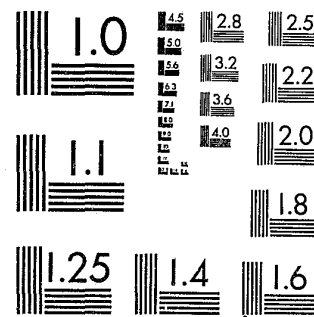


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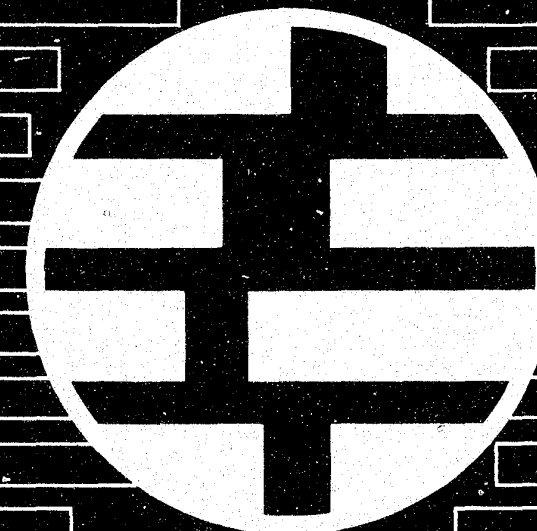
National Institute of Justice
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Washington, D. C. 20531

1/10/83

Shoplifting in Illinois

March 1982

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTER



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Illinois Law Enforcement Commission

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Shoplifting in Illinois

March 1982

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Shoplifting in Illinois

• Introduction

This report was written as a response to a request from a representative of a retail establishment regarding the amount of property loss resulting from shoplifting theft in Illinois. The report includes information regarding the number of offenses and the total value of property stolen as a result of shoplifting, the altering or transferring of merchandise, or under-ringing (when these methods of theft could be determined). The report is based on data from the Statistical Analysis Center Edition of Illinois Uniform Crime Reports Property Loss Data for the years 1975 through 1980.

• Illinois Uniform Crime Report Property Loss Data

Some of the costs associated with criminal offenses can be estimated from the Illinois Uniform Crime Reports (IUCR) Property Loss Data. Unlike most other segments of the IUCR system, which contain information that is more summary in nature, the Property Loss Data enables a fairly detailed description of the place or location where property was stolen, the method by which the crime was committed, and an estimate of the value of the property stolen or destroyed.

Presented below are data describing both the number of offenses and estimated loss in dollars for crimes that occurred in retail establishments. The following limitations apply:

- The term "retail establishment" is defined to include department stores, drug stores, hardware stores, pharmacies, sporting good stores, and other chain stores.
- Data from the Chicago Police Department are not included in the analyses below because the Department does not code property loss information by place codes as specific as those listed above. Rather, it uses the broader categories of "commercial" and "residential" locations.
- The Property Loss Data includes crime in which property losses may occur, such as robbery, burglary, theft, murder, manslaughter, rape, and vandalism.
- The Property Loss Data score the location of the offense, not the victim. Thus, offenses known to have occurred in retail establishments may not be limited to those against the store itself, but may include crimes against patrons or employees.

- These figures represent only those offenses reported to the police. This may be problematic regarding offenses against retail establishments, since a criminal offense may be known to have occurred (and therefore reported by the store) only in those instances where the offender was caught or clear signs of criminal activity were present.

• Property Value Stolen From Retail Establishments

Given these limitations, listed below is the value of property stolen from retail establishments in Illinois (excluding Chicago) between 1975 and 1980:

| Year | Dollar Value Stolen |
|------|---------------------|
| 1975 | \$1,768,561 |
| 1976 | \$2,442,177 |
| 1977 | \$2,043,919 |
| 1978 | \$2,851,595 |
| 1979 | \$3,256,518 |
| 1980 | \$2,924,852 |

The reported value of property stolen in retail stores increased by over 65% between 1975 and 1980, from just over \$1.7 million in 1975 to more than \$2.9 million in 1980. This 1980 property loss value did, however, represent a slight decline from the \$3.2 million loss experienced in 1979. The yearly dollar values stolen are presented graphically in Figure A.

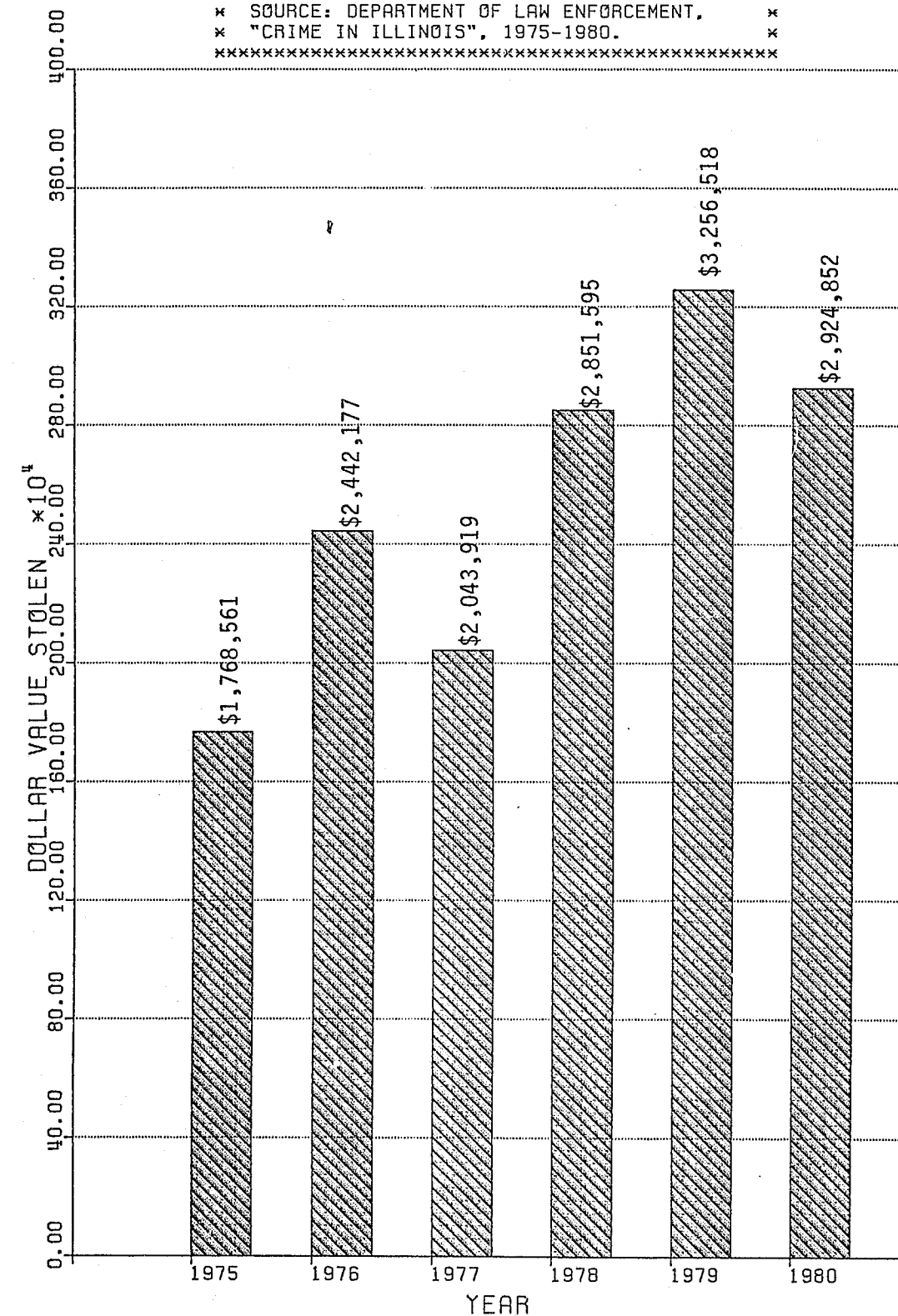
Since these dollar value stolen estimates may be affected by recent high levels of inflation, these cost figures have been adjusted for changes in the Consumer Price Index. Listed below are these same dollar value stolen estimates calculated in terms of 1975 dollars:

| Year | Dollar Value Stolen (in 1975 \$'s) |
|------|------------------------------------|
| 1975 | \$1,768,561 |
| 1976 | \$2,308,967 |
| 1977 | \$1,815,315 |
| 1978 | \$2,352,493 |
| 1979 | \$2,414,677 |
| 1980 | \$1,910,398 |

Figure A

DOLLAR VALUE STOLEN FROM RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS

 * COST FIGURES ARE ESTIMATES OF THE DOLLAR *
 * VALUE OF ITEMS STOLEN FROM CHAIN, DEPART- *
 * MENT, DRUG, HARDWARE, PHARMACIES, AND *
 * SPORTING GOOD STORES IN ILLINOIS (EXCLUD- *
 * ING CHICAGO). *
 * SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, *
 * "CRIME IN ILLINOIS", 1975-1980. *



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Even adjusting for inflation, the property lost by retail establishments increased by 8 percent from 1975 to 1980. These inflationary adjustments actually indicate a decrease in the dollar value stolen in 1980 when compared with the previous two years. These adjusted cost estimates are displayed in Figure B.

• Total Property Stolen By Type of Retail Establishment

The table below lists the number of offenses reported to police and the value of property stolen in each of the types of retail establishment during 1980.

| | Total Offenses | Dollar Value Stolen |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Chain Store | 2,799 | \$473,704 |
| Department Store | 12,265 | \$1,955,996 |
| Drug Store | 2,059 | \$221,036 |
| Hardware Store | 565 | \$170,780 |
| Pharmacy | 220 | \$23,106 |
| Sporting Goods | 303 | \$80,230 |
| TOTAL: | 18,211 | \$2,924,852 |

Source: SAC Edition Illinois Uniform Crime
 Report Property Loss Data, 1980. Figures
 exclude Chicago Police Department.

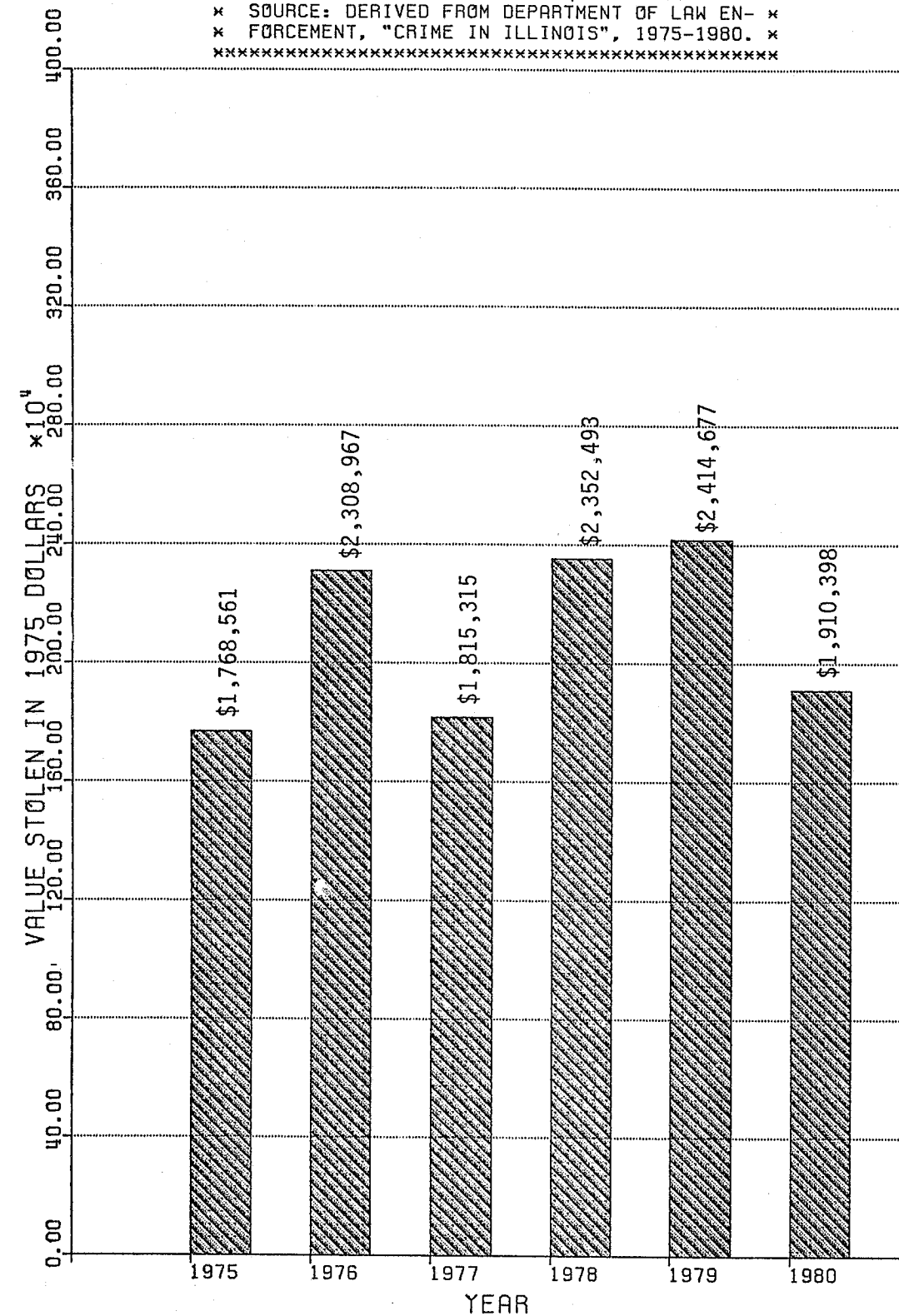
These figures indicate that, in terms of both offenses and the amount of property stolen in 1980, about two-thirds were against department stores. Chain, Drug, and Hardware stores were the site of most of the remaining offenses against retail establishments.

The average value of property stolen in each type of store during the six year period from 1975 to 1980 was also calculated. Figure C graphically displays the property value stolen from each of the six types of retail establishment as a percentage of all property stolen. More than one-half of reported stolen property was taken from department stores (53.7%) and over one-fourth was taken from chain stores (26.1%). Drug, hardware, sporting goods stores, and pharmacies together totalled about 20% of the stolen property from 1975 to 1980.

Figure B

VALUE STOLEN IN RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS (1975 \$'s)

 * COST FIGURES ARE ESTIMATES OF THE DOLLAR *
 * VALUE OF ITEMS STOLEN FROM CHAIN, DEPART- *
 * MENT, DRUG, HARDWARE, PHARMACIES, AND *
 * SPORTING GOOD STORES IN ILLINOIS (EXCLUD- *
 * ING CHICAGO) IN TERMS OF 1975 DOLLARS. *
 * SOURCE: DERIVED FROM DEPARTMENT OF LAW EN- *
 * FORCEMENT, "CRIME IN ILLINOIS", 1975-1980. *

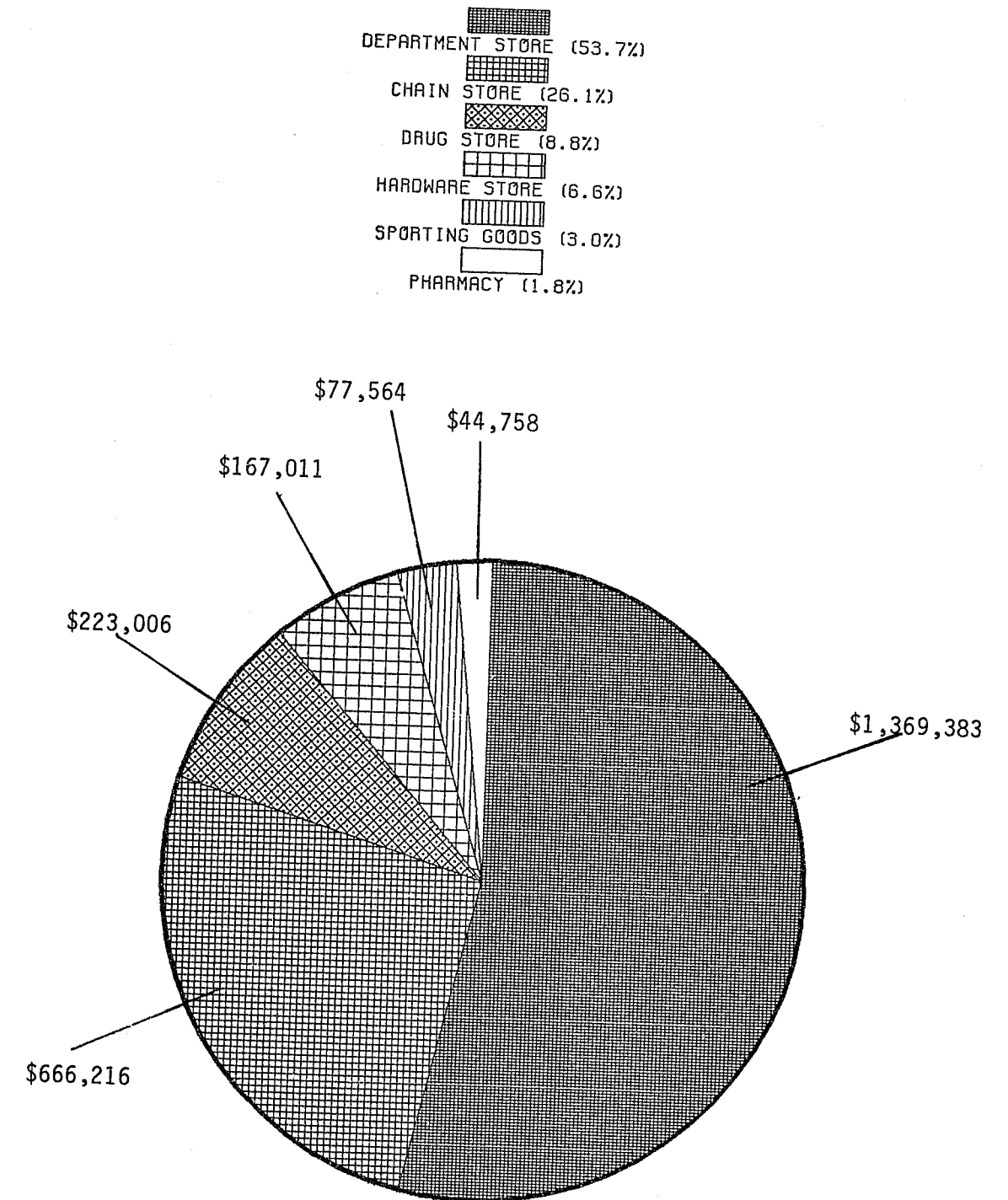


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Figure C

AVERAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STOLEN PROPERTY VALUES

 * PROPERTY LOSS TOTALS FOR EACH TYPE OF *
 * RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT IS THE AVERAGE *
 * PERCENT OF TOTAL FOR YEARS 1975-1980. *



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• Property Stolen By Method of Retail Theft

The Property Loss Data are detailed enough to allow analysis of the method by which crimes were committed. Since theft is the most likely crime to occur against a retail establishment, the analysis below is limited to this crime only. The three methods of retail theft included in IUCR, and their statutory citations, are as follows:

- Shoplifting (38-16A-3a)
- The altering or transfer of a label or price tag or the transfer of merchandise to another container (38-16A-3b,3c)
- Under-ringing or entering less than the full price on the cash register (38-16A-3d)

A copy of the Illinois statute defining these methods of retail theft may be found in the Appendix.

Table 1 lists for each of these methods the number of known offenses and value stolen for the six retail store types during 1980. Table 1 also indicates the number of cases where the method was not determined or reported in IUCR. The data in this table reveal that more than \$1 million in merchandise was shoplifted from retail establishments in 1980 in nearly 14,000 offenses. The altering or transfer of merchandise and under-ringing are less prominent methods of stealing from stores of this type. The data presented in Table 1 also show about 3,500 retail theft offenses resulting in losses of over \$1 million where the method was not reported.

The number of offenses and costs associated with under-ringing as a method of theft is surely underestimated due to the obvious problems of detection. In addition, even when detected, these crimes may be under-reported since the employer has a more direct sanction available against the offender -- dismissal.

Table 1

Offenses and Property Value Stolen in Retail Establishments by Method: 1980

| | Total Offenses | Dollar Value Stolen |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| ----- | | |
| SHOPLIFTING: | | |
| Chain Store | 1,986 | \$151,573 |
| Department Store | 9,902 | 781,326 |
| Drug Store | 1,276 | 32,078 |
| Hardware Store | 192 | 12,809 |
| Pharmacy | 50 | 734 |
| Sporting Goods | 103 | 9,365 |
| ----- | | |
| TOTAL: | 13,509 | \$987,885 |
| ----- | | |
| ALTER OR TRANSFER MERCHANDISE: | | |
| Chain Store | 47 | \$3,028 |
| Department Store | 232 | 10,858 |
| Drug Store | 8 | 22 |
| Hardware Store | 3 | 715 |
| Pharmacy | - | - |
| Sporting Goods | 16 | 1,738 |
| ----- | | |
| TOTAL: | 306 | \$16,361 |
| ----- | | |
| UNDER-RING OF MERCHANDISE | | |
| Chain Store | 8 | \$1,056 |
| Department Store | 37 | 2,750 |
| Drug Store | 1 | 249 |
| Hardware Store | 1 | 850 |
| Pharmacy | 1 | 37 |
| Sporting Goods | 1 | 200 |
| ----- | | |
| TOTAL: | 49 | \$5,142 |
| ----- | | |
| METHOD UNKNOWN: | | |
| Chain Store | 532 | \$194,947 |
| Department Store | 2,269 | 667,251 |
| Drug Store | 430 | 61,822 |
| Hardware Store | 198 | 60,426 |
| Pharmacy | 53 | 5,608 |
| Sporting Goods | 94 | 34,871 |
| ----- | | |
| TOTAL: | 3,576 | \$1,024,925 |
| ----- | | |

Source: SAC Edition Illinois Uniform Crime Report Property Loss Data, 1980. Figures exclude Chicago Police Department.

• Property Value Stolen By Time of Occurrence

The IUCR Property Loss Data also provides information regarding the time of day at which the offenses were reported to have occurred. Retail theft offenses were divided into four categories of time: 1) 8 A.M. to 5 P.M., 2) 5 P.M. to 10 P.M., 3) all other times, and 4) time unknown. Below is listed the percentage of offenses taking place within these time categories by the six categories of retail establishments during 1980.

| | 8 AM-5 PM | 5 PM-10PM | Other Times | Times Unknown |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| Chain Store | 64.1% | 29.9% | 2.8% | 3.2% |
| Department Store | 64.4% | 28.7% | 1.8% | 4.6% |
| Drug Store | 69.0% | 26.4% | 1.5% | 3.1% |
| Hardware Store | 70.8% | 20.3% | 1.5% | 7.4% |
| Pharmacy | 62.5% | 30.8% | 3.8% | 2.9% |
| Sporting Goods | 61.7% | 25.7% | 3.3% | 9.3% |
| TOTAL: | 64.9% | 28.7% | 1.8% | 4.6% |

Source: SAC Edition Illinois Uniform Crime Report Property Loss Data, 1980. Note: figures exclude Chicago Police Department.

• Conclusion

These figures underestimate the number of offenses and the value stolen from retail establishments by these methods for two reasons. First, the exclusion of Chicago data biases the totals. However, since Chicago has historically accounted for about one-half of the criminal offenses occurring in Illinois, multiplying these numbers by a factor of two could produce a fairly reasonable statewide estimate. Second, unless an individual is caught in the act of stealing by one of these methods, the store may not be aware that a theft has occurred, much less know the means by which the theft took place.

Despite these limitations, the IUCR Property Loss Data provides a general indication of the amount of property loss suffered by retail establishments as a result of crime, specifically with regard to theft by shoplifters and employees.

§ 16A-2.11. Under-ring

"Under-ring" means to cause the cash register or other sales recording device to reflect less than the full retail value of the merchandise. Laws 1961, p. 1983, § 16A-2.11, added by P.A. 79-840, § 1, eff. Oct. 1, 1975.

§ 16A-3. Offense of Retail Theft

A person commits the offense of retail theft when he knowingly:

(a) Takes possession of, carries away, transfers or causes to be carried away or transferred, any merchandise displayed, held, stored or offered for sale in a retail mercantile establishment with the intention of retaining such merchandise or with the intention of depriving the merchant permanently of the possession, use or benefit of such merchandise without paying the full retail value of such merchandise; or

(b) Alters, transfers, or removes any label, price tag, marking, indicia of value or any other markings which aid in determining value affixed to any merchandise displayed, held, stored or offered for sale, in a retail mercantile establishment and attempts to purchase such merchandise personally or in consort with another at less than the full retail value with the intention of depriving the merchant of the full retail value of such merchandise; or

(c) Transfers any merchandise displayed, held, stored or offered for sale, in a retail mercantile establishment from the container in or on which such merchandise is displayed to any other container with the intention of depriving the merchant of the full retail value of such merchandise; or

(d) Under-rings with the intention of depriving the merchant of the full retail value of the merchandise; or

(e) Removes a shopping cart from the premises of a retail mercantile establishment without the consent of the merchant given at the time of such removal with the intention of depriving the merchant permanently of the possession, use or benefit of such cart.

Laws 1961, p. 1983, § 16A-3, added by P.A. 79-840, § 1, eff. Oct. 1, 1975.

Library References

Larceny 1.

C.J.S. Larceny §§ 1, 4, 7, 9.



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