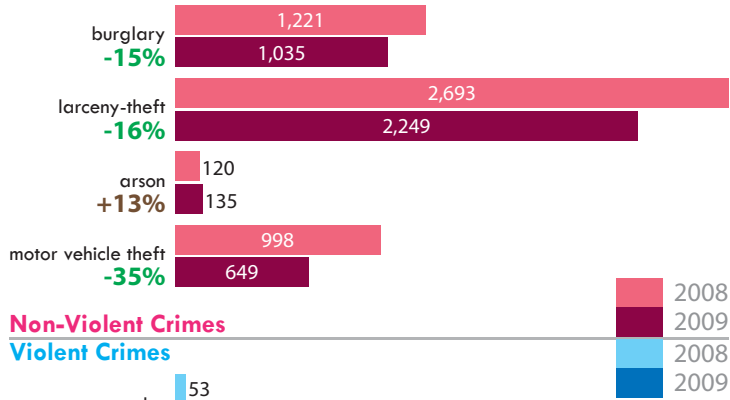


# Is Camden Really the “Most Dangerous City”?

Flawed rankings are at the heart of one of Camden’s major public relation problems.

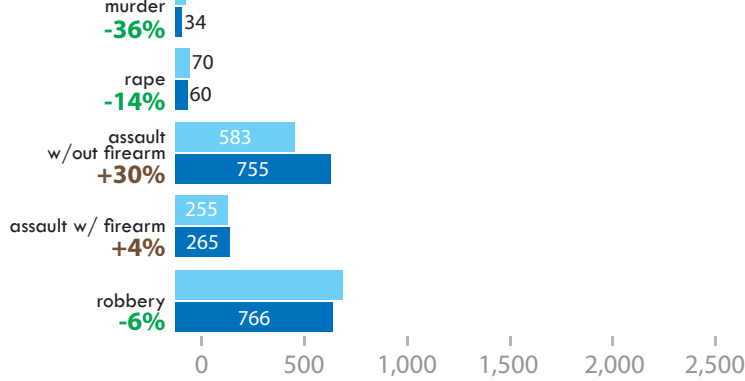
**Overview:** Crime in Camden is a significant problem that deserves serious attention, but the City’s perennial high ranking in a national list of “most dangerous cities” requires additional context to turn an alarming number into a productive discussion. *Why* is the CQ Press crime ranking misleading? **1.** People and places within Camden experience very different crime risk. **2.** Cities are not equal. **3.** Crimes are not equal. **4.** Crime data are not uniformly accurate in different cities. **5.** The rankings are almost a year out of date by the time they are published.

## Annual Reductions in Many Categories of Crime in Camden

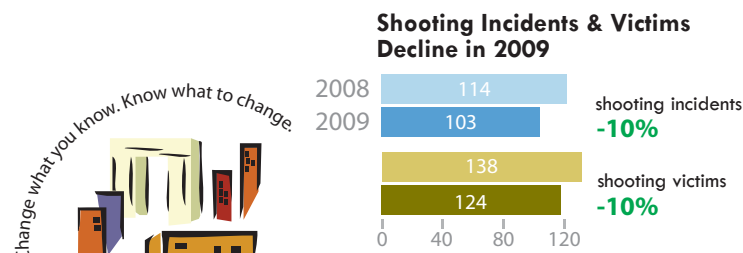
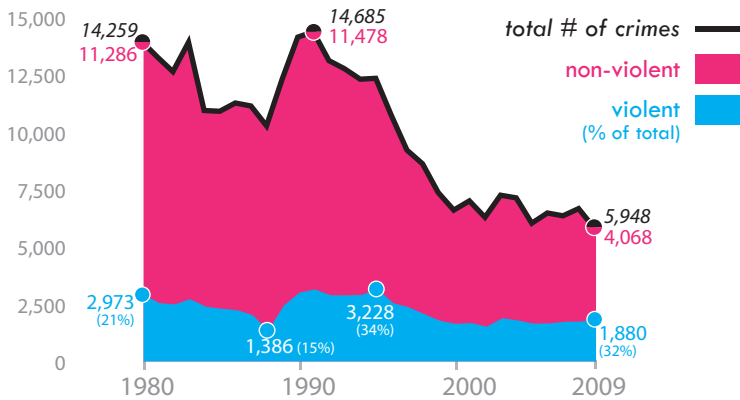


## Non-Violent Crimes

## Violent Crimes



## Both Violent and Non-Violent Crime Decrease Since 1980



For more info, visit:

[CamConnect.org/MostDangerousCity.htm](http://CamConnect.org/MostDangerousCity.htm)

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## Why Rank At All?

**1.** What does “danger” ranking accomplish? Crime is not a contest, and branding an entire city with a single number gives a misimpression of uniformity that makes crime harder to understand. Crime is not randomly distributed. The vast majority of crime takes place in a small subset of places and situations within a city. Most perpetrators know their victims.\* The non-residents most likely to be surprised or scared away by a crime ranking are also among those least likely to be victims of the crime they fear.

## Problems with the Ranking Methodology

**2.** To compare crime in different cities, CQ Press only adjusts for population. Doing so gives the false impression that population size is the only independent factor that interferes with a valid comparison. In reality, historical, budgetary, and geographical differences (among many others) also determine local crime rates.

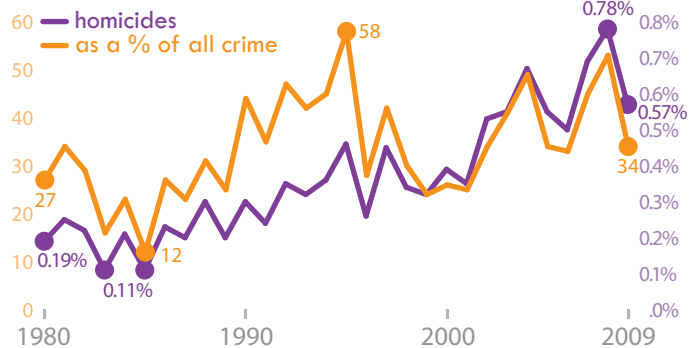
**3.** The rankings depend on a formula that gives equal weight to six categories of crime: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and motor vehicle theft. In essence, CQ Press counts murder and shoplifting the same way.

**4.** The federal Uniform Crime Reporting data used to generate the rankings rely on local police departments to accurately classify and report crime. In cities all over the country, intense performance pressure and high political stakes have at times led some departments to underreport their data, preventing a fair comparison even among single categories of crime in similar cities.

**5.** By the time the ranking is published, the data are almost a year out of date. The delay could make a city’s standing appear inaccurately high or low. When the 2009 rankings were published in November 2009 using year-end 2008 data, Camden’s crime rate in most categories had decreased dramatically from the previous year, yet Camden’s ranking increased, obscuring recent improvements.

The FBI, American Society of Criminologists, and the United States Conference of Mayors all caution against using crime data to rank cities.

## Homicides Increasing as Percentage of Total Crime



Sources: Camden Police Department; Federal Bureau of Investigation; \*Barry Glassner, *The Culture of Fear*; American Society of Criminologists, and the United States Conference of Mayors