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2015 Safest Places in Massachusetts



When deciding where to live, safety is a top priority. Our team has analyzed the most recent FBI Crime Report to determine the safety of cities and towns in Massachusetts. These 237 ranged in a crime score from 71 to 3,742, with an average of 809. Narrowing it down to the five safest places to live, we found that four fit into our midsize city category, with populations between 10,000 and 20,000, and that all five are towns located within 35 miles of Boston.

Speaking of the state capital, Boston came in 229th place, according to our crime score metric, which adjusted for population size and was based on the amount of violent and property-related crimes per 100,000 people (more on our methodology below). For more insight, take a look at the report:

5 Safest Places in Massachusetts

These cities have an average crime score of 92, 88 percent lower than their typical peer in

Massachusetts. With some of the state's lowest total violent crime rates, these five are the safest places in the state.

1. Groveland, MA

Groveland, least populous town among the top five, comes out as the state's safest. It reported 18 crimes (one robbery and 17 property-related charges) to the FBI in 2013, dropping its crime score 79 percent from a decade ago. With nine full-time [police officers](#), Groveland is almost entirely residential these days, with more than 2,100 homes along the Merrimac River.

Factor	Value
Population	6,917
Crime Score	71

2. Norfolk, MA

Another town next to a river – the Charles, this time – Norfolk landed at No. 2 on the list. It was settled way back in 1669 and incorporated in 1870 but traces its roots back even further. Current residents have a median household income of \$115,477, or 77 percent higher than a given city in the state. Their median home value of \$599,912 is also 85 percent higher than average. On the crime front, Norfolk has four prisons of varying security levels.

Factor	Value
Population	11,663
Crime Score	72

3. Sharon, MA

In the same county as Norfolk, which is also named Norfolk County, Sharon comes in third thanks to dropping its violent crime total from 16 to 1 over the last 10 years. Of the top five, it's the closest to Boston, with an express train into the state's most populous city, and it borders Foxborough, the home of the NFL's New England Patriots. The commuter town also boasts one of the nation's [best high schools](#).

Factor	Value
Population	17,935
Crime Score	102

4. Duxbury, MA

Despite reporting two aggravated assaults for 2013 – two more than three of our top-five cities – Duxbury placed fourth. We don't have data for the how the city fared in 2003, but the residents here have been in good hands with their 55-employee police department, which opened in 1931 with its then police chief patrolling neighborhoods on his [motorcycle](#). Known for its cranberries

and oysters, the former shipbuilding town has come a long way in its [long history](#).

Factor	Value
Population	15,244
Crime Score	105

5. Sudbury, MA

Incorporated in the mid-17th century like Duxbury, Sudbury, the most populous city among the top five, recorded the most property crimes (94) of the five. Its residents earn a median household income of more \$160,311, or 146 percent more than their average peer in Massachusetts. Also, their median home value, \$683,631, is 111 percent higher than the norm. Sudbury was the home of many universally-known historical figures, including Henry Ford and Babe Ruth.

Factor	Value
Population	18,312
Crime Score	109

Population Breakdown

Although we adjusted for population in our crime rankings, it is still difficult to compare a small town to a large city. To account for this fact, we separated the safest cities into three categories: towns with populations between 5,000 and 10,000, midsize cities with populations between 10,000 and 20,000, and larger cities with populations greater than 20,000. Here are our findings:

Safest Places in Massachusetts

Big Cities >20k		Midsize Cities 10-20k		Small Cities 5-10k	
1.	Franklin	1.	Norfolk	1.	Groveland
2.	Shrewsbury	2.	Sharon	2.	Southborough
3.	Westford	3.	Duxbury	3.	Stow
4.	Reading	4.	Sudbury	4.	Rockport
5.	Acton	5.	Wayland	5.	Boxford
6.	Wellesley	6.	Weston	6.	Dover
7.	Lexington	7.	Hopkinton	7.	Hamilton
8.	Winchester	8.	Norton	8.	Georgetown
9.	Stoneham	9.	Bedford	9.	Harvard
10.	Andover	10.	Medway	10.	Rowley

ValuePenguin Source: FBI

Full List of Places in Massachusetts

Below is the entire list of places that we included in our “Safest Places in Massachusetts” study. They are listed from the safest to the least safe, according to our analysis. The calculation for the crime scores can be found in the methodology section below. Take a look at the table and see where your hometown ranks.

Rank	City	Population	Violent Crime per 100k	Property Crime per 100k	Crime Score
1	Groveland	6,917	14	246	71
2	Norfolk	11,663	0	352	72
3	Sharon	17,935	6	424	102

4	Duxbury	15,244	13	387	105
5	Sudbury	18,312	0	513	109
6	Wayland	13,411	37	313	133
7	Southborough	9,908	20	585	153
8	Weston	11,893	25	547	157
9	Hopkinton	15,689	19	593	160
10	Franklin	32,633	21	524	161
11	Stow	6,949	58	345	167
12	Rockport	7,116	84	112	167
13	Boxford	8,145	49	417	168
14	Dover	5,778	35	623	176
15	Norton	19,414	41	464	179
16	Hamilton	8,122	37	616	186
17	Bedford	13,947	43	531	190
18	Medway	12,929	8	859	191
19	Clinton	13,721	73	292	196
20	Holden	17,775	45	540	201
21	Shrewsbury	36,315	17	741	204
22	Georgetown	8,457	35	757	210
23	Harvard	6,548	61	565	213
24	Westford	23,196	60	522	232
25	Reading	25,398	39	724	237
26	Acton	22,871	35	778	238
27	Rowley	6,015	100	399	245
28	Lynnfield	11,900	17	1118	259
29	Southampton	5,976	67	770	259
30	Wellesley	29,053	52	695	260
31	Lincoln	6,563	91	564	264
32	Lexington	32,632	52	711	266
33	Rochester	5,367	56	932	268
34	Medfield	12,309	97	471	275
35	Winchester	22,082	45	879	279
36	Groton	11,164	72	770	287
37	Holliston	14,199	99	528	295

38	Hampden	5,161	58	1066	295
39	Sutton	9,137	44	1160	308
40	Upton	7,690	91	780	311
41	Westborough	18,563	75	803	315
42	Stoneham	21,763	51	997	316
43	Ipswich	13,699	73	891	320
44	Dighton	7,194	139	417	322
45	Dalton	6,725	74	1026	324
46	Andover	34,529	58	909	325
47	Mendon	5,902	85	966	326
48	North Attleboro	28,913	7	1404	327
49	North Reading	15,406	78	870	329
50	Marblehead	20,209	84	787	332
51	Hanover	14,275	14	1478	333
52	Douglas	8,628	116	672	338
53	Ashburnham	6,166	81	1054	338
54	Boxborough	5,151	155	466	345
55	Cohasset	8,450	107	817	349
56	Plainville	8,512	23	1598	355
57	Melrose	27,648	76	948	362
58	Shirley	7,649	144	575	363
59	Middleton	9,394	117	798	368
60	Berkley	6,543	138	688	368
61	Mattapoisett	6,149	98	1073	370
62	Concord	19,437	87	947	371
63	Walpole	24,771	44	1296	372
64	Littleton	9,219	98	998	373
65	Longmeadow	15,844	88	985	373
66	Grafton	18,182	121	665	374
67	Lancaster	7,943	101	1007	374
68	Halifax	7,574	106	1017	382
69	West Boylston	7,821	64	1394	383
70	Hudson	19,659	81	1063	385
71	Manchester-by-the-Sea	5,255	171	533	385

72	Townsend	9,213	76	1270	387
73	Belmont	25,421	94	948	395
74	Brewster	9,825	71	1344	396
75	Southwick	9,597	83	1271	402
76	Westwood	14,850	135	747	409
77	Scituate	18,230	132	741	411
78	Maynard	10,393	125	953	417
79	Newton	86,867	85	929	418
80	Norwood	28,906	62	1335	422
81	Easthampton	15,997	119	994	434
82	Norwell	10,622	113	1149	436
83	Gloucester	29,383	75	1303	442
84	North Andover	28,667	35	1671	443
85	Sterling	7,895	152	912	444
86	Chelmsford	34,862	63	1400	447
87	Rehoboth	11,809	110	1211	448
88	Merrimac	6,590	167	850	449
89	Ashland	17,162	105	1200	454
90	Tyngsboro	12,183	131	1059	457
91	Bolton	5,060	178	870	458
92	Granby	6,297	143	1191	471
93	Milton	27,269	77	1434	472
94	Acushnet	10,362	183	714	474
95	Northborough	14,878	121	1223	482
96	Wilmington	23,187	125	1091	484
97	Charlton	13,195	167	856	486
98	Billerica	41,926	114	1116	495
99	Dracut	30,533	66	1618	496
100	Agawam	28,659	143	942	497
101	Hanson	10,342	184	832	499
102	Belchertown	14,744	142	1133	503
103	Lakeville	10,939	91	1673	503
104	Easton	23,420	141	1050	507
105	Hingham	22,687	75	1684	514

106	Lee	5,883	119	1666	516
107	Blackstone	9,094	187	924	516
108	Arlington	44,098	125	1170	533
109	Pembroke	18,040	183	881	538
110	Deerfield	5,120	137	1680	540
111	Newburyport	17,773	174	996	544
112	Uxbridge	13,629	154	1291	553
113	Pepperell	11,920	185	1057	555
114	Wilbraham	14,375	118	1635	561
115	Sandwich	20,713	150	1250	561
116	Dedham	25,094	60	2064	573
117	Natick	34,085	106	1596	578
118	Brookline	59,382	143	1138	579
119	Amherst	39,127	179	938	585
120	Westport	15,735	172	1258	589
121	Kingston	12,791	156	1493	595
122	Somerset	18,340	153	1434	599
123	Wrentham	11,195	71	2340	603
124	Ayer	7,788	154	1759	612
125	Marshfield	25,581	211	895	616
126	Ludlow	21,214	151	1508	620
127	Watertown	33,254	159	1386	637
128	Wakefield	25,838	190	1211	644
129	Rutland	8,272	302	629	656
130	Leicester	11,183	116	2236	664
131	Templeton	8,083	272	1002	674
132	Oxford	13,828	195	1533	681
133	Chatham	6,162	179	1996	683
134	Burlington	25,435	130	1970	692
135	Dudley	11,619	293	775	694
136	Hopedale	5,952	302	958	694
137	Canton	22,100	267	851	707
138	East Bridgewater	14,044	221	1424	708
139	Westminster	7,377	122	2562	708

140	Freetown	8,996	233	1523	716
141	Mansfield	23,552	200	1495	720
142	East Longmeadow	15,946	176	1863	724
143	Spencer	11,801	246	1364	728
144	Orleans	5,892	153	2512	733
145	South Hadley	17,794	214	1551	739
146	Lunenburg	11,149	197	1884	740
147	Swampscott	13,995	186	1901	741
148	Bellingham	16,619	211	1751	770
149	Beverly	40,592	217	1414	776
150	Woburn	39,284	211	1479	776
151	Harwich	12,299	195	2041	776
152	Monson	8,716	310	1159	778
153	Amesbury	16,655	252	1435	782
154	Medford	57,428	195	1564	790
155	Adams	8,352	251	1880	812
156	Milford	28,312	205	1844	821
157	Northbridge	16,026	237	1922	853
158	Waltham	62,446	226	1525	853
159	Swansea	16,099	211	2174	857
160	Winthrop	18,131	320	1164	861
161	Williamstown	7,682	182	2812	865
162	Carver	11,552	303	1601	879
163	Framingham	70,753	243	1449	882
164	Westfield	41,493	248	1593	883
165	Dartmouth	34,562	142	2645	890
166	Palmer	12,155	313	1728	928
167	Sturbridge	9,399	319	1862	940
168	Peabody	52,178	220	2033	947
169	Braintree	36,496	227	2113	948
170	Abington	16,121	298	1842	952
171	Seekonk	14,102	234	2489	953
172	Millbury	13,355	285	2059	954
173	Raynham	13,580	191	2909	956

174	West Bridgewater	6,966	330	2038	962
175	Orange	7,818	320	2123	974
176	Barre	5,453	477	972	984
177	Holbrook	10,959	356	1670	984
178	Whitman	14,682	361	1478	985
179	Stoughton	28,186	284	1887	989
180	Danvers	27,263	187	2791	992
181	Middleboro	23,547	297	1881	995
182	Methuen	48,363	219	2330	1,007
183	Attleboro	44,034	245	2139	1,009
184	Hull	10,331	407	1365	1,009
185	Plymouth	57,893	318	1392	1,013
186	Mashpee	14,041	320	2023	1,017
187	Somerville	77,768	246	1961	1,021
188	Great Barrington	6,972	430	1779	1,086
189	Weymouth	55,432	352	1414	1,087
190	Malden	60,816	337	1554	1,097
191	Athol	11,668	454	1320	1,099
192	Saugus	27,628	290	2345	1,100
193	Taunton	56,264	371	1710	1,199
194	Auburn	16,361	287	3239	1,227
195	Fairhaven	15,951	401	2282	1,238
196	Pittsfield	43,992	252	3073	1,240
197	Ware	9,856	426	2415	1,248
198	Marlborough	39,531	395	1912	1,257
199	Winchendon	10,551	474	2057	1,272
200	Warren	5,158	640	1163	1,285
201	Falmouth	31,592	323	2846	1,294
202	Quincy	93,490	386	1762	1,301
203	Salem	42,468	301	2915	1,301
204	Tewksbury	29,953	471	1676	1,324
205	Salisbury	8,490	530	2097	1,349
206	Nantucket	10,378	395	3180	1,352
207	Bourne	19,875	458	2340	1,389

208	Randolph	33,583	524	1596	1,428
209	Southbridge	16,870	486	2413	1,434
210	Cambridge	107,282	336	2710	1,442
211	Montague	8,418	535	2637	1,463
212	Everett	42,966	470	2090	1,464
213	Gardner	20,341	457	2807	1,491
214	Northampton	28,581	455	2799	1,536
215	Chicopee	55,566	490	2813	1,714
216	Revere	53,777	589	2159	1,765
217	Dennis	14,173	564	3563	1,793
218	Webster	16,871	723	2525	1,909
219	Leominster	41,175	639	2999	2,019
220	Barnstable	44,837	674	2656	2,029
221	Haverhill	62,249	665	2599	2,058
222	Lowell	109,449	571	3087	2,073
223	West Springfield	28,647	569	4611	2,169
224	Fitchburg	40,521	758	2616	2,174
225	Wareham	22,567	722	3572	2,192
226	Yarmouth	23,736	851	2814	2,291
227	Lynn	91,769	887	2613	2,629
228	North Adams	13,516	984	4328	2,723
229	Boston	643,799	782	2773	2,849
230	Lawrence	77,812	997	2921	2,909
231	Fall River	89,220	1058	2650	3,013
232	Worcester	183,454	954	3401	3,155
233	Chelsea	37,454	1223	3295	3,271
234	New Bedford	95,156	1092	3612	3,346
235	Brockton	94,448	1230	3376	3,594
236	Holyoke	40,215	1042	6624	3,684
237	Springfield	153,586	1089	4631	3,742

Methodology

To rank these places, we collected data from the 2013 FBI crime statistics by city, which provides the most recent crime data available. Not every town participates in this report and we

also excluded towns with fewer than 3,000 residents because towns with small populations are more sensitive to crime score fluctuations for fewer crimes committed. The raw data report included property crimes (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson), and violent crimes (murder/manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) from all law enforcement agencies that chose to partake in the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting program.

We standardized the data to reflect violent and property crimes per 100,000, to account for population. Then, we aggregated a “crime score” by weighting violent crime at 80% and property crime at 20%. Though property crime is more prevalent, we figured that violent crime is more concerning to town residents. Then we adjusted the crime score for population size, giving more slack to larger cities. Finally, we ranked the cities based on their crime scores.