



Murder

Definition

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program defines murder and nonnegligent manslaughter as the willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another.

The classification of this offense is based solely on police investigation as opposed to the determination of a court, medical examiner, coroner, jury, or other judicial body. The UCR Program does not include the following situations in this offense classification: deaths caused by negligence, suicide, or accident; justifiable homicides; and attempts to murder or assaults to murder, which are scored as aggravated assaults.

Data collection

Supplementary Homicide Data—The UCR Program's supplementary homicide data provide information regarding the age, sex, and race of the murder victim and the offender; the type of weapon used; the relationship of the victim to the offender; and the circumstance surrounding the incident. Law enforcement agencies are asked to provide complete supplementary homicide data for each murder they report to the UCR Program. Data gleaned from these supplementary homicide data can be viewed in the Expanded Homicide Data section.

Justifiable homicide—Certain willful killings must be reported as justifiable or excusable. In the UCR Program, justifiable homicide is defined as and limited to:

- The killing of a felon by a peace officer in the line of duty.
- The killing of a felon, during the commission of a felony, by a private citizen.

Because these killings are determined through law enforcement investigation to be justifiable, they are tabulated separately from murder and nonnegligent manslaughter.

More information about justifiable homicide is furnished in the Expanded Homicide Data section and in Expanded Homicide Data Table 14, "Justifiable Homicide by

Weapon, Law Enforcement, 2005–2009” and Expanded Homicide Data Table 15, “Justifiable Homicide by Weapon, Private Citizen, 2005–2009.”

Overview

- An estimated 15,241 persons were murdered nationwide in 2009, which is a 7.3 percent decrease from the 2008 estimate, a 9.0 percent decrease from the 2005 figure, and a 2.2 percent decrease from the 2000 estimate.
- There were 5.0 murders per 100,000 inhabitants in 2009, an 8.1 percent decrease from the 2008 rate. Compared with the 2005 rate, there was a 12.1 percent decrease in the murder rate; compared with the 2000 rate, a 10.4 percent decrease was recorded.
- More than 44 percent (44.8) of murders were reported in the South, the most populous region, with 21.3 percent reported in the West, 20.0 percent reported in the Midwest, and 13.9 percent reported in the Northeast. (See Table 3.)

Expanded murder data

UCR expanded offense data are details of the various offenses that the UCR Program collects beyond the count of how many crimes law enforcement agencies report. These details may include the type of weapon used in a crime, type or value of items stolen, and so forth. In addition, expanded data include trends (for example, 2-year comparisons) and rates per 100,000 inhabitants.

Expanded information regarding murder is available in the following tables:

Trends (2-year): Tables 12, 13, and 14

Rates (per 100,000 inhabitants): Tables 16, 17, and 18

Expanded Homicide Data (supplementary homicide information):

Victim data: Expanded Homicide Data Tables 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 13

Offender data: Expanded Homicide Data Tables 3, 5, and 6

Victim/offender relationship data: Expanded Homicide Data Table 10

Circumstance data: Expanded Homicide Data Tables 10, 11, 12, and 13

Weapons data: Expanded Homicide Data Tables 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, and Table 20

What you won't find on this page

- Clearance and arrest data for murder.