

SA Crime Statistics - Definitions

[The South African Police Service \(SAPS\)](#) define criminal cases as found in either the common or that are defined in terms of the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act 51 of 1977).¹ While hundreds of crime definitions exist, the SAPS release crime statistics for what are considered as the most serious crime categories. The figures produced within many of these crime categories consist of different types of crime. The SAPS use the following crime categories to release statistics on crime that is reported to them.

[Murder](#) consists in the unlawful and intentional killing of another human being.

[Attempted Murder](#) consists in the commission of an unlawful act with the intention of killing another human being but which does not result in the death of that human being.

[Sexual Offences](#): This category of crime replaces the former categories of rape and indecent assault. The new definition is contained in the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, Act 32 of 2007. This broad crime category includes over 50 crime types relating to violence sexual crimes, sexual exploitation, sexual grooming, trafficking and pornography.

[Common Assault](#) is the unlawful and intentional –

- a) Direct and indirect application of force to the body of another person, or
- b) Threat of application of immediate personal violence to another, in circumstances in which the threatened person is prevailed upon to believe that the person who is threatening him has the intention and power to carry out his threat.

Note: The act may consist in the direct or indirect application of force or threats of force decisive factor is the use of force or violence.

[Assault with the intent inflict Grievous Bodily Harm](#) is the unlawful and intentional direct or indirect application of force to the body of another person with the intention of causing grievous bodily harm to that person. Note: The victim does not need to sustain serious injuries. The decisive element is the intention to cause serious injuries.

[Common Robbery](#) is the unlawful and intentional forceful removal and appropriation of

¹ Definitions extracted from the SAPS Crime Definition Manual, drafted by SAPS. The full reference is SAPS (2012), Crime Definitions to be utilized by police officials for purposes of the opening of case dockets and the registration thereof on the Crime Administration System, V.001, Issued by Consolidation Notice 2/2012, Pretoria.

movable tangible property belonging to another. Note: The decisive factor is the use of force or violence. Incidents of robbery (including business and house robbery) are classified as common robbery if no weapon is used.

[Robbery with aggravating circumstances](#) is a broad category that includes cases of the unlawful and intentional forceful removal and appropriation in aggravating circumstances of movable tangible property belonging to another. Note: Robbery cases are included in this category if any weapon, not restricted to a firearm, was used to commit the crime. The SAPS provide statistics for the following sub-categories of aggravated robbery:

- [Robbery of a motor vehicle](#) or “hijacking” is the unlawful and intentional forceful removal and appropriation of a motor vehicle (excluding a truck and a light delivery vehicle) belonging to another.
- [Robbery of a truck](#) is the unlawful and intentional forceful removal and appropriation of a truck (excluding a light delivery vehicle) belonging to another.
- [Cash-in-transit robbery](#) is the unlawful and intentional forceful removal and appropriation of money or containers for the conveyance of money, belonging to another while such money or containers for the conveyance of money are being transported by a security company on behalf of the owner thereof.
- [Bank Robbery](#) is the unlawful and intentional forceful removal and appropriation of money from a bank during office hours.
- [Business robbery](#) is the unlawful and intentional forceful removal and appropriation of property from the business of another person.
- [House robbery](#) is the unlawful and intentional forceful removal and appropriation of property from the residential premises of another person.

[Arson](#) is the unlawful and intentional damaging of an immovable structure which is suitable for human occupation or the storing of goods and which belongs to another, by setting fire to it with the intention to prejudice another.

[Malicious damage to property](#) consists in the unlawful and intentional damaging of property belonging to another.

[Burglary at residential premises](#): Also referred to as “housebreaking” is a crime committed by a person who unlawfully and intentionally breaks into a building or similar structure, used for human habitation, with the intention to commit a crime on the premises.

[Burglary at non-residential premises](#): is a crime committed by a person who unlawfully and intentionally breaks into a building or similar structure, which is not used for human habitation and does not form part of residential premises, with the intention to commit a crime on the premises.

[Shoplifting](#) consists of stealing an article for sale from a self-service shop during trading hours.

[Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle](#) consists of the stealing of a motor vehicle or motorcycle

belonging to another person.

[Theft out of or from motor vehicle](#) consists of the unlawful and intentional removal of parts, accessories or equipment, that form part of a motor vehicle, or articles in or on the vehicle.

[Stock-theft](#) consists of the stealing of stock or produce belonging to another person

[Culpable Homicide](#) consists of the unlawful, negligent causing of death of another human being.

[Crimen Iniuria](#) is the unlawful intentional serious infringement of the dignity or privacy of another person.

[Public violence](#) is the unlawful and intentional commission, together with a number of people, of an act or acts and which are intended forcibly to disturb public peace and tranquillity or to invade the rights of others.

This fact sheet was prepared by The Institute for Security Studies. For more information including detailed crime maps for all policing precincts in South Africa please visit the Crime and Justice Information and Analysis Hub at www.issafrica.org/crimehub, supported by the Hanns Seidel Foundation.

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