



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 classified as aggravated assaults.

Data collection

In addition to the number of murder offenses known, the UCR Program also encourages law enforcement agencies to report supplementary homicide data as well as information about justifiable homicides that may have occurred within their jurisdictions.

Supplementary Homicide Data—The UCR Program's supplementary homicide data provide information regarding the age, sex, race, and ethnicity 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—but not required—to provide complete supplementary homicide data for each murder they report to the UCR Program. Information 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 5, “Justifiable Homicide by Weapon, Law Enforcement, 2012–2016,” and Expanded Homicide Data Table 6, “Justifiable Homicide by Weapon, Private Citizen, 2012–2016.”

Overview

- In 2016, the estimated number of murders in the nation was 17,250. This was an 8.6 percent increase from the 2015 estimate, a 16.1 percent increase from the 2012 figure, and a 0.7 percent rise from the number in 2007. (See Tables 1 and 1A.)
- There were 5.3 murders per 100,000 people in 2016. The murder rate in 2016 was up from the rates in 2015 (7.9 percent) and 2012 (12.8 percent). However, the murder rate fell 6.0 percent when compared with the 2007 rate. (See Tables 1 and 1A.)

Expanded 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): Table 10

Rates (per 100,000 inhabitants): Table 11

Expanded Homicide Data (supplementary homicide information):

Victim data: Expanded Homicide Data Tables 1 and 2

Offender data: Expanded Homicide Data Table 2

Weapons data: Expanded Homicide Data Table 3 and Table 12

What you won't find on this page

- Clearance and arrest data for murder.