



# Robberies

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**A bank's No. 1 concern during a robbery is the safety of its customers and employees.**

- Banks regularly schedule ongoing training for all front-line and branch staff so they understand how to handle robberies before, during, and after they occur.

**Better bank security is one of several factors contributing to the sharp decline in robberies.**

- Bank robberies are at their lowest level in more than 30 years.
- Banks invest heavily in sophisticated alarm systems, bait money and surveillance cameras to help deter and catch robbers. In addition, banks employ a variety of counter measures, including guards, bullet-resistant enclosures and access-controlled entry ways in an effort to prevent robbery attempts.
- Improved investigative techniques, tougher sentencing and the shift to electronic transactions have also contributed to the drop-off in robberies.

**Banks play a critical role in helping law enforcement catch criminals.**

- The majority of robberies end in arrest thanks to well-trained tellers, "wanted" posters and internet sites, alarm systems, cameras and other tracking devices.
- Most bank robbers are serial criminals. According to a 2016 FBI report, 27.2% of bank robbers identified had been previously convicted in either federal or state court for bank robbery, bank burglary, or bank larceny.<sup>1</sup>

**Contrary to popular belief, robberies do not mirror economic trends.**

- Robberies have been trending down since the 1990's, even through recessions.
- Being mentally unstable or under the influence of a controlled or illegal drug is more highly correlated with robberies than economic trends. According to a 2016 FBI report, 35.4% of bank robbers identified were determined to be users of narcotics.

**Banks continue to search for new ways to prevent robberies.**

- However, their best strategy is still to make sure employees are trained and security systems are in place and working properly.
- Front-line employees can help divert bank robberies by keeping teller cash box levels low, exercising lobby engagement, adhering to standard bank compliance regulations and completing routine training.

**Background:**

Less than 3% of all robberies reported in 2018 involved actual violence such as a shooting, assault or injury, according to the FBI. In 2018, there were a total of four robbery-related deaths, all of which were the perpetrators.<sup>1</sup>

In 2018, the following modus operandi were used: demand note (1,813), oral demand (1,252), use of a weapon threatened (1,329) and firearm (545). The western region of the U.S. reported the highest number of robberies, with 923 incidents in 2018.<sup>1</sup>

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(continued)

ABA has a database – ABA Bank Capture – that allows bankers and the FBI to share detailed information about robberies in an effort to catch the robbers, as well as learn ways to prevent future robberies.

**Total number of robberies** (includes those of commercial banks, mutual savings banks, savings and loan associations and credit unions).<sup>1</sup>

1984 – 6,067	1991 – 9,532	1998 – 7,711	2005 – 6,714	2012 – 3,870
1985 – 5,427	1992 – 9,540	1999 – 6,813	2006 – 6,948	2013 – 4,199
1986 – 5,672	1993 – 8,561	2000 – 7,310	2007 – 5,933	2014 – 3,866
1987 – 6,078	1994 – 7,081	2001 – 8,516	2008 – 6,700	2015 – 4,002
1988 – 6,549	1995 – 6,986	2002 – 7,703	2009 – 5,943	2016 – 4,168
1989 – 6,690	1996 – 8,362	2003 – 7,442	2010 – 5,543	2017 – 3,854
1990 – 8,042	1997 – 8,082	2004 – 7,510	2011 – 5,014	2018 – 2,950

Source:

<sup>1</sup>FBI Bank Crimes Statistics database (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/bank-crime-statistics-2018.pdf/view>