

Hazleton has experienced meaningful changes in crime over the past decade. While some challenges remain, particularly involving drugs and assaults, the overall trend is more favorable than it was in the mid-2010s.

Crime trends

Property crime has declined overall.

Burglaries have fallen substantially over the last decade, reflecting a statewide pattern. Theft remains the most common reported offense, particularly larceny, shoplifting, and theft from vehicles.

Violent crime is relatively stable.

Aggravated assault accounts for most violent crimes. Homicides remain infrequent compared with larger Pennsylvania cities. Hazleton's reported violent crime rate in 2024 was about **233 incidents per 100,000 residents**, below the national average reported by OpenCrime.

Drug-related crime continues to affect the community.

Like many communities in northeastern Pennsylvania, Hazleton continues to contend with opioid and fentanyl trafficking. Drug activity contributes to some property crime and violent incidents but does not account for all crime in the city.

Common scams reported in the Hazleton area

- **Law enforcement impersonation scams:** Callers claim to be deputies, police officers, or court officials, saying you missed jury duty, have an arrest warrant, or owe fines. They demand immediate payment using gift cards, cryptocurrency, or wire transfers. The Luzerne County Sheriff's Office emphasizes that it will never call to demand payment.
- **Family emergency ("grandparent") scams:** Hazleton police recently warned about callers claiming a child or grandchild has been in a serious accident or arrested and urgently needs money. The goal is to create panic before victims verify the story.
- **Identity theft and tax refund fraud:** Federal prosecutions in northeastern Pennsylvania have included schemes involving stolen identities and fraudulent tax refunds, demonstrating that identity theft remains a significant financial crime in the region.
- **Government benefit and loan fraud:** Pandemic-related fraud cases have involved false unemployment and business loan applications, highlighting the continuing risk of government-benefit fraud.

Crime is not evenly distributed.

Police data and criminology research consistently show that crime tends to cluster in a relatively small number of locations rather than being spread evenly across a city. This means targeted interventions can often have a greater impact than citywide enforcement alone.

Factors influencing crime

Several factors shape Hazleton's crime patterns:

- Economic hardship in some neighborhoods.
- Drug trafficking routes through northeastern Pennsylvania.
- Vacant or deteriorating properties that can attract illegal activity.
- Repeat offenders responsible for a disproportionate share of certain crimes.
- Differences in neighborhood investment and community resources.

Evidence-based solutions

Research suggests that the following approaches are among the most effective:

- **Hot-spot policing:** Directing patrols toward locations with persistent crime has been shown to reduce serious crime without simply displacing it elsewhere when implemented with community engagement.
- **Community policing:** Building trust through regular interaction with residents encourages reporting of crime and improves cooperation with investigations.
- **Problem-oriented policing:** Addressing underlying issues—such as nuisance properties, poor lighting, or abandoned buildings—can reduce opportunities for crime.
- **Youth engagement:** After-school programs, mentoring, and job training reduce risk factors associated with juvenile offending.
- **Substance use treatment:** Expanding access to treatment and recovery services can help reduce repeat offenses related to addiction.
- **Environmental improvements:** Better street lighting, property maintenance, security cameras, and neighborhood cleanup efforts have been associated with reductions in property crime.

What residents can do

Residents can contribute to crime prevention by:

- Locking vehicles and removing valuables from view.
- Reporting suspicious activity promptly.
- Participating in neighborhood watch or community organizations.
- Supporting local youth and mentoring initiatives.
- Learning to recognize common fraud and impersonation scams.

The [Hazleton Police Department](#) also provides online non-emergency reporting through its Desk Officer Reporting System, making it easier to report incidents such as theft, fraud, criminal mischief, and identity theft.

Overall, the data indicate that Hazleton is **safer than it was a decade ago in terms of property crime**, while continuing to face challenges related to assaults and drug-related offenses. The

combination of focused policing, community partnerships, environmental improvements, and prevention programs offers the strongest evidence for continued crime reduction.