

ABQ Blues

What is the Problem?

Why the Blues?

Answer: Crime! Lots of it!

How bad is it?

**Top ten in all categories, much worse
than our neighbors.**

What can we do about it?

Enforce the Law

Pursue, Arrest, Prosecute, Incarcerate

Be informed

Contact officials and vote!

See <https://abqcrimeblues.com>

Joe Abbin

September 2025

ABQ Blues

**Crime and Policing
in Albuquerque, NM**

By Joe Abbin

2022 Update

Albuquerque Violent Crime Index

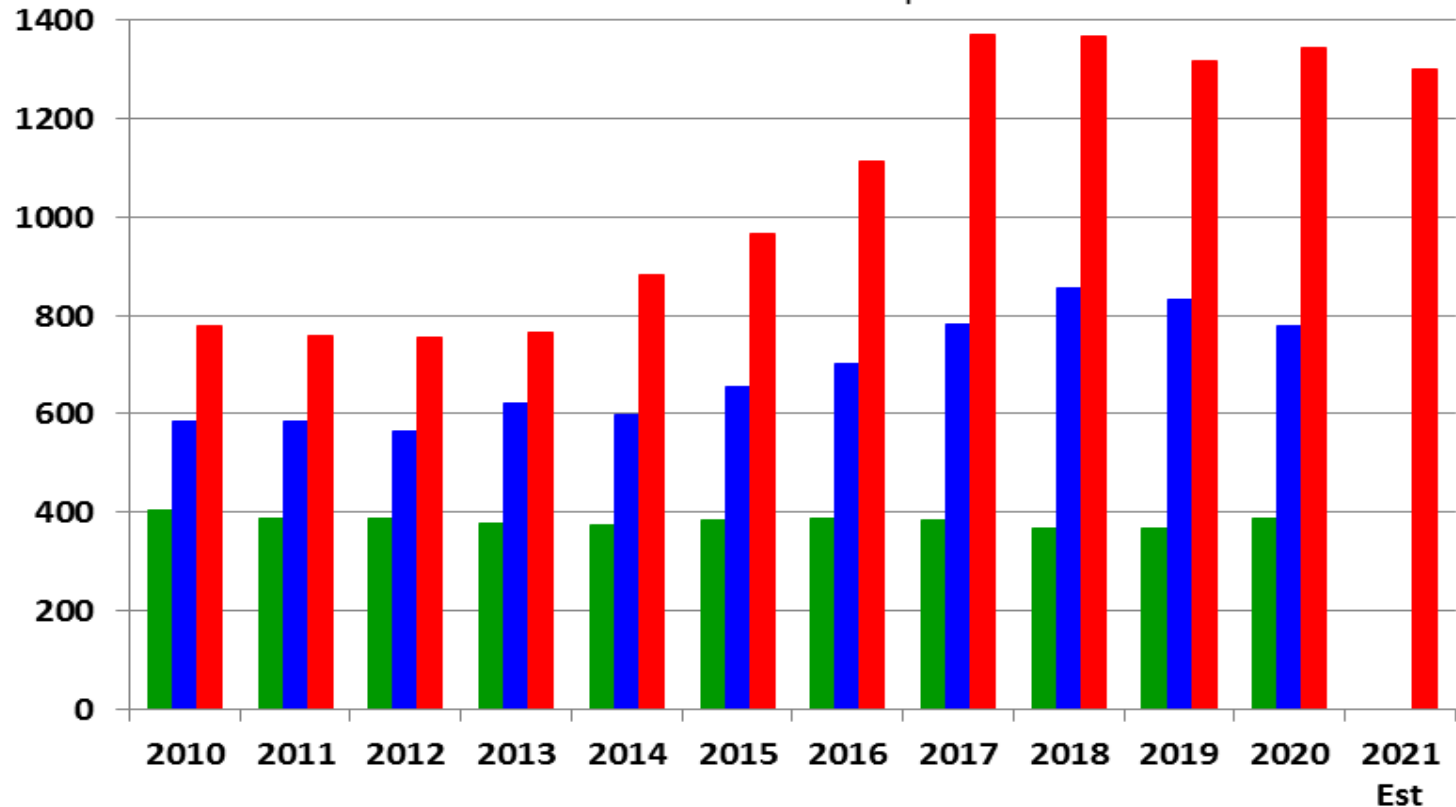
■ National

■ New Mexico

■ Albuquerque

Sources: FBI Uniform Crime Reports

Crimes Rates per 100,000 People

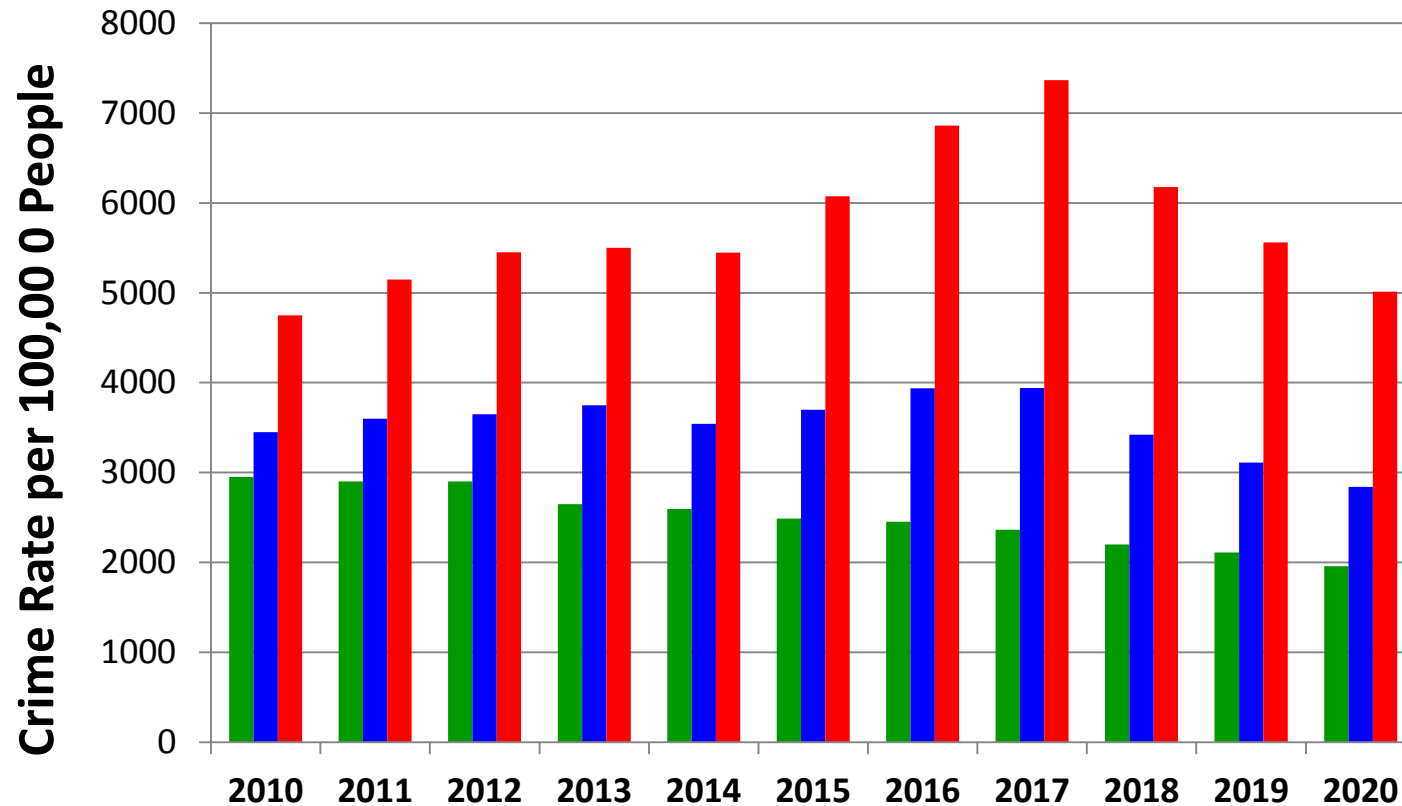


2020 Albuquerque average is 346% of the national average!

Albuquerque Property Crime Index

■ National ■ New Mexico ■ Albuquerque

Data Source: Yearly FBI Uniform Crime Reports

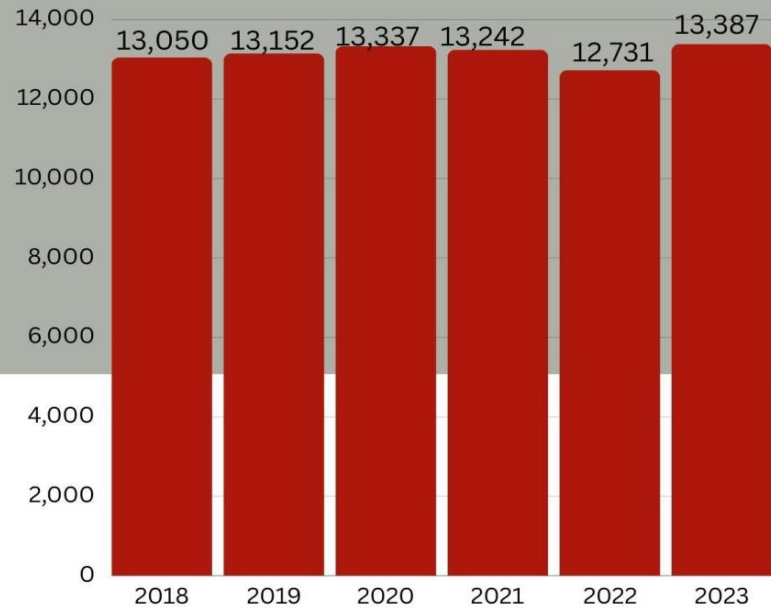


2020 Albuquerque average is 256% of the national average!

**CRIMES
AGAINST
PERSON
2018-2023**

6 -Year Change

3%

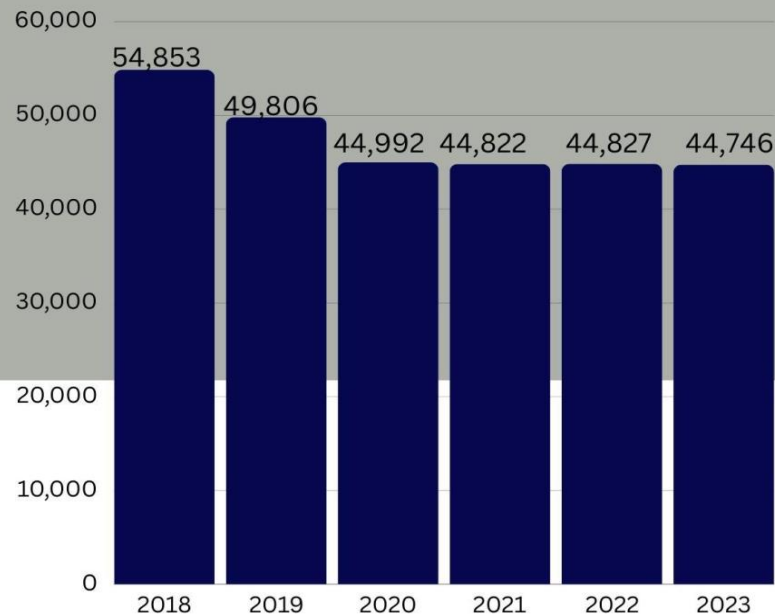


2024 13,471

**CRIMES
AGAINST
PROPERTY
2018-2023**

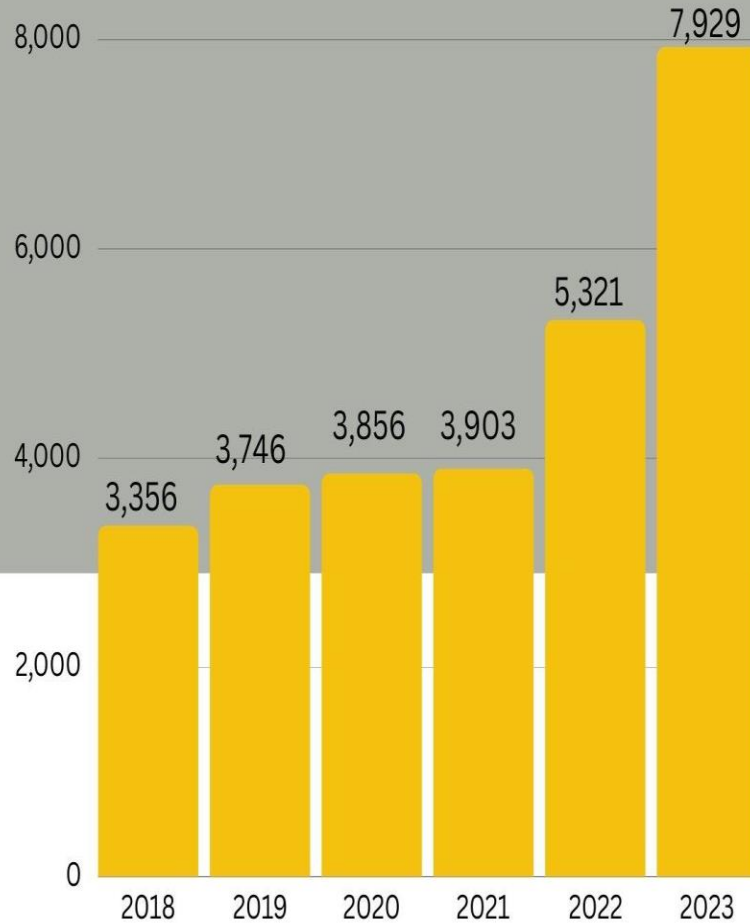
6 -Year Change

-18%



2024 43,999

CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY 2018-2023



2024 16,003

6 -Year Change

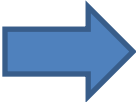
136%

Source: Albuquerque Police Department

How do we compare with our neighbors and the rest of the US?

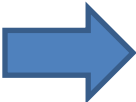
2017 - 2023 Violent Crime Rates (FBI statistics, except 2021, 2022)

Rate = (homicides + aggravated assaults + rapes + robberies) / population



<u>City</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Detroit	2057	2009	1965	2179			1781
Memphis	2003	1944	1901	2352			2501
Baltimore	2028	1835	1859	NA			1606
Albuquerque	1369	1365	1351	1413	1438	1308	1181
Chicago	1099	1006	943	987	1019		NA

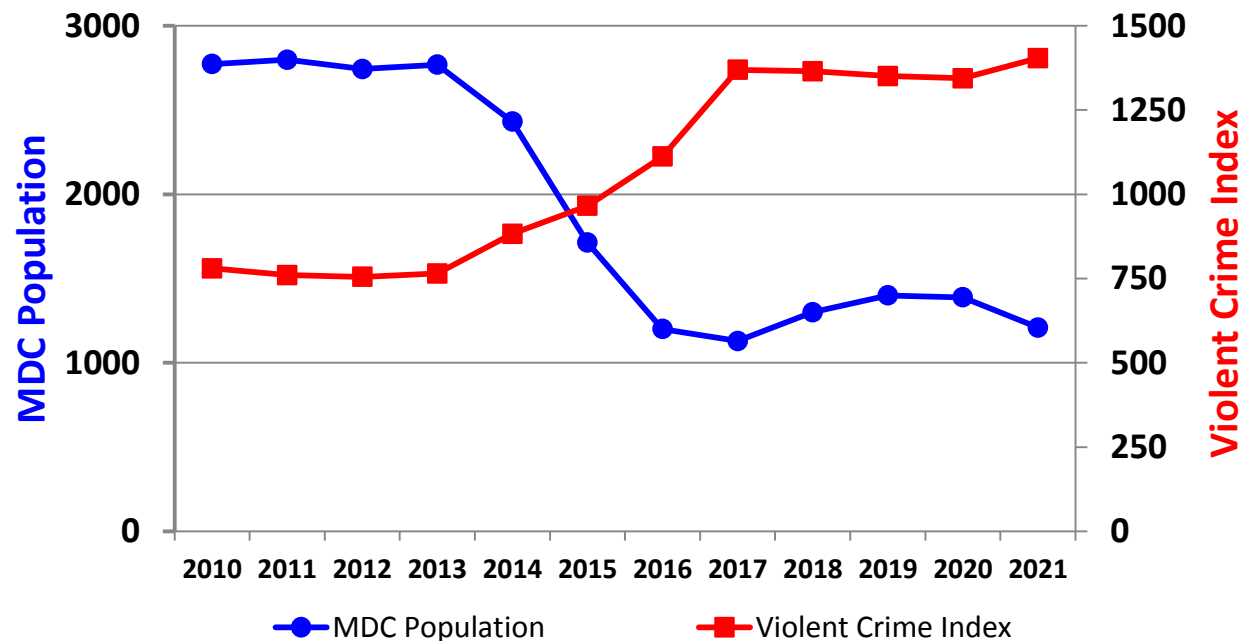
Our neighbors, etc. much better than ABQ



Phoenix	761	733	699	798	834		799
Los Angeles	761	748	732	722	793		728
Amarillo	758	807	720	836			690
CO Springs	524	556	585	597			716
NYC	538	541	571	578			671
US average	383	369	367	388	396		359
El Paso	378	371	353	316	320		278
Scottsdale	157	165	159	179	219		153

Why are we so bad? Answer: We have more criminals on the street.
Why so many criminals on the ABQ streets! Answer: They are not in jail!

**Correlation Between ABQ Metropolitan Detention Center
(MDC) Population and ABQ Violent Crime Index***



*Violent Crime Index per FBI Uniform Crime Reports (estimated for 2021)

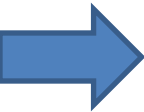
Conclusion: More Criminals in Jail = Less Crime

Why aren't the criminals in Jail?

We aren't sufficiently/effectively:

- **Arresting**
- **Prosecuting**
- **Incarcerating**

Why Aren't We Arresting?

- **ABQ Police Department (APD) short of personnel**
- **Court Approved Settlement Agreement (CASA) with the DOJ severely limits APD use of force and requires extensive reporting. This discourages pro-active policing, adequate investigation, arrest, and pursuit.**
- **McClendon Decree - Jail capacity/conditions inadequate (population over restricted even when not crowded)**
-  **APD advised/ordered not to arrest or pursue for:
low level crimes (shoplifting, vandalism, prostitution)
quality of life (littering, trespassing, nuisance)**

Why Aren't We Prosecuting?

- **DA cites lack of resources: investigators, prosecutors, lab techs**
- **DA cites inadequate case prep by APD**
- **Excessive use of plea deals?**
- **Excessive use of Diversion Courts: proven effective for 1st offenders (90%), repeat offenders, not so much (10%)**

Why Aren't We Incarcerating?

- **BERNCO courts convict only 35% (half the national average), Why??**
- **Bail Reform (Constitutional Amendment One - 2016) essentially eliminates bail and pre-trial detention for many with disastrous results**
- **McClendon Decree - Jail capacity/conditions inadequate, discourages appropriate sentencing**



Bail Reform Needs Reform Now

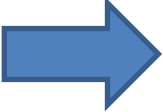
Contact state legislators!

- Prior to 2016: Defendants remanded to jail or released on bond using table of recommended bail bond amounts and judicial prudence (often lacking, biased, requires \$)
- 2016 to present: Release all defendants except those prosecutor successfully petitions for jail until trial. Ref: NM Constitutional Amendment One (2016); judge uses Arnold Tool or other decision matrix for guidance.
-  **Recommendation - future: Hold all violent defendants in jail** except those defense attorney successfully petitions for release. Ref : US Code § 3142; judge uses judicial prudence & tools for others.

What Can We Do? There is Hope!

New York City's Lessons for Crime Control

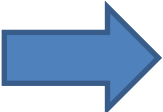
A success story



Between 1990 and 2009, New York City reduced its

- **homicide rate by an astonishing 82%**
- **auto theft rate by 94%**
- **all crime rates by a minimum of 63% from their peaks**

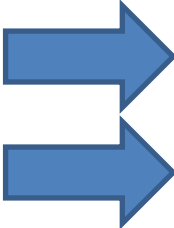
How did NYC do this?

- 
- **Increased police manpower**
 - **Major changes in:**
 - policy (Broken Windows policing),**
 - analysis (CompStat),**
 - tactics (Stop & Frisk),**
 - management (accountability at all levels)**

New York City's Lessons for Crime Control (continued)

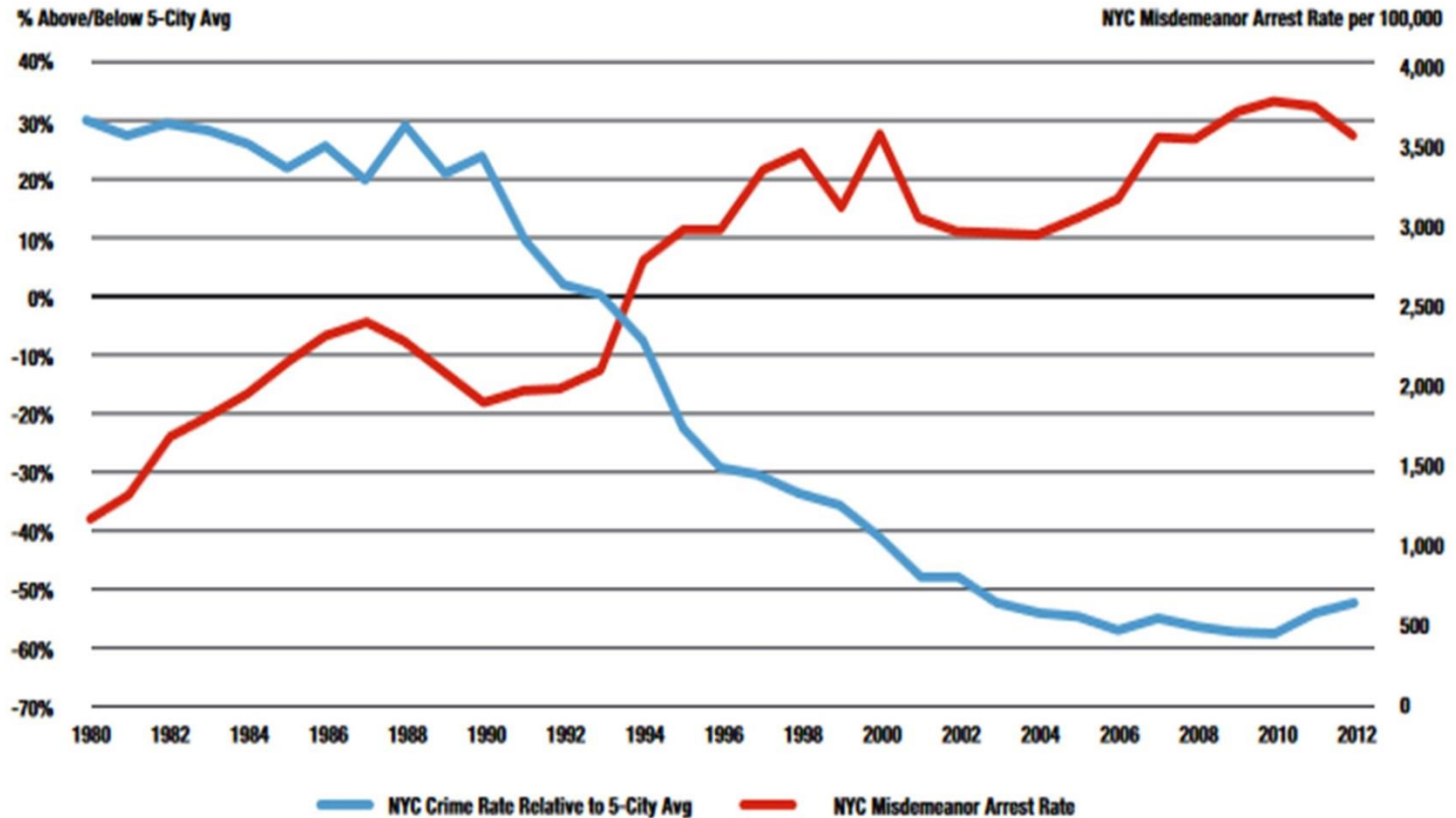
Broken Windows Policing

The broken windows theory states that visible signs of disorder and misbehavior in an environment encourage further disorder and misbehavior.

- 
- **Making minor crime accountable deters major crime**
 - **As NYC's arrest rate for misdemeanors went up, the arrest rate for felonies went down at a faster rate, thus reducing the overall incarceration rates. See next slide.**
 - **The emphasis is on arrest, not the duration of incarceration**
 - **Criminals and the public take notice when the police are actively and visibly enforcing the law. News travels fast!**

NYC Crime Rate and Misdemeanor Arrests

From "Broken Windows and Quality of Life Policing in New York City" by W. J. Bratton, Police Commissioner



Blue Line - New York City's Crime Rate (felonies and misdemeanors) as a percentage above or below the average of the next five largest cities in the state (black line)

Red Line - New York City's Misdemeanor Arrest Rate (misdemeanor arrests per 100,000 residents)

NYC Misdemeanor arrests up, total crime (felonies and misdemeanors) down!

New York City's Lessons for Crime Control (continued)

The Good News from NYC (1991-2009) per “The City That Became Safe”

- *NYC proved “that very high rates of violent crime are not hard-wired into the populations, cultures, and institutions of big cities” and “crime is not an incurable urban disease.”*
 - *“None of the (NYC) declines can be accounted for by significant changes in demographics and immigration, by economic trends including unemployment trends, poverty alleviation efforts, other social trends such as the rise of single parent families, and changes in high school graduation rates.”*
 - *“The New York difference attributable to policing is an achievable target for major cities all over the country...”.*
- 
- **In other words, any city can drastically reduce crime. NYC and ABQ did so in the past! My personal police experience indicates that Albuquerque can do this again in a Constitutional manner.**

What Can We Do?

Short Term (urgent) - Enforce the law:

- **More cops**
- **More arrests – misdemeanors/felonies**
- **More prosecutions**
- **More incarcerations (bail reform)**

Be informed, protect yourself, demand the above from your elected officials, and vote.

Long Term, we need cultural change and legislation to address:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a) Mental illness | b) Addiction |
| c) Homelessness | d) Poverty |
| e) Poor parenting | f) Poor education |
| g) Illegal aliens | g) Rehab in/out jail |

**Be informed, protect yourself, contact
your elected officials, vote.**

US, New Mexico, & Local Government Contact List

Your vote is your voice. Let them know what you think & determine their position!

1) NM US Senators & Representatives

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/NM>

2) NM Governor

<https://www.governor.state.nm.us/>

3) NM State Supreme Court Justices

<https://supremecourt.nmcourts.gov/supreme-court-justices.aspx>

4) NM State Legislators

https://nmlegis.gov/Members/Find_My_Legislator

5) Bernalillo County Commissioners

<https://www.bernco.gov/boards-commissions/bernalillo-county-board-of-commissioners.aspx>

6) ABQ Mayor

<https://www.cabq.gov/mayor>

7) ABQ City Councilors

<http://www.cabq.gov/council/find-your-councilor/contact-all-councilors>

7) District Attorney

<https://berncoda.com/>

**To read ABQ Blues – Crime and Policing in Albuquerque, NM
online or to download at no charge go to:**

<https://abqcrimeblues.com>

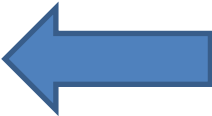
**Also available in hard copy at the ABQ Public Library and
Treasure House Book Store in Old Town**

**To stay informed, comment, or make recommendations, submit
your name (optional) & email address to:**

abqlea2020@gmail.com

Your info will not be shared

Tips To Protect Yourself/Family

- **Understand that you are your own first responder.** 
- Prepare yourself; first aid kit, whistle, light, pepper spray, weapon
- Prepare your property; alarms, locks, HD doors, fences/bars, dogs
- Establish quick dial list for emergency responders/family
- Stay alert. **Be observant/aware** of your surroundings
- Know your neighbors and your neighborhood; good or bad
- Know what businesses are open late and the locations of fire and police stations
- Ask a friend to accompany you when you go out
- **Trust your instincts.** If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave.
- Join/form a **Neighborhood Watch**
- **Be informed** about what is happening in your community
- Make your views/concerns known; call, email, petition, protest, vote
- Contact your civil servants: mayor, police chief, sheriff, district attorney, city councilors, county commissioners, state & federal legislators
- See: <https://www.sandiaheightsservices.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Home-Vehicle-Safety-Tips.pdf>

Self-protection Tools

Noise Makers

Whistle

Key Fob Alarm

Cell Phone

Tactical Flashlight

Non-Deadly

Pepper Spray

Tazer

Deadly Force

38 Revolver

280 Automatic



Retail Merchant Tips

Have a plan for the unexpected

Plan your response to medical, fire or crime events

Know your escape routes, exits, nearby facilities

Know where the alarms/phones/safe spaces, fire extinguishers, flashlights, first aid kits, etc. are

Plan your self-defense; verbal, flight, cell phone, non-lethal, lethal

Be aware of your surroundings

Know your location/address

Know your neighbors

Know your neighborhood police officers

Be aware of crime trends and events in your area

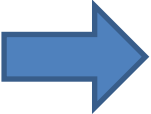
Clean up neglected areas. Trim overgrown shrubbery. Lobby for good street lighting.

Retail Merchant Tips - Continued

Don't ignore unwanted behavior or conditions

Post signs as appropriate, e.g. soliciting, loitering, restrooms, food, cash, cameras, guns, etc.

If you see something, say something. Ask for help. Alert co-workers, neighbors, landlord, etc. of unusual conditions or happenings. If in doubt call the police

 Trust your intuition

Follow your facility operating procedures

Secure the facility, lock the entry ways

Set the alarms, etc.

Useful phone numbers

All emergencies – 911

City government information – 311

Non-emergency police - 242-COPS (2677)