

NATIONWIDE MOTOR VEHICLE CRIME TRENDS – 2004

Based on the most recent statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, released for the year 2004, a motor vehicle theft now takes place every 25.5 seconds. There is widespread agreement by law enforcement and insurance professionals that a substantial percentage of these reported thefts, between 15- to - 25 percent are actually attempts to defraud an insurer.

National Trends

The overall profile for property crimes in 2004 involving “reported” motor vehicle theft, as compared with what might ultimately prove to be “real” theft, is somewhat improved over the statistics for five and ten years ago, where motor vehicle theft declined about 9.4 percent from the 1999 level, or approximately 18.1 percent when compared with the 1994 estimate, respectively. The number of motor vehicles estimated to have been stolen in 2004 decreased 1.9 percent from the 2003 estimates, which increased 6.6 percent from the 2000 estimate and decreased 16.0 percent from the 1995 estimate.

As in years gone by, large metropolitan areas where crime is typically a greater problem than in smaller cities and less populated suburban and rural areas, continue to lead the nation in the category of property crime of which motor vehicle crimes are a significant portion.

The most significant examples of motor vehicle theft [reported] was in cities with populations of 250,000 and over, which experienced the highest rate of motor vehicle thefts, with 873.5 thefts per 100,000 population.

Offense Analysis

By vehicle type, automobiles were stolen at a rate of 320.5 cars per 100,000 inhabitants in 2004. Commercial vehicles, such as trucks and buses were stolen at a rate of 81.1 vehicles per 100,000 population, and other types of vehicles at a rate of 38.4 per 100,000 population.