

HOMICIDE IN CALIFORNIA

2000



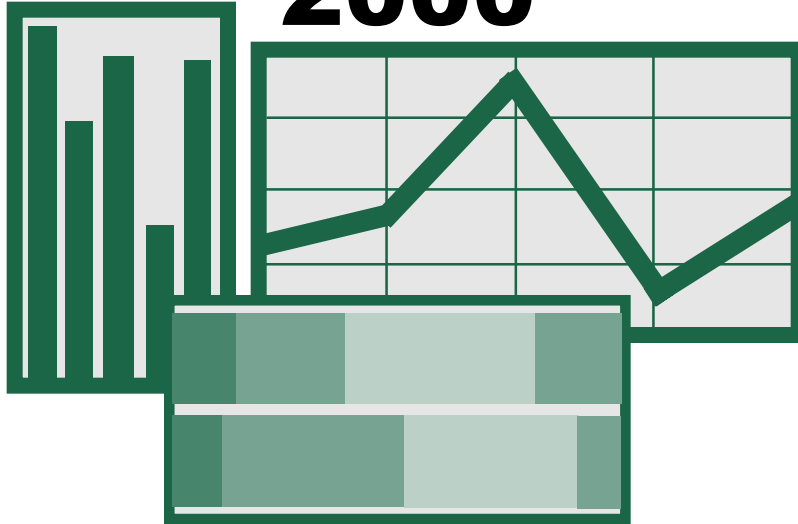
California Department of Justice
Bill Lockyer, Attorney General
Division of Criminal Justice Information Services

**CRIMES
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HOMICIDE

2000



The real problem is in the hearts and minds of men.
It is easier to denature plutonium than to
denature the evil spirit of man.

Albert Einstein
(1879-1955)

Bill Lockyer, Attorney General
California Department of Justice
Division of Criminal Justice Information Services
Bureau of Criminal Information and Analysis
CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATISTICS CENTER

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The role of the Criminal Justice Statistics Center is to:

- Collect, analyze, and report statistical data which provide valid measures of crime and the criminal justice process;
- Examine these data on an ongoing basis to better describe crime and the criminal justice system;
- Promote the responsible presentation and use of crime statistics.

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introduction

Homicide in California, 2000 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. The primary source of information comes from 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.

In order to provide the most valid data possible the disposition section of this report has been removed. CJSC staff determined that a number of homicide arrests submitted to the Department of Justice'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, however, that the exclusion of disposition data does not affect crime, arrest, death penalty, or other data included in this or past reports.

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 provided.

highlights

HOMICIDE CRIMES (see pages 2-23)

- From 1999 to 2000, homicide crimes increased 1.7 percent in rate per 100,000 population (5.9 to 6.0). From 1991 to 2000, the homicide crime rate decreased 52.4 percent (12.6 to 6.0). (Source: Table 1.)
 - Since 1991, homicide rates have decreased for all gender, race/ethnic and age groups shown. Victims under age 18 experienced the highest rate of decline (down 57.6 percent). (Sources: Table 2, 3, and 4.)
 - In 2000, most white victims fell into the aged "40 and over" category (53.8 percent). Most Hispanic and black victims fell into the aged "18-29" category (53.2 and 47.0 percent, respectively). (Source: Table 9.)
 - From 1991 to 2000, the majority of homicide victims knew their assailant. (Source: Table 11.)
 - Proportionately, females were 82 times more likely to be killed by their spouses than were males in 2000. (Source: Table 12.)
 - In 2000, seven of California's 58 counties exceeded the 2000 statewide homicide rate of 6.0 victims per 100,000 population. (Source: Table 14.)
 - Generally, homicides occurred most often during the summertime. (Source: Table 15.)
 - In 2000, 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 1991, more homicide victims have been killed by firearms than by all other types of weapons combined. (Source: Table 21.)
 - In 2000, 49.8 percent of homicide victims aged 5-29 were killed as a result of gang-related or drug-related activities. (Source: Table 26.)
 - Over 52 percent of homicides were cleared by an arrest or by "exceptional means" in 2000. (Source: Table 28.)
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HOMICIDE ARRESTS (see pages 26-29)

- From 1999 to 2000, homicide arrests decreased 10.1 percent in rate per 100,000 population at risk (6.9 to 6.2). From 1991 to 2000, the homicide arrest rate decreased 60.8 percent (15.8 to 6.2). (Source: Table 29.)
- From 1991 to 2000, the majority of homicide arrestees and victims were male. (Source: Table 30.)
- In 2000, the largest proportion of homicide arrestees and victims were Hispanic (42.9 and 45.2 percent, respectively). The majority of homicide arrestees were aged 18-29 (56.1 percent) and the largest proportion of homicide victims were aged 18-29 (43.4 percent). (Source: Tables 6, 7, 31, and 32.)

DEATH PENALTY SENTENCES (see pages 32-33)

- By the end of 2000, 589 persons were under sentence of death in California. Of these, 33 were sentenced in 2000. (Source: Table 35.)

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

- Since 1991, 60 peace officers have been feloniously killed in the line of duty. Two were killed in 2000. (Source: Table N-2.)
- Since 1991, the homicide rate for peace officers killed in the line of duty decreased 40.8 percent per 100,000 sworn law enforcement personnel (4.9 to 2.9). (Source: Table 37.)