



## Crime in the San Diego Region 2021

While crime is still at historic lows in the San Diego region, there was some distinct differences between 2021 and 2020. While the pandemic is still affecting our communities in a variety of ways, things were more open than they had been in 2020 and the data reflected this. With the release of [42 Years of Crime in the San Diego Region: 1980 Through 2021](#), this CJ Flash highlights some of these changes, provides historical context, and looks at how mental health calls for services varied in 2021, compared to 2020.

### Highlight 1

The most common crime in both 2020 and 2021 remained larceny, with a monthly average (mean) of 2,972, 9% in 2021 higher than in 2020 (Table 1). Motor vehicle theft and aggravated assault (the second and third most commonly reported crimes) also increased, as did the monthly average number of rapes.

Table 1

Monthly Average Number of Crimes Reported to Law Enforcement in the San Diego Region

	Monthly Mean 2020	Monthly Mean 2021	Percent Change in Monthly Means
Larceny	2,739	2,972	9%
Motor vehicle theft	777	929	20%
Aggravated assault	659	741	12%
Nonresidential burglary	337	327	-3%
Residential burglary	272	269	-1%
Robbery	211	202	-4%
Rape	81	89	10%
Homicide	10	10	0%

### Highlight 2

Even though the annual number of reported crimes increased for several of the categories, it is important to consider the annual lows and highs historically, going back to 1980. As Table 2 shows, the 2021 numbers were below the historical highs in all eight of the categories presented and was a 42-year low for two (robbery and residential burglary). When considering these numbers, it is important to remember that some definitions changed over time and that other types of crime (e.g., identity theft) have grown over time, but are not included in these crime categories.



Table 2

## Historic Lows, Highs, and 2021 Annual Numbers for Crime in the San Diego Region

	42-Year Low (Year Reported)	2021 Annual Number	42-Year High (Year reported)
Homicide	67 (2010)	118	278 (1991)
Rape*	596 (1985)	1,072	1,162 (2018)
Robbery	2,418 (2021)	2,418	8,554 (1992)
Aggravated Assault*	4,767 (1982)	8,887	15,406 (1994)
Residential Burglary	3,226 (2021)	3,226	28,137 (1980)
Nonresidential Burglary	3,602 (2018)	3,923	11,592 (1991)
Larceny	32,865 (2020)	35,663	85,448 (1989)
Motor Vehicle Theft	9,325 (2020)	11,145	40,897 (1989)

\*The definition of rape changed in 2015 which resulted in a larger number of crimes being categorized in this category. Domestic violence became a crime with mandatory reporting in 1986, which increased the number of reported aggravated assaults as a result.

### Highlight 3

According to a recently published article,<sup>1</sup> 27% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 are estimated to have experienced some type of intimate partner violence in their lifetime. In the San Diego region in 2021, 18,185 domestic violence incidents were reported to law enforcement, an increase of 3% from 2020. This 2021 number represented a monthly average of 1,515 – more than any of the crime types listed in Table 1 with the exception of larceny.

Figure 1

### Number of Domestic Violence Incidents Reported in the San Diego Region



<sup>1</sup>Sardinha, L., Maheu-Giroux, M., Stockl, H., Meyer, S.R., & Garcia-Moreno, C. (2022, February 26). Global, regional, and national prevalence estimates of physical or sexual, or both, intimate partner violence against women in 2018. *The Lancet*, 399, 10327, P803-813.

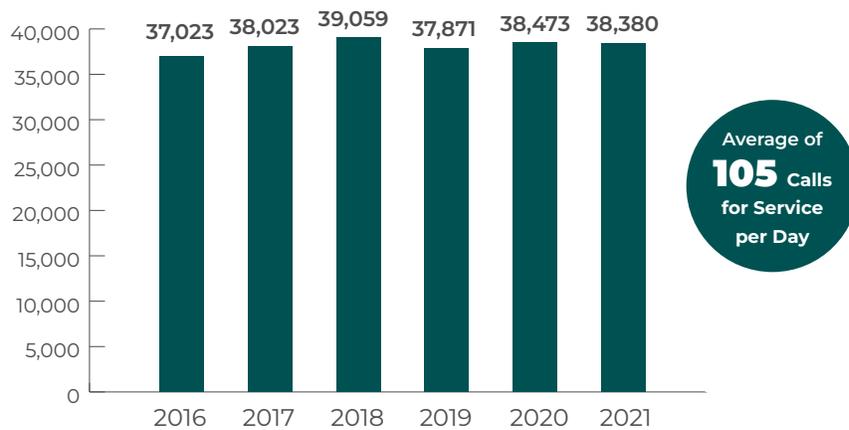


## Highlight 4

The effect of the pandemic on mental health has been widely acknowledged. Last year, SANDAG prepared an InfoBits which examined regional mental health calls for services and updated it for this CJ Flash to determine how numbers changed regionally. As Figure 2 shows, there were 38,380 mental health calls for service in 2021, which equates to an average of 105 per day, a decrease of less than 1% from 2020 and an increase of 4% from 2016, the first year these statistics were requested from local agencies.

Figure 2

### Number of Mental Health Calls for Service Reported to Local Law Enforcement, San Diego County



## Highlight 5

The number of hate crime events in the San Diego region decreased from 87 in 2020 to 81 in 2021. The most common hate crime motivation in 2021 remained actual or perceived race/ethnicity (70%), followed by sexual orientation (21%), and religion (9%) (Figure 3). Of the 57 events related to race/ethnicity, 49% involved an individual who identified as Black/African-American, 18% as Asian/Pacific Islander, 11% as Hispanic/Latino/Latina, 9% as White, 5% multiple and other, and 4% Arabic.

Figure 3

### Hate Crime Motivations in the San Diego Region, 2021

