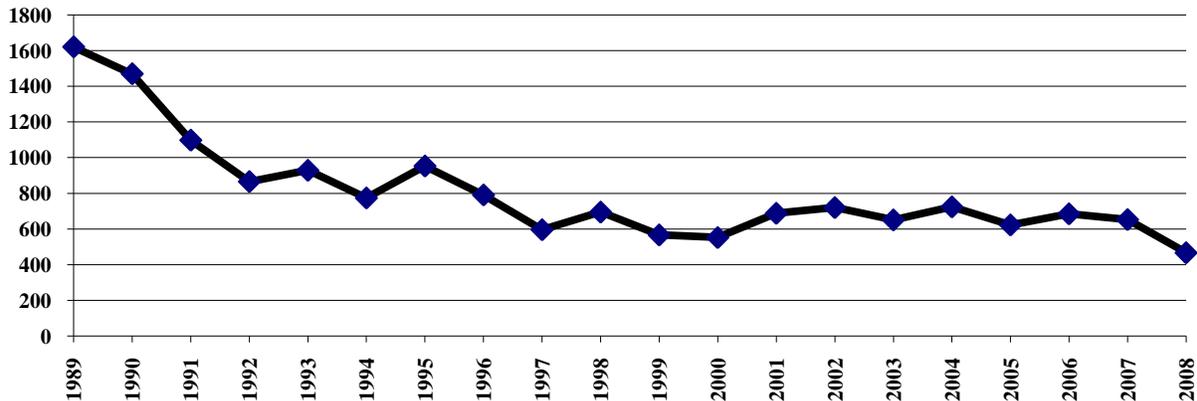


BURGLARY

Burglary is described as the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or theft. The use of force to gain entry is not required to classify an offense as burglary. Burglary attempts are included in the total.

Twenty Year Review: Burglary in Cambridge, 1989-2008



653 reported in 2007 • 467 reported in 2008

Burglary is categorized as a more serious crime than larceny since it involves the use of force and unlawful entry into a business or residence. Perpetrators employ various techniques to enter residences or businesses. Since burglars need to pull off their heist quickly, break-ins are occasionally only unsuccessful “attempts,” in which no entry is made, but damage is caused to the structure.

	2007	2008	% Change from 07-08
Commercial Burglary	134	76	-43%
Residential Burglary	519	391	-25%
Total	653	467	-28%

Over the past 20 years, burglary in Cambridge has decreased by approximately 71%. Burglary crimes peaked in the late 1980’s, decreased dramatically in the early 1990’s, and remained relatively stable in the 2000’s until 2008, when Cambridge recorded its lowest burglary total in 40 years.

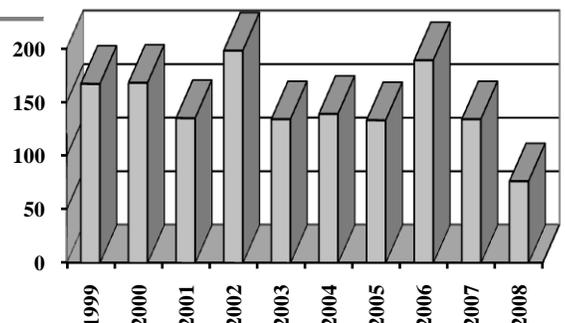
Burglars often fall into two types: the “amateur” and the “professional.” Amateurs are likely to smash windows or kick in doors to enter unoccupied buildings. These burglars will often take lightweight, visible property, such as a purse left on a table, loose change, a laptop, or other less costly items. “Professional” burglars, alternatively, are more sophisticated in their methods and tend to steal higher-priced items. They often pry open a door, disable alarms, and even occasionally enter occupied establishments.

For the purposes of analysis, burglary is divided into two main categories: *commercial* and *residential*.

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY

A commercial burglary, more commonly referred to as a *commercial break*, is the unlawful entry into a commercial establishment, including business, government, religious, or retail establishments. Between 2007 and 2008, there was a 43% decrease in commercial breaks in Cambridge. Over the past five years, commercial breaks have averaged approximately 134 incidents a year, a 16% decrease from the previous five-year average.

Commercial Burglary 1999-2008



A wide variety of establishments are targeted in commercial burglary using an array of methods. Most breaks can be categorized as one of the following:

- ◆ **Smash & Grab** burglaries target display windows along major routes. The burglar runs or drives up, smashes the window, steals valuables from the immediate window area, and runs off. The entire endeavor may take less than a minute.
- ◆ **Retail** burglars pry or smash their way into stores or other locations with cash registers on the premises. They hope to steal cash left in the register or safe and may grab cigarettes or lottery tickets on the way out.
- ◆ **Restaurant/Bar** burglars often cross multiple jurisdictions, breaking into similar franchises, looking for safes. Registers and cash were targeted in the majority of the 2008 cases.
- ◆ **Business** burglars enter real-estate offices, law firms, technology companies, and other offices, looking for laptop computers and other expensive equipment. The majority of the incidents in 2008 occurred when an intruder gained entrance into locked offices and stole electronic equipment.
- ◆ **Construction Site/Industrial Area** thieves are a special breed of burglars who know how to select, steal, and sell expensive power tools, building supplies, and heavy equipment. They are often in the business themselves and may have done sub-contract work on the sites that they target. Construction site and industrial area burglaries increased by 450% from 2005 to 2006 due mainly to increases in thefts of copper products. This pattern was eradicated in 2007.
- ◆ **Safe Crackers** are a more professional type of burglar. In these incidents, perpetrators enter businesses with high cash intake, such as restaurants and bars, and usually take that cash.
- ◆ **Church** burglars are usually homeless individuals with substance abuse problems. They enter lightly secured houses of worship, looking for petty cash and easily fenced items.
- ◆ **School** burglars are generally juveniles, breaking into their own schools to vandalize or steal computers and other expensive goods they see everyday. Youth centers/daycares are included.

TYPE OF PREMISE	2007	2008
Bar/Restaurant/Social	23	25
Business Offices	26	16
Other: (hair salons, health clubs, laundromat etc)	21	12
Retail Establishments	17	7
Convenience/Gas	14	4
School/Youth Center	13	5
Church	9	4
Industrial/Construction	8	3
Government Building	3	0
TOTAL	134	76

IN FOCUS: PROFESSIONAL COMMERCIAL BURGLARY PATTERNS

In 2008, there was a considerable decrease of 43% in commercial burglaries. There were no distinct patterns that emerged, but a few places did experience more than one break. About 21% of the breaks in 2008 were attempts in which no entry was gained and another 7% were considered 'inside jobs' in which an employee or known associate was believed to be responsible. Together these two categories account for a little over a quarter of the commercial breaks in 2008. All but three of the business districts saw significant declines in commercial breaks in 2008.

The few incidents worth mention all occurred in the summer. In June, there were four commercial breaks in East Cambridge with similar methods of entry targeting cash registers. The last weekend of June and the first weekend of July saw three breaks at one location on Huron Ave, and two more at nearby establishments. Entry was made through a window in all of the incidents and cash was stolen in two. At the end of July, two similar breaks occurred in East Cambridge in which the front window of each establishment was smashed and coins from the registers were stolen.

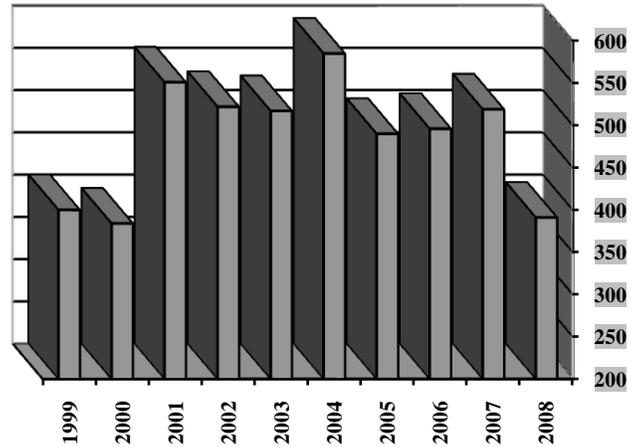
GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF COMMERCIAL BURGLARIES						
Business District	2006	2007	2008	% Change 07-08	% of Total	
Central Square	37	16	17	+6%	22%	
East Cambridge/Galleria	29	26	12	-54%	16%	
Alewife/West Cambridge	17	23	10	-57%	13%	
Inman Square/Harrington	30	17	9	-47%	12%	
Harvard Square	18	13	8	-38%	11%	
Porter Square/North Cambridge	23	16	7	-56%	9%	
Massachusetts Avenue 1500-1900	8	15	5	-67%	7%	
Bay Square/Upper Broadway	6	6	3	-50%	4%	
Kendall Square/M.I.T.	13	2	3	+50%	4%	
Cambridgeport/Riverside	8	1	2	Inc.	3%	

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

Residential burglaries, or “housebreaks,” are of particular concern to local police and communities because of the loss of personal security felt when one’s home is invaded and possessions are stolen.

Housebreaks were down 25% in Cambridge in 2008 compared to 2007. This total includes 73 housebreak incidents (or 19%) that were attempted but not completed. Both Area 4 and Cambridgeport recorded decreases of over 40%, due to an eradication of patterns that had affected both neighborhoods in 2007. The few increases were recorded in Mid-Cambridge, West Cambridge, East Cambridge and Agassiz.

Residential Burglary, 1999-2008



GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY					
AREA	2006	2007	2008	% Change 07-08	% of Total
Mid-Cambridge	78	56	61	+9%	16%
Inman/Harrington	53	80	55	-31%	14%
Peabody	43	59	50	-15%	13%
Area 4	54	86	47	-45%	12%
North Cambridge	31	55	34	-38%	9%
West Cambridge	43	31	33	+6%	8%
Cambridgeport	85	59	32	-46%	8%
East Cambridge	41	26	28	+8%	7%
Riverside	31	36	23	-36%	6%
Agassiz	24	17	20	+18%	5%
Strawberry Hill	9	11	6	-45%	2%
Cambridge Highlands	3	2	2	No Change	1%
M.I.T. Area	1	1	0	Inc	0%

Housebreaks most commonly occur during the daytime while victims are not home, or while the homeowners are away on vacation. Suspects are often long gone by the time the victim returns home and calls police. A large number of housebreaks are simply attempts in which a suspect tries but is unable to gain entry to a residence. The victim later discovers signs that someone tried to enter. In 2008, attempts accounted for 19% of the housebreaks. Unknown suspects are typically the perpetrators in Cambridge housebreaks, although a small percentage of incidents involve acquaintances or family members. For example, 1% of all reported housebreak victims in 2008 named an acquaintance (friend, roommate, or neighbor) as a suspect. An additional 4% of incidents were categorized as domestic (perpetrated by family members, ex-boyfriends, etc). Arrests were made in 34 of the housebreak incidents in 2008.

Entry is gained into a residence by various methods. The most common method of entry is forcing or prying open the front door. However, entry is often made via unlocked/open windows in a large number of breaks during the summer months. The front doors of a residence were pried/forced/broken in 20% of the housebreaks in 2008. Window entry was significant regarding two different methods: shoved/forced/pried windows accounted for 16% of the incidents, and cut or removed window screens accounted for 9%. However, unlocked windows and doors combined enabled suspects to enter without force in at least 12% of all housebreaks in 2008. Historically, the property targeted in housebreaks typically

includes cash and jewelry, but in a society where many own valuable electronics, common targets of theft now include laptops, iPods, digital cameras, TVs, DVD players, and video gaming systems.

There was a noteworthy housebreak pattern that occurred throughout Area 4 and Inman Harrington in 2007. This on-again off-again pattern accounted for nearly 50% of the housebreaks citywide in 2007 and involved over 100 stolen laptops. In 30 years of observing housebreak patterns in Cambridge, this series was the first in which a group of juveniles was identified and appeared to be working in consort over an extended period of time in a concentrated area of the City. A few juvenile arrests occurred throughout 2007 in the problem areas, and five juveniles were arrested or summonsed for these housebreaks in late December 2007 and early January 2008.

With the decline in housebreaks in 2008, a pattern as substantial as the one in 2007 did not emerge. However, there were a few smaller patterns, some that were eradicated by arrests.

- In late December 2007 and early January 2008, a pattern developed in West Cambridge in which eight breaks took place in the early morning hours. These breaks involved window entry and targeted small, portable electronics. A suspect from Boston was arrested in January.
- Also in January, there was a pattern that emerged in Mid-Cambridge around the 900-1100 block of Mass Ave. The suspect(s) were entering through first floor windows and targeting jewelry and electronics. No one was apprehended in these ten incidents.
- There was a pattern along the Cambridge and Somerville border that began in late January and continued into March. In this pattern, houses were broken into around lunch time through pried front doors, and electronics, jewelry, and cash were targeted. An arrest was made in Somerville in late March after the suspect was caught breaking into a residence on Porter St in Somerville. The Cambridge man stated that he worked at a construction site in the area and a majority of the breaks coincided with his lunch break hours.
- From April to June, there was a rash of housebreaks around Concord Ave and Mass Ave that took place mainly on Wednesdays and Thursdays. A number of these breaks targeted jewelry and took place from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. There was an arrest made of a juvenile who had a bicycle that was stolen from one of the breaks; however, he claimed he received it from a third party. There was also a suspect from Boston who was linked to the burglaries through stolen property.
- The pattern that plagued Cambridge throughout 2007 returned during the summer months of 2008, with 44 attempted and completed breaks taking place mainly in Area 4 and Inman/Harrington. The breaks occurred during the day and suspects gained entry by cutting window screens to allow access. Two people were arrested in mid-September for these breaks. The “ring leader” of the juvenile crew responsible for the patterns in 2007 and 2008 was arrested in September, which has significantly contributed to the decline in housebreaks.
- In August and September, there was a pattern of housebreaks in North Cambridge that were taking place while victims were home. Witnesses were able to give helpful descriptions of the two suspects, who were eventually identified through surveillance cameras at an establishment where they used stolen credit cards. One juvenile and a 20-year-old male were arrested for these crimes.

Top Five Items Stolen/Targeted in 2008		
	In Housebreaks:	In Commercial Burglaries:
1	Laptops	Cash
2	Jewelry	Laptops/Computers
3	Cash	Camera
4	MP3 Players	Miscellaneous Electronics
5	Camera	Cigarettes

2006 – 2008 MONTHLY HOUSEBREAK TOTAL COMPARISON

