

# FORCIBLE RAPE

## DEFINITION

Forcible rape, as defined in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, is the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Assaults or attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force are also included; however, statutory rape (without force) and other sex offenses are excluded.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of offenses</i>	<i>Rate per 100,000 inhabitants</i>
1999	89,411	32.8
2000	90,186	32.0
Percent change	+0.9	-2.3

The estimated 90,186 forcible rapes of females nationwide in 2000 represented the first increase in forcible rape since 1992. A comparison of 2000 figures to those of the previous year demonstrates an increase of 0.9 percent. However, the 2000 totals are 6.3 percent below the 1996 level and 15.4 percent below the 1991 level.

The greatest volume of rapes, 38.0 percent, was reported in the most populous area of the Nation, the South. Twenty-five percent of rapes were reported in the Midwest, 23.8 percent in the West, and 13.2 percent in the Northeast, respectively. Two-year trends for forcible rapes indicate that forcible rape offenses increased in three of the four regions. From 1999 to 2000, forcible rapes increased 3.5 percent in the West, 1.9 percent in the Northeast, and 1.6 percent in the Midwest. The South showed a drop of 1.5 percent. (See Tables 3 and 4.)

A study of the monthly variations for this offense indicates that in 2000 the highest number of forcible rapes were recorded in July. The lowest number were reported in December. (See Table 2.18.)

Table 2.18

**Forcible Rape by Month**

Percent distribution, 1996-2000

Month	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
January	7.9	7.9	7.9	8.1	8.0
February	7.9	7.0	7.4	7.3	7.6
March	8.1	8.0	8.6	8.2	8.4
April	8.1	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.0
May	9.0	9.1	8.8	8.6	9.1
June	8.8	9.5	8.7	8.8	9.1
July	9.5	9.7	9.6	9.6	9.5
August	9.1	9.4	9.3	9.5	9.2
September	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.3	8.4
October	8.5	8.2	7.9	8.3	8.4
November	7.4	7.4	7.6	7.9	7.5
December	6.9	6.7	7.1	7.2	6.8

**Rate**

As stated previously, in the UCR Program the victims of rape are always female. In 2000, an estimated 62.7 of every 100,000 females in the country were victims of rape. The 2000 rate for forcible rape decreased 1.6 percent compared to the previous year's figures and declined 11.3 percent compared to the rates for 1996.

For 2000, cities outside metropolitan areas recorded the highest rate for rape in the Nation, 69.0 per 100,000 females. This figure represents a 3.0-percent increase in the rate of rape in these types of communities from the 1999 rate. Metropolitan Statistical Areas recorded a rate of 65.0 rapes per 100,000 females. This number represents a 28.6-percent decrease in the rate of rape from the 1991 rate, when there were 91 forcible rapes for every 100,000 females. Rural counties reported a rate of 43.4 rapes per 100,000 females, a rate that is 6.5 percent lower

than in 1991.

Of the four regions, the rate of 68.4 rapes per 100,000 females reported by the Midwestern States was the highest. Rates of 66.9 in the Southern States, 66.5 in the Western States, and 43.5 in the Northeastern States followed. Two of the four regions experienced rate declines when compared to the 1999 figures. Rates in the South fell 4.3 percent and in the Northeast 2.3 percent. The rate of female forcible rape increased 1.5 percent in the West, and the rate in the Midwest showed no change from 1999.

Over the past decade, all four regions have experienced declines in the rate of female forcible rape. The West showed a 26.4-percent decrease when compared with 1991 figures. The Northeast experienced a decrease of 24.6 percent. A decline of 23.9 percent was recorded for the South, and a 23.6-percent decline was computed for the Midwest.

**Nature**

Rapes by force accounted for 89.5 percent of rapes reported in 2000. The remaining 10.5 percent were accounted for by attempts or assaults to commit forcible rape. Compared to 1999, the volume of rapes by force in 2000 increased 1.8 percent. A 5.0-percent decrease in attempts to rape was noted nationwide.

**Law Enforcement Response**

Overall, law enforcement cleared 46.9 percent of reported forcible rapes in 2000. The highest clearance rate for forcible rapes was reported by rural counties, 52.4 percent. Rapes occurring in suburban counties were cleared at a rate of 47.4 percent. In the Nation's cities, forcible rape had a clearance rate of 46.2 percent. Law enforcement in cities of 250,000 and over in population cleared 48.6 percent, and those with populations of less than 10,000 recorded a clearance rate of 49.1 percent. (See Table 25.)

Regionally, 2000 forcible rape clearance rates were 51.1 percent in the Northeast, 49.2 percent in the South, 43.9 percent in the West, and 43.6 percent in the Midwest. (See Table 26.)

Juveniles (persons under 18 years of age) were involved in 12.1 percent of the total clearances for forcible rape nationwide. The percentage of juvenile involvement varied by community type. In the Nation's cities collectively, juveniles were involved in 11.8 percent of clearances. Clearances in cities having populations of 25,000 to 49,999 revealed the highest level of juvenile involvement, 16.0 percent. In rural counties, 15.0 percent of clearances involved juveniles. Suburban counties reported juvenile clearance rates of 12.1 percent. (See Table 28.)

In 2000, law enforcement across the country arrested an estimated 27,469 persons for forcible rape. Of those arrested, 45.4 percent were under age 25 and 63.7 percent were white. (See Tables 29, 41, and 43.)

Compared to figures from 1999, a 3.6-percent decrease in the national arrest total for forcible rape was recorded

in 2000. Arrests for forcible rape in suburban and rural counties increased 2.4 percent and 2.1 percent, respectively. A 5.5-percent decrease in arrests was recorded in the Nation's cities collectively. (See Tables 36, 44, 50, and 56.)

FIGURE 2.8

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PERCENT CHANGE  
from 1996

