



# 1. Why should we tackle High Impact Crime?

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High Impact Crime, abbreviated as HIC, encompasses criminal offences that have a major impact on the victim and often also on their immediate environment.

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**H**IC not only causes material damage and/or injury to the victim (objective victimisation), feelings of anxiety and fear of recurrence (subjective victimisation) are frequently also a consequence. HIC has an impact on the perception of safety in society, and consequently on the trust that citizens have in society and the government in general and in the police and the justice system in particular. This means that the approach to tackling HIC must be sustainable.

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The following three types of crime are primarily considered to be HIC (as stipulated in the Criminal Code):

## RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

“theft or an attempt to do so, without (threat of) violence against individual(s), in combination with unlawful entry into a home, for example by breaking in or intruding”.

## STREET ROBBERY

“The forcible removal or extortion of any property by (threat of) violence, committed against private individuals in a public area, or the attempt thereto”.

## (ARMED) ROBBERY

“the forcible or threatened removal or extortion of any property from an individual in a protected area or on a scheduled or organised high-value transport, or the attempt thereto”.

Sometimes more criminal offences are classified as falling under HIC, such as residential armed robbery (home invasion) and other forms of ‘excessive violence’ (including nightlife violence). A different or broader definition of HIC may be useful or necessary at a local level, but in this Book of Basics, we will focus on tackling the three crimes mentioned: **residential burglaries, street robberies and (armed) robberies**.



# 1.1 Scope of HIC

The figures documented by the police for 2019 reflect the magnitude of these three HIC problems in the Netherlands:

CRIMINAL OFFENSE	2019	2020
Residential burglary	39.452	30.650 (-22,31%)
Street robbery	3.783	3.205 (-15,29%)
(Armed) robbery	1.174	915 (-22,06%)
<b>HIC total (2019)</b>	<b>44.409</b>	<b>34.770</b>

This data comes from the publicly accessible police data portal\* (see Chapter 3). The figures reveal that there was a significant decline in these three HIC criminal offences in 2020.

Due to the Covid-19 measures from spring 2020 to 2021, people stayed at home more and were not out and about as much. Opportunities for HIC were subsequently dramatically reduced. See also the “Knowledge Pearls” by Jaap de Waard, number 154\* and number 223\*. All Knowledge Pearls can be found on [www.ProHIC.nl](http://www.ProHIC.nl).

\* More information about sources, see the digital version at [www.prohic.nl](http://www.prohic.nl)

Compared to 20 years ago, the total number of criminal offences registered by the police in the Netherlands has declined enormously.

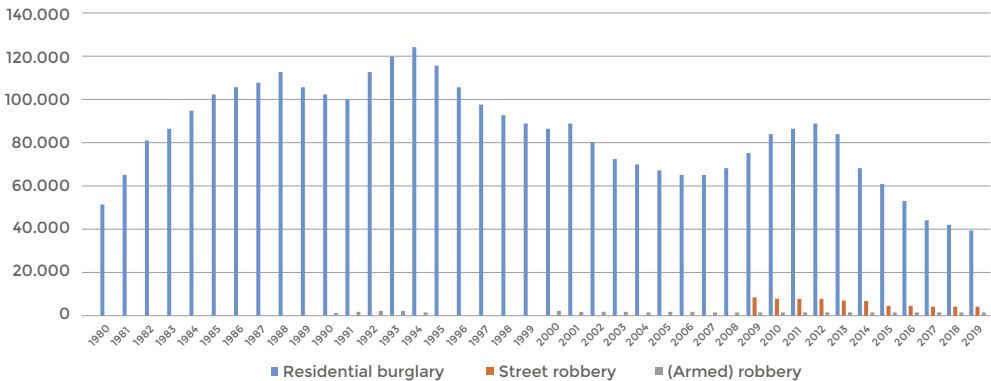
**Crimes registered by the police 1948-2020**



**THE DECLINE**

We see a similar decline in High Impact Crime. It is also noticeable that residential burglaries form the bulk of the national HIC problem.

**High Impact Crimes since 1980**



This downward trend is also evident in the figures from Statistics Netherlands' national crime victimisation survey, the Safety Monitor (Veiligheidsmonitor) (**Annex 1**). In 2012, the victim rate for burglaries amongst the Dutch population was 1.8%, and in 2019 this figure had fallen to 1.0% (CBS, 2019).

Although the Netherlands is not doing too badly from a European perspective (they are around mid-tier), there are several countries that perform significantly better when it comes to residential burglaries, among other things. This is apparent from the Fundamental Rights Survey (2021) carried out by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

We are, however, definitely on the right track here in the Netherlands and many organisations and people - including the HIC task force - have contributed to this. See *A Look Back At Ten Years of Successfully Tackling HIC \**.

Incidentally, other approaches have also proven effective here, such as including "burglary resistance" in the regulations of the Dutch Building Decree (Van Ours & Vollaard, 2011), the Dutch Police Label

Secure Housing (Politiekeurmerk Veilig Wonen®) and the Business Security Warranty (Keurmerk Veilig Ondernemen, KVO).

However, it remains important to continue monitoring HIC problems and signal any variances. A reduction is often followed by another upsurge, or other changes may occur that are also objectionable (fewer home burglaries, but more home invasions). Getting the HIC approach to work well on a local level therefore requires continuity, whereby we measure the HIC 'temperature' locally and take immediate action if HIC flares up again.

In addition, although the problem is declining on a national scale, we are not seeing this decline throughout the Netherlands. For example, there are still worrying concentrations of HIC (vexample\*). Which is all the more reason to tackle the issue in a more targeted manner. This Book of Basics unites national and international knowledge and experience in the area of HIC to help ensure that the decline continues in the coming years and a sustained reduction in HIC is achieved.

If you would like to know more about Dutch criminologist Prof. Jan J. M. van Dijk's statement concerning this significant decline in crime - which has occurred in all Western countries - please refer to the lecture from the "Universiteit van Nederland" (University of the Netherlands)\* which was given in 2014 in the IT nightclub (in Dutch unfortunately).

There was another lecture in the same series\* about how government is able to make countries demonstrably safer.

**For those who wish to test their knowledge on this decline** (and the best explanations for it), we refer you to the "Kenniscrimiquiz" (Knowledge of Criminals Quiz) about the trends and developments in crime and law enforcement, Knowledge Pearl 109\*.

*Research on this comes from: Van Dijk et al. (2012), Farrel (2013), Farrell et al. (2011, 2014 and 2018).*

\* More information about sources, see the digital version at [www.prohic.nl](http://www.prohic.nl)