

Austin Police Department

Annual Crime and Traffic Report: 2015 Final Report



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December 5, 2016

Background

Each year, the Austin Police Department reports crime statistics to the FBI through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. After federal review, these become our “official” statistics and are useful in tracking year-to-year performance and trends, as well as comparing our crime statistics to other US cities of similar size.

This report contains Austin’s final crime statistics reported to the FBI; it updates our preliminary report produced in April 2016.

Overview

This document contains UCR crime data for 2015 (January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015). For comparison, we have included data from other large US cities with populations between 500,000 and 1,500,000. Previously, we compared Austin to cities with populations 500,000 to 999,999, but have enlarged this pool as Austin’s population has grown. See Page 3 for a list of comparison cities.

We have also included selected traffic statistics on fatal crashes and comparable data for other jurisdictions.

The report is organized by crime category (violent or property) and by type of crime within each category (e.g., murder and robbery within violent crime).

Notable Findings

This year’s crime statistics include the following noteworthy findings:

- Austin’s **violent crime rate** of 373 per 100,000 residents decreased 6% from 2014, and is less than half the rate of other large US cities. (Page 4)
- Austin’s **property crime rate** of 3,771 per 100,000 residents decreased 9% from 2014 and represents a 20-year low. (Page 11)
- Austin saw **declines in burglary, theft, and auto theft rates** (down 16%, 8%, and 2% respectively); all represent 20-year lows. (Pages 12-14)
- Total **violent and property crime clearance rates** continue to exceed other large US cities; theft is the only type where Austin lags – 13% vs 14% for large US cities. (Page 16)
- **Traffic fatalities** increased 62%, from 63 in 2014 to 102 in 2015; and **fatal crashes** increased 66%. **Impairment continues to be a significant factor**; the impaired fatality rate exceeds those of both Texas and the US. (Pages 17-20)

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Overall Crime Statistics

The FBI identifies seven “Part I Index Crimes,” based on their seriousness and frequency of occurrence. Each crime is defined – including how incidents are counted – and grouped into two categories:

Violent crimes

Murder (number of victims)
 Rape (number of victims)
 Robbery (number of offenses)
 Aggravated Assault (number of victims)

Property crimes

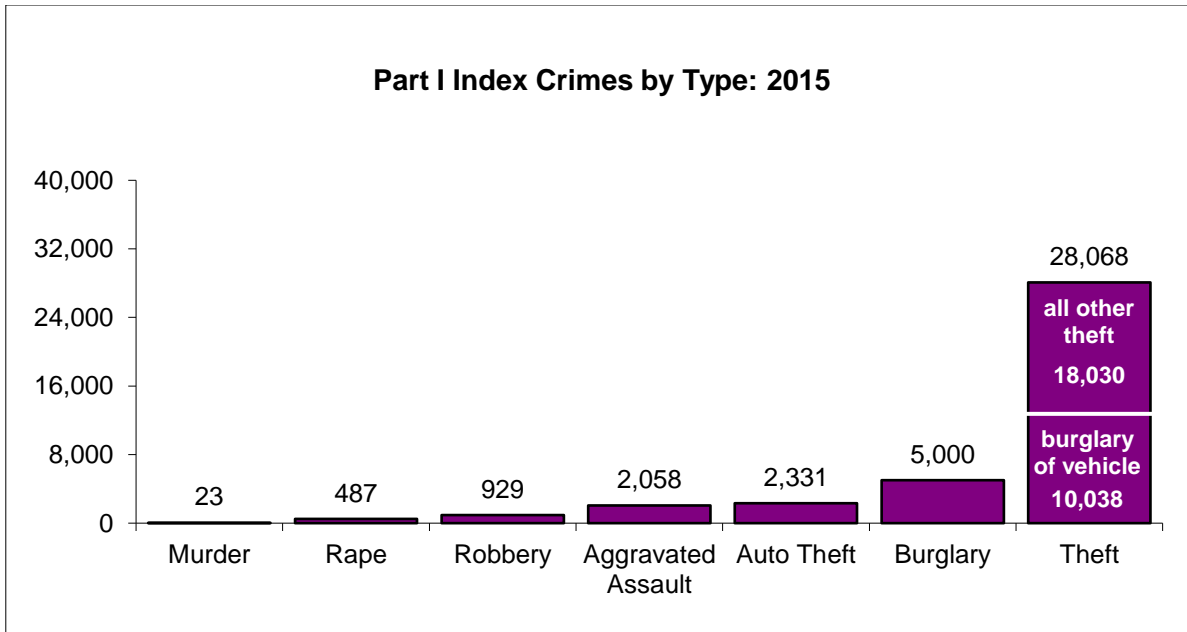
Burglary (number of premises entered)
 Theft (number of offenses)
 Auto Theft (number of vehicles)

These categories and crime definitions are used for reporting city-level crime statistics to the FBI under its Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program.

Incidents and Rates

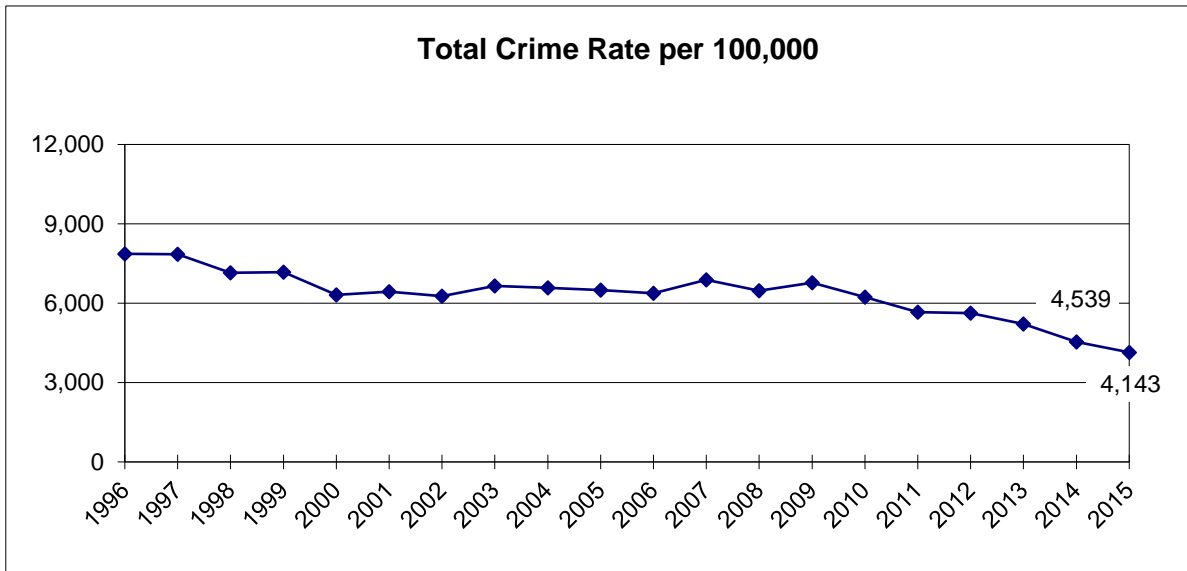
Throughout this report, crime is reported in terms of actual numbers (e.g., incidents, victims) as well as rate per 100,000 residents. Rates allow for comparisons to previous years and with other cities.

Part I Index Crimes	Offenses			Rate per 100,000		
	2014	2015	% chg	2014	2015	% chg
Murder	32	23	-28%	3.5	2.5	-31%
Rape	571	487	-15%	63	52	-18%
Robbery	873	929	6%	97	99	2%
Aggravated Assault	2,105	2,058	-2%	233	219	-6%
Total Violent Crime	3,581	3,497	-2%	396	373	-6%
Burglary	5,733	5,000	-13%	634	533	-16%
Theft	29,423	28,068	-5%	3,255	2,990	-8%
Auto Theft	2,288	2,331	2%	253	248	-2%
Total Property Crime	37,444	35,399	-5%	4,142	3,771	-9%
Total Index Crime	41,025	38,896	-5%	4,539	4,143	-9%



Trends

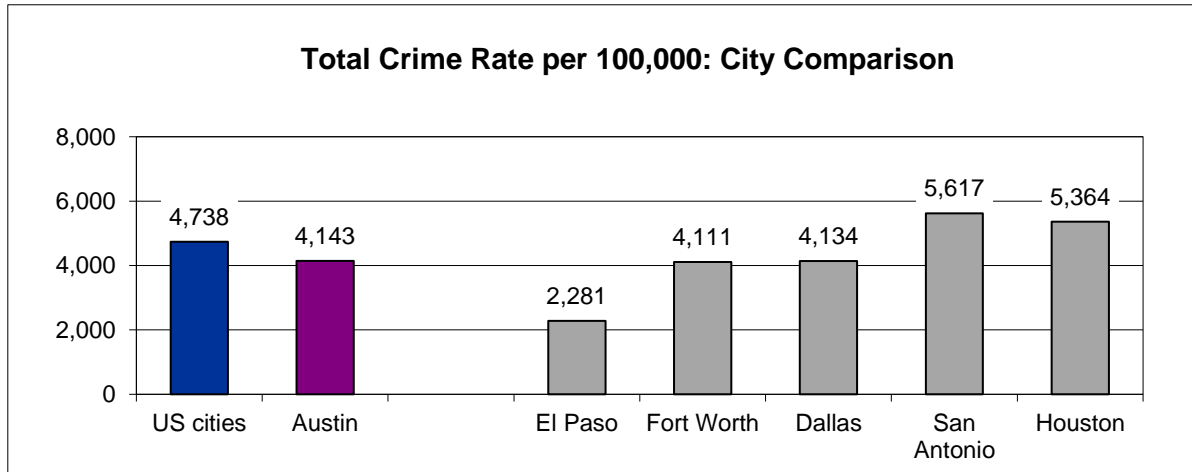
In 2015, the number of all Part I Index crimes for Austin was 38,896. This was a 5% decrease in incidents as compared with 2014 (41,025). The crime rate per 100,000 residents was 4,143 in 2015 – a 9% decrease from the 2014 rate of 4,539 and a 20-year low (1996 to 2015).



Compared to Other Cities

This chart shows how Austin compares to large US cities (population 500,000 to 1,500,000). According to FBI UCR, Austin's 2015 population was 938,728. For regional comparison, large Texas cities are identified; Houston is the only Texas city *not* included in US cities average because its population exceeds the range.

Austin's rate of 4,143 offenses per 100,000 was 13% lower than the average rate of 4,738 for all large US cities.



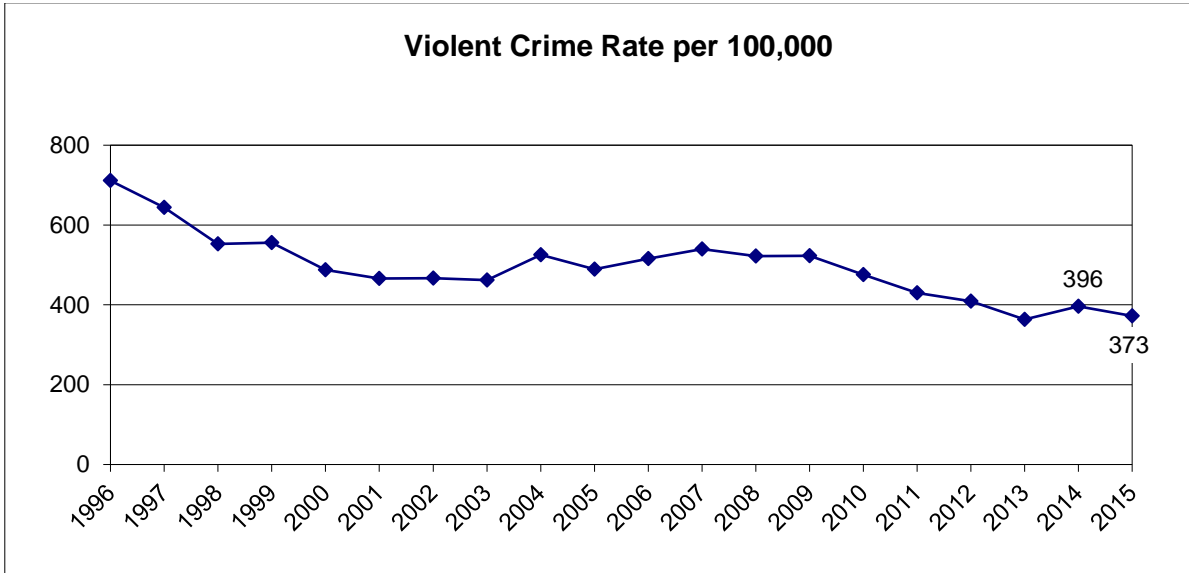
The following cities are included in the "US cities" category above, and elsewhere throughout this report:

- Albuquerque*
- Baltimore
- Boston
- Charlotte*
- Columbus
- Dallas
- Denver
- Detroit
- El Paso
- Fort Worth
- Fresno
- Honolulu
- Indianapolis
- Jacksonville
- Louisville
- Memphis
- Milwaukee
- Nashville
- Oklahoma City
- San Antonio
- San Diego
- San Francisco
- San Jose
- Seattle
- Tucson
- Washington DC

* *Austin adopted the FBI's broadened rape definition in 2014 but these two cities continued to use the old definition in 2015. Because their results are not comparable to Austin's, they are excluded from rape, violent, and total crime comparisons in this report.*

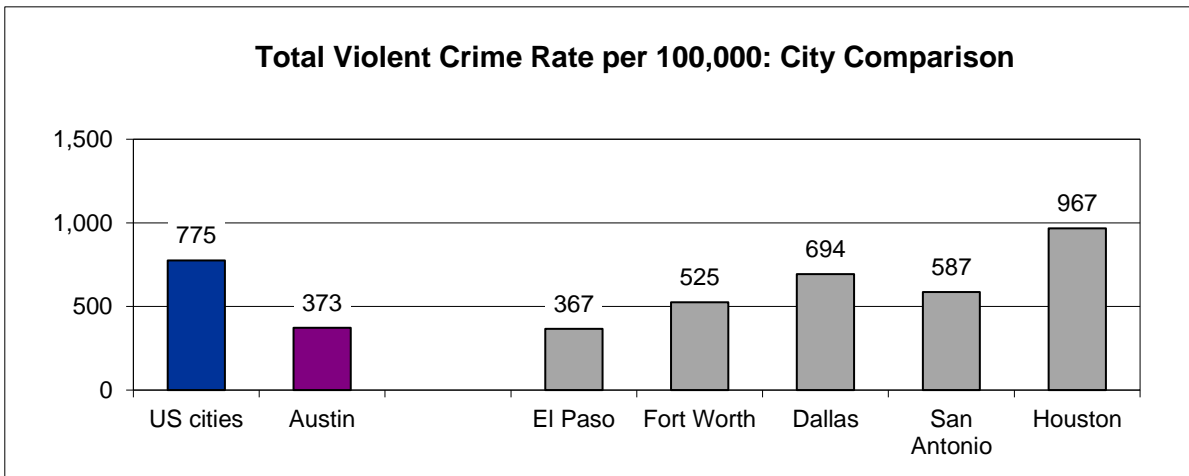
Violent Crime

In 2015, the number of violent crimes was 3,497, a 2% decrease in incidents from 2014 (3,581). The rate of violent crime per 100,000 residents was 373 in 2015, down 6% from 396 in 2014.



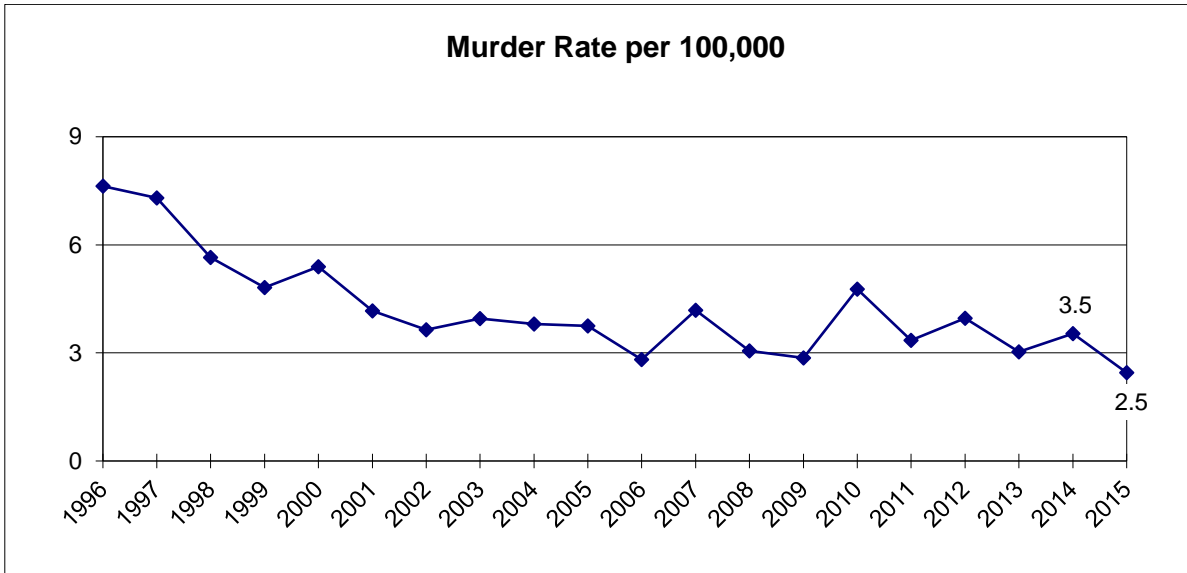
Compared to Other Cities

Austin's rate of 373 violent crimes per 100,000 was 52% lower than the average rate of 775 for all large US cities.

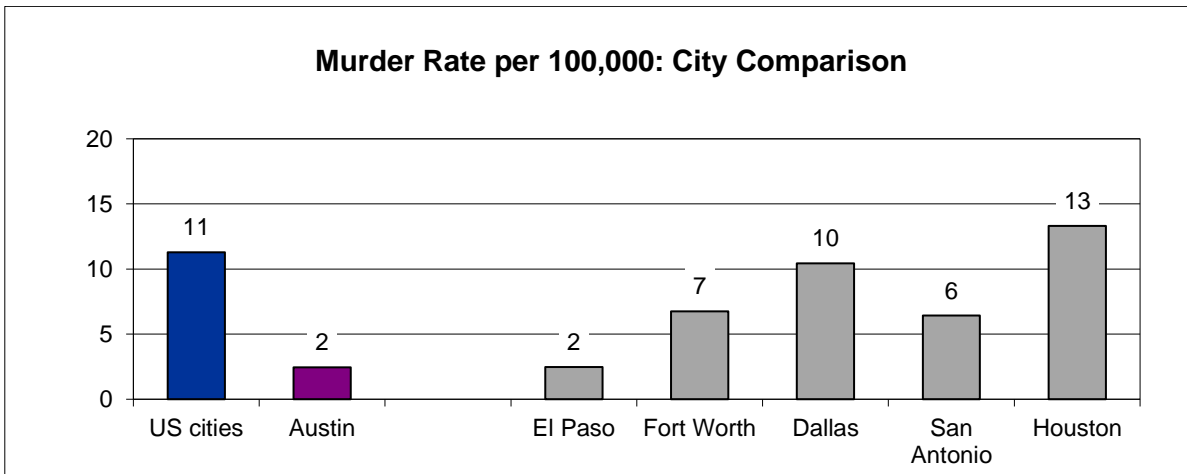


Murder

During 2015 there were 23 murder victims, down from 32 in 2014. Over the previous 10 years (2005 to 2014), the number of murder victims ranged from 20 to 38. The murder rate was 2.5 per 100,000 residents, down from the rate of 3.5 in 2014 and a 20-year low (1996 to 2015).

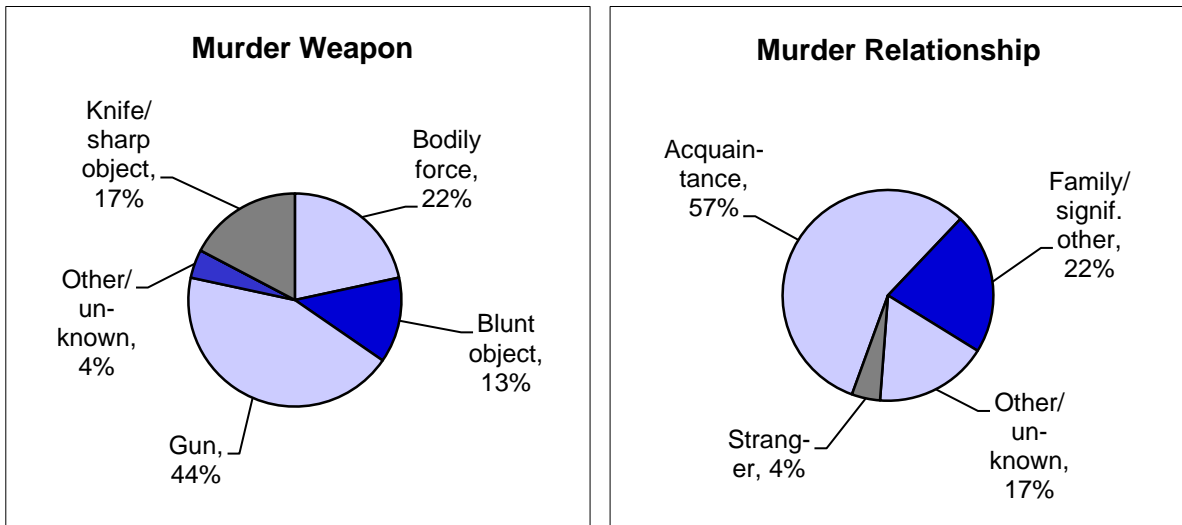


Austin's murder rate was 78% lower than the average of US cities our size.



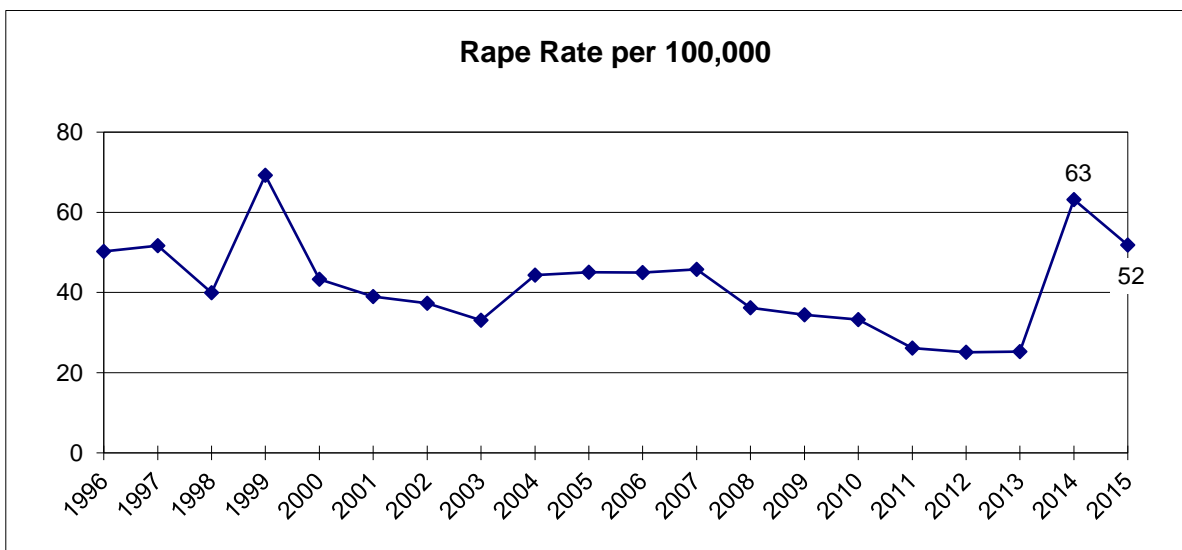
In 2015, guns were the most frequent weapon used in murders (44%), followed by bodily force (22%).

The relationship (connection) between the victim and suspect was established in 83% of the cases. Of these, the victim knew the offender as an acquaintance, family member, significant other, or roommate in 95% of murders, up from 88% in 2014.



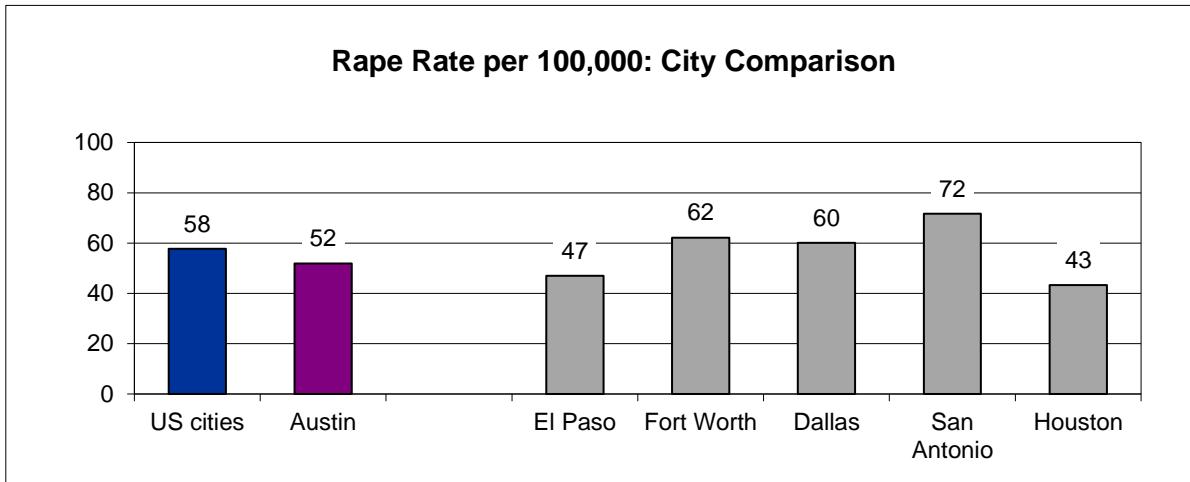
Rape

There were 487 reported victims of rape in 2015, down from 571 in 2014. The rate was 52 per 100,000 residents, down 18% from 63 in 2014.

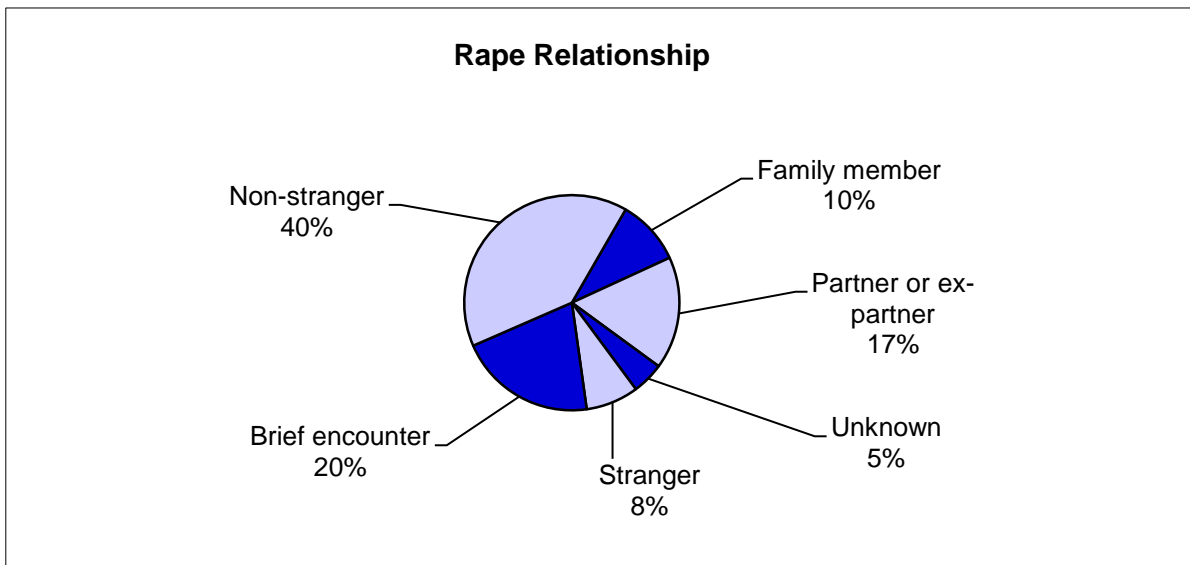


Note: In 2014, Austin began using the FBI's modified rape definition that includes sexual assaults not previously included in rape counts, thereby increasing counts and rates starting that year. Counts are comparable for 2014 and future years, but not prior years.

Austin's rate of reported rapes was 10% lower than the average of US cities of the same size.

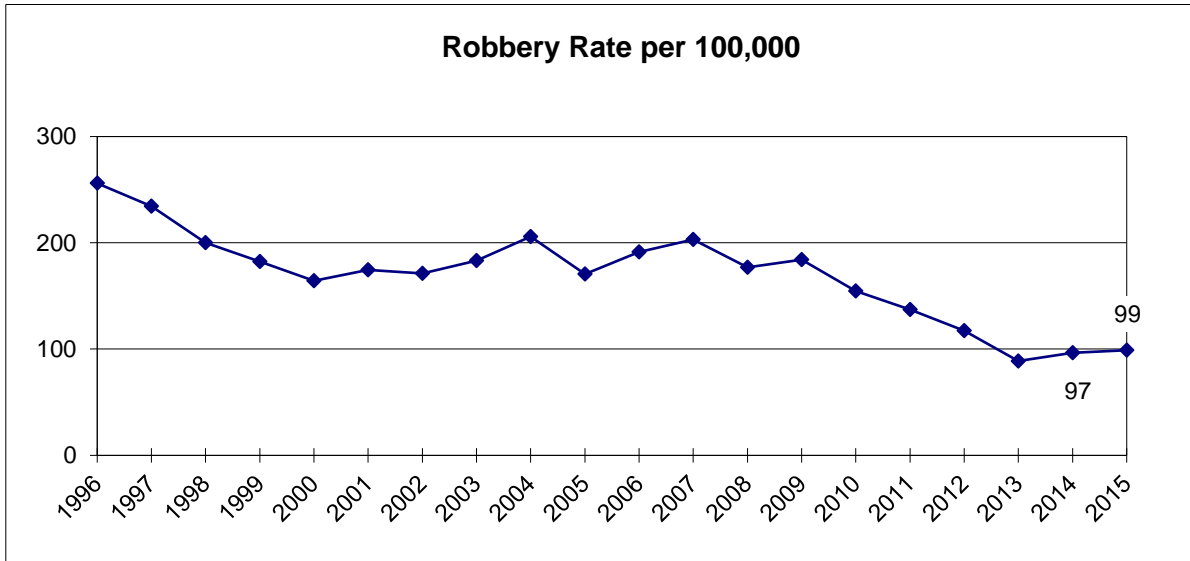


The relationship (connection) between the victim and suspect was established in 95% of the cases. Of these, the victim knew the suspect as a family member, partner or ex-partner, from a brief encounter, or otherwise as a non-stranger in 92% of the incidents. This was unchanged from 2014.

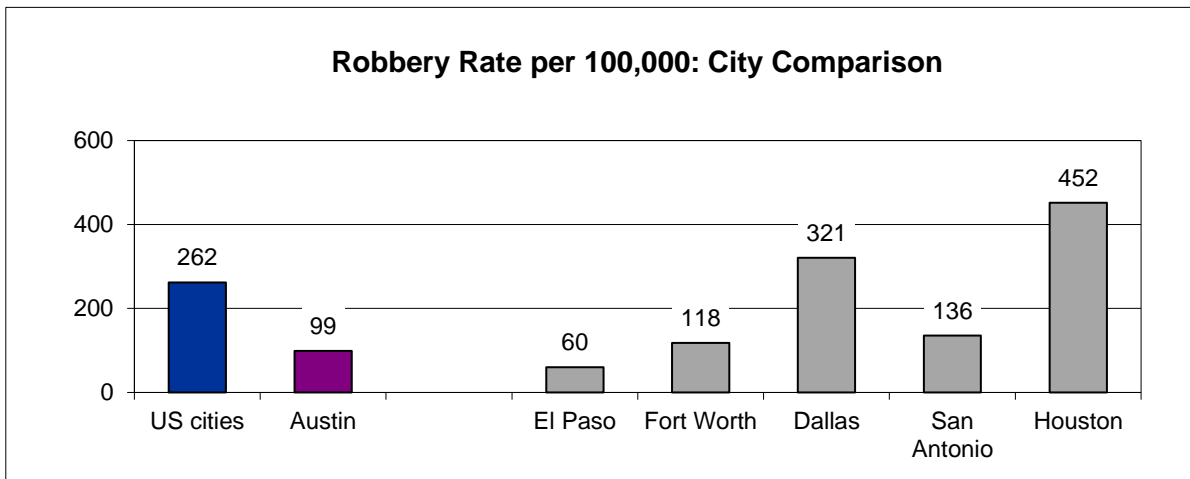


Robbery

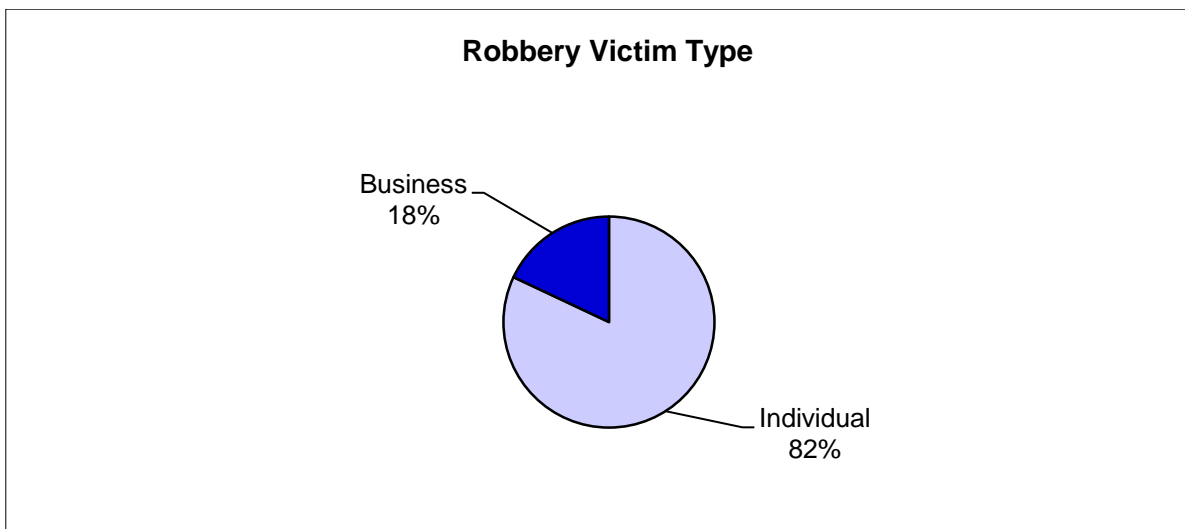
There were 929 robberies reported in 2015, up from 873 in 2014. The rate was 99 robberies per 100,000 residents, which was a 2% increase from the previous year's rate of 97.



Austin's rate of reported robberies was 62% lower than the average of US cities of the same size.

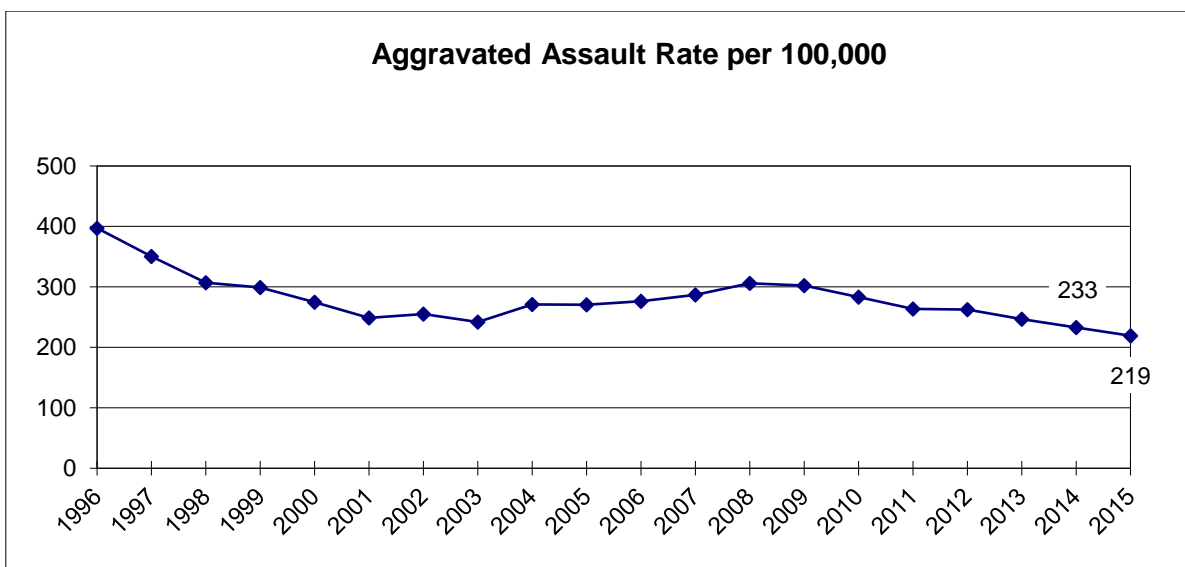


In 2015, 82% of robberies were committed against individuals, as compared with 18% that occurred at businesses. During 2014, 84% of robberies were against individuals and 16% occurred at businesses.

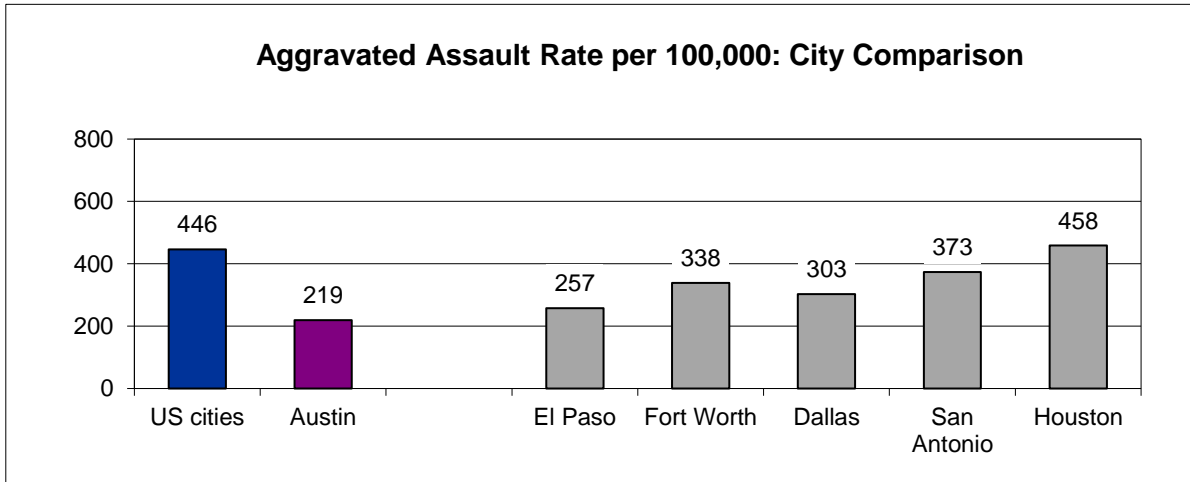


Aggravated Assault

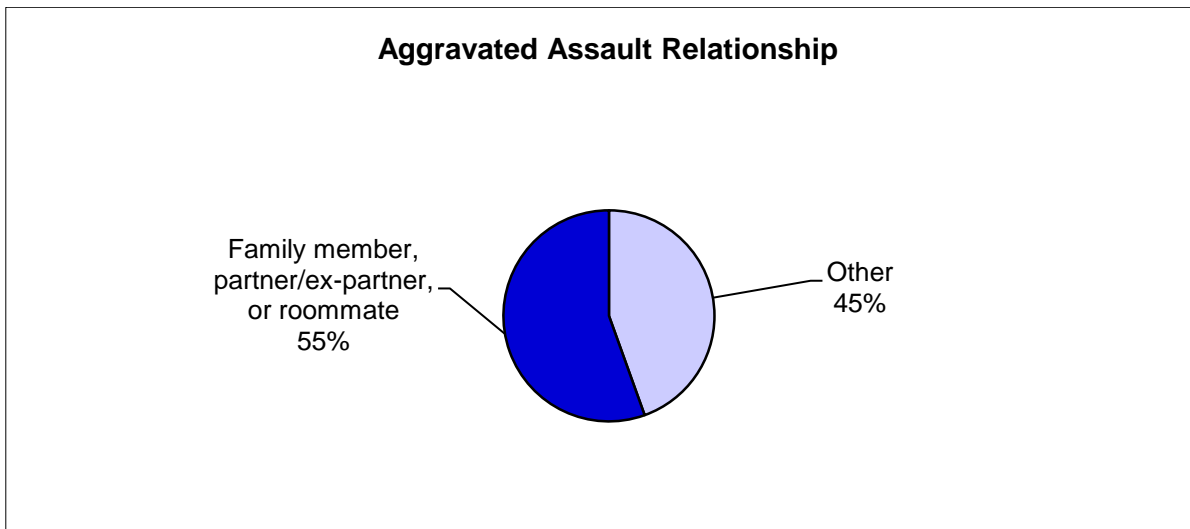
There were 2,058 reported victims of aggravated assault in 2015, down from 2,105 in 2014. The rate was 219 victims per 100,000 residents, down 6% from the prior year's rate of 233 and represents a 20-year low (1996 to 2015).



Austin's rate of aggravated assault victims was 51% lower than the average of US cities of the same size.

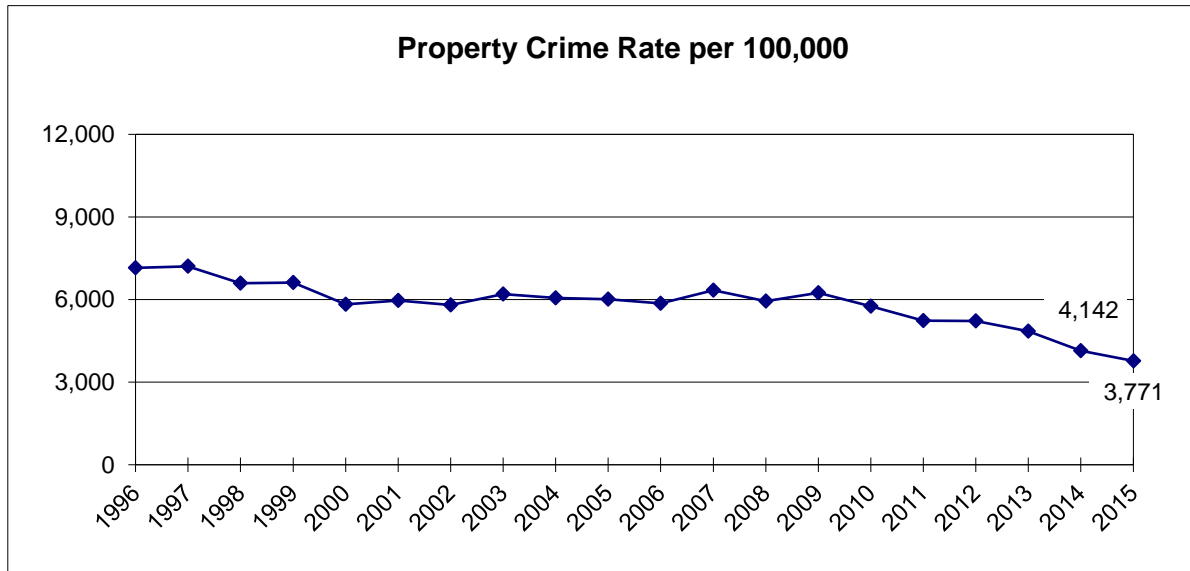


More than half (55%) of aggravated assaults were committed by a family member, partner or ex-partner, or roommate of the victim. This was down from 56% in 2014.



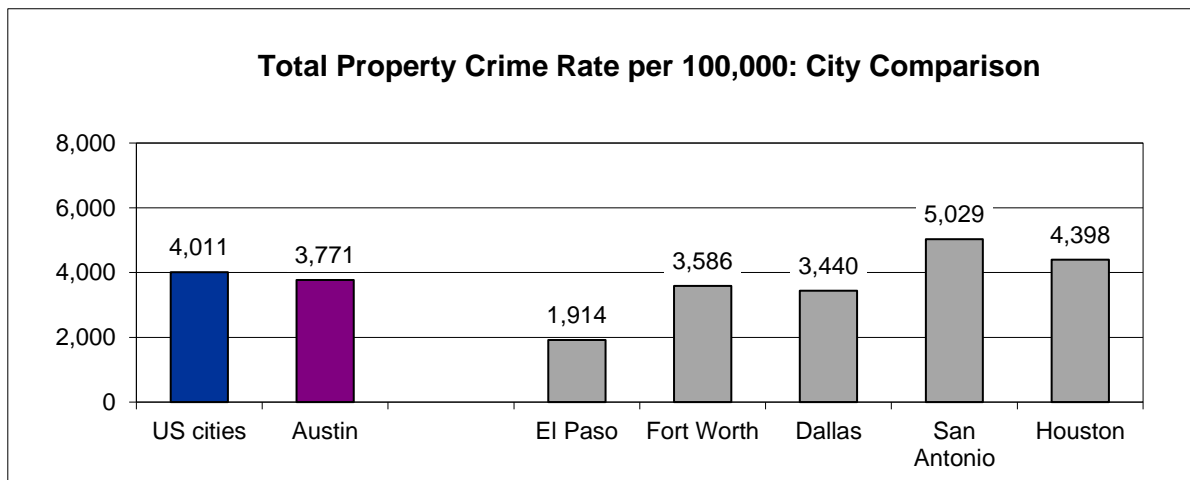
Property Crime

In 2015, the number of property crimes in Austin was 35,399, down from 37,444 in 2014. The rate of property crime per 100,000 residents was 3,771 in 2015, which was down 9% from the prior year's rate of 4,142 and represents a 20-year low (1996 to 2015).



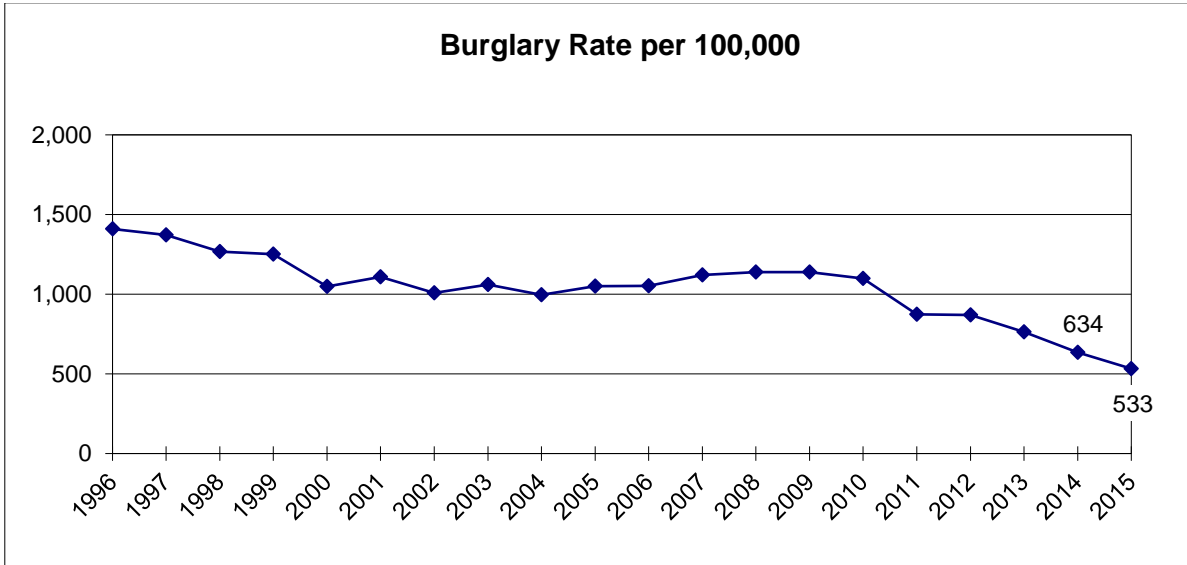
Compared to Other Cities

Austin's rate of 3,771 property crimes per 100,000 in 2015 was 6% lower than the average rate of 4,011 per 100,000 for large US cities.

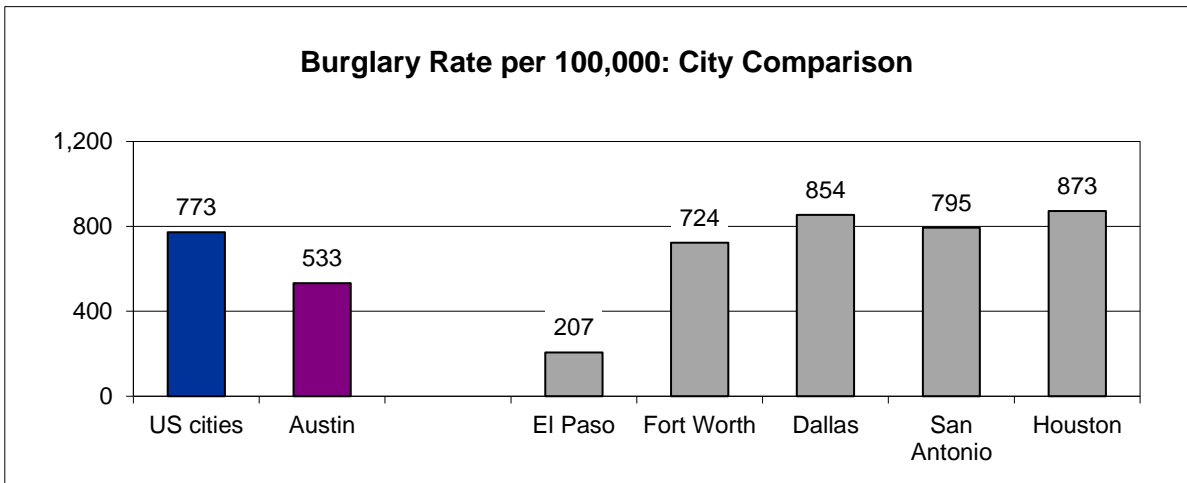


Burglary

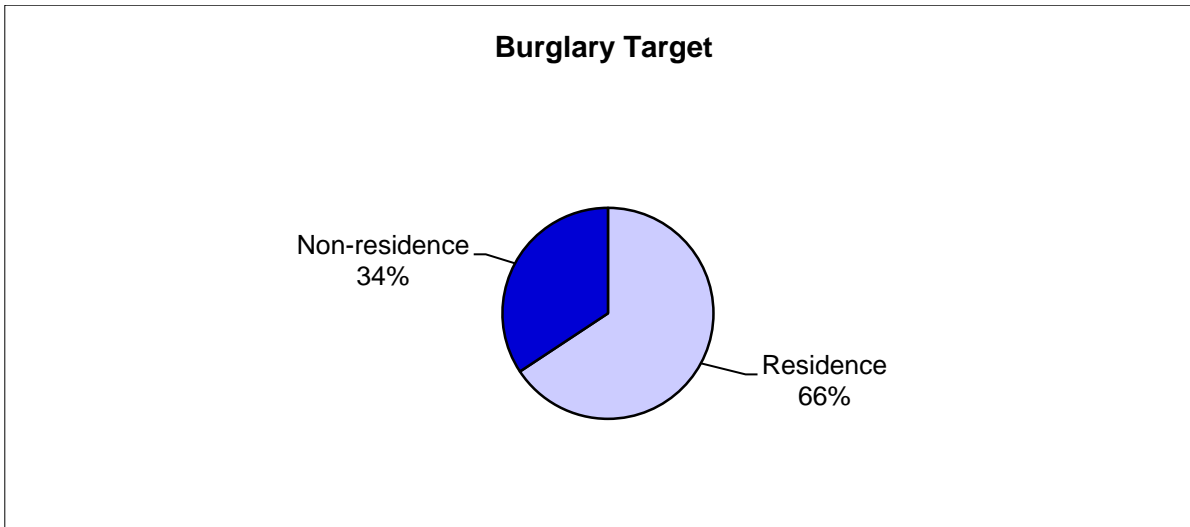
There were 5,000 reported burglaries in 2015, down from 5,733 in 2014. The rate was 533 burglaries per 100,000 residents, which was down 16% from the prior year's rate of 634 and represents a 20-year low (1996 to 2015).



Austin's burglary rate in 2015 was 31% lower than the average of US cities of the same size.

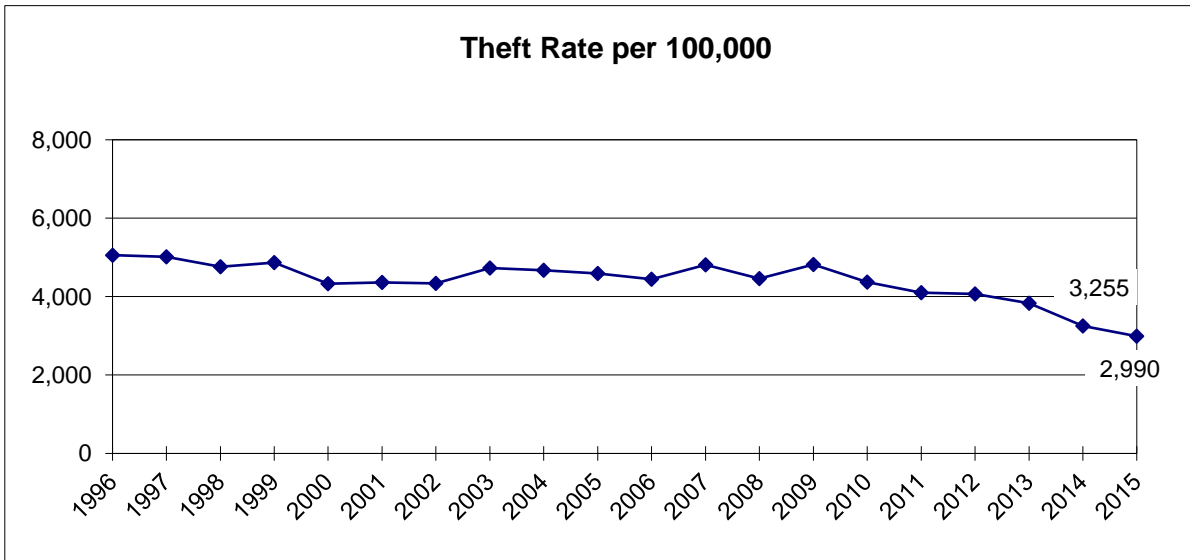


In 2015, 66% of burglaries involved residences and 34% involved other targets (businesses, offices, restaurants, etc.). During 2014, 70% of burglaries involved residences and 30% involved other targets.

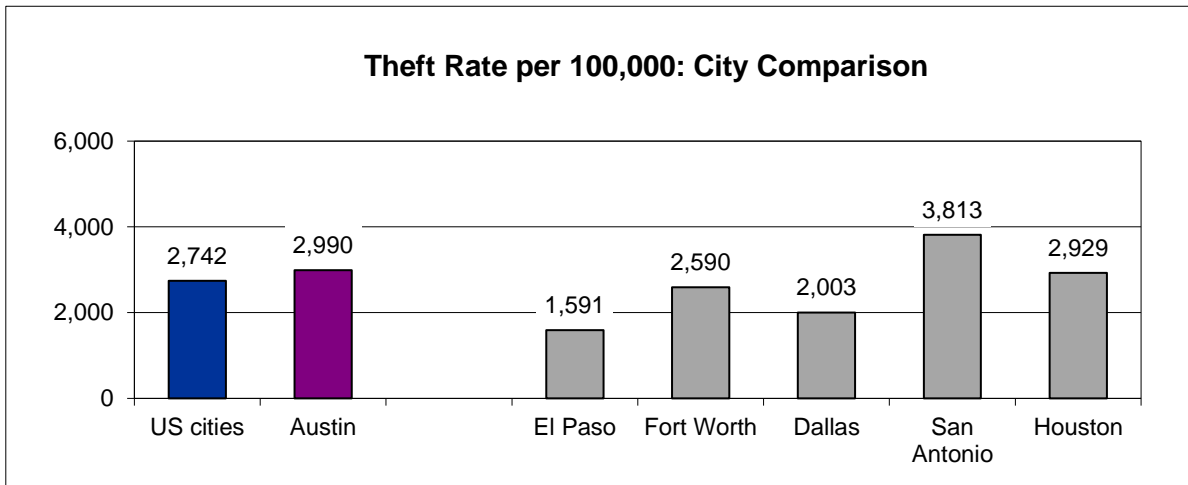


Theft

There were 28,068 reported thefts in 2015, down from 29,423 in 2014. The rate was 2,990 thefts per 100,000 residents, which was down 8% from the rate of 3,255 in 2014 and represents a 20-year low (1996 to 2015).



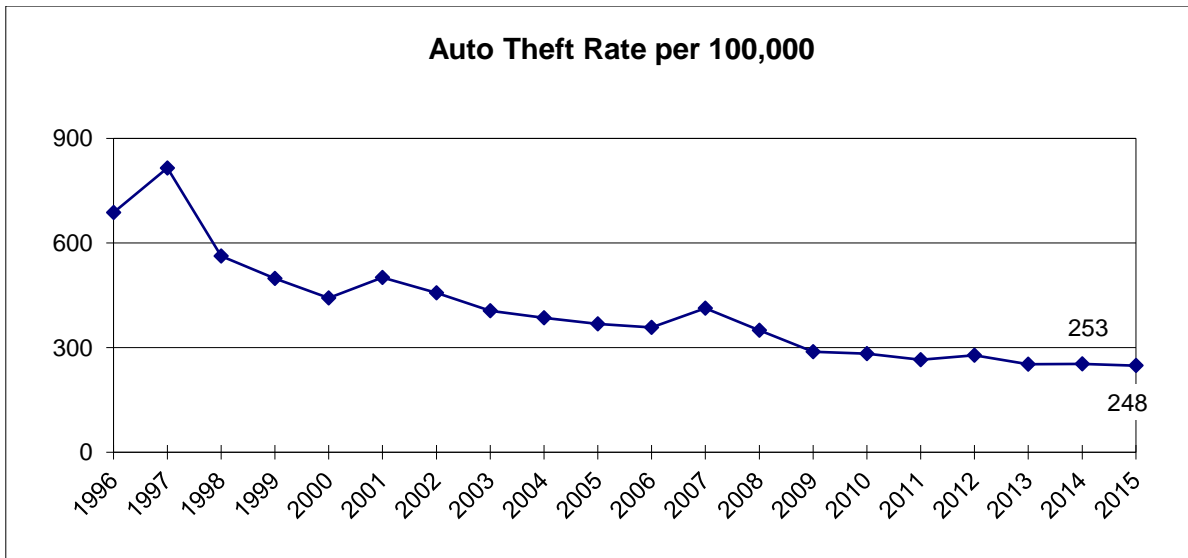
Austin's rate of thefts in 2015 was 9% higher than the average of US cities of the same size.



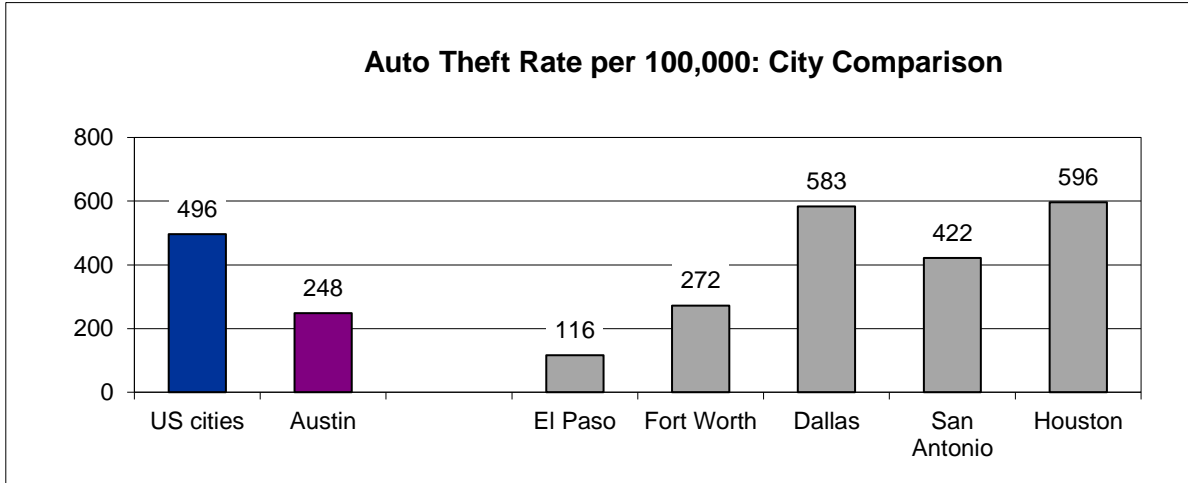
Of all thefts reported in 2015, 36% were burglary of vehicle, or BOV offenses. This proportion was unchanged from 2014.

Auto Theft

There were 2,331 reported auto thefts in 2015, up from 2,288 in 2014. The rate was 248 auto thefts per 100,000 residents, which was a 2% decrease from the rate of 253 in 2014.

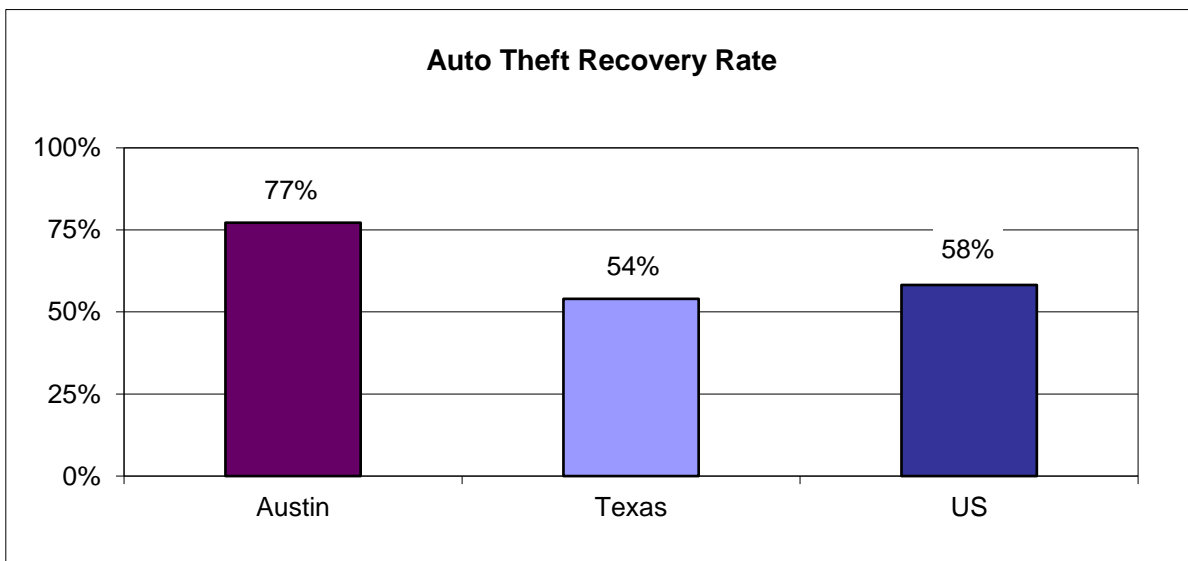


Austin's auto theft rate in 2015 was half the average of US cities of the same size.



The most frequently stolen vehicles were Honda Accord sedans; trucks made by Ford, Chevrolet, and GMC; and sport utility vehicles made by Chevrolet and GMC. Together, they represent 34% of all stolen vehicles where the make and model were known.

In terms of recovery, of all vehicles stolen in 2015, 77% were successfully recovered, down from 80% in 2014. Austin's recovery rate is higher than those of both Texas and the US (includes all US cities).



Solving Crime

Crimes can be cleared in two ways: by arrest and by exception. A crime is cleared exceptionally when a circumstance prevents an arrest. Examples include when the offender dies, the victim refuses to cooperate with the prosecution, or the offender is being prosecuted in another jurisdiction and cannot be extradited.

Part I Index Crimes	% of Crimes Cleared by Arrest or Exception		
	Austin		US Cities (pop 500,000 - 1,500,000)
	2014	2015	2015
Murder	66%	87%	54%
Rape	54%	53%	35%
Robbery	31%	31%	21%
Aggravated Assault	61%	60%	41%
Total Violent Crime	53%	51%	34%
Burglary	11%	12%	8%
Theft	15%	13%	14%
Auto Theft	16%	20%	8%
Total Property Crime	15%	13%	12%

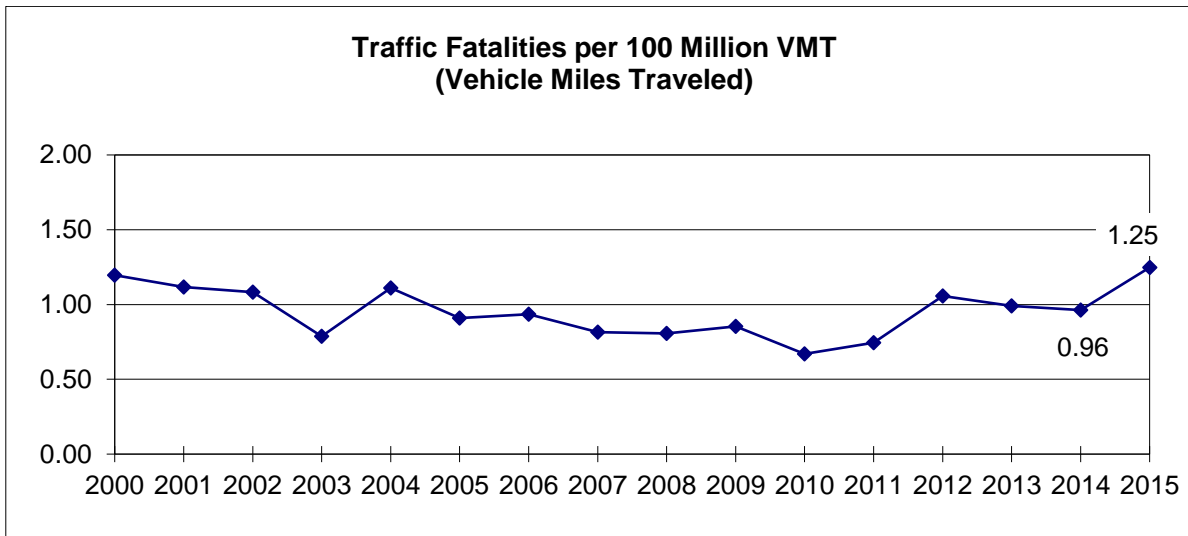
During 2015, Austin police solved, or cleared, 51% of the reported violent crimes, down from 53% in 2014. Austin outperformed other cities on clearing all violent crime types: murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Solving property crimes is generally more difficult because many property crimes are discovered after the crime has occurred, with no known suspects or witnesses. During 2015, Austin solved 13% of property crimes, down from 15% in 2014. Austin outperformed other cities in clearing burglaries and auto thefts, and performed slightly lower than other cities in clearing thefts.

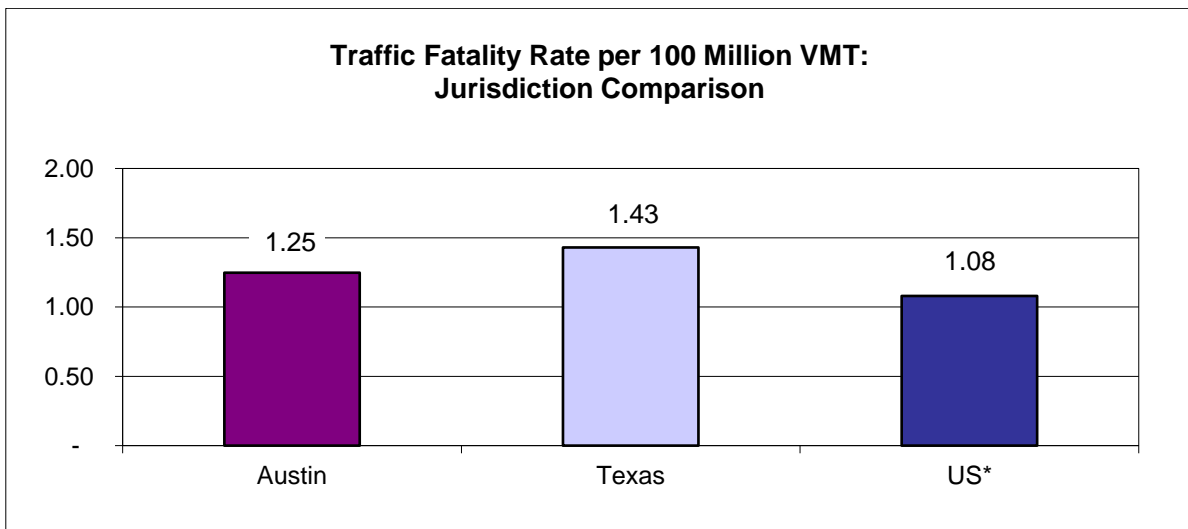
Traffic Fatalities

During 2015 there were 93 fatal crashes that resulted in 102 deaths, as compared with 56 fatal crashes that resulted in 63 deaths in 2014.

The 2015 traffic fatality rate was 1.25 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT), as compared with the rate of .96 in 2014.

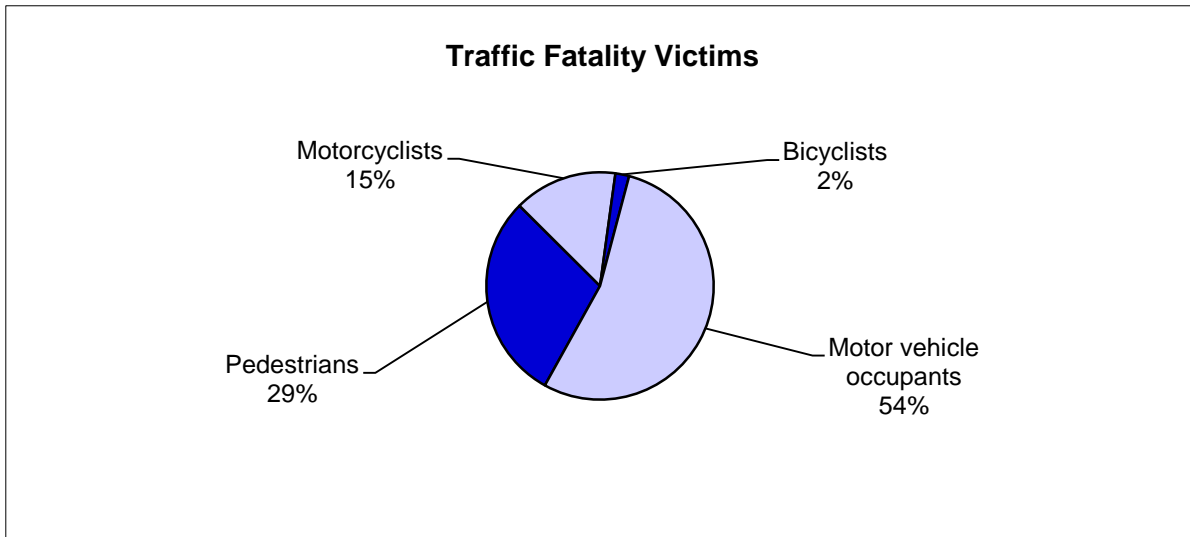


Austin's rate of 1.25 fatalities per 100 million VMT was lower than the Texas rate (1.43) but higher than the rate for all US cities (1.08).

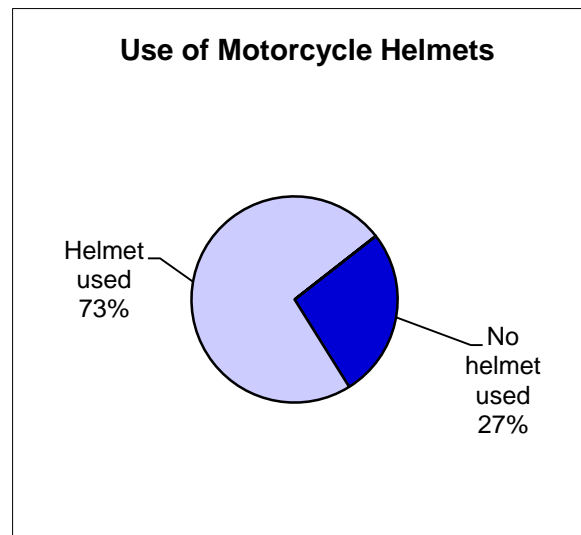
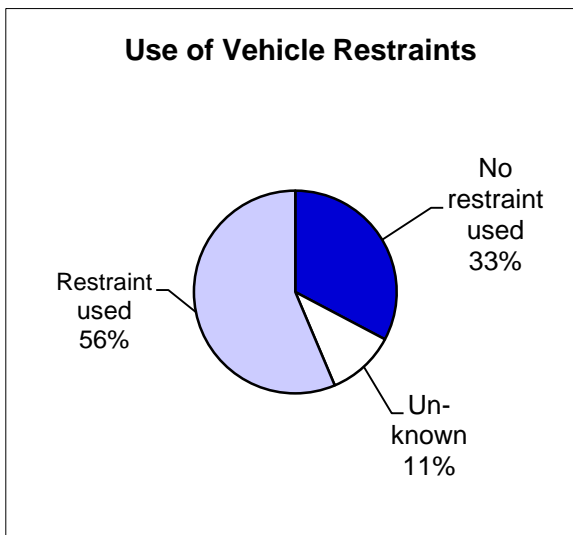


* 2014 US statistics are the most current data available from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

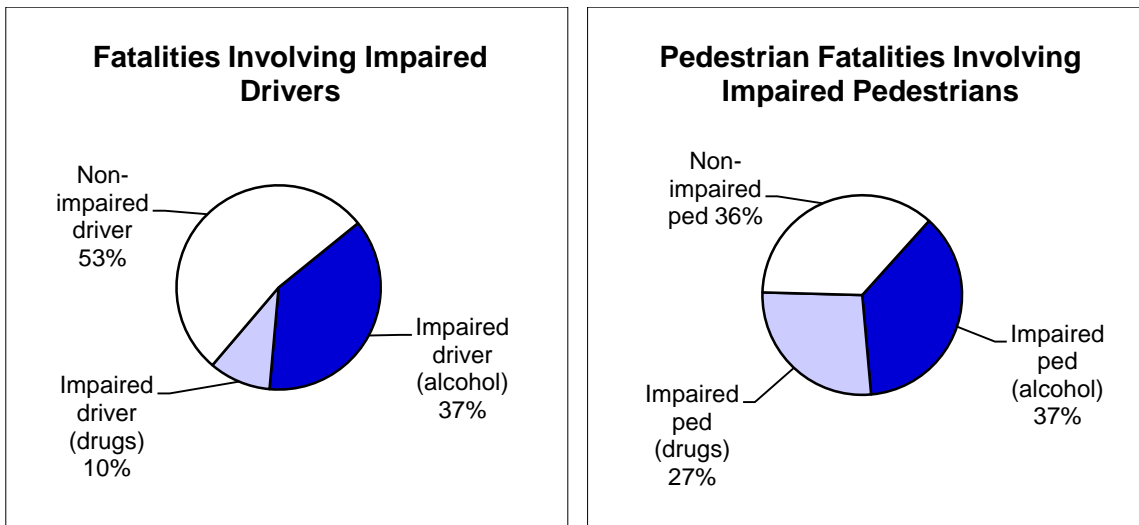
In 2015 most traffic fatalities involved motor vehicle occupants (55, or 54%), followed by pedestrians (30, or 29%), motorcyclists (15, or 15%) and bicyclists (two, or 2%). Similarly, in 2014, most traffic fatalities involved motor vehicle occupants (34, or 54%), followed by pedestrians (15, or 24%), followed by motorcyclists (13, or 21%) and bicyclists (one, or 1%).



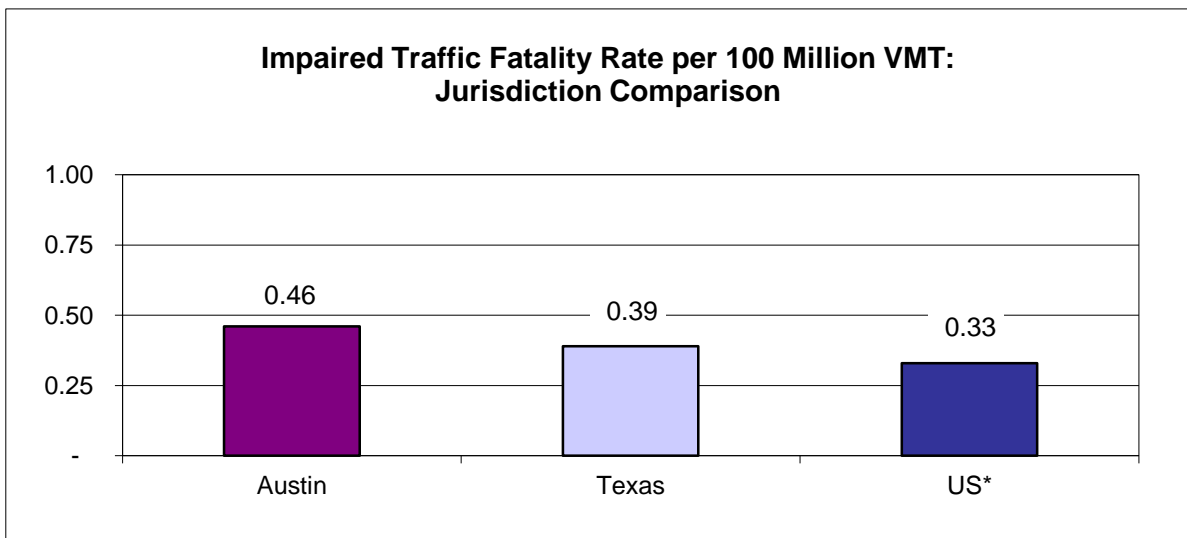
Of all motor vehicle fatalities in 2015, 18 (or 33%) victims were not using restraints, as compared with 10 (or 29%) victims in 2014. Of all motorcycle fatalities, four (or 27%) victims were not wearing helmets, as compared with six (or 46%) in 2014.



Of all fatalities in 2015, 38 (or 37%) involved an alcohol-impaired driver, as compared with 28 (or 44%) in 2014. Of all pedestrian fatalities in 2015, 11 (or 37%) involved an alcohol-impaired pedestrian, as compared with eight (or 53%) in 2014.



Austin's rate of traffic fatalities involving driver alcohol impairment is .46 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT). That rate is higher than the rates for both Texas (.39) and all US cities (.33).



* 2014 US statistics are the most current data available from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

In 2015, 32 (or 34%) fatal crashes involved speed, as compared with 20 (or 36%) in 2014. And in 2015, 35 (or 38%) fatal crashes occurred on freeways (IH-35, Mo-Pac, US Hwy 183, and State Hwy 71/290 West), as compared with 29 (or 52%) in 2014.

