

17. Crime & Crashes



In spring 2008, New Hampshire was named the “safest state” in the nation for 2008 by CQ Press. Rankings are based on the FBI uniform crime reports. New Hampshire had the lowest murder rate and the second-lowest rates for aggravated assault and burglary. In addition, the state passed a strict law to protect children from sexual predators in 2006, and increased the number of state police and state prosecutors.¹

High Profile Criminal Cases

In December 2008, a New Hampshire jury handed down the first death sentence since 1959. This case involved the shooting death of a Manchester police officer. It remains to be seen how New Hampshire will handle updating rules, regulations, and procedures pertaining to prisoner execution. The last time a prisoner was executed in New Hampshire was in 1939.

There was a second capital murder case in the state eligible for a death sentence. In this, murder for hire, the defendant eluded the death penalty with a sentence of life in prison.

New Hampshire gained the national stage in late November 2007, when a man held hostages at the Rochester campaign office of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. The man had strapped a bomb-like device to his chest and seized several hostages. He has been sentenced to three years in jail for the hostage takeover.

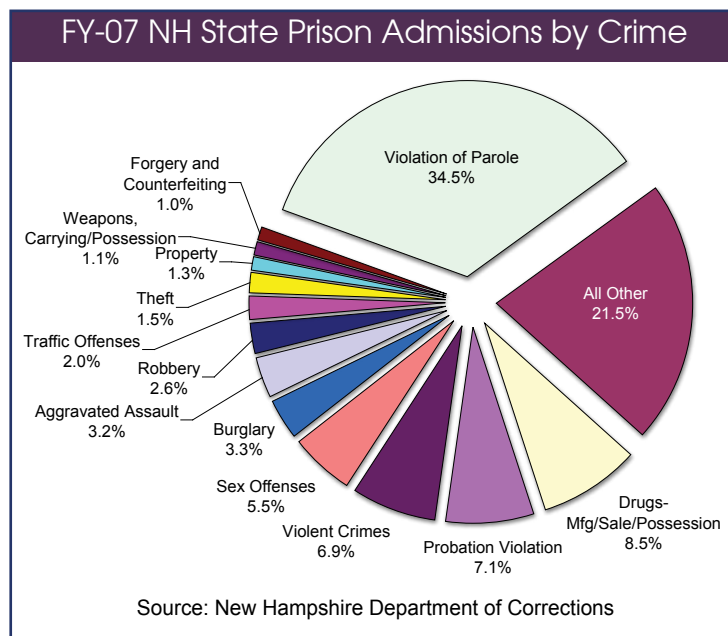
¹ “New Hampshire Named Safest State in the Nation.” *Press Release*. Office of the Governor of New Hampshire. March 17, 2008. Accessed December 5, 2008. <www.governor.nh.gov/news/2008/031708.html>

Another high profile case concluded with a life sentence for a woman convicted of murdering and cremating two men on her farm. After the conviction, she was transferred to a correctional facility out-of-state. Department of Corrections officials state that reasons for a transfer are not part of public record but could be related to access to services for specific needs of the inmate.²

U.S. Marshals Service Apprehensions

In July 2007, a Massachusetts man was the first person in New Hampshire arrested on federal charges for failing to register as a sex offender under the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006. This federal act was passed in July 2006 with the intent of protecting the public from sex offenders and offenders against

² “LaBarre Moved to Massachusetts Prison. No Reason Given For Move Out Of State.” *WMUR.com*. December 1, 2008. Accessed December 2, 2008. <www.wmur.com/news/18180869/detail.html>



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children. In New Hampshire, the U.S. Marshals Service assists jurisdictions in locating and apprehending sex offenders who violate sex offender registration requirements.³

Another high profile case handled by the U.S. Marshals Service was that of Ed and Elaine Brown. The Plainfield couple who were wanted for tax evasion, were convicted at trial in January 2007 and sentenced. Following their April sentencing, the Browns elected to stage a standoff at their home, refusing to surrender. After a six-month ordeal, during which power and telephone service was cut to the home, U.S. Marshals posed as supporters and peacefully carried out the arrests in October 2007. The peaceful resolution was a great relief to Plainfield residents, whose small town had been inundated with supporters, protesters, reporters, and constant police surveillance.⁴

Shoplifting

Generally, with the holidays, there is an increase in the number of thefts and shoplifting incidents. This holiday season is no different, except police are estimating that the sagging economy is contributing to the rise in shoplifting cases. Concord police estimated that shoplifting arrests had climbed nearly 20 percent, while other theft arrests had grown by about 44 percent over the year.⁵

The increase in incidents may not just be related to an increase in criminal activity, but may be the result of an increase in security procedures. Police agencies worked with shop owners to increase awareness of illicit behaviors. Retail associations throughout New England joined efforts to fight organized theft by creating the Law Enforcement Retailer Alliance of New England (LERANE), which is an information-sharing network of law enforcement and retailers. The goal is to achieve a multi-state, multi-jurisdictional method of identifying and tracing theft rings.⁶

3 "First Person Charged in NH Under the Adam Walsh Act." Press Release, United States Marshals Service, July 17, 2007. Accessed December 30, 2008. <www.usmarshals.gov/news/chron/2007/071707.htm>

4 "Couple Arrested After Lengthy Standoff in Plainfield Home." WMUR.com. October 4, 2007. Accessed December 30, 2008. <www.wmur.com/print/14274183/detail.html>

5 Timmins, Annmarie. "Arrests up for thefts, shoplifting. Failing economy is part of the problem." *Concord Monitor*. November 21, 2008. Accessed December 2, 2008. <www.concordmonitor.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20081121/FRONTPAGE/811210305>.

6 Feingold, Jeff. "Retailers join to fight organized theft." *New Hampshire Business Review*. September 25, 2008. Accessed December 8, 2008. <www.nhbr.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080925/NEWS06/809249917&SeArchID=73338435172064>.

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Traffic reports

The Thanksgiving holiday weekend report for 2008 was released December 1st. The New Hampshire State Police logged 938 speeding citations throughout the state, down from last year's 1,043. Authorities attribute the declines in speeding violations to the changing costs of gasoline. Motorists had developed slower driving habits as prices of gasoline rose, therefore reducing the number of summons.

Thanksgiving Holiday Weekend Report	2007	2008
DWIs	23	20
Vehicle Stops	3,925	4,188
Speed Citations	1,043	938
Other Court	219	216
Warnings	2,363	2,347
Defective Equipment	83	82
Accidents	52	74

Source: New Hampshire Department of Safety, Division of State Police

Total Crime Index (Rate per 100,000 population)	2004	2005	2006	2007	Source
United States	3,977.3	3,900.5	3,808.1	3,730.4	FBI
New Hampshire	2,221.4	1,973.7	2,012.8	2,029.3	FBI
Connecticut	2,973.9	2,851.2	2,784.9	2,655.9	FBI
Maine	2,517.4	2,531.6	2,634.2	2,546.8	FBI
Massachusetts	2,928.4	2,819.2	2,838.0	2,823.0	FBI
Rhode Island	3,131.5	2,980.4	2,814.4	2,849.9	FBI
Vermont	2,420.2	2,495.3	2,441.3	2,447.0	FBI

Violent Crime Index (Rate per 100,000 population)	2004	2005	2006	2007	Source
United States	463.2	469.0	473.6	466.9	FBI
New Hampshire	169.5	134.8	138.7	137.3	FBI
Connecticut	289.0	272.6	280.8	256.0	FBI
Maine	103.7	112.5	115.5	118.0	FBI
Massachusetts	460.2	460.8	447.0	431.5	FBI
Rhode Island	247.5	252.4	227.5	227.3	FBI
Vermont	114.8	125.6	136.6	124.3	FBI

Property Crime Index (Rate per 100,000 population)	2004	2005	2006	2007	Source
United States	3,514.1	3,431.5	3,334.5	3,263.5	FBI
New Hampshire	2,051.9	1,838.9	1,874.1	1,892.0	FBI
Connecticut	2,684.9	2,578.6	2,504.1	2,399.9	FBI
Maine	2,413.7	2,419.1	2,518.7	2,428.8	FBI
Massachusetts	2,468.2	2,358.4	2,391.0	2,391.5	FBI
Rhode Island	2,886.0	2,728.0	2,586.9	2,622.6	FBI
Vermont	2,343.6	2,369.7	2,304.7	2,322.7	FBI

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Crime Offenses	2004	2005	2006	2007	Source
Total crime offenses	28,860	25,792	26,466	26,703	FBI
Annual percent change	1.6%	-10.6%	2.6%	0.9%	FBI
Violent crime offenses	2,202	1,761	1,824	1,807	FBI
Annual percent change	13.7%	-20.0%	3.6%	-0.9%	FBI
Property crime offenses	26,658	24,031	24,642	24,896	FBI
Annual percent change	0.8%	-9.9%	2.5%	1.0%	FBI

Criminal Arrests	2004	2005	2006	2007	Source
Total	43,769	46,351	46,100	38,396	UCR/NHES
Annual percent change	16.7%	5.6%	-0.5%	-16.7%	UCR/NHES
Total Drug Offenses	3,389	3,209	3,228	2,570	UCR/NHES
Annual percent change	37.6%	-5.6%	0.6%	-20.4%	UCR/NHES
Total DWI Offenses	5,582	5,035	4,783	4,146	UCR/NHES
Annual percent change	9.3%	-10.9%	-5.3%	-13.3%	UCR/NHES
Adult Total	35,957	37,934	37,786	31,794	UCR/NHES
Annual percent change	16.9%	5.2%	-0.4%	-15.9%	UCR/NHES
Total Drug Offenses	2,694	2,491	2,513	2,000	UCR/NHES
Annual percent change	39.0%	-8.1%	0.9%	-20.4%	UCR/NHES
Total DWI Offenses	5,462	4,944	4,681	4,049	UCR/NHES
Annual percent change	9.5%	-10.5%	-5.6%	-13.5%	UCR/NHES
Juvenile Total	7,812	8,417	8,314	6,602	UCR/NHES
Annual percent change	15.8%	7.2%	-1.2%	-20.6%	UCR/NHES
Total Drug Offenses	695	718	715	570	UCR/NHES
Annual percent change	32.4%	3.2%	-0.4%	-20.3%	UCR/NHES
Total DWI Offenses	120	91	102	97	UCR/NHES
Annual percent change	0.8%	-31.9%	10.8%	-4.9%	UCR/NHES

State Prison Population	2004	2005	2006	2007	Source
Number of prisoners in state prisons (December 31)	2,448	2,520	2,805	NA	USDJ
New Hampshire's incarceration rate ^a (fiscal year)	187	192	207	212	USDJ
Probation and parole caseload	5,497	6,017	6,211	NA	USDJ/NHES
U.S. incarceration rate (federal and state jurisdiction) ^b	486	491	501	509	USDJ
State jurisdiction incarceration rate ^b	432	435	445	451	USDJ
Federal jurisdiction incarceration rate ^b	54	56	58	59	USDJ

^a Number of inmates on June 30th, sentenced for more than one year.

^b Sentenced prisoners with more than 1 year per 100,000 residents.

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Traffic Crashes	2004	2005	2006	2007	Source
Total crashes reported	38,444	39,189	34,801	37,376	DMV
Annual percent change	-0.1%	1.9%	-11.2%	7.4%	DMV/NHES
Total injuries reported	15,585	15,965	13,712	14,726	DMV
Annual percent change	-5.5%	2.4%	-14.1%	7.4%	DMV/NHES
Fatal motor vehicle crashes	158	156	116	122	NHTSA
Number of fatalities	171	166	127	129	NHTSA
Annual percent change	34.6%	-2.9%	-23.5%	1.6%	NHTSA/NHES
Percent alcohol involved, victims ^a	35%	37%	41%	30%	NHTSA/NHES
Fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles	1.26	1.24	NA	NA	NHTSA

^aBased on a Blood Alcohol Content of 0.4% alcohol level or above.

Auto Insurance Claims Loss - Personal and Commercial	2004	2005	2006	2007	Source
Total Claims (\$ millions)	\$450.7	\$469.8	\$467.1	\$465.2	ID
Annual percent change	-4.4%	4.2%	-0.6%	-0.4%	ID/NHES
Personal Claims (\$ millions)	\$388.9	\$403.1	\$405.9	\$404.5	ID
Annual percent change	-3.8%	3.7%	0.7%	-0.3%	ID/NHES
Percent Personal	86.3%	85.8%	86.9%	87.0%	ID/NHES
Commercial Claims (\$ millions)	\$61.7	\$66.7	\$61.2	\$60.7	ID
Annual percent change	-8.5%	8.1%	-8.2%	-0.8%	ID/NHES