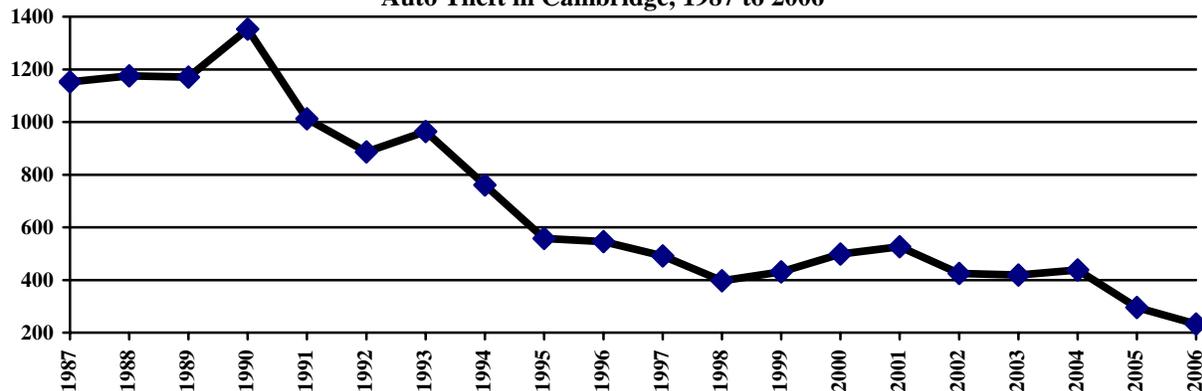


# AUTO THEFT

Auto theft is defined as the theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle. This offense category includes the theft of automobiles, trucks, buses, motorcycles, motor scooters, and snowmobiles. This definition excludes the taking of a motor vehicle for temporary use by persons having lawful access.

**Twenty Year Review:  
Auto Theft in Cambridge, 1987 to 2006**



**295 reported in 2005 • 233 reported in 2006**

In the mid-1970's there were nearly 3,000 cars reported stolen yearly in Cambridge. These figures declined to approximately 1,700 thefts in the 1980's, and to less than 1,000 thefts yearly in the 1990's. Today's figures represent one of the most dramatic reported decreases in a single crime type. The decline can be attributed to the virtual elimination of "chop shops" and interstate auto theft rings, crackdowns on insurance fraud, advances in automobile security, and new technology that enables patrol officers to quickly check a vehicle's registry listing and determine if it is stolen.

## GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF AUTO THEFT

Neighborhood	2004*	2005*	2006	CHANGE 05-06	% OF TOTAL
East Cambridge	56	34	21	-38%	9%
M.I.T. Area	15	4	7	+75%	3%
Inman/Harrington	45	23	23	0%	10%
Area 4	43	26	26	0%	11%
Cambridgeport	56	38	25	-34%	11%
Mid-Cambridge	36	34	27	-21%	11.5%
Riverside	26	14	12	-14%	5%
Agassiz	10	11	11	0%	5%
Peabody	53	26	38	+46%	16%
West Cambridge	38	30	13	-57%	5.5%
North Cambridge	41	41	21	-49%	9%
Cambridge Highlands	12	5	3	-40%	1%
Strawberry Hill	5	8	6	-25%	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>-21%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Please note that two incidents in 2004 and one in 2005 took place at unknown locations, therefore they are not included in this breakdown.

In 2006, the City of Cambridge reported its lowest number of stolen cars in over 30 years with 233 incidents. The Peabody neighborhood reported the city's highest number of thefts at 38, which represents a 46% increase for the neighborhood from the previous year. Multiple incidents were reported on Cadbury, Garden, Linnaean, Mt. Vernon, Richdale, Upland, Walden, and Wood Streets. The neighborhoods with the next highest numbers were Mid-Cambridge (27), Area 4 (26) and Cambridgeport (25). The 2006 totals in Area 4 were consistent with 2005, while Mid-Cambridge and Cambridgeport saw decreases of approximately 20% and 30%, respectively. Although auto thefts in the M.I.T. area increased by 75%, there were only three more reported incidents in this area in 2006 than in 2005. The number of auto thefts in this neighborhood represents only 3% of the total number of cars stolen in all of Cambridge. North Cambridge, which reported the highest number of auto thefts in 2005, managed to cut its number of thefts in half in 2006.

The first quarter of 2006 experienced 48 auto theft incidents in the city of Cambridge. The second quarter increased to 64 incidents. The summer months of July, August, and September saw the most auto theft incidents in 2006 with a total of 82 cars stolen. Conversely, the last quarter of the year (October through December) saw the fewest incidents with only 39 auto thefts. The month of July reported the highest number of stolen vehicles in a single month with 36 incidents (15% of the total), which incidentally is nearly equal to the total amount reported for the entire fourth quarter.

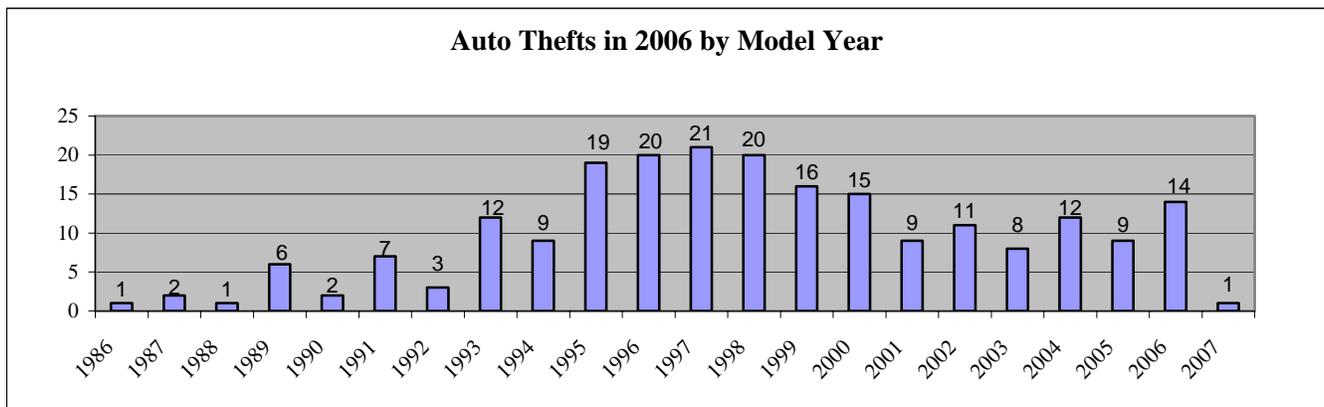
## MAKES AND MODELS

Hondas were by far the most commonly stolen automobiles of 2006, constituting 32% of all reports, or 75 incidents. Toyotas came in second with 32 incidents, and Fords came in third with 21 incidents. This information is consistent with historical and national trends, as Hondas are typically the most commonly stolen vehicles nationwide. As is clear in the table below, most of the top five vehicle model types stolen in Cambridge mirrors the top five stolen statewide in Massachusetts.

The most targeted model this year was the Honda Civic, followed by the Toyota Camry and Honda Accord. The Acura Integra was also highly targeted. These particular models are stolen more than any other due to several factors. These cars are some of the most commonly *owned* models in the nation, making them more widely available. Statistical probability alone would place them near the top of the theft list. Car thieves tend to look for average-cost, commonly owned, inconspicuous cars. High-priced luxury cars are not stolen very often because they are too easy for someone to spot and are more likely to be equipped with expensive alarm systems.

<b>TOP FIVE STOLEN MAKES &amp; MODELS STOLEN</b>			
<b>Makes</b>		<b>Model type</b>	
Honda	75	Honda Civic*+	52
Toyota	32	Toyota Camry*+	17
Ford	21	Honda Accord*+	16
Acura	15	Acura Integra+	12
Dodge	9	Toyota Corolla	5
		Dodge Caravan*	5
		Ford Taurus	5
*Also in the National Top Five			
+Also in the Massachusetts Top Five			

Analysis of the age of stolen vehicles shows that the highest demand is for cars that are eight to nine years old. Thieves looking for transportation steal these cars because they are inconspicuous. Thieves looking to make a profit target these years because parts for these cars are in higher demand. The other high cluster, with 2004-2006 cars, represents "joyriders," looking for newer models to increase their sense of status, and thieves intending to sell the entire car for profit. The table below shows the incidence of auto theft by year of the model.



## **AUTO THEFT RECOVERIES**

Approximately 40% of the cars reported stolen in 2006 have been recovered to date. The majority of the recovered cars were located throughout Cambridge and Boston. When damage was reported on recovered vehicles, it was most commonly ignition damage and body damage. Radios were missing from six vehicles, seats were missing from five, and tires were missing from two. As for cars found completely destroyed, one car was stripped, one was burned, and one was submerged in a pond. Note that additional information regarding parts stolen from vehicles that were not themselves stolen can be found in the Larceny section of this report. The following table shows a breakdown of recovery locations.

<b>Boston</b>	
Downtown Boston	13
Roxbury	5
Dorchester	3
Allston/Brighton	2
Hyde Park	1
<b>Cambridge</b>	
Inman/Harrington	5
Peabody	5
East Cambridge	5
North Cambridge	4
Area 4	4
Mid-Cambridge	4
Cambridgeport	3
Agassiz	3
West Cambridge	2
Riverside	1
Cambridge Highlands	1
Strawberry Hill	0
MIT Area	0
Unknown	1
<b>Other Cities</b>	
Somerville	8
Brockton	3
Chelsea	3
Everett	1
Medford	1
Lynn	1
Melrose	1
Saugus	1
Braintree	1
Kingston	1
Other/Unknown	7

**Protect your car!! Please see the Protect Yourself section starting on page 138 for tips on how you can protect your car from auto theft.**

# Auto Theft in Cambridge 2006

Peabody experienced the most incidents this year with 38 reported auto thefts.

Area 4, Cambridgeport, Inman/Harrington and Mid-Cambridge together reported 43% (101) of the 233 auto thefts in 2006.

Cambridge Highlands was the neighborhood with the fewest reported auto thefts (3) in 2006.

