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CANADIAN URBAN VICTIMIZATION SURVEY

Household Property Crimes

Bulletin

7

HOUSEHOLD PROPERTY CRIMES

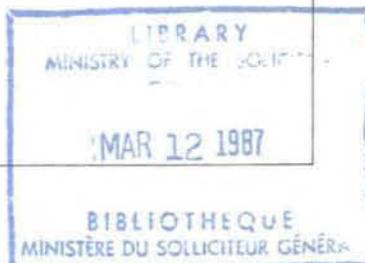
This is the seventh in a series of Bulletins based on the findings of the 1982 Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (see Appendix 1 for details). This Bulletin addresses the estimated 900,000 incidents of break and enter, motor vehicle theft, theft of household property and vandalism uncovered by the survey.

Crimes such as these can have far-reaching consequences for household members. Few will be surprised to learn about the suffering that may be caused to victims, particularly low income victims, by the financial cost of replace-

ment and repairs. But there can be other serious consequences quite apart from material loss. Recent research has revealed that the sense of intrusion that comes with the realization that one's home is not safe from crime can have a severe and lasting impact on victims. Public fear and concern about crime are nurtured by reports of violence, and the needs of the more numerous victims of property offences may not get the attention they deserve.

Victimization survey data can tell us a great deal about public perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system,

about the distribution of certain crimes in the community, and about the impact of crime on victims. These data can also assist police and concerned citizens to develop prevention strategies based on accurate knowledge about which households are at greatest risk of victimization, and to develop programs and policies which can help to minimize the impact of such crimes on victims.



Household Victimization Rates

For some types of offences it is not possible to isolate a single direct victim; it is logical in some cases to speak of offences against households rather than offences against individuals. In fact, the majority of offences uncovered by this survey were of this type - break and enter, motor vehicle theft, household property theft and vandalism (Figure 1).

Theft of household property was by far the most common type of household victimization (see Appendix 2 for definitions of offence categories). Estimated rates of household theft were approximately double those of both break and enter and vandalism (172, 94 and 88 per thousand households, respectively) (Table 1). There were relatively few incidents of motor vehicle theft (17 per 1,000 households).

A great deal of variation in rates of household offences occurred among
 Programs Branch/
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the seven cities: Winnipeg (463) and Vancouver (458) showed the highest overall rates and Toronto (277) and Halifax-Dartmouth (377) the lowest. The relatively high rates of household theft no doubt reflect the opportunistic nature of much property crime.

Certain characteristics apparently make some households more vulnerable to victimization than others. Ease of access, ease of escape and cover from detection seem to contribute to the likelihood of a particular household being victimized. For example, even though the large majority of householders (98%) usually kept their doors locked when no one was home, and when homes were occupied both during the day (81%) and at night (92%), in 36% of break and enter incidents, offenders took the opportunity to enter through unlocked doors or windows or through doors and windows so easy to open that there was no evidence of force. Poor quality of locks and occa-

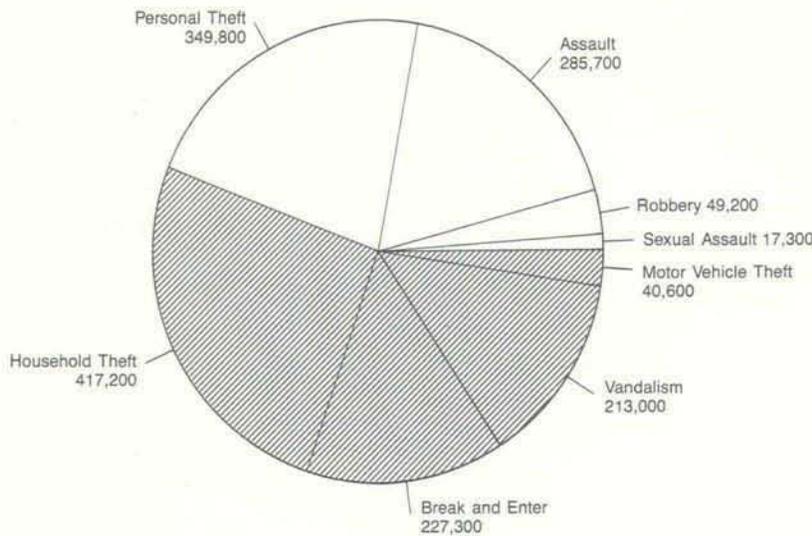
sional unlocked doors and windows may help to account for this apparent contradiction.

The most important "risk factor" seemed to be whether the house was or appeared to be occupied. Homes that usually were occupied all day experienced a substantially lower rate of break and enter, household theft and vandalism than households with someone home for part of the day or not at all (Table 2).

The opportunity to commit household property crimes is also linked to the time of day, day of the week, and the season. Most incidents occurred after dark and during the summer months. Overall, 68% occurred under the cover of darkness: 55% of break and enters, 69% of household thefts, 75% of vandalism incidents, and 80% of motor vehicle thefts. Only vandalism (for the most part a young person's crime) was

1986

FIGURE 1
TOTAL ESTIMATED INCIDENTS IN SEVEN CITIES



Total Estimated Incidents: 1,600,100

noticeably more likely to occur on week-ends (42%).

Thirty-seven percent of household offences took place during the summer months when homes are more likely to be left vacant for long periods, household belongings are generally more visible and more accessible, and open doors and windows make break and enter and theft of motor vehicles easier. Twenty-three percent of household offences occurred in the spring, 26% in the autumn, and only 14% in the winter.

These findings point to the importance of having homes occupied, or at least making them appear occupied. Neighbours watching out for one another, and making homes look occupied when they are not, are commonsense precautions residents can take to reduce the opportunity for household crime and form the basis of many community prevention programs.

As might be expected, the risk of household theft and vandalism increased with annual household income (Table 3). Middle and upper income households were at greatest risk of motor vehicle theft which, not surprisingly, was also linked to the number of vehicles owned by householders.

Criminologists have long maintained that low income households are at

Table 1

Estimated Rates of Household Property Offences for Seven Cities

Type of Incident	Rates per 1,000 Households							
	Vancouver	Edmonton	Winnipeg	Toronto	Montreal	Halifax/ Dartmouth	St. John's	Seven Cities
Break & Enter	101 (93-109) ¹	86 (79-93)	99 (70-106)	69 (63-75)	122 (114-130)	79 (72-86)	54 (48-60)	94 (91-97)
Motor Vehicle Theft	22 (19-25)	17 (14-20)	17 (14-20)	8 (6-10)	23 (20-26)	15 (12-18)	15 (12-18)	17 (16-18)
Household Theft	214 (203-225)	204 (193-215)	243 (232-254)	132 (124-140)	154 (144-164)	193 (188-198)	221 (218-224)	172 (168-176)
Vandalism	122 (113-130)	86 (79-93)	104 (97-111)	68 (62-74)	83 (76-90)	90 (83-97)	106 (97-115)	88 (85-91)
All Household Incidents ²	458 (440-476)	393 (377-409)	463 (446-480)	277 (264-290)	382 (365-399)	377 (361-393)	405 (386-424)	369 (363-375)

¹ Numbers in brackets are confidence intervals calculated at the 95% level, i.e. we have 95% confidence that the population value falls between these two limits.

² Specific offence rates may not add up to overall city rates due to rounding.

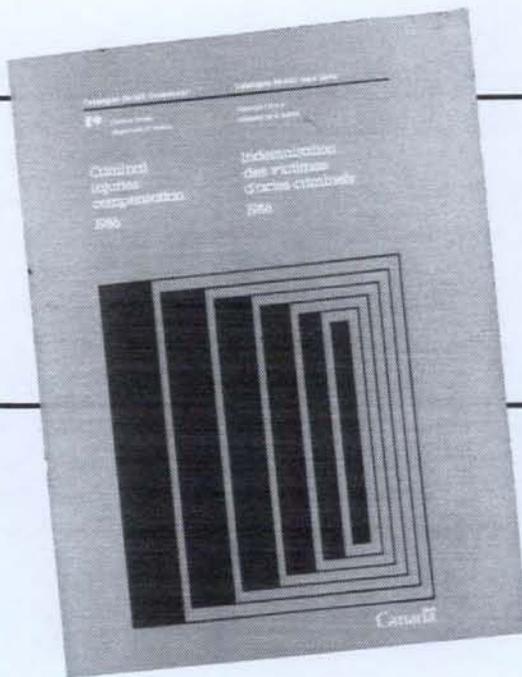


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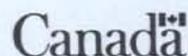
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greatest risk of break and enter because offenders, who typically live in less affluent neighbourhoods, tend to victimize low income but readily accessible households. The survey data provide only limited support for this contention. Although some cities deviate from the general pattern, when all seven cities are considered together, the households least likely to have experienced a break and enter incident had an annual income of less than \$9,000, or between \$20,000 and \$29,000 (Table 4). Overall, high income households (earning \$40,000 or more annually) had the highest rate of victimization.

To explore this anomaly further, census data were used to compare the socio-economic characteristics of neighbourhoods in the seven cities to the incidence of break and enter. This comparison clearly shows that low income neighbourhoods experienced the highest rates of break and enter (Table 5), thereby adding support for the commonly held assumption. Less clear, however, was the relationship between risk, household income and neighbourhood income. It may be the case that offenders most often victimize their neighbours, but with increased migration of high and middle income families to the downtown core of many Canadian cities, neighbourhoods are increasingly likely to be comprised of a heterogeneous mix of income groups. The location, "attractiveness" and security of individual households must be considered in coming to an understanding of the complex relationship between risk of break and enter and household income.

Break and Enter

An estimated 193,400 households in the seven cities (8% of the total) experienced a break and enter in the survey year, 14% of these (27,000) more than once, and 3% (5,500) three times or more for a total of 227,300 incidents. One-third of the incidents were described as attempted entries into victims' homes. Two-thirds of break and enter incidents involved the use of force to gain or attempt to gain entry.

The survey data indicate that type of dwelling is related to the likelihood that a particular household will be victimized (Table 6). Residents of lowrise apartment buildings (less than five stories) and duplexes were at highest risk of break and enter (94 per 1,000), and

Table 2

Estimated Victimization Rates by Daytime Occupancy

Seven Cities

Household Usually Occupied	Rates per 1,000 Households			
	Break and Enter	Motor Vehicle Theft	Household Theft	Vandalism
No	113	16	188	95
Part of the Day	96	18	175	93
All Day	79	17	160	81

Table 3

Estimated Victimization Rates by Household Income¹

Seven Cities

Household Income	Rates per 1,000 Households			
	Break and Enter	Motor Vehicle Theft	Household Theft	Vandalism
Less than \$9,000	83	8	99	41
\$9,000-14,999	104	16	150	71
\$15,000-19,999	103	19	176	90
\$20,000-24,999	99	23	225	108
\$25,000-29,999	99	23	208	123
\$30,000-39,999	103	22	229	120
\$40,000 or more	113	20	241	128

¹ These estimated rates are based on cases in which household income was provided by the respondent. In approximately 25% of the cases the respondent did not know or did not provide household income information.

those living in highrise buildings and "doubles" were at lowest risk (39 and 55 per 1,000). Residents of single family dwellings and rowhouses recorded a moderate risk of break and enter (70 per 1,000). One-quarter of break and enter incidents occurred in garages (19%) and vacation homes (4%).

Risk of break and enter, then, is in part determined by the physical structure of dwellings. Access to highrise apartments is often controlled by a security system and the risk of confrontation may well deter potential offenders. Strangers will be detected less readily in and around lowrise apartment buildings and duplexes which are generally less secure and easier to enter unnoticed. The vulnerability of single or attached houses (doubles and rowhouses) will vary significantly depending on the landscape, participation in community crime prevention programs and the like.

Two-thirds (67%) of break and enter incidents resulted in loss to householders due to theft, damage or both: 56%

of victimized households suffered dollar loss due to theft, and 48% suffered loss due to damage to property. The type of property stolen included jewellery (32%), stereos and television sets (10%), bicycles (10%) and other personal and household goods (48%) such as appliances, liquor, clothing, purses and wallets. The large majority (87%) of incidents with damaged property involved damage to the dwelling, presumably while gaining or attempting to gain entry.

The initial loss due to theft and damage in break and enter incidents was substantial: \$175,100,000 in seven cities in a single year. Sixty-five percent of households which suffered theft of property estimated the value of the loss at \$200 or more, 46% at \$500 or more, and 32% at more than \$1,000. The value of damage exceeded \$100 in 31% of incidents involving damage, and \$200 in 17%.

Overall, about two-thirds of break and enter incidents were reported to the police. The two variables most important in understanding victims'

Table 4

Estimated Rates of Break and Enter by Household Income in Seven Cities

Household Income	Rates per 1,000 Households							Seven Cities
	Vancouver	Edmonton	Winnipeg	Toronto	Montreal	Halifax/ Dartmouth	St. John's	
Less than \$9,000	80	64	95	54	102	76	49	83
\$9,000-14,999	110	107	95	81	124	80	53	104
\$15,000-19,999	106	106	98	78	129	79	60	103
\$20,000-24,999	113	88	108	66	135	78	60	99
\$25,000-29,999	99	85	104	75	143	62	56	99
\$30,000-39,999	127	90	113	72	129	97	63	103
\$40,000 or more	128	86	121	95	144	114	77	113

Table 5

Estimated Rates of Break and Enter by Neighbourhood Income in Seven Cities

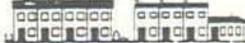
Median Neighbourhood Income	Rates per 1,000 Households						
	Vancouver	Edmonton	Winnipeg	Toronto	Montreal	Halifax/ Dartmouth	St. John's
Low	89	87	201	56	139	72	41
Medium-Low	76	80	95	52	85	56	35
Medium-High	70	58	72	39	81	50	26
High	64	52	55	49	66	38	20

In each city, 1981 census data were used to group census tracts into four income categories. "Neighbourhood" break and enter rates are based on the number of households in each category.

reporting behaviour appear to be "financial loss" and "evidence of forced entry". For example, in incidents in which theft occurred and entry had been forced, the reporting rate was 90% (Figure 2). These findings support the view that the costs of break and enter are not only financial, and that the invasion of one's home by a stranger is itself felt deeply by many victims, particularly if that invasion was achieved through locked doors or windows. Reporting rates were highest when losses were substantial (Table 7), and when households were insured. The reasons most frequently given for failure to report break and enter incidents to the police were that the incident was too minor (65%), that the police couldn't do anything about it (58%), and that nothing was taken (42%)¹ (Table 8).

¹ Victims could give more than one reason for failure to report any one incident.

Table 6
BREAK AND ENTER BY TYPE OF DWELLING Seven Cities

Type of Dwelling	Rate per 1,000 Households	Percent of Households	Percent of Incidents
Lowrise Apartment 	94	24	31
Duplex 	94	10	12
Single House 	70	39	37
Rowhouse 	70	4	4
Double 	55	6	4
Highrise Apartment 	39	16	9
Other		1	2
Total	94	100	100

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Property stolen in break and enter incidents was very seldom recovered within the survey year. In only 10% of incidents involving theft had stolen property been returned to victims by the time of the interview. The likelihood that residents had insurance to cover theft was directly related to the annual income of the household: lower income households were least likely to be insured, and therefore the financial costs of victimization fell more heavily on them. Six in ten households that experienced theft of property had insurance to cover the loss: 71% of those with an income of \$30,000 or more, but only 33% of households with an income of less than \$9,000. When insured, 62% of all households were able to recover some portion of their losses. The high proportion (38%) of insured victims who did not receive compensation through insurance may reflect incidents involving relatively small losses, often less than the amount deductible from insurance claims.

Break and enter victims were much less likely to receive compensation for damage to property than for loss through theft. At the time of the interview, 14% of households with property damage had received insurance compensation for the damage. The average net loss (i.e., after recovery) due to theft and damage to property for incidents involving loss was \$655, after an average gross loss of \$1,142 and an average recovery of \$487.

These findings are a crude indication of dollar loss; they do not describe the full impact, financial or psychological, of break and enter incidents. Clearly, losses will be felt more seriously by some victims than by others, as will the sense of invasion and fear this crime often produces. Additional suffering and inconvenience is often caused when stolen items recovered by the police are held as evidence for some time after the incident. Some victim assistance programs are specifically designed to facilitate the return of property held by police, and thereby to alleviate some of the distress felt by victims.

Motor Vehicle Theft

Approximately 37,600 households in the seven cities (2% of the total) experienced theft of a motor vehicle (including attempts) during 1981, 7% more than once, for a total of 40,600 incidents of motor vehicle theft. Sixty percent of these incidents were

FIGURE 2
PERCENTAGE OF BREAK AND ENTER INCIDENTS REPORTED TO THE POLICE

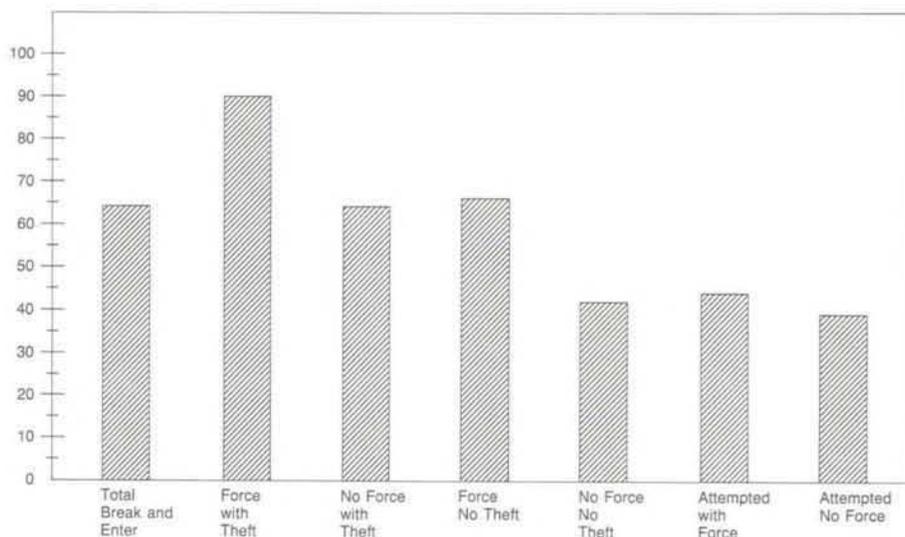


Table 7

Proportion of Incidents Reported to the Police by Value of Property Stolen or Damaged

Seven Cities

	Percent Reported	
	Stolen	Damaged
<i>Break and Enter</i>		
Under \$100	51	64
\$100-500	75	87
Over \$500	96	91
<i>Motor Vehicle Theft</i>		
Under \$1000	87	65
Over \$1000	96	98
<i>Theft of Household Property</i>		
Under \$100	21	54
\$100-500	63	77
Over \$500	90	94
<i>Vandalism</i>		
Under \$100		19
\$100-500		48
Over \$500		78

described as attempted theft; 40% involved actual theft of a motor vehicle.

About two-thirds (68%) of the total incidents occurred in owners' yards or

driveways or in other parking places near their homes, indicating that owners may be less vigilant in locking doors and closing windows when their vehicles are parked close to home.

The losses involved in theft of a motor vehicle and the proportion of vehicles insured against theft contribute to higher overall rates of reporting (70%) than for other household offences (Figure 3). Successful motor vehicle thefts were reported to the police at more than double the rate of attempted thefts (89% vs 42%).

Incidents of successful motor vehicle theft resulted in initial costs, on average, of about \$3,500. An average of \$3,000 was recovered overall leaving victims with a net loss of about \$500². Two-thirds had their vehicles returned by the police or by other means. Unreported motor vehicle thefts, the majority of which were attempted thefts, were generally not reported to the police because victims thought that the incident was too minor (56%), that the police couldn't do anything about it (57%), or because nothing was taken (51%),

Seven in every ten stolen vehicles were covered by insurance and in 54% of these cases the loss was recovered through insurance by the time of the interview. One would expect this rate of recovery to be higher if claims processed after the survey year were included. The costs of victimization by theft of motor vehicles were therefore distributed among insurance companies and the general public. Victims without insurance, most of whom were from low income households, clearly suffered the greatest direct costs.

Theft of Household Property

In this survey, household theft is defined as theft or attempted theft of household property or motor vehicle parts.³ One-half (47%) of the estimated 417,200 household theft incidents involved theft of motor vehicle parts such as hubcaps and radios. The remainder involved bicycles (20%), furniture, tools and lawn equipment (14%), stereo equipment (5%), and other household property (25%).⁴

² These figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred. See Bulletin 5 for a detailed analysis of the costs of victimization.

³ Incidents were defined as household theft only if no other more serious offence such as break and enter or motor vehicle theft occurred at the same time.

⁴ Victims could list more than one category of stolen property.

Two-thirds of all incidents, including thefts from vehicles, took place in or around victims' homes. This reinforces the importance of neighbourhood watch programs and personal vigilance about locks and windows even around one's own neighbourhood.

The value of stolen property was under \$100 in 47% of all incidents of household theft, but motor vehicle parts were generally of higher dollar value than other household property. The value of the property exceeded \$200 in 38% of the incidents involving motor vehicle parts, and exceeded

\$500 in 16%. The value of other stolen household property was estimated to be over \$200 in 26% of the total and over \$500 in 9%.

Fewer than one-half of all incidents of household theft were brought to the attention of the police (44%). However, theft of motor vehicle parts was reported at a higher rate (50%) than theft of other household property (40%), due probably to the value of the loss, the proportion of victims who had insurance, and the requirement by insurance companies that a report be made to the police. Incidents not

Table 8

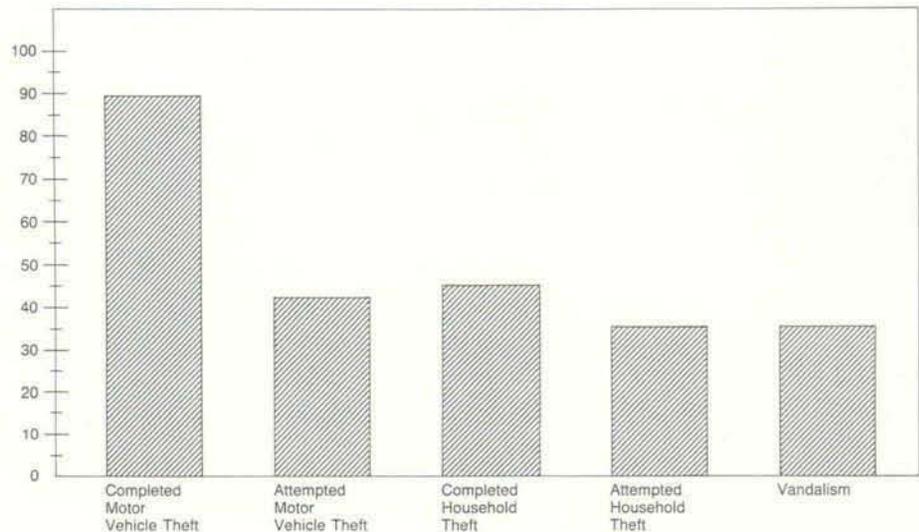
Reasons for not Reporting Household Offences to the Police

Seven Cities

	Percent of Non-Reporting Victims			
	Too Minor	Police Could not do Anything	Nothing Taken	Reporting Too Inconvenient
Break and Enter	65	58	42	20
Motor Vehicle Theft	56	57	51	19
Household Theft	71	64	8	26
Vandalism	73	69	28	25

Percentages do not add to 100% since respondents could indicate more than one reason for failure to report any one incident.

FIGURE 3
PERCENTAGE OF MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT, HOUSEHOLD THEFT AND VANDALISM INCIDENTS REPORTED TO THE POLICE



reported to the police were considered by victims to be too minor (71%) or something about which the police could do nothing (64%).

One-half of the households which suffered loss had insurance against theft, but again, those with annual incomes of over \$30,000 were more likely to be insured (59%) than were those with incomes of under \$9,000 (31%). Theft of motor vehicle parts was more likely to be covered by insurance (62%) than theft of other household property (38%). Very few households (7%) had had all or part of the property returned by the police or by other means at the time of the interview.

Vandalism

An estimated 183,100 households in the seven cities (almost 8% of all households) suffered damage to private property (vandalism) during the survey year, 13% (24,000) more than once, and 3% (5,000) three times or more for a total of 213,000 vandalism incidents.⁵

Motor vehicles were the object of the offence in the large majority (79%) of cases; dwellings were damaged in 10% and other property in 11% of the incidents. Vandalism of motor vehicles occurred most often to vehicles parked in owners' yards or driveways or on the street close to their homes (62%).

In more than one-quarter of the incidents, victims were unable to estimate the financial cost of the damage to their

property. However, the known value of damage was considerable, especially when motor vehicles were involved. Sixty percent of the incidents of motor vehicle vandalism resulted in damage of more than \$100, and 14% resulted in damage of more than \$500. Vandalism of other property resulted in damage of more than \$100 in 30% of the incidents, and more than \$500 in 7%. On average, the "after insurance" cost to victims of vandalism was \$132.

Vandalism was the least likely of the household crime categories to be reported to the police (35%). Higher proportions of vandalism victims than victims of other household offences stated that they did not report the incident to the police because it was too minor (73%) and because the police couldn't do anything about it (69%). Only a small percentage of vandalism victims (26%) had received insurance payments or other financial assistance to help defray the costs of repair or replacement. Victims were more likely to have been compensated through insurance in incidents involving damage to motor vehicles (26%) than in incidents involving damage to a dwelling or other property (10%).

Fear and the Impact of Crime

The fear and emotional trauma caused by the invasion of one's home and privacy can be more painful and enduring than the financial cost of theft or damage. As Table 9 indicates, victims of break and enter were as likely as assault victims and more likely than robbery victims to report feeling unsafe walking alone in their own neighbourhoods after dark. Although unoccupied

residences were the most frequent targets for break and enter (89%), victims who had been present at the time of the intrusion were more likely to express fear than were others (53% vs 45%). In all offence categories, women were far more likely than men to feel unsafe. These data confirm what other research is beginning to show, that break and enter can be a very threatening experience, particularly for female victims.

The impact of break and enter on victims can also be measured by questions about their perceptions of crime in their communities. In general, victims of crime were more likely than non-victims to perceive the amount of neighbourhood crime to be high and rising. Break and enter victims were more likely than others to describe their neighbourhoods as high crime areas (25% vs 18%), and to believe that neighbourhood crime was increasing (51% vs 42%). Break and enter victims were also more likely to perceive a serious crime problem in their neighbourhoods (32% vs 25%), with the most serious crime problems considered to be property loss (61%) and personal safety (22%).

Thirty percent of break and enter victims also indicated that emotional or psychological counselling should be available for victims of this type of crime. This proportion is lower than for victims of violent crimes (49%), but considerably higher than for victims of other property offences (14%). Preliminary analyses of police-based victim service units in Canada show that victims of break and enter account for between one-third and one-half of all requests for assistance.

⁵ An even greater number of incidents (293,700) involved damage to property but these were eventually classified as more serious offences, such as break and enter, robbery or motor vehicle theft.

Table 9
Percentage Who Felt Unsafe¹ Walking Alone In their Neighbourhood After Dark by Type of Victimization and Sex

Seven Cities

Sex	Victimization Experience								
	Non-Victims	Sexual Assault	Robbery	Assault	Break and Enter	Motor Vehicle Theft	Personal Theft	Household Theft	Vandalism
Females	54	72	70	66	65	65	58	60	59
Males	17	**	29	21	23	20	17	17	17
Total	38	65	45	37	45	40	41	38	39

¹ Combines "somewhat unsafe" and "very unsafe" categories.

** The actual count was too low to make statistically reliable population estimates.

Break and enter victims who were unemployed or from low income households were most likely to express a need for emotional counselling. Those who were living alone⁶ at the time of the interview were also more likely to express support for counselling services than were those living with other adults.

A further indication of the potentially serious impact of break and enter is revealed by an additional 15,600 incidents of illegal entry which escalated into violence and were classified as incidents of assault, robbery or sexual assault. Among these incidents, it is not possible to differentiate between those in which offenders had violent intent and those which escalated into violence as a result of a confrontation. Preliminary analyses does indicate, however, that break and enter incidents resulting in violence were more likely than non-violent break and enter incidents to involve victims and offenders known or related to one another.

Satisfaction with Case Handling by Police

Even though most victims of household offences rated the police highly, particularly on being courteous and responding promptly to their call, far fewer gave the police a positive rating on "keeping them informed" (Table 10), suggesting that one of the major unmet needs of victims is for information on the progress of the case. In fact, about 20% of victims who reported the incident to the police did not know whether anyone had been charged in the incident.

Table 10

Proportion of Victims Who Perceived Police Response to be "Good"¹

Seven Cities

Type of Offence	Aspects of Police Behaviour			
	Promptness	Courtesy	Keeping Victim Informed	Overall Case Handling
Break and Enter	75	74	46	55
Motor Vehicle Theft	74	64	53	56
Household Theft	69	70	40	48
Vandalism	71	72	48	55

¹ Possible answers were "good", "average", and "poor".

Conclusions

The findings of the Canadian Urban Victimization Survey confirm what official crime statistics show - that the majority of crimes experienced by Canadians are against property. The survey also uncovered a large number of offences never reported to the police and thus not reflected in crime statistics. While a large proportion of these unreported offences are perceived by victims to be relatively trivial, many were not reported because victims understood that there are limits to how much the police can do to deal with household thefts and minor acts of vandalism in particular.

The consequences of household victimization, however, can be serious. Beyond the financial costs, victims of household property offences may exhibit increased fear of crime and perceptions that crime is high and rising. This is particularly the case with victims of break and enter. Such offences can also have consequences for the quality of life in our communities. Effective prevention of household property crime demands an approach in which individuals minimize risk and communities work together to reduce the opportunity for household crime in individual neighbourhoods and communities.

⁶ The survey asked only about the number of co-habitants aged 16 and older.

Suggested Readings:

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The Canadian Urban Victimization Survey Bulletin Series:

- Bulletin 1 Victims of Crime
- Bulletin 2 Reported and Unreported Crimes
- Bulletin 3 Crime Prevention: Awareness and Practice
- Bulletin 4 Female Victims of Crime
- Bulletin 5 Cost of Crime to Victims
- Bulletin 6 Criminal Victimization of Elderly Canadians
- Bulletin 7 Household Property Crimes

Forthcoming Bulletins incorporating the Findings of the Edmonton Victimization Survey (1985) will include:

- Patterns in Violent Crime
- Patterns in Property Crime

Appendix I

About the Canadian Urban Victimization Survey

Early in 1982 the Ministry of the Solicitor General, with the assistance of Statistics Canada, conducted a victimization survey in seven major urban centres: Greater Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax-Dartmouth and St. John's. A random sample of 61,000 residents 16 years of age or older was asked about their perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system, their experience of certain crimes, and the impact which criminal victimization may have had upon them.

Because of the relatively low incidence in any one year of some types of crimes included in the survey, very large samples are required to ensure that enough cases are "caught" to be statistically representative of all actual cases in the community under study. Sample sizes ranged from 6,910 in one city to 9,563 in another, with more than 61,000 telephone interviews completed by Statistics Canada interviewers overall. Telephone interviews were used because the cost of interviewing in person for such a large survey was prohibitive. Careful pretests in Edmonton, Hamilton and Greater Vancouver had proven that reliable data could be obtained through telephone interviews.

To maximize reliability of recall, respondents were asked to report on only those incidents which had occurred between January 1 and December 31, 1981. On the basis of these interviews, statistical estimates were made for the general population 16 and over in the seven cities. These statistically derived estimates for the population are used throughout this bulletin.

Victimization surveys can provide information about most, but not all types of crimes that are of major concern to the general public. Crimes such as murder or kidnapping cannot be uncovered using survey techniques, and were therefore excluded. "Victimless" crimes and crimes committed against commercial establishments were also excluded from this survey.

The eight categories of crimes included in this survey are: sexual assault, robbery, assault, break and enter, motor vehicle theft, theft of household property, theft of personal property and vandalism.

Appendix II

Definitions and Limitations

The eight categories of crime included in this survey are: sexual assault, robbery, assault, break and enter, motor vehicle theft, theft of household property, theft of personal property and vandalism. These offences are ranked in descending order of seriousness.

1. Sexual assault includes rape, attempted rape, molesting or attempted molestation, and is considered the most serious crime.
2. Robbery occurs if something is taken and the offender has a weapon or there is a threat or an attack. The presence of a weapon is assumed to imply a threat. Attempted robberies are also included in this offence category.
3. Assault involves the presence of a weapon or an attack or threat. Assault incidents may range from face-to-face verbal threats to an attack with extensive injuries.
4. Break and enter occurs if a dwelling is entered by someone who has no right to be there. "No right to be there" differentiates, for example, between a workman who is in a dwelling with the permission of the owner and steals something, and someone illegally entering the dwelling to take property. The latter would be classified as a break and enter as are attempts to enter a dwelling if there is some evidence of force or knowledge of how the person tried to get in.

5. Motor vehicle theft involves the theft or attempted theft of a car, truck, van, motorcycle or other motor vehicle.
6. Theft or attempted theft of household property.
7. Theft or attempted theft of money or other personal property (not household property).
8. Vandalism occurs if property is damaged but not taken.

Incidents which involved the commission of several different criminal acts appear in the tables only once, according to the most serious component of the event. Thus for example, if sexual assault, theft of money and vandalism all occurred at the same time, the incident would be classified in these tables as sexual assault. An incident would be classified as vandalism (least serious on the hierarchy) only if no other crime which is higher on the seriousness scale occurred at the same time.

The **Canadian Urban Victimization Survey Bulletin** is produced by the Research and Statistics Group and the Communications Group, Programs Branch, Ministry Secretariat, under the authority of the Hon. James Kelleher, P.C., M.P., Solicitor General of Canada. It is available free from the Communications Group, Programs Branch, Solicitor General Canada, 340 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P8.

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Cat. No. JS42-18/7-1986

ISBN 0-662-54705-5