



SANDAG

Crime in the San Diego Region Mid-Year 2021 Statistics

September 2021

Research findings from the Criminal Justice Clearinghouse

CJ
BULLETIN

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Introduction

Since 1980, SANDAG has been compiling and reporting regional crime statistics for San Diego County and remains the only local source for regional statistics not available at the national level. This summary presents information regarding how many and what types of Part I crimes were reported to local law enforcement in the first half of 2021 and how these numbers compare to prior years. Because of the pandemic that resulted in the stay home order in March 2020, additional analyses are presented here regarding month-by-month change over the first half of the year, as well as comparisons to mid-year 2019, prior to the pandemic.

Violent crime

- A total of 6,080 Part I violent crimes were reported to local law enforcement agencies in the region between January and June 2021 (Tables 1 and 6). Part I violent crimes include homicide, rape,¹ robbery, and aggravated assault. This number was higher than what was reported in both 2020 (14%) and 2019 (9%).
- The violent crime rate of 3.64 per 1,000 population was 7% higher than it was ten years ago and the second highest rate it has been in the ten-year comparison period (Figure 1).
- Of the 18 jurisdictions with violent crime numbers that were able to be compared, 13 had a higher violent crime rate in the first six months of 2021 compared to the same period in 2020 and 5 had a lower one (Table 3).
- There were 48 homicides in the first half of 2021, lower than the 54 reported in 2020, but higher than the 38 reported in 2019 (Tables 1 and 8).
 - As Figure 2 shows, the number of homicides were higher in 2021, compared to 2020, in three of the months and lower the other three months.
 - For the 29 homicide incidents in which a motive could be determined (to date) in 2021, 17% were described as related to an argument, 17% to gangs, and 13% to domestic violence (not shown).
- There were 532 rapes reported to law enforcement in San Diego County in the first half of 2021, more than the number reported in the first half of 2020 (433) when the stay-home order was in effect, but around the same number as in 2019 (when there were 539) (Tables 1 and 8).

¹ When interpreting these mid-year figures, it is important to note that in 2015, California law enforcement agencies began to use the new and broader Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) definition of rape that includes male victims, sodomy, penetration with any body part or objects, and no longer requires force. As a result of this change, some Part I crimes that previously would have been aggravated assaults are now rapes and some Part II crimes that previously would not have been captured in these statistics are now Part I crimes.

Highlights

Six months into 2021, there have been more violent and property crimes reported to local law enforcement, compared to the first half of 2020. However, because 2020 was an unprecedented year in recent history, it is important to consider crime trends over a longer period of time. Looking at violent crime, there were fewer homicides and robberies reported in 2021 to date, compared to 2020, but more rapes and robberies. The greatest decreases in reported rapes were seen in the months when the stay-home order was most restrictive and the 2021 numbers are back to around what they were in 2019. Aggravated assaults were up compared to both 2019 and 2020 numbers, with the largest jumps in those that involved a firearm.

Property crime was up, compared to 2020 numbers, but was still the second lowest rate in the past ten years. The number of reported burglaries was down, compared to 2020, but residential burglaries increased in number most recently, and non-residential was down. Larcenies increased in number, compared to 2020, as did motor vehicle thefts.

- Additional analysis of the change month-to-month revealed that the greatest increases in rapes in 2021 were seen in April, May, and June, which is not surprising given that social distancing was possibly at its peak the prior year during these months (Figure 3).
- The number of robberies reported across the region decreased 7% from mid-year 2020 (1,268) to 2021 (1,177). This mid-year total was also 17% lower than the reported total at mid-year 2019 (Tables 1 and 8).
 - Comparing the changes month-to-month, there was variation, with more robberies reported in three months in 2021, compared to 2020, and fewer the other three months, with no consistent pattern (Figure 4).
- The 4,323 aggravated assaults reported during the first six months of the year represented a 20% increase from the prior year (Tables 1 and 8) and was also similarly higher than the number reported in 2019 (3,572, a 21% increase). Aggravated assaults that involved the use of a firearm increased more than any other type of aggravated assault (55%, compared to 9% to 21% increases for other weapon types) (not shown).
 - As Figure 5 shows, there were more aggravated assaults reported each of the first six months in 2021, compared to 2020, ranging from 15% to 27% more.
- There were 8,936 domestic violence incidents reported in the first half of 2021, which include aggravated assaults and other offenses (both violent and property), a 5% increase from the 8,496 reported in the first half of 2020 (Table 12) and a 9% increase from the 8,235 reported in 2019.
 - As Figure 6 shows, there were fewer domestic violence incidents reported in January and February 2021, compared to those months in 2020 prior to the pandemic, but for the remaining four months, there were more, ranging from 5% more in March to 14% more in June.

Property crime

- A total of 27,023 property crimes were reported to local law enforcement agencies in the first half of 2021 (Tables 1 and 7). This was 10% higher than it was during the first half of 2020, but 1% lower compared to the first half of 2019. Property crime includes burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.
- The mid-year 2020 property crime rate of 16.17 was 18% lower than it was in 2011 (19.82) and the second lowest rate in the past ten years (Figure 7).
- Of the 25 jurisdictions with property crime numbers that were able to be compared, 17 had a higher property crime rate in the first six months of 2021 compared to 2019, and 8 had a higher one (Table 4).
- The 3,525 burglaries reported in the San Diego region in the first half of 2021 represented a decrease of 3% from the first half of 2020 (when there were 3,636). This number was also lower than what was reported in the first half of 2019, prior to the pandemic (3,844, -8%). Residential burglaries decreased 4%, compared to mid-year 2020, and were also down 22%, compared to mid-year 2019. For non-residential burglaries, there were fewer compared to 2020 (-2%), but more compared to 2019 (7%) (Tables 1 and 8).
 - As Figure 8 shows, residential burglaries were lower for January through April 2021, compared to 2020, but were up in both May (9%) and June (24%). On the other hand, non-residential burglaries were up the first two months of 2021, compared to 2020, but down (between 3% and 26%) the next four months.
 - A greater percentage of burglaries in the first half of 2021 involved forced entry (57%), compared to 2020 (55%) and 2019 (47%) (not shown).
- The number of larcenies reported in the region at mid-year 2021 (18,036) represented a 10% increase from mid-year 2020 (16,355), but a 4% decrease from mid-year 2019 (18,811) (Tables 1 and 8).

- As Figure 9 shows, the number of reported larcenies was up for five of the past six months, but increased the most between April and June.
- There was variation over the past six months in terms of the type of larceny, with theft of motor vehicle parts and accessories increasing the most (86%), followed by theft from motor vehicles (15%), theft of bicycles (13%), theft from buildings (3%), and other types of theft, including coin operated machines (1%). Pickpocket and shoplifting were down mid-year 2021, compared to 2020 (-30% and -13%, respectively) (Table 1).
- Motor vehicle theft increased 21%, from 4,527 vehicles stolen at mid-year 2020 to 5,462 at mid-year 2021. This 2021 number was also 19% higher than the 4,584 reported in mid-year 2019 (Tables 1 and 8).
 - There were double-digit increases in the number of motor vehicles stolen January through May 2021, compared to 2020 (ranging from 12% to 37%), with a 3% increase in June (Figure 10).

Hate crime

- At mid-year 2021, there were 45 hate crimes reported to law enforcement in the San Diego region, compared to 46 at mid-year 2020.
- The most common motivation identified in both years was race, though a greater percentage was attributed to race in 2020 (76%), compared to 2021 (64%).
- Of the 34 hate crime cases attributed to race in 2020, 2 or 6% involved Asian victims. In 2021, this percentage had increased to 18% (5 of 28). While these numbers are relatively small and should be considered when comparing percentage change, they are consistent with national statistics and other anecdotal feedback from the community regarding increases in these types of hate crimes since the pandemic began.

Background

The ability for SANDAG to analyze data and produce reports on crime trends for the region relies upon a cooperative agreement with each local law enforcement agency. SANDAG obtains crime data from every agency on a monthly basis, allowing the presentation of regional crime data in a timely manner.

Crimes are categorized according to the FBI's standardized UCR guidelines for law enforcement agencies across the country. Reported crimes are tallied in ARJIS according to the date of data entry, which may or may not reflect the day of occurrence. It should be noted that while local law enforcement agencies strive to tabulate their statistics in a timely fashion, data entry delays sometimes occur, which may affect statistics.

The mid-year crime rates per 1,000 residents are estimated by multiplying the number of crimes reported between January and June by two and dividing that number by the population which has been divided by 1,000.

The statistics presented in this CJ Bulletin include crime rates and numbers for San Diego County and individual jurisdictions for the first half of 2021. Comparisons are made to prior years. The number and type of crimes that are reported can be influenced by several factors, including the degree of opportunity to commit crimes in a given jurisdiction, which can be related to the amount of commercial land use and ease of access to the area. It should be noted that in 2021, California States Parks was only able to share data for January and February and will not be contributing to UCR after this date. Data from this agency represented less than one percent of the crimes reported in the San Diego region.

Crime statistics for January through December 2021 are expected to be available in April 2022. If you have any questions about these numbers, please contact the Criminal Justice Research Division at (619) 699-1900. For more information about the SANDAG Criminal Justice Clearinghouse, please visit sandag.org/cj.

Figure 1

Annualized violent crime rate mid-year 2011-2021

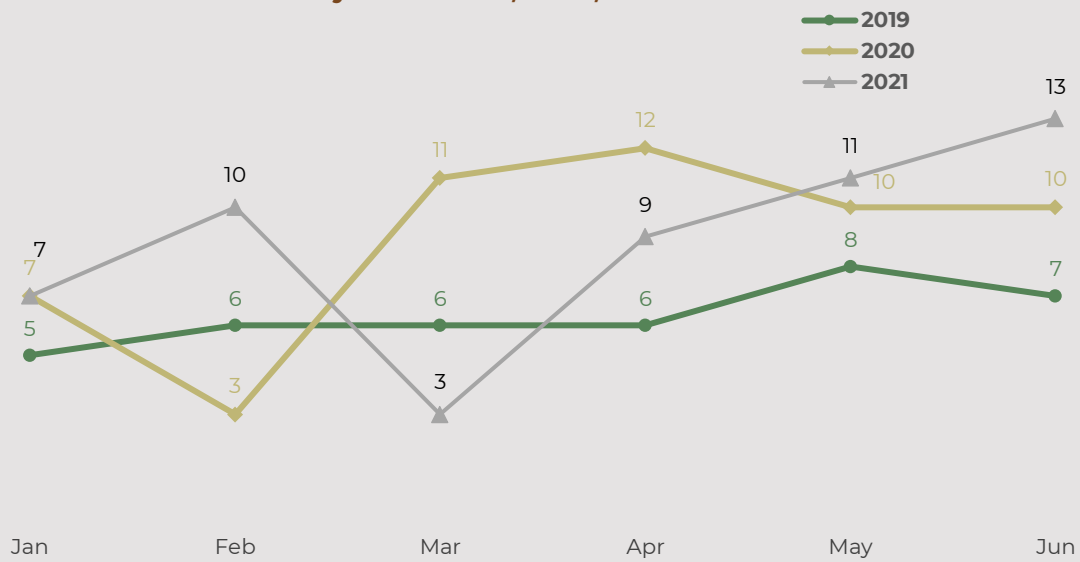


Notes: The violent crime rate includes reported homicides, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assault.

Sources: California Department of Finance; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates, v2020, 2019-2020

Figure 2

Number of homicides January - June 2019, 2020, and 2021

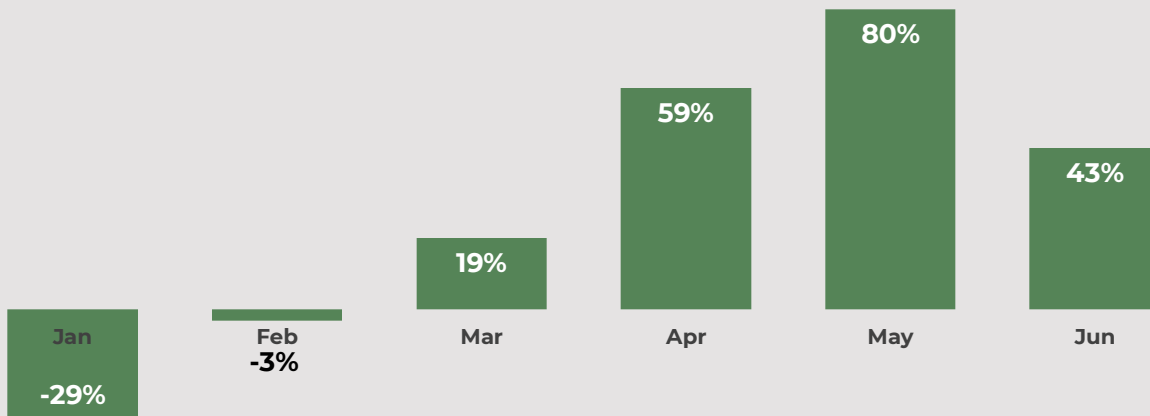


Notes: The property crime rate includes reported burglaries, larceny thefts, and motor vehicle thefts.

Sources: California Department of Finance; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates, v2020, 2019-2020

Figure 3

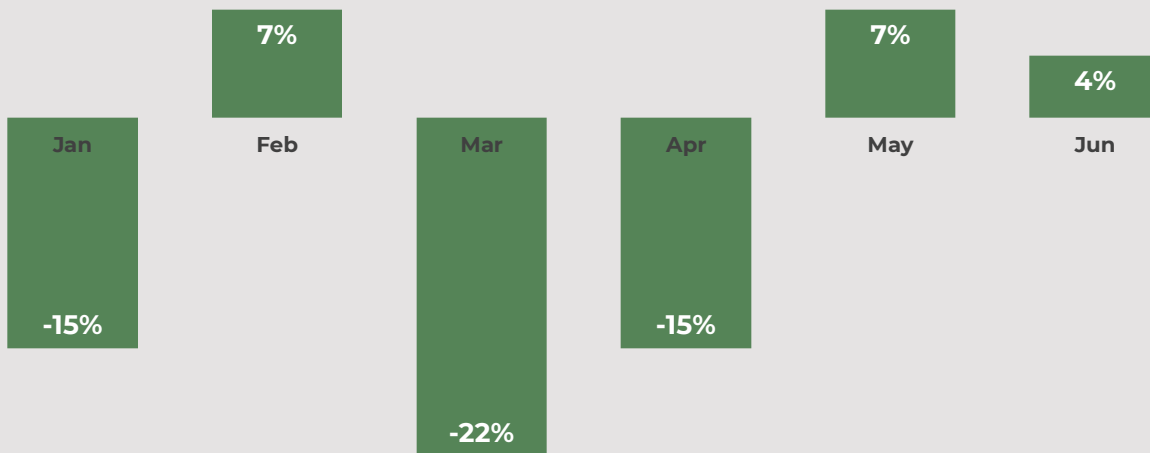
Percent change in number of reported rapes in the San Diego region, mid-year 2020–2021



Sources: SANDAG

Figure 4

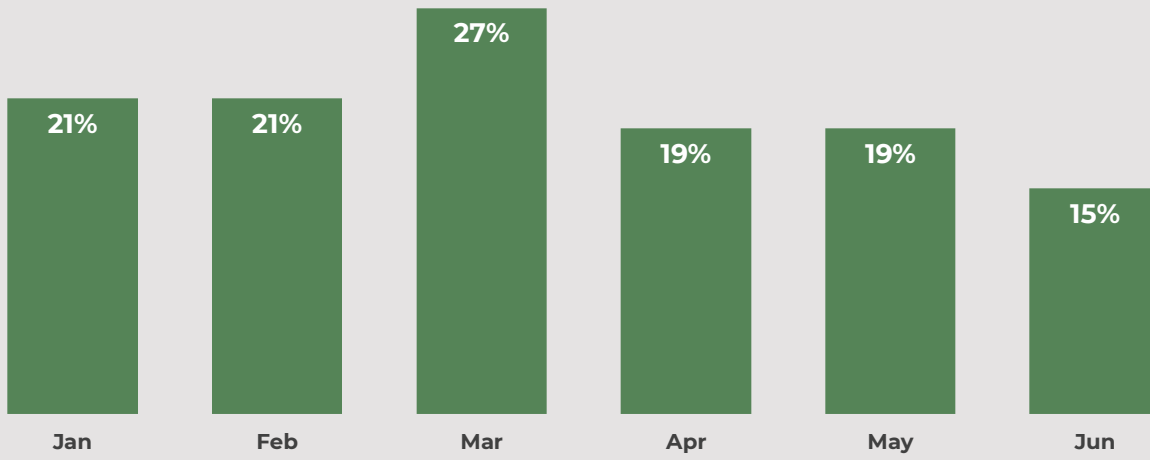
Percent change in number of reported robberies in the San Diego region, mid-year 2020–2021



Sources: SANDAG

Figure 5

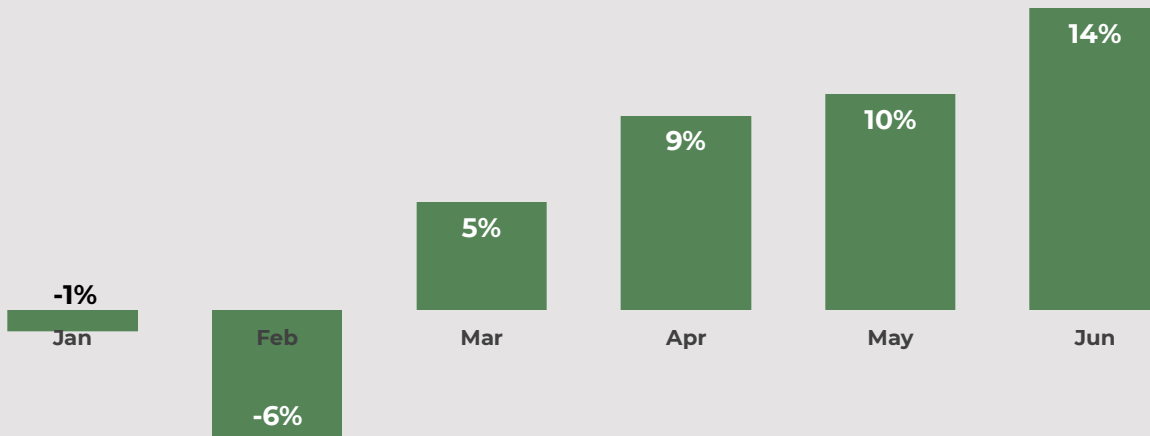
Percent change in number of reported aggravated assaults in the San Diego region, mid-year 2020–2021



Sources: SANDAG

Figure 6

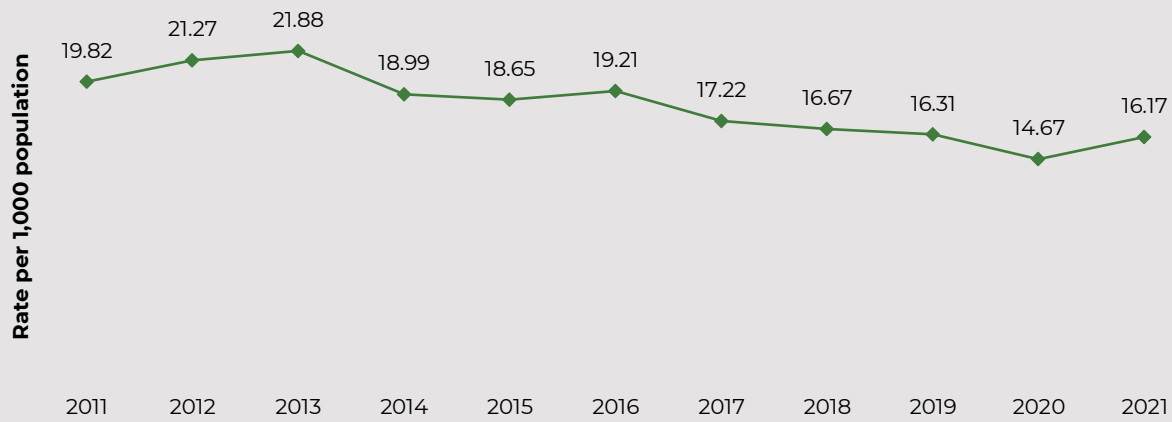
Percent change in number of reported domestic violence incidents in the San Diego region, mid-year 2020–2021



Sources: SANDAG

Figure 7

Annualized property crime rate mid-year 2011–2021

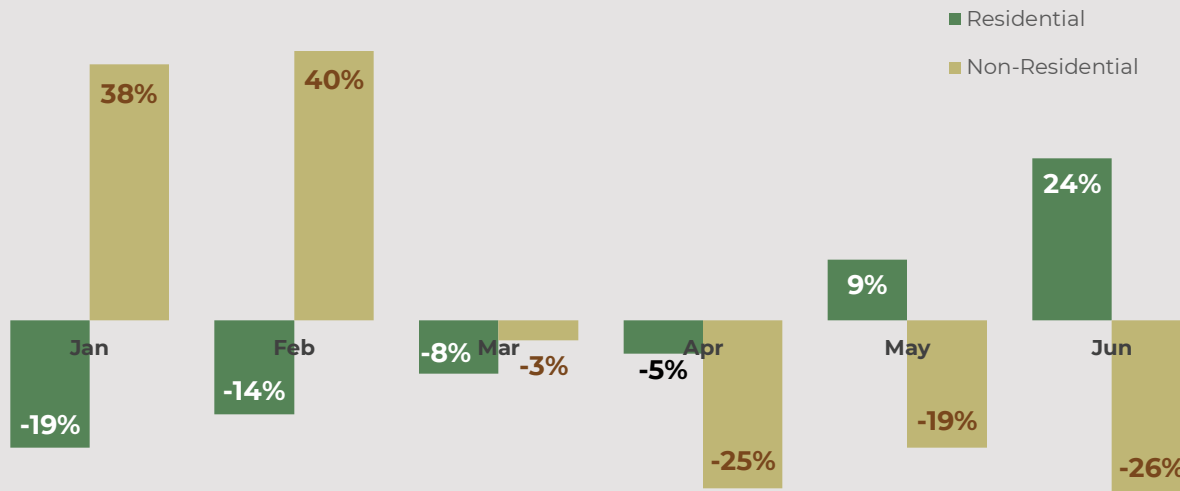


Notes: The property crime rate includes reported burglaries, larceny thefts, and motor vehicle thefts.

Sources: California Department of Finance; SANDAG Population and Housing Estimates, v2020, 2019–2020

Figure 8

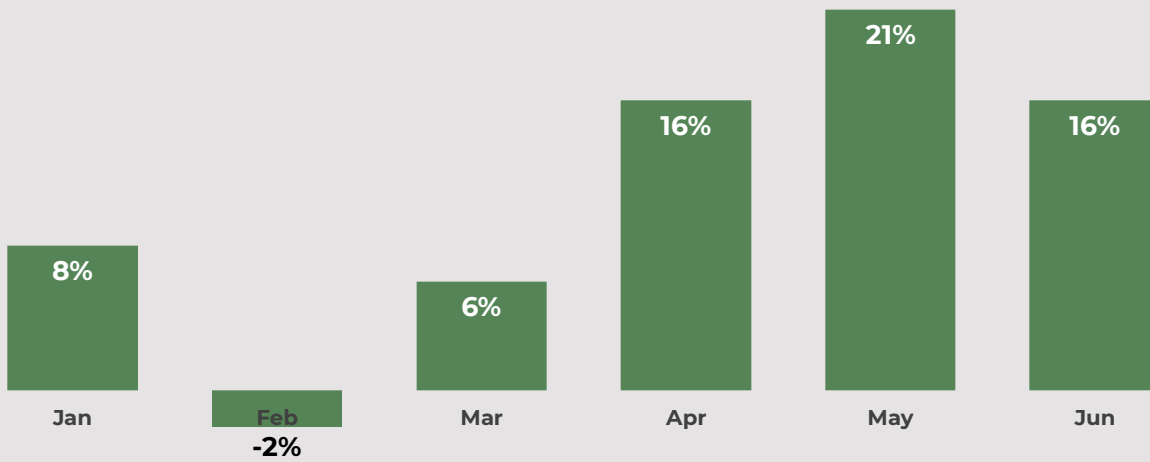
Percent change in number of reported residential and non-residential burglaries in the San Diego region, mid-year 2020–2021



Sources: SANDAG

Figure 9

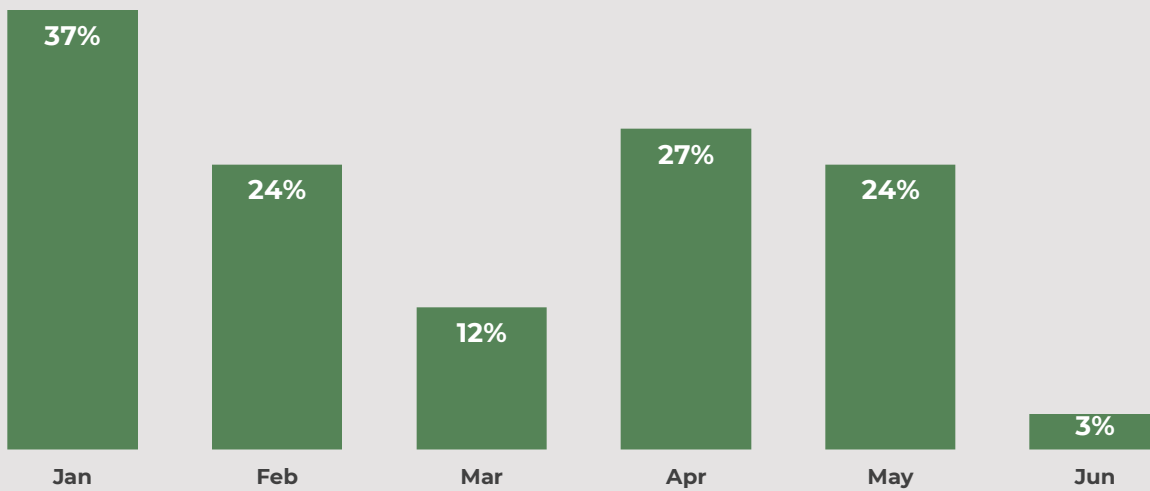
Percent change in number of reported larcenies in the San Diego region, mid-year 2020–2021



Sources: SANDAG

Figure 10

Percent change in number of reported motor vehicle thefts in the San Diego region, mid-year 2020–2021



Sources: SANDAG