

Counting Murder

These notes are intended to provide a brief overview of how information about murder is collected and how it was brought together for the purpose of this report. They are not intended to be a comprehensive description of crime reporting methods, but rather seek to give the reader a working knowledge of the uses and limitations of crime data and provide an understanding of how this information can be used to describe the nature and extent of murder in South Carolina.

All the information presented in this report starts with the statewide uniform incident report. The statewide uniform incident report is filled out whenever a criminal event is reported to law enforcement. The responding officer fills out the incident report which contains detailed information about the incident, the victim and the offender. This information is then entered into SCIBRS, which is maintained by SLED. SCIBRS data for the years 1977 through 2002 provide the primary source of data for this report.

Methodological Notes

Murder: SCIBRS uses the Federal Bureau of Investigation's definition of murder, which is the willful and unlawful killing of a human being by another. For purposes of this report, negligent homicides, suicides and justifiable homicides are not included. Deaths in the course of a felony driving under the influence offense are also excluded in this definition.

Crime reporting: When a crime is reported to law enforcement, an incident report containing information about the offense(s), the victim(s), the offender(s) and anyone arrested in connection to the offense is completed and sent to SLED. This process and its information are referred to as SCIBRS and it provides the basis of most crime data in South Carolina.

Rates: Rates are calculated by dividing the number of crimes, victims or offenders by the population or sub-population of interest. This allows for meaningful comparisons over time, between jurisdictions or special populations of interest.

Rates are determined as follows:

$$\text{Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of Incidents/Victims/Arrests}}{\text{Population/Sub-population}} \times 10,000$$

All rates are expressed as rate per 10,000.

Victim to offender relationships: Perhaps the easiest way to understand this is by substituting the phrase “the victim was” followed by the type of relationship. Since multiple victim to offender relationships occur whenever there is more than one victim or offender, SCIBRS collects information concerning up to ten such relationships, however this report only uses the first five victim to offender relationships. Due to situations involving more than one offender, the number of victim to offender relationships exceeds the number of victims.

Data sources: South Carolina crime data were taken from SCIBRS, which was made available by SLED. Although SCIBRS data collection was started in 1991 as part of a national program of crime reporting, SLED converted and combined, through considerable effort, statewide crime incident data from 1977 through 1990 with SCIBRS data. For purposes of brevity, this combined data-set is cited throughout the report as SCIBRS. Population estimates used to calculate victimization rates were provided by the South Carolina Budget and Control Board's Office of Research and Statistics (ORS).

Data limitations/caveats: In order to understand crime incident data, it is important to understand the unit of count. This report uses the following units of count: murder victims, murder incidents, murder offenders and murder arrestees. The unit of count murder victims refers to the number of people murdered. The unit of count murder incidents represents the number of events in which a murder occurred. An incident may have multiple victims and/or offenses associated with it. The unit of count arrestee represents individuals arrested in connection with a murder. One or more arrestees may be involved per victim or incident.

It is also important to note that some variables such as weapons, offenses, special circumstances and victim to offender relationships are counted by looking at multiple fields within a record. As an example, SCIBRS allows for information to be recorded concerning up to three weapons. The result is that the number of weapons is very likely to exceed the number of incidents. This results in totals that vary from the basic unit of count. Such situations are noted

throughout the report. Because of differences in data coding and editing procedures between the pre-SCIBRS incident data and SCIBRS, the resulting combined dataset is missing more data in some circumstances than might be expected otherwise.

SCIBRS data for 1995 were incomplete, making the use of data from that year in trend analysis questionable. Consequently, 1995 SCIBRS data were omitted from trend data unless that information was available from another source. Since jurisdiction was a factor in the completeness of 1995 data, data from that year were also excluded from the computation and comparison of county murder rates. Arrest data from SCIBRS for 2001 were also incomplete and were not available from other sources. Therefore, arrest data for 2001 were omitted for purposes of trend analysis. These exclusions are noted throughout the report.

There were also limitations to the population data used to calculate rates. Population estimates for age, race and sex were not available for the years 1977, 1978 and 1979. Methods used to account for these limitations are noted in the report.

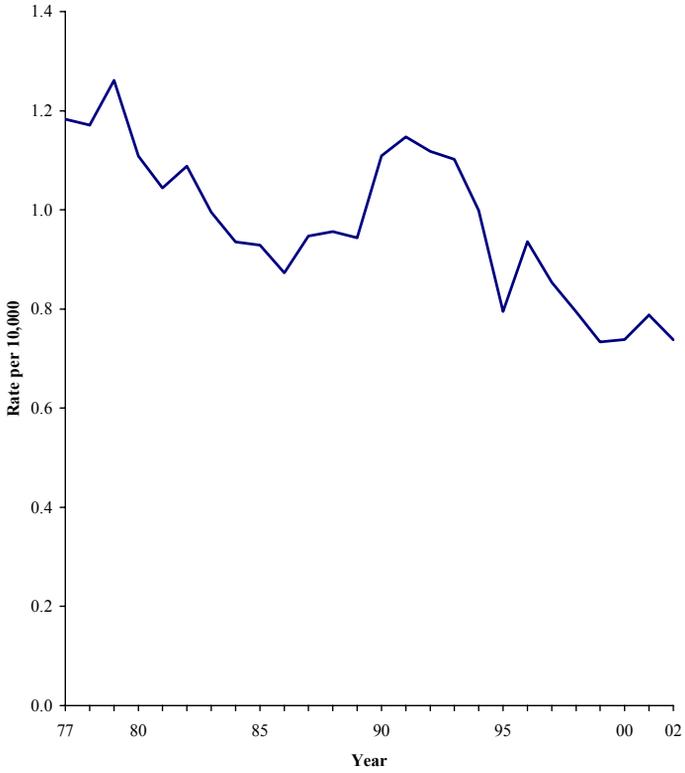
***South Carolina's murder rate declined 33.9%
from 1977 to 2002.***

Year	Number	Rate
1977	336	1.18
1978	335	1.17
1979	368	1.26
1980	346	1.11
1981	331	1.04
1982	348	1.09
1983	321	1.00
1984	305	0.94
1985	306	0.93
1986	291	0.87
1987	319	0.95
1988	325	0.96
1989	325	0.94
1990	388	1.11
1991	408	1.15
1992	402	1.12
1993	400	1.10
1994	366	1.00
1995	248	0.79
1996	348	0.94
1997	321	0.85
1998	305	0.79
1999	285	0.73
2000	297	0.74
2001	331	0.79
2002	303	0.74

Note: Unit of count – victims.

Sources: SLED, *Crime in South Carolina*.

Murder Victimization Rate 1977 - 2002



South Carolina's murder rate was higher than the national rate every year except 1995. South Carolina had the 7th highest murder rate in the nation in 2002.

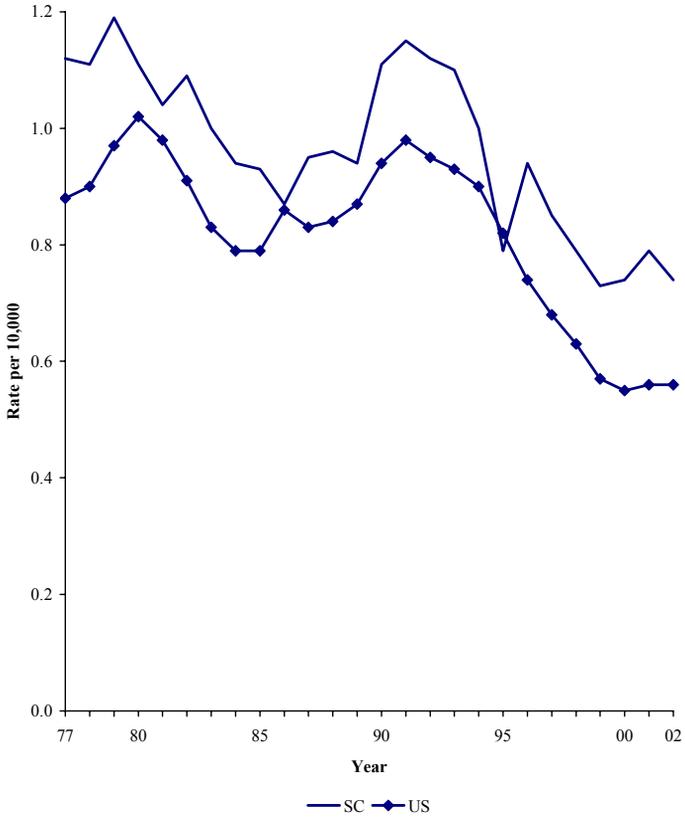
**STATE AND NATIONAL MURDER RATES
1977 – 2002**

Year	South Carolina	United States
1977	1.12	0.88
1978	1.11	0.90
1979	1.19	0.97
1980	1.11	1.02
1981	1.04	0.98
1982	1.09	0.91
1983	1.00	0.83
1984	0.94	0.79
1985	0.93	0.79
1986	0.87	0.86
1987	0.95	0.83
1988	0.96	0.84
1989	0.94	0.87
1990	1.11	0.94
1991	1.15	0.98
1992	1.12	0.95
1993	1.10	0.93
1994	1.00	0.90
1995	0.79	0.82
1996	0.94	0.74
1997	0.85	0.68
1998	0.79	0.63
1999	0.73	0.57
2000	0.74	0.55
2001	0.79	0.56
2002	0.74	0.56

Note: Unit of count – victims.

Sources: FBI, Crime in the United States; SLED, Crime in South Carolina.

State and National Murder Rates



County murder victimization rates ranged from 0.46 to 1.88 per 10,000.

**MURDER VICTIMIZATION RATE BY COUNTY
1977 – 2002**

County	Rate	County	Rate
Abbeville	0.78	Greenwood	0.90
Aiken	1.01	Hampton	0.56
Allendale	1.53	Horry	1.05
Anderson	0.99	Jasper	1.69
Bamberg	1.02	Kershaw	0.77
Barnwell	1.15	Lancaster	0.83
Beaufort	0.68	Laurens	1.11
Berkeley	0.68	Lee	0.94
Calhoun	1.22	Lexington	0.64
Charleston	1.04	McCormick	1.20
Cherokee	1.10	Marion	1.14
Chester	1.00	Marlboro	1.88
Chesterfield	1.38	Newberry	0.79
Clarendon	1.31	Oconee	0.78
Colleton	1.36	Orangeburg	1.39
Darlington	1.22	Pickens	0.46
Dillon	1.80	Richland	1.22
Dorchester	0.56	Saluda	1.15
Edgefield	1.17	Spartanburg	0.98
Fairfield	1.04	Sumter	1.02
Florence	1.13	Union	0.89
Georgetown	0.81	Williamsburg	1.16
Greenville	0.93	York	0.79

Notes: 1995 murder victims were not included in calculating county victimization rates. Unit of count – victims.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Marlboro County had the highest murder victimization rate with 1.88 per 10,000.

**MURDER VICTIMIZATION RATES
THE TOP TEN COUNTIES
1977 – 2002**

County	Murder Victims	Victimization Rate
Marlboro	137	1.88
Dillon	130	1.80
Jasper	67	1.69
Allendale	40	1.53
Orangeburg	291	1.39
Chesterfield	134	1.38
Colleton	118	1.36
Clarendon	90	1.31
Calhoun	40	1.22
Richland	861	1.22
Darlington	188	1.22

Notes: Calhoun, Richland and Darlington counties tied for 9th place. 1995 murder victims were not included in these totals or in calculating the rates. Unit of count – victims.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, population estimates.

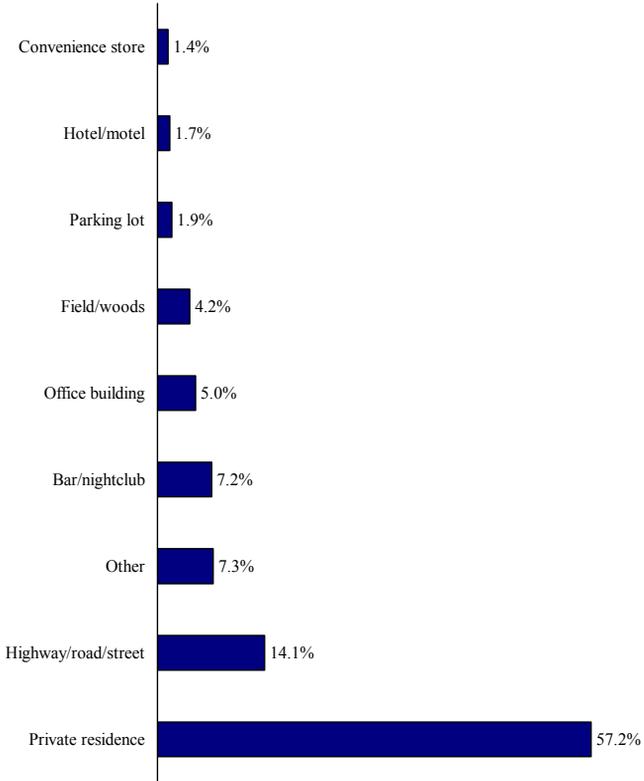
Private residences such as houses or apartments were the location for 57.2% of murder incidents.

**MURDER INCIDENTS BY LOCATION
1977 – 2002**

Location	Number	Percent
Bar/nightclub	599	7.2%
Convenience store	116	1.4%
Field/woods	355	4.2%
Highway/road/street	1,179	14.1%
Hotel/motel	138	1.7%
Office building	421	5.0%
Other	612	7.3%
Parking lot	159	1.9%
Private residence	4,780	57.2%
Total	8,359	100.0%

Note: Unit of count – incidents.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Murder Incidents by Location 1977 - 2002



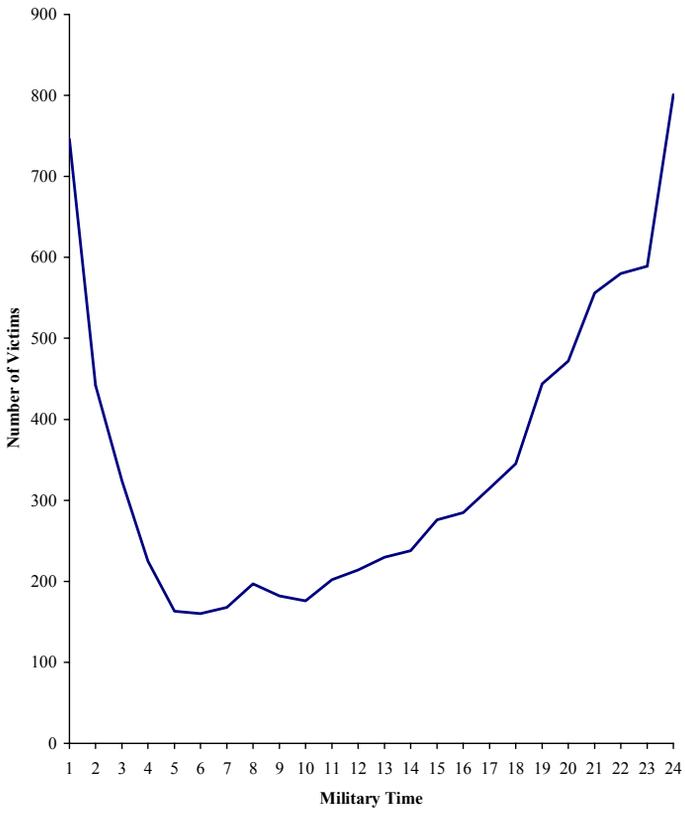
More murders occurred between 11:00 P.M. and midnight than any other hour of the day.

**MURDER VICTIMIZATION BY TIME OF DAY
1977 – 2002**

Time	Number	Percent
Mid - 12:59 AM	746	9.0%
1:00 - 1:59 AM	442	5.3%
2:00 - 2:59 AM	324	3.9%
3 :00- 3:59 AM	225	2.7%
4 :00- 4:59 AM	163	2.0%
5 :00- 5:59 AM	160	1.9%
6 :00- 6:69 AM	168	2.0%
7 :00- 7:59 AM	197	2.4%
8 :00- 8:59 AM	182	2.2%
9 :00- 9:59 AM	176	2.1%
10 :00- 10:59 AM	202	2.4%
11:00 - 11:59 AM	214	2.6%
Noon - 12:59 PM	230	2.8%
1 :00- 1:59 PM	238	2.9%
2 :00- 2:59 PM	276	3.3%
3 :00- 3:59 PM	285	3.4%
4 :00- 4:59 PM	315	3.8%
5 :00- 5:59 PM	345	4.1%
6 :00- 6:69 PM	444	5.3%
7 :00- 7:59 PM	472	5.7%
8 :00- 8:59 PM	556	6.7%
9 :00- 9:59 PM	580	7.0%
10 :00- 10:59 PM	589	7.1%
11 :00- 11:59 PM	801	9.6%

Notes: Murders where time was missing were excluded. Unit of count – victims.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Murder Victims by Time of Day



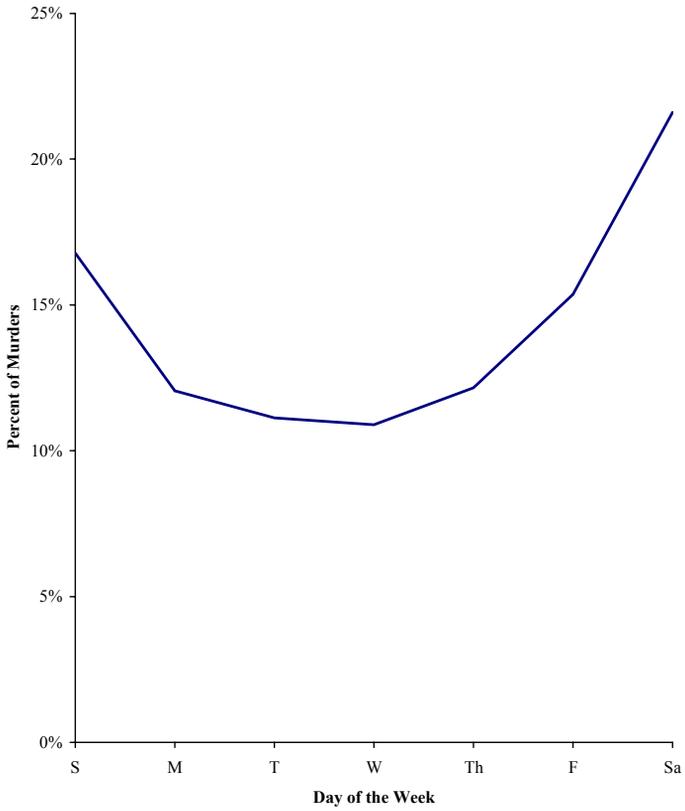
More than half (53.8%) of murders occurred on Friday, Saturday or Sunday.

**MURDER VICTIMIZATION BY DAY OF THE
WEEK
1977 – 2002**

Day	Number	Percent
Sunday	1,453	16.8%
Monday	1,044	12.1%
Tuesday	964	11.1%
Wednesday	943	10.9%
Thursday	1,053	12.2%
Friday	1,330	15.4%
Saturday	1,871	21.6%
Total	8,658	100.0%

Note: Unit of count – victims.
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Murder Victimization by Day of Week



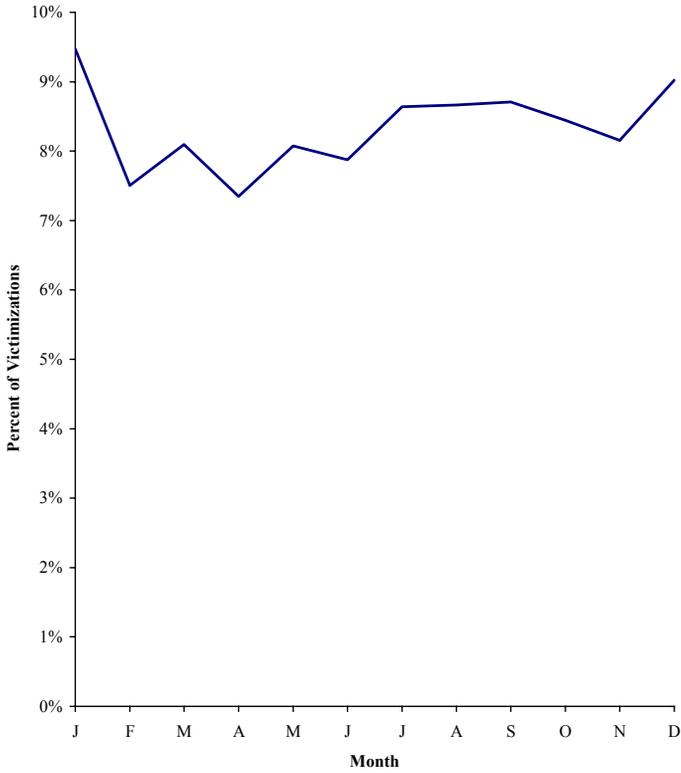
More murders were reported in January than any other month. The fewest murders were reported in April.

**MURDER VICTIMIZATION BY MONTH
1977 – 2002**

Month	Number	Percent
January	820	9.5%
February	650	7.5%
March	701	8.1%
April	636	7.3%
May	699	8.1%
June	682	7.9%
July	748	8.6%
August	750	8.7%
September	754	8.7%
October	731	8.4%
November	706	8.2%
December	781	9.0%
Total	8,658	100.0%

Note: Unit of count – victims.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Murder Victimization by Month 1977 - 2002



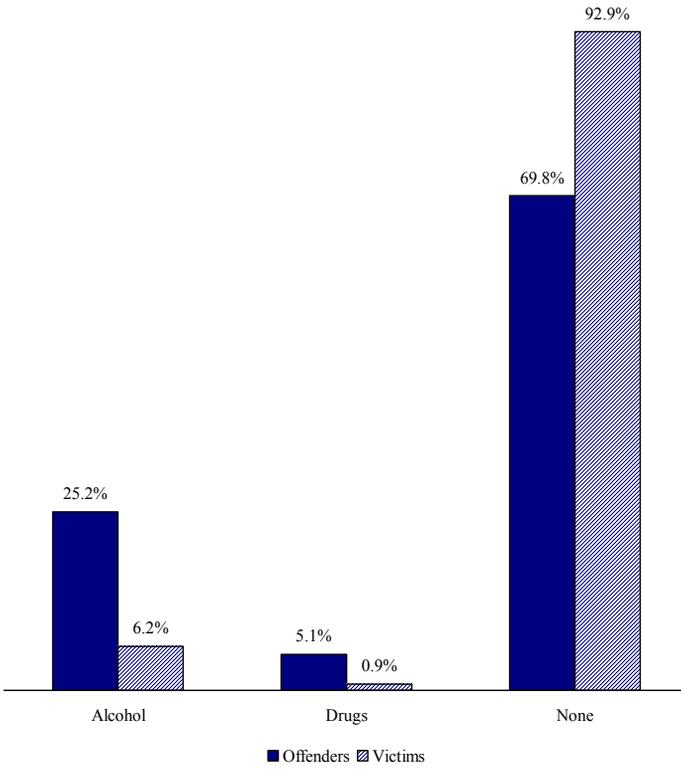
Alcohol use by the offender was reported in 25.2% of murder incidents.

**SUBSTANCE USE IN MURDER INCIDENTS
1977 – 2002**

Substance	Offender	Victim
Drugs/Narcotics	5.1%	0.9%
Alcohol	25.2%	6.2%
None	69.8%	92.9%

Notes: The total percent exceeds 100 due to incidents where both alcohol and drug use was reported. Unit of count – incidents, substance use.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Substance Use in Murder 1977 - 2002



Among the circumstances associated with a murder, suicide by the offender was the most common.

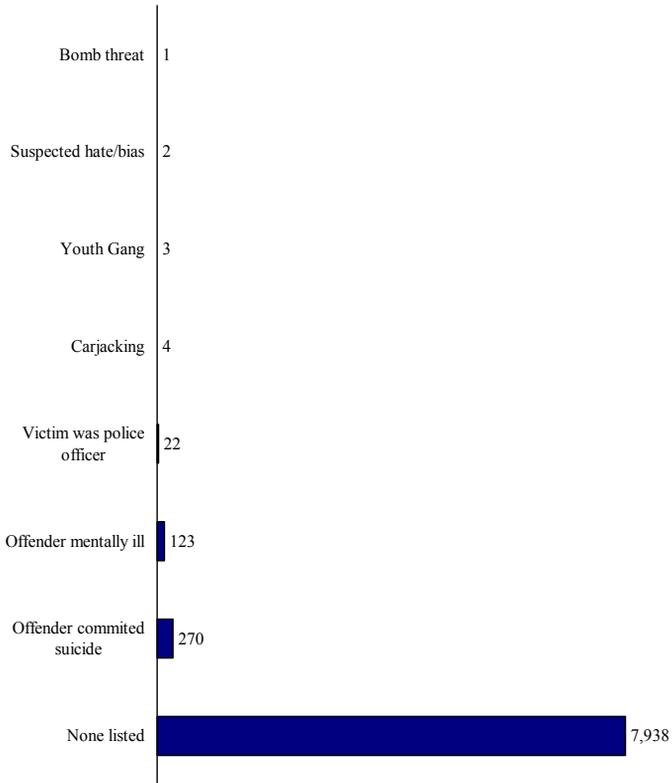
**CIRCUMSTANCES ASSOCIATED WITH
MURDER
1977 – 2002**

Circumstance	Number	Percent
Bomb threat	1	<0.1%
Carjacking	4	<0.1%
None listed	7,938	94.9%
Offender mentally ill	123	1.5%
Offender suicide	270	3.2%
Suspected hate/bias	2	<0.1%
Victim was police officer	22	0.3%
Youth gang	3	<0.1%
Total	8,363	100.0%

Notes: The total exceeds the number of incidents because of multiple special circumstance listings. Unit of count - incidents, special circumstances.

Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Special Circumstances Associated with Murder 1977 - 2002



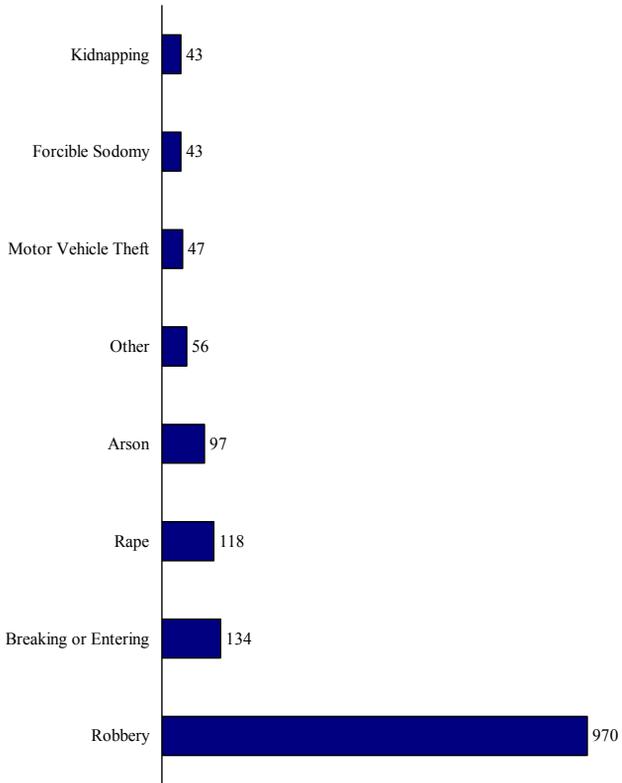
Robbery was the offense most often reported in association with murder.

**OFFENSES ASSOCIATED WITH MURDER
1977 – 2002**

Offense	Number	Percent
Arson	97	6.4%
Breaking or Entering	134	8.9%
Forcible Sodomy	43	2.9%
Kidnapping	43	2.9%
Motor Vehicle Theft	47	3.1%
Other	56	3.7%
Rape	118	7.8%
Robbery	970	64.3%
Total	1,508	100.0%

Note: Unit of count – victims, offenses.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Other Offenses Associated with Murder 1977 - 2002



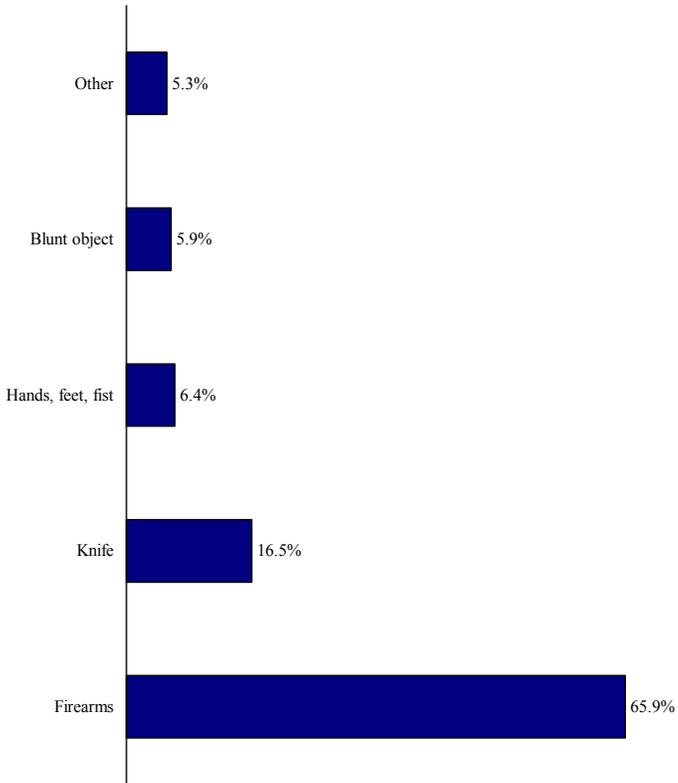
Firearms account for 65.9% of the weapons reported in murder incidents. Firearms were involved in 66.2% of murder incidents.

**WEAPON USE IN MURDER INCIDENTS
1977 – 2002**

Weapon	Number	Percent
Blunt object	499	5.9%
Firearms	5,564	65.9%
Hands, feet, fist	538	6.4%
Knife	1,396	16.5%
Other	451	5.3%
Total	8,448	100.0%

Note: Unit of count – incidents, weapons.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Weapon Use in Murder Incidents 1977 - 2002



The firearm murder rate decreased from 0.83 in 1977 to 0.47 in 2002.

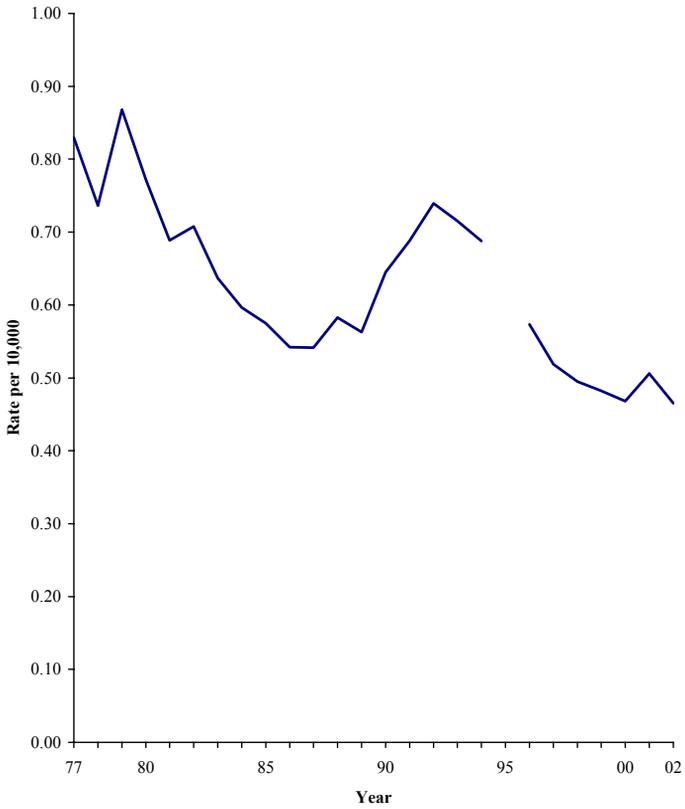
FIREARM MURDER RATE

Year	Number	Rate
1977	248	0.83
1978	224	0.74
1979	268	0.87
1980	241	0.77
1981	219	0.69
1982	227	0.71
1983	206	0.64
1984	193	0.60
1985	188	0.57
1986	179	0.54
1987	181	0.54
1988	197	0.58
1989	192	0.56
1990	223	0.65
1991	240	0.69
1992	264	0.74
1993	259	0.72
1994	252	0.69
1995	Inc.	Inc.
1996	215	0.57
1997	197	0.52
1998	191	0.49
1999	189	0.48
2000	186	0.47
2001	203	0.51
2002	189	0.47

Notes: 1995 data were excluded due to incomplete data. Unit of count – incidents, weapons.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Firearm Murder Incident Rate Trend



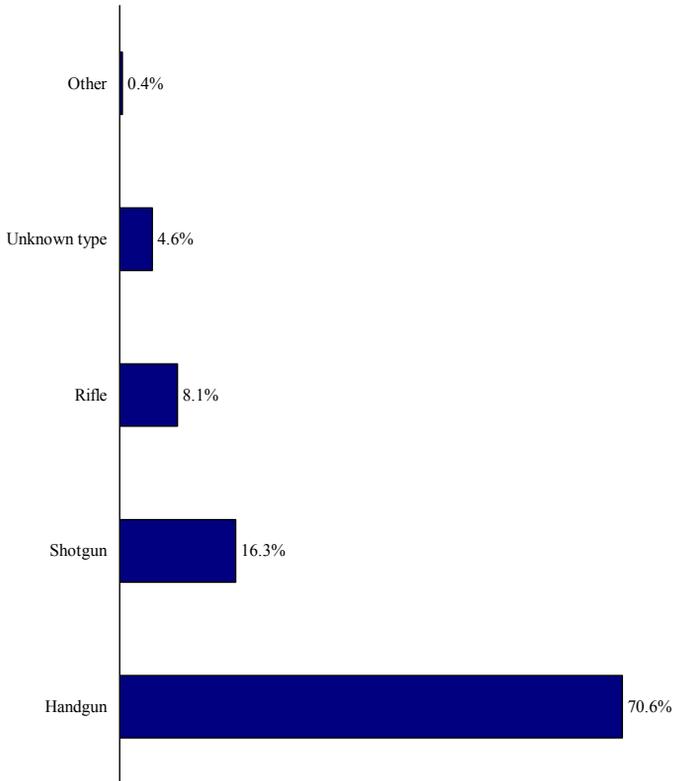
Handguns accounted for 70.6% of firearms involved in murder incidents.

**FIREARM USE IN MURDER INCIDENTS
1977 – 2002**

Firearm	Number	Percent
Handgun	3,929	70.6%
Other Firearms	22	0.4%
Rifle	451	8.1%
Shotgun	908	16.3%
Unknown type	254	4.6%
Total	5,564	100.0%

Note: Unit of count – incidents, weapons.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Firearm Use in Murder Incidents 1977 - 2002



The handgun murder rate decreased from 0.57 in 1977 to 0.30 in 2002.

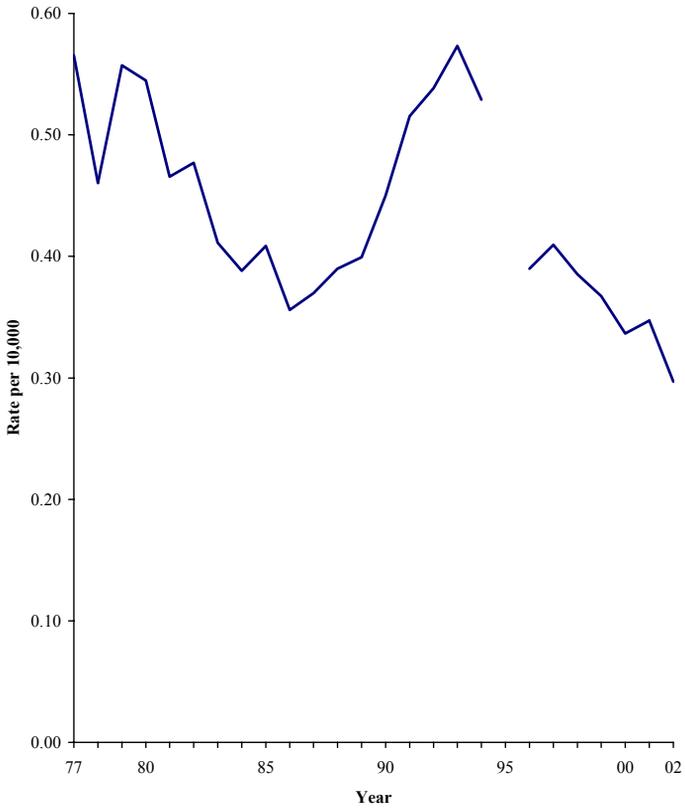
HANDGUN MURDER RATE

Year	Number	Rate
1977	169	0.57
1978	140	0.46
1979	172	0.56
1980	170	0.54
1981	148	0.47
1982	153	0.48
1983	133	0.41
1984	127	0.39
1985	135	0.41
1986	119	0.36
1987	125	0.37
1988	133	0.39
1989	138	0.40
1990	157	0.45
1991	184	0.52
1992	195	0.54
1993	210	0.57
1994	196	0.53
1995	Inc.	Inc.
1996	148	0.39
1997	158	0.41
1998	151	0.39
1999	146	0.37
2000	135	0.34
2001	141	0.35
2002	122	0.30

Notes: 1995 data were excluded due to incomplete data. Unit of count – incidents, weapons.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Handgun Murder Rate



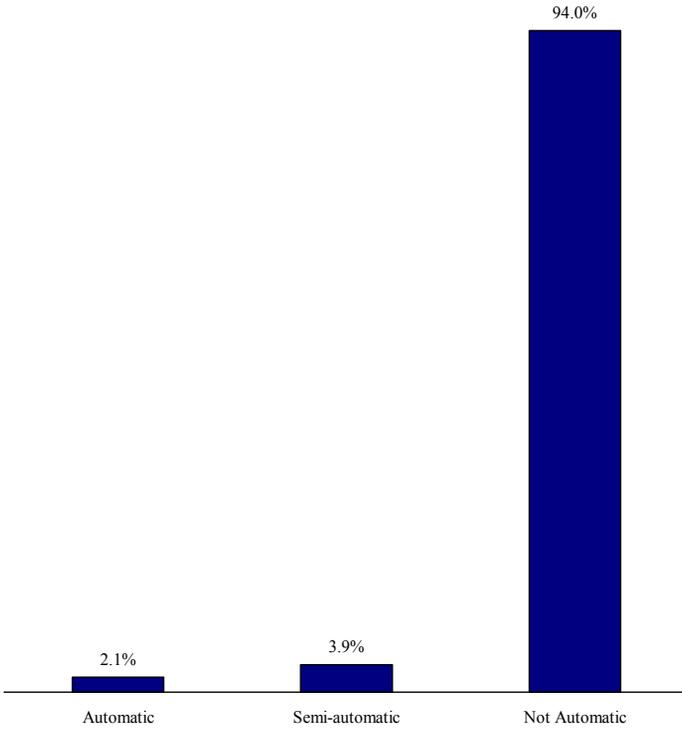
Automatic or semi-automatic weapons accounted for 6% of firearm involvement in murder incidents.

**AUTOMATIC/SEMI-AUTOMATIC FIREARM
USE IN MURDER INCIDENTS
1977 – 2002**

Type	Number	Percent
Automatic	118	2.1%
Semi-automatic	217	3.9%
Not Automatic	5,229	94.0%
Total	5,564	100.0%

Note: Unit of count – incidents, weapons.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

**Automatic/Semi-Automatic Firearm Use in
Murder Incidents
1977 - 2002**



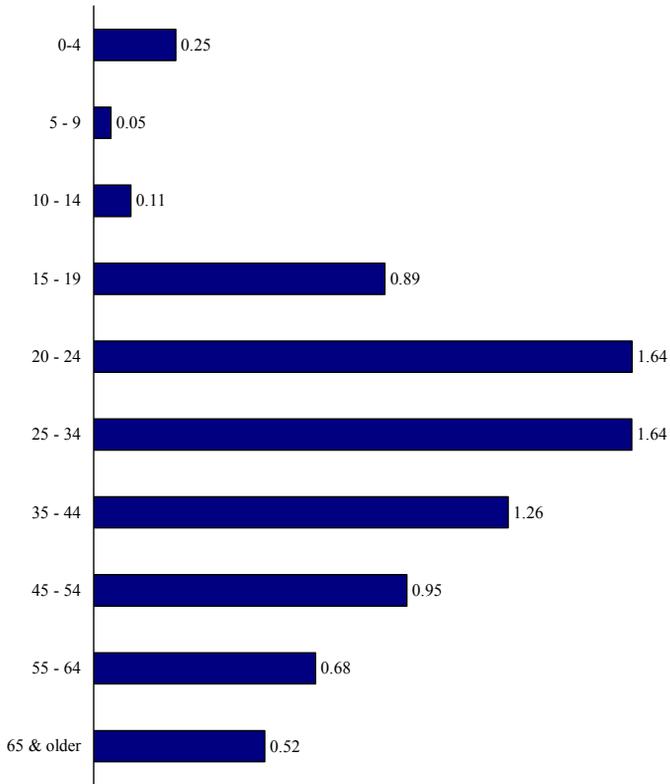
The highest murder rate was among adults from 10 to 34 years old. The mean average age of murder victims was 35.6 years. The median age among murder victims was 33 years.

**MURDER VICTIMIZATION RATE BY AGE GROUP
1977 - 2002**

Age Group	Number	Rate
0-4	168	0.25
5 - 9	35	0.05
10 - 14	78	0.11
15 - 19	659	0.89
20 - 24	1,266	1.64
25 - 34	2,432	1.64
35 - 44	1,703	1.26
45 - 54	999	0.95
55 - 64	555	0.68
65 & older	546	0.52

Notes: Victim data for which the age was unknown or expressed as a range, were excluded. Population estimates for age groups for 1977, 1978 and 1979 were extrapolated on the basis of 1980 through 2002 estimates. Unit of count – victims.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Murder Victimization Rate by Age 1977 - 2002



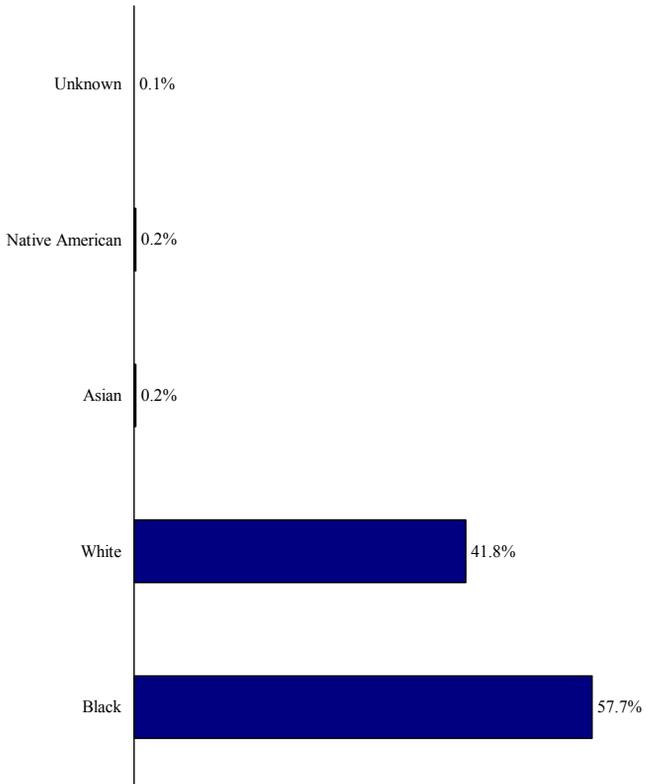
From 1977 through 2002, 57.7% of murder victims were Black.

**MURDER VICTIMS BY RACE
1977 - 2002**

Race	Number	Percent
Asian	17	0.2%
Black	4,999	57.7%
Native American	17	0.2%
Unknown	5	0.1%
White	3,619	41.8%
Total	8,657	100.0%

Notes: One homicide victim had missing race data. Unit of count – victims.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Murder Victims by Race 1977 - 2002



The murder victimization rate for Non-Whites was 206% higher than the victimization rate for Whites.

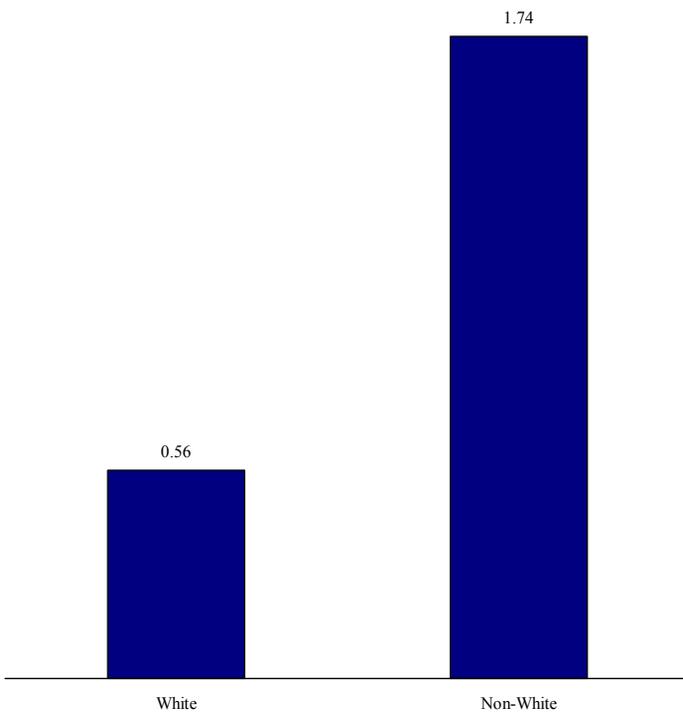
**MURDER VICTIMIZATION RATE BY RACIAL GROUP
1977 – 2002**

Racial Group	Number	Rate
Non-White	5,033	1.97
White	3,619	0.64

Notes: Population data necessary for calculating victimization rates were not available for Asians and Native Americans. For the purpose of calculating victimization rates those Asian and Native American victims were combined with Black victims to form a comprehensive racial group, Non-White. Population estimates for racial categories in 1977, 1978 and 1979 were extrapolated on the basis of 1980 through 2002 estimates. Unit of count – victims.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Murder Victimization Rate by Racial Group 1977 - 2002



Hispanics accounted for 1% of murder victims.

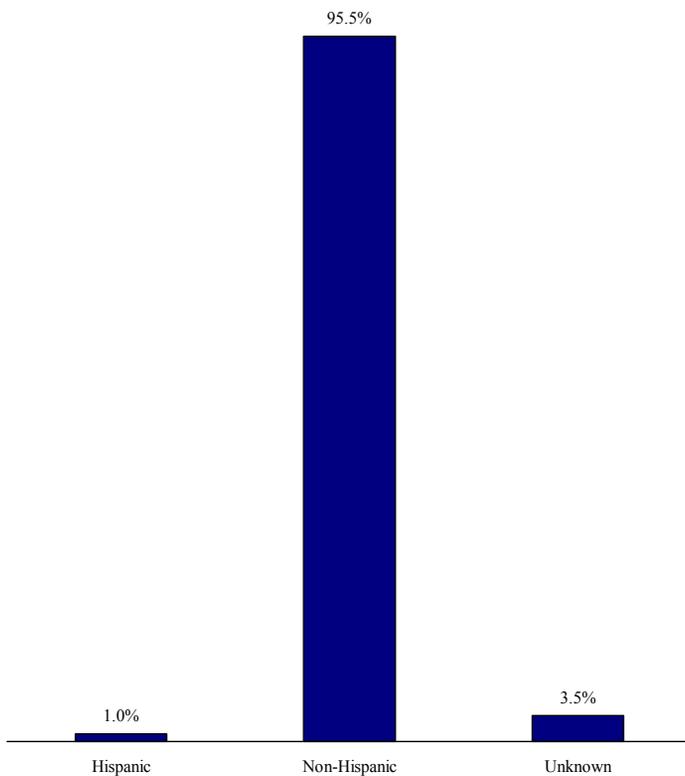
**MURDER VICTIMS BY ETHNICITY
1977 – 2002**

Ethnicity	Number	Percent
Hispanic	78	1.0%
Non-Hispanic	7,246	95.5%
Unknown	267	3.5%
Total	7,591	100.0%

Notes: In SCIBRS ethnicity and race are separate data elements. Unit of count – victims.

Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Murder Victims by Ethnicity 1977 - 2002



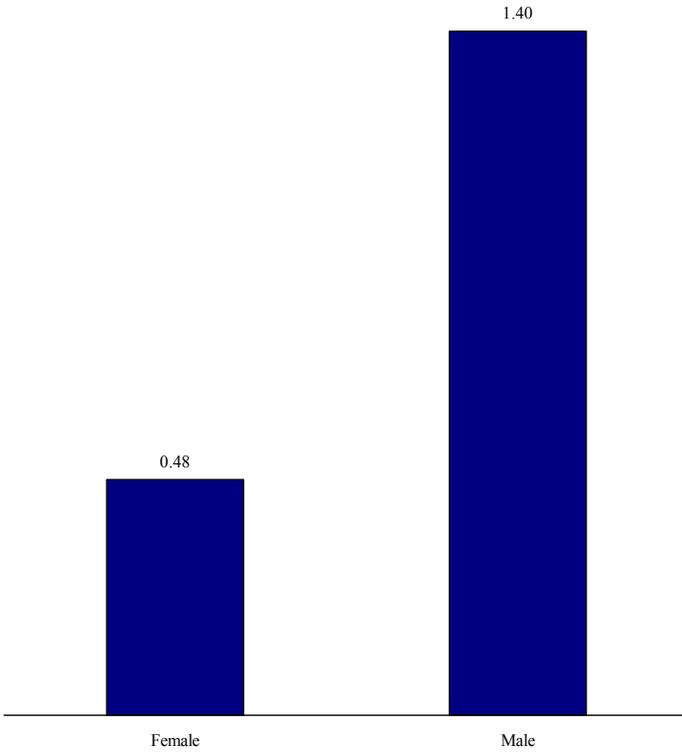
Males made up 73.2% of murder victims. The murder victimization rate for males was 192% higher than for females.

**MURDER VICTIMS BY SEX
1977 - 2002**

Sex	Percent	Rate
Female	26.8%	0.48
Male	73.2%	1.40

Notes: Population estimates for sex for 1977, 1978 and 1979 were extrapolated on the basis of 1980 through 2002 estimates. Unit of count – victims.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Murder Victimization Rate by Sex 1977 - 2002



The most frequently occurring victim to offender relationship category was Known.

VICTIM/OFFENDER RELATIONSHIPS: SCIBRS defines 26 victim to offender relationships. These have been collapsed into six categories: Known, Stranger, Marital, Family, Romantic and Ex-spouse. Known includes friends, acquaintances, employees/employers, neighbors and others who are known but not related, married to or romantically involved with the offender. Marital includes spouses and common-law spouses. Family includes family relationships other than spouses or common-law spouses. Romantic includes boyfriends, girlfriends and homosexual relationships. Stranger and Ex-spouse include only those specific relationships.

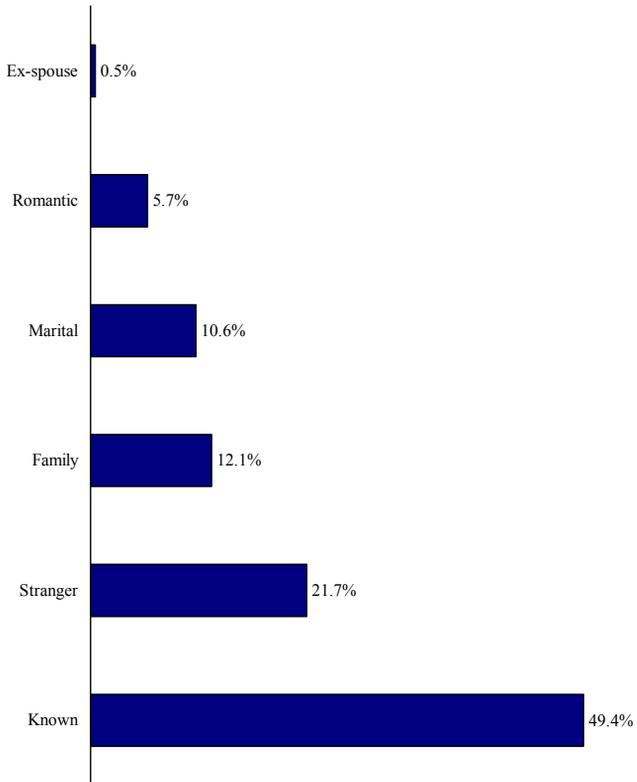
**MURDER VICTIM TO OFFENDER
RELATIONSHIP CATEGORIES
1977 – 2002**

Victim was:	Number	Percent
Ex-spouse	47	0.5%
Family	1,187	12.1%
Known	4,833	49.4%
Marital	1,034	10.6%
Romantic	559	5.7%
Stranger	2,120	21.7%
Total	9,780	100.0%

Notes: If the relationship was unknown, if the victim was also the offender or if the relationship data were missing, those relationships were excluded. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationships.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Murder Victim to Offender Relationships 1977 - 2002



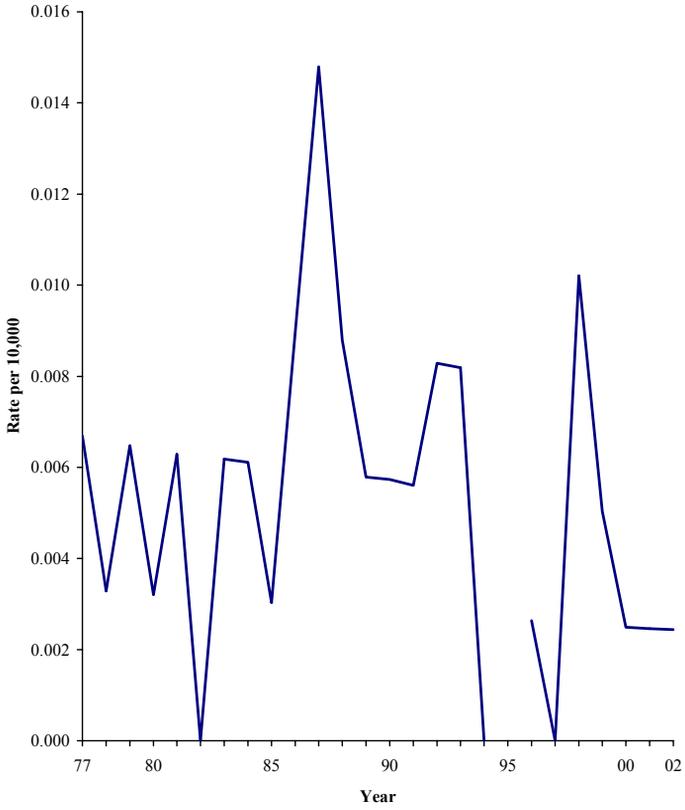
Ex-spouse was the least frequently reported victim to offender relationship. The annual number of ex-spouse murder victims ranged from 0 to 5.

Year	Number	Rate
1977	2	0.0067
1978	1	0.0033
1979	2	0.0065
1980	1	0.0032
1981	2	0.0063
1982	0	0.0000
1983	2	0.0062
1984	2	0.0061
1985	1	0.0030
1986	3	0.0090
1987	5	0.0148
1988	3	0.0088
1989	2	0.0058
1990	2	0.0057
1991	2	0.0056
1992	3	0.0083
1993	3	0.0082
1994	0	0.0000
1995	Inc.	Inc.
1996	1	0.0026
1997	0	0.0000
1998	4	0.0102
1999	2	0.0050
2000	1	0.0025
2001	1	0.0025
2002	1	0.0024

Notes: Victims were included if there was an associated victim to offender relationship of ex-spouse. 1995 victim data were excluded. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationships.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Ex-Spouse Murder Victimization Rate



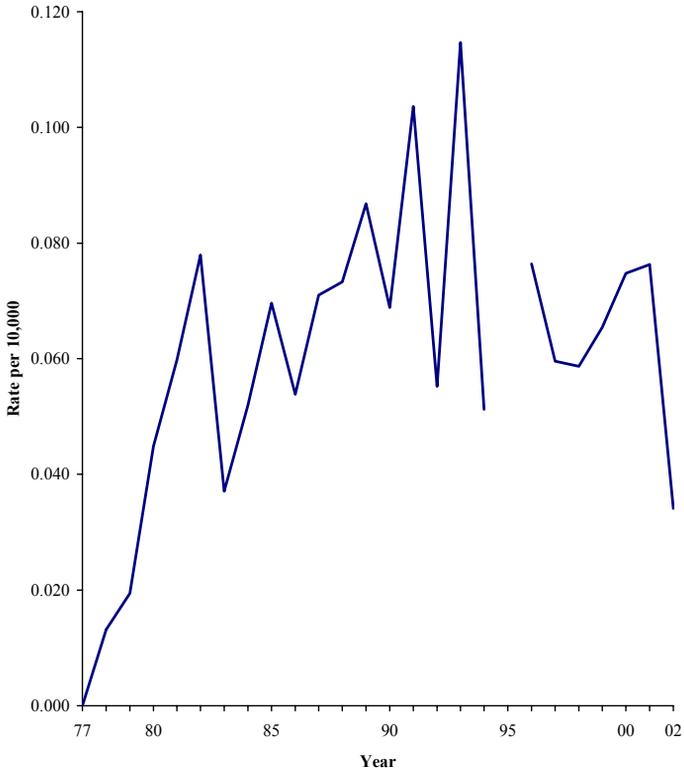
The largest number of murder victims in romantic victim to offender relationships in one year was 42.

MURDER VICTIMS IN ROMANTIC VICTIM TO OFFENDER RELATIONSHIPS

Year	Number	Rate
1977	0	0.000
1978	4	0.013
1979	6	0.019
1980	14	0.045
1981	19	0.060
1982	25	0.078
1983	12	0.037
1984	17	0.052
1985	23	0.070
1986	18	0.054
1987	24	0.071
1988	25	0.073
1989	30	0.087
1990	24	0.069
1991	37	0.104
1992	20	0.055
1993	42	0.115
1994	19	0.051
1995	Inc.	Inc.
1996	29	0.076
1997	23	0.060
1998	23	0.059
1999	26	0.065
2000	30	0.075
2001	31	0.076
2002	14	0.034

Note: Victims were included if there was an associated romantic victim to offender relationship. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationships.
 Source: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Murder Victimization Rate in Romantic Relationships



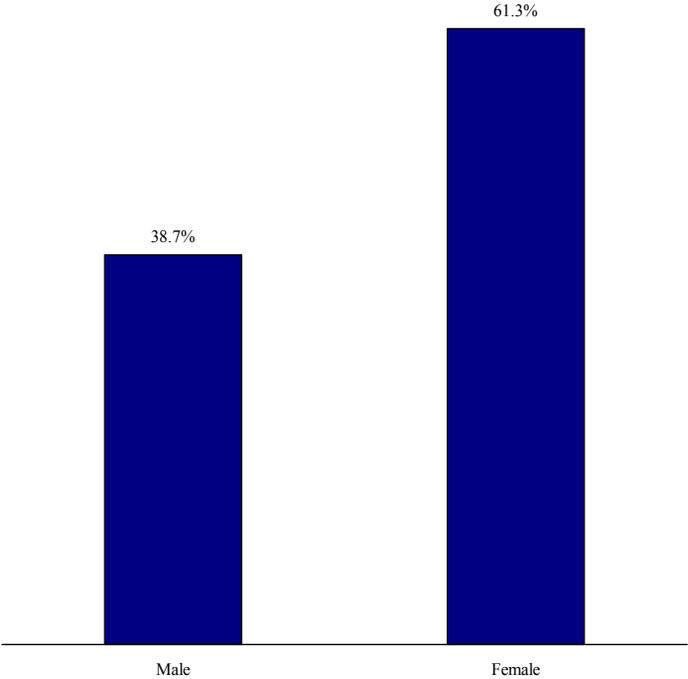
Women accounted for 61.3% of murder victims in romantic victim to offender relationships.

**MURDER VICTIMS IN ROMANTIC VICTIM TO
OFFENDER RELATIONSHIPS BY SEX
1977 – 2002**

Sex	Number	Percent
Female	340	61.3%
Male	215	38.7%
Total	555	100.0%

Note: Victims were included if there was an associated romantic victim to offender relationship. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationships.
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

**Murder Victims in Romantic Victim to
Offender Relationships by Sex
1977 - 2002**



The marital murder rate dropped from 0.21 in 1977 to 0.07 in 2002.

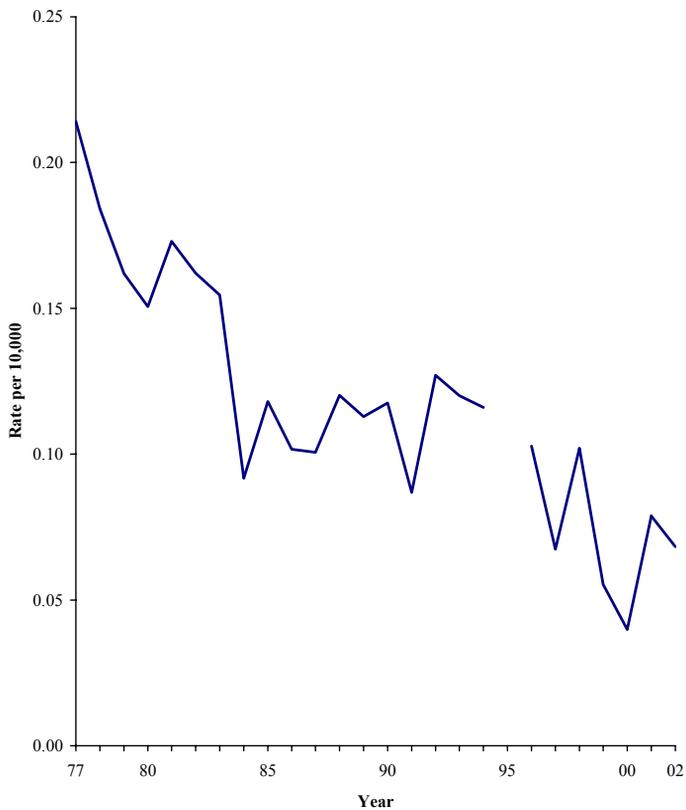
MARITAL MURDER VICTIMIZATION RATE

Year	Number	Rate
1977	64	0.21
1978	56	0.18
1979	50	0.16
1980	47	0.15
1981	55	0.17
1982	52	0.16
1983	50	0.15
1984	30	0.09
1985	39	0.12
1986	34	0.10
1987	34	0.10
1988	41	0.12
1989	39	0.11
1990	41	0.12
1991	31	0.09
1992	46	0.13
1993	44	0.12
1994	43	0.12
1995	Inc.	Inc.
1996	39	0.10
1997	26	0.07
1998	40	0.10
1999	22	0.06
2000	16	0.04
2001	32	0.08
2002	28	0.07

Notes: Victims were included if there was an associated marital victim to offender relationship. 1995 data were excluded due to incomplete data. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationships.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Marital Murder Victimization Rate



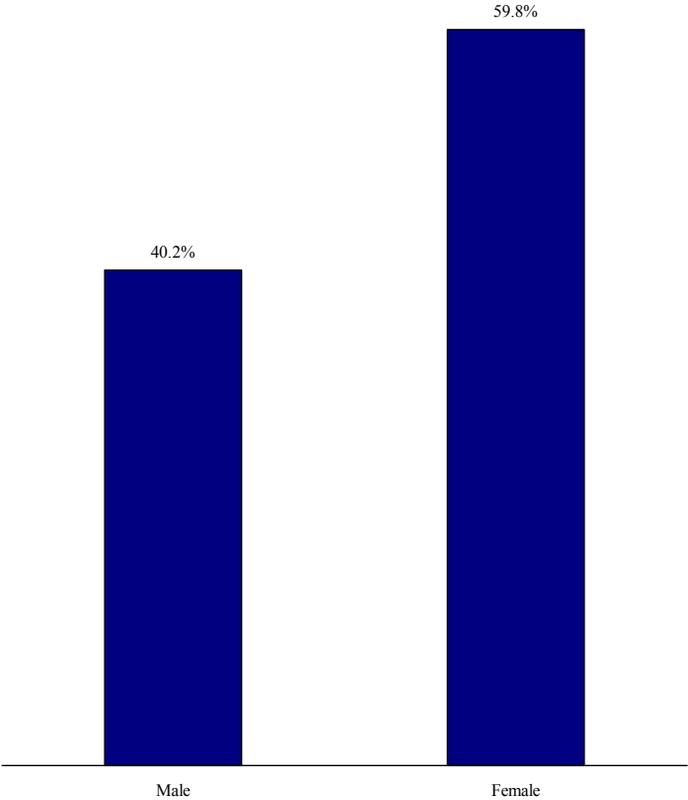
Women accounted for 59.8% of murder victims in marital victim to offender relationships.

**MARITAL MURDER VICTIMS BY SEX
1977 – 2002**

Sex	Number	Percent
Female	615	59.8%
Male	414	40.2%
Total	1,029	100.0%

Notes: Victims were included if there was an associated marital victim to offender relationship. Unit of count – victims.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

**Marital Murder Victims by Sex
1977 - 2002**



The family murder victimization rate reached a high of 0.18 per 10,000 in 1990. The 2002 rate of 0.07 was the lowest during the time period.

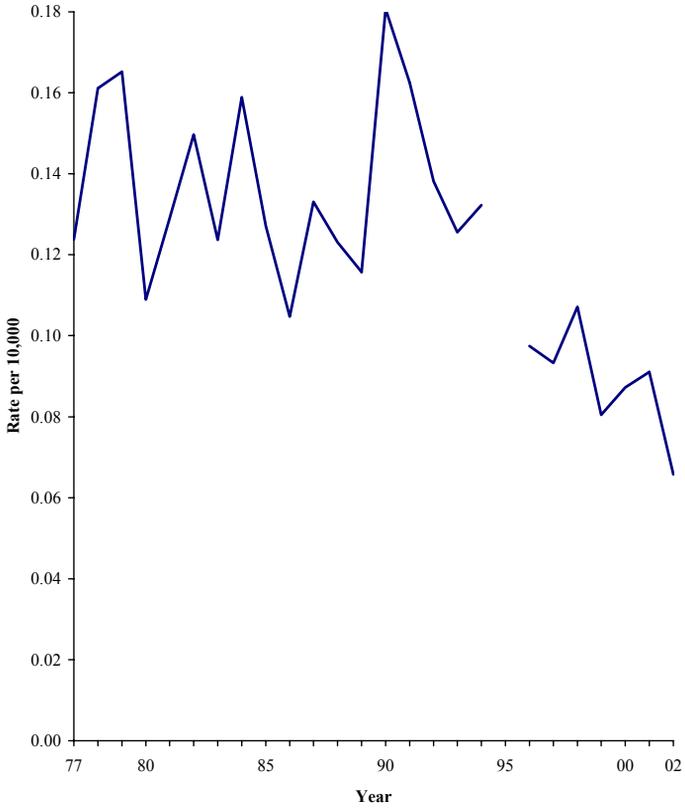
FAMILY MURDER VICTIMIZATION RATE

Year	Number	Rate
1977	37	0.12
1978	49	0.16
1979	51	0.17
1980	34	0.11
1981	41	0.13
1982	48	0.15
1983	40	0.12
1984	52	0.16
1985	42	0.13
1986	35	0.10
1987	45	0.13
1988	42	0.12
1989	40	0.12
1990	63	0.18
1991	58	0.16
1992	50	0.14
1993	46	0.13
1994	49	0.13
1995	Inc.	Inc.
1996	37	0.10
1997	36	0.09
1998	42	0.11
1999	32	0.08
2000	35	0.09
2001	37	0.09
2002	27	0.07

Notes: Victims were included if there was an associated family victim to offender relationship. 1995 data were excluded due to incomplete data. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationship.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Family Murder Victimization Rate



Other family, which includes aunts, uncles, cousins and extended family members, was the most frequently reported victim to offender relationship among family murders.

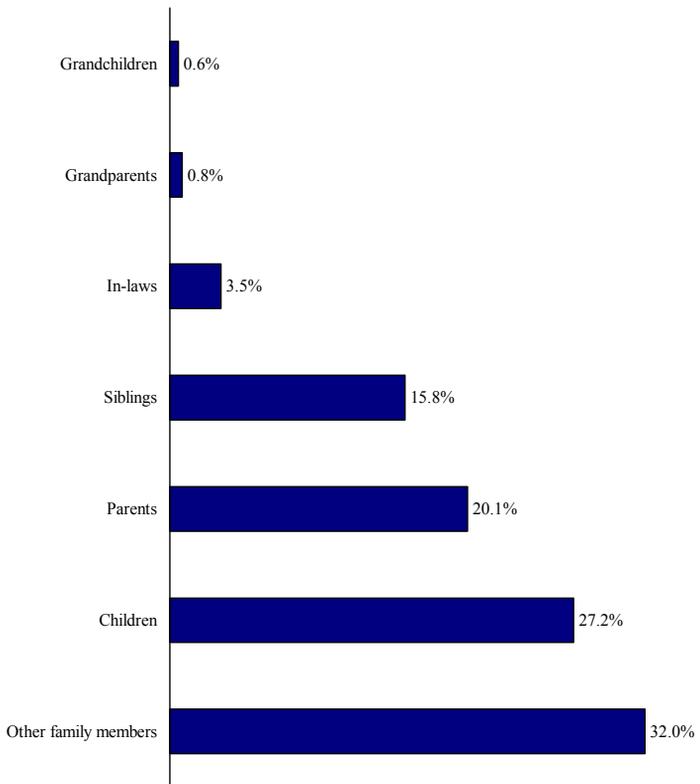
**FAMILY MURDER VICTIM TO OFFENDER
RELATIONSHIPS
1977 - 2002**

Victim was:	Number	Percent
Child	323	27.2%
Grandchild	7	0.6%
Grandparent	10	0.8%
In-law	41	3.5%
Other family member	380	32.0%
Parent	238	20.1%
Sibling	188	15.8%
Total	1,187	100.0%

Notes: Step-parent, step-child and step-sibling was included with parent, child and sibling, respectively. Victims were included if there was an associated family victim to offender relationship. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationships.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Family Murder by Relationship 1977 - 2002



The murder victimization rate for the Known category reached a high of 0.57 in 1979.

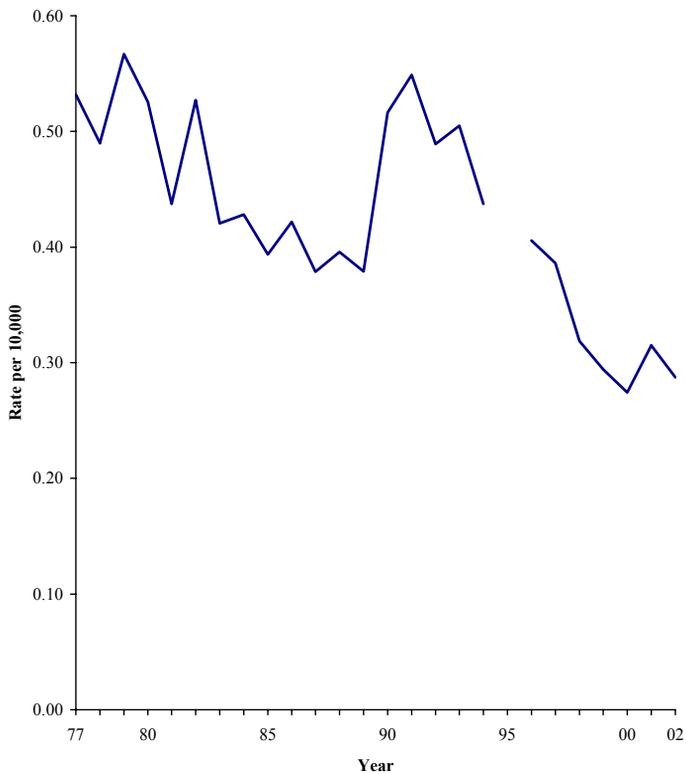
MURDER VICTIMIZATION RATE FOR KNOWN VICTIMS

Year	Number	Rate
1977	159	0.53
1978	149	0.49
1979	175	0.57
1980	164	0.53
1981	139	0.44
1982	169	0.53
1983	136	0.42
1984	140	0.43
1985	130	0.39
1986	141	0.42
1987	128	0.38
1988	135	0.40
1989	131	0.38
1990	180	0.52
1991	196	0.55
1992	177	0.49
1993	185	0.51
1994	162	0.44
1995	Inc.	Inc.
1996	154	0.41
1997	149	0.39
1998	125	0.32
1999	117	0.29
2000	110	0.27
2001	128	0.32
2002	118	0.29

Notes: Victims were included if there was an associated Known victim to offender relationship. 1995 data were excluded due to incomplete data. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationships.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Victimization Rate for Known Murder Victims



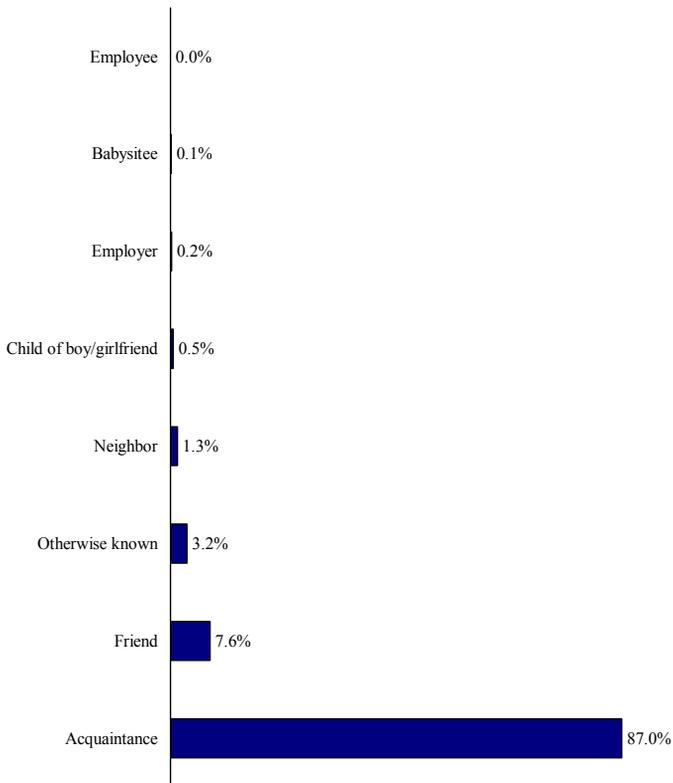
Acquaintances accounted for 87% of victims in the Known category.

**KNOWN MURDER VICTIM TO OFFENDER
RELATIONSHIPS
1977 – 2002**

Victim was:	Number	Percent
Acquaintance	4,204	87.0%
Babysitee (the child)	7	0.1%
Child of boy/girlfriend	26	0.5%
Employee	2	<0.1%
Employer	10	0.2%
Friend	368	7.6%
Neighbor	63	1.3%
Otherwise known	153	3.2%
Total	4,833	100.0%

Notes: Victims were included if there was an associated Known victim to offender relationship. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationships.
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Known Murder Victimization Relationships 1977 - 2002



The murder victimization rate for strangers ranged from 0.08 to 0.21.

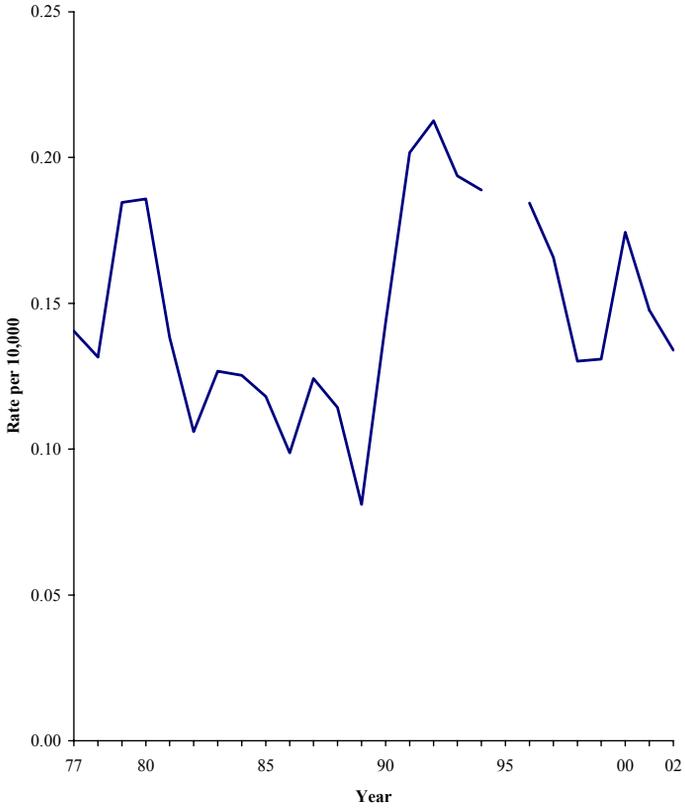
STRANGER MURDER VICTIMIZATION RATE

Year	Number	Rate
1977	42	0.14
1978	40	0.13
1979	57	0.18
1980	58	0.19
1981	44	0.14
1982	34	0.11
1983	41	0.13
1984	41	0.13
1985	39	0.12
1986	33	0.10
1987	42	0.12
1988	39	0.11
1989	28	0.08
1990	50	0.14
1991	72	0.20
1992	77	0.21
1993	71	0.19
1994	70	0.19
1995	Inc.	Inc.
1996	70	0.18
1997	64	0.17
1998	51	0.13
1999	52	0.13
2000	70	0.17
2001	60	0.15
2002	55	0.13

Notes: Victims were included if there was an associated victim to offender relationship of stranger. 1995 data were excluded due to incomplete data. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationships.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS, ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Stranger Murder Incident Rate



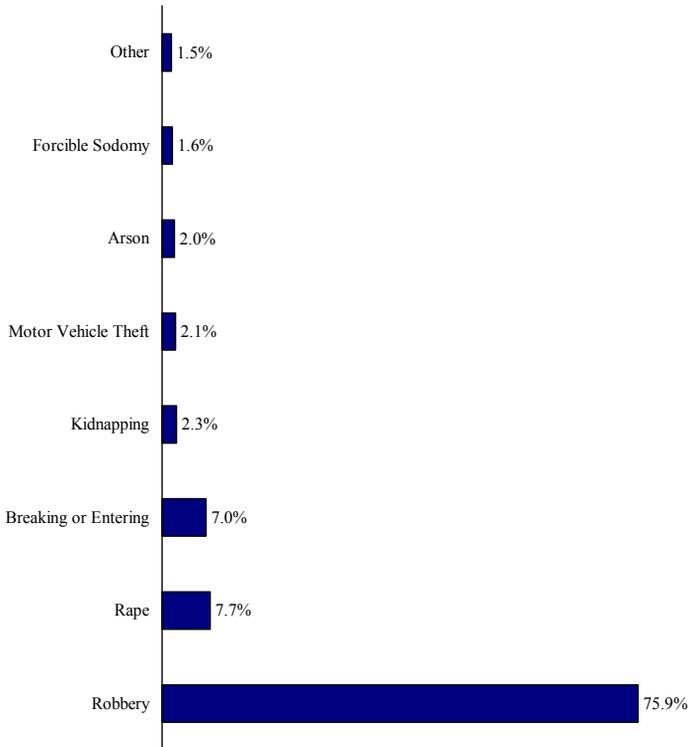
Robbery was involved in 34.5% of murders where a stranger was involved. Robbery was the offense most often reported in association with murders involving strangers.

**OFFENSES ASSOCIATED WITH MURDERS
INVOLVING STRANGERS
1977 – 2002**

Offense	Number	Percent
Arson	12	2.0%
Breaking or Entering	43	7.0%
Forcible Sodomy	10	1.6%
Kidnapping	14	2.3%
Motor Vehicle Theft	13	2.1%
Other	9	1.4%
Rape	47	7.7%
Robbery	465	75.9%
Total	613	100.0%

Notes: Unit of count – victims, offenses.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Additional Offenses in Murder Victimization Involving Strangers 1977 - 2002



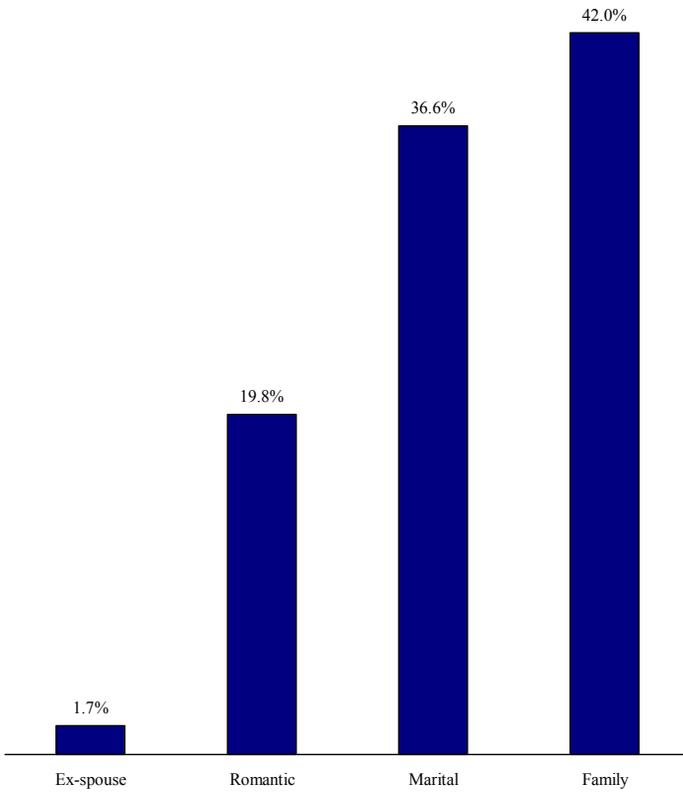
Family relationships accounted for 42% of domestic murder relationships. Domestic relationships are defined as ex-spouse, romantic, marital or family members.

**DOMESTIC MURDER VICTIM TO OFFENDER
RELATIONSHIPS
1977 - 2002**

Victim was:	Number	Percent
Ex-spouse	47	1.6%
Family	1,187	42.0%
Marital	1,034	36.6%
Romantic	559	19.8%
Total	2,827	100.0%

Notes: For the purpose of this report, a domestic relationship was defined as a victim to offender relationship involving marriage (current or past), a romantic relationship or a familial relationship. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationships.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Domestic Murder Relationships



The domestic murder victimization rate ranged from 0.39 to 0.17.

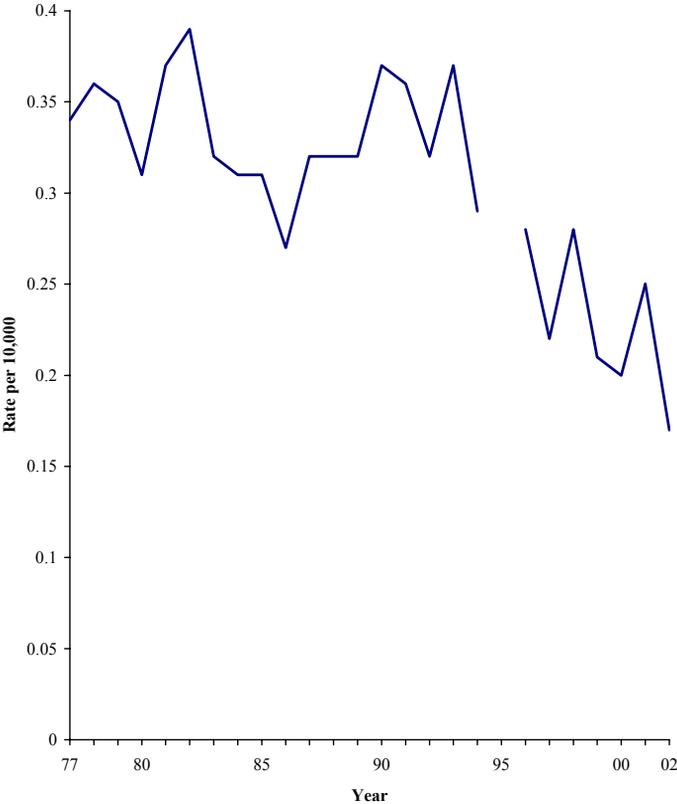
DOMESTIC MURDER VICTIMIZATION RATE

Year	Number	Rate
1977	103	0.34
1978	110	0.36
1979	109	0.35
1980	96	0.31
1981	117	0.37
1982	124	0.39
1983	104	0.32
1984	101	0.31
1985	104	0.31
1986	90	0.27
1987	107	0.32
1988	110	0.32
1989	111	0.32
1990	130	0.37
1991	127	0.36
1992	117	0.32
1993	135	0.37
1994	109	0.29
1995	Inc.	Inc.
1996	106	0.28
1997	84	0.22
1998	109	0.28
1999	82	0.21
2000	82	0.20
2001	100	0.25
2002	70	0.17

Notes: Victims were included if there was an associated domestic victim to offender relationship. 1995 data were excluded due to incomplete data. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationships.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Domestic Murder Rate



Domestic murder victims were most often between the ages of 25 and 34.

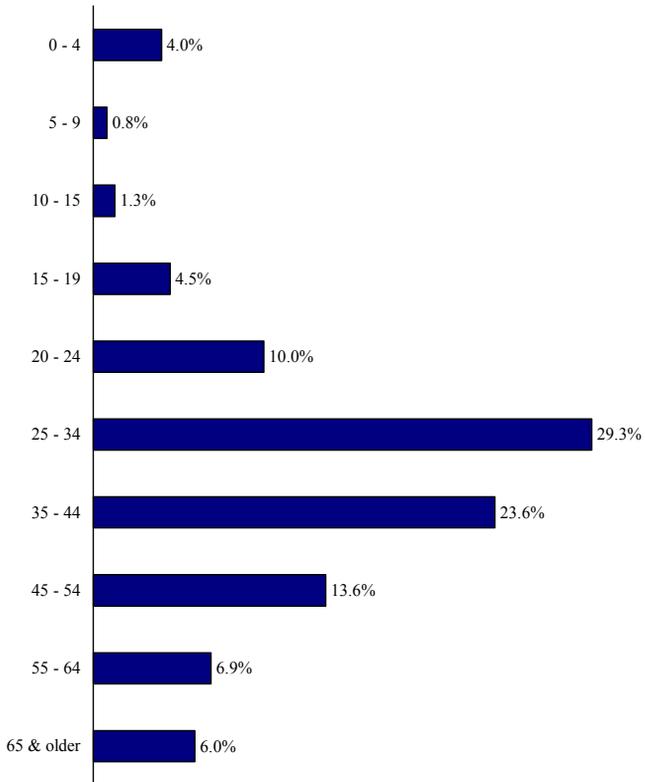
**DOMESTIC MURDER VICTIMS BY AGE
1977 – 2002**

Age	Number	Percent
0 - 4	105	4.0%
5 - 9	21	0.8%
10 - 15	33	1.3%
15 - 19	118	4.5%
20 - 24	262	10.0%
25 - 34	766	29.3%
35 - 44	617	23.6%
45 - 54	357	13.6%
55 - 64	181	6.9%
65 & older	156	6.0%
Total	2,616	100.0%

Notes: Victims with missing age data were excluded. Victims were included if there was an associated domestic victim to offender relationship. Unit of count – victims, victim to offender relationships.

Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Domestic Murder by Age Group 1977 - 2002



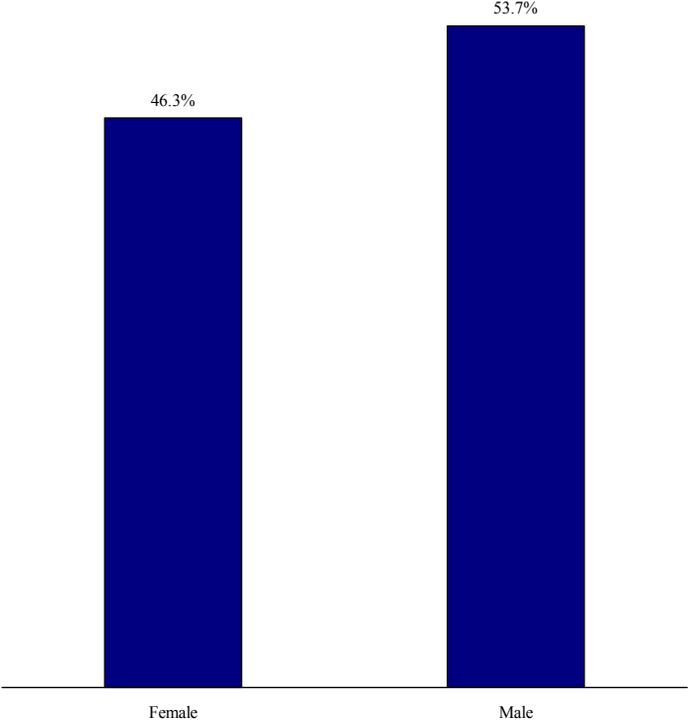
Males accounted for 53.7% of domestic murder victims.

**DOMESTIC MURDER VICTIMS BY SEX
1977 – 2002**

Sex	Number	Percent
Female	1,255	46.3%
Male	1,458	53.7%
Total	2,713	100.0%

Note: Unit of count – victims, domestic victim to offender relationship.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

**Domestic Murder Victims by Sex
1977 - 2002**



Blacks accounted for 55.3% of domestic murder victims.

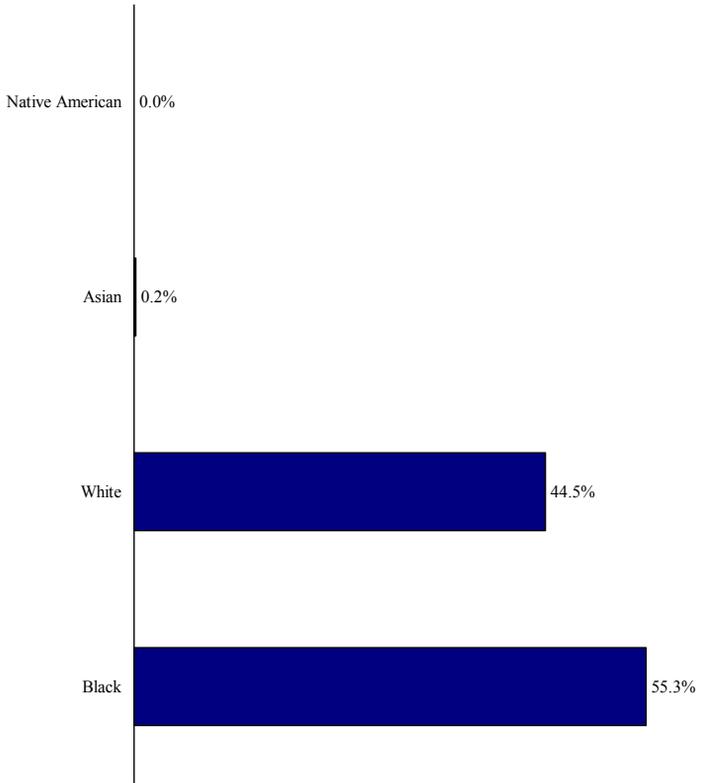
**DOMESTIC MURDER VICTIMS BY RACE
1977 – 2002**

Race	Number	Percent
Asian	5	0.2%
Black	1,500	55.3%
Native American	1	<0.1%
White	1,206	44.5%
Total	2,712	100.0%

Notes: One case for which race was unknown was excluded. Unit of count – victims, domestic relationships.

Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Domestic Murder Victims by Race 1977 - 2002



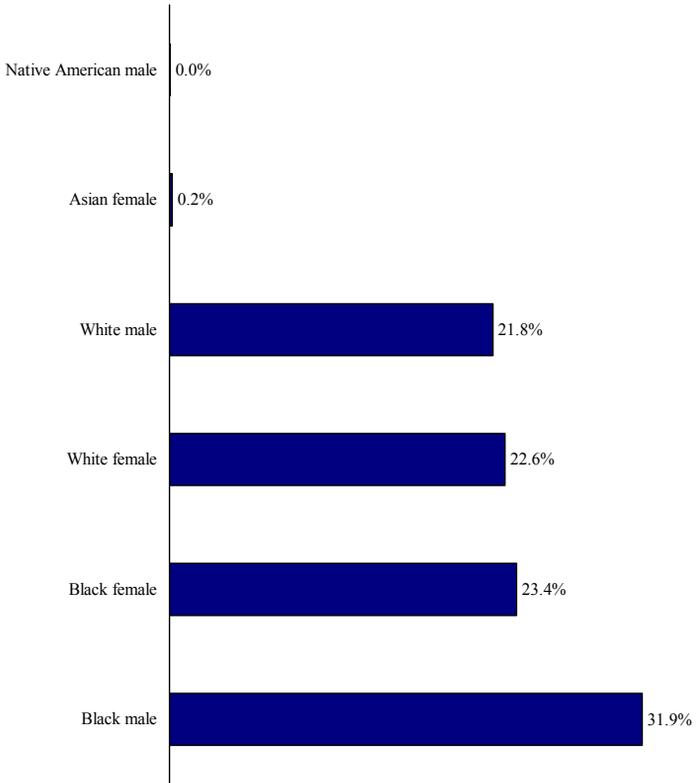
Black males comprised the single largest race/sex group among domestic murder victims.

**DOMESTIC MURDER VICTIMS BY RACE/SEX
1977 – 2002**

Race/Sex	Number	Percent
Asian female	5	0.2%
Asian male	0	0.0%
Black female	635	23.4%
Black male	865	31.9%
Native American female	0	0.0%
Native American male	1	<0.1%
White female	614	22.7%
White male	592	21.8%
Total	2,712	100.0%

Notes: One case for which race was unknown was excluded. Unit of count - victims, domestic relationship.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Domestic Murder Victims by Race/Sex 1977 - 2002



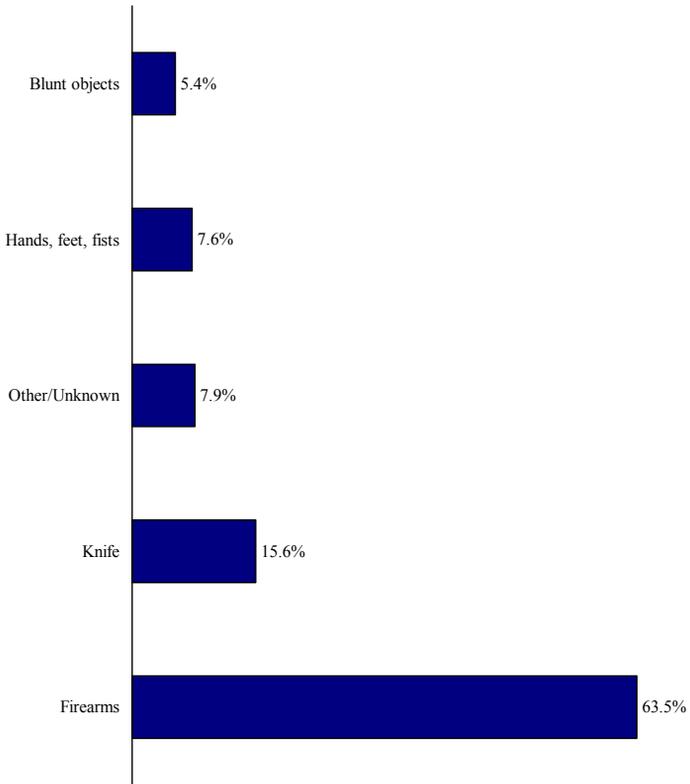
Firearms accounted for 63.5% of weapon involvement in domestic murder.

**WEAPON USE IN DOMESTIC MURDER
1977 – 2002**

Weapon	Number	Percent
Blunt objects	153	5.4%
Firearms	1,787	63.5%
Hands, feet, fists	213	7.6%
Knife	438	15.6%
Other/Unknown	222	7.9%
Total	2,813	100.0%

Note: Unit of count – incidents, victim to offender relationships.
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Weapon Use in Domestic Murder 1977 - 2002



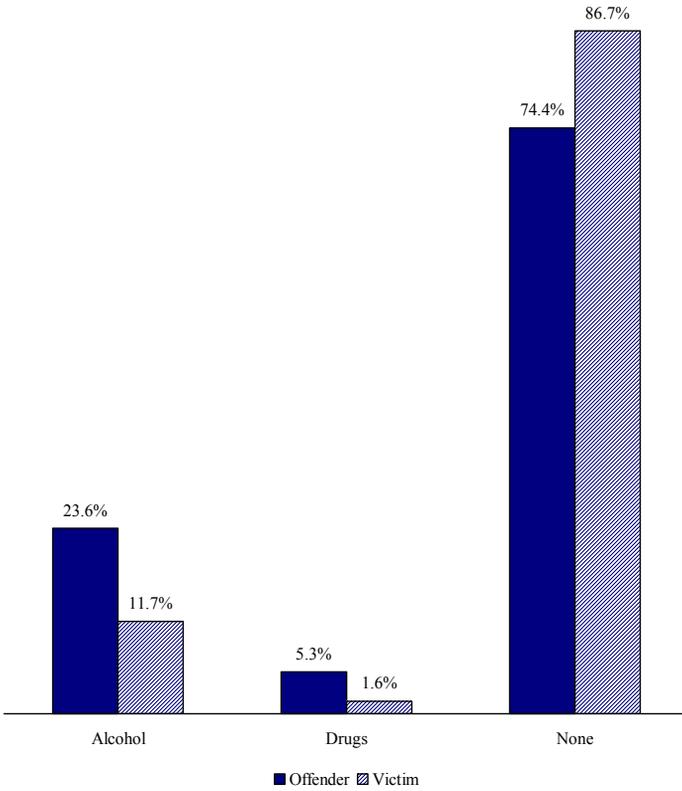
Alcohol use by the offender was involved in 23.6% of domestic murder incidents.

**SUBSTANCE USE IN DOMESTIC MURDER
1977 – 2002**

Substance	Offender	Victim
Alcohol	23.6%	11.7%
Drugs	5.3%	1.6%
None	74.4%	86.7%

Notes: The total percent exceeds 100 due to incidents where both alcohol and drug use was reported. Unit of count – incidents, substance use.
Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Substance Use in Domestic Murder 1977 - 2002



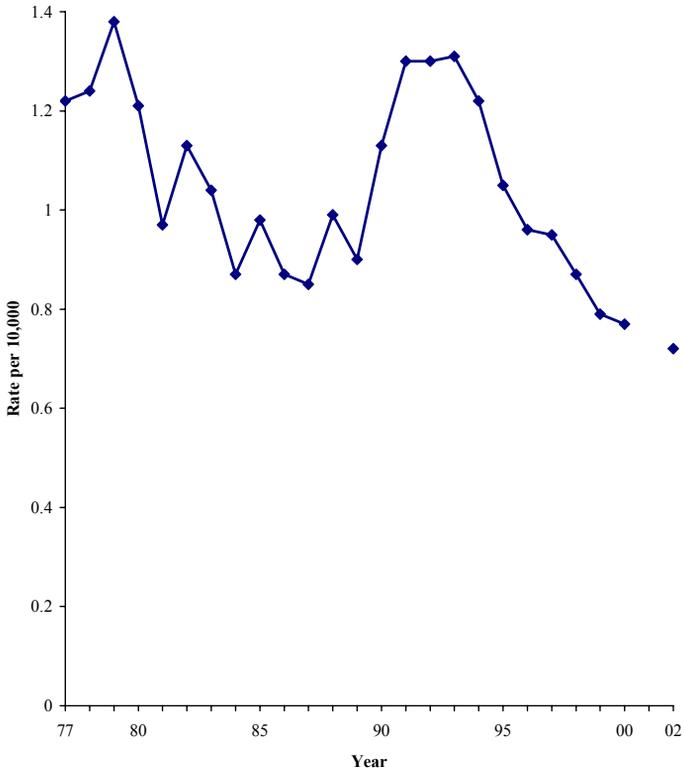
The murder arrest rate in South Carolina decreased 40.9% from 1977 to 2002.

**MURDER ARREST RATE
1977 – 2002**

Year	Number	Rate
1977	346	1.22
1978	356	1.24
1979	403	1.38
1980	378	1.21
1981	307	0.97
1982	361	1.13
1983	334	1.04
1984	283	0.87
1985	323	0.98
1986	289	0.87
1987	288	0.85
1988	336	0.99
1989	310	0.90
1990	397	1.13
1991	463	1.30
1992	467	1.30
1993	476	1.31
1994	447	1.22
1995	340	1.05
1996	355	0.96
1997	358	0.95
1998	355	0.87
1999	306	0.79
2000	310	0.77
2001	Inc.	Inc.
2002	295	0.72

Notes: Arrest data for 2001 were incomplete and not available from *Crime in South Carolina* and were therefore excluded for trend purposes. Unit of count – arrestees.
Sources: SLED, *Crime in South Carolina*.

Murder Arrest Rate 1977 - 2002



Murder arrestees were most often young adults in the 17 to 24 age group. Juveniles accounted for 4.3% of murder arrests.

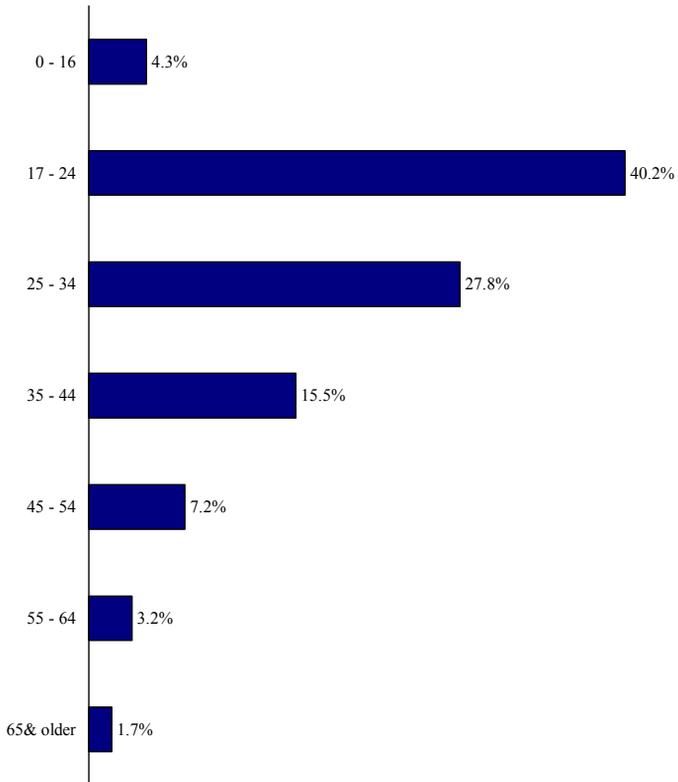
**MURDER ARRESTEES BY AGE GROUP
1977 – 2002**

Age Group	Number	Percent
0 - 16	347	4.3%
17 - 24	3,231	40.2%
25 - 34	2,236	27.8%
35 - 44	1,247	15.5%
45 - 54	580	7.2%
55 - 64	261	3.2%
65& older	139	1.7%
Total	8,041	100.0%

Notes: Arrestees with missing age data or age ranges were excluded. Unit of count – arrestees.

Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Murder Arrestees by Age Group 1977 - 2002



The 20 to 24 age group had the highest rate of arrest for murder.

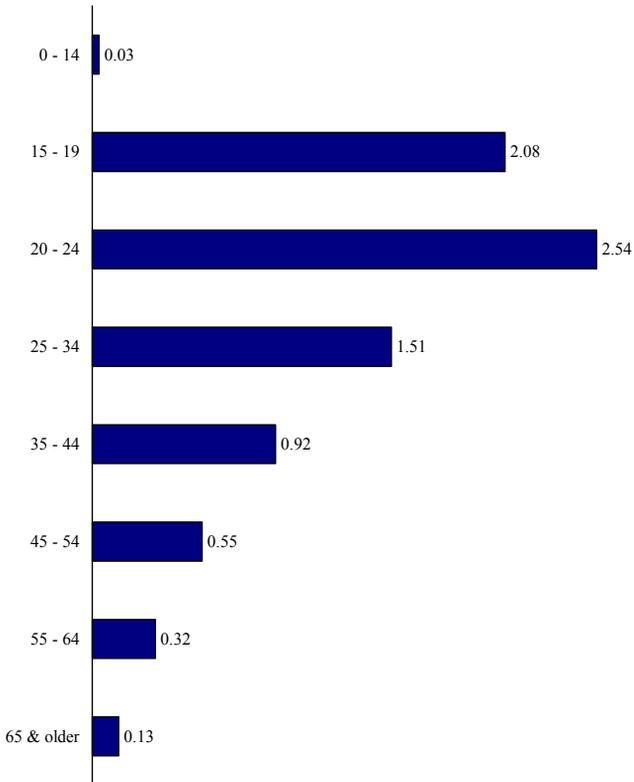
**MURDER ARREST RATE BY AGE GROUP
1977 – 2002**

Age Group	Number	Rate
0 - 14	70	0.03
15 - 19	1,545	2.08
20 - 24	1,963	2.54
25 - 34	2,236	1.51
35 - 44	1,247	0.92
45 - 54	580	0.55
55 - 64	261	0.32
65 & older	139	0.13

Notes: Arrestees with missing age data or age ranges were excluded. Population estimates for age groups for 1977, 1978 and 1979 were extrapolated on the basis of 1980 through 2002 estimates. Unit of count – arrestees.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Murder Arrest Rates by Age Group 1977 - 2002



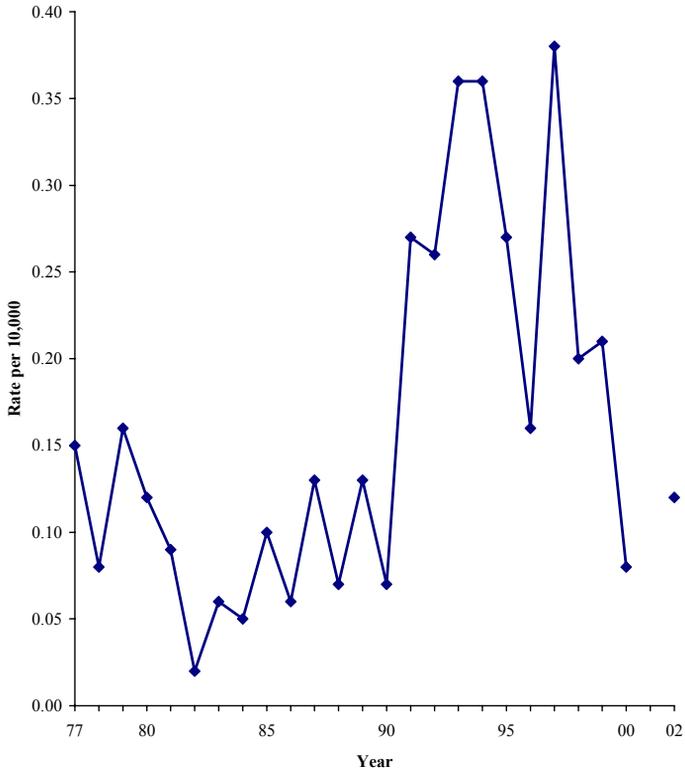
The juvenile murder arrest rate ranged from 0.07 to 0.38. Overall, juveniles accounted for 4.3% of those arrested for murder.

**JUVENILE MURDER ARREST RATE
1977 – 2002**

Year	Number	Rate
1977	13	0.15
1978	7	0.08
1979	14	0.16
1980	11	0.12
1981	8	0.09
1982	2	0.02
1983	5	0.06
1984	4	0.05
1985	9	0.10
1986	5	0.06
1987	11	0.13
1988	6	0.07
1989	11	0.13
1990	6	0.07
1991	24	0.27
1992	23	0.26
1993	32	0.36
1994	32	0.36
1995	24	0.27
1996	14	0.16
1997	34	0.38
1998	18	0.20
1999	19	0.21
2000	8	0.08
2001	Inc.	Inc.
2002	12	0.12

Notes: Arrest data for 2001 were incomplete and not available from *Crime in South Carolina* and were therefore excluded for trend purposes. Unit of count – arrestees.
Source: SLED, *Crime in South Carolina*.

Juvenile Murder Arrest Rate 1977 - 2002



Among those arrested for murder, 67.9% were Black and 31.7% were White.

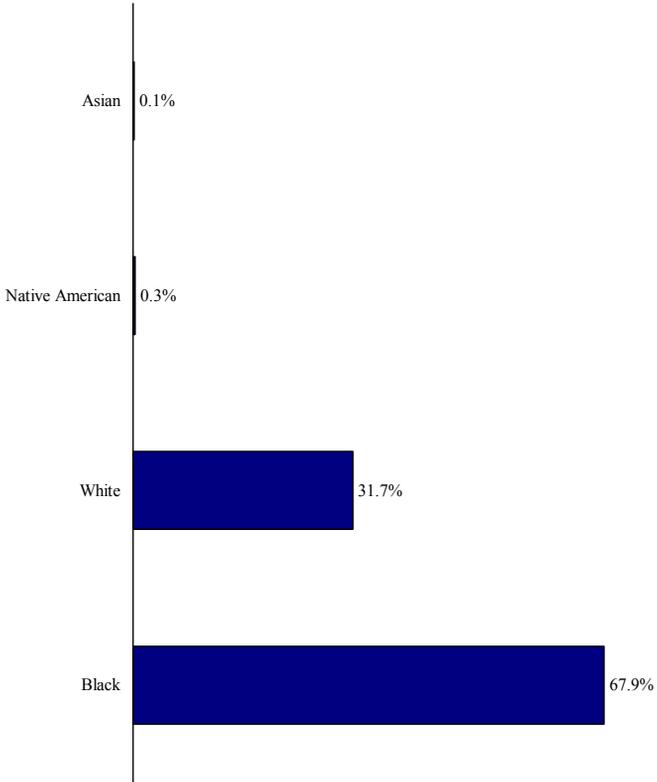
**MURDER ARRESTEES BY RACE
1977 – 2002**

Race	Number	Percent
Asian	10	0.1%
Black	5,468	67.9%
Native American	24	0.3%
White	2,551	31.7%
Total	8,053	100.0%

Notes: Arrestees for whom race was unknown or missing were excluded. Unit of count – arrestees.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Murder Arrestees by Race 1977 - 2002



The murder arrest rate for Non-Whites was higher than the rate for Whites.

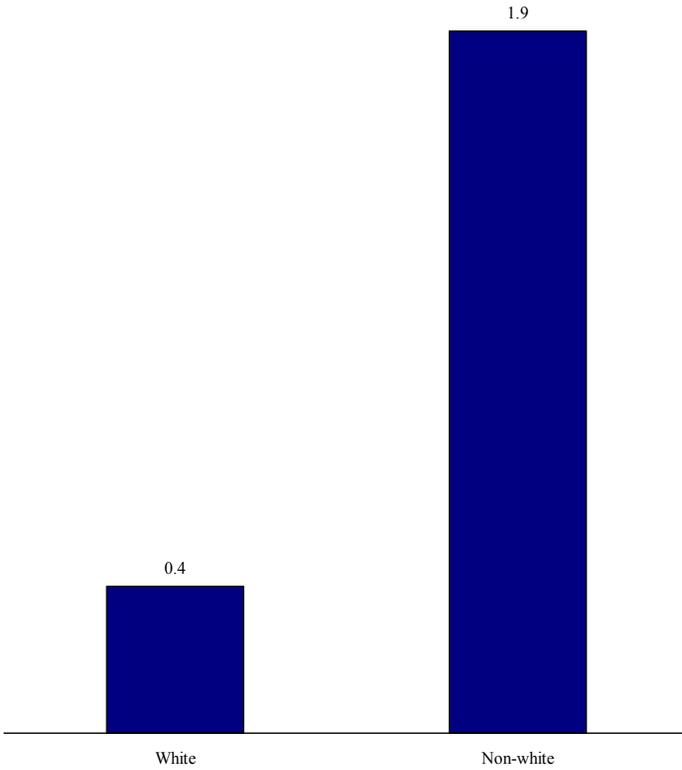
**MURDER ARREST RATE BY RACIAL GROUP
1977 – 2002**

Racial group	Number	Rate
White	2,551	0.4
Non-white	5,502	1.9

Notes: Population data necessary for calculating victimization rates were not available for Asians and Native Americans. For the purpose of calculating arrest rates Asian and Native American arrestees were combined with Black arrestees to form a comprehensive racial group, Non-White. Population estimates for racial categories for 1977, 1978 and 1979 were extrapolated on the basis of 1980 through 2002 estimates. Unit of count – arrestees.

Source: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Murder Arrest Rate by Racial Category 1977 - 2002



Murder arrestees were more often Non-Hispanic than Hispanic.

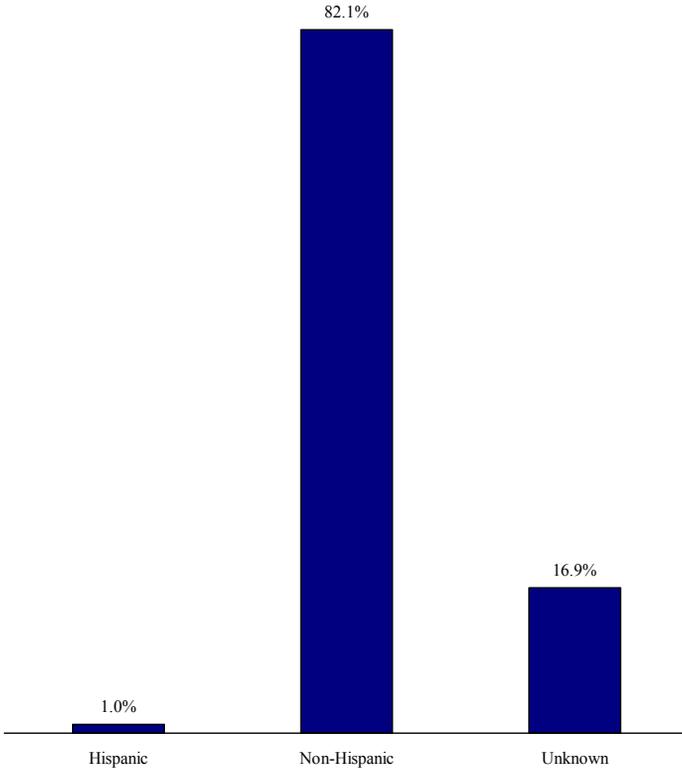
**MURDER ARRESTEES BY ETHNICITY
1977 – 2002**

Ethnicity	Number	Percent
Hispanic	82	1.0%
Non-Hispanic	6,798	82.1%
Unknown	1,403	16.9%
Total	8,283	100.0%

Notes: Arrestees with missing ethnicity data were excluded. Unit of count – arrestees.

Source: SLED, SCIBRS.

Murder Arrestees by Ethnicity 1977 - 2002



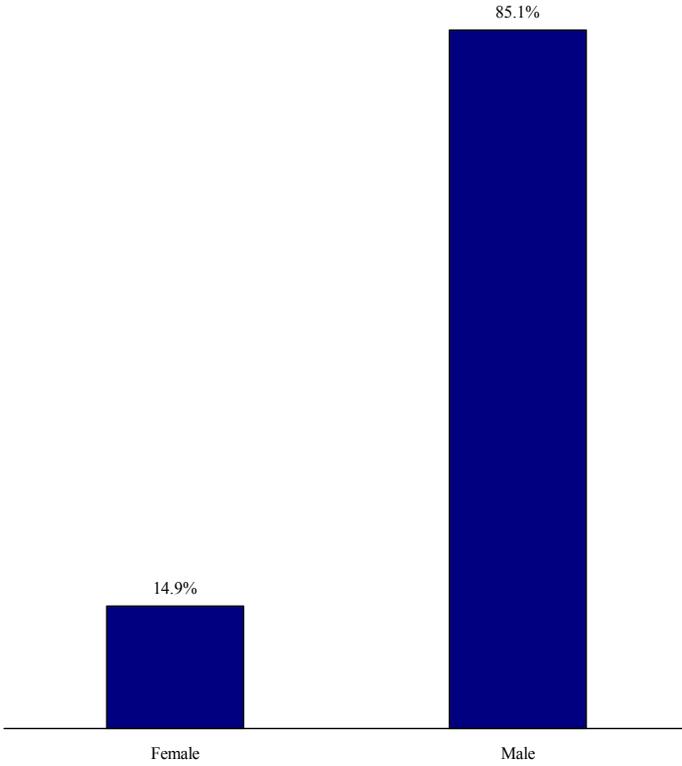
Males accounted for 85.1% of people arrested for murder.

**MURDER ARRESTEES BY SEX
1977 – 2002**

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Female	1,201	14.9%
Male	6,854	85.1%
Total	8,055	100.0%

Note: Unit of count – arrestees.
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

**Murder Arrestees by Sex
1977 - 2002**



The murder arrest rate for males was 1.52 per 10,000 compared to 0.25 for females.

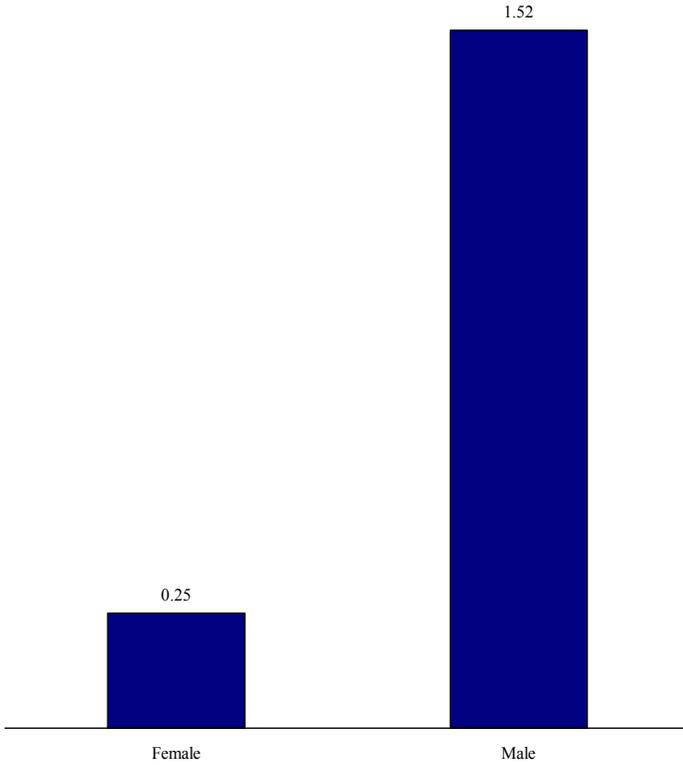
**MURDER ARREST RATE BY SEX
1977 – 2002**

Sex	Number	Rate
Female	1,201	0.25
Male	6,854	1.52

Notes: arrestees for whom sex was missing or unknown were excluded. Unit of count – arrestees.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; ORS, unpublished population estimates.

Murder Arrest Rate by Sex 1977 - 2002



Summary

The murder rate has been on a general pattern of decline since 1977. With the exception of a marked increase in the early 1990s, declining murder rates have been characteristic of this 26 year period. Despite this decline South Carolina's murder rate has been higher than the national average every year except one during that time period.

This pattern of decrease holds true across different types of murder. Murder rates for murders involving strangers, family relationships, romantic partners, domestic relationships, firearms and handguns declined during this time period.

The involvement of alcohol use by offenders in nearly a quarter of all murders is noteworthy. Equally notable is the relatively low involvement of drug or narcotic use by offenders. Victims are less likely to have been using alcohol or drugs than offenders, but a similar pattern of higher alcohol use than drug use holds true for murder victims.

Firearm use is a factor that stands out as an important associated factor. Approximately two-thirds of all murders involved firearms. Of the firearms involved in murder incidents, 70% were handguns.

Demographic factors were also found to be important. Young adults were more likely to be victims of murder than any other age group. Young adults were similarly more likely to be arrested in connection to murder. Juveniles, age 16 and younger in South Carolina, accounted for less than 5% of murder arrests.

African-Americans were more likely to be murder victims than Whites. Similarly, African-Americans were more likely to be arrested for murder than Whites. Hispanics accounted for a very small portion of murder victims and arrestees. However the relatively large number of murder arrestees for whom ethnicity could not be determined is a possible indicator of problems with the reliability of ethnicity data.

Overall, men were more likely to be murder victims than women. However in murders involving marital or romantic relationships between the victim and offender, the victims were more likely to be female. Men were much more likely to be arrested for murder than women.

Implications for future SCIBRS based murder research include detailed analysis of specific situations such as the murder of children or the elderly, murder for robbery or domestic murder. Analysis of certain offender populations such as juveniles, spouses or romantic partners might also provide useful findings. However, the value of any SCIBRS based analysis would be greatly enhanced by utilizing other data sources such as computerized criminal history records in tandem with SCIBRS data. An example of such analysis might be charting the criminal histories of domestic murders to determine if they are the outcome of chronic abuse situations or if they are the one-time result of a single, unpredictable event. Whatever topical issues are pursued, it is important that SCIBRS continue to provide a reliable basis of information for policy decisions concerning this most serious of all offenses.

Sources

Published:

Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States 1977 – 2002*.

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South Carolina Budget and Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics; unpublished population estimates.

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