

## Weapon Use and Violent Crime

with 1.5 ml of water. The mixture was stirred for 15 min and then filtered. The filtrate was dried over  $\text{CaH}_2$  and then distilled.

Age Group	No answer	No	Yes	Don't know
18-24	~10%	~10%	~70%	~10%
25-34	~10%	~10%	~60%	~20%
35-44	~10%	~10%	~50%	~30%
45-54	~10%	~10%	~40%	~40%

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Approximately half of all Americans are a member of at least one religious group, and roughly a half of all Americans are members of an evangelical Protestant denomination. Approximately 10% of Americans identify as "born again" Christians.</p> <p>2. Members of religious groups are healthier, live longer, and are less likely to be depressed than those who are not.</p> <p>3. While religious faith alone is not enough for health, it is a significant factor in the health of Americans.</p> <p>4. Religious faith alone is not enough for health, it is a significant factor in the health of Americans.</p> <p>5. Religious faith alone is not enough for health, it is a significant factor in the health of Americans.</p> | <p>6. From 1987 through 2003, the percentage of Americans who are members of religious groups has increased from 46% to 54%, and the percentage of Americans who are members of evangelical Protestant denominations has increased from 12% to 14%.</p> <p>7. The percentage of Americans who are members of religious groups has increased from 46% to 54%, and the percentage of Americans who are members of evangelical Protestant denominations has increased from 12% to 14%.</p> <p>8. The percentage of Americans who are members of religious groups has increased from 46% to 54%, and the percentage of Americans who are members of evangelical Protestant denominations has increased from 12% to 14%.</p> <p>9. The percentage of Americans who are members of religious groups has increased from 46% to 54%, and the percentage of Americans who are members of evangelical Protestant denominations has increased from 12% to 14%.</p> <p>10. The percentage of Americans who are members of religious groups has increased from 46% to 54%, and the percentage of Americans who are members of evangelical Protestant denominations has increased from 12% to 14%.</p> |
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## Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report

September 2003, NCJ 194820

*National Crime Victimization Survey, 1993-2001*

# Weapon Use and Violent Crime

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Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) indicate that between 1993 and 2001 approximately 26% of the average annual 8.9 million violent victimizations were committed by offenders armed with a weapon. About 10% of the violent victimizations involved a firearm.

From 1993 through 2001 violent crime declined 54%; weapon violence went down 59%; and firearm violence, 63%.

Males, American Indians, and Hispanics, the young, and those with the lowest annual household income were more vulnerable to weapon violence in general and firearm violence in particular than their respective counterparts.

For the 9-year period beginning with 1993, 23% of white victims of violence and 36% of black victims were victims of violence involving an offender armed with a weapon. About 7% of white victims and 17% of black victims were involved in incidents in which an offender was armed with a gun.

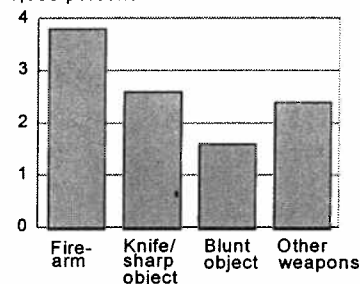
Forty-five percent of all violence with a weapon involved victims between ages 25 and 49, and 38% involved victims between ages 15 and 24.

Blacks were about 9 times more likely than whites to be victims of gun-related homicides (25 per 100,000 blacks age 12 or older versus 3 per 100,000 whites.)

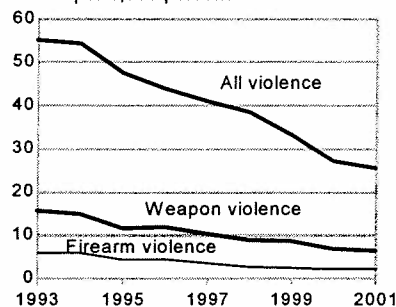
### Highlights

**For nonfatal violent crimes, offenders were more likely to have a firearm than a knife or club. From 1993 to 2001 the rate of firearm violence fell 63%**

Rates of violent crime per 1,000 persons



Rates per 1,000 persons



- Approximately half of all robberies, about a quarter of all assaults, and roughly a twelfth of all rapes/sexual assaults involved an armed assailant. About 90% of homicide victims were killed with a weapon.
- Firearm violence rates for blacks age 12 or older (8.4 per 1,000 blacks) were —
  - 40% higher than rates for Hispanics (6.0)
  - 200% higher than rates for whites (2.8 per 1,000).
- Blacks were about 9 times more likely than whites to be murdered with a firearm.
- On average black victims of firearm violence were 3 years younger than white victims — 29 versus 32.
- From 1993 through 2001 blacks accounted for 49% of homicide victims and 54% of victims of firearm homicide but 12% of the U.S. population.
- The likelihood of an injury was the same for victims facing armed and unarmed offenders (26%); serious injury was more likely from armed offenders (7% versus 2%).
- From 1993 through 2001 the number of murders declined 36% while the number of murders by firearms dropped 41%.
- From 1994 through 1999, the years for which data are available, about 7 in 10 murders at school involved some type of firearm, and approximately 1 in 2 murders at school involved a handgun.

While victimizations involving knives comprised 6% of all violent crimes resulting in an injury, these victimizations accounted for about 24% of all serious injuries experienced by crime victims.

Type of weapon	Violent crime		
	With/with- out injury	Serious injury	Minor injury
Total	100%	100%	100%
No weapon	66	37	72
Any weapon	26	57	23
Firearm	10	13	4
Knife/sharp object	6	24	4
Blunt object/other	10	20	14
Do not know*	8	6	5

Note: Data from cases for which injury information was available.

\*Victim did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

The most common locales for armed violence and gun violence were the streets: those away from the victim's home (30% of violence with a weapon and 35% of gun violence) and those at or near the victim's home (27% of armed violence and 25% of gun violence).

Most violence involving a weapon and most firearm violence occurred while the victims were engaged in leisure activities away from home (27% and 27%) and commuting to work (23% and 25%, respectively).

Weapon use varied by type of crime. Offenders had weapons in about half of robberies, a fourth of assaults, and a twelfth of rapes/sexual assaults (table 1).

### Weapons and violent crime

Between 1993 and 2001, about 26% (or an annual average of 2.3 million) of the estimated 8.9 million violent crimes in the United States were committed by offenders armed with guns, knives, or objects used as weapons. Firearm violence accounted for 10% of all violent crimes; about 6% were committed with a knife or other sharp object such as scissors, ice pick, or broken bottle; 4% with blunt objects such as a brick, bat, or bottle; and 5% were committed with unspecified/ "other" objects used as weapons.

Type of weapon	Average annual victimizations	Percent of —	
		All violent crime	All armed violence
Total	8,896,460	100%	
No weapon	5,863,750	66%	
Any weapon	2,304,340	26%	100%
Firearm	846,950	10	37
Handgun	737,370	8	32
Other gun	100,470	1	4
Type unknown	9,110	0	0
Knife/sharp object	569,990	6	25
Blunt object	356,340	4	16
Other	424,160	5	18
Unknown	106,890	1	5
Do not know*	728,370	8%	

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

\*Victim did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

### The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)

The NCVS is the Nation's primary source of information on criminal victimization. Data are continuously obtained from a nationally representative sample of approximately 43,000 households comprising nearly 80,000 persons age 12 or older. Household members are asked about the frequency, characteristics, and consequences of victimization.

The survey enables the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to estimate the rate of victimization for rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, robbery, assault, theft, household burglary, and motor vehicle theft. The rates describe the vulnerability to crime by the population as a whole as well as by segments of the population such as women, the elderly, members of racial and ethnic groups, and city dwellers.

For the most current estimates of criminal victimization in the United States, see *Criminal Victimization 2001: Changes 2000-2001 with Trends 1993-2001* <[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs)>.

**Table 1. Weapon use, by type of violent crime, 1993-2001**

Type of weapon	Homicide	Rape/sexual assault	Robbery	All assaults
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Any weapon	91	8	50	24
Firearm	70	3	27	8
Knife/sharp object	13	3	13	6
Blunt object	5	1*	5	4
Other	3	1	5	6
Do not know*	4	7	11	8
No weapon	4	85	39	69

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See *Methodology*, page 11.

\*Victim did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

**Table 2. Violent crime, by type of weapon, 1993-2001**

Violent crime	All crimes	No weapon	Any weapon	Firearm		Knife/sharp object	Blunt object	Other weapon	Unspecified type of weapon	Do not know*
				All	Handgun					
<b>Percent</b>										
All nonlethal violence	100%	65.9%	25.9%	9.5%	8.3%	1.2%	6.4%	4.0%	4.8%	8.2%
Rape/sexual assault	100	84.9	8.0	3.4	3.4	0.0*	2.8	0.7*	0.6*	7.1
Robbery	100	39.2	49.7	26.8	25.1	1.7	12.8	4.7	1.7	11.1
All assaults	100	68.5	23.6	7.5	6.3	1.2	5.7	4.1	1.2	7.9
<b>Rates<sup>b</sup></b>										
All nonlethal violence	40.3	26.6	10.4	3.8	3.3	0.5	2.6	1.6	1.9	3.3
Rape/sexual assault	1.7	1.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0*	0.0	0.0*	0.0*	0.1
Robbery	4.5	1.8	2.2	1.2	1.1	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.5
All assaults	34.2	23.4	8.1	2.6	2.2	0.4	2.0	1.4	0.4	2.7

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases. See *Methodology*, page 11.

\*Victim did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

<sup>b</sup>Rates per 1,000 persons age 12 or older.

## Definitions of weapons

**Firearms** include handguns (pistols, revolvers, derringers) and shotguns, rifles, and other firearms (excluding BB and pellet guns and air rifles).

**Sharp objects** include knives and other sharp edged and/or pointed objects (scissors, ice picks, and axes).

**Blunt objects** include rocks, clubs, blackjacks, bats, and metal pipes.

**Other weapons** include ropes, chains, poison, martial arts weapons, BB guns, and objects that could not be classified.

## Firearms

Between 1993 and 2001 victims were confronted by offenders armed with guns in about 27% of robberies, 8% of assaults, and 3% of all rapes/sexual assaults (table 2).

U.S. residents were victims of crimes committed with firearms at a annual average rate of 4 crimes per 1,000 persons age 12 or older. Of the average 847,000 violent victimizations committed with firearms, about 7 out of 8 were committed with handguns.

Type of firearm	Violent victimizations, 1993-2001		
	Average annual number	Percent	Rate per 1,000 age 12 or older
Total	846,940	100%	3.8
Handgun	737,360	87	3.3
Other	109,580	13	0.5

## Knives and sharp objects

Annually during the 9-year period, about 570,000 violent victimizations were committed with a knife or other sharp object, accounting for 6% of all violent crimes. Thirteen percent of robberies, 6% of assaults, and 3% of rapes were committed with a knife or other sharp object.

From 1993 through 2001 crimes involving knives or sharp objects were committed at an average annual rate of 3 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older. In 85% of these victimizations, about 482,000 annually, the weapon was a knife. In the remainder, about 88,000 victimizations per year on average, the weapon was another type of sharp object.

Type of sharp edged weapon	Average annual number	Percent	Rate per 1,000 age 12 or older
Total	569,990	100%	2.6
Knife	481,870	85	2.2
Sharp object	88,120	15	0.4

## Blunt objects

Armed with blunt objects such as bats, sticks, rocks, clubs, or blackjacks, offenders committed approximately 356,000 violent crimes as an annual average from 1993 through 2001.

Crimes by offenders armed with blunt objects were committed at an annual average rate of 2 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older.

## Other weapons

Between 1993 and 2001 about 5% of all violent crimes were committed with weapons other than guns, knives, or blunt objects. Such weapons include ropes, chains, poison, martial arts weapons, BB guns (not considered to be firearms by the NCVS), and objects that could not be classified.

## Weapon use and crime outcome

Weapon use varied by crime. Robberies, followed by all assaults, were more likely to involve an armed assailant while rape/sexual assault was the least likely.

## Robbery

Armed robberies were more likely to be completed, resulting in loss of property, than unarmed robberies. Higher completion percentages occurred for robberies committed with firearms than for robberies with knives and other sharp objects or blunt objects/other weapons. Robberies committed with knives and unarmed robberies were completed at similar percentages.

Type of weapon	Robberies, 1993-2001		
	Total	Completed	Attempted
All robberies*	100%	66%	34%
No weapon	100	60	40
Any weapon	100	71	29
Firearm	100	79	21
Knife/sharp object	100	57	43
Blunt object/other <sup>b</sup>	100	67	33

\*Includes victims who did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

<sup>b</sup>"Other" includes ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects used as weapons.

## Assaults

**All assaults** in this report represent simple and aggravated assault examined together.

**Simple assault** is an attack *without* a weapon resulting in either no injury or minor injury.

**Aggravated assault** is an attack or attempted attack with a weapon, regardless of whether an injury occurred and attack without a weapon when serious injury results.

All assaults	100%
Aggravated assault	27
Involved a weapon	26
Did not involve a weapon	1
Simple assault	73

A discussion of minor and serious injury appears on page 6.

## Rape/sexual assault

For the 9-year period beginning in 1993, the percentage of rapes/sexual assaults that was completed did not vary significantly depending on the offenders' possession of a weapon. About 71% of rapes/sexual assaults involving no weapon were completed; of such assaults with a weapon, 67% were completed.

Type of weapon	Rapes/sexual assaults, 1993-2001		
	Total	Completed	Attempted
All rapes/sexual assaults	100%	69%	31%
No weapon	100	71	29
Any weapon	100	67	33
Firearm	100	74	26

Note: "Completed" includes rapes and sexual assaults, and "attempted" includes attempted rape. There were too few sample cases for analysis by type of weapon.

## Assault

The outcome for incidents of assault is measured by whether a victim sustained an injury as a result of the crime.

Overall, about 1 in 4 assault victims were injured during the incident. Victims of firearm violence were less likely than other victims to be injured. About 1 in 3 assault victims were injured when the offender possessed a blunt object or some unspecified type of weapon. About 1 in 4 victims were injured when the assailant had a knife.

Type of weapon	Assaults, 1993-2001		
	Total	Not injured	Injured
All assaults*	100%	76%	24%
No weapon	100	76%	24%
Any weapon	100	75	25
Firearm	100	87	13
Knife/sharp object	100	74	26
Blunt object/other <sup>b</sup>	100	66	34

\*Includes victim who did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

<sup>b</sup>"Other" includes ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects used as weapons.

### Victim characteristics

Males, blacks, Hispanics, and those between ages 15 and 24 were more vulnerable than their respective counterparts to violent crime committed by armed assailants.

#### Gender

Between 1993 and 2001, approximately 1 in 3 male victims of violent crime faced an armed offender. About 1 in 5 female victims of violent crime faced an armed assailant (table 3). Males were twice as likely as females to be confronted by an armed offender

#### Offender use of firearms

Of incidents involving offenders with firearms, victims —

- were shot (3%)
- were shot at but not hit (8%)
- were struck with a firearm (4%)
- were threatened with a firearm (72%)
- did not describe offender's use of firearms (13%).

**Table 3. Type of weapon, by gender of victims, 1993-2001**

Gender of victim	Nonlethal violent victimization						
	All crime	No weapon	Any weapon	Firearm	Sharp object	Blunt object/other <sup>a</sup>	Do not know <sup>b</sup>
<b>Percent</b>							
Male	100%	60.8%	30.5%	11.5%	7.4%	11.6%	8.8%
Female	100	72.5	20.0	7.0	5.1	7.9	7.5
<b>Violent victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older</b>							
<b>Rate</b>							
Male	46.9	28.5	14.3	5.4	3.5	5.4	4.1
Female	34.2	24.8	6.8	2.4	1.8	2.7	2.5

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup>"Other" includes ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects used as weapons.

<sup>b</sup>Victim did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

(14 versus 7 per 1,000 persons respectively). This pattern was generally consistent across weapon types; for each type of weapon, the victimization rate for males was about twice that for females.

#### Race and ethnicity

For each type of weapon, victimization rates for whites were lower than those for blacks or Hispanics.<sup>1</sup> Blacks were victimized by offenders armed with guns at higher rates than Hispanics but at similar rates as American Indians. Blacks had similar victimization rates as Hispanics for crimes committed with knives or blunt objects/other weapons.

The rate of firearm violence for blacks was more than twice that for whites (8 versus 3 per 1,000) (table 4). The rate

<sup>1</sup>In this report race and ethnicity are analyzed together. *White, black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian* refer to non-Hispanic persons.

for Hispanics (6 per 1,000) was about twice that for whites.

No significant differences separated the rates at which whites and blacks were victimized by unarmed offenders.

The rate of armed violence for American Indians (25 per 1,000 American Indians) was —

- 43% higher than the rate for blacks (18 per 1,000 blacks)
- 78% higher than the rate for Hispanics (14 per 1,000 Hispanics)
- 184% higher than the rate for whites (9 per 1,000).

#### Age, weapons, and violence

For overall violence, persons age 12-14, 15-17, and 18-20 were victimized at similar rates, higher than those for persons age 21 or older (table 5). Vulnerability to victimization by an armed offender similarly varied by the age of victim. Younger persons, particularly those age 18-20, had higher rates of victimization by armed offenders.

The rate of firearm violence was also highest for persons age 18-20. Their rate (12 per 1,000 persons) was about 40% higher than the rate for persons ages 15 to 17 and 21 to 24.

Except for victims age 12-14, for whom firearm violence constituted about 3% of all violent crime, firearm violence accounted for between 9% and 13% of all violent crime for each age group.

Similarly, crimes committed with knives/sharp objects accounted for 6% to 8%, and crimes with other weapons, 9% to 11% of all violent crime for each age group examined.

**Table 4. Race and ethnicity of victims of violent crime, by type of weapon, 1993-2001**

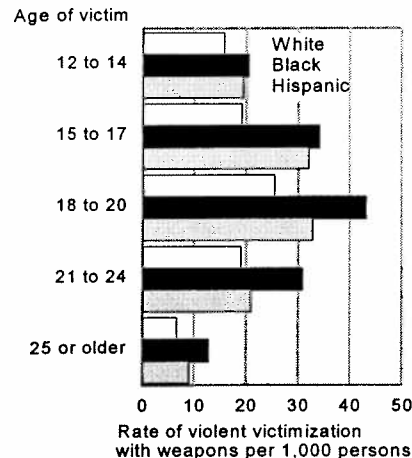
Race/ethnicity of victim of violence	Nonlethal violent victimization						
	All	No weapon	Any weapon	Firearm	Sharp object	Blunt object/other <sup>a</sup>	Do not know <sup>b</sup>
<b>Percent</b>							
White	100%	69.4%	22.7%	7.3%	5.7%	9.8%	7.9%
Black	100	54.2	36.1	17.2	8.4	10.5	9.7
American Indian	100	66.8	26.1	8.0	5.0	13.1	7.1
Asian	100	58.1	31.2	13.3	8.1	9.8	10.7
Hispanic	100	59.3	33.0	14.0	8.5	10.4	7.8
<b>Violent victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older</b>							
<b>Rate</b>							
White	39.2	27.2	8.9	2.8	2.2	3.8	3.1
Black	48.9	26.5	17.6	8.4	4.1	5.1	4.7
American Indian	97.2	65.0	25.3	7.7	4.9	12.7	6.9
Asian	20.7	12.0	6.5	2.7	1.7	2.0	2.2
Hispanic	42.9	25.4	14.2	6.0	3.7	4.5	3.3

<sup>a</sup>"Other" includes ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects used as weapons.

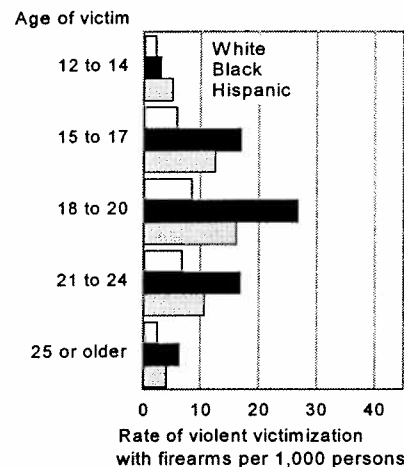
<sup>b</sup>Victim did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

**For each age category, blacks and Hispanics had higher rates of violence than whites — involving a weapon and involving a firearm**

#### All weapon violence



#### All firearm violence



Figures 1 and 2

Age of victim	Population	All weapons	Firearm
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%
12 to 14	5	8	3
15 to 17	5	11	11
18 to 20	5	14	16
21 to 24	7	13	14
25 to 34	18	23	24
35 to 49	28	22	24
50 to 64	17	6	6
65 or older	15	2	2

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Forty-five percent of all armed violence involved victims between 25 and 49, and 38% was against victims age 15-24.

**Table 5. Weapons used in violent crime, by age of victims, 1993-2001**

Age of victim	All crime	No weapon	Any weapon	Type of weapon			Do not know <sup>b</sup>
				Firearm	Sharp object	Blunt object/ other <sup>a</sup>	
Percent							
12 to 14	100%	77.2%	17.9%	2.6%	6.3%	9.0%	4.9%
15 to 17	100	67.3	25.1	8.9	6.5	9.7	7.6
18 to 20	100	62.6	30.1	12.6	7.1	10.5	7.3
21 to 24	100	63.7	28.8	11.9	7.6	9.3	7.5
25 to 34	100	64.5	27.4	10.3	6.4	10.7	8.1
35 to 49	100	64.9	25.5	9.8	5.7	9.9	9.6
50 to 64	100	63.4	24.9	9.1	5.5	10.2	11.7
65 or older	100	54.4	30.4	13.1	6.1	11.2	15.2
Rates per 1,000 persons							
12 to 14	91.7	70.8	16.4	2.4	5.8	8.2	4.5
15 to 17	90.3	60.7	22.7	8.1	5.9	8.7	6.9
18 to 20	94.3	59.0	28.4	11.8	6.7	9.9	6.9
21 to 24	71.3	45.4	20.5	8.4	5.4	6.7	5.3
25 to 34	48.6	31.4	13.3	5.0	3.1	5.2	4.0
35 to 49	32.6	21.2	8.3	3.2	1.9	3.2	3.1
50 to 64	15.1	9.6	3.8	1.4	0.8	1.5	1.8
65 or older	4.5	2.4	1.4	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.7

<sup>a</sup>Other includes ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects used as weapons.

<sup>b</sup>Victim did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

#### Race, ethnicity, and age

When race and ethnicity are added to the considerations of age, some differences in victimization rates between age categories emerge for crimes committed with any weapon or with a firearm. Both for crimes committed with any weapon and for firearm violence specifically, differences between black and Hispanic victimization rates were greatest within the age category 18-20 (figures 1 and 2).

Whites and blacks, age 18-20, were more likely than whites and blacks of other ages to have been victims of weapon violence in general and firearm violence in particular.

Hispanics of ages 15-17 and 18-20 were more vulnerable than other Hispanics to violence involving a weapon and violence involving a firearm.

The rates of violent victimization, violent victimization involving a weapon, and violent victimization involving a firearm for persons age 18-20 were approximately 20 times those of persons age 65 or older.

For blacks, whites, and Hispanics, victims of violent crime were, on average, younger than the general population. For the general population

as well as for the victim population, the mean age of whites was greater than the mean age of blacks (table 6).

Overall among the victims, blacks were older than Hispanics, the youngest racial or ethnic group considered. This pattern of relative ages was true for victims of violence involving firearms.

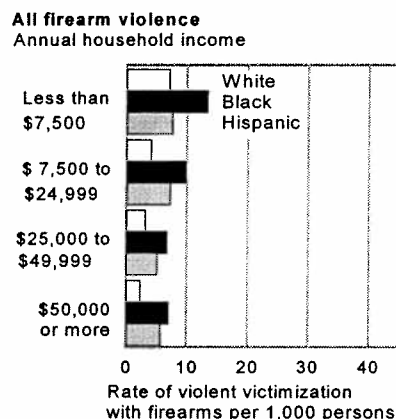
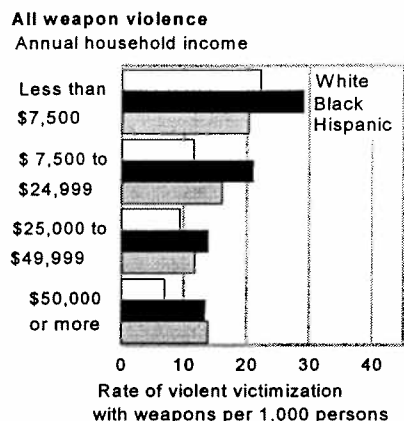
#### Annual household income

Persons with annual household incomes of less than \$7,500 experienced both armed violence and firearm violence at about 3 times the rates of persons with annual household incomes of \$50,000 or more (23.1 versus 7.3 armed victimizations per 1,000 persons, and 8.4 versus 2.4 firearm victimizations, respectively) (table 7).

**Table 6. Mean age of victim, by race/Hispanic origin and type of weapon, 1993-2001**

Type of weapon	Mean age		
	White	Black	Hispanic
All persons age 12 or older	43 yr	38 yr	34 yr
All victims of violent crime	29	27	26
All weapons	30	28	26
Firearms	32	29	26

**At almost every level of household income, blacks were more vulnerable than whites and Hispanics to violence involving a weapon and involving a firearm**



Figures 3 and 4

#### Annual household income and race/ethnicity

Blacks at every income level were more vulnerable than whites to be victims of firearm violence. Whites and blacks with household incomes below \$7,500 were more vulnerable to armed violence than their counterparts with higher incomes.

For violence by an offender with a weapon and for violence by an offender armed with a gun, blacks with household incomes of less than \$50,000 were victimized at rates higher than those of Hispanics or whites with similar incomes.

#### Weapons and injuries

For 1993-2001 about a quarter of violent crimes overall resulted in an injury to the victim (table 8). Crimes committed with weapons and crimes committed without weapons were about equally likely to result in victim injury (26%). Crimes committed with weapons, however, were about 3.5 times as likely to result in serious injury as crimes committed by unarmed offenders (7% versus 2%, respectively).

Of all violence with a weapon, the crimes committed with blunt objects/other weapons were the most often associated with victim injury (36%). Twenty-eight percent of the crimes

with knives/sharp objects and 15% of crimes with firearms involved injury.

Offenders armed with knives accounted for 6% of all violence but 24% of all serious injuries — having inflicted serious injury on about 1 in 8 of their victims. About 1 in 15 victims of offenders using a blunt object/other weapon and 1 in 22 victims of offenders with a firearm sustained serious injury.

Type of weapon	Violent crime		
	With/with-out injury	Serious injury	Minor injury
Total	100%	100%	100%
No weapon	66	37	72
Any weapon	26	57	23
Firearm	10	13	4
Sharp object	6	24	4
Blunt object/other	10	20	14
Do not know*	8	6	5

\*Victim did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

Because completed rape is considered an injury, victims of rape/sexual assault were more likely than robbery or assault victims to be injured, regardless of offender weapon use. For all weapon types, robbery victims were more likely than assault victims to sustain injury.

#### Definition of types of injuries

**Serious injuries** include gunshot or knife wounds, broken bones, loss of teeth, internal injuries, loss of consciousness, and undetermined injuries requiring 2 or more days of hospitalization.

**Minor injuries** include bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, swelling, chipped teeth, and undetermined injuries requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization.

**Rape** is sexual intercourse forced on the victim through physical or psychological coercion. Forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by the offender(s), including penetration by a foreign object. Victims can be male or female, and the rape can be heterosexual or homosexual. NCVS defines completed rape as a serious injury.

**Rape without additional injuries**, for the purposes of this report, were categorized as an injury but not as a serious or minor injury. Cases in which the victim suffered additional injuries were grouped according to the severity of those additional injuries.

**Table 7. Annual household income, by type of weapon, 1993-2001**

Annual household income of victims of violent crimes	All crime	No weapon	Type of weapon				Do not know <sup>b</sup>
			Any	Firearm	Sharp object	Blunt object/other <sup>a</sup>	
<b>Percent</b>							
Less than \$7,500	100%	60.7%	31.0%	11.2%	8.8%	11.0%	8.3%
\$7,500 to \$24,999	100	63.7	28.3	11.1	6.7	10.5	7.9
\$25,000 to \$49,999	100	68.6	23.8	8.4	5.8	9.7	7.6
\$50,000 or more	100	69.7	22.2	7.4	5.5	9.4	8.1
<b>Rates<sup>c</sup></b>							
Less than \$7,500	74.7	45.3	23.1	8.4	6.6	8.2	6.2
\$7,500 to \$24,999	47.5	30.3	13.5	5.3	3.2	5.0	3.8
\$25,000 to \$49,999	41.0	28.1	9.8	3.4	2.4	4.0	3.1
\$50,000 or more	32.9	23.0	7.3	2.4	1.8	3.1	2.7

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup>"Other" includes ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects used as weapons.

<sup>b</sup>Victim did not know if the offender possessed a weapon.

<sup>c</sup>Rates of victimization per 1,000 persons age 12 or older.

## Robbery and injuries

About half of victims of robbery by offenders armed with blunt objects/other weapons sustained an injury during the crime.

About a third of victims of robbery by unarmed offenders (36%) and offenders armed with knives or sharp objects (31%) sustained injury during the victimization.

Offenders armed with any weapon other than a firearm inflicted a serious injury during about 1 in 7 robberies that they committed.

Type of weapon	Did assailant threaten before attacking you?			
	All	Yes	No	Unsure
Robbery <sup>a</sup>	100%	36%	63%	1%
No weapon	100	35	64	1
Any weapon	100	41	58	1
Firearm	100	48	50	1
Knife/sharp object	100	42	57	0
Blunt object/other <sup>b</sup>	100	33	67	1

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup>Includes victims who did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

<sup>b</sup>"Other" includes ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects used as weapons.

Victims of robbery by offenders armed with blunt objects/other weapons were more likely than victims of robbery by offenders armed with a firearm to be attacked without a prior threat.

## Assault

Victims were injured in a third of all assaults by offenders armed with blunt objects/other weapons. Less than a third of assaults by offenders armed with guns or knives resulted in injury (13% and 26%, respectively). Victims of offenders armed with a knife or sharp object were the most likely to sustain a serious injury; 12% of such offenses resulted in serious injury.

## Rape/sexual assault

About half of all victims of rape/sexual assault committed by unarmed offenders were injured, compared to three-quarters of victims of such crimes by armed offenders.<sup>2</sup> Injuries sustained include completed rape. (See definitions of type of injuries on page 6.)

<sup>2</sup>The small number of sample cases of rape/sexual assault, the least frequent nonlethal violent crime, prevents further examination of injuries by type of weapon.

Time of incident	All crime	Any weapon	Firearms
Total	100%	100%	100%
Day	54	45	38
Night	46	55	62

## Characteristics of the incident

### Time of incident

Violent crimes at night were more likely than crimes occurring during the day to involve a weapon (30% versus 21%, respectively) or a firearm (12% versus 6%, respectively). Three of every five crimes committed by an offender with a firearm occurred at night.

Type of weapon	Percent of violent crime occurring during —	
	Day	Night
Total	100%	100%
No weapon	71	62
Any weapon	21	30
Firearm	6	12
Sharp object	6	7
Blunt object/other <sup>*</sup>	9	11
Do not know if weapon present	8	8

<sup>\*</sup>"Other" includes ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects used as weapons.

**Table 8. Injury from violent victimizations, by type of weapon, 1993-2001**

Type of crime by type of weapon	All crime	No injury	Type of injuries			
			All	Serious	Minor	Rape <sup>a</sup>
<b>Total<sup>b</sup></b>	100%	74.4%	25.6%	3.3%	21.0%	1.2%
No weapon	100	73.7	26.3	1.9	22.8	1.6
Any weapon	100	73.8	26.2	7.3	18.5	0.4
Firearm	100	85.0	15.0	4.6	9.8	0.6
Knife/sharp object	100	72.3	27.7	12.7	14.5	0.5
Blunt object/other <sup>c</sup>	100	64.0	36.0	6.5	29.3	0.1
<b>Rape/sexual assault<sup>b</sup></b>	100%	46.8%	53.2%	2.9%	21.1%	29.3%
No weapon	100	48.4	51.6	1.7	19.9	30.0
Any weapon	100	24.8	75.2	10.1	35.0	30.1
<b>Robbery<sup>b</sup></b>	100%	69.2%	30.8%	5.9%	24.9%	/
No weapon	100	64.3	35.7	3.1	32.6	/
Any weapon	100	72.8	27.2	8.5	18.7	/
Firearm	100	83.6	16.4	4.2	12.2	/
Knife/sharp object	100	69.1	30.9	13.5	17.4	/
Blunt object/other <sup>c</sup>	100	48.9	51.1	13.8	37.3	/
<b>Assault<sup>b</sup></b>	100%	76.5%	23.5%	3.0%	20.5%	/
No weapon	100	76.0	24.0	1.8	22.3	/
Any weapon	100	74.9	25.1	7.0	18.2	/
Firearm	100	87.0	13.0	4.8	8.1	/
Knife/sharp object	100	74.5	25.5	12.3	13.2	/
Blunt object/other <sup>c</sup>	100	66.2	33.8	5.6	28.2	/

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

/No sample cases.

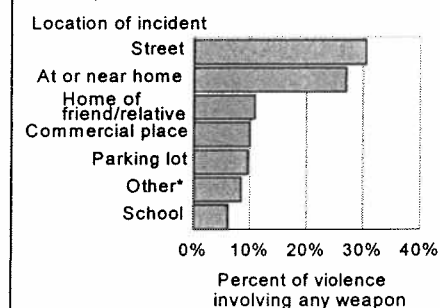
<sup>a</sup>Includes rape without additional injuries. All the detail of weapon type for rape would have been based on 10 or fewer cases and are therefore not reported.

<sup>b</sup>Includes victims who did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

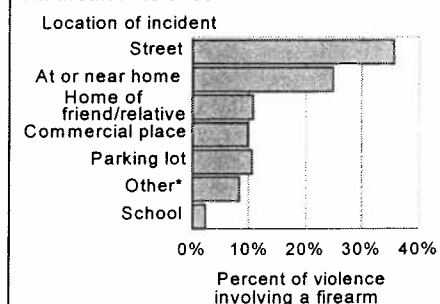
<sup>c</sup>"Other" includes ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects used as weapons.

## About a third of violent crimes involving a weapon or a firearm occurred on the street away from the victim's home

### All weapon violence



### All firearm violence



<sup>\*</sup>Such as open areas, playgrounds (other than at school), or public transportation.

Figures 5 and 6



**Table 9. Type of weapon, by victim's activity at time of incident, 1993-2001**

Victim's activity at time of the incident	Percent of violent victimizations						
	All crime	No weapon	Type of weapon				Do not know <sup>b</sup>
			Any	Firearm	Sharp object	Blunt object/other <sup>a</sup>	
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Work	18.0	19.8	14.5	15.0	16.0	13.0	14.5
School	8.5	11.3	2.8	1.1	4.6	3.3	4.6
Home	22.5	23.8	20.5	18.4	23.2	20.7	17.9
Shopping	3.8	3.1	4.7	5.6	4.8	3.8	6.3
Leisure away from home	22.8	21.0	26.9	26.6	25.1	28.4	24.5
Traveling to or from work	16.9	13.6	22.9	25.4	18.6	23.2	25.0
Other	7.5	7.4	7.8	7.9	7.7	7.7	7.2

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup>"Other" includes ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects used as weapons.

<sup>b</sup>Victim did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

#### Activity and location

Crime by armed offenders was most likely to occur while the victim was engaged in leisure activity away from home (27%) or traveling to or from work or school (23%) (table 9). Nearly 21% of victims of armed violence were involved in some activity at home at the time of the incident.

The most common location for crimes by armed offenders was on the street away from the victim's home (30%) (figure 5). About a quarter of all violence by armed offenders occurred at or near the victim's home.

About 6% of armed violence, and 2% of firearm violence occurred at a school or on school grounds (figure 6).

#### Victim-offender relationship

Crimes committed by intimates were less likely than crimes committed by strangers to involve a weapon. The offender was armed in a third of all violence by a stranger and in a sixth of all violence committed by an intimate.

Victims of crimes by strangers were also more likely than victims of crimes by intimates to be confronted by an offender with a firearm (14% versus 5%, respectively).

Type of weapon	Victim-offender relationship		
	Intimates	Known non-intimate	Stranger
Total	100%	100%	100%
No weapon	80	75	56
Any weapon	16	20	33
Firearm	5	5	14
Sharp object	4	6	7
Blunt object/other <sup>a</sup>	7	9	11
Do not know <sup>b</sup>	4	5	11

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup>Blunt objects as well as other objects such as ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects.

<sup>b</sup>Victim did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

#### Trends

Violent victimization rates declined from 1993 to 2001. Rates for crimes committed with firearms reflected a larger decrease than did the rates for overall violence and armed violence in general. Between 1993 and 2001 overall violence decreased 54%, armed violence fell 59%, and firearm violence declined 63%.

The rates of firearm violence for blacks and Hispanics fell relatively more than the rate for whites, 1993-2001. In 1993 blacks and Hispanics were victims of firearm violence at a rate of 13 firearm crimes per 1,000 persons, about 3 times the rate for whites. By 2001 the rate for blacks had fallen to about 4 per 1,000, roughly 2.5 times that for whites. In 2001 Hispanics experienced firearm violence at a rate per 1,000 similar to those for both blacks and whites.

From 1993 to 2001, rates of violence involving firearms declined among all age groups. The decline was greatest among the youngest victims: by 2001, persons age 12-14 had experienced a 97% decrease in the rate of firearm violence, and those age 15-17, a 77% decrease.

#### Homicide and weapons

Between 1993 and 2001 local law enforcement agencies reported 160,396 murders and nonnegligent manslaughters of persons age 12 or older to the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports. (The homicides that occurred in the events of September 11, 2001, were not included.) There was an annual average of 17,822 murders of persons age 12 or older (table 10). A weapon was used in 91% of these crimes. In 4% of the homicides, the offender used a means such as strangling, punching, and kicking. Information about the weapon used was unavailable in 5% of all homicides.

Seventy percent of homicide victims were killed with a firearm. Handguns were used in 56% of all homicides.

**Table 10. Homicides of persons age 12 or older, by weapon type, 1993-2001**

Type of weapon	Homicide of persons age 12 or older		
	Average annual number	Percent	Rates per 100,000 persons
Total	17,822	100%	8.1
<b>Any weapon</b>	16,207	90.9	7.3
Firearm	12,486	70.1	5.7
Handgun	10,058	56.4	4.6
Shotgun	771	4.3	0.3
Rifle	611	3.4	0.3
Other gun	44	0.2	0.0
Unknown type	1,002	5.6	0.5
Knife/ sharp object	2,406	13.5	1.1
Blunt object	823	4.6	0.4
Other weapon	492	2.8	0.2
<b>No weapon<sup>a</sup></b>	767	4.3	0.3
<b>Do not know<sup>b</sup></b>	847	4.8	0.4

Note: Detail may not add to subtotals because of rounding. The homicides that occurred in the events of September 11, 2001, were not included.

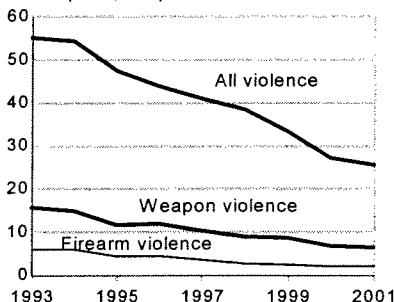
<sup>a</sup>Includes hands and feet.

<sup>b</sup>The police record did not contain information on the type of weapon used in the homicide.

**From 1993 through 2001 nonfatal firearm violence declined for all races, for Hispanics, and for all age groups**

**Violent crime, crime with weapons, and crime with firearms, 1993-2001**

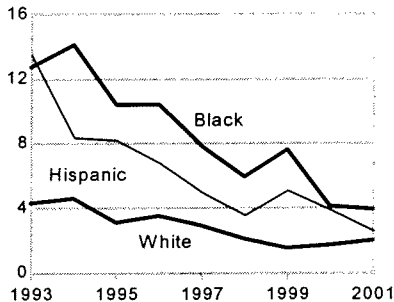
Rates per 1,000 persons



Type of victimization	Percent change in the rate per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, 1993-2001
All violence	-54%
Weapon violence	-59
Firearm violence	-63

**Firearm violence, by race and Hispanic origin of victims, 1993-2001**

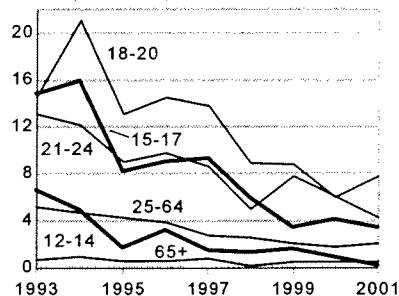
Rates per 1,000 persons



Race/Hispanic origin of victim	Percent change in the rate of violence involving firearms per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, 1993-2001
Hispanic	-80%
Non-Hispanic black	-70
Non-Hispanic white	-54

**Firearm violence, by age of victim, 1993-2001**

Rates per 1,000 persons



Age of victim	Percent decrease in the rate of violence involving firearms per 1,000 persons age 12 or older, 1993-2001
12-14*	-97%
15-17	-77
18-20	-47
21-24	-67
25-64	-60
65 or older*	-29

\*Estimates for some data years are based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Figures 7, 8, and 9

## Gender

Male homicide victims were more likely than female victims to have been killed by a firearm. Eight in ten male homicide victims were killed with a firearm, compared to 6 in 10 female victims.

Type of weapon	Gender of homicide victim	
	Male	Female
<b>Percent</b>	100%	100%
Firearm	81	61
Knife/sharp object	13	22
Blunt object/other	6	17
<b>Rates*</b>		
Any weapon	12	3
Firearm	10	2
Knife/sharp object	2	1
Blunt object/other	1	1

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. The homicides that occurred in the events of September 11, 2001, were not included.

\*Per 100,000 persons age 12 or older.

Knives or other sharp objects were the second most frequently used weapon in homicides of both males and females (13% and 22%, respectively). Males were 5 times more likely than females to be a victim of a homicide committed with a firearm (10 versus 2 per 100,000 persons, respectively),

and twice as likely to be murdered with a knife or other sharp object (2 versus 1 per 100,000, respectively).

## Race

From 1993 to 2001, blacks were 12% of the U.S. population age 12 or older but 49% of all homicide victims and 54% of all victims of firearm homicide. Among homicide victims, blacks were more likely than whites to have been killed with a firearm. About 8 in 10 black homicide victims and 7 in 10 white homicide victims died from gunshot injuries.

Race of victim	Population	Homicides	
		All	Firearm
Total	100%	100%	100%
White	84	48	44
Black	12	49	54
Other	4	3	2

Note: Excludes homicides that had unknown race of victim or unknown means of homicide.

Blacks were about 7 times more likely than whites to be a homicide victim (30 versus 4 per 100,000 persons age 12 or older respectively), and approximately 9 times more likely to be a victim of a homicide committed with a firearm (25 versus 3 per 100,000 persons age 12 or older, respectively).

Type of weapon	Race of homicide victim	
	White	Black
<b>Percent</b>	100%	100%
Firearm	72	82
Knife/sharp object	17	12
Blunt object/other	11	5
<b>Rates*</b>	4	30
Firearm	3	25
Knife/sharp object	1	4
Blunt object/other	1	2

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. The homicides that occurred in the events of September 11, 2001, were not included.

\*Less than 0.5.

\*Rates per 100,000 persons age 12 or older.

## Age

Persons age 18 to 24 were victims of homicide overall as well as firearm homicides at the highest rates (table 11). Those age 18 to 24 were 3.5 times as likely as persons age 12 to 17 and about 3 times as likely as those age 25 to 64 to be killed with a firearm.

There appears to be a relationship between the age of the victim and the type of homicide weapon. Victims of firearm murders were, on average, 6 years younger than victims of homicides committed with knives/other

## Murders of children under age 12

Weapons in general and firearms specifically were less commonly used against murder victims under age 12 than against those age 12 or older.

From 1993 through 2001, about 2 in 5 murders of children under age 12 involved a weapon, and about 1 in 6 involved a firearm. Among victims age 12 or older, 91% of the

murders were committed with a weapon, and 70% were committed with a firearm.

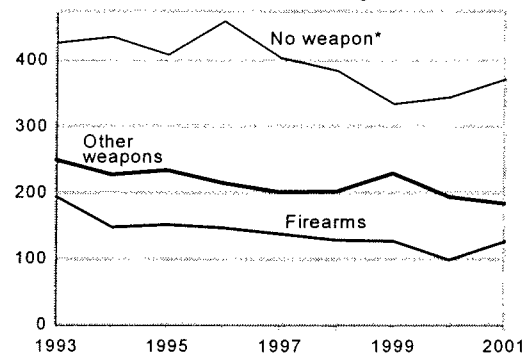
In 1993 firearms accounted for 19% of murders of persons under age 12. This peak of 195 incidents preceded a decline; in 2001, 15% of all such murders (127 of the 824 total) involved a firearm.

Type of weapon	Murders of persons younger than age 12, 1993-2001		
	Average annual number	Percent	Rate per 100,000 persons under age 12
<b>Total</b>	<b>881</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>Any weapon</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>40.5</b>	<b>0.8</b>
Firearm	141	16.0	0.3
Knife/sharp object	40	4.6	0.1
Blunt object	56	6.3	0.1
Other weapon	120	13.6	0.3
<b>No weapon*</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>0.9</b>
<b>Missing data</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>0.3</b>

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

\*Includes hands/fists and feet.

Number of murders of children under age 12



\*Includes hands/fists and feet.

**Table 11. Homicide, by the victim's age and the type of weapon, 1993-2001**

Type of weapon	Homicides				
	12-17	18-24	25-64	65 or older	
<b>Percent</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Firearm	86	88	86	73	46
Knife/sharp object	9	9	10	17	26
Blunt object/other	5	3	4	9	27
<b>Rate*</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>
Firearm	4	16	15	5	1
Knife/sharp object	‡	2	2	1	1
Blunt object/other	‡	1	1	1	1

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. The nonnegligent homicides that occurred in the events of September 11, 2001, were not included.

‡Less than 0.5.

\*Rates per 100,000 persons in each age category.

sharp objects (31 versus 37 years old, respectively), and 12 years younger than victims of homicides committed with blunt objects (age 43) (table 12).

### Race and age

On average, black murder victims were 5 years younger than white victims (age 31 versus age 36, respectively). The same age difference existed for firearm murders (age 28 versus age 33, respectively). Black and white victims of murders committed with knives or blunt objects were, on average, closer in age.

### Trends in homicides, 1993-2001

The number of homicides declined 36% between 1993 and 2001. Firearm-homicides decreased 41% during the

period. In 1993, 72% of homicides of persons age 12 or older were committed with firearms. In 2001, 66% were committed with firearms.

Year	Homicide of persons age 12 or older		Percent of homicides with a firearm
	All	Firearms	
<b>Average number</b>	<b>17,822</b>	<b>12,486</b>	<b>70.1%</b>
1993	23,179	16,697	72.0
1994	21,967	15,967	72.7
1995	20,350	14,383	70.7
1996	18,411	12,968	70.4
1997	17,007	12,027	70.7
1998	15,742	10,718	68.1
1999	14,462	9,895	68.4
2000	14,453	9,906	68.5
2001	14,826	9,814	66.2
<b>Average rate*</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>5.7</b>	
1993	11.0	7.9	
1994	10.3	7.5	
1995	9.4	6.7	
1996	8.4	5.9	
1997	7.7	5.5	
1998	7.1	4.8	
1999	6.4	4.4	
2000	6.4	4.4	
2001	6.4	4.3	

### Percent change in number of homicides

Annual average	-4.8%	-5.7%
Overall, 1993-2001	-36.0	-41.2

\*Rates per 100,000 persons age 12 or older. The nonnegligent homicides that occurred in the events of September 11, 2001, were not included.

**Table 12. Mean age of homicide victims age 12 or older, by race and type of weapon, 1993-2001**

Race of victim	General population age 12 or older	Mean age of homicide victims			
		All homicides	Firearm	Sharp object	Blunt object/other
Overall	41 yr	33 yr	31 yr	37 yr	43 yr
White	42	36	33	38	44
Black	38	31	28	36	42

## Weapons, juveniles, and school violence

Annually on average, 1993 to 2001, about 703,800 violent crimes against persons age 12-17 occurred at school or on school property. About 8% of these crimes were committed with a weapon; about 1% with a firearm.

Type of weapon	Violent school crime
All victims	100%
No weapon	88
Any weapon	8
Firearm	1
Sharp object	3
Blunt object/other <sup>a</sup>	4
Do not know <sup>b</sup>	4

Annual average 703,810

<sup>a</sup>"Other" includes ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects used as weapons.

<sup>b</sup>Victim did not know whether the offender possessed a weapon.

About a third of armed assaults in schools resulted in injury to the victim.

Type of weapon	All	Not injured	Injured
Total	100%	77%	23%
No weapon	100	77	23
Any weapon	100	67	33
Firearm	100	92	8*
Sharp object	100	68	32
Blunt object/other <sup>a</sup>	100	61	39

\*10 or fewer cases.

<sup>a</sup>"Other" includes ropes, chains, poison, and unspecified objects used as weapons.

Between 1994 and 1999, the most recent year of available data, 172 homicides of both students and nonstudents took place at school or on school property in the United States.

Type of student and nonstudent fatalities	Violent deaths at school, 1994-99
	Number Percent
Total	220 100%
Homicide	172 78
Suicide	30 14
Homicide/suicide	11 5
Legal intervention	5 2
Unintentional	2 1

Of these, 69% were committed with a firearm. Eighteen percent were committed with a knife or other sharp object. Of the firearm homicides at school, three-quarters were committed with handguns.

Type of weapon	School homicides, 1994-99
	Number Percent
Total	172 100%
Firearm	119 69
Handgun	89 52
Rifle <sup>a</sup>	18 11
Unknown	12 7
Sharp object	31 18
Beating <sup>b</sup>	12 7
Strangulation	5 3
Other	5 3

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup>Includes shotguns and other "long guns."

<sup>b</sup>Includes blunt objects.

Source for school homicide data: Anderson, M. and others. "School Associated Violent Deaths in the United States, 1994-99," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Dec. 5, 2001, 286, 21, pp. 2695-2702.

## Victim self-defense

Between 1993 and 2001, about 61% of all victims of violent crime reported taking a self-defensive measure during the incident.

Most used nonaggressive means, such as trying to escape, getting help, or attempting to scare off or warn the offender. About 13% of victims of violent crime tried to attack or threaten the offender. About 2% of victims of violent crime used a weapon to defend themselves; half of these, about 1% of violent crime victims, brandished a firearm.

## All victims' responses to violent crime 100%

Offered no resistance	39.3
Took some action	60.5
Used physical force toward offender	13.0
Attacked/threatened offender without a weapon	10.8
Attacked/threatened offender with a gun	0.7
Attacked/threatened offender with other weapon	1.4
Resisted or captured offender	15.0
Scared or warned off offender	4.2
Persuaded or appeased offender	5.5
Escaped/hid/got away	9.8
Got help or gave alarm	3.9
Reacted to pain or emotion	0.3
Other	8.9
Method of resistance unknown	0.2

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

## Methodology

Except for homicide data obtained from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, this report presents data from the BJS National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Between 1993 and 2001 the Census Bureau interviewed approximately 651,750 individuals age 12 or older in 336,295 households. For the NCVS data presented, response rates varied between 93% and 96% of eligible households, and between 89% and 92% of eligible individuals.

Violent acts covered in this report include murder, rape, sexual assault, robbery, and assault (aggravated and simple) against persons age 12 or older. Overall violent crime is a combination of each type of crime.

## Hypothesis testing and the NCVS

### Standard error computations

Comparisons of estimates discussed in this report were tested to determine if the differences were statistically significant. Differences described as *higher*, *lower*, or *different* passed a hypothesis test at the .05-level of statistical

significance (95%-level of confidence). That is, the tested difference was greater than about twice the standard error of that difference. Comparisons of estimates statistically significant at the 0.10 level (90%-confidence level), have differences described as *somewhat*, *marginal*, or *slight*.

Caution is required when making comparisons of estimates not explicitly discussed in this report. What may appear to be a large difference in estimates may not test as statistically significant at the 95%- or even the 90% confidence level. Significance testing calculations were conducted at BJS

using statistical programs developed specifically for the NCVS by the U.S. Census Bureau. These programs consider the complex NCVS sample design when calculating generalized variance estimates.

Estimates based on 10 or fewer sample cases have high relative standard errors so that care should be taken when comparing such estimates to other estimates. It is inadvisable to compare estimates when both are based on 10 or fewer sample cases. Asterisks mark estimates based on 10 or fewer sample cases in this report.

Comparisons of rates made in this report are based on the unrounded estimates.

#### *Testing trends in weapons violence*

Unless stated otherwise when a statement is made describing differences in estimates between years, it was tested for significance using a computer program designed specifically for the NCVS. These tests determine whether

an estimate in one year differs from that of another, regardless of intervening estimate variation.

#### **Definitions of crimes:**

**Aggravated assault** - Attack or attempted attack with a weapon, regardless of whether or not an injury occurred and attack without a weapon when serious injury results.

**Rape** - Forced sexual intercourse including both psychological coercion as well as physical force. Forced sexual intercourse means, vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by the offender(s). This category also includes incidents where the penetration is from a foreign object. Includes rapes of male and female victims and both heterosexual and homosexual rape. Attempted rape includes verbal threats of rape.

**Robbery** - Completed or attempted theft, directly from a person, of property or cash by force or threat of force, with or without a weapon, and with or without injury.

**Sexual assault** - A wide range of victimizations, separate from rape or attempted

rape. These crimes include attacks or attempted attacks generally involving unwanted sexual contact between victim and offender. Sexual assaults may or may not involve force and include such things as grabbing or fondling. Sexual assault also includes verbal threats.

**Simple assault** - Attack without a weapon resulting either in no injury, minor injury (for example, bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches, or swelling) or in undetermined injury requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization. Also includes attempted assault without a weapon.

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