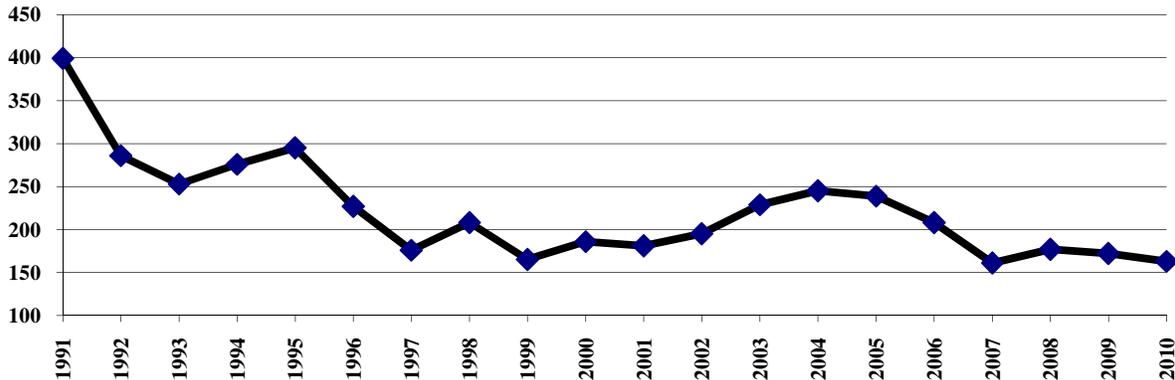


# ROBBERY

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, 1991-2010**



**172 reported in 2009 • 163 reported in 2010**

Over a four-year span from 2001 to 2004, robberies in the City slowly increased. This trend ended in 2005, and robberies continued to decrease until 2007, at which point robberies reach a 20-year low. This downward trend ended in 2008 with a reported overall increase of 10%. In 2009, robberies saw a small decline, which continued through 2010. In 2010, overall robberies dropped an additional 5% to 163 incidents, which is just two incidents higher than the 20-year low reported in 2007. Although total robberies dropped this year, it should be noted that commercial robberies did experience a slight increase of one incident.

	2009	2010	% Change
Commercial Robbery	21	22	+5%
Street Robbery	151	141	-7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>-5%</b>

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Due to its violent nature, robbery is one of the most feared crimes. For this reason, it is one of the crimes most often considered by a citizen when he or she gauges the general “safety” of an area. Not only is robbery on the minds of local citizens but 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 incidents, but a suspect may simply rely on the victim’s perceived fear of harm. Most incidents involve little physical contact between the suspect and victim, and often result in no harm to the victim, especially when they comply with the suspect’s demands.

## COMMERCIAL ROBBERY

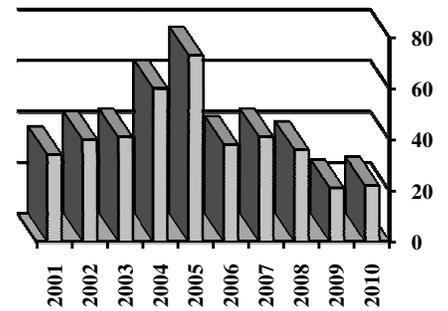
From 1970-1990, Cambridge averaged 100 commercial robberies annually. Throughout the 1990’s, the number of robberies decreased dramatically to an average of 45 a year (with a high in 1990 of 102 and a low in 1999 of 18). From 2000 to 2005, the number of commercial robberies slowly increased, until 2006 when a decrease of nearly 50% was reported. Commercial robberies remained low in 2007 and 2008. In 2009, Cambridge experienced a 10-year low, with only 21 commercial robberies reported across the city. In 2010, commercial robberies were again remarkably low at 22.

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.

As was mentioned above, commercial robberies rose by one incident in 2010, equaling a 5% increase over 2009. The business district that experienced the most commercial robberies this year was Harvard Square, with eight incidents, followed by Cambridgeport/Riverside and Central Square, each with three. These three districts accounted for 64% of the commercial robberies that occurred in 2010.

Banks were one of the most common targets of commercial robberies in 2010, accounting for five incidents, or 23% of the total. No single Cambridge bank experienced more than one robbery this year. Two of the bank robberies occurred in May, and one each occurred in June, October, and December. All five resulted in arrests and all took place on weekdays between 11:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The December robbery, which took place at the East Cambridge Savings Bank in North Cambridge, was part of an on-going regional series perpetrated by Paul Gowell of Wakefield, who was arrested later in the month by Cambridge Police and the Bank Robbery Task Force.

**Commercial Robbery 2001-2010**



COMMERCIAL ROBBERIES BY LOCATION TYPE			
Type	2008	2009	2010
Bank/Armored Car	15	8	5
Convenience/Grocery	9	7	5
Gas Station	1	1	3
Misc. Retail	3	2	3
Café/Restaurant	3	0	2
Electronics/Computers	0	1	2
Drug Store	0	1	1
Jewelry Store	1	0	1
Cab	4	0	0
Hotel/Motel	0	1	0
Fast Food	0	0	0
Liquor Store	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>

Convenience store robberies also accounted for five of the commercial robberies in 2010. All of these incidents took place on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, and all occurred between 8:00 p.m. and 1:30 a.m. All but one of the robberies took place during the first half of the year. A firearm was shown in one incident and implied in three, while a knife was displayed in the fifth robbery. No patterns emerged during the year, but two separate robberies were reported at Tedeschi's on Broadway in April and June.

Three gas station robberies were reported in 2010, two of which occurred at the Shell station on Memorial Drive in March and August. The third incident took place at the Mobile station on Memorial Drive in September. All three incidents occurred between 11:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m., and all involved weapons.

The following incidents are some of the other more notable commercial robberies this year. In July at the CVS on Alewife Brook Parkway, a male suspect brandished a firearm and demanded money from the cash register after a female suspect purchased several items. This incident was actually part of a regional spree and resulted in the arrests of both suspects in Woburn later that day. Two pizzerias were robbed this year, one in Central Sq in April and one in Harvard Sq in December. The Central Sq incident resulted in the arrest of a homeless male. Also in December, a suspect entered a jewelry store in Harvard Sq and asked to see a row of rings before pushing the store owner and fleeing with the rings.

**Protect yourself and your business!! Please see the Protect Yourself section starting on page 136 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.**

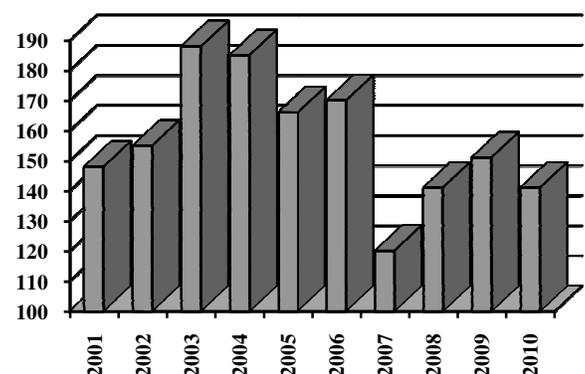
## STREET ROBBERY

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

Street robbery involves all robberies committed against individuals, as opposed to commercial establishments. Despite the name, a "street" robbery does not necessarily have to occur on the street, although

the majority of them do. Examples of street robberies are "muggings," "carjackings," and "purse snatchings." The number of street robberies reported in 2010 decreased by ten incidents, translating to a 7% drop from the previous year. The last three years have been 18-26% higher than the number reported in 2007, when street robberies were at their lowest level in twenty years.

**Street Robbery 2001 - 2010**



<b>STREET ROBBERIES BY NEIGHBORHOOD</b>			
<b>AREA</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Area 4	20	23	27
Cambridgeport	16	32	22
Mid-Cambridge	12	16	14
North Cambridge	22	12	14
West Cambridge	13	4	14
East Cambridge	20	14	13
Peabody	13	11	10
Riverside	9	14	8
Inman/Harrington	10	8	8
Agassiz	1	7	5
Cambridge Highlands	1	5	2
M.I.T. Area	4	3	2
Strawberry Hill	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>141</b>

The number 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 East Cambridge are 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. The neighborhood that experienced the most robberies in 2010 was Area 4, accounting for 19%, or 27 of the total 141 incidents. Cambridgeport had the next highest number with 22 incidents, or 16% of the total.

Of the 2010 incidents, 73% involved the use or threat of a weapon. The most commonly used weapons this year were hands and/or feet (46 incidents), knives (28 incidents), and handguns (17 incidents).

There were a few discernable street robbery patterns over the course of the year. During the first quarter, four individuals from Boston and Randolph were arrested near the Galleria Mall after they allegedly followed a victim from the

mall and robbed him of his cell phone. One of the arrested individuals then admitted to a similar robbery that took place in February, a few weeks earlier. No further related incidents were reported after the March arrest.

No patterns emerged during the second quarter, but two notable street robbery convictions from 2008 and 2009 patterns were handed down during that time. In early April, a Medford man pled guilty and was sentenced to 16-20 years in prison in connection with a pattern of street robberies in Cambridge and Somerville between November and December of 2008. His girlfriend was also sentenced to prison time. Then in late April, an Arlington man pled guilty to charges of armed robbery and kidnapping in connection with a pattern of armed street robberies near MBTA stations in Cambridge and Somerville during April and May of 2009. He was sentenced to five years in prison and five years probation.

During the third quarter, there was a brief one-night spree of possibly related incidents in lower Cambridge and Somerville between 11:30 p.m. on September 5 and 1:00 a.m. on September 6. Four of the six incidents in this series involved armed robberies at gunpoint, while the other two involved sexual assaults. All of the incidents involved a male suspect on a bike. No arrests were made, but no similar incidents were reported after that night.

The fourth quarter experienced the most street robbery activity this year with two patterns. Throughout October, five women reported being the victims of purse snatchings. Most of the incidents took place along the Mass Ave corridor, and all five occurred between 10:00 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. Possible suspects were developed in this pattern, but no arrests were made.

The other pattern during the fourth quarter turned out to be the most notable street robbery pattern of the year in this city. Between mid October and early November, a total of 16 similar armed street robberies were reported in Cambridge, Brookline, and Boston. The incidents typically occurred between 7:30 p.m. and 12:00 a.m. and involved two males who were armed with knives. Victims were primarily college students and the crimes were becoming increasingly violent with two victims suffering stab wounds. Due to cooperation between the Cambridge Police Department, Brookline Police Department, and other local agencies, Santony Joseph of Malden was placed under arrest after an investigation into these robberies. Although the other suspect was never arrested, a person of interest was developed in the case and no further incidents were reported.

Twenty-six of the street robberies in 2010 resulted in arrests. Perhaps one of the most notable arrests took place in mid November in the Harvard Sq area. In the early morning hours of November 13<sup>th</sup>, an officer exited his cruiser to intervene in a disturbance on Brattle St, which was later determined to be a robbery. As the officer approached the group, an individual, later identified as Kai Kruger of Cambridge, fled and the officer proceeded to chase him. As the officer came within 25 feet of the suspect, the suspect turned and fired a gun in the officer's direction. Fortunately, the suspect missed and was quickly apprehended. Kruger was also believed to be the suspect in a robbery on Harvard University property two days earlier.

The victimology for street robberies often varies depending on the goal of the offender, but the majority (70%) of the victims in 2010 were male. Breaking victim characteristics down by age, almost 60% of the victims were between the ages of 18 and 30. The main items stolen from victims this year were portable electronics (cell phones, MP3 players, and laptops), wallets, purses, and money.

As stated earlier, street robberies can take place in many different locations, including shopping malls, MBTA stations, and parking lots. Still, more than 85% of all street robberies in 2010 occurred on a street or sidewalk. As for some of the other notable premise types, six of the robberies this year took place in residences, four happened in parking lots, and four occurred at or inside the Galleria Mall. Victims knew the suspects in 18 of the robberies, and two incidents were categorized as drug deals gone wrong. Over 50% of the street robberies throughout the city happened between 7:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m. This is a common timeframe for robberies to occur because people are walking home after work or are out when the bars close.

## **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**, including the Lechmere MBTA Station area. These usually involve 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. Pack robberies target people leaving the station and “bullyboy” robberies target schoolmates 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 are concentrated during the late night and predawn hours of the weekend.

Our Crime Analysis Unit breaks down street robbery incidents into categorizations of similar types for further and more accurate analysis. Approximately 43% of the street robberies were “predatory,” where the victim was approached by one or two suspects, threatened, and robbed. The second most common type of street robberies were pack robberies involving three or more suspects, which accounted for 26% of the total. Purse snatchings and robberies by acquaintances represented 12% and 13% of the total, respectively.

## **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 (18):** Related to domestic robbery and homeless robbery (read 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, and robberies between co-workers.

**ATM Robberies (0):** 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 (0):** Juvenile robberies of intimidation where the primary property targets are bicycles.

**Bully Boys (2):** 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. These robberies usually involve two to four juveniles strong-arming their victim, stealing such things as his cell phone, MP3 player, or lunch money.

**Carjacking (1):** In this scenario, a 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 (0):** These robberies target delivery service personnel. In these situations, suspects usually brandish a knife or gun to intercept a delivery person.

**Domestic (0):** 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 (2):** Typically drug deals gone awry.

**Home Invasion (4):** One of the most serious robbery types. Home invasions involve robbers entering their victims' homes, 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 (0):** These are incidents of homeless people robbing each other. The majority of these robberies occur in the vicinity of Central and 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.

**Pack Robberies (37):** In this situation, a group of three or more individuals will target victims around shopping malls, MBTA stations, streets, or recreational areas. The robberies are not always premeditated and the typical victim is often a male between the ages of 15-25, walking alone.

**Predatory Robberies (60):** 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. Cambridge typically experiences more two-person predatory robberies than any other type.

**Purse Snatch (17):** 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. Some incidents also involve the snatching of purses from the ground at outdoor cafes where accessibility is easy.

# Robberies in Cambridge, 2010

