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Commissioner

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Department of  
Public Safety

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

## **New Report Highlights Drop In Alaska Crime**

*Numbers show a decrease of nearly 10 percent from 2018 to 2019*

**September 11, 2020 (Anchorage, AK)** – The Department of Public Safety has published the [Crime in Alaska 2019](#) report, noting a decrease in Alaska’s overall crime rate by nearly 10%. The number of reported offenses is the second lowest level in five years, mirroring the national downward trend in crime rates. While Alaska’s reported violent crime rate decreased almost 2%, the reported murder rate increased significantly from 2018 to 2019. Alaska’s property crime rate decreased 11.4% in 2019 and in the last five years, only 2015 had a lower reported property crime rate. Motor Vehicle Theft offenses saw a 34.1% crime rate decrease in 2019.

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program is a nationwide cooperative effort by federal, state, city, county and tribal law enforcement agencies to report data on crimes reported in their jurisdiction. The document is a major resource for measuring the trend and distribution of crime in Alaska. In 2019, 32 agencies reported crime data to DPS, and all thirty-two agencies provided twelve months of crime data to the department. These agencies represent 99.5% of the state’s population.

“While it is encouraging that crime, in general, has decreased in Alaska, public safety requires a long-term, comprehensive effort with laser focus on supporting survivors and holding offenders accountable. We know there is still much work that can be done to keep Alaskans safe,” said Commissioner Amanda Price, Department of Public Safety. “The DPS is aggressively working on its recruitment efforts to bring a larger law enforcement presence across Alaska. Additionally, we continue to partner with our federal and local law enforcement counterparts to do what we can to collectively further decrease crime across our state.”

Caution should be exercised when comparing data from year to year and making conclusions as the report does not account for when an incident actually occurred, it accounts for when it was reported. For example, a burglary or theft occurring in November of one year may not have been discovered and reported until February of the next year. The incident is not retroactively applied to a previous year’s data, it is counted in the year it was reported. The same applies for assaults, sexual assaults and homicides.

The Crime in Alaska 2019 report was authored by DPS’s [Division of Statewide Services](#). The Division of Statewide Services provides technical and specialized services to the other divisions of the Department

of Public Safety, local State and Federal Law enforcement, and the public at large. Past Crime in Alaska Reports and Felony-Level Sex Offenses reports can be found online [here](#).

The calculations represented in Crime in Alaska are made utilizing the index offense totals for the current and previous year as well as population estimates provided by the FBI. The overall violent crime and property crime indices decreased in 2019. The crime rate, which relates the incidence of crime to population, experienced similar fluctuations as the index totals. All facts are important to consider when reviewing the fluctuations in the crime index and rate variances between 2018 and 2019.

The UCR and Crime in Alaska reports are based on the Federal Bureau of Investigation UCR Program definitions of crimes to ensure consistency and uniformity in reported offenses on a national level. The definitions do not always echo state definitions; therefore, federal publications cannot accurately be compared to reports that use the state definitions for crimes as these are unique to each state. Additionally, the population counts for Crime in Alaska come from the US Census; the numbers used in Crime in AK are based on the numbers the FBI pulls from the census data on a specific date.

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