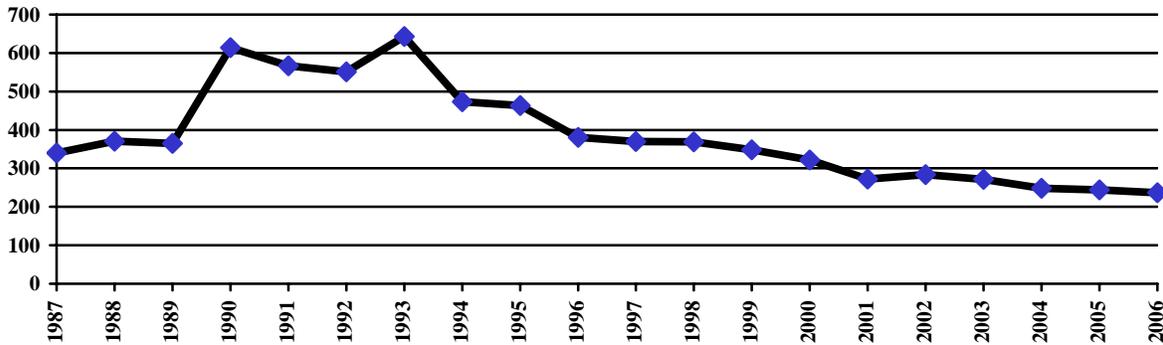


AGGRAVATED ASSAULT

Aggravated assault describes an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault is usually accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm. Attempts are included since it is not necessary that injury result when a gun, knife, or other weapon is used which could and probably would result in serious personal injury if the crime were successfully completed.

**Twenty Year Review:
Aggravated Assault in Cambridge, 1987-2006**



244 reported in 2005 • 237 reported in 2006

Analysis of the past twenty years shows that aggravated assault reached its peak in the early 1990's. Between 1984 and 1989, Cambridge registered about 350 incidents per year; in 1990, it suddenly jumped by 41% to an unprecedented 614 reports. It peaked at 643 in 1993 and has been on a steady decline since then. Within the last five years, aggravated assaults have averaged 257 incidents a year, a 24% decrease from the five previous years.

Assault is a violent crime that typically arises in "the heat of the moment". Unlike the crime of robbery, assault seldom involves a motivation of personal gain. Offenders in aggravated assaults will often regret the incident subsequent to its occurrence, as the offender typically knows his or her victim.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS FROM 2004 TO 2006

NEIGHBORHOOD	2004	2005	2006
East Cambridge	27	22	19
M.I.T. Area	4	7	5
Inman/Harrington	31	20	29
Area 4	48	51	42
Cambridgeport	37	29	34
Mid-Cambridge	17	26	24
Riverside	24	28	21
Agassiz	3	3	4
Peabody	10	9	12
West Cambridge	13	15	17
North Cambridge	28	26	24
Cambridge Highlands	1	3	4
Strawberry Hill	4	5	1
Unknown	1	0	1
	248	244	237

*Please note that 1 incident in 2004 and 1 incident in 2006 occurred at unknown locations and have been indicated as such on the breakdown above.

Aggravated assault is a very serious crime and is not taken lightly by the Cambridge Police. The severity of aggravated assault lies in the serious injury caused to victims, which can range from bruises to knife or gun wounds. Approximately 10% of the aggravated assaults in 2006 resulted in serious to life-threatening injuries, most of which involved a stabbing or shooting. Roughly 20% of the 237 incidents resulted in no injury, as the victim was merely threatened with the use of a weapon.

IN FOCUS: DOMESTIC ASSAULTS

A good portion of the fluctuation in the rate of incidents can be attributed to the frequency in which the crime is *reported* rather than the frequency of its actual occurrence. One area with a historically low reporting rate is domestic assault. As domestic violence awareness has increased over the last decade, so has the willingness of domestic violence victims to report abuse to the police. A quarter of the aggravated assaults in 2006 were domestic incidents. Over the past five years, the rate of domestic incidents has been closer to about a third of all reported incidents.

Despite advances made by domestic violence victim advocates in recent years, experts estimate that between 60 and 80% of domestic assaults are never reported to the police. However, lack of reporting is not unique to domestic incidents. It is very likely that factors including apathy, fear of police contact, embarrassment, and other issues lead to underreporting of various assaults involving acquaintances, gangs, and conflicts among the homeless. Due to the estimated high rate of underreporting, *assault statistics must be viewed with extreme care.*

Since domestic assaults and assaults among acquaintances dominate the percentages (aside from stranger assaults), the crime naturally registers higher in areas that have a high residential population. These neighborhoods include Area 4, Riverside, and Inman/Harrington. Domestic assaults and other domestic crimes are reviewed in the *Domestic Crimes* section of this report.

Relationships

Another way to look at aggravated assaults is to classify the relationship between the offender and the victim. Many, but not all, of the assault categorizations are based on this relationship. This list shows the relationship between the offender and the victim in the 237 aggravated assaults in 2006:

Relationship	Total	%
Stranger	92	39%
Acquaintance	57	24%
Romantic Partner	29	12%
Ex-Romantic Partner	15	6%
Client/Patron	12	5%
Parent/Child	9	4%
Spouse	6	3%
Sibling	4	2%
Schoolmate	4	2%
Co-Worker/Employee	4	2%
Landlord/Tenant	2	1%
Third Lover	1	0%
Roommate	1	0%
Neighbor	1	0%

NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS AND TRENDS OBSERVED IN 2006

The following is a synopsis of neighborhoods with concentrations of particular aggravated assault categories as well as detailed accounts of some of the most serious incidents of the year (not including domestic incidents).

- **NEIGHBORHOODS:**

- **Strawberry Hill** experienced the greatest decrease in aggravated assaults, declining by 80% from five incidents in 2005 to one incident in 2006. The **MIT area** and **Riverside**, which experienced a 29% and 25% decrease, respectively, were the other two areas that reported the most substantial decline in aggravated assaults. **Inman/Harrington** sustained the most notable increase; a 45% rise over 2005.
- **Cambridgeport** was the top area of bar and alcohol related incidents. This type of activity, which was highest in the Central Square vicinity, can be attributed to the high density of foot traffic around restaurants, bars and nightclubs in the Mass Ave area, particularly in the nighttime.
- **Area 4** experienced a large number of juvenile/gang related aggravated assaults, as did **North Cambridge**. Similar to incidents in 2004 and 2005, many juvenile incidents citywide in 2006 involved the use of a knife or handgun. A BB gun was also used in a number of incidents.
- There were three aggravated assault incidents involving homeless individuals in Cambridge this year. Two of these incidents took place in the **Central Square** area, where there is a large homeless

population. The typical homeless incident will involve homeless-on-homeless assaults, usually among acquainted individuals.

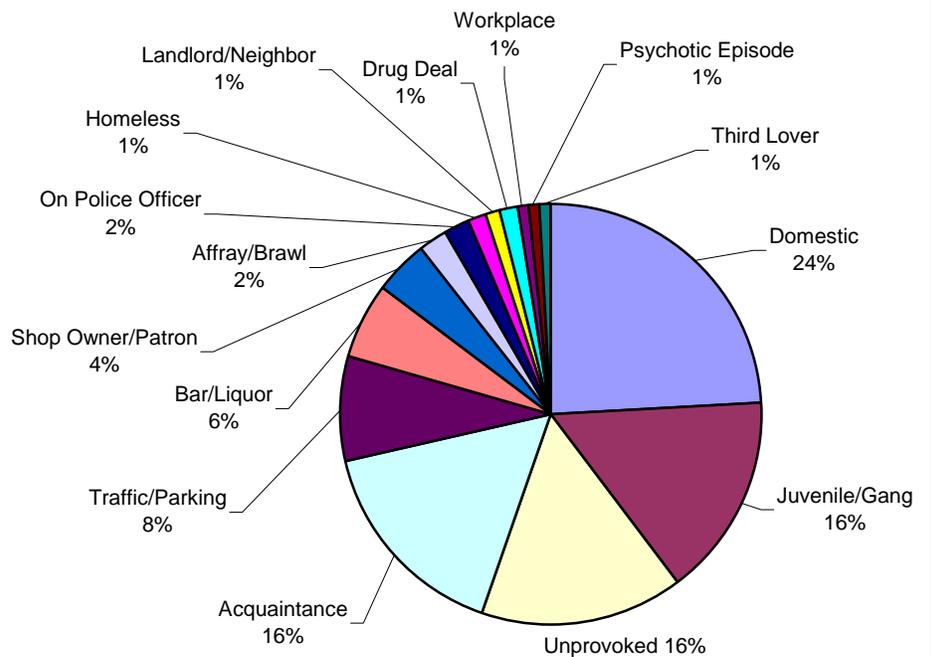
- Unprovoked incidents were highest in **West Cambridge**. However, there was no discernable pattern to these incidents.
- Thirteen of the aggravated assaults in 2006 were shooting incidents. The following examples represent some of the more serious non-fatal shootings of the year.
 - A male was shot eleven times while standing outside a residence on Howard St in May. Two males were arrested in connection with this incident.
 - In July, a male and a female were shot while in Clement Morgan Park just before midnight. This incident remains under investigation.
- See page 39 for a map of all aggravated assaults in 2005 and 2006 in which a handgun was used or threatened.

Protect yourself!! Please see the Protect Yourself section starting on page 138 for tips on how you can protect against becoming a victim of assault, and what do in case of an assault or abuse.

AGGRAVATED ASSAULT CLASSIFICATIONS

TYPE	2005	2006
Domestic	63	57
Acquaintance	41	38
Juvenile	21	37
Unprovoked	39	37
Traffic/Parking	21	19
Bar/Liquor	13	14
Shop Owner/Patron	0	10
Affray/Brawl	12	5
On Police Officer	9	5
Homeless	3	3
Landlord/Neighbor	6	3
Drug Deal	4	3
Workplace	7	2
Psychotic Episode	3	2
Third Lover	2	2

Classification Percent of Aggravated Assaults, 2006



SIMPLE ASSAULT

531 reported in 2005 • 397 reported in 2006

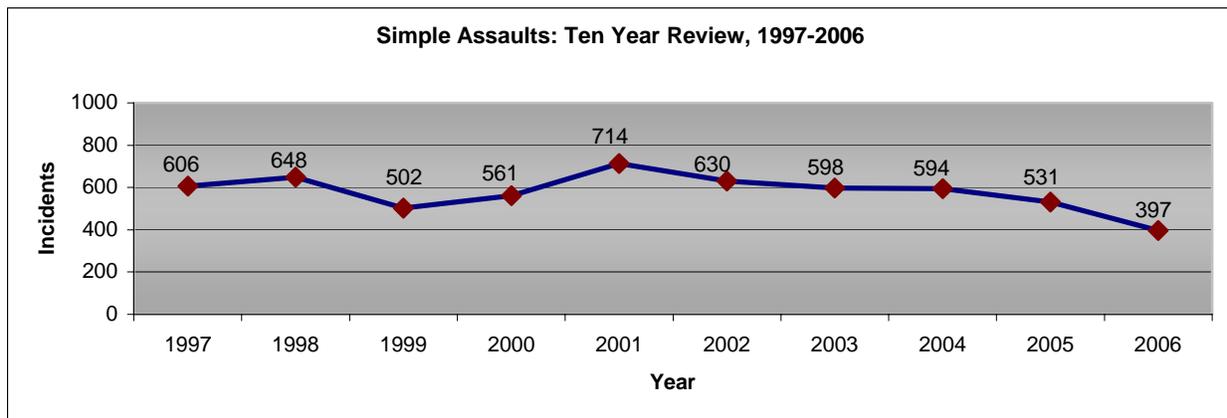
SIMPLE ASSAULT CATEGORIZATION			
Categorization	2005	2006	% Change 05-06
Domestic	203	160	-21%
Acquaintance	78	66	-15%
Unprovoked	44	38	-14%
Traffic/Parking	39	29	-26%
Bar/Alcohol	24	26	+8%
Juvenile/Gang	30	21	-30%
Landlord/Neighbor	12	15	+25%
Shop Owner/Patron	22	13	-41%
Police Officer	22	10	-55%
Workplace	32	8	-75%
Homeless	17	6	-65%
Psychotic Episode	4	4	0%
Third Lover	2	1	-50%
Other	2	0	NA
Total	531	397	-25%

Simple Assaults, unlike aggravated assaults, are not scored among the Part I Crimes (Index Crimes). They do not involve the use of a dangerous weapon and do not cause serious injury. Examples of simple assault include a shove, a punch in the stomach, or a slap in the face.

On average, Cambridge reports 500 to 600 simple assault incidents annually. During the past year, 397 simple assaults were reported to the Cambridge Police Department. This number represents a 25% decrease from the 531 incidents reported in 2005 and is the lowest number reported in over 10 years. However, because most simple assaults result in minimal or no injury, the victims and offenders may sometimes dismiss them as inconsequential. Therefore, lack of reporting is a problem in calculating exact numbers of simple assaults.

Similar to aggravated assaults, domestic incidents make up the highest percent of reported simple assaults. In 2006, domestic incidents accounted for 40% of the simple assaults. Assaults among acquaintances made up 17% of the simple assaults and unprovoked incidents followed, accounting for approximately 10% of the reports.

Cambridgeport and Area 4 reported the most simple assault activity in 2006 with 67 and 60 incidents, respectively. Bar and alcohol related incidents were highest in Cambridgeport (eight incidents), and traffic/parking incidents were highest in East Cambridge (eight incidents). The other incident categories broke down more evenly across neighborhoods.



WHERE ASSAULTS TAKE PLACE...

Many assaults take place in the home, particularly family, roommate or acquaintance-related incidents. Assaults taking place on the street are the most common, as these involve domestic disputes as well as arguments that may begin in a commercial establishment and spill onto the street. Restaurant/Bar incidents are common, and can be the result of intoxicated parties becoming disorderly and sometimes violent. Aggravated assaults on school grounds have not significantly increased over the past five years, basically making up between 1 and 2% of all aggravated assaults. While many juvenile simple assaults take place on school grounds, the more violent aggravated assaults take place on the street in the proximity of residential housing and parks.

AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS INVOLVING HANDGUNS, 2005-2006

