

RECORDED CRIME ‘OCCURRENCE ONLY’ AND ‘DV-NO OFFENCE’ NARRATIVE AUDIT

EVENTS BETWEEN JULY 2010 AND JUNE 2011

The Bureau’s Recorded Crime Audit Strategy includes the identification of possible under-reporting of criminal incidents through an annual analysis of ‘occurrence only’ and ‘DV – no offence’ incident narratives.

AIM

To determine the extent of under-reporting of criminal incidents by NSW Police through the use of non-criminal ‘occurrence only’ and ‘DV - no offence’ incidents in the NSW Computerised Operational Policing System (COPS).

DEFINITIONS

DV – no offence – Domestic Violence-related incidents where no offence is considered to have taken place eg neighbours have called Police out to what is ascertained to be a verbal argument. These incidents are not counted in the Recorded Crime data.

Occurrence only – ‘occurrence only’ incidents are not classified as criminal incidents and so are not counted in the Recorded Crime data. The NSW Police Crime Recording Standard states: “OCCURRENCE ONLY incidents should only be used where there is no other applicable COPS Incident Category and used where there is no police investigation / action required.”

METHOD

Sample selection

A random sample of 200 ‘occurrence only’ and 200 ‘DV – no offence’ incidents with an event date between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2011.

Audit Method

Using the information recorded in the event narratives on COPS, and the instructions in Crime Recording Standard, we set out to answer the question ‘Did a criminal incident take place?’ with three possible answers: Yes, No and Unclear.

For those records where a criminal incident did take place, we then asked ‘Was there a criminal incident created in the same event?’ with two possible answers: Yes and No.

RESULTS

Sample 1: ‘Occurrence only’ incidents

Sampled incidents	200
No criminal incident took place	182
Criminal incident did take place	16
Unclear whether a criminal incident did take place	2
Criminal incident did take place but no criminal incident was created in that Event	7

Of the 200 sampled 'occurrence only' incidents, there were seven (3.5%) where the event narrative indicated that a criminal incident did take place but there was no corresponding criminal incident created within that event.

Sample 2: 'DV – no offence' incidents

Sampled incidents	200
No criminal incident took place	183
Criminal incident did take place	17
Criminal incident did take place but no criminal incident was created in that Event	8

Of the 200 sampled 'DV – no offence' incidents, there were eight (4%) where the event narrative indicated that a criminal incident did take place but there was no corresponding criminal incident created within that event. Two of the eight incidents have a clear-up status of "under investigation".

In six of the eight incidents, either an AVO was applied for or an application made to add conditions to an existing AVO.

CONCLUSION

There appears to be only limited under-reporting of crime through the use of non-criminal incidents. Three and a half percent¹ of a sample of 'occurrence only' incidents and 4%² of a sample of 'DV – no offence' incidents involved a crime for which a criminal incident was not created on COPS.

**NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
1 December 2011**

¹ This sample proportion of 3.5% has 95% confidence interval bounds of 1.0% and 6.0%.

² This sample proportion of 4% has 95% confidence interval bounds of 1.3% and 6.7%.