



Patterns of Juvenile Arrests: Orange County – 1989 to 1999

INTRODUCTION

The most recent data available indicates that in 1999, 15,251 juveniles were arrested in Orange County. Of those arrested, 26.5% were arrested for felony crimes, while 73.5% were arrested for misdemeanor crimes. Among the 15,251 arrests were 828 arrests for committing a “violent crime.” (See Table 1) While the total number of arrests represents an increase in the absolute number of arrests over 10 years ago (15,251 in 1999 as compared with 13,738 in 1989), when converted into a rate per 100 juveniles living in Orange County (See Table 2), the increase is only slight (5.63 per 100 juveniles in 1989 as compared with 5.71 per 100 juveniles in 1999).

The number of juvenile arrests in Orange County over the past 10 years, while slightly erratic from year to year, must be described as generally increasing. In the

early 90’s, the numbers were in the 13,000 range. In the mid-90’s the numbers clearly moved into the 14,000+ range. And for the last four years of the 90’s, the number of arrests has been in the 15,000 range, touching 16,000 in 1996.

While the numerical pattern in the distribution of the juvenile arrests between the categories of felony and misdemeanor is difficult to discern (See Table 1); the percentage distributions paint a clear picture. The percentage of juvenile arrests for felony crimes has become a smaller share of all arrests, while the percentage of arrests for misdemeanor crimes has become a larger share. Felony arrests have dropped from the 34-35% figures of the early 1990’s down to 30% or below in the past three years. Misdemeanor arrests, as a consequence, rose from

Table 1
Juvenile Arrests by Category of Offense
Orange County, California: 1985-1997

Year	Total		Felony		Misdemeanor		Violent Crimes	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1989	13,738	100	4,749	34.6	8,989	65.4	641	4.7
1990	13,482	100	4,759	35.3	8,723	64.7	823	6.1
1991	13,219	100	4,581	34.7	8,638	65.3	819	6.2
1992	13,778	100	4,625	33.6	9,153	66.4	835	6.1
1993	14,731	100	4,608	31.3	10,123	68.7	884	6.0
1994	14,637	100	4,764	32.5	9,873	67.5	1,005	6.9
1995	15,175	100	5,080	33.5	10,095	66.5	1,042	6.9
1996	16,221	100	5,052	31.1	11,169	68.9	974	6.0
1997	15,179	100	4,609	30.4	10,570	69.6	955	6.3
1998	15,954	100	4,537	28.4	11,417	71.6	902	5.7
1999	15,251	100	4,047	26.5	11,204	73.5	828	5.4

SOURCE: CA Dept. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center

the 65% range of the early 90's to 70%+ in the last three years. While the trend in the changing distribution of the arrests is clear, arrests for violent crimes have only recently fallen below the 6% mark of all arrests since it hit 6.1% in 1990.

Juvenile felony arrest rates have clearly fallen during the last part of the 1990's. After hovering around the 1.9 and above range from 1989 through 1996, the rates of juvenile felony arrests per 100 juveniles began to drop. In 1997, the rate was only 1.71, dropping to 1.64 in 1998 and dropping again in 1999 to 1.44 (See Table 2). A similar pattern is evident in violent crimes after they reached a high of .40 per 100 juveniles in 1994 and 1995, they began to drop to the current level of .29 per 100 juveniles. The rates for misdemeanor arrests and for total arrests are best described as erratic for the 10-year period under review.

Table 2
Juvenile Arrest Rates by Category
Orange County, California 1989- 1998
(Rates Per 100 Population Ages 10-17)

Year	Population Age 10-17	Felony	Misdemeanor	Violent	Total
1989	243.8	1.95	3.69	0.26	5.63
1990	243.3	1.96	3.59	0.34	5.54
1991	242.3	1.89	3.57	0.34	5.46
1992	244.0	1.90	3.75	0.34	5.65
1993	247.7	1.86	4.09	0.36	5.95
1994	252.3	1.89	3.91	0.40	5.80
1995	257.3	1.97	3.92	0.40	5.90
1996	263.6	1.92	4.24	0.37	6.15
1997	269.3	1.71	3.92	0.35	5.64
1998	277.1	1.64	4.12	0.33	6.08
1999	281.9	1.44	3.97	0.29	5.71
Ten Year Average		1.87	3.88	0.35	5.78
Standard Deviation		0.11	0.23	0.04	0.23

Note: Population figures are in 1,000's
SOURCE: CA Dept. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center

A trend that has been clear for some time is the distribution of arrests by gender. (See Table 3) In 1989, 88.6% of all juvenile arrests were male in gender (11.4% female). That value has been slowly falling over the past 10 years so that by 1999, only 82.3% of all juvenile arrests were of males and the remaining 17.7% were female juveniles.

The distribution of juvenile arrests and felony arrests by city for the years 1991 through 1999 are contained in Tables 4 and 5 respectively. (Note: The regions represented in the tables in this report coincide with the Orange County Probation Department's supervision regions, as well as those used in the Orange County Local Action Plan for Juvenile Justice, published by the County's Juvenile Justice Commission.) In the most recent two years, Orange (483), Newport Beach (239) and Garden Grove (154) reported large increases in the number of juvenile misdemeanor arrests. On the other hand, cities like Huntington Beach (-424), Brea (-196) and Santa Ana (-190) reported substantial declines in misdemeanor arrests. The biggest percentage increases in juvenile misdemeanor arrests over the past year were recorded in La Palma (75%), Orange (63%) and Newport Beach (49%). The major percentage declines were recorded in Brea (39%), Yorba Linda (36%) and Laguna Niguel (34%). Other cities with 30%+ declines included Placentia (33%), Huntington Beach (31%) and Mission Viejo (30%).

Table 3
Juvenile Felony Arrests By Gender
Orange County: 1989-1999

Year	Total	Males		Females		Ratio: Females Per 100 Males
		Number	%	Number	%	
1989	4,749	4,206	88.6	543	11.4	12.9
1990	4,759	4,164	87.5	595	12.5	14.3
1991	4,581	3,970	86.7	611	13.3	15.4
1992	4,625	3,967	85.8	658	14.2	16.6
1993	4,608	3,908	84.8	700	15.2	17.9
1994	4,764	4,128	86.6	636	13.4	15.4
1995	5,080	4,366	85.9	714	14.1	16.4
1996	5,052	4,284	84.8	768	15.2	17.9
1997	4,609	3,857	83.7	752	16.3	19.5
1998	4,537	3,809	84.0	728	16.0	19.1
1999	4,047	3,329	82.3	718	17.7	21.6

SOURCE: CA Dept. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center

The changes in felony juvenile arrests were not as dramatic as those found for misdemeanor arrests. The largest increases recorded over the last year were in the low two digit figures. Dana Point felony misdemeanor arrests increased by 28, Costa Mesa by 23 and Laguna Hills by 21. The declines were a bit larger with Fullerton, reporting a drop of 110 felony misdemeanor arrests in 1999 as compared with 1998. Huntington Beach reported a drop of 71 and Anaheim reported a 61 decline.

Both Dana Point and La Palma experienced in-

**Table 4
Juvenile Misdemeanor Arrests By Jurisdiction
Orange County: 1991-1999**

JURISDICTION	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
North County									
Anaheim	757	790	1,062	1,219	1,504	1,431	722	680	673
Brea	234	263	276	196	239	293	336	501	304
Buena Park	303	357	399	359	334	305	363	308	366
Cypress	442	460	530	292	268	389	426	108	92
Fullerton	215	181	384	303	326	375	588	399	372
La Habra	115	76	81	59	67	82	46	428	313
La Palma	673	623	714	635	548	654	693	12	21
Orange	112	99	131	99	89	114	121	762	1,245
Placentia	17	37	22	36	24	22	24	165	111
Villa Park	153	133	177	164	141	217	307	24	29
Yorba Linda	166	166	190	110	119	113	100	232	149
North County Total	3,187	3,185	3,966	3,472	3,659	3,995	3,726	3,619	3,675
West County									
Fountain Valley	95	102	135	210	212	213	159	180	176
Garden Grove	572	553	661	679	657	691	666	788	942
Huntington Beach	755	755	758	783	964	1,630	1,034	1,349	925
Los Alamitos	46	51	73	59	47	46	36	30	34
Seal Beach	44	37	34	36	37	31	18	29	35
Stanton	49	42	44	40	33	40	50	55	61
Westminster	191	221	290	316	300	268	272	298	362
West County Total	1,752	1,761	1,995	2,123	2,250	2,919	2,235	2,729	2,535
Central County									
Santa Ana	606	668	881	810	862	996	1,020	1,107	917
Central County Total	606	668	881	810	862	996	1,020	1,107	917
South County									
Costa Mesa	414	459	515	495	362	510	519	349	351
Dana Point	86	109	143	122	99	164	128	107	120
Irvine	411	352	340	373	352	364	659	657	701
Laguna Beach	34	54	50	138	235	206	233	213	186
Laguna Hills	*	121	117	147	129	82	89	134	138
Laguna Niguel	47	46	87	56	58	63	48	125	82
Lake Forest	*	126	166	182	151	152	183	193	227
Mission Viejo	214	200	348	292	316	261	284	393	274
Newport Beach	920	1,277	672	618	641	575	485	486	725
San Clemente	146	64	90	72	142	152	101	199	186
San Juan Capistrano	100	71	126	77	115	92	51	82	97
Tustin	131	141	177	211	210	199	337	332	327
Unincorporated	396	377	290	473	342	439	472	510	508
South County Total	2,899	3,397	3,121	3,256	3,152	3,259	3,589	3,780	3,922
Other	194	142	160	212	172	*	*	*	*
County Total	8,638	9,153	10,123	9,873	10,095	11,169	10,570	11,235	11,049

SOURCE: CA Dept. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center

Table 5
Juvenile Felony Arrests By Jurisdiction
Orange County: 1991-1999

JURISDICTION	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
North County									
Anaheim	304	236	481	597	584	668	516	486	424
Brea	89	77	77	58	79	61	103	87	102
Buena Park	220	241	218	199	243	245	273	199	151
Cypress	124	110	83	92	88	94	93	83	45
Fullerton	334	324	345	292	318	274	312	357	247
La Habra	132	122	133	113	108	132	103	120	100
La Palma	21	35	42	34	28	52	29	13	29
Orange	283	319	292	313	270	267	249	243	238
Placentia	93	74	62	60	58	84	61	54	70
Villa Park	40	20	4	10	12	1	11	7	12
Yorba Linda	73	68	61	64	79	73	73	50	32
North County Total	1,713	1,626	1,798	1,832	1,867	1,951	1,823	1,699	1,450
West County									
Fountain Valley	96	106	104	155	144	124	142	108	106
Garden Grove	438	447	398	468	446	451	464	435	374
Huntington Beach	232	258	267	201	256	177	6	196	125
Los Alamitos	30	23	26	33	30	28	24	18	14
Seal Beach	37	38	52	28	42	24	15	21	25
Stanton	54	36	25	28	32	22	37	41	46
Westminster	188	191	194	194	259	252	177	214	219
West County Total	1,075	1,099	1,066	1,107	1,209	1,078	865	1,033	909
Central County									
Santa Ana	641	637	554	694	767	828	703	577	547
Central County Total	641	637	554	694	767	828	703	577	547
South County									
Costa Mesa	232	245	247	195	223	240	273	192	215
Dana Point	36	40	30	27	32	33	34	14	42
Irvine	161	231	169	173	183	176	198	166	141
Laguna Beach	17	4	18	13	17	18	13	26	15
Laguna Hills	0	48	26	36	27	32	56	46	67
Laguna Niguel	22	32	35	22	16	34	23	46	29
Lake Forest	0	72	53	69	71	61	73	86	63
Mission Viejo	85	77	138	122	99	116	77	147	91
Newport Beach	181	226	195	140	211	137	112	110	112
San Clemente	51	38	30	24	35	56	25	57	44
San Juan Capistrano	31	59	26	22	40	31	24	31	40
Tustin	76	79	115	116	147	130	161	126	141
Unincorporated	260	112	108	172	136	131	149	151	130
South County Total	1,152	1,263	1,190	1,131	1,237	1,195	1,218	1,198	1,130
County Total	4,581	4,625	4,608	4,764	5,080	5,052	4,609	4,507	4,036

SOURCE: CA Dept. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center

Table 6
Total Juvenile Arrests By Jurisdiction
Orange County: 1991-1999

JURISDICTION	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
North County									
Anaheim	1,061	1,026	1,543	1,816	2,088	2,099	1,238	1,166	1,097
Brea	323	340	353	254	318	354	439	588	406
Buena Park	523	598	617	558	577	550	636	507	517
Cypress	566	570	613	384	356	483	519	191	137
Fullerton	549	505	729	595	644	649	900	756	619
La Habra	247	198	214	172	175	214	149	548	413
La Palma	694	658	756	669	576	706	722	25	50
Orange	395	418	423	412	359	381	370	1,005	1,483
Placentia	110	111	84	96	82	106	85	219	181
Villa Park	193	153	181	174	153	218	318	31	41
Yorba Linda	239	234	251	174	198	186	173	282	181
North County Total	4,900	4,811	5,764	5,304	5,526	5,946	5,549	5,318	5,125
West County									
Fountain Valley	191	208	239	365	356	337	301	288	282
Garden Grove	1,010	1,000	1,059	1,147	1,103	1,142	1,130	1,223	1,316
Huntington Beach	987	1,013	1,025	984	1,220	1,807	1,040	1,545	1,050
Los Alamitos	76	74	99	92	77	74	60	48	48
Seal Beach	81	75	86	64	79	55	33	50	60
Stanton	103	78	69	68	65	62	87	96	107
Westminster	379	412	484	510	559	520	449	512	581
West County Total	2,827	2,860	3,061	3,230	3,459	3,997	3,100	3,762	3,444
Central County									
Santa Ana	1,247	1,305	1,435	1,504	1,629	1,824	1,723	1,684	1,464
Central County Total	1,247	1,305	1,435	1,504	1,629	1,824	1,723	1,684	1,464
South County									
Costa Mesa	646	704	762	690	585	750	792	541	566
Dana Point	122	149	173	149	131	197	162	121	162
Irvine	572	583	509	546	535	540	857	823	842
Laguna Beach	51	58	68	151	252	224	246	239	201
Laguna Hills	0	169	143	183	156	114	145	180	205
Laguna Niguel	69	78	122	78	74	97	71	171	111
Lake Forest	0	198	219	251	222	213	256	279	290
Mission Viejo	299	277	486	414	415	377	361	540	365
Newport Beach	1,101	1,503	867	758	852	712	597	596	837
San Clemente	197	102	120	96	177	208	126	256	230
San Juan Capistrano	131	130	152	99	155	123	75	113	137
Tustin	207	220	292	327	357	329	498	458	468
Unincorporated	656	489	398	645	478	570	621	661	638
South County Total	4,051	4,660	4,311	4,387	4,389	4,454	4,807	4,978	5,052
Other	194	142	160	212	172	*	*	*	*
County Total	13,219	13,778	14,731	14,637	15,175	16,221	15,179	15,742	15,085

SOURCE: CA Dept. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center

creases in juvenile felony arrests that represented more than a 100% change over 1998's figure. For Dana Point, the figure was 200% while for La Palma the figure was 123%. Villa Park's small increase of 5 felony juvenile arrests above the 1998 figure represented a 71% change. Two cities reported declines that represented more than 40% of their 1998 figure. These were Cypress (-46%) and Laguna Beach (-42%). Other cities reporting sizable percentage declines included Mission Viejo (-38%), Laguna Niguel (-37%), Huntington Beach (-36%) and Yorba Linda (-36%).

Table 6 contains the total number of juvenile arrests occurring within jurisdictions. North County, while decreasing slightly over the past few years, still accounts for over 5,000 juvenile arrests every year. In 1996, that figure was almost 6,000, while in 1991, the figure was below 5,000. West County has a similar pattern except that the magnitudes were in the 3,000 to 3,500 range. In

1996, West County reported a high of almost 4,000 juvenile arrests.

Central County is only the city of Santa Ana. Since Santa Ana reported 1,824 juvenile arrests in 1996, the number of arrests has been declining consistently through 1999 when 1,464 juvenile arrests were reported. This figure, however, is still higher than the 1991 number of 1,247. Meanwhile, because of the large population increases occurring in the southern part of the County, the total number of juvenile arrests has been increasing almost steadily since 1991. In 1991, there were 4,051 juvenile arrests and in 1999 that number had grown to 5,052.

The year 1996 was a high year for Orange County in Juvenile arrests when a total of 16,221 arrests were reported. The County total has been declining ever since, to the point where the total number of juvenile arrests reported in 1999 was 15,085. This figure, however, is still substantially higher than the 13,219 reported in 1991.

The internet has evolved into an invaluable source for demographic information. Data is available from government and private sources in a variety of formats. Check out the Center for Demographic Research web page for products and data available for Orange County ([HTTP://WWW.FULLERTON.EDU/CDR](http://www.fullerton.edu/cdr)). Our web site also provides links to some of the following sites:

[HTTP://WWW.DOF.CA.GOV](http://www.dof.ca.gov)

California Department of Finance home page. Wealth of information for California cities and counties regarding housing & population demographics. Also includes links to additional sites.

[HTTP://factfinder.census.gov/java_prod/dads.ui.homepage.homepage](http://factfinder.census.gov/java_prod/dads.ui.homepage.homepage)

American FactFinder - U.S. Census Bureau. The newest feature on the Census Bureau's web site; access population & housing demographics from the U.S. Census and American Community Survey.

[HTTP://WWW.CENSUS.GOV/CGI-BIN/GAZETTEER](http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/gazetteer)

U.S. Gazetteer. This gazetteer is used to identify places to view with the Tiger Map Server and obtain census data from the 1990 Census Lookup server. The entire www.census.gov site is massive.

[HTTP://WWW.SCAG.ORG/](http://www.scag.org/)

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Access Project. Citizens can also use our Web pages to obtain information about member agencies.

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