

Active citizen participation helps keep crime low in 2008

Crime data compiled under the categories established by the state's *Uniform Crime Reporting Index*, or UCR, placed 2008 in the books as the fourth lowest crime rate for Oak Park in the past 25 years. Police credit citizens willing to report suspicious activity for helping keep crime low.

Property crimes remained the largest categories, according to the data, with thefts alone — primarily bicycles and items left visible in vehicles — representing nearly two-thirds of all 2008 crime in Oak Park. Add in burglaries — mostly garage entries — and these incidents police call *crimes of opportunity* represented nearly 85 percent of all criminal activity in the community.

Police did report an increase in robberies from 2007's historic low. Forty-seven more robberies were reported in 2008 than in 2007, a number similar to those reported in 2006. However, the 160 robberies committed in 2008 remained down some 50 percent over the course of the last two decades. Robbery arrests also were up in 2008 over the prior year, an important statistic, police say, because a single criminal often is responsible for multiple incidents.

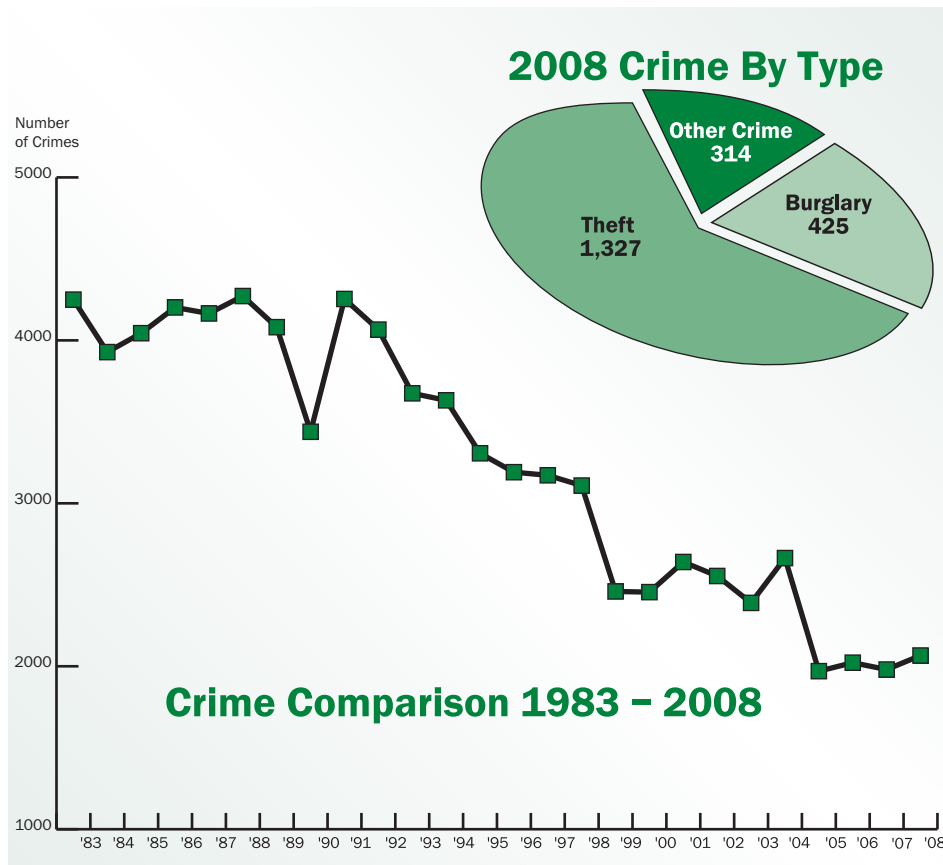
The continued historically low crime rate is remarkable, police say, given that Oak Park shares a border with the nation's third largest city. And while the trend in crime over the past 25 years is noticeably down overall, police say more can be done — especially if residents don't hesitate to call 9-1-1 when they see anything suspicious or out of the ordinary, as well as get to know their neighbors and Resident Beat Officer (RBO).

Police simply cannot be everywhere, but residents can and are. Police know that residents are aware when something is not right, whether it is on the block, in the alley or with a neighbor's garage. But it is the willingness to pick up a telephone and call 9-1-1 that is essential to keeping crime down, police say. More than 38,000 Oak Parkers did just that in 2008, and police were on the scene in a little more than three minutes of an emergency call.

For more information on crime in Oak Park, contact your RBO — just call 708.386.3800 or visit www.oak-park.us/police.

Crime Prevention Tips

- Keep garage outside lights on at night or have motion detectors
- Close and lock all garage doors
- Lock your vehicle — even if it's in a garage
- Don't leave valuables such as cell phones and laptop computers visible in your vehicle — take them with you or lock them in the trunk
- Keep your home's outside light on at night or have motion detectors
- Close and lock all windows and doors at night
- When away, use timers to turn on lights for individual rooms in the house
- If you are out of town, have a neighbor pick up newspapers and mail
- Have your RBO perform a security check of your home and provide tips on how to improve security
- When out alone, always be aware of your surroundings
- When walking to your vehicle, have your car keys out
- Park in a lighted area — and check the interior of the vehicle before entering
- Don't carry a purse or large amounts of money
- Be aware of your surroundings — criminals watch for individuals who are distracted by cell phones and iPods
- Listen to your gut — if something feels wrong, it probably is
- Look out for each other — this doesn't mean stepping into a criminal incident, but being willing to call police
- Report any suspicious persons, vehicles or activity as soon as possible — be ready to give a description
- Don't hesitate to call 9-1-1 — never worry about inconveniencing an officer — police would rather stop a crime than try to solve it after the fact



OAK PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT

UCR CRIME INDEX NUMBERS

1982 - 2008

YEAR	MURDER	CRIM SEX ASSAULT	ROBBERY	AGG ASSAULT/ ROBBERY	BURGLARY	THEFT	MOTOR VEH THEFT	ARSON	Total
1982	0	9	249	65	740	2094	237	7	3401
1983	5	5	293	66	1068	2420	377	16	4250
1984	3	3	302	96	973	2120	415	16	3928
1985	1	24	264	66	1314	1972	383	20	4044
1986	1	18	278	89	1254	2151	401	10	4202
1987	2	29	331	83	996	2295	411	18	4165
1988	0	14	275	92	1159	2319	402	11	4272
1989	0	11	308	72	863	2471	344	12	4081
1990	2	10	276	31	629	2186	292	13	3439
1991	1	13	295	69	859	2715	292	10	4254
1992	1	18	284	65	871	2484	337	6	4066
1993	2	13	209	32	749	2352	305	13	3675
1994	1	11	202	46	609	2397	361	5	3632
1995	1	6	193	30	680	2159	236	2	3307
1996	3	2	180	43	871	1887	196	9	3191
1997	3	8	172	35	732	2020	195	7	3172
1998	0	12	159	17	538	2182	197	4	3109
1999	0	4	149	26	367	1713	190	10	2459
2000	0	6	140	19	411	1662	215	2	2455
2001	1	2	156	16	580	1694	183	8	2640
2002	0	5	180	28	541	1575	218	7	2554
2003	2	9	174	22	501	1509	169	3	2389
2004	1	16	148	37	525	1765	167	5	2664
2005	1	11	130	58	437	1160	165	8	1970
2006	0	12	153	41	351	1365	98	2	2022
2007	1	8	113	37	343	1389	86	3	1980
2008	1	2	160	46	425	1327	102	3	2066