Poll Rates Minneapolis, Seattle, Safest U.S. Cities

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By Miranda Hitti

*Web*MD

Looking for the safest U.S. cities for your next home or vacation? You may want to consider Minneapolis, Minn., and Seattle, according to a new Gallup poll.

Those cities ranked first and second, respectively, in the poll on perceived safety in 14 big American cities. The results don't necessarily reflect crime statistics; instead, they focus on public perception about each city. More than 1,000 U.S. adults participated in the October telephone poll, rating the 14 largest cities as "safe" or "unsafe." Here's how the cities ranked in perceived safety, in order from most safe to least safe: Minneapolis, Minn. Seattle, Dallas, Boston, Houston, San Francisco, Atlanta, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Washington, Detroit.

Minneapolis, Minn., was called "safe" by 78 percent of respondents. The city has ranked high in past Gallup polls; since 1993, at least 70 percent of Americans have called Minneapolis "safe," says Gallup. In contrast, only 33 percent of this year's polltakers called Detroit "safe."

Three cities — Philadelphia, Washington, and Detroit — had declines in their perceived safety this year. However, all 14 cities rank higher than they did in 1990, says Gallup, noting a substantial drop in the nation's crime rate since then.

1. If there are an estimated 294,760,921 people in the U.S. (http://www.census.gov/) and 1,000 polltakers speak on their behalf, what percent of the population spoke for the entire country? Does this portray an accurate representation? Explain.

2. According to the Gallup polls how many people called Minneapolis, Minn. "safe"?

3. In contrast, how many people in this year's poll called Detroit "safe"?

4. Prior to ranking a city, what factors are taken into consideration? What factors are not?

5. In your personal opinion, has this article altered your impression of what places in the U.S. are safer than others? Explain.