Introduction:

The FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program is a nationwide, cooperative statistical effort of federal, state, county, city, university, college, and tribal law enforcement agencies reporting data on offenses reported or known since 1930. Originally, the UCR Program was designed as a summary system to collect only the single most serious offense within a reported incident. UCR summary reporting provides an aggregated monthly tally of specific crimes to include: homicide, rape, robbery, burglary, and larceny.

In 1989, after years of redesigning the UCR Program’s ability to gather crime details, incident-based reporting (NIBRS) was created to improve the overall quality of crime data collected by capturing all offenses within a crime incident reported to law enforcement instead of only one offense.

How does NIBRS differ from UCR?

NIBRS differs from UCR in that it collects additional details on every crime incident such as: multiple offenses within the same crime incident, information on victims, information on known offenders, the relationships between victims and offenders, arrestees’ information, and the property involved in the reported incident. NIBRS has the ability to provide circumstances and context for crimes such as location and time of day. Nationwide implementation of the FBI’s NIBRS became top priority requiring all local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to transition to the updated method of reporting crimes. As such, all law enforcement agencies in the state of California are mandated to transition to NIBRS reporting.

How will NIBRS impact the way in which crime statistical information is reported and presented to the community?

NIBRS reporting will impact the way in which crime statistical information is reported and presented to the community as more incidents will be required to be reported.

For example, using the following hypothetical circumstances:
An offender breaks into a home and removes property from within the home (a burglary); the offender also removes property from the inside of an unlocked vehicle in the garage (a petty theft) and lastly, the offender graffiti’s the front door as he exits the home (a vandalism).

Under the UCR model, only one crime that was classified as the most serious is reported; however, under the NIBRS model, all three crimes will be reported. This new reporting model will give the appearance that more crimes have been committed, even though the total number of crime incidents may be the same. During the first few months of the transition, Staff will continue to provide UCR crime statistical information alongside NIBRS crime statistical informational to allow reviewers to see a side-by-side comparison. The first monthly crime statistics report has been published in early September for crimes occurring in the month of August.