

2005-2010 Regional Auto Theft Statistics

Introduction

Since 2005, the Virginia State Police HEAT Program has been analyzing auto theft reports from Virginia law enforcement agencies in the Tidewater, Central and Richmond Metro areas as part of a project to track vehicle theft data. The results have been valuable in assessing trends that led to the development and implementation of new vehicle anti-theft technologies and public awareness programs.

During this period, over 37,000 theft records were submitted. The vehicle data was classified into seven types: cars, SUVs, vans, pick-ups, motorcycles, scooter-type and “other”. The first six types accounted for 95% of thefts. The remaining 5% included trailers, trucks of various types, ATVs, tractors, farm equipment, etc.

The most popular stolen vehicle types were found to be:

1. Cars 58%
2. SUVs 14%
3. Vans 8%
4. Pickups 7%
5. Motorcycles 4%
6. Scooters, etc. 4%
7. Other 5%

Except for scooters, thefts show a downward trend from 2005 to 2010. Table I summarizes the total theft rate by type for all regions. During 2007, there was a spike in Dodge RAM pick-up thefts in Chesterfield County and the City of Petersburg. Interestingly, vans showed the largest decrease in theft, followed by cars and SUV’s. After three years of decreasing motorcycle thefts, rates rose during 2008, then fluctuated in 2009 and 2010, reaching an overall decrease of 2.3% at the end of 2010.

TYPE	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	% Change 2005-2010
CAR	219.2	182.7	169.2	146.5	130.3	108.8	-50.0%
SUV	46.4	44.1	42.6	40.4	35.8	28.7	-38.1%
VAN	39.3	27.1	22.6	17.6	15.5	12.7	-67.7%
PU	24.0	20.4	22.2	21.1	13.2	15.5	-35.4%
MC	13.0	12.1	11.3	14.3	11.8	12.7	-2.3%

Table I: Theft/100,000 by Type of Vehicle

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Theft rate trends by region for all reported vehicle types are shown in Table II below. Changes are listed from 2005 to 2010, except for Roanoke PD (Central). The Richmond Metro theft rate decreased by 54% from 2005 to 2010, while Tidewater decreased 36% and Central (2007-2009) decreased by 5%.

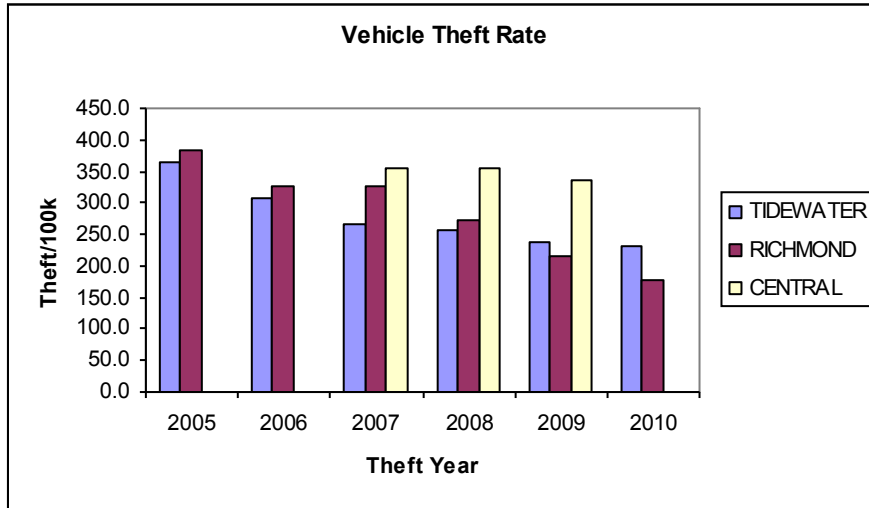


Table II: Theft Rate/100,000 Population by Region 2005-2010

The Top-10 stolen vehicles by year/model are listed below in Table III for all agencies for theft year 2010:

Rank	Model	Rank	Model
1	1996 Cherokee	6	2002 Explorer
2	1991 Accord	7	1994 Camry
3	1997 Caravan	8	2005 Altima
4	1996 thru '99 Civic	9	1998 Voyager
5	1998 Taurus	10	1997 F-150

Table III: Top-10 Stolen Models in 2010

Table III is consistent with other data reported in the U.S. and, although the rankings may vary, the same models appear repeatedly. Note that most of these vehicles are from the mid-late 1990's.

Starting in the early 1990's, vehicle manufacturers began improving vehicle security by introducing sophisticated keying systems; also, new OEM theft-deterrent devices and tracking systems were introduced to the market. Since 1992, the HEAT Program and local law enforcement have also worked jointly to decrease auto theft and educate citizens at local events, making them aware of "The Layered Approach to Protection" and suggesting how to protect their vehicles. During this period the HEAT VIN Etching and Event Displays Programs have introduced thousands of citizens throughout the state of the need for vehicle security and the

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many ways available to accomplish this. The effect of this is evident if we consider vehicle model thefts by year of manufacture, as shown next in Chart I.

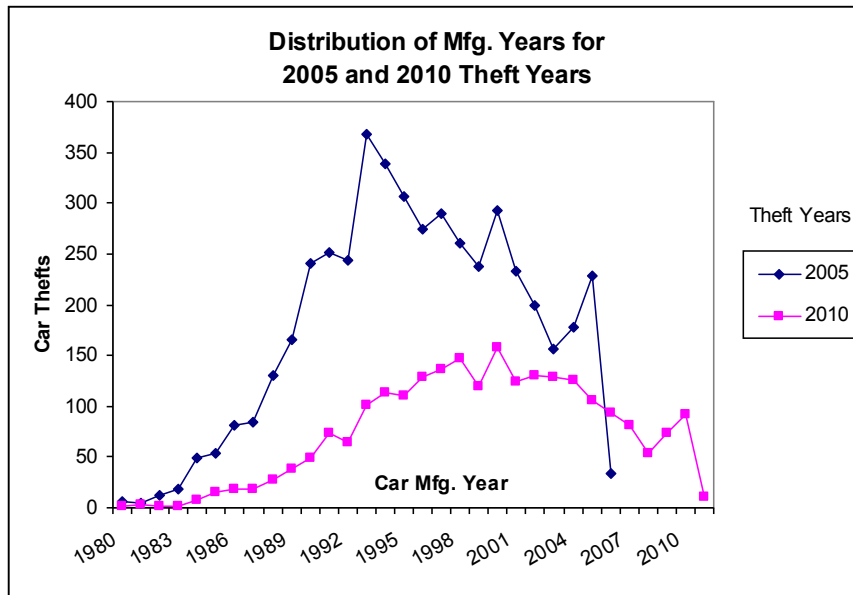


Chart I: Car Theft by Mfg. Year

Chart I is a distribution of cars that were manufactured between 1980 and 2010 and stolen during theft years 2005 and 2010. Overall, a drop in the total number of thefts from 2005 to 2010 is apparent. During 2005, a significant number of stolen cars were manufactured between 1991 and 2003. Theft of 1993 cars peaked in 2005, with Taurus, Tempo, Spirit, Accord, Altima and Camry models leading the way.

For the 2010 theft year, the data shifts to the right by about five years. Note that for both theft years, newer cars experienced fewer thefts but the older cars are still being targeted, but at a lower level.

Generally speaking, the downward trend for the newest model cars can be attributed to ever improving anti-theft security built in by manufacturers and by the continued efforts of state and local law enforcement. This is good news for the Auto Insurance Industry, since insurance payouts for newer cars can be very expensive. Thefts of cars built prior to 1993 drop off with age and are probably stolen for parts.

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By looking individually at the theft of current-year models for each of the five years of data, we can see a downward trend in new car thefts, as shown in Table IV below. For example, the number of 2005 cars manufactured in 2005 and stolen that same year is 228. During 2005, there were also 33 new 2006 models stolen. As we move to the current data year of 2010, the number of thefts has continued to decrease, along with the next-year models. This definitely suggests that anti-theft efforts are paying off.

<i>Car Year</i>	<i>Data Year 2005</i>	<i>Data Year 2006</i>	<i>Data Year 2007</i>	<i>Data Year 2008</i>	<i>Data Year 2009</i>	<i>Data Year 2010</i>
2005	228					
2006	33	199				
2007		24	157			
2008			18	179		
2009				25	103	
2010					9	92
2011						10

Table IV: Current Data Year and New Car Theft

Note that during 2008, thefts of 2008 and 2009 model years began to rise again. It could be surmised that economic conditions during this period contributed to this renewed increase. It is reasonable to expect that new cars will continue to be stolen as long as owners or dealers ignore proper security, neglect to lock their cars or leave keys where they can be stolen.

Some of the stolen vehicle models in Table IV repeat each year and are shown in Table V below. These are among the top-sellers and thus are more available, just by sheer number. In addition, many of the stolen rental car vehicles are of this type. As a result, local agencies and the HEAT Program have worked with rental agencies to come up with improved security.

<i>Data Year 2005</i>	<i>Data Year 2006</i>	<i>Data Year 2007</i>	<i>Data Year 2008</i>	<i>Data Year 2009</i>	<i>Data Year 2009</i>
2005 Ford Taurus, Focus	2006 Ford Taurus, Focus	2007 Ford Taurus, Focus	2008 Ford Taurus, Mustang	2009 Toyota Camry	2010 Dodge Charger
2005 Chevrolet Impala, Malibu	2006 Chevrolet Impala, Cobalt	2007 Chevrolet Impala, Cobalt	2008 Chevrolet Impala, Cobalt	2009 Chevrolet Impala	2010 Chevrolet Impala
2005 Nissan Altima, Sentra	2006 Nissan Altima, Sentra	2007 Chrysler 300, Sebring	2008 Dodge Avenger, Caliber	2009 Dodge Charger	2010 Hyundai Sonata

Table V: Popular New Car Models Stolen in 2005-2010

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Motorcycle Theft

Recent motorcycle theft data from NICB indicates that about 70,000 motorcycles were stolen in the US during 2006. Progressive Insurance reports that nationwide, Suzuki, Yamaha, Honda and Kawasaki are the most popular stolen motorcycles. This study data, shown next in Table VI indicates similar results:

Rank	Make
1	Suzuki
2	Honda
3	Kawasaki
4	Yamaha
5	Harley Davidson

Table VI: Top-5 Stolen Motorcycles

Most motorcycle thefts occurred in the Tidewater area, where many military personnel live. These owners have little or no motorcycle secure storage during deployment and thus leave themselves vulnerable to theft. Added to this, motorcycle recovery is only 25-30%. It's surprising that with all the after-market devices available, from heavy chains/locks to hi-tech motion detectors and cell phone alerts, many owners still do not secure their motorcycles. Chart II (below) indicates that the number of stolen motorcycles decreased from 2005 to 2007 but then turned up in 2008, before dropping again in 2009. Over the period from 2005 thru 2010, no significant change in the total number of thefts can be seen.

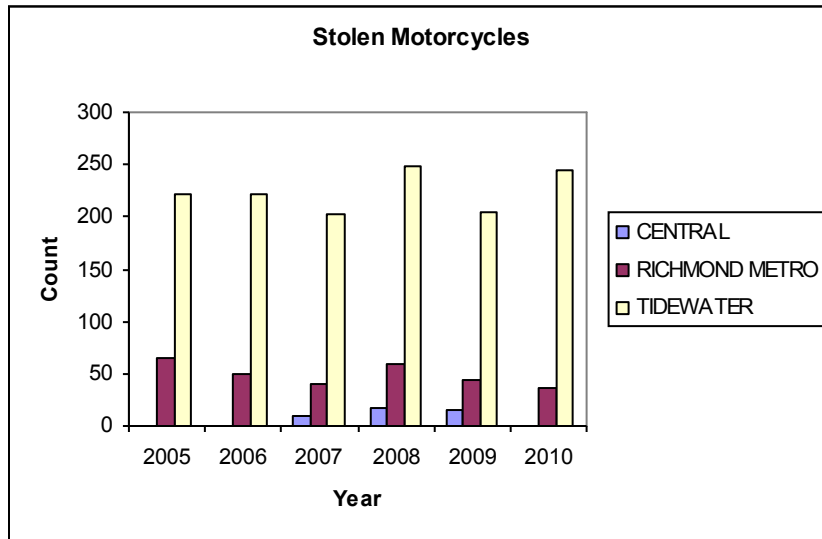


Chart II: Theft of Stolen Motorcycles by Year for All Regions

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Scooters

Since 2005, scooter thefts have been on the rise, as seen in Chart III:

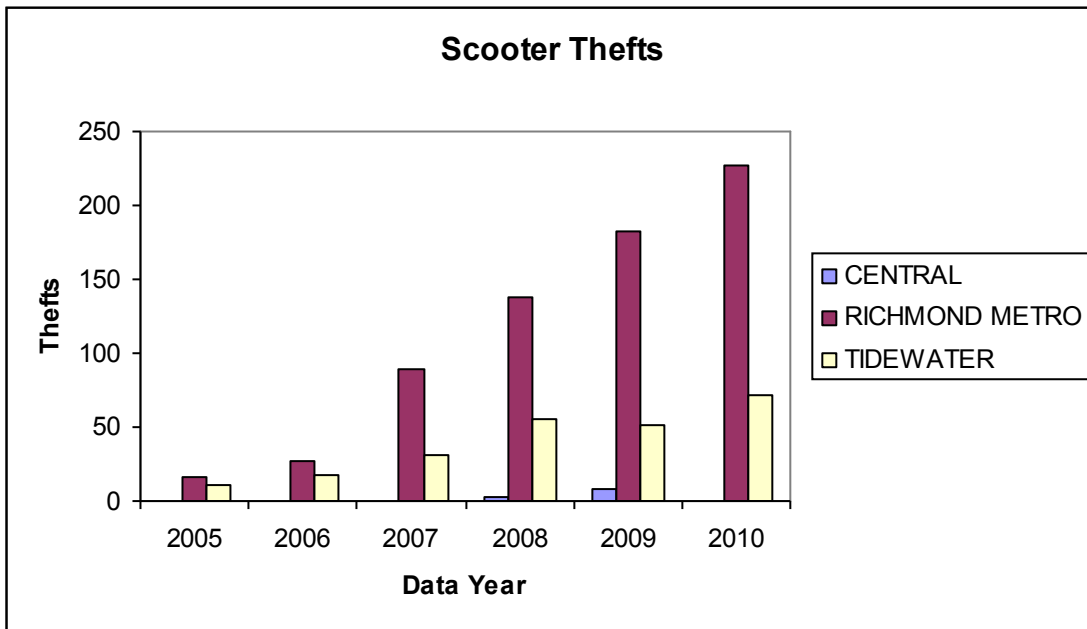


Chart III: Stolen Scooters and Mopeds by Theft Year

The largest increase occurred in the Richmond Metro area, where thefts rose from 16 during 2005 to 227 during 2010. In the Tidewater area, thefts showed an increase from 11 to 72 during the same period.

Summary

The information described here continues to give the HEAT Program a better understanding of vehicle theft trends within the agencies. With this information, HEAT will continue to investigate the application of new technologies for the prevention, apprehension and recovery of stolen vehicles.

Taken as a whole, vehicle thefts have decreased significantly from 2005 to 2010. This is consistent with similar data from FBI data and the Virginia State Police. This study also examined the data by the type and model of vehicle. It shows that overall, car theft has dropped significantly, scooter theft has increased at a high rate and motorcycle theft has fluctuated but essentially remains unchanged.

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Disclaimer

The data included in this report was supplied as part of an informal study to track vehicle theft trends in the Richmond Metro, Central and Tidewater areas. Such data may not match corresponding data as reported by the Virginia State Police, Uniform Crime Reporting Section. In some cases, reported data could not be used because of inaccuracies or indeterminate information.

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