

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL**

**Criminal Justice Statistics Special Report**

**Homicide in North Dakota, 2005**



**Attorney General  
Wayne Stenehjem**

Report prepared by  
Colleen Weltz  
Bureau of Criminal Investigation  
Information Services Section

August 2006

The term "homicide," for purposes of this report, includes the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) offenses of murder and non-negligent manslaughter. Homicide refers to the "willful killing of one human being by another." It does not include attempts to kill, assaults to kill, suicides, accidental deaths, justifiable homicides or deaths caused by gross negligence.

## HOMICIDE IN 2005

- In 2005, thirteen homicide deaths were known to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. Based on a state population estimate of 637,000, the resulting homicide rate for the state of North Dakota was 2 per 100,000 population. See Table 2 on page 3 for information regarding rates for previous years.
- **Victim Gender:** Seven of the homicide victims were male.
- **Victim Age:** Eleven of the victims were adults. "Adult" is defined as a person aged 18 or older. See Table 1 on page 2 for a summary of homicide incidents in 2005.
- **Weapons:** Firearms were involved in the deaths of three homicide victims. Five victims died as the result of a beating.
- **Domestic Violence:** Six of the thirteen homicides in 2005 resulted from domestic violence incidents. See definition on page 10.
- **Assailant Gender:** Twelve of the thirteen identified assailants were male.
- **Assailant Age:** All of the identified assailants were adults.
- While tribal law enforcement agencies and any other federal law enforcement entities in the state do not participate in the state UCR program, every effort is made to include all homicide incidents occurring within the state's borders.

**Table 1  
Summary of Homicide Incidents  
North Dakota, 2005**

Date & Location of Incident	Victim(s)		Assailant(s)		Weapons Used	Relationship of Victim to Assailant	Circumstances
	Age	Sex	Age	Sex			
2/11/2005 Burlington, Ward County	1	F	23	F	Personal weapon	Stepchild	Domestic Violence Victim was shaken to death.
3/10/2005 Langdon, Cavalier County	40	F	35	M	Asphyxiation	Girlfriend	Domestic Violence
3/31/2005 Fairmount, Richland County	50	F	46	M	Firearm	Girlfriend	Domestic Violence Victim was shot. Murder/Suicide.
5/18/2005 Fargo	36	M	Unknown		Blunt Object		
5/29/2005 Bismarck	74	F	59	M	Fire	Stranger	Apartment building set on fire by assailant.
6/10/2005 Fargo	52	M	49	M	Vehicle	Stranger	Hit-and-run death.
6/20/2005 Hankinson, Richland County	43	F	19	M	Knife	Acquaintance	Circumstance unknown.
6/26/2005 Rolette County	40	M	27	M	Personal weapon	Uncle	Domestic Violence Victim found beaten in home.
7/10/2005 New Rockford, Eddy County	83	M	57	M	Blunt object	Acquaintance	Victim found dead in garage with head injury.
7/14/2005 Spirit Lake Reservation	29	M	43	M	Personal weapon	Friend	Victim struck in head with offender's fist.
10/8/2005 Grand Forks	BB	F	22	M	Asphyxiation	Daughter	Domestic Violence Victim found not breathing.
10/17/2005 White Shield, Fort Berthold Reservation	27	M	30 28	M M	.22-caliber pistol	Brother-in-law Acquaintance	Domestic Violence Argument
11/8/2005 Minot	18	M	57	M	.44-caliber	Acquaintance	Argument

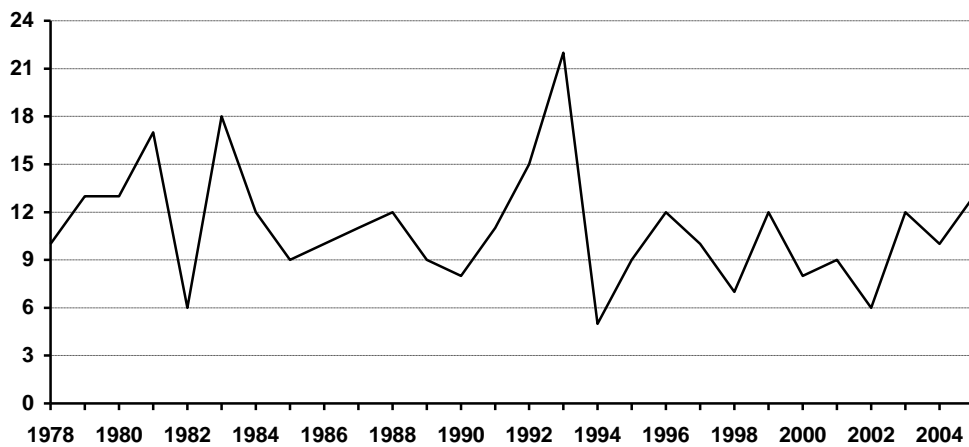
**HOMICIDE TOTALS AND RATES**

- Table 2 on page 3 provides yearly homicide totals and homicide rate information for North Dakota during the period 1978-2005.
- The average number of homicide deaths per year during this period is 11.

**Table 2  
Homicide Rate  
North Dakota, 1978-2005**

Year	Homicide Total	Population Estimate	Rate/100,000 Population
1978	10	651,000	1.5
1979	13	652,000	2.0
1980	13	652,700	2.0
1981	17	652,200	2.6
1982	6	670,000	0.9
1983	18	680,000	2.6
1984	12	686,000	1.7
1985	9	686,000	1.3
1986	10	679,000	1.5
1987	12	672,000	1.8
1988	12	663,000	1.8
1989	9	660,000	1.4
1990	8	638,800	1.3
1991	11	635,000	1.7
1992	15	636,000	2.4
1993	22	635,000	3.5
1994	6	638,000	0.9
1995	9	641,000	1.4
1996	12	644,000	1.9
1997	10	641,000	1.6
1998	7	638,000	1.1
1999	12	634,000	1.9
2000	8	642,200	1.2
2001	9	634,450	1.4
2002	6	634,110	0.9
2003	12	634,000	1.9
2004	10	634,500	1.6
2005	13	637,000	2.0

**Figure 1  
Homicide in North Dakota  
1978-2005**



## **VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER**

- Fifty-nine percent of the 311 total homicide victims during the period 1978-2005 were male.

**Table 3**  
**Gender of Homicide Victims**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978	6	4	10
1979	10	3	13
1980	9	4	13
1981	9	8	17
1982	3	3	6
1983	10	8	18
1984	5	7	12
1985	7	2	9
1986	8	2	10
1987	6	6	12
1988	8	4	12
1989	4	5	9
1990	3	5	8
1991	4	7	11
1992	10	5	15
1993	15	7	22
1994	2	4	6
1995	6	3	9
1996	6	6	12
1997	7	3	10
1998	5	2	7
1999	8	4	12
2000	4	4	8
2001	7	2	9
2002	2	4	6
2003	6	6	12
2004	7	3	10
2005	7	6	13
Total 1978-2005	184 (59%)	127 (41%)	311

## **VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - AGE**

- Of the 311 homicides during the period 1978-2005, 85 percent were adults. See Table 4 below.
- Forty-six percent of homicide victims were between the ages of 21 and 40. See Table 5 on the following page for information regarding age and gender of victims.

**Table 4  
Homicide Victims  
Juvenile and Adult  
North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Age Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978		10		10
1979	3	10		13
1980	3	10		13
1981	2	15		17
1982		6		6
1983	2	15	1	18
1984	5	7		12
1985		9		9
1986		10		10
1987	2	10		12
1988	1	11		12
1989	2	7		9
1990		8		8
1991	3	8		11
1992	3	12		15
1993	7	15		22
1994		6		6
1995	2	7		9
1996		12		12
1997		10		10
1998	1	6		7
1999	1	11		12
2000		8		8
2001		9		9
2002	2	4		6
2003	2	10		12
2004	3	7		10
2005	2	11		13
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>311</b>

**Table 5  
Homicide Victims  
By Age and Gender  
North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Unknown		1	1
Less than 1 year	7	8	15
01-05	4	5	9
06-10	1	6	7
11-15	2	3	5
16-20	20	10	30
21-25	31	10	41
26-30	24	13	37
31-35	14	15	29
36-40	20	16	36
41-45	14	10	24
46-50	14	9	23
51-55	11	6	17
56-60	1	3	4
61-65	6	3	9
Over 65	15	9	24
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>311</b>



## **WEAPONS AND VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS**

- Fifty-one percent of deaths due to homicide during the period 1978-2005 resulted from firearm use. See Table 6 below.
- In homicides involving firearms, the weapon was more likely to be a long gun than a handgun.
- Thirty-two of the 311 total homicide deaths involved the use of "personal weapons." Personal weapons include the use of hands, fists and feet as weapons.

**Table 6  
Weapons of Homicide  
North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Handgun</b>	<b>Other Firearm</b>	<b>Knife</b>	<b>Blunt Instrument</b>	<b>Personal Weapon</b>	<b>Other or Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978	4	4	1		1		10
1979	3	3	2	1	3	1	13
1980	5	5	2			1	13
1981	3	5	3		1	5	17
1982		3	3				6
1983		9	4	2		3	18
1984	5	2				5	12
1985	3	2	1		2	1	9
1986	3	1	2	2	1	1	10
1987	2	4	5			1	12
1988	9				2	1	12
1989	2	3	2		1	1	9
1990	3	1	2	1	1		8
1991		4	1	1		5	11
1992	2	6	4	2	1		15
1993	6	4	5	2	2	3	22
1994	1	2				3	6
1995	2	2	1	2		2	9
1996	3	4	4			1	12
1997		1	1	2	4	2	10
1998		3	2			2	7
1999	1	4	3	1		3	12
2000	2	1	2	1	2		8
2001	2	3	1	1	2		9
2002	1	1			2	2	6
2003	4	7			1		12
2004		5		1	1	3	10
2005	2	1	1	2	5	2	13
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>311</b>

- Firearms were used in 41 percent of the homicides of juveniles. Fifty-three percent of adult deaths due to homicide involved firearms. See Table 7 below.
- Forty-seven percent of homicides of males and 56 percent of homicides of females involved the use of firearms. See Table 8.
- Twenty-one percent of homicides of males and 11 percent of homicides of females involved knives.

**Table 7  
Homicide Victims  
By Weapon and Age Category  
North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Age Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	8	60		68
Other Firearm	11	79		90
Knife	1	51		52
Blunt Instrument	2	19		21
Personal Weapon	10	22		32
Other or Unknown	14	33	1	48
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>311</b>

**Table 8  
Homicide Victims  
By Weapon and Gender  
North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	42	26	68
Other Firearm	45	45	90
Knife	38	14	52
Blunt Instrument	17	4	21
Personal Weapon	20	12	32
Other or Unknown	22	26	48
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>311</b>

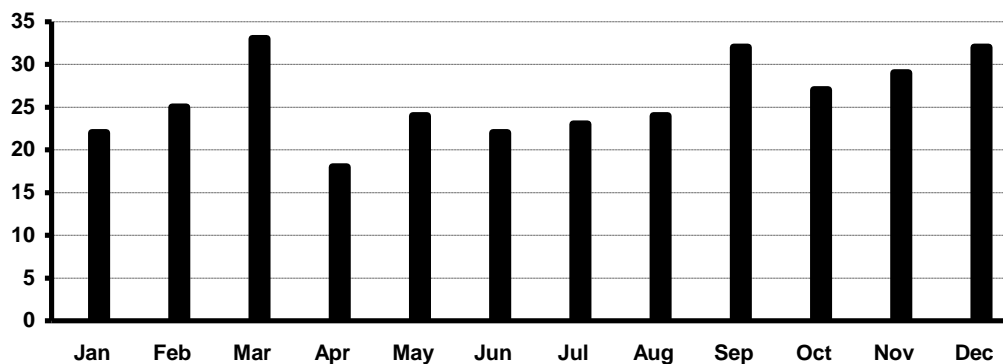
## MONTH OF OCCURRENCE

- During the period 1978-2005, the month of March had the highest number of deaths. See Table 9 below. Figure 2 illustrates this information graphically.

**Table 9**  
**Deaths Due to Homicide**  
**By Month, 1978-2005**

Month	Number	Percent of Total Homicides
January	22	7.1 %
February	25	8.0
March	33	10.6
April	18	5.8
May	24	7.7
June	22	7.1
July	23	7.4
August	24	7.7
September	32	10.3
October	27	8.7
November	29	9.3
December	32	10.3
Total 1978-2005	311	100.0

**Figure 2**  
**Homicides by Month of Occurrence**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**



## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEATHS**

**For purposes of this report, domestic violence deaths include those involving a spouse, former spouse, parent, child, persons related by blood or marriage, persons in a present or former dating relationship, persons who are presently residing together or have resided together in the past, persons who have a child in common regardless of whether they are or have been married or have lived together at any time, other persons on premises when a domestic incident occurs, and romantic triangle situations.**

- For the period 1978-2005, 51 percent of deaths due to homicide involved domestic violence.

**Table 10  
Domestic Violence Deaths  
North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Non-Domestic</b>	<b>No Assailant Identified</b>	<b>Homicide Total</b>
1978	5	4	1	10
1979	4	9		13
1980	7	6		13
1981	8	7	2	17
1982	4	1	1	6
1983	7	10	1	18
1984	10	2		12
1985	2	7		9
1986	5	4	1	10
1987	4	7	1	12
1988	6	5	1	12
1989	5	3	1	9
1990	5	3		8
1991	5	4	2	11
1992	11	4		15
1993	11	11		22
1994	4	1	1	6
1995	3	6		9
1996	7	5		12
1997	2	8		10
1998	5	2		7
1999	6	6		12
2000	6	1	1	8
2001	2	5	2	9
2002	4	1	1	6
2003	8	4		12
2004	6	4		10
2005	6	6	1	13
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>311</b>

- Persons killed in domestic violence incidents were more likely to be killed with a firearm than those killed in non-domestic incidents.
- Sixty-seven percent of female deaths in domestic violence incidents involved firearms, while 29 percent of female deaths in non-domestic violence incidents involved firearms.
- Seventy-five percent of female homicide victims were killed in domestic violence incidents, compared to 39 percent of males.

**Table 11**  
**Domestic Violence Deaths**  
**By Type of Weapon and Age Category of Victim**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Handgun	5	32	3	23
Other Firearm	10	53	1	25
Knife		21	1	26
Blunt Instrument	1	5	1	13
Personal Weapon	8	6	2	15
Other or Unknown	6	11	7	19
Total 1978-2005	30	128	15	121

**Table 12**  
**Domestic Violence Deaths**  
**By Type of Weapon and Gender of Victim**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	15	22	22	4
Other Firearm	23	40	21	5
Knife	14	7	21	6
Blunt Instrument	2	4	14	
Personal Weapon	6	8	14	3
Other or Unknown	6	11	13	13
Total 1978-2005	66	92	105	31

## **CLEARANCE RATES**

- Cases may be "cleared by arrest" of an assailant, or "cleared exceptionally," if a physical arrest cannot be made for reasons beyond the control of law enforcement. An example of an exceptional clearance would be a case in which the assailant committed suicide after killing someone.
- "Clearances" should not be interpreted as "convictions." The information regarding clearances, collected through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, reflects law enforcement activity. If an arrest is made, the UCR program considers the case cleared. UCR data does not reflect the results of prosecution of assailants.
- The average clearance rate for homicides in North Dakota during the period from 1978 to 2005 is 95 percent.

**Table 13**  
**Clearance Rates for Homicides**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Cleared</b>	<b>Total Homicides</b>	<b>North Dakota Clearance Rate</b>	<b>National Clearance Rate*</b>
1978	9	10	90 %	76 %
1979	13	13	100	73
1980	13	13	100	72
1981	15	17	88	72
1982	5	6	83	74
1983	17	18	94	76
1984	12	12	100	74
1985	9	9	100	72
1986	9	10	90	70
1987	11	12	92	70
1988	11	12	92	70
1989	8	9	89	68
1990	8	8	100	67
1991	9	11	82	67
1992	15	15	100	65
1993	22	22	100	66
1994	5	6	83	64
1995	9	9	100	65
1996	12	12	100	67
1997	10	10	100	66
1998	7	7	100	69
1999	12	12	100	69
2000	7	8	88	63
2001	7	9	78	63
2002	5	6	83	64
2003	12	12	100	62
2004	10	10	100	63
2005	12	13	92	Not Available

\* Clearance rates reported in annual Crime in the United States reports published by the FBI.

## **IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER**

- During the period 1978-2005, 90 percent of the 308 identified homicide assailants were male.
- Seventeen homicides during 1978-2005 have not had an assailant identified by law enforcement.

**Table 14**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**By Gender**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978	9		9 *
1979	14	2	16
1980	15	1	16
1981	9	3	12 *
1982	4	1	5 *
1983	17	2	19 *
1984	8		8
1985	12		12
1986	8		8 *
1987	11		11 *
1988	9	3	12 *
1989	8		8 *
1990	4	3	7
1991	8		8 *
1992	11	3	14
1993	17	3	20
1994	4	1	5 *
1995	19		19
1996	13	2	15
1997	8	1	9
1998	5	2	7
1999	9	1	10
2000	7	1	8 *
2001	9		9 *
2002	5		5 *
2003	9		9
2004	13	1	14
2005	12	1	13 *
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>277 (90%)</b>	<b>31 (10%)</b>	<b>308</b>

\* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

- Eighty-eight percent of the total 308 assailants identified by law enforcement were adults. See Table 15 below.
- Of the 308 assailants identified by law enforcement, 66 percent were between the ages of 16 and 35. See Table 16 on the following page for information on age and gender of identified assailants.

**Table 15**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**Juvenile and Adult**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978	2	7	9 *
1979	2	14	16
1980	7	9	16
1981		12	12 *
1982		5	5 *
1983		19	19 *
1984	1	7	8
1985		12	12
1986		8	8 *
1987	2	9	11 *
1988		12	12 *
1989	2	6	8 *
1990		7	7
1991	1	7	8 *
1992	2	12	14
1993	3	17	20
1994		5	5 *
1995	13	6	19
1996	1	14	15
1997		9	9
1998	1	6	7
1999		10	10
2000		8	8 *
2001		9	9
2002		5	5 *
2003		9	9 *
2004		14	14
2005		13	13 *
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>37 (12%)</b>	<b>271 (88%)</b>	<b>308</b>

\* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.



**Table 16**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**By Age and Gender**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
01-05			0
06-10			0
11-15	19	2	21
16-20	54	4	58
21-25	63	4	67
26-30	40	2	42
31-35	29	7	36
36-40	21	4	25
41-45	18	7	25
46-50	9		9
51-55	6	1	7
56-60	9		9
61-65	4		4
Over 65	5		5
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>308</b>

## **WEAPONS AND IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS**

- In homicide incidents involving firearms, juvenile assailants were much more likely to use firearms other than handguns. For adults, long guns were used more often than handguns.
- Male assailants were more likely to use firearms in homicide incidents, while females were more likely to use knives.
- For incidents involving the use of firearms, male assailants were more likely to use rifles or shotguns than handguns. Conversely, females were more likely to use handguns than other types of firearms.

**Table 17**  
**Identified Assailants**  
**By Type of Weapon and Age Category**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	2	55	57
Other Firearm	19	67	86
Knife	6	53	59
Blunt Instrument	4	24	28
Personal Weapon	2	33	35
Other or Unknown	4	39	43
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>308</b>

**Table 18**  
**Identified Assailants**  
**By Type of Weapon and Gender**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	51	6	57
Other Firearm	81	5	86
Knife	46	13	59
Blunt Instrument	27	1	28
Personal Weapon	33	2	35
Other or Unknown	39	4	43
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>308</b>

- Forty-six percent of assailants identified by law enforcement were involved in domestic violence incidents. See Table 19 below.
- Assailants were more likely to use firearms in domestic incidents than in non-domestic incidents. See Table 20.

**Table 19**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Non-Domestic</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978	4	5	9 *
1979	5	11	16
1980	9	7	16
1981	7	5	12 *
1982	4	1	5 *
1983	4	15	19 *
1984	6	2	8
1985	2	10	12
1986	4	4	8 *
1987	4	7	11 *
1988	6	6	12 *
1989	4	4	8 *
1990	4	3	7
1991	4	4	8 *
1992	8	6	14
1993	8	12	20
1994	4	1	5 *
1995	4	15	19
1996	7	8	15
1997	2	7	9
1998	5	2	7
1999	5	5	10
2000	6	2	8 *
2001	2	7	9 *
2002	4	1	5 *
2003	6	3	9
2004	6	8	14
2005	7	6	13 *
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>141 (46%)</b>	<b>167 (54%)</b>	<b>308</b>

\* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

**Table 20**  
**Weapon Use by Identified Assailants**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Non-Domestic</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	32	25	57
Other Firearm	51	35	86
Knife	21	38	59
Blunt Instrument	5	23	28
Personal Weapon	15	20	35
Other or Unknown	17	26	43
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>308</b>

- Blunt instruments were more likely to be used by assailants in non-domestic incidents.
- Seventy-four percent of identified female assailants were involved in domestic incidents, compared to 42 percent for males. See Table 22.

**Table 21**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**By Type of Weapon and Age Category of Assailant**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Domestic</b>		<b>Non-Domestic</b>	
	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>
Handgun	1	31	1	24
Other Firearm	5	46	14	21
Knife	3	18	3	35
Blunt Instrument		5	4	19
Personal Weapon	1	14	1	19
Other or Unknown	2	15	2	24
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>142</b>

**Table 22**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**By Type of Weapon and Gender of Assailant**  
**North Dakota, 1978-2005**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Domestic</b>		<b>Non-Domestic</b>	
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Handgun	26	4	25	2
Other Firearm	46	5	35	
Knife	11	10	35	3
Blunt Instrument	5		22	1
Personal Weapon	13	2	20	
Other or Unknown	15	2	24	2
<b>Total 1978-2005</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>8</b>