

Cost of Crime

During 1997, losses estimated at nearly \$500 million were attributed to robberies. The value of property stolen averaged \$995 per robbery, up from \$921 in 1996. Average dollar losses in 1997 ranged from \$576 taken during robberies of convenience stores to \$4,802 per bank robbery. (*Federal Bureau of Investigation. (released November 22, 1998). Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports, 1997, p. 29. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.*)

The dollar value of property stolen in connection with property crimes in 1997 was estimated at over \$15.6 billion. The average loss per offense in 1997 was \$1,311, slightly more than the 1996 figure of \$1,266. In 1997, law enforcement agencies nationwide reported a 37 percent recovery rate for dollar losses in connection with stolen property. (*Ibid.*, pp. 7 & 38)

Based on information from 11,461 law enforcement agencies, nearly 81,753 arson offenses were reported in 1997. The average dollar loss of property damaged due to reported arsons was \$11,294. The overall average loss for all types of structures was \$19,804. (*Ibid.*, p. 56)

During 1997, the estimated value of motor vehicles stolen nationwide was more than \$7 billion. The average value per vehicle at the time of theft was \$5,416. In relating the value of vehicles stolen to those recovered, the recovery rate for 1997 was 67 percent. (*Ibid.*, p. 52)

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse estimates that of the \$38 billion in correctional expenditures in 1996, more than \$30 billion was spent incarcerating individuals who had a history of drug and/or alcohol abuse, were convicted

of drug and/or alcohol violations, were high on drugs and or alcohol at the time of their crime, or committed their crime to get money to buy drugs. (*Ibid.*, citing *National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, (1998, January). Behind Bars: Substance Abuse and America's Prison Population. New York: Columbia University.*)

Personal crime is estimated to cost \$105 billion annually in medical costs, lost earnings and public program costs related to victim assistance. When pain, suffering, and the reduced quality of life are assessed, the costs increases to an estimated \$450 billion annually. Violent crime results in lost wages equivalent to one percent of American earnings. (*Miller, T., Cohen, M., & Wiersema, B. (1996, February). Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice.*)

Violent crime causes three percent of U.S. medical spending and 14 percent of injury-related medical spending. (*U.S. News and World Report, July 1, 1996.*)

Insurers pay \$45 billion annually due to crime -- roughly \$265 per American adult. The U.S. government pays \$8 billion annually for restorative and emergency services to victims, plus perhaps one-fourth of the \$11 billion in health insurance payments. (*Ibid.*)

Direct costs of alcohol-related crashes are estimated at \$45 billion yearly. It is also estimated that an additional \$70.5 billion is lost in quality of life due to alcohol-related crashes. (*Miller T. & Blincoe, L. (1994). "Incidence and Cost of Alcohol-involved Crashes." Accident Analysis & Prevention, Vol 26, Number 5.*)

Note: OVC makes no representation concerning the accuracy of data from non-Department of Justice sources.