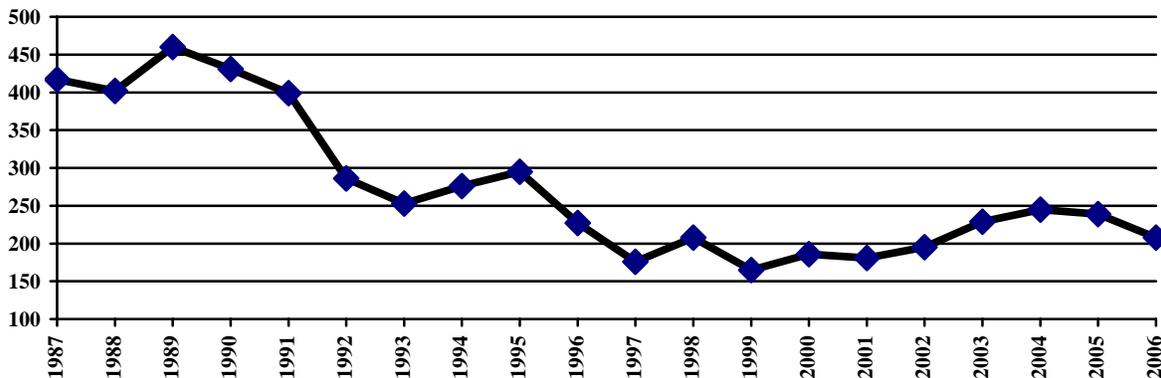


ROBBERY

Robbery is the taking or attempted taking of anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. This crime includes muggings, purse snatchings, and bank hold-ups.

**Twenty Year Review:
Robbery in Cambridge, 1987-2006**



239 reported in 2005 • 208 reported in 2006

From 2001 to 2004, robberies in the City were slowly increasing in number. This trend ended in 2005, and continued downwards in 2006, when robberies decreased by 13% overall. A closer look at the types of robbery reveals a whopping 48% decrease in commercial robberies and a slight increase of 2% in street robberies.

	2005	2006	% Change
Commercial Robbery	73	38	-48%
Street Robbery	166	170	+2%
Total	239	208	-13%

Due to its violent nature, robbery is one of the most feared crimes. It is one of the top crimes considered by residents when they estimate the relative “safety” of an area. It is also one of the main concerns of business owners. Often, suspects approach their target, threatening to cause harm if the victim does not relinquish money or property. Weapons are brandished in some cases, but a suspect may just rely on the victim’s perceived fear of harm to commit the crime. Most incidents involve little physical contact between the suspect and victim, and often result in no harm to the victim, especially when they do not resist the suspect’s demands.

COMMERCIAL ROBBERY

From 1970-1990, Cambridge averaged 100 commercial robberies annually.

Throughout the 1990’s the number of robberies decreased dramatically to an average of 45 a year (with a high in 1990 of 102 and a low in 1999 of 18). From

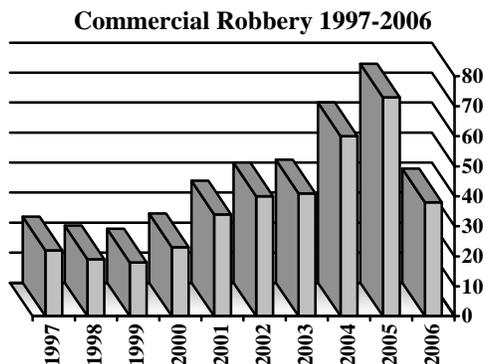
2000 to 2005, the number of reported commercial robberies steadily increased, until 2006 when a decrease of nearly 50% was reported.

Commercial robbery is described as the taking by force or threat of force anything of value from the care or custody of a commercial or financial establishment. Examples of this crime include a bank heist, a cab stick-up, and a convenience store hold-up. Commercial incidents tend to occur early in the morning or late into the night.

This year, commercial robberies fell by 35 incidents, translating to a 48% decrease. The 38 reported incidents in 2006 represent the fewest commercial robberies Cambridge has seen in four years. The Porter Square area experienced the most commercial robberies with 34% of the incidents, followed by the Alewife/West Cambridge business district, which accounted for 29% of the total.

Convenience stores were the most common targets of commercial robberies in 2006. Approximately 29% of the robberies in 2006 were of convenience stores, and the majority of these incidents occurred in the later evening hours between 8:00 p.m. and midnight.

In the first quarter, two commercial robberies targeted dry cleaning establishments on Saturdays in January and February. In both robberies, the suspect entered the cleaners wearing a black mask, brandished a handgun, and demanded money from the register. The suspect then fled in a waiting motor vehicle operated by a second suspect.



COMMERCIAL ROBBERIES BY LOCATION TYPE			
Type	2004	2005	2006
Bank/Armored Car	14	13	9
Cab	7	3	1
Café	5	2	0
Convenience	10	17	12
Gas Station	15	16	5
Drug Store	0	4	0
Fast Food	2	1	1
Hotel/Motel	2	1	3
Jewelry Store	0	0	0
Liquor Store	0	1	0
Misc. Retail	5	2	7
Parking Garage	1	0	0

There was a notable commercial robbery series that continued from the first quarter into the second. A series of three robberies targeted a convenience store on Massachusetts Ave. between January and early February. In each of the robberies the suspect entered the store, threatened the clerk with a gun, and demanded money. This same convenience store experienced two more robberies in the second quarter. In late May, a Somerville resident loitering around the establishment was arrested in connection with a robbery at this location earlier in the year.

There were nine bank robberies in 2006, seven of which occurred in the second half of the year. Six of the nine bank robberies resulted in an arrest. In March, the Cambridge Portuguese Credit Union was robbed and the FBI Bank Robbery Task Force later arrested an individual in connection with this robbery. This individual was also recognized as being the person who robbed the

bank earlier in the year. In August, a Roxbury man was arrested after he robbed The First National Bank on Massachusetts Ave. In September, there was a bank robbery at the Century Bank located on Massachusetts Ave. The FBI Bank Robbery Task Force arrested a man from Woburn, MA, for an unrelated warrant who later confessed to committing the Century Bank robbery. In early November, The Bank of America on Mt. Auburn St. was robbed and a Cambridge man was arrested a few days later after warrants were sought for his arrest in connection with this robbery. In early December, a Salem, NH, man was arrested for robbing the Cambridge Trust Bank on Huron Ave. A few days after this robbery, an Arlington resident was arrested for robbing the Citizen’s Bank on Cambridge St.

Protect yourself and your business!! Please see the Protect Yourself section starting on page 138 for tips on how you can protect yourself against becoming a robbery victim, and how to handle the situation if you do find yourself in dangerous circumstances.

STREET ROBBERY

Street robberies historically take place during the evening hours, particularly after drinking establishments close, and in dark areas.

Street robbery describes all robberies committed against individuals, as opposed to commercial establishments. Examples of street robberies are “muggings,” “car-jackings,” and “purse snatchings.”

The number of street robberies reported in 2006 increased slightly by four incidents, translating to a 2% increase over the previous year. The numbers of street robberies across each neighborhood varied widely, which is a reflection of the residential and commercial mixture in each area. For example, Cambridgeport, Area

4, and Mid-Cambridge are much more densely populated than other neighborhoods and are closer to train stations and drinking establishments. These are factors that contribute to higher numbers of potential targets for street robbers. Individuals can become targets when they are walking alone late at night, distracted or intoxicated.

A weapon was used or threatened in a majority of the street robberies in 2006. The most commonly used weapons this year were knives, hands/feet, and handguns.

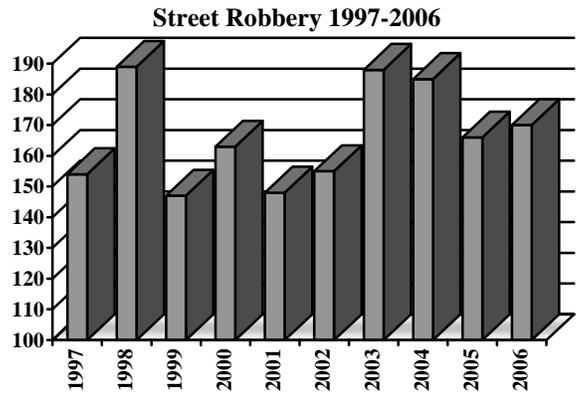
There were a few noteworthy street robbery patterns that developed during 2006. The most notable street robbery pattern in the first quarter involved six robberies in Area 4, which started at the end of February and continued into the beginning of March. The first four incidents occurred on either an early Tuesday morning or a late Tuesday night. The series continued until March 9, when two robberies occurred within minutes of each other in the early hours of a Thursday morning. All six cases involved more than one young suspect threatening the victim with a gun and demanding the victim's wallet. In most of these incidents, the victim was a male walking alone. In four cases, the victim refused and the suspects fled without taking anything. This pattern has stopped and no related incidents have been reported since March 9.

The second quarter saw one significant street robbery pattern involving a total of eight possibly related incidents. This series occurred in April and was labeled a pack robbery series, in which a group of three or more teenage suspects used force to rob the victim. All victims targeted were walking alone late at night into the early morning hours. In most of the incidents, the suspects used physical force and/or brandished a knife to threaten their victims into giving them their money. The robberies took place in the vicinity of the Inman/Harrington and Area 4 neighborhoods and continued from April 15 until the last reported incident on April 27.

The last quarter of the year also saw a pack robbery series, this time concentrated around the Fresh Pond Area in the vicinity of Cushing St. Suspects in these robberies traveled in large groups and demanded cash from victims walking alone late in the evening. Extra patrol and an extensive investigation by Detectives of area juveniles appeared to eradicate this series of incidents.

Despite the name, street robberies can take place in many different places, including parks, parking lots, or apartment hallways. Still, nearly 83% of all street robberies in 2006 occurred on the street or sidewalk. Five percent of the incidents took place in parking garages or lots and three percent occurred at local parks. Victims in 10 of the robbery cases knew the suspects. The majority of the street robberies throughout the city occurred between 7:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m. This is a common time for street robberies to be reported because people are walking home after work or are out when the bars close.

The Crime Analysis Unit breaks down incidents of street robbery into similar types for further analysis. Approximately 46% of the street robberies were "predatory," where the victim was approached by one or two suspects, threatened, and robbed. The second most common type reported in 2006 was purse snatchings. A breakdown of street robbery types can be found on the following pages.



FIVE HISTORICAL STREET ROBBERY HOT SPOTS

1. **CENTRAL SQUARE**, specifically the area of Massachusetts Avenue between Washington and Franklin Streets, down Pearl Street. This is a prime location for homeless-on-homeless robberies. Mostly predatory, but also purse snatchings concentrated here in the late afternoon and late evening.
2. **CAMBRIDGESIDE GALLERIA**, particularly the First Street entrance, including the Lechmere MBTA Station area. These are usually juveniles robbing each other between 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
3. **HARVARD SQUARE**, around Church Street, Brattle Street and Harvard Yard. Predatory robberies in the late evening mixed with early evening pack robberies.
4. **RUSSELL FIELD AND THE ALEWIFE MBTA STATION**. The 300-400 blocks of Rindge Avenue hold the major concentration for these incidents. Bullyboy and pack robberies target people leaving the station and crossing through the field.
5. **UPPER CAMBRIDGEPORT**, the area surrounded by Franklin and Erie Streets, between Brookline and Pleasant Streets. These incidents are predatory in nature and concentrated during the late night and predawn hours of the weekend.

Frequently Occurring Scenarios in Cambridge

A long-term trend analysis of street robberies in Cambridge reveals a number of frequently recurring scenarios. The number in parenthesis after the category indicates how frequently that categorization occurred in Cambridge this past year:

Acquaintance Robberies (9): Related to domestic robbery and homeless robbery (see below), Acquaintance Robberies are committed by someone the victim knows. Common scenarios include drinking buddies robbing each other after a night at the bar, friends turning on each other, drug disputes, and robberies between co-workers.

ATM Robberies (3): In this type of robbery, the suspect may approach the victim immediately after the victim withdraws money from an ATM and demand that he or she hand over the cash, or the suspect may wait behind the victim as they make a transaction, then take the money directly from the ATM and run. An ATM robbery can also occur when suspects approach a victim on the street, threaten the victim by displaying or implying a weapon, and demand the victim go to an ATM and withdraw money for them.

Bikejackers (2): Juvenile robberies of intimidation where the primary property targets are bicycles.

Bully Boys (3): Juvenile robberies of intimidation. In most occurrences, the victim knows the perpetrators. Committed by and against school-aged youths, they occur on the way home from school, or at playgrounds, malls, parks, or skating rinks. Two to four juvenile males usually strong-arm their victim, stealing such things as his jacket, hat, or lunch money.

Carjacking (3): In this scenario, a lone predator approaches a victim entering or exiting his or her car, or when stopped at a traffic light. The robber orders the victim out of the vehicle and demands the keys.

Dial-A-Victim (1): These robberies target delivery service personnel. In these situations, suspects usually brandish a knife or gun to intercept a delivery person.

Domestic (1): This type of scenario occurs when someone close to the victim, like a family member, romantic partner, or roommate, takes money or property from them by the use or threat of violence.

Drug Deal (1): Typically drug deals gone awry.

Home Invasion (2): One of the most serious robbery types. Home invasions involve robbers entering their victim's homes, usually at night, subduing the residents, and robbing the home. Fortunately this type of robbery is rare in Cambridge, and when it occurs, the victim generally knows the perpetrator.

Homeless Robberies (2): These are incidents of homeless people robbing each other. The majority of these robberies occur in the vicinity of Central and

STREET ROBBERIES BY NEIGHBORHOOD			
AREA	2004	2005	2006
East Cambridge	15	17	20
M.I.T. Area	2	1	1
Inman/Harrington	9	15	23
Area 4	40	27	36
Cambridgeport	43	30	19
Mid-Cambridge	13	20	12
Riverside	22	14	10
Agassiz	6	4	3
Peabody	8	11	13
West Cambridge	7	5	4
North Cambridge	18	16	18
Cambridge Highlands	1	4	5
Strawberry Hill	1	2	6

Harvard Squares, or at various shelters. The victim is usually acquainted with the perpetrator, and in many cases, both are intoxicated. Property stolen ranges from a bottle of wine to a blanket or a pair of shoes. Like domestic robberies, homeless robberies are sometimes precipitated by past debts, real or imaginary.

Pack Robberies (36): In this situation, a group of three to eight individuals will stalk victims around shopping malls, MBTA stations, streets, or recreational areas. The majority of these robberies occur on Friday or Saturday nights, when the "pack" is returning from a dance or party. The robberies are not always premeditated, but the victim—typically a male between the ages of 15-25, walking alone—simply ends up in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Predatory Robberies (79): This type of street robbery has the most pronounced effect on a citizen's perception of safety. Predatory robberies are synonymous with "muggings." In the typical scenario, one or two men approach the victim with knife or gun and demand cash. The danger of serious injury is constantly present. Cambridge typically experiences more two-person predatory robberies than any other type.

Purse Snatch (27): The purse-snatcher is generally unarmed, and has little intent to cause injury. After "casing" a victim—usually a female carrying a purse, bag, or wallet—this robber approaches quickly—on foot or on a bicycle—and snatches the item out of the victim's hands or off her shoulder before she has a chance to react, often effecting a "body check" in the process. Many incidents also involve the snatching of purses from the ground at outdoor cafes where accessibility is easy.

Robberies in 2006

- ★ Commercial Robberies
- Street Robberies

