

Most Dangerous City Rankings

Camden Reports 2005

In November 2005, Camden was deemed the most dangerous city in America, according to rankings released by Morgan-Quitno Press. These rankings are derived using the Federal Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) data reported by local police departments to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

This analysis by CAMConnect describes why Camden ranks atop the “Most Dangerous” list for the second consecutive year. It also includes data illustrating the decline in crime reported in Camden during 2005 and discussion about the city’s potential rank for next year.

There are several important points to remember about the rankings:

- ⇒ The rankings are calculated with an adjustment for population so that the crime rate in Camden (population 80,000) can be compared to the crime rate in Detroit (population 915,000) and other cities. So, if Camden is named “more dangerous” than Philadelphia, that does not mean that Camden has a higher number of crimes than Philadelphia. Instead, it means that Camden has a higher rate of crime *when a population adjustment is calculated*.
- ⇒ The rankings are based on 2004 UCR data, and do not consider any changes to crime rates occurring in 2005.
- ⇒ UCR data relies on cities to report their crimes accurately. There are standards for how different crimes are to be classified, but in the past, several cities including Philadelphia and St. Louis have had issues with how crime is reported and classified.

As a non-profit, non-partisan organization, CAMConnect takes no position on the merits of the Morgan-Quitno rankings, and this document should not be construed as an endorsement of any position related to the methodology of the rankings. However, given the media attention that the rankings generated the last two years, CAMConnect believes it is important to provide some additional context about how the rankings are developed.



Updated 10/26/06
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Discussion of 2004 Crime Rates

On November 21, 2005, Camden was deemed the most dangerous city in America for the second consecutive year, according to rankings released by Morgan-Quitno Press. Morgan-Quitno, a private company based in Kansas, ranks cities each year based on Federal Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) data. (\$)

Morgan-Quitno compares crime rates--adjusted for population--in each city with over 75,000 people to the national average in order to develop its rankings. According to the company in its 2005 rankings: "the 2004 crime rates per 100,000 population for six basic crime categories - murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and motor vehicle theft - were plugged into a formula that measured how a particular city compared to the national average for a given crime category...Each of the six crimes was given equal weight."

For the 2005 rankings based on 2004 data, Camden's total score calculated by Morgan-Quitno was 407.5. The next highest city, Detroit, had a total score of 336.3. Over half of Camden's score for both the 2004 and 2005 rankings was contributed by just two of the six categories: murder and robbery (see definitions on the following pages)

Among cities with over 75,000 residents, Camden had the 3rd highest rate of murder in the United States in 2003 and the highest rate in 2004, at over 10 times the national rate. The city had the highest rates of robbery in both 2003 and 2004. Camden's rate of robbery in 2004 was 30% higher than the #2 city, St. Louis, and was over seven times the national rate.

Offenses Known to Law Enforcement, 2003-2004, City of Camden, New Jersey

	Number	Rate	Rank
Murder 2003	41	51	3
Murder 2004	49	61	1
Rape 2003	56	69	45
Rape 2004	56	69	48
Robbery 2003	856	1,068	1
Robbery 2004	822	1,019	1
Agg Assault 2003	972	1,213	3
Agg Assault 2004	897	1,112	10
Burglary 2003	1,459	1,821	21
Burglary 2004	1,159	1,437	64
MV Theft 2003	1,149	1,434	27
MV Theft 2004	1,357	1,683	9

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigations, Crime in the United States 2004. Accessed at http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius_04/offenses_reported/offense_tabulations/table_08.html, November 1, 2005. Based on Table 8 - "Offenses Known to Law Enforcement by City 10,000 and Over in Population." Rates are derived by calculating the incidence per 100,000 people. Rankings are among cities with over 75,000 people, according to Census Bureau estimates for 7/1/2004. There were 369 cities with over 75,000 people included in the 2005 Morgan-Quitno rankings.

(\$) The FBI cautions against ranking cities based on the UCR data, because of wide differences in the context of different municipalities, including demographics and law enforcement techniques. According to the FBI, "rankings lead to simplistic and/or incomplete analyses that often create misleading perceptions adversely affecting cities and counties, along with their residents." See http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/05cius/aboutvariables_affecting_crime.html for more information on the FBI's concerns.

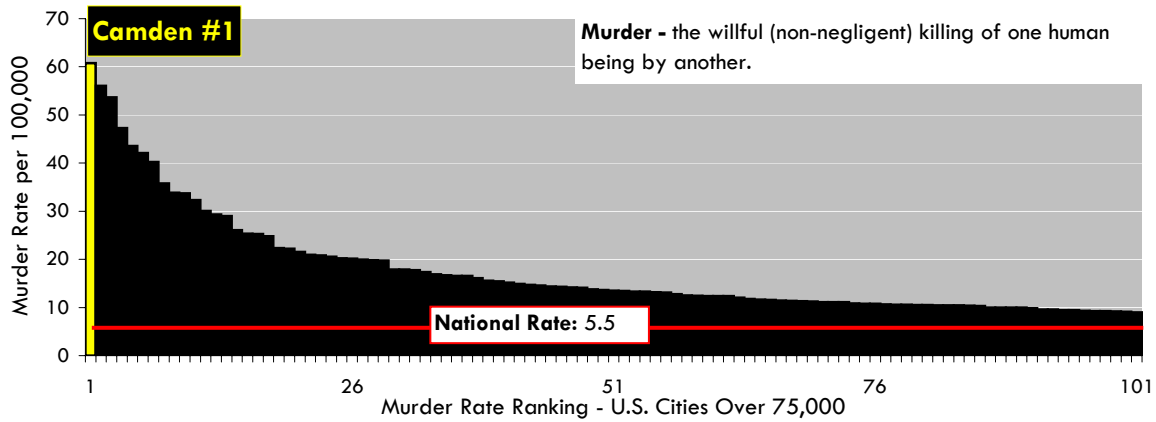
2004 Crime Rates per 100,000 People

MQ Rank*	City	Murder	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Agg. Assault	Burglary	Motor Vehicle Theft
1	Camden	61	69	1,019	1,112	1,437	1,683
2	Detroit	42	79	596	1,023	1,334	2,687
3	St. Louis	34	33	785	1,206	1,880	2,659
4	Flint, MI	32	116	392	1,385	2,053	1,295
5	Richmond, VA	47	51	683	591	1,389	1,208
23	Newark	30	26	481	488	771	2,068
27	Trenton	21	55	670	833	1,149	921
33	Philadelphia	22	67	657	661	710	848
128	Elizabeth	8	11	381	152	770	1,323
140	Paterson	7	16	411	367	850	740

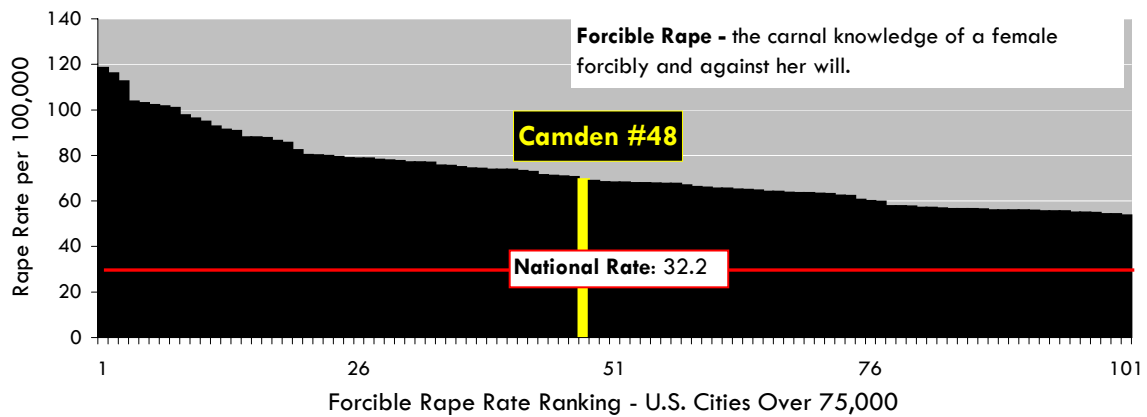
* MQ Rank is the ranking by Morgan-Quitno among the "Most Dangerous" cities with over 75,000 people, for the company's rankings in November 2005. Rankings do not include cities in Illinois, which does not conform to UCR standards in reporting forcible rape.

The rankings in the first column were initially calculated based on the Morgan-Quitno formula reported in the *Inquirer*, October 30, 2005. The actual rankings released by the company confirmed these projections.

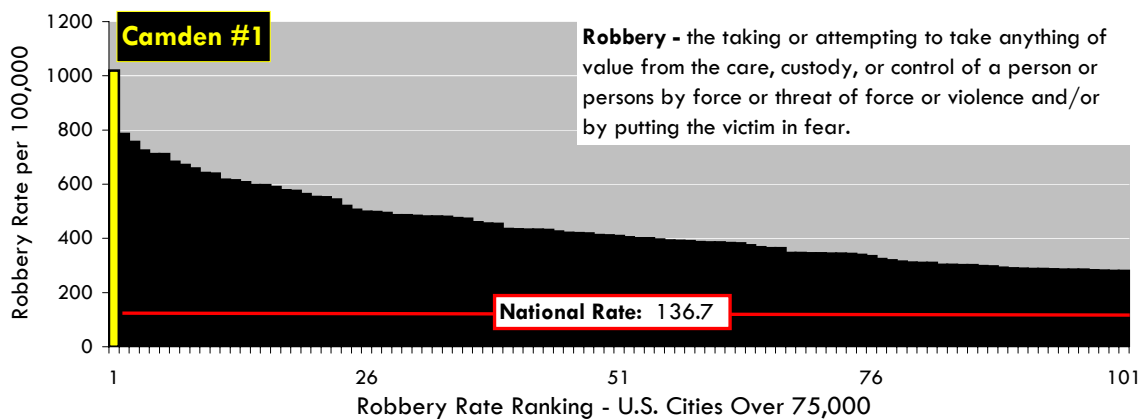
Murder Rates - 2004



Forcible Rape Rates - 2004



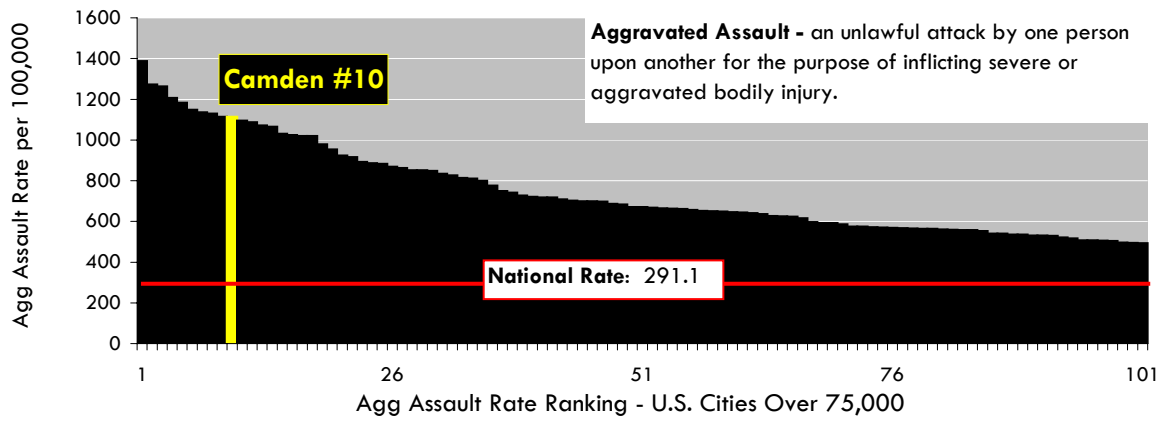
Robbery Rates - 2004



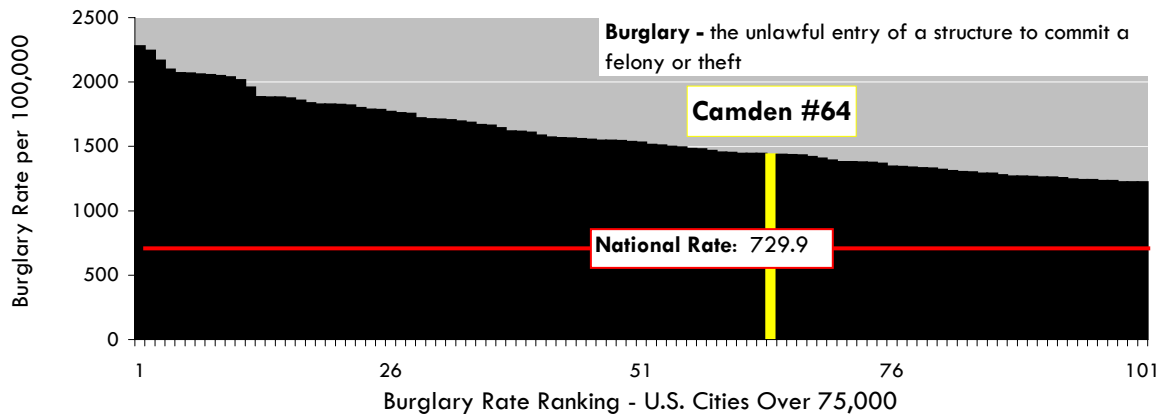
These charts show the relative rates of crimes adjusted for population in U.S. cities. The Census estimated that 379 cities had over 75,000 residents in 2004. These charts show only the 101 cities with the highest rates of each type of crime. The charts do not show the actual crime numbers for each city included.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigations, Crime in the United States 2004.
http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius_04/offenses_reported/index.html

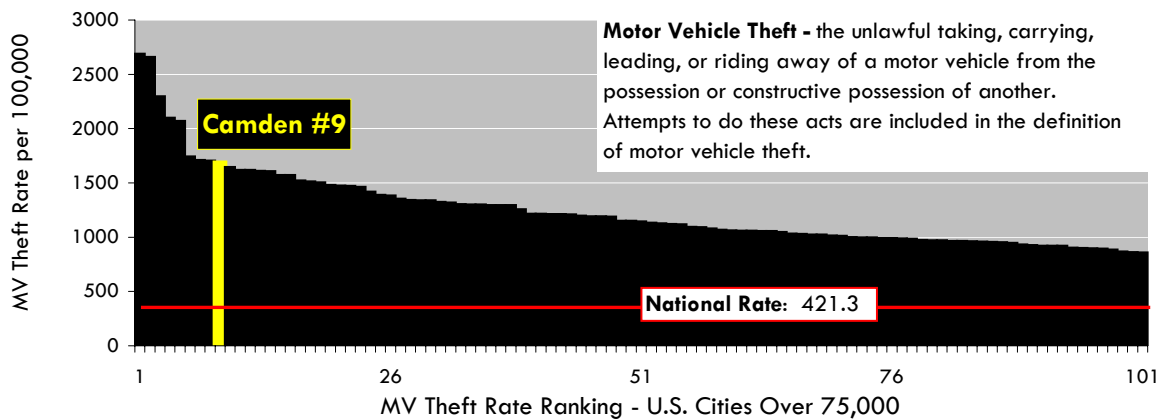
Agg Assault Rates - 2004



Burglary Rates - 2004



Motor Vehicle Theft Rates - 2004

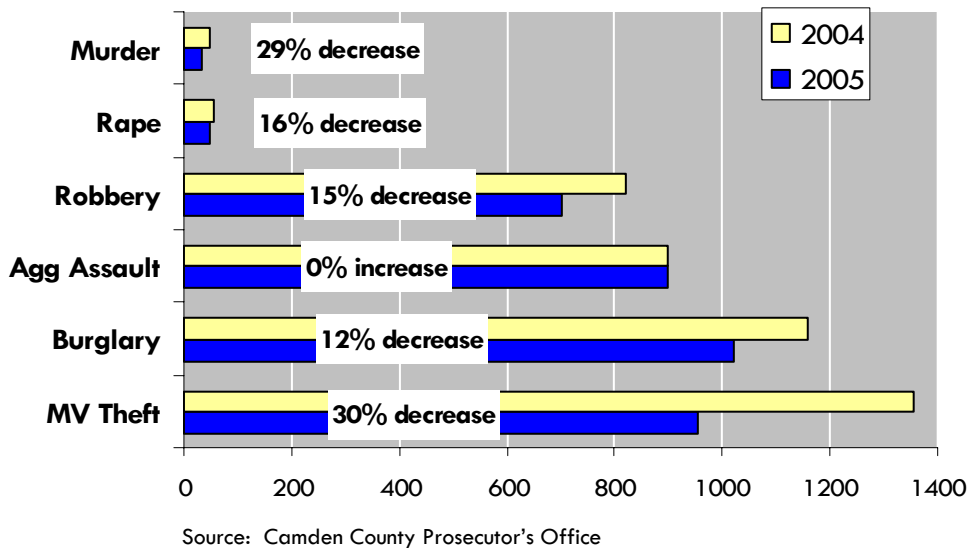


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Source: Federal Bureau of Investigations, Crime in the United States 2004.
http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius_04/offenses_reported/index.html

Review of 2005 Camden Crime Data

Number of Crimes Reported to Camden Police



During 2005, all but one of the six crimes included in the Morgan-Quitno rankings decreased in Camden City compared with 2004.

Based on this data, Camden will still rank around 5th in the Most Dangerous City rankings released in November 2006, assuming the following:

- ⇒ National averages and crime rates in the other 5 “most dangerous” cities do not decline to the extent that Camden’s rates decreased in 2005.
- ⇒ Morgan-Quitno’s methodology remains the same

For More Information:

Uniform Crime Reporting

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Crime in the United States 2004
http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius_04/summary/index.html - introduction

Offense Tabulations for Cities

http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius_04/offenses_reported/offense_tabulations/table_08.html

Crime Definitions

http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius_04/offenses_reported/violent_crime/murder.html

Morgan-Quitno Rankings

<http://www.morganquitno.com/index.htm> - homepage

<http://www.morganquitno.com/cit05pop.htm> - rankings released in November 2004

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Morgan-Quitno Methodology

<http://www.morganquitno.com/methodology05.htm> - methodology for November 2004 ranking

Wood, Sam and Elisa Ung, “Camden trying to fight stigma of crime rating” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 30, 2005