



Crime and telephone deception

Figure 1 — Reported crimes in Hong Kong during 1997-2017

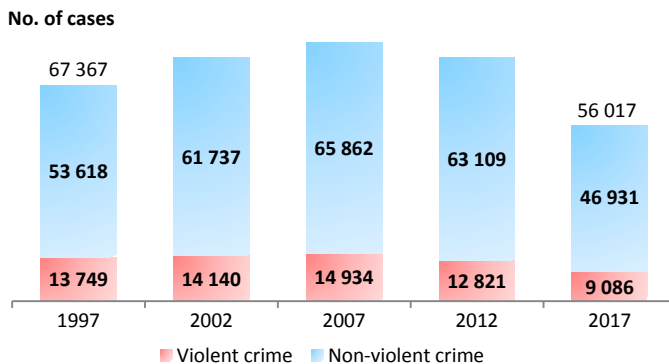
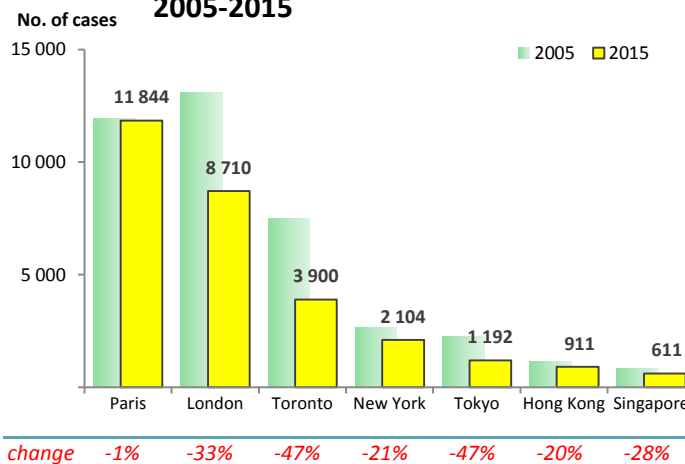
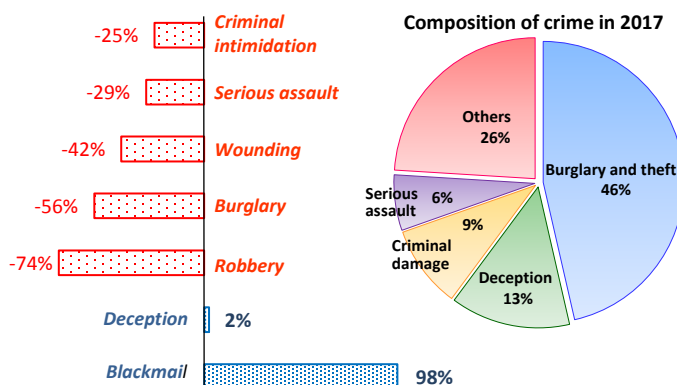


Figure 2 — Crime rate* in selected cities during 2005-2015



Note: (*) Crime rate is measured by the number of crime per 100 000 population. Classification of crime may differ among cities.

Figure 3 — Major crime categories in 2017 and changes during 2012-2017



Changes between 2012 and 2017

Highlights

- Hong Kong is one of the safest cities in the world, taking the 7th position in a comparative study on personal safety among 60 selected cities in 2017. Over the past two decades, the number of reported crimes has declined noticeably by 17% to 56 017 cases in 2017, with bigger reduction in violent crime (33%) than non-violent crime (12%) (Figure 1). The overall crime situation also hit a 42-year low since 1975.

- As regards the crime rate in Hong Kong in terms of the number of crime per 100 000 population, it fell by 20% from 1 137 in 2005 to 911 in 2015. Among the seven big cities selected for comparison, Hong Kong recorded the second lowest crime rate in 2015, next to Singapore. It compared favourably with other big cities such as London, New York and Tokyo. All the selected cities likewise recorded decreases in reported crime by various magnitudes during 2005-2015 (Figure 2).

- Among all types of crime, burglary and theft was the largest category of crime in Hong Kong, accounting for 46% of all reported crime in 2017. It was followed by deception, with a share of 13%. In line with the downtrend in overall crime rate, most of the major crime categories (e.g. robbery, burglary, wounding) registered double-digit declines during 2012-2017. However, the number of blackmail cases recorded the largest increase of 98% over the past five years (Figure 3).

Crime and telephone deception (cont'd)

Figure 4 — Number of deception cases

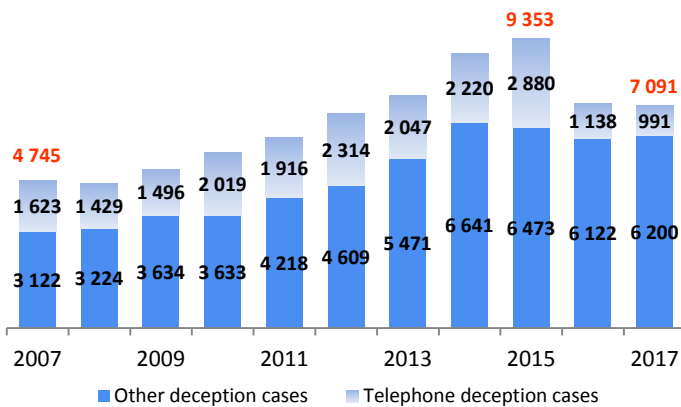


Figure 5 — Number of telephone deception cases with and without financial loss

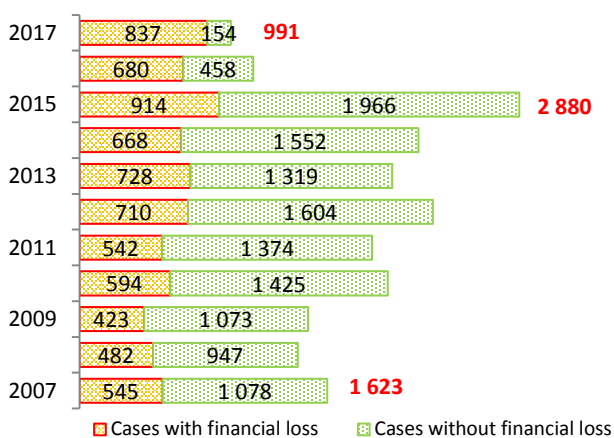
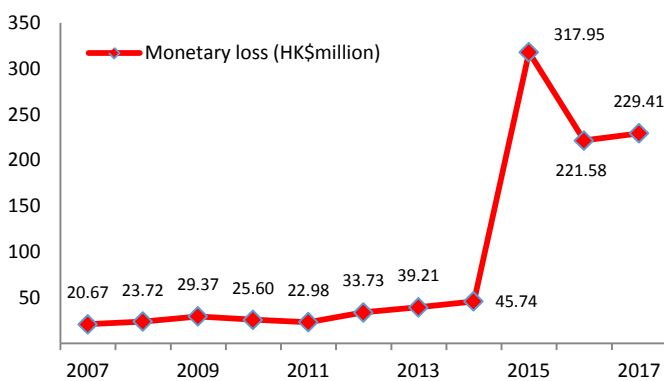


Figure 6 — Financial loss of the victims



Note: Some victims lost more than HK\$10 million to telephone scammers.

Highlights

- Most recently, there is an emerging uptrend in deception, especially telephone deception. The number of deception and fraud cases has surged by 97% in eight years to a peak of 9 353 cases in 2015. Within this total, telephone deception increased by 77% over the same period and took up 31% of deception cases in 2015. That said, the number of telephone deception cases fell noticeably by 66% in two years to 991 in 2017, upon increased public education efforts by the Police (Figure 4).
- Common tactics of telephone deception include bogus government officials (e.g. customs and immigration) or officers in banks and courier companies asking victims to make online money transfers. During 2007-2017, the Police received 20 073 reports of telephone deception, of which 35% involved fraudsters having successfully defrauded victims of money. The situation worsened in 2017, with 84% of the 991 telephone deception cases resulting in financial loss (Figure 5).
- In terms of annual amount of total financial loss of the victims, it hovered below HK\$46 million before 2014, but shot up by 595% to a peak of HK\$318 million in 2015. In spite of a decline to HK\$222 million in 2016, the Police recorded a 4% rebound in the amount of financial loss to HK\$229 million in 2017 (Figure 6).
- To combat this sort of fraud, the Police established the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre in July 2017 to improve intelligence gathering, enhance publicity and education, and strengthen cross-boundary collaboration as many fraudulent calls came from outside Hong Kong to evade detection.

Data source: Latest figures from Hong Kong Police Force.

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