

# DATA CHARACTERISTICS AND KNOWN LIMITATIONS

## CRIMES

A crime is an act specifically prohibited by law, or failure to perform an act specifically required by law, for which punishment is prescribed (California Penal Code section 15).

If multiple crimes occur during the same event, only the most serious (based on hierarchy) is counted. Arson is the exception to this rule because arson frequently occurs in conjunction with other crimes. Therefore, it is felt that valuable information could be lost using the hierarchy rule and arson is counted along with the other most serious offense.

The number of reported homicide, forcible rape, and aggravated assault crimes represents known victims, while for robbery, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson, the number represents known incidents of property.

Beginning in 2003, larceny-theft of property valued over \$400 was included in the property crime category to give a more representative depiction of crime in California.

The Lanterman Developmental Center did not report data for February through December 2007 because of staffing shortages.

In 2004, the Legislature amended section 11093 of the Government Code to require any state agency or department that develops and maintains data and statistics on the municipal level to report a separate breakdown for the San Fernando Valley portion of the City of Los Angeles.

Data for the San Francisco County Sheriff's Department are reported by the San Francisco Police Department.

The UC Lawrence Livermore Police Department reported data for January through June 2007. On June 30, 2007, it became a contract agency with the Alameda County Sheriff's Department. The UC Lawrence Livermore Police Department's data from June 30 through December 31, 2007, is included in the sheriff's department's reports.

Motor vehicle thefts are reported by the California Highway Patrol for the Calaveras, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Santa Cruz, Trinity, and Tulare county sheriff's departments. The only motor vehicle thefts reported by the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department are those in which motor vehicles were stolen during the commission of a burglary.

## ARRESTS

### Monthly Arrest and Citation Register (MACR)

An arrest occurs when a person is taken into custody because an officer has reason to believe the person violated the law. Not all arrests result in persons being jailed. Arrestees may be released by the arresting agency, post bail, or be released on their own recognizance to appear in court at a later date. Some are issued citations, much like traffic tickets, which direct them to appear in court at a later date.

Arrests are divided into two major groups: felony arrests and misdemeanor arrests. A felony arrest can result in a sentence to state prison if the offender is convicted as an adult. A misdemeanor arrest can result in a sentence of up to one year in county jail, a fine, probation, restitution, or any combination of these sentences.

Juveniles may also be arrested for truancy, incorrigibility, running away, and violating curfew. These are referred to as "status offenses" because agency intervention is based solely on the juvenile's status as a minor. Status offenses are acts that would not be "crimes" if committed by adults.

If a person is arrested for multiple offenses, the MACR selects only the most serious offense based on the severity of possible punishment.

Felony arrest counts may include some misdemeanor warrants for felony offenses.

The subjectivity of the classification and labeling process must be considered in the analysis of race/ethnic group data.

In 2004, the Legislature amended section 11093 of the Government Code to require any state agency or department that develops and maintains data and statistics on the municipal level to report a separate breakdown for the San Fernando Valley portion of the City of Los Angeles.

The San Jacinto Police Department reported incomplete data for May and June 2007 because of staffing shortages.

The UC Lawrence Livermore Police Department reported data for January through June 2007. On June 30, 2007, it became a contract agency with the Alameda County Sheriff's Department. The UC Lawrence Livermore Police Department's data from June 30 through December 31, 2007, is included in the sheriff's department's reports.

The Victorville Police Department did not report juvenile data for December 2007.

## **DATA CHARACTERISTICS AND KNOWN LIMITATIONS (continued)**

### **ADULT FELONY ARREST DISPOSITIONS**

#### **Offender-Based Transaction Statistics (OBTS)**

The OBTS system is designed to track the processing of adult felony arrestees through California's criminal justice system. The OBTS data are extracted from the Automated Criminal History System (ACHS).

The OBTS system tracks the processing of adults arrested for felony offenses through final disposition. "Final disposition" refers to the last legal action taken after an adult has been arrested for a felony offense. Final disposition can occur at the law enforcement, prosecutorial, or court levels.

The OBTS data are displayed by the year of final disposition regardless of the year in which an arrest occurred.

Approximately 65 to 75 percent of adult felony arrest dispositions are reported annually. This data represents statewide felony arrest dispositions but may or may not represent countywide felony arrest dispositions.

Only the final disposition for an arrest event is selected for statistical purposes. "Intermediate" dispositions (i.e., diversion programs, suspended proceedings, reopenings, retrials, or subsequent actions) are not included in the OBTS data.

If a person is arrested for multiple offenses, the OBTS system selects only the most serious offense based on the severity of possible punishment. If there are multiple court dispositions, the OBTS system selects the most serious court disposition and the associated offense.

The OBTS file includes information about persons under 18 years of age at the time of arrest. These minors were processed as adults and received final disposition in adult court under the Welfare and Institutions Code sections 602, 707(a), 707(b), 707(c), and 707.1(a).

Dispositions of adult felony arrests in state correctional institutions are included in statewide totals but are excluded from county-level totals. State institutional commitment data may be inconsistent with data reported by other state agencies because of differences in collection methods.

Caution should be used when comparing conviction and non-conviction dispositions. Budget constraints necessitated the processing of conviction dispositions on a priority basis. Therefore, fluctuations from year to year may not necessarily be the result of actual occurrences in the criminal justice system, but may reflect the degree to which reports of dispositions were reported and processed.

### **ADULT PROBATION**

Adult probation data are limited to original grants of probation and do not include subsequent grants of probation to those already under supervised probation in the same county. Probationers are counted for each jurisdiction in which they are on probation. However, probationers with cases in multiple jurisdictions are counted more than one time in statewide totals.

Because of reporting problems, the Los Angeles County Probation Department submitted data corrections for 1998. These corrections caused Los Angeles County's caseload counts to increase in 1998. Therefore, data for this county may not be consistent with previously published data.

For 2002, the Marin County Probation Department implemented a new computer system. Because of complications associated with the new system, the department was unable to extract data for November and December.

For 2000, the Mariposa County Probation Department reported a negative caseload count for misdemeanor offenses. This was due to more probationers being removed from probation at the beginning of the year than were added throughout the year.

Beginning in March 2002, the Placer County Probation Department's caseload increased because of the merging of the Tahoe City and Auburn offices. Previously, the Tahoe City office did not submit reports.

As a result of a computer change and audit in August 2002, the Sacramento County Probation Department combined its felony and misdemeanor offense counts.

San Bernardino County Probation Department data are incomplete for 2001 because of a loss of personnel.

The San Francisco County Probation Department reported incomplete data for 2000. Also, the department was unable to report for 2001 through 2005 because of computer program issues and budget cuts.

In 2002, the San Joaquin County Probation Department reported a negative caseload count for felony offenses. This was due to more probationers being removed from probation at the beginning of the year than were added throughout the year.

The Sierra County Probation Department did not report data for 1998.

For 1998, the Solano County Probation Department reported estimates for the number of placements. Also, the department did not report data for 1999.

## DATA CHARACTERISTICS AND KNOWN LIMITATIONS (continued)

The Ventura County Probation Department made adjustments to its 2003 through 2005 data. Therefore, data for Ventura County and statewide will not match previously published data.

As a result of a caseload audit, the Yolo County Probation Department made adjustments to its January 2007 beginning caseload counts.

The Yolo County Probation Department experienced programming problems and was unable to report data for 2000, and it only partially reported data for 2001 (April through December).

Contra Costa, Merced, Sacramento, Siskiyou, Tulare, and Yolo county probation departments did not report separate misdemeanor offense counts.

### JAIL PROFILE SURVEY

**Type I facility:** a local detention facility for detaining persons for not more than 96 hours after booking, excluding holidays. Type I facilities may also detain persons on a court order or for their own safekeeping, or sentence persons to a city jail as inmate workers. This facility may also house inmate workers sentenced to the county jail, provided such placement in the facility is made voluntarily by the inmate. An inmate worker is a person assigned to do designated tasks outside his or her cell or dormitory, pursuant to the written policy of the facility, for a minimum of four hours each day on a five-day scheduled workweek.

**Type II facility:** a local detention facility for the detention of persons pending an arraignment, participating in a trial, or awaiting a sentence of commitment.

**Type III facility:** a local detention facility used only for persons convicted and sentenced.

**Type IV facility:** a local detention facility, or portion of one, designated for the housing of inmates eligible under Penal Code section 1208 for work/education furlough and/or other programs involving inmate access into the community.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

#### Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance

Domestic violence is defined as "...abuse committed against an adult or a fully emancipated minor who is a spouse, former spouse, cohabitant, former cohabitant, or person with whom the suspect has had a child or is having or has had a dating or engagement relationship." [13700(b) PC]

Abuse is defined as "...intentionally or recklessly causing or attempting to cause bodily injury, or placing another person in reasonable apprehension of imminent serious bodily injury to himself or herself, or another." [13700(a) PC]

The definition of "domestic violence" is subject to varying interpretations by law enforcement agencies. As a result, different types of domestic violence relationships may be included in the database.

This profile includes data for instances in which the responding law enforcement agency drafted a report. Therefore, data include both cases where the responding law enforcement agency made an arrest and cases where circumstances did not warrant an arrest.

Domestic violence-related calls for assistance that involved the use, or threat to use, a firearm, knife or cutting instrument, or other dangerous weapon are reported according to the type of weapon used regardless of the outcome or injury.

In 2002, law enforcement agencies were given clarification about reporting personal weapons. This clarification corresponds to a notable decrease in the number of personal weapons reported. The use of a personal weapon, such as hands, fists, or feet, was reported as a weapon only if the assault was considered an aggravated assault under Uniform Crime Reporting guidelines. An aggravated assault is an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury, such as broken bones, internal injuries, or cuts requiring stitches.

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