Appendix B

Overview of the Data Source

The SCIBRS data set consists of the compilation of incident reports forwarded to SLED by local law enforcement agencies throughout the state. Whenever a criminal incident is reported to law enforcement, the responding officer fills out a Uniform Incident Report that is forwarded to SLED. The information in SCIBRS is drawn from this report. SCIBRS is fully compliant with the FBI's NIBRS requirements and has additional data elements as well that SLED has determined would provide useful information. The secondary premise used in this report is an example of such an additional element. Participation in NIBRS among South Carolina's law enforcement agencies has been virtually 100% since 1991. For the most part, SLED receives incident reports and enters the data, determining the offense classification based on a review of the narrative describing the incident. For law enforcement agencies that have been certified to transmit their data electronically to SLED, that determination is made at the local level. Part of the certification process involves training to make reliable offense classifications. The SCIBRS data are maintained in annual files, created after the previous year's data have been received and entered. However, SLED keeps each file open for an additional year to enable it to receive edits, additions, deletions and other corrections. As a result, there are two types of annual files, year end files which are the first version of the annual file, and purge files which are the final, corrected version of that file. This analysis accessed the purge file for 1996 and the year end files for 1997 and 1998. Although it would have been preferable to use the 1997 purge file, that data file was not available at the time the analysis was started. These files were accessed using the internet-based extraction module developed by ASG as part of this project, which allows the user to define and then create for analysis, flat data files. Those flat data files were analyzed using the software package SPSS Base 9.0.