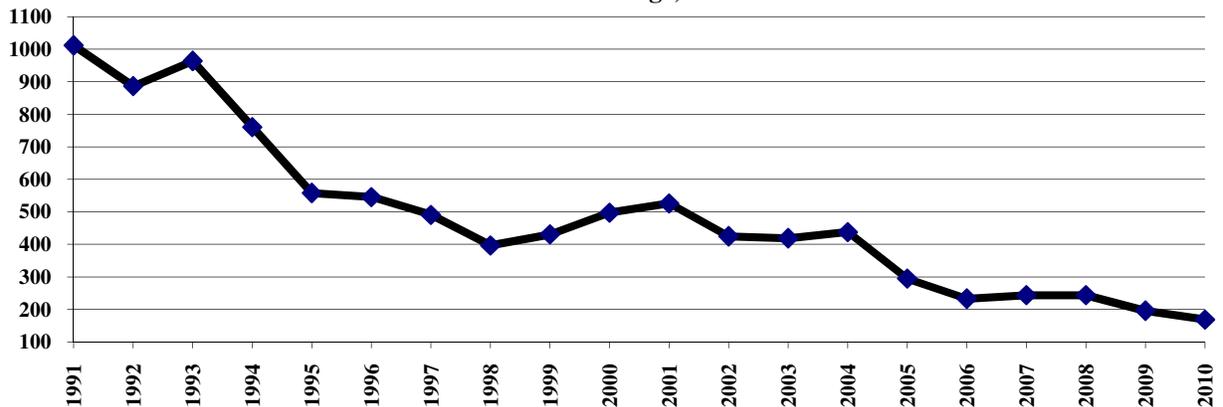


# AUTO THEFT

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, 1991 to 2010**



**196 reported in 2009 • 169 reported in 2010**

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. In 2010, Cambridge reported a 50-year low in auto thefts. This 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				CHANGE	% OF TOTAL
	2008	2009	2010	09-10	
Cambridgeport	28	28	26	-7%	15%
Area 4	30	17	21	+24%	12%
West Cambridge	25	25	20	-20%	12%
North Cambridge	21	20	20	0%	12%
Mid-Cambridge	31	20	18	-10%	11%
Inman/Harrington	24	13	16	+23%	9%
East Cambridge	15	20	15	-25%	9%
Peabody	24	20	14	-30%	8%
Riverside	21	10	10	0%	6%
Agassiz	8	12	4	-67%	2%
Strawberry Hill	9	4	3	-25%	2%
Cambridge Highlands	3	4	1	-75%	Inc
M.I.T. Area	5	3	1	-67%	inc
<b>Total</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>-14%</b>	

As mentioned, Cambridge reported a 50-year low in auto thefts in 2010 with only 169 incidents. The Cambridgeport neighborhood reported the city's highest number of thefts at 26. The neighborhoods with the next highest numbers were Area 4, with 21 incidents, and a two-way tie between West Cambridge and North Cambridge, each with 20 incidents. Despite being the top ranking neighborhoods for auto thefts in Cambridge, three of these

four areas either experienced decreases from the previous year or remained the same. The neighborhood that experienced the largest increase over 2009 was Area 4, where auto thefts rose by four incidents, or 24%. Cambridge Highlands experienced the largest decrease in auto thefts this year, showing a 75% drop from four incidents in 2009 to one in 2010. However, auto thefts in this neighborhood represent only 1% of the total auto thefts for the city, so a more notable decrease would be the 67% drop in Agassiz's auto thefts or the 30% drop that was experienced in Peabody.

Cambridge experienced 23 auto theft incidents in the first quarter of 2010. The second quarter (April, May, and June) resulted in a total of 49 incidents, and the third quarter (July, August, and September) reported the most auto thefts in 2010 with 54 incidents. Auto thefts dropped down to 43 in the fourth quarter. The month of August reported the highest number of stolen vehicles in a single month with 27 incidents (16% of the total). Incidentally, July, the month that experienced the most auto thefts in 2009, had 41% fewer auto thefts in this year, dropping from 32 incidents in 2009 to 13 in 2010.

## **MAKES AND MODELS**

Hondas continue to be by far the most commonly stolen automobiles in 2010, constituting 30% of all reports, or 51 incidents. Toyotas came in second with 16 incidents and Dodge came in third with 13 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, the top five vehicle model types stolen in Cambridge mirror the top five stolen nationally and statewide.

By far the most targeted model this year was the Honda Civic, followed by the Honda Accord and Toyota Camry. 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.

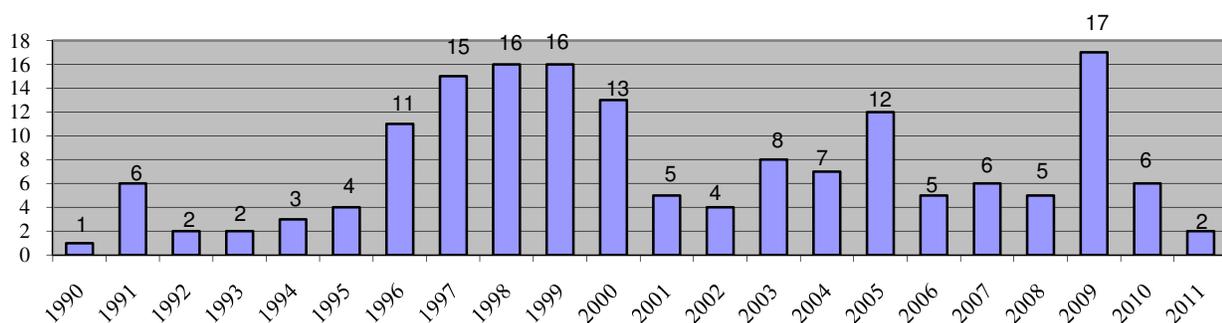
The table below shows the incidence of auto theft by model year (two vehicles did not report the model year and one was from 1985 and did not fit on the graph; therefore these three are not included below). Analysis of the age of stolen vehicles shows that the highest demand is for cars that are nine to fourteen 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. Normally the other high cluster of cars stolen are those that are only a few years old. This represents "joyriders," looking for newer models to increase their sense of status, and thieves intending to sell the entire car for profit. Looking at the table, a significant number of 2009 models were stolen. This is not typical; however, what the number alone does not show is that nine of these vehicles (or 53%) were motorcycles or scooters.

### **TOP FIVE STOLEN MAKES & MODELS**

<b>Makes</b>		<b>Model type</b>	
Honda	51	Honda Civic*+	33
Toyota	16	Honda Accord*+	9
Dodge	13	Toyota Camry*+	9
Acura	9	Acura Integra*+	8
Ford	6	Dodge Caravan*+	8

\*Also in the National Top Five (for 2009)  
 +Also in the Massachusetts Top Five (for 2008)  
 (2010 National/MA Top Five data is not yet available)

**Auto Thefts in 2010 by Model Year**



## **AUTO THEFT RECOVERIES**

Approximately 69% of the cars reported stolen in 2010 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 (34 vehicles) and body damage (28 vehicles). Radios were missing from eight vehicles, tires were missing from two, and miscellaneous parts were missing from six. Thirteen cars were found either partially or completely stripped. One vehicle was found totaled. Note that additional information regarding parts stolen from vehicles where the vehicles themselves were not stolen can be found in the Larceny section of this report. The following table shows a breakdown of recovery locations.

<b>Boston</b>	<b>32</b>
Downtown Boston	19
East Boston	5
Dorchester	3
Mattapan	2
Roxbury	2
Jamaica Plain	1
<b>Cambridge</b>	<b>49</b>
Peabody	7
Area 4	6
Cambridgeport	5
Inman/Harrington	5
North Cambridge	5
West Cambridge	5
Mid-Cambridge	4
East Cambridge	3
Riverside	3
Agassiz	2
Cambridge Highlands	2
Strawberry Hill	1
Unknown	1
MIT Area	0
<b>Other Cities</b>	<b>36</b>
Somerville	7
Out of State	5
Brookline	4
South Shore towns	4
Everett	3
Malden	2
Medford	2
Revere	2
Belmont	1
Brockton	1
Chelsea	1
Lynn	1
Sudbury	1
Walpole	1
Winthrop	1

**Protect your car!! Please see the Protect Yourself section starting on page 136 for tips on how you can protect your car from auto theft.**



# Auto Theft in Cambridge, 2010

Seven cars were recovered in Peabody in 2010, which was more than any other neighborhood in the city.

Area 4 registered the largest increase in Auto Thefts in 2010 with 21 reported, up 24% from 2009.

The majority (57%) of the Auto Thefts this year occurred in the lower half of the city.

