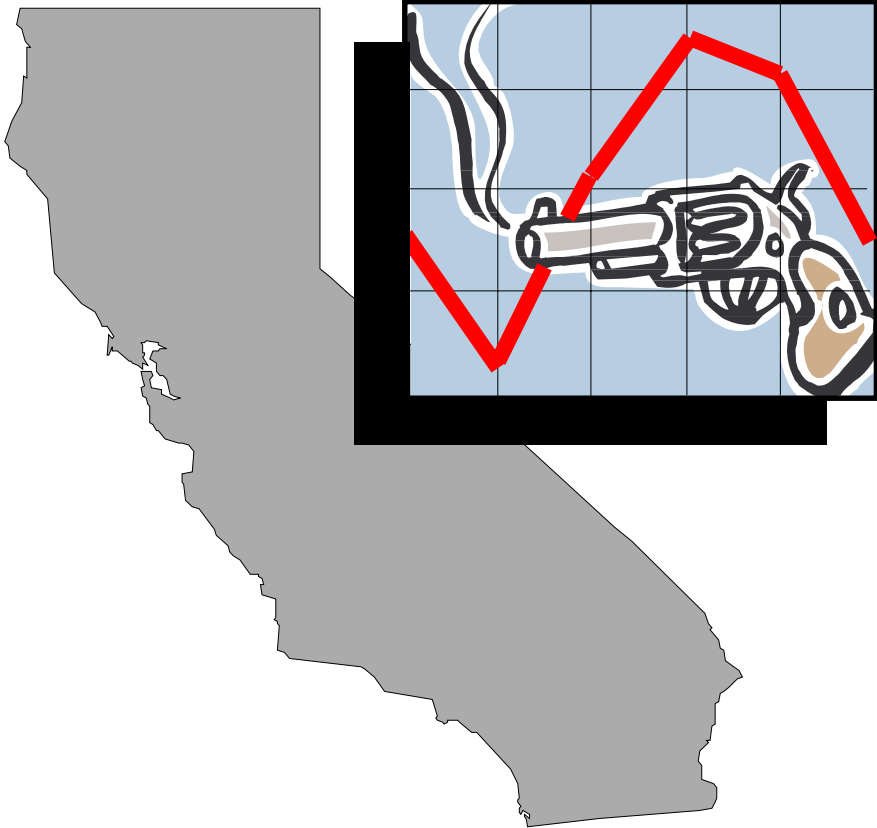


# HOMICIDE IN CALIFORNIA, 1997



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

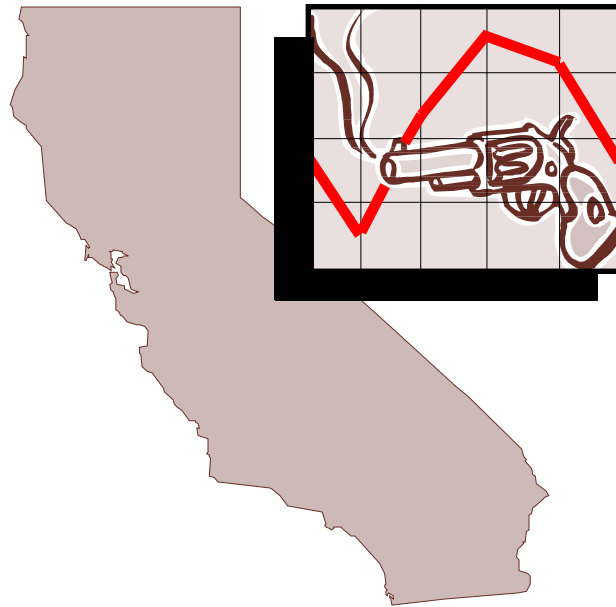
- [CJSC Home Page](#)
- [AG Home Page](#)



## **HOMICIDE IN CALIFORNIA, 1997**

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

# **HOMICIDE IN CALIFORNIA, 1997**



---

**I met Murder in the way -  
He had a mask like Castlereagh.  
SHELLY, "The Mask of Anarchy" (1819), II**

---

---

**DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION SERVICES**

Nick Dedier, Director

**BUREAU OF CRIMINAL INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS**

Doug Smith, Chief

Mike Acosta, Assistant Chief

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATISTICS CENTER**

Steve Galeria, Program Manager

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.

**STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTER**

John D. Dumbauld ..... Manager  
Adele Spears ..... Publication Coordinator/Research Analyst/Data Tables  
Ron Lai ..... Publication Consultant  
Rebecca Bowe ..... Design/Senior Graphic Artist/Internet  
Tricia Clark ..... Research Analyst  
LaTanya Henley ..... Crime Studies Technician  
Myrna Naughton ..... Adult Criminal Justice Statistical System

**STATISTICAL DATA CENTER**

Roy V. Lewis, Ph.D. .... Manager  
Debra Callahand/Marie Herbert ..... Homicide Data Base  
Benita Burgoa ..... Monthly Arrest and Citation Register Data Base

# contents



## Narrative

Introduction .....	vii
Highlights .....	viii
Homicide <u>crimes</u> .....	2
Homicide <u>arrests</u> .....	26
<u>Dispositions</u> of adults arrested for homicide .....	32
<u>Death penalty sentences</u> .....	40
<u>Peace officers killed</u> in the line of duty .....	44
<u>Justifiable homicides</u> .....	48
<u>Appendixes</u>	
Appendix I - Computational formulas .....	109
Appendix II - Criminal justice glossary .....	110
Appendix III - Publication evaluation survey results .....	112

## Charts and tables within narrative

Homicide crimes, 1952-1997 .....	2
Violent crimes, 1988-1997 .....	3
<u>Homicide crimes</u>	
Gender of victim; Race/ethnic group of victim, 1988-1997, rate per 100,000 population .....	4
Age of victim, 1988-1997, rate per 100,000 population .....	5
Gender of victim; Gender of victim by percent of total victims and percent of population, 1997 .....	6
Race/ethnic group of victim; Race/ethnic group of victim by percent of total victims and percent of population, 1997 .....	7
Age of victim; Age of victim by percent of total victims and percent of population, 1997 .....	8
Race/ethnic group of victim by gender of victim; Race/ethnic group of victim by age of victim, 1997 .....	9
Relationship of victim to offender, 1997; Selected relationships of victims to offenders, 1988-1997 .....	10
Gender of victim by relationship of victim to offender; Race/ethnic group of victim by relationship of victim to offender, 1997 .....	11
Age of victim by relationship of victim to offender, 1997 .....	12
County by rate per 100,000 population, 1997 .....	13
Season of incident, 1997; Season of incident, 1988-1997 .....	14
Race/ethnic group of victim by average daily number of incidents on weekdays and weekends; Age of victim by average daily number of incidents on weekdays and weekends, 1997 .....	15
Location of homicide; Gender of victim by location of homicide, 1997 .....	16
Race/ethnic group of victim by location of homicide; Age of victim by location of homicide, 1997 ...	17
Type of weapon used, 1997; Selected types of weapons used, 1988-1997 .....	18
Gender of victim by type of weapon used; Race/ethnic group of victim by type of weapon used, 1997 .....	19
Age of victim by type of weapon used, 1997 .....	20
Contributing circumstance, 1997; Selected contributing circumstances, 1988-1997 .....	21
Gender of victim by contributing circumstance; Race/ethnic group of victim by contributing circumstance, 1997 .....	22
Age of victim by contributing circumstance, 1997 .....	23

---

<u>Homicide arrests</u>	
Gender of arrestee, 1997 .....	26
Race/ethnic group of arrestee; Age of arrestee, 1997 .....	27
Race/ethnic group of arrestee by gender of arrestee, 1997 .....	28
Race/ethnic group of arrestee by age of arrestee, 1997 .....	29
<u>Dispositions of adults arrested for homicide</u>	
Type of disposition; Gender of arrestee by type of disposition, 1997 .....	33
Race/ethnic group of arrestee by type of disposition; Age of arrestee by type of disposition, 1997 ..	34
Convicted offense; Gender of offender by convicted offense, 1997 .....	35
Race/ethnic group of offender by convicted offense; Age of offender by convicted offense, 1997 ...	36
Convicted offense by sentence, 1997 .....	37
<u>Death penalty sentences</u>	
Persons under California sentence of death, 1978-1997 .....	41
<u>Peace officers killed in the line of duty</u>	
Total, 1988-1997; Type of weapon used, 1997 .....	44
Race/ethnic group of officer by gender of officer, 1997 .....	45
<u>Justifiable homicides</u>	
By peace officers or private citizens by gender of deceased, 1997 .....	48
Race/ethnic group of deceased; Age of deceased, 1997 .....	49
Location of justifiable homicide, 1997 .....	50
Contributing circumstance, 1997 .....	51

## Tables

<u>1 - Violent crimes, 1988-1997, number, rate per 100,000 population, and percent change .....</u>	54
<u>Homicide crimes</u>	
2 - Gender of victim, 1988-1997, number, percent, and rate per 100,000 population .....	55
3 - Race/ethnic group of victim, 1988-1997, number, percent, and rate per 100,000 population .....	56
4 - Age of victim, 1988-1997, number, percent, and rate per 100,000 population .....	57
5 - Gender of victim; 6 - Race/ethnic group of victim, 1988-1997 .....	58
7 - Age of victim, 1988-1997; 8 - Race/ethnic group of victim by gender of victim, 1997 .....	59
9 - Race/ethnic group of victim by age of victim, 1997 .....	60
10 - Race/ethnic group of victim by gender and age of victim, 1997 .....	61
11 - Relationship of victim to offender, 1988-1997 .....	62
12 - Gender and race/ethnic group of victim by relationship of victim to offender, 1997 .....	63
13 - Age of victim by relationship of victim to offender, 1997 .....	64
14 - County, number and rate per 100,000 population, 1988-1997 .....	65
15 - Season and month of incident, 1988-1997 .....	69
16 - Gender and race/ethnic group of victim by day of incident, 1997 .....	70
17 - Age of victim by day of incident, 1997 .....	71
18 - Location of homicide, 1997 .....	72
19 - Gender and race/ethnic group of victim by location of homicide, 1997 .....	73
20 - Age of victim by location of homicide, 1997 .....	74
21 - Type of weapon used, 1988-1997 .....	75
22 - Gender and race/ethnic group of victim by type of weapon used, 1997 .....	76
23 - Age of victim by type of weapon used, 1997 .....	77
24 - Contributing circumstance, 1988-1997 .....	78
25 - Gender and race/ethnic group of victim by contributing circumstance, 1997 .....	79
26 - Age of victim by contributing circumstance, 1997 .....	80
27 - Age of victim by contributing circumstance, 1997 .....	81
28 - Contributing circumstance by relationship of victim to offender, 1997 .....	82
29 - Clearances, 1988-1997, number cleared, and clearance rate .....	83

---



---

#### Homicide arrests

30 - <u>Felony arrests for selected violent offenses</u> , 1988-1997, number, rate per 100,000 population at risk, and percent change .....	84
31 - <u>Gender of arrestee</u> ; 32 - <u>Race/ethnic group of arrestee</u> , 1988-1997 .....	85
33 - <u>Age of arrestee</u> , 1988-1997 .....	86
34 - <u>Race/ethnic group of arrestee by gender and age of arrestee</u> , 1997 .....	87
35 - <u>Race/ethnic group of arrestee by gender and age of arrestee</u> , 1997 .....	88

#### Dispositions of adults arrested for homicide

36 - <u>Type of disposition</u> , 1988-1997 .....	89
37 - <u>Gender, race/ethnic group, and age of arrestee by type of disposition</u> , 1997 .....	90
38 - <u>Based on complaints filed</u> , gender, race/ethnic group, and age of arrestee by type of disposition, 1997 .....	91
39 - <u>Gender and race/ethnic group of arrestee by type of disposition</u> , 1997 .....	92
40 - <u>Age of arrestee by type of disposition</u> , 1997 .....	93
41 - <u>Convicted offense</u> , 1988-1997 .....	94
42 - <u>Gender, race/ethnic group, and age of offender by convicted offense</u> , 1997 .....	95
43 - <u>Convicted offense by sentence</u> , 1997 .....	96

#### Death penalty sentences

44 - <u>Persons under California sentence of death</u> , 1978-1997 .....	97
45 - <u>Sentencing county by gender, race/ethnic group, and age of persons sentenced to death</u> , 1997 .	98

#### Peace officers killed in the line of duty

46 - <u>Homicide crimes and peace officers killed in the line of duty</u> , 1988-1997, number and rate per 100,000 respective population; 47 - <u>Contributing circumstance</u> , 1997 .....	99
--	----

#### Justifiable homicides

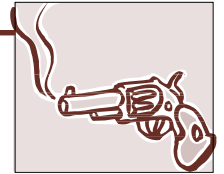
48 - <u>By peace officers or private citizens by gender, race/ethnic group, and age of deceased</u> , 1997 ...	100
49 - <u>Location of justifiable homicide</u> , 1997 .....	101
50 - <u>Contributing circumstance</u> , 1997 .....	102
51 - <u>Type of weapon used</u> , 1997 .....	103

#### Population

52 - <u>Population estimates</u> , 1952-1997 .....	104
--	-----

# introduction

---



*Homicide in California, 1997* contains information about the crime of homicide and its victims, demographic information about 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.

Most data displayed in this publication come from three data bases maintained by the California Department of Justice's Criminal Justice Statistics Center (CJSC). The Homicide File captures willful and justifiable homicide crime data; the Monthly Arrest and Citation Register captures the race/ethnic group, age, and gender of persons arrested for homicide; and the Offender-Based Transaction Statistics system captures information about types of dispositions and sentences. Because of differences in the type of data collected, and the methods used to collect these data, the reader is cautioned against comparing data from these three collection systems.

In response to the publication evaluation survey suggestions, this year's edition of *Homicide in California* includes several changes. The table of contents now lists every data element displayed, and incorporates the data table index which had been located in the back of the publication. Table N-1 (Page 2) was expanded to include 1952 (the first year data were collected) through 1997 homicide data. Rates per 100,000 population were also calculated and included for these years. Homicide clearance rates are now included (see [Table 29](#), Page 83), and CJSC publications available in either printed or electronic format (via the Internet) are listed on the inside of the back cover. Customized statistical reports or additional statistical information may be requested by contacting CJSC at the numbers provided.



# highlights

---

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

- From 1996 to 1997, homicide crimes decreased 13.3 percent in rate per 100,000 population (9.0 vs. 7.8). From 1988 to 1997, the homicide crime rate decreased 25.7 percent (10.5 vs. 7.8).
- In 1997, the black homicide victim rate was nine and one-half times that of whites and over two and one-half times that of Hispanics (29.5 vs. 3.1 and 11.1, respectively).
- The homicide rate for victims aged 40 and over decreased 38.9 percent from 1988 to 1997 (7.2 vs. 4.4).
- In 1997, most white victims fell into the "aged 40 and over" category (45.9 percent). Most Hispanic and black victims fell into the "aged 18-29" category (51.0 and 46.7 percent, respectively).
- In 1997, 65.0 percent of homicide victims knew their assailant.
- Proportionately, female victims were 17 times more likely than male victims to be the spouse of the offender (20.4 vs. 1.2 percent) in 1997.
- More victims were killed by firearms in 1997 than by all other types of weapons combined (72.3 percent).
- In 1997, 25.2 percent of homicides were gang-related; In 1988, 12.2 percent were gang-related.
- In 1997, 52.9 percent of homicide victims aged 5-17 were killed as a result of gang-related activities.



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

- From 1996 to 1997, homicide arrests decreased 13.1 percent in rate per 100,000 population at risk (9.9 vs. 8.6). From 1988 to 1997, the homicide arrest rate decreased 40.3 percent (14.4 vs. 8.6).

### **DISPOSITIONS OF ADULTS ARRESTED FOR HOMICIDE** (see Pages 32-37)

- Approximately three-fourths of adults arrested for homicide, for which 1997 dispositions were received, were convicted of homicide or some other offense.

### **DEATH PENALTY SENTENCES** (see Pages 40-41)

- By the end of 1997, 493 persons were under sentence of death in California. Of these, 40 were sentenced in 1997.

### **PEACE OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY** (see Pages 44-45)

- Since 1988, 66 peace officers have been killed in the line of duty. Seven were killed in 1997.

- [Continue on to the CRIMES Section](#)
- [Appendix Section](#)
- [CJSC Home Page](#)
- [AG Home Page](#)