

## The Facts About Robbery

In 2010, one robbery occurred every 1.4 minutes in the United States.<sup>5</sup>

In 2010, the national loss due to robberies was an estimated \$456 million.<sup>6</sup>

In 2010, robbery was the most likely offense to involve an armed offender (44 percent). Firearms were the most commonly used weapon (29 percent).<sup>7</sup>

In 2010, 72 percent of male and 53 percent of female victims of a robbery stated that the robber was a stranger.<sup>8</sup>

In 2010, nearly a third of all robbery offenses were committed on streets and highways, with another third occurring in commercial establishments and residences.<sup>9</sup>

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011, *Crime in the United States, 2010*, Washington, DC.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011, *Criminal Victimization, 2010*, Washington, DC.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011, *Crime in the United States, 2010*, Washington, DC.

## Resources for Information and Assistance

National Center for Victims of Crime  
202-467-8700  
[www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org)

National Organization for Victim Assistance  
1-800-TRY-NOVA or 1-800-879-6682  
[www.trynova.org](http://www.trynova.org)

Directory of Crime Victim Services  
Office for Victims of Crime  
Office of Justice Programs  
U.S. Department of Justice  
<http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/findvictimservices>

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THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
**Victims of Crime**

## OVC HELP SERIES for Crime Victims

### Robbery

## What Is Robbery?

*Robbery* is the taking or attempted taking of anything of value, by force or by threat of force, from the care, custody, or control of someone.<sup>1</sup> *Armed robbery* indicates that a weapon was used and is usually considered a more serious crime. Robbery is a property crime, but it is also a crime against a person and qualifies as a violent crime even if no weapon is involved.

Anyone can become a victim of robbery. It is the second most committed violent crime in the United States, with 367,832 incidents accounting for 30 percent of violent crime in 2010.<sup>2</sup> Robberies occur in almost any setting: on the street, in the home, on public transportation, or in a business such as a store, hotel, or gas station. Victims, especially men, are more likely to be robbed by a stranger than by someone they know.<sup>3</sup>

The financial cost of robbery can be substantial. In 2010, the average dollar loss per robbery was \$1,239, most of which was never recovered.<sup>4</sup> There is also an emotional cost to robbery. For instance, emotional reactions can be very intense if the stolen property has unique or sentimental value. Also, victims often feel a total and immediate loss of control because of their proximity to the perpetrator. When a weapon is involved, the sense of helplessness and the fear of death intensifies.

## If You Are the Victim of a Robbery

A robbery can be a frightening, life-threatening situation. How victims react to robbery varies from person to person. Although you may feel as if you are the only one experiencing these feelings and that no one else can understand what you are going through, remember that your reactions are normal.

Your reactions may be immediate and short-lived or delayed and long-lasting. You may feel vulnerable and believe that you have lost control of your life. Even though you did nothing wrong, you may feel guilt that perhaps something you did led to the robbery. You may feel intense sadness and grief over lost possessions.

You may fear that the robber will return. You may have nightmares or flashbacks about the robbery. You may find that you startle more easily at little noises or abrupt movements. You may feel nervous in some crowds or very suspicious of strangers. You may feel angry at the perpetrator. You may also be angry with the police and the criminal justice system for not doing enough.

Whatever your reactions, it is important for you to deal with and resolve your crisis in your own way and at your own pace. Not everyone reassembles his or her life in the same way or within the same timeframe. Many victims find it helpful to talk with others about the robbery and their reaction. As victims talk about the robbery, over time they learn to put the incident into perspective and begin to cope with its consequences.

## Where Can You Get Help?

As the victim of a robbery, you are not alone. Trained professionals can help you learn about your rights as a crime victim. Your community likely has victim assistance programs with caring professionals, and it may have support groups—all of which are there to help you with information, services, and referrals.

Although most state crime victim compensation programs do not reimburse for stolen cash or stolen or damaged property, you may be eligible for reimbursement by your state's crime victim compensation program for certain expenses related to the robbery, such as medical or counseling expenses and lost wages. To be eligible for these funds, you must report the robbery to the police and cooperate with the criminal justice system. Victim assistance programs in your community can help you determine your eligibility and complete compensation applications.

It is important to record the expenses you incurred as a result of the robbery. If the offender is convicted, a judge might order restitution, which requires the offender to repay the victim for monetary losses resulting from the crime. You may request restitution by completing a victim impact statement. However, note that you may receive no, or only partial, restitution because, in many cases, the defendant may have insufficient assets or income to pay restitution.