



# **NORTH DAKOTA**

## **Office of Attorney General**

### **Bureau of Criminal Investigation**

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**Crime in North Dakota, 2007**

**Attorney General**  
**Wayne Stenehjem**

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL**

**Criminal Justice Statistics Special Report**

**Homicide in North Dakota, 2007**



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Wayne Stenehjem**

Report prepared by  
Colleen Weltz  
Bureau of Criminal Investigation  
Information Services Section

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The term "homicide," for purposes of this report, includes the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) offenses of murder and non-negligent manslaughter. Homicide refers to the "willful killing of one human being by another." It does not include attempts to kill, assaults to kill, suicides, accidental deaths, justifiable homicides or deaths caused by gross negligence.

## HOMICIDE IN 2007

- In 2007, sixteen homicide deaths were known to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. Based on a state population estimate of 640,000, the resulting homicide rate for the state of North Dakota was 2.5 per 100,000 population. See Table 2 on page 3 for information regarding rates for previous years.
- **Victim Gender:** Six of the homicide victims were male.
- **Victim Age:** Twelve of the victims were adults. "Adult" is defined as a person aged 18 or older. See Table 1 on page 2 for a summary of homicide incidents in 2007.
- **Weapons:** Firearms were involved in the deaths of three homicide victims. In 3 homicides, the weapon involved was asphyxiation.
- **Domestic Violence:** Seven of the sixteen homicides in 2007 resulted from domestic violence incidents. See definition on page 12.
- **Assailant Gender:** Thirteen of the fifteen identified assailants were male.
- **Assailant Age:** Thirteen of the fifteen of the identified assailants were adults.
- While tribal law enforcement agencies and any other federal law enforcement entities in the state do not participate in the state UCR program, every effort is made to include all homicide incidents occurring within the state's borders.

**Table 1  
Summary of Homicide Incidents  
North Dakota, 2007**

Date & Location of Incident	Victim(s)		Assailant(s)		Weapons Used	Relationship of Victim to Assailant	Circumstances
	Age	Sex	Age	Sex			
1/5/2007 Devils Lake	1	F	17	M	Personal Weapon	Acquaintance	Blunt force trauma
4/6/2007 Wells County	70 67	M F	28	M	.45-caliber Handgun	Acquaintance	Victims died of gunshot wounds and burned in home
4/29/2007 Minot	28	F	42	M	Asphyxiation	Girlfriend	Victim was strangled with a phone cord Domestic Violence
5/5/2007 Burke County	68	F	58	M	Firearm	Wife	Murder/Suicide Domestic Violence
5/12/2007 Fargo	18	F	26	M	Vehicle	Stranger	Hit-and-run
6/2/2007 Minot	18	F	Unknown				Victim killed in her apartment
7/14/2007 Fargo	16	F	15	M	Asphyxiation	Sister	Victim found dead in home Domestic Violence
7/29/2007 Minot	27	M	31	M	9 mm Handgun	Acquaintance	Victim shot in an alley
8/19/2007 Fargo	24	M	23	M	Knife	Acquaintance	Victim stabbed during a fight
9/15/2007 Valley City	1	M	26 18	M F	Other (Starvation)	Son	Victim found not breathing in crib Domestic Violence
10/27/2007 Grand Forks	38	M	23	M	Personal Weapon	Unknown	Beaten to death at a bar
11/02/2007 Bismarck	40	M	52	M	Personal Weapon	Friends	Argument
11/04/2007 Turtle Mt. Reservation	49	F	Unknown	M	Personal Weapon	Former Girlfriend	Beaten to death in home Domestic Violence
11/30/2007 Cass County	85	F	84	M	Knife	Wife	Wife died single knife wound Husband died multiple knife wounds Murder/Suicide Domestic Violence
12/06/2007 Bismarck	NN	F	26	F	Asphyxiation	Child	Domestic Violence

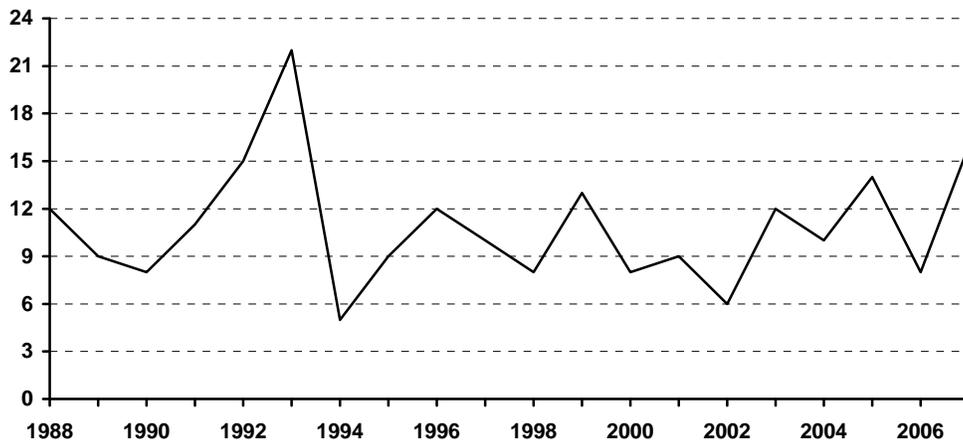
## **HOMICIDE TOTALS AND RATES**

- Table 2 provides yearly homicide totals and homicide rate information for North Dakota during the period 1988-2007.
- The average number of homicide deaths per year during this period is 11.

**Table 2**  
**Homicide Rate**  
**North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Homicide Total</b>	<b>Population Estimate</b>	<b>Rate/100,000 Population</b>
1988	12	663,000	1.8
1989	9	660,000	1.4
1990	8	638,800	1.3
1991	11	635,000	1.7
1992	15	636,000	2.4
1993	22	635,000	3.5
1994	6	638,000	0.9
1995	9	641,000	1.4
1996	12	644,000	1.9
1997	10	641,000	1.6
1998	8	638,000	1.1
1999	13	634,000	2.1
2000	8	642,200	1.2
2001	9	634,450	1.4
2002	6	634,110	0.9
2003	12	634,000	1.9
2004	10	634,500	1.6
2005	14	637,000	2.2
2006	8	636,000	1.3
2007	16	640,000	2.5

**Figure 1**  
**Homicide in North Dakota**  
**1988-2007**



## VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER

- Fifty-seven percent of the 218 total homicide victims during the period 1988-2007 were male.

**Table 3**  
**Gender of Homicide Victims**  
**North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
1988	8	4	12
1989	4	5	9
1990	3	5	8
1991	4	7	11
1992	10	5	15
1993	15	7	22
1994	2	4	6
1995	6	3	9
1996	6	6	12
1997	7	3	10
1998	6	2	8
1999	9	4	13
2000	4	4	8
2001	7	2	9
2002	2	4	6
2003	6	6	12
2004	7	3	10
2005	8	6	14
2006	4	4	8
2007	6	10	16
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>124 (57%)</b>	<b>94 (43%)</b>	<b>218</b>

## **VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - AGE**

- Of the 218 homicides during the period 1988-2007, 83 percent were adults. See Table 4 below.
- Forty-three percent of homicide victims were between the ages of 21 and 40. See Table 5 on the following page for information regarding age and gender of victims.

**Table 4  
Homicide Victims  
Juvenile and Adult  
North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
1988	1	11	12
1989	2	7	9
1990		8	8
1991	3	8	11
1992	3	12	15
1993	7	15	22
1994		6	6
1995	2	7	9
1996		12	12
1997		10	10
1998	2	6	8
1999	2	11	13
2000		8	8
2001		9	9
2002	2	4	6
2003	2	10	12
2004	3	7	10
2005	2	12	14
2006	2	6	8
2007	4	12	16
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>218</b>

**Table 5  
Homicide Victims  
By Age and Gender  
North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Less than 1 year	9	7	16
01-05	3	3	6
06-10	1	3	4
11-15	1	2	3
16-20	11	10	21
21-25	15	5	20
26-30	14	10	24
31-35	12	9	21
36-40	16	13	29
41-45	10	7	17
46-50	10	10	20
51-55	6	2	8
56-60	2	2	4
61-65	2	2	4
Over 65	12	9	21
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>218</b>

## **WEAPONS AND VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS**

- Forty-five percent of deaths due to homicide during the period 1988-2007 resulted from firearm use. See Table 6 below.
- In homicides involving firearms, the weapon was more likely to be a long gun than a handgun.
- Thirty-two of the 218 total homicide deaths involved the use of "personal weapons." Personal weapons include the use of hands, fists and feet as weapons.

**Table 6  
Weapons of Homicide  
North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Handgun</b>	<b>Other Firearm</b>	<b>Knife</b>	<b>Blunt Instrument</b>	<b>Personal Weapon</b>	<b>Other or Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
1988	9				2	1	12
1989	2	3	2		1	1	9
1990	3	1	2	1	1		8
1991		4	1	1		5	11
1992	2	6	4	2	1		15
1993	6	4	5	2	2	3	22
1994	1	2				3	6
1995	2	2	1	2		2	9
1996	3	4	4			1	12
1997		1	1	2	4	2	10
1998		3	2			3	8
1999	1	4	3	1		4	13
2000	2	1	2	1	2		8
2001	2	3	1	1	2		9
2002	1	1			2	2	6
2003	4	7			1		12
2004		5		1	1	3	10
2005	2	1	1	2	5	3	14
2006	1		4		2	1	8
2007	4		2		6	4	16
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>218</b>

- Firearms were used in 27 percent of the homicides of juveniles. Forty-eight percent of adult deaths due to homicide involved firearms. See Table 7 below.
- Forty-two percent of homicides of males and 48 percent of homicides of females involved the use of firearms. See Table 8.
- Seventeen percent of homicides of males and 15 percent of homicides of females involved knives.

**Table 7  
Homicide Victims  
By Weapon and Age Category  
North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	3	42	45
Other Firearm	7	45	52
Knife		35	35
Blunt Instrument	1	15	16
Personal Weapon	12	20	32
Other or Unknown	14	24	38
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>218</b>

**Table 8  
Homicide Victims  
By Weapon and Gender  
North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	29	16	45
Other Firearm	23	29	52
Knife	21	14	35
Blunt Instrument	13	3	16
Personal Weapon	18	14	32
Other or Unknown	20	18	38
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>218</b>

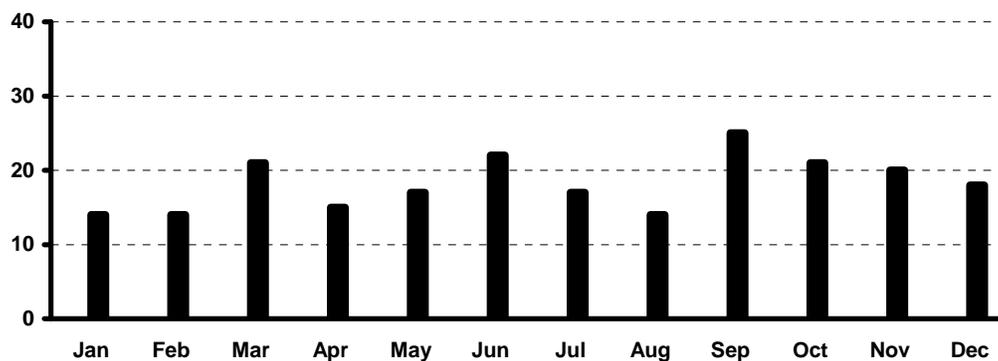
## MONTH OF OCCURRENCE

- During the period 1988-2007, the month of September had the highest number of deaths. See Table 9 below. Figure 2 illustrates this information graphically.

**Table 9**  
**Deaths Due to Homicide**  
**By Month, 1988-2007**

Month	Number	Percent of Total Homicides
January	14	6.4 %
February	14	6.4
March	21	9.6
April	15	6.9
May	17	7.8
June	22	10.1
July	17	7.8
August	14	6.4
September	25	11.5
October	21	9.6
November	20	9.2
December	18	8.3
Total 1988-2007	218	100.0

**Figure 2**  
**Homicides by Month of Occurrence**  
**North Dakota, 1988-2007**



## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEATHS**

**For purposes of this report, domestic violence deaths include those involving a spouse, former spouse, parent, child, persons related by blood or marriage, persons in a present or former dating relationship, persons who are presently residing together or have resided together in the past, persons who have a child in common regardless of whether they are or have been married or have lived together at any time, other persons on premises when a domestic incident occurs, and romantic triangle situations.**

- For the period 1988-2007, 53 percent of deaths due to homicide involved domestic violence.

**Table 10  
Domestic Violence Deaths  
North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Non-Domestic</b>	<b>No Assailant Identified</b>	<b>Homicide Total</b>
1988	6	5	1	12
1989	5	3	1	9
1990	5	3		8
1991	5	4	2	11
1992	11	4		15
1993	11	11		22
1994	4	1	1	6
1995	3	6		9
1996	7	5		12
1997	2	8		10
1998	6	2		8
1999	7	6		13
2000	6	1	1	8
2001	2	5	2	9
2002	4	1	1	6
2003	8	4		12
2004	6	4		10
2005	6	6	2	14
2006	4	3	1	8
2007	7	8	1	16
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>218</b>

- Persons killed in domestic violence incidents were more likely to be killed with a firearm than those killed in non-domestic incidents.
- Fifty-eight percent of female deaths in domestic violence incidents involved firearms, while 22 percent of female deaths in non-domestic violence incidents involved firearms.
- Seventy-three percent of female homicide victims were killed in domestic violence incidents, compared to 37 percent of males.

**Table 11**  
**Domestic Violence Deaths**  
**By Type of Weapon and Age Category of Victim**  
**North Dakota, 1988-2007**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Handgun		21	3	17
Other Firearm	7	34		11
Knife		19		15
Blunt Instrument	1	4		10
Personal Weapon	9	6	3	13
Other or Unknown	7	7	6	12
Total 1988-2007	24	91	12	78

**Table 12**  
**Domestic Violence Deaths**  
**By Type of Weapon and Gender of Victim**  
**North Dakota, 1988-2007**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	8	13	17	3
Other Firearm	14	27	9	2
Knife	10	9	10	5
Blunt Instrument	2	3	10	
Personal Weapon	5	10	13	3
Other or Unknown	7	7	8	10
Total 1988-2007	46	69	67	23

## **CLEARANCE RATES**

- Cases may be "cleared by arrest" of an assailant, or "cleared exceptionally," if a physical arrest cannot be made for reasons beyond the control of law enforcement. An example of an exceptional clearance would be a case in which the assailant committed suicide after killing someone.
- "Clearances" should not be interpreted as "convictions." The information regarding clearances, collected through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, reflects law enforcement activity. If an arrest is made, the UCR program considers the case cleared. UCR data does not reflect the results of prosecution of assailants.
- The average clearance rate for homicides in North Dakota during the period from 1988 to 2007 is 93 percent.

**Table 13  
Clearance Rates for Homicides  
North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Cleared</b>	<b>Total Homicides</b>	<b>North Dakota Clearance Rate</b>	<b>National Clearance Rate*</b>
1988	11	12	92	70
1989	8	9	89	68
1990	8	8	100	67
1991	9	11	82	67
1992	15	15	100	65
1993	22	22	100	66
1994	5	6	83	64
1995	9	9	100	65
1996	12	12	100	67
1997	10	10	100	66
1998	8	8	100	69
1999	13	13	100	69
2000	7	8	88	63
2001	7	9	78	63
2002	5	6	83	64
2003	12	12	100	62
2004	10	10	100	63
2005	12	14	86	62
2006	7	8	88	61
2007	15	16	94	Not Available

\* Clearance rates reported in annual Crime in the United States reports published by the FBI.

## **IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER**

- During the period 1988-2007, 88 percent of the 216 identified homicide assailants were male.
- Thirteen homicides during 1988-2007 have not had an assailant identified by law enforcement.

**Table 14**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**By Gender**  
**North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
1988	9	3	12 *
1989	8		8 *
1990	4	3	7
1991	8		8 *
1992	11	3	14
1993	17	3	20
1994	4	1	5 *
1995	19		19
1996	13	2	15
1997	8	1	9
1998	5	3	8
1999	9	2	11
2000	7	1	8 *
2001	9		9 *
2002	5		5 *
2003	9		9
2004	13	1	14
2005	12	1	13 *
2006	6	1	7 *
2007	13	2	15*
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>189 (88%)</b>	<b>27 (12%)</b>	<b>216</b>

\* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

- Eighty-eight percent of the total 216 assailants identified by law enforcement were adults. See Table 15 below.
- Of the 216 assailants identified by law enforcement, 63 percent were between the ages of 16 and 35. See Table 16 on the following page for information on age and gender of identified assailants.

**Table 15**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**Juvenile and Adult**  
**North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
1988		12	12 *
1989	2	6	8 *
1990		7	7
1991	1	7	8 *
1992	2	12	14
1993	3	17	20
1994		5	5 *
1995	13	6	19
1996	1	14	15
1997		9	9
1998	1	7	8
1999		11	11
2000		8	8 *
2001		9	9 *
2002		5	5 *
2003		9	9
2004		14	14
2005		13	13 *
2006		7	7 *
2007	2	13	15*
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>25 (12%)</b>	<b>191 (88%)</b>	<b>216</b>

\* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

**Table 16**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**By Age and Gender**  
**North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
01-05			0
06-10			0
11-15	12	2	14
16-20	35	2	37
21-25	40	6	46
26-30	27	3	30
31-35	19	5	24
36-40	16	4	20
41-45	12	4	16
46-50	7		7
51-55	4	1	5
56-60	9		9
61-65	2		2
Over 65	6		6
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>216</b>

## **WEAPONS AND IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS**

- In homicide incidents involving firearms, juvenile assailants were much more likely to use firearms other than handguns. For adults, long guns were used equally as often as handguns.
- Male assailants were more likely to use firearms in homicide incidents, while females were more likely to use knives.
- For incidents involving the use of firearms, male assailants were more likely to use rifles or shotguns than handguns. Conversely, females were more likely to use handguns than other types of firearms.

**Table 17  
Identified Assailants  
By Type of Weapon and Age Category  
North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	1	39	40
Other Firearm	10	39	49
Knife	5	38	43
Blunt Instrument	3	16	19
Personal Weapon	3	30	33
Other or Unknown	3	29	32
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>216</b>

**Table 18  
Identified Assailants  
By Type of Weapon and Gender  
North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	35	5	40
Other Firearm	46	3	49
Knife	33	10	43
Blunt Instrument	19		19
Personal Weapon	31	2	33
Other or Unknown	25	7	32
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>216</b>

- Forty-nine percent of assailants identified by law enforcement were involved in domestic violence incidents. See Table 19 below.
- Assailants were more likely to use firearms in domestic incidents than in non-domestic incidents. See Table 20.
- Knives were more likely to be used by assailants in non-domestic incidents.
- Seventy-eight percent of identified female assailants were involved in domestic incidents, compared to 45 percent for males. See Table 22.

**Table 19**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Non-Domestic</b>	<b>Total</b>
1988	6	6	12 *
1989	4	4	8 *
1990	4	3	7
1991	4	4	8 *
1992	8	6	14
1993	8	12	20
1994	4	1	5 *
1995	4	15	19
1996	7	8	15
1997	2	7	9
1998	6	2	8
1999	6	5	11
2000	6	2	8 *
2001	2	7	9 *
2002	4	1	5 *
2003	6	3	9
2004	6	8	14
2005	7	6	13 *
2006	4	3	7 *
2007	8	7	15*
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>106 (49%)</b>	<b>110 (51%)</b>	<b>216</b>

\* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

**Table 20**  
**Weapon Use by Identified Assailants**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Non-Domestic</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	21	19	40
Other Firearm	31	18	49
Knife	19	24	43
Blunt Instrument	4	15	19
Personal Weapon	15	18	33
Other or Unknown	16	16	32
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>216</b>

**Table 21**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**By Type of Weapon and Age Category of Assailant**  
**North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Domestic</b>		<b>Non-Domestic</b>	
	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>
Handgun		21	1	18
Other Firearm	1	30	9	9
Knife	2	17	3	21
Blunt Instrument		4	3	12
Personal Weapon	1	14	2	16
Other or Unknown	1	15	2	14
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>90</b>

**Table 22**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**By Type of Weapon and Gender of Assailant**  
**North Dakota, 1988-2007**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Domestic</b>		<b>Non-Domestic</b>	
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Handgun	18	3	17	2
Other Firearm	28	3	18	
Knife	11	8	22	2
Blunt Instrument	4		15	
Personal Weapon	13	2	18	
Other or Unknown	11	5	14	2
<b>Total 1988-2007</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>6</b>