

Boston’s overall crime rate is down 1.5% in 2022, but fatal shootings rose over 2021

    



Boston crime stats for 2022 compared to the same period in 2021.

CRIME	INCREASE/DECREASE	2021	2022
HOMICIDE	UP 2.5%	40*	41**
RAPE & ATTEMPTED RAPE	DOWN 25.8%	225	167
ROBBERY & ATTEMPTED ROBBERY	DOWN 2.2%	758	741
DOMESTIC AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	UP 2.2%	813	831
NON-DOMESTIC AGGAVATED ASSAULT	UP 5.6%	1,569	1,657
COMMERCIAL BURGLARY	UP 13.7%	313	356
RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY	DOWN 15.8%	947	797
LARCENY FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	DOWN 3.9%	2,690	2,584
OTHER LARCENY	DOWN 1.5%	6,475	6,376
AUTO THEFT	UP 4.5%	1,257	1,313
TOTAL CRIME	DOWN 1.5%	15,087	14,863

SOURCE: Boston Police; Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2021 vs. Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2022. Percentage change, to nearest tenth, calculated by Flint McColgan. The Boston Police cautions that this data should be considered preliminary and may change once coding is complete.

** 2022 Homicide totals include 0 incidents that were ruled a Homicide in 2022 but occurred in prior years.
* 2021 Homicide totals include 3 incidents that were ruled a Homicide in 2021 but occurred in prior years.

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Crime in the city last year offered a somewhat rosier picture compared with 2021, though blemished by the loss of eight additional lives in fatal shootings, making for one additional homicide.

Total crimes reported by the Boston Police, from homicides to auto thefts, dropped by 224 incidents from 15,087 to 14,863, a roughly 1.5% drop from 2021.

Total shooting victims in the city also fell by 16, from 197 to 181, a drop of 8.1% — though the 33 fatal shootings recorded in the calendar year marks eight more deaths. That’s a drop from the 35.6 fatal shootings and 209.2 total shootings averaged over the previous five years.

In total, there were 146 shooting incidents, a 12.6% decrease from 2021.

The numbers released Tuesday are preliminary, the department cautions, as the Boston Regional Intelligence Center is continuing to crunch numbers. BPD chief spokesman Sgt. Det. John Boyle said a further breakdown will be available soon.

The downward trend in total homicides is heartening to at least one observer, Mark Culliton, the co-founder of Boston Uncornered, who told the Herald that Boston possesses “the full array of the services and supports that can lead to lower levels of violence.”

“We look at shootings really as the key determinant. A 12 percent reduction in shootings is a good step, but insufficient,” he said. “I think we’re headed in the right direction, but we should be impatient to end street violence and end shootings completely and I think Boston is the first city in America that can make that a reality.”

In comparison to other cities across the country, he said, Boston has historically had a better police and community relationship, district attorneys focused on solutions and a great network of nonprofit organizations — like his own, which he co-founded with Michelle Caldeira after having founded College Bound Dorchester — that take aim at the root causes of violence.

His organization, which a spokeswoman said “is the nation’s only corner to college solution to gang violence and generational urban poverty,” identifies leaders of gangs, who are “core influencers” for the neighborhoods they live in, and present opportunities other than violence, including earning a high school equivalency and then a chance at college.

“When we talk about a city being uncornered, what we mean is that violence anywhere is an aberration rather than an expectation,” he added. “The reduction in shootings is something that we can be proud of but I think we should be impatient to get to zero.

The largest changes seen in the BPD statistics include a nearly 14% increase in commercial burglaries, though that’s nearly the inverse of reported residential burglaries, which dropped nearly 16% in 2022.

The number of reported rapes and attempted rapes in the city dropped more than a quarter from 2021, from 225 to 167. A late-afternoon attempt to get context or a statement on these numbers from the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center — an organization dedicated to ending sexual violence — was not immediately returned Tuesday.

Crime is down from 2022, which is the year that gave the city a reprieve from the surge in violent crimes that permeated the pandemic years. In all, crime in 2021 was down 14% from the year before, when the city experienced a 54% spike in homicides at 57 across the city compared to the 37 seen in 2019, which had been a 20-year low.