocket-picking, purse-snatching, bicycle thefts, thefts from coin-operated machines, and all other types of larceny-thefts. Table 2.28 provides the distribution of larceny-theft by type and geographic region.

Law Enforcement Response

The national clearance rate for larceny-theft offenses in 2000 was 18.2 percent. Cities with populations from 10,000 to 24,999 recorded the highest clearance rate, 22.9 percent. The Nation's cities collectively cleared 18.5 percent of larceny-thefts, and rural counties reported an 18.4-percent clearance rate. Suburban counties had a 16.8-percent clearance rate.

Law enforcement agencies in the Northeast cleared 21.6 percent of reported larceny-theft offenses in 2000. Agencies in the Midwest cleared 17.9 percent; the South, 17.8 percent; and the West, 17.4 percent. (See Table 26.)

Larceny-theft clearances involving juveniles (person under age 18), both nationally and in the Nation's cities were measured at 23.0 and 23.5 percent, respectively. Juveniles comprised 21.6 percent of larceny-theft clearances in suburban counties, and 16.8 percent in rural

counties. Cities with populations of 50,000 to 99,999 inhabitants showed the greatest juvenile involvement in larceny-theft, 26.5 percent.

The number of persons arrested for larceny-theft in 2000 fell 5.5 percent in comparison to 1999 data. Arrests of males and females decreased 6.6 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively. Arrests of juveniles dropped 5.6 percent during this same period, and arrests of adults declined 5.4 percent.

A comparison of 1996 and 2000 data, revealed that larceny-theft arrests have declined 21.2 percent. The number of adult arrests dropped 18.3 percent in this 5-year period, and arrests of persons under the age of 18 fell 26.9 percent. Arrests of males were 23.6 percent lower in 2000 than in 1999, and arrests of females were down 16.5 percent.

Of the arrests for all Crime Index offenses reported to law enforcement in 2000, larceny-theft accounted for 52.3 percent. Larceny-theft comprised 72.4 percent of all arrests for property crimes. Of those individuals arrested for larceny-theft, 46.5 percent were persons under 21 years of age, and 31.2 percent of the arrestees were under 18. Females were arrested more often for this offense than for any other and made up 35.9 percent of larceny-theft arrestees.

Of the total number of persons arrested for larceny-theft offenses, 66.7 percent were white, 30.4 percent were black, and the remaining 2.9 percent were of all other races.