

## Appendix 8

### National Crime Victimization Survey

Survey methodology and definitions of terms

Note: This information was excerpted from U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 2002 Statistical Tables*, NCJ 200561 [Online]. Available: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cvus02.pdf> [Mar. 3, 2004]; *2003 Statistical Tables*, NCJ 207811 [Online]. Available: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cvus03.pdf> [Oct. 17, 2005]; *2004 Statistical Tables*, NCJ 213257 [Online]. Available: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cvus04.pdf> [Sept. 5, 2006]; *2005 Statistical Tables*, NCJ 215244 [Online]. Available: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cvus05.pdf> [May 30, 2007]; *Criminal Victimization, 2006*, Bulletin NCJ 219413, pp. 1, 2, 5; *2007*, Bulletin NCJ 224390, pp. 2, 7-11; *2008*, Bulletin NCJ 227777, pp. 2, 7, 8 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice); and information provided by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Non-substantive editorial adaptations have been made.

### Survey methodology

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) collects data from residents living throughout the United States, including persons living in group quarters, such as dormitories, rooming houses, and religious group dwellings. Crew members of merchant vessels, Armed Forces personnel living in military barracks, and institutionalized persons, such as correctional facility inmates, were not included in the survey. Similarly, U.S. citizens residing abroad and foreign visitors to this country were excluded. With these exceptions, individuals age 12 and older living in units selected for the sample were eligible to be interviewed.

#### Data collection

Each housing unit selected for the NCVS remains in the sample for 3 years, with each of seven interviews taking place at 6-month intervals. An NCVS interviewer's first contact with a housing unit selected for the survey is in person. The interviewer may then conduct subsequent interviews by telephone.

To elicit more accurate reporting of incidents, the NCVS uses the self-respondent

method, which calls for the direct interviewing of each person 12 years and older in the household. An exception is made to use proxy interviewing instead of direct interviewing for the following three cases: 12- and 13-year-old persons when a knowledgeable household member insists they not be interviewed directly, incapacitated persons, and individuals absent from the household during the entire field-interviewing period. In the case of temporarily absent household members and persons who are physically or mentally incapable of granting interviews, interviewers may accept other household members as proxy respondents, and in certain situations non-household members may provide information for incapacitated persons.

Some interviews were conducted using Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), a data collection method that involves interviewing from centralized facilities and using a computerized instrument. In the CATI-eligible part of the sample, all interviews are done by telephone whenever possible, except for the first interview, which is primarily conducted in person. The telephone interviews are conducted by CATI facilities in Hagerstown, MD and Tucson, AZ.

#### Sample design and size

Survey estimates are derived from a stratified, multi-stage cluster sample. The primary sampling units (PSUs) comprising the first stage of the sample were counties, groups of counties, or large metropolitan areas. Large PSUs were included in the sample automatically and are considered to be self-representing (SR) since all of them were selected. The remaining PSUs, called non-self-representing (NSR) because only a subset of them was selected, were combined into strata by grouping PSUs with similar geographic and demographic characteristics, as determined by the 1990 census.

The initial 1990 design consisted of 93 SR PSUs and 152 NSR strata, with one PSU per stratum selected with probability proportionate to population size. A sample reduction was done in October 1996, reducing the number of NSR PSUs by 42 to 110. Therefore, the current NCVS sample consists of 93 SR and 110 NSR PSUs. The NCVS sample design continued use of both 1980- and 1990-based samples through 1997. Beginning in 1998 only the 1990-based sample remains.

In the second stage of sampling, each selected stratification PSU is divided into four nonoverlapping frames (unit, area, permit, and group quarters) from which the NCVS independently selects its sample. From each selected stratification PSU, clusters of approximately four housing units or housing

unit equivalents are selected from each frame. For the unit and group quarter frames, addresses come from the 1990 census files. For the permit frame, addresses come from building permit data obtained from building permit offices. This ensures that units built after the 1990 census are included in the sample. For the area frame, sample blocks come from the 1990 census files. Then, addresses are listed and sampled in the field. A new sample, based on addresses drawn from the 2000 census, was phased in beginning in 2005.

In order to conduct field interviews, the sample is divided into six groups, or rotations, and each group of households is interviewed once every 6 months over a period of 3 years. The initial interview is used to bound the interviews (bounding establishes a timeframe to avoid duplication of crimes on subsequent interviews), but is not used to compute the annual estimates. Each rotation group is further divided into six panels. A different panel of households, corresponding to one-sixth of each rotation group, is interviewed each month during the 6-month period. Because the survey is continuous, newly constructed housing units are selected as described, and assigned to rotation groups and panels for subsequent incorporation into the sample. A new rotation group enters the sample every 6 months, replacing a group phased out after being in the sample for 3 years.

For the 2002 survey, approximately 42,000 households and 76,050 persons age 12 and older were interviewed. Response rates were 92% of eligible households and 87% of eligible individuals. For the 2003 survey, approximately 83,660 households and 149,040 persons age 12 and older were interviewed. Response rates were 92% of eligible households and 86% of eligible individuals. For the 2004 survey, approximately 84,360 households and 149,000 persons age 12 and older were interviewed. Response rates were 91% of eligible households and 86% of eligible individuals. For the 2005 survey, approximately 77,200 households and 134,000 persons age 12 and older were interviewed. Response rates were 91% of eligible households and 84% of eligible individuals. For the 2006 survey, approximately 76,000 households and 135,300 persons age 12 and older were interviewed. Response rates were 91% of eligible households and 86% of eligible individuals. For the 2007 survey, approximately 41,500 households and 73,600 persons age 12 and older were interviewed (each person was interviewed twice during the year). Response rates were 90% of eligible households and 86% of eligible individuals. For the 2008 survey, 42,093 households and 77,852 persons age 12 and older were interviewed (each person was interviewed twice during the year). Response

rates were 90.4% of eligible households and 86.2% of eligible individuals.

#### Race and ethnicity categories

In 1997 the Office of Management and Budget introduced new guidelines for the collection and reporting of race and ethnicity data in government surveys. These methodological changes were implemented for all demographic surveys as of Jan. 1, 2003. Individuals are now allowed to choose more than one racial category. In prior years they were asked to select a single primary race.

Beginning with the 2003 NCVS data, racial categories consist of the following: white only, black only, other race only (American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander if only one of these races is given), and two or more races (all persons of any race indicating two or more races). Also, individuals are now asked whether they are of Hispanic ethnicity before being asked about their race, and are asked directly if they are Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino.

#### Collection year estimates

Beginning with data for 1996 (and 1995 data printed in selected reports), all NCVS estimates are now based on interviews conducted during the calendar year being estimated. This procedure is referred to as "collection year" reporting. Previously, estimates were based on victimizations occurring during a given calendar year. This procedure is referred to as "data year" reporting. This change in the reporting procedure was undertaken in an effort to expedite publication of NCVS data. NCVS respondents are interviewed every 6 months and asked to recall any crime incidents that have occurred in the 6 months since the previous interview. For this reason, 6 months of data collection beyond the end of the calendar year were needed to gather information on all incidents occurring during a calendar year. Under the collection year procedure estimates for any given year will include some incidents that actually took place during the previous calendar year, and will exclude some incidents that would have been reported in interviews conducted in the following calendar year.

Data year estimates differ slightly from calendar year estimates. The differences will be greater during periods of changing crime rates and less during periods of stable rates.

#### Series victimizations

A series victimization is defined as six or more similar but separate crimes that the victim is unable to recall individually or describe in detail to an interviewer. These series crimes have been excluded from the tables because victims were unable to provide details for each separate event.

#### Estimation procedure

Annual collection year estimates of the levels and rates of victimization are derived by accumulating four quarterly estimates. The estimation procedure involves the application of a base weight to the data for each individual interviewed. Readers interested in detailed information on the estimation procedure should consult the original source.

#### Accuracy of estimates

The accuracy of an estimate is a measure of its total error, that is, the sum of all the errors affecting the estimate: sampling error as well as nonsampling error.

The sample used for the NCVS is one of a large number of possible samples of equal size that could have been obtained by using the same sample design and selection procedures. Estimates derived from different samples would differ from one another due to sampling variability, or sampling error.

The standard error of a survey estimate is a measure of the variation among the estimates from all possible samples. Therefore, it is a measure of the precision (reliability) with which a particular estimate approximates the average result of all possible samples. The estimate and its associated standard error may be used to construct a confidence interval. A confidence interval is a range of numbers that has a specified probability that the average of all possible samples, which is the true unknown value of interest in an unbiased design, is contained within the interval. About 68% of the time, the survey estimate will differ from the true average by less than one standard error. Only 10% of the time will the difference be more than 1.6 standard errors, and just 1 time in 100 will it be greater than 2.5 standard errors. A 95% confidence interval is the survey estimate plus or minus twice the standard error. Thus there is a 95% chance that a result based on a complete census would fall within the confidence interval.

In addition to sampling error, the estimates are subject to nonsampling error. While substantial care is taken in the NCVS to reduce the sources of nonsampling error throughout all the survey operations, by means of a quality assurance program, quality controls, operational controls, and error-correcting

procedures, an unquantified amount of nonsampling error remains.

A major source of nonsampling error is related to the inability of respondents to recall in detail the crimes that occurred during the 6 months prior to the interview. Research based on interviews of victims obtained from police files indicates that assault is recalled with the least accuracy of any crime measured by the NCVS. This may be related to the tendency of victims to avoid reporting crimes committed by offenders who are not strangers, especially if they are relatives. In addition, among certain groups, crimes that contain elements of assault could be a part of everyday life, and are therefore forgotten or not considered important enough to mention to a survey interviewer. These recall problems may result in an understatement of the actual rate of assault.

Another source of nonsampling error is the inability of some respondents to recall the exact month a crime occurred, even though it was placed in the correct reference period. This error source is partially offset by interviewing monthly and using the estimation procedure mentioned earlier. Telescoping is another problem in which incidents that occurred before the reference period are placed within the period. The effect of telescoping is minimized by using the bounding procedure previously described. The interviewer is provided with a summary of the incidents reported in the preceding interview and, if a similar incident is reported, it can be determined whether or not it is a new one by discussing it with the victim. Events that occurred after the reference period are set aside for inclusion with the data from the following interview.

Other sources of nonsampling error can result from other types of response mistakes, including errors in reporting incidents as crimes, misclassification of crimes, systematic data errors introduced by the interviewer, and errors made in coding and processing the data. Quality control and editing procedures were used to minimize the number of errors made by respondents and interviewers.

Since field representatives conducting the interviews usually reside in the area in which they interview, the race and ethnicity of the field representatives generally match that of the local population. Special efforts are made to further match field representatives and the people they interview in areas where English is not commonly spoken. About 90% of all NCVS field representatives are female.

Standard errors measure only those nonsampling errors arising from transient factors affecting individual responses completely at random (simple response variance); they do not reveal any systematic biases in the data. As calculated in the NCVS, the standard er-

rors would partially measure nonsampling error arising from some of the above sources, such as transient memory errors, or accidental errors in recording or coding answers, for example.

### Estimates for 2006 based on new methods

The following three changes made to the 2006 NCVS survey methodology resulted in national-level estimates that are not comparable to estimates based on NCVS data from previous years.

1. Introduction of a new sample to account for shifts in population and location of households that occur over time.

The NCVS sample for 2006 was redrawn to update representation of the entire population of the United States based on more recent Census Bureau counts. A selected number of households in the sample that were based on the 1990 Decennial Census were replaced with newly selected households based on the 2000 Census. For areas that were in both the old and new samples--primarily urban and suburban areas--the data for 2006 were consistent with data from previous years. Sample changes had the most impact on estimates for rural areas. Eighty-three percent of rural households were in new sampling areas, compared with 14% of households in urban areas and 15% in suburban areas. In addition, the new sample required hiring and training a large number of new interviewers in the new areas.

2. Incorporation of responses from households that were in the survey for the first time.

In general, interviews from households in NCVS for the first time produce higher rates of victimization. Typically, these first interviews are not included in the data for analysis but are used as a reference (bounding interview) for subsequent interviews. In 2006 BJS was required to use data from these first-time interviews due to insufficient funding.

3. Use of computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) for the entire sample.

Similar to first-time interviews, automation of data collection also typically produces higher rates of victimization. In July 2006, NCVS replaced paper and pencil interviews (PAPI) with CAPI because the Census Bureau discontinued paper and pencil household surveys. While the conversion to CAPI was expected to produce higher rates of crime, BJS did not have sufficient funds to develop procedures to evaluate the impact of the questionnaire automation and gener-

ate statistical parameters to control for the effects.

For an earlier survey redesign, the effects of pre-redesign and post-redesign changes were able to be adjusted. When NCVS underwent a redesign in 1992, two comparable samples were conducted. This made it possible to develop an adjustment factor that showed what the victimization estimates would have been if the redesigned survey had been used from 1973 through 1992. The adjustments in the series between 1973 and 1992 for violent and property crime permitted trend data to be maintained.

If it had been possible to conduct two comparable samples in the 2006 redesign, there would have been a similar adjustment factor to make the 2006 data comparable to 2005. While the rates for both violent and property crime increased between 2005 and 2006, it is unknown how much of the increase was caused by methodological changes rather than any real change in crime trends. However, the variation in the amount and rate of crime was too extreme to be attributed to actual year-to-year changes.

### Changes to the 2007 NCVS

In 2007, three further changes were made, largely for budgetary reasons, to the NCVS program:

1. The sample was reduced by 14% in July 2007.

2. First-time interviews from all sample areas were used in the production of 2007 estimates (as was done for the 2006 survey estimates, see above).

To offset the impact of reducing the sample, first-time interviews (or bounding interviews) were used in the production of 2007 NCVS estimates. Using first-time interviews to calculate victimization estimates helped to ensure that the overall sample size would remain consistent with previous years.

Respondents tend to report more victimizations during first-time interviews than in subsequent interviews. In part, this is because respondents new to the survey tend to recall events as having taken place at a time that was more recent than when they actually occurred. Adjustment factors were applied to the first-time interviews to counteract the effect of including unbounded interviews.

Analyses of the 2007 estimates demonstrate that the bounding adjustment effectively countered the impact of including unbounded interviews.

3. Beginning in July 2007, computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) from centralized

interviewing centers were discontinued, and all interviewing was conducted by field interviewers using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI).

CATI is a telephone survey technique in which the interviewer follows a script provided by a software application. From 2004 through 2006, the percentage of sample cases interviewed using CATI declined from about 30% to 15% of all interviews. Beginning in the second half of 2007, all NCVS interviewing was conducted using CAPI.

Changes in the survey mode and sample redesign impacted estimates to a greater extent in 2006 than in 2007. Analyses of the 2007 estimates indicate that the program changes made in 2007 had relatively small effects on NCVS estimates. The substantial increases in victimization rates from 2005 to 2006 do not appear to be due to actual changes in crime during that period. The increases were attributed to the impact of the methodological changes in the survey. Continued study by BJS and the Census Bureau suggests that the 2006 findings represent a temporary anomaly in the data. As such, the 2006 estimates should be omitted from any trend comparisons. Based on research completed to date, there is a high degree of confidence that survey estimates for 2007 and 2008 are consistent with and comparable to those for 2005 and previous years.

### Definitions of terms

**Age**--The appropriate age category is determined by the respondent's age on the last day of the month before the interview.

**Aggravated assault**--Attack or attempted attack with a weapon, regardless of whether an injury occurred, and attack without a weapon when serious injury results.

**With injury**--An attack without a weapon when serious injury results, or an attack with a weapon involving any injury. Serious injury includes broken bones, lost teeth, internal injuries, loss of consciousness, and any unspecified injury requiring 2 or more days of hospitalization.

**Threatened with a weapon**--Threat or attempted attack by an offender armed with a gun, knife, or other object used as a weapon, not resulting in victim injury.

**Annual household income**--The total income of the household head and all members of the household for the 12 months preceding the interview. Includes wages, salaries, net income from businesses or farms, pensions, interest, dividends, rent, and any other form of monetary income.

**Assault**--An unlawful physical attack or threat of attack. Assaults may be classified as aggravated or simple. Rape, attempted rape, and sexual assaults are excluded from this category, as well as robbery and attempted

robbery. The severity of assaults ranges from minor threats to incidents that are nearly fatal.

**Ethnicity**--A classification based on Hispanic culture and origin, regardless of race. Persons are asked directly if they are Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino before being asked about their racial category.

**Head of household**--A classification that defines one and only one person in each housing unit as the head. Head of household implies that the person rents or owns (or is in the process of buying) the household unit. The head of household must be at least 18, unless all members of the household are under 18, or the head is married to someone 18 or older.

**Hispanic**--Persons who describe themselves as Mexican-American, Chicano, Mexican, Mexicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American, South American, or from some other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

**Household**--A person or group of people meeting either of the following criteria: (1) people whose usual place of residence is the same housing unit, even if they are temporarily absent; (2) people staying in a housing unit who have no usual place of residence elsewhere.

**Household burglary**--Unlawful or forcible entry or attempted entry of a residence. This crime usually, but not always, involves theft. The illegal entry may be by force, such as breaking a window or slashing a screen, or may be without force by entering through an unlocked door or an open window. If the person entering has no legal right to be present in the structure a burglary has occurred. The structure need not be the house itself for a burglary to take place; illegal entry of a garage, shed, or any other structure on the premises also constitutes household burglary. If breaking and entering occurs in a hotel or vacation residence, it is still classified as a burglary for the household whose member or members were staying there at the time the entry occurred.

**Completed burglary**--To successfully gain entry to a residence by a person who has no legal right to be present in the structure, by use of force, or without force.

**Forcible entry**--A form of completed burglary in which force is used to gain entry to a residence. Examples include breaking a window or slashing a screen.

**Unlawful entry without force**--A form of completed burglary committed by someone having no legal right to be on the premises, even though no force is used.

**Attempted forcible entry**--A form of burglary in which force is used in an attempt to gain entry.

**Identity theft**--Unauthorized use or attempted use of existing credit cards or other existing accounts such as checking ac-

counts; misuse of personal information to obtain new accounts or loans, or to commit other crimes.

**Incident**--A specific criminal act involving one or more victims and offenders. For example, if two people are robbed at the same time and place, this is classified as two robbery victimizations but only one robbery incident.

**Marital status**--Every person is assigned to one of the following classifications: (1) married, which includes persons in common-law unions and those who are currently living apart for reasons other than marital discord (employment, military service, etc.); (2) separated or divorced, which includes married persons who are legally separated and those who are not living together because of marital discord; (3) widowed; and (4) never married, which includes persons whose marriages have been annulled and those who are living together and not in a common-law union.

**Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)**--Office of Management and Budget defines this as a population nucleus of 50,000 or more, generally consisting of a city and its immediate suburbs, along with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with the nucleus. MSAs are designated by counties, the smallest geographic units for which a wide range of statistical data can be obtained. However, in New England, MSAs are designated by cities and towns since these sub-county units are of great local significance and considerable data are available for them. Currently, an area is defined as an MSA if it meets one of two standards: (1) a city has a population of at least 50,000; (2) the Census Bureau defines an urbanized area of at least 50,000 people with a total metropolitan population of at least 100,000 (or 75,000 in New England). The Census Bureau's definition of urbanized areas, data on commuting to work, and the strength of the economic and social ties between the surrounding counties and the central city determine which counties not containing a main city are included in an MSA. For New England, MSAs are determined by a core area and related cities and towns, not counties. A metropolitan statistical area may contain more than one city of 50,000 and may cross State lines. Within this general classification unit, there are three subclassifications: urban, suburban, and rural. They are defined as follows:

**Urban areas**--The largest city or grouping of cities in a metropolitan statistical area.

**Suburban areas**--A county or group of counties containing a central city, plus any contiguous counties that are linked socially and economically to the central city. Suburban areas are categorized as those portions of metropolitan areas situated "outside central cities."

**Rural areas**--A place not located inside a metropolitan statistical area. This category includes a variety of localities ranging from sparsely populated rural areas to cities with populations less than 50,000.

**Motor vehicle**--An automobile, truck, motorcycle, or any other motorized vehicle legally allowed on public roads and highways.

**Motor vehicle theft**--Stealing or unauthorized taking of a motor vehicle, including attempted thefts.

**Completed motor vehicle theft**--The successful taking of a vehicle by an unauthorized person.

**Attempted motor vehicle theft**--The unsuccessful attempt by an unauthorized person to take a vehicle.

**Non-Hispanic**--Persons who report their culture or origin as something other than "Hispanic" as defined above. This distinction is made regardless of race.

**Nonstranger**--A classification of a crime victim's relationship to the offender. An offender who is either related to, well known to, or casually acquainted with the victim is a nonstranger. For crimes with more than one offender, if any of the offenders are nonstrangers, then the group of offenders as a whole is classified as nonstranger. This category only applies to crimes that involve contact between the victim and the offender; the distinction is not made for crimes of theft since victims of this offense rarely see the offenders.

**Offender**--The perpetrator of a crime; this term usually applies to crimes involving contact between the victim and the offender.

**Personal crimes**--Rape, sexual assault, personal robbery, assault, purse snatching and pocket picking. Includes both attempted and completed crimes.

**Personal crimes of violence**--Rape, sexual assault, robbery, or assault. Includes both attempted and completed crimes; does not include purse snatching and pocket picking. Murder is not measured by the NCVS because of the inability to question the victim.

**Completed violence**--The sum of all completed rapes, sexual assaults, robberies, and assaults.

**Attempted/threatened violence**--The unsuccessful attempt of rape, sexual assault, robbery, or assault. Includes attempted attacks or sexual assaults by means of verbal threats.

**Property crimes**--Burglary, motor vehicle theft, or theft. Includes both attempted and completed crimes.

**Purse snatching/pocket picking**--Theft or attempted theft of property or cash directly from the victim by stealth, without force or threat of force.

**Race**--Racial categories for the 2002 survey (and earlier years) are white, black, and other. The category "other" is composed mainly of Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos. The race of the head of household is used in determining the

race of the household for computing household crime demographics. See discussion above for changes to the racial categories beginning in 2003.

**Rape**--Forced sexual intercourse including both psychological coercion as well as physical force. Forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by the offender(s). This category also includes incidents involving penetration using a foreign object such as a bottle. Includes attempted rapes, male as well as female victims, and both heterosexual and homosexual rape. Attempted rape includes verbal threats of rape.

**Rate of victimization**--See "Victimization rate."

**Robbery**--Completed or attempted theft, directly from a person, of property or cash by force or threat of force, with or without a weapon, and with or without injury.

**Completed/property taken**--The successful taking of property from a person by force or threat of force, with or without a weapon, and with or without injury.

**Completed with injury**--The successful taking of property from a person, accompanied by an attack, with or without a weapon, resulting in injury.

**Completed without injury**--The successful taking of property from a person by force or the threat of force, with or without a weapon, but not resulting in injury.

**Attempted to take property**--The attempt to take property from a person by force or threat of force without success, with or without a weapon, and with or without injury.

**Attempted without injury**--The attempt to take property from a person by force or threat of force without success, with or without a weapon, but not resulting in injury.

**Attempted with injury**--The attempt to take property from a person without success, accompanied by an attack, with or without a weapon, resulting in injury.

**Sexual assault**--A wide range of victimizations, separate from rape or attempted rape. Includes attacks or attempted attacks generally involving unwanted sexual contact between victim and offender. Sexual assaults may or may not involve force and include such things as grabbing or fondling. Sexual assault also includes verbal threats.

**Simple assault**--Attack without a weapon resulting either in no injury, minor injury (for example, bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, or swelling), or in undetermined injury requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization. Also includes attempted assault without a weapon.

**With minor injury**--An attack without a weapon resulting in such injuries as bruises, black eyes, cuts, or in undeter-

mined injury requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization.

**Without injury**--An attempted assault without a weapon not resulting in injury.

**Stranger**--A classification of the victim's relationship to the offender for crimes involving direct contact between the two. Incidents are classified as involving strangers if the victim identifies the offender as a stranger, did not see or recognize the offender, or knew the offender only by sight. Crimes involving multiple offenders are classified as involving nonstrangers if any of the offenders was a nonstranger. Since victims of theft without contact rarely see the offender, no distinction is made between strangers and nonstrangers for this crime.

**Tenure**--The NCVS recognizes two forms of household tenancy: (1) owned, which includes dwellings that are mortgaged, and (2) rented, which includes rent-free quarters belonging to a party other than the occupants and situations where rental payments are in kind or in services.

**Theft**--Completed or attempted theft of property or cash without personal contact. Incidents involving theft of property from within the sample household would classify as theft if the offender has a legal right to be in the house (such as a maid, delivery person, or guest). If the offender has no legal right to be in the house, the incident would classify as a burglary.

**Completed**--To successfully take without permission property or cash without personal contact between the victim and offender.

**Attempted**--To unsuccessfully attempt to take property or cash without personal contact.

**Victim**--The recipient of a criminal act, usually used in relation to personal crimes, but also applicable to households.

**Victimization**--A crime as it affects one individual person or household. For personal crimes, the number of victimizations is equal to the number of victims involved. The number of victimizations may be greater than the number of incidents because more than one person may be victimized during an incident. Each crime against a household is assumed to involve a single victim, the affected household.

**Victimization rate**--A measure of the occurrence of victimizations among a specified population group. For personal crimes, this is based on the number of victimizations per 1,000 residents age 12 and older. For household crimes, the victimization rates are calculated using the number of incidents per 1,000 households.

**Victimize**--To commit a crime against a person or household.