

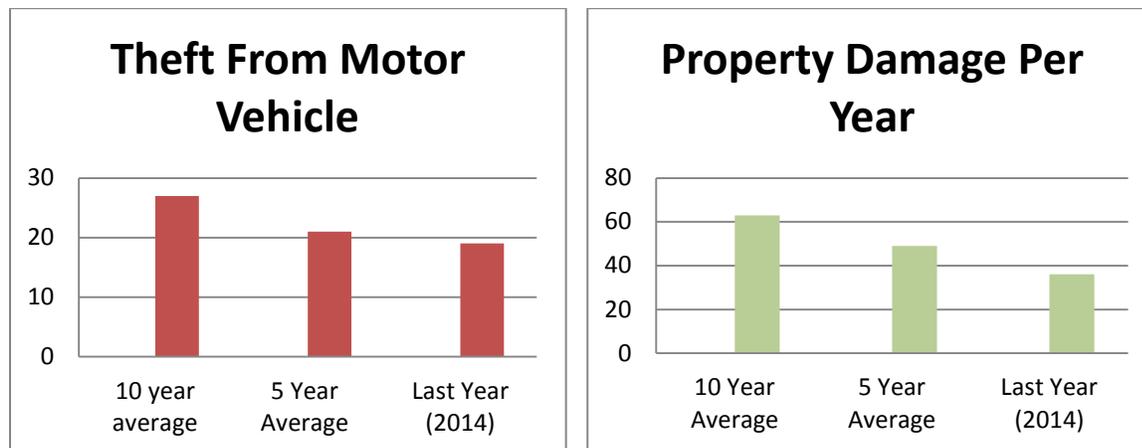


Are we experiencing a Crime Spree in Norwalk? Not based on the data.

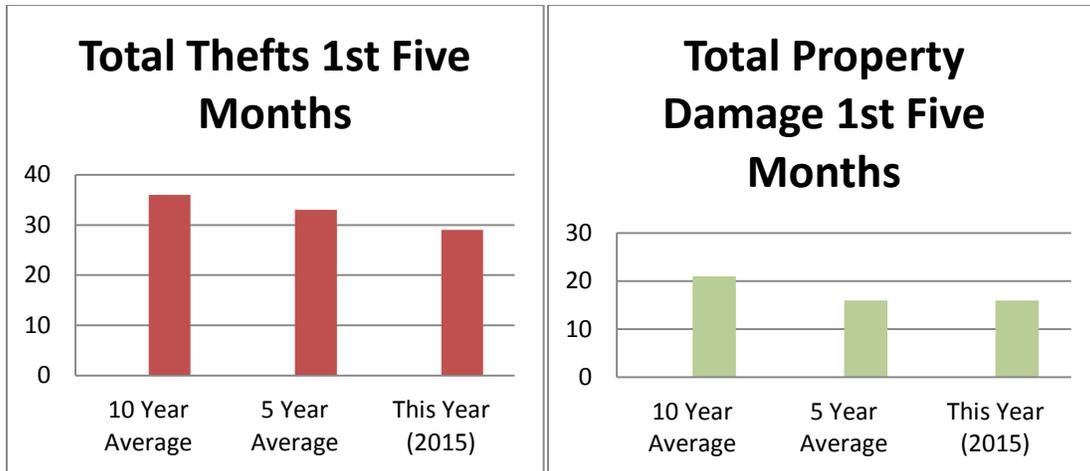
Portions of his article were printed in the September issue of Norwalk Living Magazine

Over the last few months, numerous residents have contacted the police department concerning a growing community perception of an increase in crime; specifically regarding the crimes of Theft from Motor Vehicle and Criminal Mischief Property Damage. In the technologically advanced world of today, where information can easily and quickly be shared, it is no wonder that many members of the community feel that crime is on an upswing. Is there more crime? Or are we just more aware of the crime that is occurring? Based on data the Norwalk Police Department (NPD) gathered the following information was used to answer those questions.

NPD reviewed all reported Theft from Motor Vehicle incidents and all reported Criminal Mischief/Property Damage incidents for the last 10 years. They then looked at the 10 year and five year averages for these crimes and compared them to the last year where they had a full set of data (2014). The comparisons are shown in the charts below. There were less reported crimes in 2014 than there were for the averages of the last 10 years and five years respectively.



When looking at yearly data, in a historical context, Norwalk's rate of victimization is lower. This is good news. However, due to our increased ability to share information, it gave the impression crime was up "right now". To find out if crime actually was up, NPD gathered the number of reported crimes for the first five months of this year and compared them to the reported crimes for the first five months of the last 10 years and 5 years respectively. These comparisons are shown in the charts below. The data shows the number of Thefts from Motor Vehicle is lower than the 10 year and five year averages. The number of Criminal Mischief Property Damage reports is lower than the 10-year average and the same as the five-year average.



Based on the data available to NPD earlier this summer, it appears that crime, when measured by two specific property crime types is lower than our historical averages. In short, our crime has decreased, but our ability to talk to each other about it has increased. This has given the false perception that crime is out of control, when in actuality it is not.

Even though the data suggests that our collective rate of reported crimes is lower than previous years, NPD continues to try to lower that rate even more. The police department investigates every reported crime in an attempt to solve the case but also to possibly stop the perpetrator from committing additional criminal acts. They currently do this and will continue to do it in the future. But, NPD could use your help.

Norwalk is a great place to live and raise a family. One reason this is true is that the City does not regularly experience high levels of crime. To help reduce future crimes, there are three easy things you can do:

- Keep your outside lights on. Criminals like to lurk in the shadows and operate in the dark. If your lights are on, they may go somewhere else. If you need a light bulb, we have them. Stop by the Public Safety Building to pick one up.
- Talk to your neighbors and watch each other's property. The more eyes paying attention the better
- Lock your car doors. The single best way to reduce crime in Norwalk is to lock your doors. Over the last 10 years, there were 204 incidents of Theft from a Motor Vehicle where investigating officers were able to determine if the vehicle was locked or unlocked. 78% of these vehicles were unlocked.

Any one of us, at any time, could be the victim of a crime. If we think smart, think strategically and work together, we can reduce the rate of crime even further.

Don't be a victim. Lock it or Lose it!

It is important to remember that the information included in this article is based on officially reported incidents only. Investigations are conducted once the report is formally filed. If you are the victim of a crime, please consider contacting the police so that their records and data are

accurate. Without complete data sets, it is difficult to determine the true nature of any problem. To report suspicious behavior or a crime that is currently happening or has JUST happened, call 911. To report suspicious behavior or a crime that has happened in the past, call dispatch at 222-3321.

UPDATE September 10, 2015

The original portion of this article was written in August 2015. The majority of the article was then printed in the September issue of Norwalk Living Magazine. Since the submission of the article for printing, Norwalk experienced the single worst night of crime in recent memory. On the night of September 1, over 20 incidents of theft or attempted theft occurred and were subsequently reported to the police. The number of thefts that were reported is concerning and they are being investigated by the NPD. Due to the sheer number of reported incidents, the NPD was interested to find out if thefts were up “right now”. So, similar to what they did in May, the number of thefts from January 1 to September 2, 2015 was compared to the 10 year and 5 year averages for the same time period. The results are similar to what has been shown in the graphs above. The number of thefts so far this year is lower.

