

Larceny, Post Pandemic

Larceny and shoplifting incidents have shown high volatility, with reported shoplifting in cities like New York and Los Angeles rising by over **60% between 2019 and mid 2023**. While viral “smash and grab” events occur, over 95% of shoplifting involves one or two people. Shoplifting rates remained elevated above pre 2020 levels in late 2024, despite some city level declines in other property crimes. [1, 2, 3, 4]

Key Looting and Theft Statistics

- **Retail Theft Surge:** Reported shoplifting in 24 major U.S. cities was higher in early 2024 compared to the same period in 2023, following significant increases in NYC and Los Angeles.
- **Small Scale Incidents:** Over 95% of shoplifting incidents involved one or two people, not large groups.
- **Case Value:** The median value of stolen goods per shoplifting incident grew from roughly \$75 in 2019 to about \$100 in 2021.
- **Felony Increase:** Shoplifting incidents classified as felonies doubled from 8% to nearly 16% between 2019 and mid 2023.
- **Clearance Rates:** Property crimes have low clearance rates (solved cases). In 2019, only 18.4% of larceny thefts and 13.8% of motor vehicle thefts were cleared by arrest.
- **Demographics:** Over 66% of shoplifters are younger than 30.
- **Gun Theft Trends:** Rates of guns stolen from vehicles rose 31% from 2018 to 2022, with vehicles becoming a primary target for theft. [1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7]

Common Locations for Robbery (2019 FBI Data)

- **Streets and Highways:** 34.3%
- **Commercial Houses:** 16.7%
- **Residences:** 15.8% [8]

Organized Retail Crime (ORC)

While highly publicized, organized retail crime, where groups steal to resell goods, is estimated to be a small fraction of overall retail theft, roughly 5%. However, the Council on Criminal Justice notes that retail theft in general has caused significant inventory loss, driving some store closures. [9, 10]

Data Discrepancies

Different FBI reporting systems show varying trends. The Summary Reporting System (SRS) suggests 2023 shoplifting was equal to 2019 levels, while the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) shows it was 93% higher, creating uncertainty in exact figures. [4]

AI responses may include mistakes.

[1] <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/myth-vs-reality-trends-retail-theft>

[2] <https://counciloncj.org/shoplifting-trends-what-you-need-to-know/>

[3] <https://counciloncj.org/crime-trends-in-u-s-cities-year-end-2025-update/>

[4] <https://counciloncj.org/between-the-aisles-a-closer-look-at-shoplifting-trends/>

- [5] <https://electroiq.com/stats/shoplifting-statistics/>
[6] <https://counciloncj.org/trends-in-gun-theft/>
[7] <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/clearances>
[8] <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/robbery>
[9] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WA3z5M1OhAw>
[10] <https://harbert.auburn.edu/research-faculty/centers/center-for-ethical-organizational-cultures/retail-theft-runs-rampant.htm>

Vehicle Theft

Think Layers

Use multiple defenses so if one fails, another still protects you
Habits → Deterrents → Immobilization → Tracking

1. Everyday Habits (Prevent a Large Percentage of Theft)

- Always lock doors and fully close windows
- Take your keys or fob and never leave them in or near the car
- Do not leave valuables visible such as bags, electronics, or coins
- Park in well lit and busy areas
- If you have a garage, use it and still lock the car

2. Visible Deterrents (Make Your Car a Bad Target)

- Steering wheel lock such as The Club
- Wheel clamp
- Alarm system or visible blinking light
- Anti theft decals

These do not make theft impossible. They make thieves choose another car.

3. Immobilization (Stops the Car From Being Driven Away)

- Built in or aftermarket engine immobilizer
- Hidden kill switch that cuts ignition or fuel
- OBD port lock that prevents reprogramming keys

This is one of the most effective layers against modern theft.

4. Tracking and Recovery

- Hide a tracker such as an Apple AirTag or similar
- Install a dedicated GPS tracker
- Use built in vehicle tracking apps if available

Tip: Hide trackers somewhere non obvious, not the glove box or center console.

5. Protect Keyless Entry (Common Modern Weak Point)

- Store keys in a Faraday pouch at home
- Keep keys away from doors and windows
- Disable passive entry if your car allows it

This helps prevent relay attacks where thieves copy your key signal.

6. Avoid High Risk Situations

- Do not leave your car running unattended
- Be cautious in long term or unsecured parking areas
- Avoid sharing clear location details of your car publicly
- Do not hand keys to unknown or unverified individuals

Simple Effective Setup

- Lock your car and park smart
- Add a steering wheel lock
- Use a Faraday pouch for your keys
- Hide a tracker

This combination significantly lowers your risk.

“My Car Is My Bike:”

Bike theft is even more about opportunity than car theft. Bikes are lighter, easier to move, and often poorly secured. The goal is the same. Make yours harder to take than the one next to it.

Use the Right Locks (This Is Everything)

- Use a U lock or D lock as your primary lock
- Add a second lock such as a chain or cable for the other wheel
- Lock through the frame, not just the wheel
- Secure to something fixed and immovable

A single cheap cable lock is the easiest thing for a thief to cut.

Lock It the Smart Way

- Position the lock high off the ground
- Keep the lock tight with little space inside
- Fill the lock space to prevent prying
- Remove quick release parts if possible

Choose Parking Carefully

- High traffic visible areas are safer
- Use designated bike racks
- Avoid leaving it overnight in public
- At home bring it inside if possible

Garages and apartment bike rooms are common theft spots and are not always secure.

Layer Your Security

- Use two different types of locks
- Add a small alarm or motion sensor if desired
- Consider locking near better protected bikes

Tracking and Recovery

- Hide a tracker such as an Apple AirTag under the seat or inside the frame
- Use GPS trackers for higher end bikes
- Register your bike serial number

Make Your Bike Less Resellable

- Record the serial number
- Take photos of your bike
- Use unique markings or stickers
- Register with databases such as Bike Index

Stolen bikes are often resold quickly. Make yours harder to sell.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Locking only the wheel
- Using thin cable locks alone
- Leaving it in the same spot daily at the same time
- Assuming safe neighborhoods mean no theft

Simple Effective Setup

- One strong U lock through frame and rack
- One secondary lock for the wheel
- Hidden tracker
- Smart parking choices

This setup puts you ahead of most bikes on the street.

Quick Tip

Put 911 in your contacts as A 911.