

Spike in Thefts Between 2018 and 2019 at UMD

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2019 saw a 43.8% increase of larceny-thefts at the University of Maryland compared to 2018. According to the University of Maryland Police Department, the college had 243 incidents of larceny-thefts in 2019, a stark difference to the 169 incidents in 2018.

Larceny-theft refers to “the unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession or constructive possession of another,” according to the FBI. This definition excludes automotive theft.

UMD, a campus with nearly 50,000 people when classes are in session, has averaged 319 cases of larceny-theft over the past ten years. While 243 incidents in 2019 is below the average, it still raises the question why 2018 witnessed only 169 incidents?

For more answers, I emailed UMPD Public Information Officer Rosanna Hoaas. While the email exchange was brief it provided useful clues. Firstly, the officer admitted that 2018 was a “record year low.”

She mentioned bicycles thefts in particular are a number that contributes to the larceny-theft reports in a given year. Additionally, the officer spoke about weather being a factor to the low crime statistics of 2018.

In addition to bicycles, Officer Hoaas mentioned items that are stolen are usually left unattended. There is privacy that comes with being indoors, making it much harder to steal items. But the great outdoors proves to provide many opportunities to take objects.

Naturally, if the year yielded more precipitation there would be less bikes outside to steal.

According to National Weather Service, in 2018, it rained between 60 to 70 inches in College Park, MD. But in 2019, it only rained between 40 and 50 inches in College Park.

Though it is unclear what percentage of the larceny-thefts in 2019 were outdoor incidents, 2018 proved to have more rainy days than 2019. This climate comparison should be taken into consideration when assessing why 2018 saw so few cases of larceny-thefts.