

# HOMICIDE

IN CALIFORNIA

2001



California Department of Justice  
Bill Lockyer, Attorney General  
Division of California Justice Information Services

Crimes      Arrests      Death Penalty Sentences  
Peace Officers Killed      Justifiable Homicides  
Data Tables      Appendices

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*Homicide in California, 2001* contains information about the crime of homicide and its victims, demographic data on persons arrested for homicide, and information about the response of the criminal justice system. Information about the death penalty, the number of peace officers killed in the line of duty, and justifiable homicide is also included.

Information displayed in this publication comes from several databases maintained by the California Department of Justice (DOJ). The primary source of information is the Homicide File which captures willful and justifiable homicide crime data. Other databases capture information about persons arrested for homicide, death penalty sentences, and peace officers killed in the line of duty. The reader should consider that the type of data collected, and the methods used to collect these data, differ for each data set. *Unless otherwise indicated, all calculations are based on the number of known incidents.*

To provide the most valid data possible, the disposition section of this report has been removed. In 2001, Criminal Justice Statistics Center (CJSC) staff determined that a number of homicide arrests submitted to the DOJ's Automated Criminal History System (from which adult felony arrest disposition data are extracted) from 1997 to 2000 should have been submitted as arrests for attempted homicide. In addition, some correctly submitted attempted homicide arrests were programmatically treated as homicide arrests. As a result, more homicide arrests were counted during these years than occurred. This caused the percentage of homicide convictions to be too low and the percentage of assault convictions to be too high. (Both percentages were based on the number of adult felony arrests for homicide for which dispositions were received.) Based on CJSC staff findings, the reader is advised against using previously published disposition data for 1997 to 1999. It should be noted that the DOJ has addressed this issue and that the exclusion of disposition data does not affect crime, arrest, death penalty, or other data included in this or past reports. When homicide disposition data are once again determined to be accurate, they will be included in this publication.

CJSC publications available in either printed or electronic format (via the Attorney General's website) are listed on the inside of the back cover. Customized statistical reports or additional statistical information may be requested by contacting the CJSC at the numbers or addresses provided there.

## **HOMICIDE CRIMES** (see pages 2-23)

- From 1992 to 2001, the homicide crime rate decreased 49.6 percent (12.5 to 6.3). However, from 2000 to 2001, homicide crimes increased 5.0 percent in rate per 100,000 population (6.0 to 6.3). (Source: Table 1.)
- Since 1992, homicide rates have decreased for all gender, race/ethnic, and age groups shown. Victims under age 18 experienced the highest rate of decline (down 56.9 percent). (Sources: Tables 2, 3, and 4.)
- In 2001, the percentage of white homicide victims who were female was over 2½ times the percentage of Hispanic and black victims who were female. White victims tended to be older, Hispanic and black victims younger. (Sources: Tables 8 and 9.)
- In 2001, the percentage of homicide victims killed by friends or acquaintances (45.8 percent) was the lowest since 1992. (Source: Table 11.)
- The percentage of females killed by their spouses was over 12 times larger than the percentage of males killed by their spouses in 2001. (Source: Table 12.)
- In 2001, 10 of California's 58 counties exceeded the 2001 statewide homicide rate of 6.3 victims per 100,000 population. (Source: Table 14.)
- In 2001, males were more likely to be killed on streets or sidewalks and less likely to be killed in their residences; the inverse was true for females.  
(See page 16 and Table 19.)
- Since 1992, more homicide victims have been killed by firearms than by all other types of weapons combined. Seventy-two percent of homicide victims and 85 percent of homicide victims aged 18-29 were killed with firearms in 2001.  
(Sources: Tables 21 and 23.)
- In 2001, over one-third (34.3 percent) of homicides were gang-related.  
(Source: Table 24.)
- Approximately one-half (49.6 percent) of homicides were cleared by an arrest or by "exceptional means" in 2001. (Source: Table 28.)

## **HOMICIDE ARRESTS** (see pages 26-29)

- From 1992 to 2001, the homicide arrest rate decreased 53.2 percent (14.1 to 6.6). However, from 2000 to 2001, homicide arrests increased 6.5 percent in rate per 100,000 population at risk (6.2 to 6.6). (Source: Table 29.)
- From 1992 to 2001, the overwhelming majority of homicide arrestees and victims were male. (Sources: Tables 5 and 30.)
- From 1992 to 2001, the largest percentage of homicide arrestees and victims were Hispanic. (Sources: Tables 6 and 31.)
- From 1992 to 2001, the largest percentage of homicide arrestees and victims were aged 18-29. (Sources: Tables 7 and 32.)

## **DEATH PENALTY SENTENCES** (see pages 32-33)

- By the end of 2001, 610 persons were under sentence of death in California. Of these, 25 were sentenced in 2001. (Source: Table 35.)

## **PEACE OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY** (see pages 36-37)

- Since 1992, 63 peace officers have been feloniously killed in the line of duty. Six were killed in 2001. (Source: Table N-2.)
- Between 1992 and 2001, the homicide rate for peace officers killed in the line of duty varied from 2.9 to 16.1 per 100,000 sworn law enforcement personnel. (Source: Table 37.)

To Crimes (part 1) 