

Crime Statistics for calendar year ending 31 December 2010

Frequently Asked Questions



April 2011

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Total recorded crime is well down - Police must be very pleased?

Yes, a drop of 6.7% in recorded offences per head of population for the 2010 calendar year is a pleasing result. There were 426,345 recorded offences last year, compared with 451,405 in 2009. The resolution rate remained largely stable. In real terms, recorded offences dropped by 5.6% (or 25 thousand) from the previous year. But taking into account growth in New Zealand's resident population by just over one percent during the period, recorded offences per head of population dropped by 6.7%.

What do Police put the decrease down to?

The drop in recorded offences is an excellent result, and consistent with the long term trend. Total recorded offences per head of population have been trending downward since 1997. Strategies and policies taken at both a national and local policing level, along with partnerships with other agencies, are continuing to make a positive difference in our communities.

But it's not all good news - less than half of all recorded offences were resolved. Why is that?

Police would love to resolve every crime, but in many cases - more so the less serious crimes - there is insufficient evidence. We can take some comfort from the fact that serious crimes, particularly violent crimes, have high resolution rates. Overall the resolution rate remains at a similar level to recent years. The drop in resolution rate is mainly due to a reduction in the volume of offences that (typically) have very high resolution rates. For example, there were fewer offences in 2010 for breaches of liquor bans, assaults police, and hinders police. This has the effect of reducing the overall resolution rate, even though the average resolution rate for a given type of offence has changed little.

Where were some of the big drops achieved? The number of murders?

There were 46 murders in 2010 compared with 65 a year earlier. Across a 25-year period the murder trend remains flat. Within these figures, family violence murders dropped from 36 in 2009 to 25 last year.

What else is highlighted?

Drugs possession and use of illicit drugs offences dropped by 7.7% (864 offences) in 2010. Possession and use of methamphetamine and amphetamines dropped by 8.2%, while procurement and possession of cannabis dropped by 8.1%. Theft and related offences, which make up more than 30% of all recorded offences, dropped by 5.4%, while burglary offences dropped by 3.4% from 2009.

What about sexual offending?

Sexual Assault and related offending increased by 3.6% in 2010 from the previous year, driven almost entirely by recorded family violence. We know that most cases of sexual offending are not reported, and this remains a concern to Police. We urge all victims of sexual offending to report it to Police.

What are the variations in each Police district?

The following table gives a breakdown of recorded offences by District:

District	2009	2010	Variance	1. Variance / 10,000 population
Northland	17,153	16,994	-0.9%	-1.9%
Waitematā	40,835	36,392	-10.9%	-12.3%
Auckland City	56,596	50,991	-9.9%	-11.1%
Counties Manukau	56,041	51,664	-7.8%	-9.5%
Waikato	35,384	34,764	-1.8%	-3.0%
Bay of Plenty	39,188	38,701	-1.2%	-2.2%
Eastern	25,429	25,566	0.5%	-0.3%
Central	32,314	31,084	-3.8%	-4.4%
Wellington	48,079	44,321	-7.8%	-8.7%
Tasman	18,804	17,318	-7.9%	-8.7%
Canterbury	52,981	52,119	-1.6%	-2.8%
Southern	28,601	26,431	-7.6%	1. -8.4%
TOTAL	451,405	426,345	-5.6%	1. -6.7%

Can you provide a breakdown of offences recorded by division?

Yes, the following table gives a breakdown of recorded offences

Offence division	2009	2010	Variance
Homicide & Related Offences	127	97	-23.6%
Acts Intended to Cause Injury	45,375	44,515	-1.9%
Sexual Assault & Related Offences	2,912	3,016	3.6%
Dangerous or Negligent Acts	749	859	14.7%
Abduction, Harassment etc.	14,473	14,157	-2.2%
Robbery, Extortion & Related	2,828	2,641	-6.6%
Unlawful Entry / Burglary etc.	61,405	59,323	-3.4%
Theft & Related Offences	144,780	136,932	-5.4%
Fraud, Deception & Related Offences	13,314	9,726	-26.9%
Illicit Drug Offences	24,924	22,995	-7.7%
Weapons & Explosives Offences	7,763	7,074	-8.9%
Property Damage etc.	62,636	58,483	-6.6%
Public Order Offences	46,945	46,105	-1.8%
Offences Against Justice etc.	21,789	19,083	-12.4%
Miscellaneous Offences	1,385	1,339	-3.3%
TOTAL	451,405	426,345	-5.6%

Do the figures show family violence remains a major problem?

Yes they do. There were 655 more recorded family violence offences (+1.2%) in 2010 compared to the previous year, but this is a much lower rise than in recent years. Recent years have seen strong rises in recorded family violence offences, which peaked in mid-2010. There were fewer recorded family violence offences in the second half of last year, than in the same period in 2009. This shows the message is starting to get through.

There is substantial variance in the family violence offending across Districts. Six had reductions in family violence in 2010, the largest of which were in Waitematā (down 10.9%)

and Southern (down 12.0%). In contrast, the biggest increases were in Eastern (up 19.0%) and Canterbury (up 18.3%).

Family violence and the safety of victims of family violence is a priority for police and other agencies working in this difficult area. Family violence is unacceptable in any form and it requires a cultural shift from everyone in the community to make a difference. Police are making progress, and there is an increasing intolerance from the community to family violence. Encouraging people to report family violence, to seek help both as victims and as offenders, is vital to breaking the cycle of family violence.

Can we attribute the turn-around in recorded family violence to Police targeting repeats?

It is difficult to prove or disprove this from available data. We will continue to monitor this relationship.

What about assault offences?

Acts Intended to Cause Injury offences decreased by 1.9% (down 860 offences) in 2010. This area consists almost entirely of Assault offences.

Eight of the twelve Districts recorded decreases in this area. Auckland City had the biggest drop, down 7.5%, while the biggest increase was in Counties/Manukau, up 4.3% (285 offences).

Despite the overall reduction in offences in this division, recorded family violence Assault offences increased by 1.2%. Six of the twelve Districts had drops in family violence assault offences, with Wellington District down by 6.5%. Tasman and Canterbury Districts had the greatest increases, both up by 10.1%. Acts Intended to Cause Injury committed in public places dropped by 5.5% nationally, with reductions recorded in all Districts except Counties/Manukau and Canterbury.

Has there been an increase in recorded fraud offences, given the current economic conditions?

No. The greatest reduction in any division was in Fraud, Deception and related offences - down 26.9% in 2010. At the same time the resolution rate increased to 57.0% in 2010. We are currently looking into possible reasons for this change. It appears that recording practices could be a factor. However, electronic commerce and emergence from recession may also have an influence.

What caused the 58% drop in recorded Fraud offences in Auckland?

Police are currently looking into the reasons for this drop.

How are this year's recorded offences grouped?

The calendar year offences are grouped according to the Australian Standard Offence Classification (ASOC) for grouping offence codes. The move does not change the total number of offences recorded, just how they are grouped, and is a first step towards making statistics in the two countries more comparable. However, important differences still exist which mean statistics are not yet comparable. As an example, Australian statistics only count the most serious offence on each file, whereas New Zealand reports every offence. All New Zealand justice sector agencies began using the ASOC offence codes from 1 July 2010.

What is the Homicide Victims report?

This report presents statistical information about the victims of murder, manslaughter and infanticide. It will be published on the Police website on 1 April.

What are the main findings of the report?

The report presents description statistics, rather than findings, as such. It outlines who the victims were, where they were killed and with what weapon. It also outlines details of the victim's relationship (if any) to the offender.