



NIBRS Offense Definitions

The definitions that were developed for the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) are not meant to be used for charging persons with crimes. To the contrary, they are simply a way of categorizing or organizing the crimes committed throughout the United States. State statutes must be very specific in defining crimes so that persons facing prosecution will know the exact charges being placed against them. Conversely, the definitions used in NIBRS must be generic in order not to exclude varying state statutes relating to the same types of crimes.

Accordingly, the offense definitions in NIBRS are based on common-law definitions found in *Black's Law Dictionary*, as well as those used in the *Summary Reporting System (SRS) User Manual* and the Uniform Offense Classifications for the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). Since most state statutes are also based on common-law definitions, even though the specifics may vary, most crimes should fit into a corresponding NIBRS offense classification.

If a state statute for an offense includes additional offenses that do not fit the NIBRS offense definition, the nonconforming offenses are reported according to the NIBRS offense classifications. For example, some states have larceny statutes that include the crime of embezzlement. When embezzlements are perpetrated within these states, the offenses must be reported to NIBRS as embezzlements, not larcenies.

Group A Offenses

Animal cruelty—Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly taking an action that mistreats or kills any animal without just cause, such as torturing, tormenting, mutilation, maiming, poisoning, or abandonment. Included are instances of duty to provide care, e.g., shelter, food, water, care if sick or injured; transporting or confining an animal in a manner likely to cause injury or death; causing an animal to fight with another; inflicting excessive or repeated unnecessary pain or suffering, e.g., uses objects to beat or torture an animal. This definition does not include proper maintenance of animals for show or sport; use of animals for food, lawful hunting, fishing, or trapping.

Arson—To unlawfully and intentionally damage, or attempt to damage, any real or personal property by fire or incendiary device

Assault Offenses—An unlawful attack by one person upon another



Aggravated Assault—An unlawful attack by one person upon another wherein the offender uses a weapon or displays it in a threatening manner, or the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness. This also includes assault with disease (as in cases when the offender is aware that he/she is infected with a deadly disease and deliberately attempts to inflict the disease by biting, spitting, etc.)

Simple Assault—An unlawful physical attack by one person upon another where neither the offender displays a weapon, nor the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness

Intimidation—To unlawfully place another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words and/or other conduct, but without displaying a weapon or subjecting the victim to actual physical attack

Bribery—(Except Sports Bribery) The offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting of anything of value (i.e., a bribe, gratuity, or kickback) to sway the judgment or action of a person in a position of trust or influence

Burglary/Breaking and Entering—The unlawful entry into a building or other structure with the intent to commit a felony or a theft

Counterfeiting/Forgery—The altering, copying, or imitation of something, without authority or right, with the intent to deceive or defraud by passing the copy or thing altered or imitated as that which is original or genuine; or the selling, buying, or possession of an altered, copied, or imitated thing with the intent to deceive or defraud

Destruction/Damage/Vandalism of Property—(Except Arson) To willfully or maliciously destroy, damage, deface, or otherwise injure real or personal property without the consent of the owner or the person having custody or control of it

Drug/Narcotic Offenses—(Except Driving Under the Influence) The violation of laws prohibiting the production, distribution, and/or use of certain controlled substances and the equipment or devices utilized in their preparation and/or use

Drug/Narcotic Violations—The unlawful cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, use, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance



Drug Equipment Violations—The unlawful manufacture, sale, purchase, possession, or transportation of equipment or devices utilized in preparing and/or using drugs or narcotics

Embezzlement—The unlawful misappropriation by an offender to his/her own use or purpose of money, property, or some other thing of value entrusted to his/her care, custody, or control

Extortion/Blackmail—To unlawfully obtain money, property, or any other thing of value, either tangible or intangible, through the use or threat of force, misuse of authority, threat of criminal prosecution, threat of destruction of reputation or social standing, or through other coercive means

Fraud Offenses—(Except Counterfeiting/Forgery and Bad Checks) The intentional perversion of the truth for the purpose of inducing another person, or other entity, in reliance upon it to part with something of value or to surrender a legal right

False Pretenses/Swindle/Confidence Game—The intentional misrepresentation of existing fact or condition, or the use of some other deceptive scheme or device, to obtain money, goods, or other things of value

Credit Card/Automated Teller Machine Fraud—The unlawful use of a credit (or debit) card or automated teller machine for fraudulent purposes

Impersonation—Falsely representing one's identity or position, and acting in the character or position thus unlawfully assumed, to deceive others and thereby gain a profit or advantage, enjoy some right or privilege, or subject another person or entity to an expense, charge, or liability which would not have otherwise been incurred

Welfare Fraud—The use of deceitful statements, practices, or devices to unlawfully obtain welfare benefits

Wire Fraud—The use of an electric or electronic communications facility to intentionally transmit a false and/or deceptive message in furtherance of a fraudulent activity

Identity theft—Wrongfully obtaining and using another person's personal data (e.g., name, date of birth, Social Security number, driver's license number, credit card number)

Hacking/Computer Invasion—Wrongfully gaining access to another person's or institution's computer software, hardware, or networks without authorized permissions or security clearances



Gambling Offenses—To unlawfully bet or wager money or something else of value; assist, promote, or operate a game of chance for money or some other stake; possess or transmit wagering information; manufacture, sell, purchase, possess, or transport gambling equipment, devices or goods; or tamper with the outcome of a sporting event or contest to gain a gambling advantage

Betting/Wagering—To unlawfully stake money or something else of value on the happening of an uncertain event or on the ascertainment of a fact in dispute

Operating/Promoting/Assisting Gambling—To unlawfully operate, promote, or assist in the operation of a game of chance, lottery, or other gambling activity

Gambling Equipment Violations—To unlawfully manufacture, sell, buy, possess, or transport equipment, devices, and/or goods used for gambling purposes

Sports Tampering—To unlawfully alter, meddle in, or otherwise interfere with a sporting contest or event for the purpose of gaining a gambling advantage

Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter—The willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another

Negligent Manslaughter—The killing of another person through negligence

This offense includes killings from hunting accidents, gun cleaning, and children playing with guns. In addition, changes in 2019 expanded the offense to include arrests associated with driving under the influence, distracted driving (using a cell/smartphone), and reckless driving traffic fatalities resulting from the operation of a motor vehicle or vessel (boat).

Justifiable Homicide—The killing of a perpetrator of a serious criminal offense by a peace officer in the line of duty, or the killing, during the commission of a serious criminal offense, of the perpetrator by a private individual (This is not a crime in the UCR Program.)

Human Trafficking Offenses—The inducement of a person to perform a commercial sex act, or labor, or services, through force, fraud, or coercion

Human trafficking has also occurred if a person under 18 years of age has been induced, or enticed, regardless of force, fraud, or coercion, to perform a commercial sex act.

Human Trafficking, Commercial Sex Acts—Inducing a person by force, fraud, or coercion to participate in commercial sex acts, or in which the person induced to perform such act(s) has not attained 18 years of age



Human Trafficking, Involuntary Servitude—The obtaining of a person(s) through recruitment, harboring, transportation, or provision, and subjecting such persons by force, fraud, or coercion into voluntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (not to include commercial sex acts)

Kidnapping/Abduction—The unlawful seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will, or of a minor without the consent of his/her custodial parent(s) or legal guardian

Larceny/Theft Offenses—The unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession, or constructive possession, of another person

Pocket-picking—The theft of articles from another person's physical possession by stealth where the victim usually does not become immediately aware of the theft

Purse-snatching—The grabbing or snatching of a purse, handbag, etc., from the physical possession of another person

Shoplifting—The theft, by someone other than an employee of the victim, of goods or merchandise exposed for sale

Theft from Building—A theft from within a building which is either open to the general public or which the offender has legal access

Theft from Coin-Operated Machine or Device—A theft from a machine or device which is operated or activated by the use of coins

Theft from Motor Vehicle—(Except Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts or Accessories) The theft of articles from a motor vehicle, locked or unlocked

Theft of Motor Vehicle Parts or Accessories—The theft of any part or accessory affixed to the interior or exterior of a motor vehicle in a manner which would make the item an attachment of the vehicle, or necessary for its operation

All Other Larceny—All thefts that do not fit any of the definitions of the specific subcategories of Larceny/Theft listed above

Motor Vehicle Theft—The theft of a motor vehicle

Pornography/Obscene Material—The violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, publishing, sale, purchase, or possession of sexually explicit material, e.g., literature, photographs, etc.



Prostitution Offenses—To unlawfully engage in or promote sexual activities for anything of value

Prostitution—To engage in commercial sex acts for anything of value

Assisting or Promoting Prostitution—To solicit customers or transport persons for prostitution purposes; to own, manage, or operate a dwelling or other establishment for the purpose of providing a place where prostitution is performed; or to otherwise assist or promote prostitution

Purchasing Prostitution—To purchase or trade anything of value for commercial sex acts

Robbery—The taking, or attempting to take, anything of value under confrontational circumstances from the control, custody, or care of another person by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear of immediate harm

Special Note about Sex Offenses: At the recommendation of the Criminal Justice Information Services Advisory Policy Board, the UCR Program combined the offense categories of Sex Offenses [formerly Forcible] and Sex Offenses, Nonforcible. Beginning with the 2018 data, all offense types previously published in those two categories are now published in one category as Sex Offenses.

Sex Offenses—Any sexual act including Rape, Sodomy, Sexual Assault With An Object, or Fondling directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent; also unlawful sexual intercourse

Rape—(Except Statutory Rape) 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—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—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



Fondling—The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification 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—Nonforcible sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law

Statutory Rape—Nonforcible sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent

Stolen Property Offenses—Receiving, buying, selling, possessing, concealing, or transporting any property with the knowledge that it has been unlawfully taken, as by burglary, embezzlement, fraud, larceny, robbery, etc.

Weapon Law Violations—The violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, concealment, or use of firearms, cutting instruments, explosives, incendiary devices, or other deadly weapons



Group B Offenses

Bad Checks— (Except Counterfeit Checks or Forged Checks) Knowingly and intentionally writing and/or negotiating checks drawn against insufficient or nonexistent funds

Curfew/Loitering/Vagrancy Violations—The violation of a court order, regulation, ordinance, or law requiring the withdrawal of persons from the streets or other specified areas; prohibiting persons from remaining in an area or place in an idle or aimless manner; or prohibiting persons from going from place to place without visible means of support

Disorderly Conduct—Any behavior that tends to disturb the public peace or decorum, scandalize the community, or shock the public sense of morality

Driving Under the Influence—Driving or operating a motor vehicle or common carrier while mentally or physically impaired as the result of consuming an alcoholic beverage or using a drug or narcotic

Drunkenness—(Except Driving Under the Influence) To drink alcoholic beverages to the extent that one's mental faculties and physical coordination are substantially impaired

Family Offenses, Nonviolent—Unlawful, nonviolent acts by a family member (or legal guardian) that threaten the physical, mental, or economic well-being or morals of another family member and that are not classifiable as other offenses, such as Assault, Incest, Statutory Rape, etc.

Liquor Law Violations—(Except Driving Under the Influence and Drunkenness) The violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or use of alcoholic beverages

Peeping Tom—To secretly look through a window, doorway, keyhole, or other aperture for the purpose of voyeurism

Trespass of Real Property—To unlawfully enter land, a dwelling, or other real property

All Other Offenses—All crimes that are not Group A offenses and not included in one of the specifically named Group B crime categories listed previously



Additional Crime Occurrences Collected via NIBRS

In addition to criminal offenses, the details captured via NIBRS provide law enforcement and other data users with information to help understand other criminal occurrences. Program changes have resulted in details to help understand cargo theft and, most recently, domestic and family violence. Definitions for these criminal occurrences and changes regarding the collection of details associated with them follow.

Inclusion of Identity Theft and Hacking/Computer Invasion as Cargo Theft Offenses

Although the UCR Program began collecting data for identity theft and hacking/computer invasion in 2016, these offenses were not included in the list of offenses that could occur in conjunction with cargo theft, which is defined as follows.

Cargo theft—The criminal taking of any cargo including, but not limited to, goods, chattels, money, or baggage that constitutes, in whole or in part, a commercial shipment of freight moving in commerce, from any pipeline system, railroad car, motor truck, or other vehicle, or from any tank or storage facility, station house, platform, or depot, or from any vessel or wharf, or from any aircraft, air terminal, airport, aircraft terminal or air navigation facility, or from any intermodal container, intermodal chassis, trailer, container freight station, warehouse, freight distribution facility, or freight consolidation facility. For purposes of this definition, cargo shall be deemed as moving in commerce at all points between the point of origin and the final destination, regardless of any temporary stop while awaiting transshipment or otherwise.

As recommended by the CJIS Advisory Policy Board (APB), the UCR Program expanded the list of offenses that can be reported with the cargo theft indicator in 2019 to include identity theft and hacking/computer invasion.

Collection of Domestic and Family Violence Data

As approved by the CJIS APB, the UCR Program began collecting data about domestic and family violence in 2019 in accordance with the following definition.

Domestic and Family Violence—The use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force of a weapon; or the use of coercion or intimidation; or committing a crime against property by a current or former spouse, parent, or guardian of the victim; a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; a person who is cohabiting with or has cohabited with the victim as a spouse, parent, or guardian; or by a person who is or has been similarly situated to a spouse, parent, or guardian of the victim.



Uniform Crime Reporting Program
National Incident-Based Reporting System

Specific changes within NIBRS to pinpoint such occurrences included replacing the data value of Lover's Quarrel with Domestic Violence as a circumstance for murder and aggravated assault offenses. In addition to other data values that specify the relationship of victims to their offenders, an additional value for Ex-relationship was added.