



Rape addendum

Updated 2017

In 2013, the Summary UCR definition of rape was changed to “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.” The new definition updated the 80-year-old historical definition of rape which was “carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will.” Effectively, the revised definition expands rape to include both male and female victims and offenders, and reflects the various forms of sexual penetration understood to be rape, especially nonconsenting acts of sodomy, and sexual assaults with objects.

It has long been the UCR Program’s mission to collect and publish data regarding the scope and nature of crime in the nation, including those for rape. Since the FBI began collecting data using the revised definition of rape in January 2013, program officials expected that the number of reported rapes would rise.

How this change affects rape data in *Crime in the United States*

The UCR Program collects data through two reporting systems: the traditional Summary Reporting System (SRS) and the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The change to the rape definition applies only to the SRS because the NIBRS already captures the broader sex offense information reflected in the revised definition. Therefore, the CJIS Advisory Police Board (APB) requested that the UCR Program make only minor changes to the sex offense definitions in the NIBRS (i.e., the phrase “forcibly or against the victim’s will” would be changed to “without the consent of the victim”). In addition, no changes were made to the reporting requirements in the NIBRS. For trending purposes, the UCR Program will convert the NIBRS offenses of rape, sodomy, and sexual assault with an object to the SRS revised definition of rape for publication in *Crime in the United States*.

Because of the changes to the definition, readers will see some differences in the *Crime in the United States* publications. Although the revised definition for rape was approved in 2011 and implemented in 2013, not all state and local agencies have been able to make the change in their

records management systems. The UCR Program is encouraging law enforcement agencies to use the revised definition; however, some agencies currently can report the offense based only on the legacy definition. Therefore, rape data collected under both definitions are used in this publication. Footnotes for tables in *Crime in the United States* indicate which definition(s) of rape is being used in each of the tables.

Because the revised definition, unlike the legacy definition, includes offenses of rape, sodomy, sexual assaults with objects, and offenses in which males were the victims, the number of rape offenses may appear to increase for various agencies or in certain aggregations. Except where comparisons are made based on the same definitions of rape, readers are cautioned against assuming increases in rape numbers are due to an increase of violence or number of sexual assaults, but rather, the increase may simply be a reflection of the more inclusive definition.

To estimate the expected increase in rape numbers in agencies and states based on the revised definition, the UCR Program made a comparison of sex offenses in the NIBRS, which includes male victims and the additional offenses mentioned above. As the table below shows, this change may yield as much as a 41.7 percent increase in the number of sex offenses.¹

Table 1: Comparison of Legacy Rape to Revised Rape Using NIBRS Data

2013 NIBRS Sex Offenses	Legacy	Revised
Rape Females	26,994	26,994
Rape Males		611
Sodomy		7,602
Sexual Assault With an Object		3,043
Totals	26,994	38,250

Increase in Reported Rape	11,256
Percent Increase	41.7%

¹ Individual states and agencies will likely experience unique percent increases in their rape numbers based on their specific jurisdictional crime characteristics. However, while the NIBRS has not been shown to be a statistically representative sample of crime in the United States, a current partnership of the FBI's UCR Program and the Bureau of Justice Statistics is working to develop such a sample. Until then, the 41.7 percent increase can be used to generally understand how sex offense numbers are likely to increase for agencies and states reporting rape by the new definition.

Offense Definitions in the NIBRS

The following provides definitions of the offenses collected in the NIBRS that relate to rape.

- Rape (except incest and statutory rape - NIBRS Offense Code 11A)

The carnal knowledge of a person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity

- Sodomy (NIBRS Offense Code 11B)

Oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity

- Sexual assault with an object (NIBRS Offense Code 11C)

To use an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity

- Incest (NIBRS Offense Code 36A)

Non-forcible sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law

- Statutory rape (NIBRS Offense Code 36B)

Non-forcible sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent

Table-by-Table Explanation of Rape Statistics

Table 1: Data with the legacy and revised definition of rape are shown in this table. The totals in the violent crime column were calculated using only the legacy definition of rape. These tables contain estimates based on both the legacy and revised definitions of rape. Agencies submit data based on only one of these definitions. Within each population group size, the proportion of female rape victims was calculated from all NIBRS reports of rape, sodomy, and sexual assault with an object. For agencies that reported using the revised definition, the actual number of

reported rapes was decreased by the calculated proportion to arrive at an estimate for the number of rapes using the legacy definition. Conversely, for agencies that reported using the legacy definition, the actual number of reported rapes was increased by the inverse of the proportion to arrive at an estimate for the number of rapes using the revised definition.

Tables 2 and 3: Estimates with the legacy definition of rape and the revised definition of rape are shown in two separate columns. These tables contain estimates based on both the legacy and revised definitions of rape. Agencies submit data based on only one of these definitions. Within each population group size, the proportion of female rape victims was calculated from all NIBRS reports of rape, sodomy, and sexual assault with an object. For agencies that reported using the revised definition, the actual number of reported rapes was decreased by the calculated proportion to arrive at an estimate for the number of rapes using the legacy definition. Conversely, for agencies that reported using the legacy definition, the actual number of reported rapes was increased by the inverse of the proportion to arrive at an estimate for the number of rapes using the revised definition.

Table 4: The rape column on this table presents the total number of rape offenses (legacy and/or revised definition) reported by each agency. Because of the technical limitations of the UCR Program's legacy system (i.e., the SRS), under which all UCR data processing occurs, it was not possible to separate rape data with the legacy definition from rape data with the revised definition by MSA. For example, if one agency is in two different MSAs and one MSA used the legacy definition and the other used the revised, they could not be reconciled. In these instances, an aggregate total for all rape offenses (regardless of which definition was used within the agency) is included.

Table 5: This table shows estimates for rape with the legacy definition and the revised definition.

Tables 6-9: Figures with the legacy definition of rape and the revised definition of rape are provided in separate columns. Agency rape counts are presented in the appropriate column based on the definition the agency used to report the data. Agencies that switched from reporting data under the legacy definition to the revised definition sometime throughout the year were considered revised for the entire year. Both definitions were included in the combined violent crime columns as reported by agencies.

Table 10: Data with both the revised and the legacy definitions of rape are presented. The violent crime column includes the figures from both the revised and the legacy definitions of rape.

Table 11: Data with both the revised and the legacy definitions of rape are presented. The violent crime column includes the figures from both the revised and the legacy definitions of rape.

Table 15: The Supplement to the Return A data shown in this table include an aggregate total of combined legacy and revised rape definitions.

Table 17: In the Clearance table, rape totals collected under both the revised definition and the legacy definition are presented. Totals in the violent crime column include the figures from both the revised and the legacy definitions of rape.

Tables 18-22: The rape data presented in these tables include the total number of arrests for rape (using both the legacy and/or the revised definition) reported by each agency. Because of the technical limitations of the UCR Program's SRS, under which all UCR data processing occurs, it was not possible to separate the data with the legacy definition of rape from the data with the revised definition for agencies that transitioned to the revised definition *during* the reporting year. In these instances, an aggregate total for all arrests for rape made by the agency is reported.

Expanded Homicide Tables: The expanded homicide tables include aggregate totals of combined legacy and revised rape circumstance tallies.