



# Small Number of Blocks Account for Lots of Crime in D.C.

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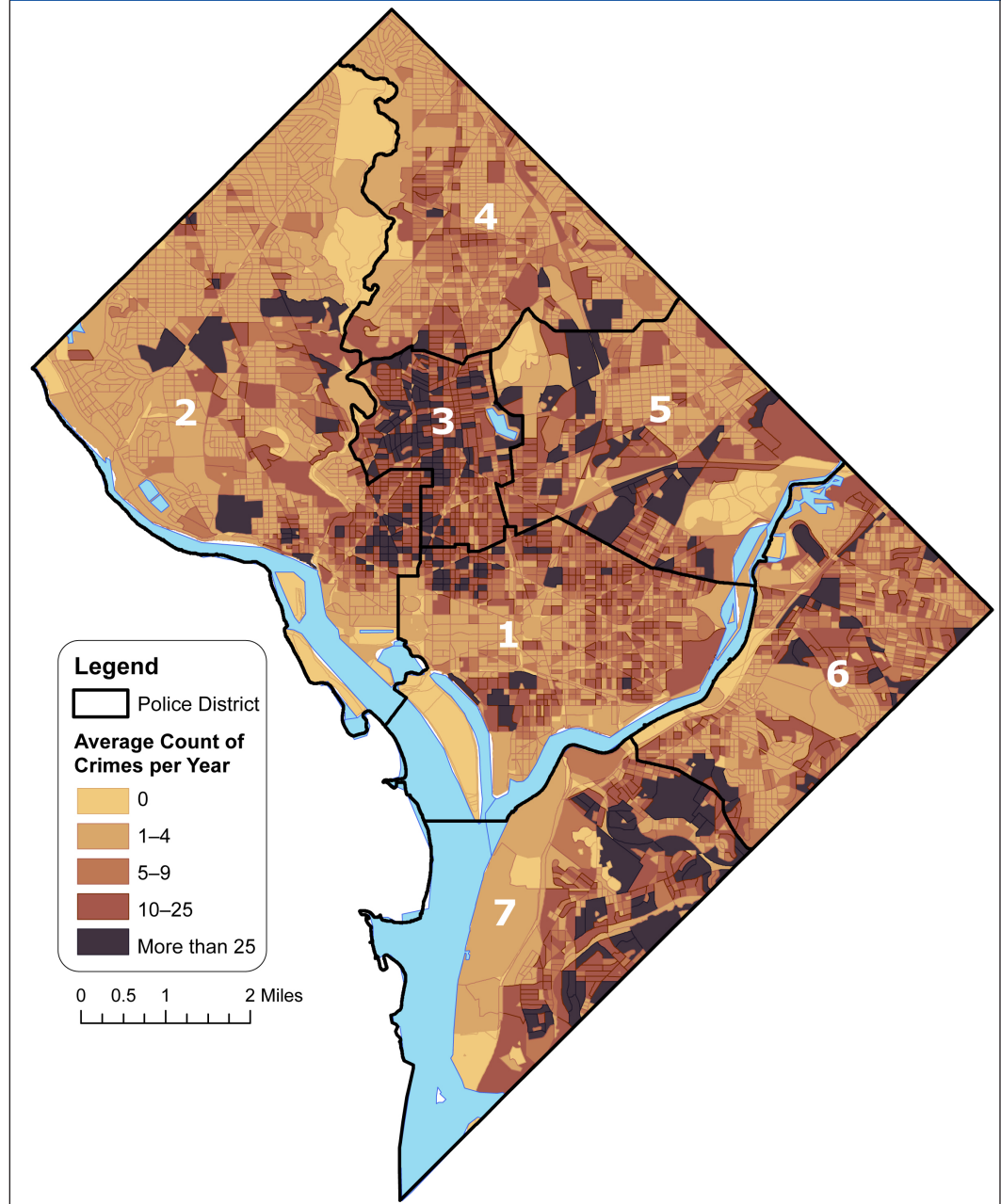
The maps and table in this brief classify blocks in the District of Columbia into 5 categories based on their average yearly crime counts: 0 crimes, 1–4 crimes, 5–9 crimes, 10–25 crimes, and more than 25 crimes. Table 1 provides counts of blocks in each of those crime categories for each year from 2000 to 2009, and yearly counts of all Part I crimes (including homicide, sexual assault, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and theft from a motor vehicle) for each crime category over the study period.

More than one-fifth of the blocks in the District did not report any crimes, and more than half reported fewer than 5 crimes in any given year. On average, then, these blocks reported crimes less frequently than once every other month.

Most crime is concentrated in a relatively small number of blocks in the District—in any given year, more than one-quarter of the crimes occur in just five percent of the blocks. And the approximately 20 percent of blocks in the District that fall into the ‘high crime’ categories (with 10 or more crimes

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Figure 1. Average crime by block in the District of Columbia, 2000–2009



per year) account for more than 60 percent of the crime that occurs in the District. In addition, while not shown in the table, over 40 percent of blocks in the high crime categories were zoned largely for commercial activity.

Figure 1 shows that the high crime blocks are, not surprisingly, geographically clustered. The largest clusters of high crime blocks are found in the center of the city and on the eastern edge of the city, in the Third, Sixth, and Seventh Police Districts.

*What exactly is a block?*

*This table reports data by census block, the smallest unit for which the Census Bureau collects and reports data. Blocks do not include buildings that face each other across the street; blocks are bounded by streets (or other physical features). Buildings that 'back up' to each other are included in the same census block. This also means that some commercial or industrial blocks, or those encompassing large parks/green spaces, may be rather large, and not follow the typical block pattern.*

**Table 1. Number of blocks by crime category, year, 2000–2009\***

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Average
Blocks with no crime	1,221	1,240	1,257	1,240	1,372	1,444	1,465	1,407	1,404	1,345	1,340
% of all blocks	21.5	21.9	22.2	21.9	24.2	25.5	25.8	24.8	24.7	23.7	23.6
Count of crime in these blocks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
% of yearly crime	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blocks with 1–4 Crimes	2,017	1,941	1,929	1,920	2,052	2,072	2,022	2,046	2,010	2,159	2,017
% of all blocks	35.6	34.2	34.0	33.8	36.2	36.5	35.6	36.1	35.4	38.1	35.5
Count of crime in these blocks	7,027	6,956	6,682	7,038	5,750	5,255	5,116	5,603	5,710	5,747	6,088
% of yearly crime	17.4	16.9	16.6	17.6	16.4	16.0	15.1	15.8	16.0	16.7	16.5
Blocks with 5–9 Crimes	1,139	1,123	1,147	1,137	1,077	1,079	1,089	1,060	1,078	1,038	1,097
% of all blocks	20.1	19.8	20.2	20.0	19.0	19.0	19.2	18.7	19.0	18.3	19.3
Count of crime in these blocks	8,393	8,542	8,635	8,588	7,402	6,854	6,927	7,264	7,361	7,087	7,705
% of yearly crime	20.8	20.7	21.4	21.5	21.2	20.9	20.4	20.5	20.6	20.6	20.9
Blocks with 10–25 Crimes	985	1,049	1,029	1,092	962	882	867	904	928	906	960
% of all blocks	17.4	18.5	18.1	19.3	17.0	15.5	15.3	15.9	16.4	16.0	16.9
Count of crime in these blocks	14,436	15,151	14,833	14,149	12,773	11,907	12,724	13,097	13,161	12,552	13,478
% of yearly crime	35.8	36.8	36.8	35.4	36.5	36.3	37.5	37.0	36.9	36.5	36.5
Blocks with more than 25 Crimes	312	321	312	285	211	197	231	257	254	226	261
% of all blocks	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.0	3.7	3.5	4.1	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.6
Count of crime in these blocks	10,428	10,528	10,151	10,248	9,070	8,751	9,149	9,482	9,478	8,988	9,627
% of yearly crime	25.9	25.6	25.2	25.6	25.9	26.7	27.0	26.8	26.5	26.2	26.1
<b>Total Crime</b>	<b>40,284</b>	<b>41,177</b>	<b>40,301</b>	<b>40,023</b>	<b>34,995</b>	<b>32,767</b>	<b>33,916</b>	<b>35,446</b>	<b>35,710</b>	<b>34,374</b>	<b>36,899</b>

\*Note: There are 5,674 total blocks in the District of Columbia.