

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

Criminal Justice Statistics Special Report

Homicide in North Dakota, 2009



**Attorney General
Wayne Stenehjem**

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

July 2010

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 2009

- In 2009, fifteen homicide deaths were known to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. Based on a state population estimate of 647,000, the resulting homicide rate for the state of North Dakota was 2.3 per 100,000 population. See Table 2 on page 3 for information regarding rates for previous years.
- **Victim Gender:** Seven of the homicide victims were male.
- **Victim Age:** Four of the fifteen victims were under the age of 3 months. Eleven 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 2009.
- **Weapons:** Firearms were involved in the deaths of six homicide victims.
- **Domestic Violence:** There were twelve homicides in 2009 resulting from domestic violence incidents. See definition on page 12.
- **Assailant Gender:** Fifteen of the seventeen identified assailants were male.
- **Assailant Age:** All 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, 2009**

Date & Location of Incident	Victim(s)		Assailant(s)		Weapons Used	Relationship of Victim to Assailant	Circumstances
	Age	Sex	Age	Sex			
1/27/2009 Spirit Lake Reservation	36	M	49	F	Knife	Boyfriend	Lover's Quarrel Domestic Violence
2/2/2009 Burleigh County	NB	F	18	F	Starvation	Daughter	Baby died of malnutrition Domestic Violence
3/6/2009 McHenry County	38	F	38	M	Shotgun	Girlfriend	Murder/Suicide Domestic Violence
3/19/2009 Turtle Mountain Reservation	3 M	F	24	M	Personal Weapon	Daughter	Domestic Violence
3/26/2009 Dunn County	49	M	39 23	M M	Firearm	Acquaintance Acquaintance	Alleged Child Abuse Domestic Violence
5/5/2009 Bismarck	74	F	78	M	Blunt Object	Wife	Unknown Domestic Violence
07/25/2009 Dickinson	19	M	20	M	Firearm	Acquaintance	Argument
07/26/2009 Fargo	47	M	20	M	Personal Weapon	Stranger	Unknown
8/16/2009 Dickinson	43	F	41	M	Firearm /Blunt Object	Wife	Lover's Quarrel Murder/Suicide Domestic Violence
9/8/2009 Grand Forks	47	F	50	M	Handgun	Wife	Domestic Violence Murder/Suicide
10/06/2009 Bismarck	3 M	M	20	M	Personal Weapon	Son	Shaken Baby Syndrome Domestic Violence
10/16/2009 Fort Berthold Reservation	18	M	18	M	Knife	Cousins	Victim found with stab wounds Domestic Violence
10/26/2009 Fargo	49	M	41 63	M M	Blunt Object	Acquaintance Other Family Member	Murder for hire Domestic Violence
10/31/2009 Fargo	2 M	F	46	M	Asphyxiation	Babysittee	Fell asleep on top of victim.
11/26/2009 Pembina County	41	F	52	M	Handgun	Wife	Murder/Suicide Domestic Violence

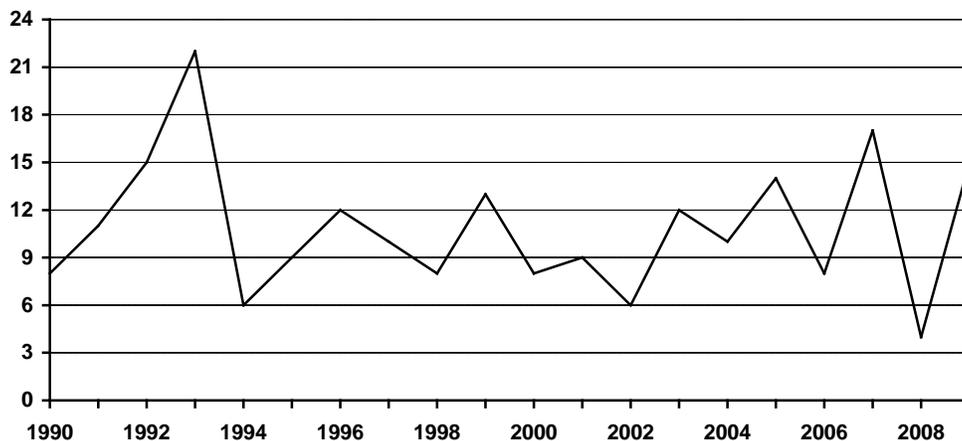
HOMICIDE TOTALS AND RATES

- Table 2 provides yearly homicide totals and homicide rate information for North Dakota during the period 1990-2009.
- The average number of homicide deaths per year during this period is 11.

**Table 2
Homicide Rate
North Dakota, 1990-2009**

Year	Homicide Total	Population Estimate	Rate/100,000 Population
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	1.3
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	17	640,000	2.7
2008	4	641,500	0.6
2009	15	647,000	2.3

**Figure 1
Homicide in North Dakota
1990-2009**



VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER

- Fifty-seven percent of the 217 total homicide victims during the period 1990-2009 were male.

Table 3
Gender of Homicide Victims
North Dakota, 1990-2009

Year	Male	Female	Total
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	7	10	17
2008	3	1	4
2009	7	8	15
Total 1990-2009	123 (57%)	94 (43%)	217

VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - AGE

- Of the 217 homicides during the period 1990-2009, 82 percent were adults. See Table 4 below.
- Thirty-nine 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, 1990-2009**

Year	Juvenile	Adult	Total
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	13	17
2008	2	2	4
2009	4	11	15
Total 1990-2009	40	177	217

**Table 5
Homicide Victims
By Age and Gender
North Dakota, 1990-2009**

Age	Male	Female	Total
Less than 1 year	11	10	21
01-05	3	2	5
06-10	1	3	4
11-15	1	1	2
16-20	13	10	23
21-25	12	3	15
26-30	15	10	25
31-35	10	8	18
36-40	15	11	26
41-45	8	10	18
46-50	13	11	24
51-55	6	2	8
56-60	2	2	4
61-65	1	2	3
Over 65	12	9	21
Total 1990-2009	123	94	217

WEAPONS AND VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

- Forty-one percent of deaths due to homicide during the period 1990-2009 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-four of the 217 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, 1990-2009**

Year	Handgun	Other Firearm	Knife	Blunt Instrument	Personal Weapon	Other or Unknown	Total
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	1	6	4	17
2008			2		2		4
2009	3	3	2	2	3	2	15
Total 1990-2009	37	52	37	19	34	38	217

- Firearms were used in 20 percent of the homicides of juveniles. Forty-six percent of adult deaths due to homicide involved firearms. See Table 7 below.
- Thirty-seven percent of homicides of males and 47 percent of homicides of females involved the use of firearms. See Table 8.
- Eighteen percent of homicides of males and 16 percent of homicides of females involved knives.

**Table 7
Homicide Victims
By Weapon and Age Category
North Dakota, 1990-2009**

Weapon	Juvenile	Adult	Total
Handgun	2	35	37
Other Firearm	6	46	52
Knife		37	37
Blunt Instrument	1	18	19
Personal Weapon	16	18	34
Other or Unknown	15	23	38
Total 1990-2009	40	177	217

**Table 8
Homicide Victims
By Weapon and Gender
North Dakota, 1990-2009**

Weapon	Male	Female	Total
Handgun	22	15	37
Other Firearm	23	29	52
Knife	22	15	37
Blunt Instrument	15	4	19
Personal Weapon	21	13	34
Other or Unknown	20	18	38
Total 1990-2009	123	94	217

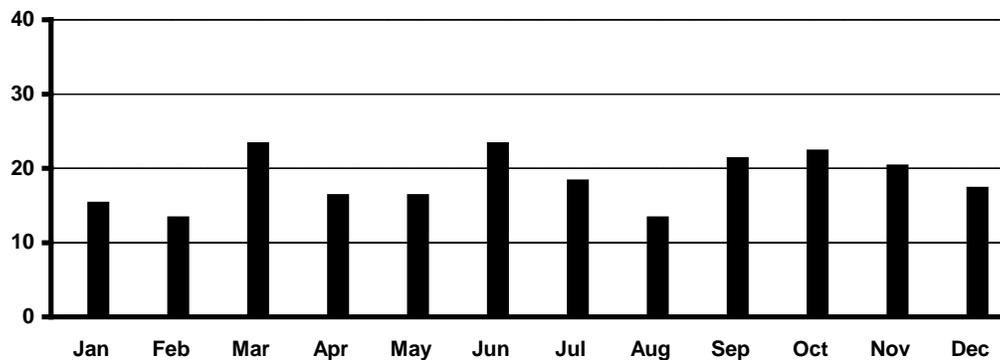
MONTH OF OCCURRENCE

- During the period 1990-2009, the months of March and June had the highest number of homicide deaths. See Table 9 below. Figure 2 illustrates this information graphically.

Table 9
Deaths Due to Homicide
By Month, 1990-2009

Month	Number	Percent of Total Homicides
January	15	6.9 %
February	13	6.0
March	23	10.6
April	16	7.4
May	16	7.4
June	23	10.6
July	18	8.3
August	13	6.0
September	21	9.7
October	22	10.1
November	20	9.2
December	17	7.8
Total 1990-2009	217	100.0

Figure 2
Homicides by Month of Occurrence
North Dakota, 1990-2009



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 1990-2009, 54 percent of deaths due to homicide involved domestic violence.

**Table 10
Domestic Violence Deaths
North Dakota, 1990-2009**

Year	Domestic	Non-Domestic	No Assailant Identified	Homicide Total
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	7		9
2002	4	1	1	6
2003	8	4		12
2004	6	4		10
2005	6	7	1	14
2006	4	3	1	8
2007	7	9	1	17
2008		4		4
2009	12	3		15
Total 1990-2009	116	93	8	217

- Persons killed in domestic violence incidents were more likely to be killed with a firearm than those killed in non-domestic incidents.
- Fifty-five 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 36 percent of males.

Table 11
Domestic Violence Deaths
By Type of Weapon and Age Category of Victim
North Dakota, 1990-2009

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Handgun		18	2	17
Other Firearm	6	33		12
Knife		19		16
Blunt Instrument	1	6		13
Personal Weapon	11	5	5	11
Other or Unknown	8	6	6	12
Total 1990-2009	26	87	13	81

Table 12
Domestic Violence Deaths
By Type of Weapon and Gender of Victim
North Dakota, 1990-2009

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	6	12	16	3
Other Firearm	13	26	10	2
Knife	10	9	10	6
Blunt Instrument	2	5	13	
Personal Weapon	6	10	14	2
Other or Unknown	7	7	8	10
Total 1990-2009	44	69	71	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 1990 to 2009 is 95 percent.

**Table 13
Clearance Rates for Homicides
North Dakota, 1990-2009**

Year	Total Cleared	Total Homicides	North Dakota Clearance Rate	National Clearance Rate*
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	9	9	100	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	16	17	94	61
2008	4	4	100	64
2009	15	15	100	Not Available

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

IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER

- During the period 1990-2009, 88 percent of the 225 identified homicide assailants were male.
- Eight homicides during 1990-2009 have not had an assailant identified by law enforcement.

Table 14
Identified Homicide Assailants
By Gender
North Dakota, 1990-2009

Year	Male	Female	Total
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	11		11
2002	5		5 *
2003	9		9
2004	13	1	14
2005	13	1	14 *
2006	6	1	7 *
2007	14	3	17 *
2008	6	1	7
2009	15	2	17
Total 1990-2009	197 (88%)	28 (12%)	225

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

- Eighty-nine percent of the total 225 assailants identified by law enforcement were adults. See Table 15 below.
- Of the 225 assailants identified by law enforcement, 64 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, 1990-2009

Year	Juvenile	Adult	Total
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		11	11
2002		5	5 *
2003		9	9
2004		14	14
2005		14	14 *
2006		7	7 *
2007	3	14	17 *
2008		7	7
2009		17	17
Total 1990-2009	24 (11%)	201 (89%)	225

* 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, 1990-2009

Age	Male	Female	Total
01-05			0
06-10			0
11-15	11	2	13
16-20	39	4	43
21-25	46	6	52
26-30	26	4	30
31-35	17	3	20
36-40	17	4	21
41-45	11	3	14
46-50	9	1	10
51-55	4	1	5
56-60	8		8
61-65	3		3
Over 65	6		6
Total 1990-2009	197	28	225

WEAPONS AND IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS

- In homicide incidents involving firearms, juvenile assailants were much more likely to use firearms other than handguns.
- Male assailants were more likely to use firearms in homicide incidents, while females were more likely to use knives.

Table 17
Identified Assailants
By Type of Weapon and Age Category
North Dakota, 1990-2009

Weapon	Juvenile	Adult	Total
Handgun	1	35	36
Other Firearm	10	40	50
Knife	3	43	46
Blunt Instrument	3	21	24
Personal Weapon	4	33	37
Other or Unknown	3	29	32
Total 1990-2009	24	201	225

Table 18
Identified Assailants
By Type of Weapon and Gender
North Dakota, 1990-2009

Weapon	Male	Female	Total
Handgun	34	2	36
Other Firearm	47	3	50
Knife	35	11	46
Blunt Instrument	24		24
Personal Weapon	33	4	37
Other or Unknown	24	8	32
Total 1990-2009	197	28	225

- 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-nine 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, 1990-2009

Year	Domestic	Non-Domestic	Total
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	9	11
2002	4	1	5 *
2003	6	3	9
2004	6	8	14
2005	7	7	14 *
2006	4	3	7 *
2007	9	8	17 *
2008		7	7
2009	14	3	17
Total 1990-2009	111 (49%)	114 (51%)	225

* 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, 1990-2009

Weapon	Domestic	Non-Domestic	Total
Handgun	20	16	36
Other Firearm	31	19	50
Knife	20	26	46
Blunt Instrument	7	17	24
Personal Weapon	17	20	37
Other or Unknown	16	16	32
Total 1990-2009	111	114	225

Table 21
Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents
By Type of Weapon and Age Category of Assailant
North Dakota, 1990-2009

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Handgun		20	1	15
Other Firearm	1	30	9	10
Knife	2	18	1	25
Blunt Instrument		7	3	14
Personal Weapon	2	15	2	18
Other or Unknown	1	15	2	14
Total 1990-2009	6	105	18	96

Table 22
Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents
By Type of Weapon and Gender of Assailant
North Dakota, 1990-2009

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	19	1	15	1
Other Firearm	28	3	19	
Knife	11	9	24	2
Blunt Instrument	7		17	
Personal Weapon	14	3	19	1
Other or Unknown	10	6	14	2
Total 1990-2009	89	22	108	6