

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

**Criminal Justice Statistics Special Report**

**Homicide in North Dakota, 2021**



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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. (Any new data for prior years will be included in this report.)

## **HOMICIDE IN 2021**

- In 2021, seventeen homicide deaths were known to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. Based on a state population estimate of 774,948, the resulting homicide rate for the state of North Dakota was 2.2 per 100,000 population. See Table 2 on page 3 for information regarding rates for previous years.
- **Victim Gender:** Ten of the homicide victims were male.
- **Victim Age:** Fifteen 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 2021.
- **Weapons:** Firearms were involved in the deaths of thirteen homicide victims.
- **Domestic Violence:** There were three homicides in 2021 resulting from domestic violence incidents. See definition on page 10.
- **Assailant Gender:** Sixteen of the seventeen identified assailants were male.
- **Assailant Age:** All 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, 2021**

Date & Location of Incident	Victim(s)		Assailant(s)		Relationship of Victim to Assailant	Weapons Used	Circumstances
	Age	Sex	Age	Sex			
1/14/21 Spirit Lake Res.	17	M	34	M	Acquaintance	Firearm Fire	Unknown Circumstance
3/28/21 Bismarck PD	26	M	27 29	M M	Stranger Stranger	Rifle	Argument Drug dealing
5/4/21 Turtle Mountain Res.	36	M	34	M	Relationship Unknown	Firearm	Unknown Circumstance
5/23/21 Fargo PD	27	M				Firearm	Unknown Circumstance
6/3/21 Minot PD	33	F	32	M	Former Girlfriend	Firearm Arson Personal Weapon	Domestic Incident Unknown Circumstance Vehicle was engulfed in fire
6/4/21 Wahpeton PD	52	F	62	M	Girlfriend	Handgun	Domestic Incident Murder/Suicide Unknown Circumstance
6/4/21 Fargo PD	14	F	23	M	Stranger	Knife Asphyxiation	Unknown Circumstance
7/11/21 Minot PD	29	F	41	M	Girlfriend	Firearm	Domestic Incident Argument
7/24/21 Fargo PD	40	M	40	M	Otherwise Known	Firearm	Argument
7/25/21 Dunn SO	43	M	28	M	Acquaintance	Handgun	Unknown Circumstance
8/3/21 Fargo PD	78	M	59	F	Acquaintance	Personal Weapon	Other Circumstance
8/15/21 Minot PD	50	F	23	M	Acquaintance	Firearm	Argument
8/21/21 West Fargo PD	53	M	35	M	Relationship Unknown	Personal Weapon	Argument
9/12/21 Grand Forks PD	28	F	26	M	Acquaintance	Handgun	Argument Other Circumstance
10/9/21 Fort Berthold Res	38	M	30 30	M M	Acquaintance Acquaintance	Personal Weapon	Unknown Circumstance
11/17/21 Fargo PD	43 32	M F	35	M	Acquaintance Acquaintance	Handgun	Other Circumstance

## **HOMICIDE TOTALS AND RATES**

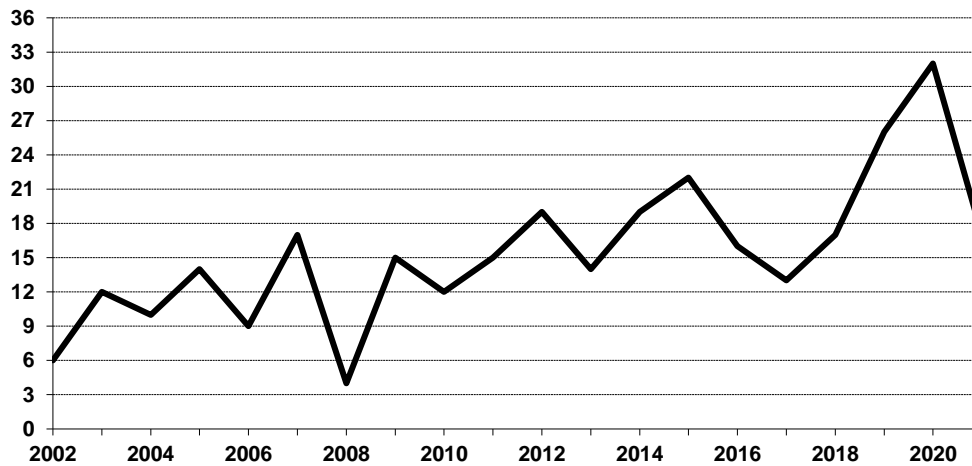
- Table 2 provides yearly homicide totals and homicide rate information for North Dakota during the period 2002-2021.
- The average number of homicide deaths per year during this period is 15.

**Table 2  
Homicide Rate  
North Dakota, 2002-2021**

Year	Homicide Total	Population Estimate	Rate/100,000 Population
2002	6	634,110	0.9
2003	12	634,000	1.9
2004	10	634,500	1.6
2005	14	637,000	2.2
2006 <sup>1</sup>	9	636,000	1.4
2007 <sup>1</sup>	17	640,000	2.7
2008	4	641,500	0.6
2009	15	647,000	2.3
2010	12	672,591	1.8
2011	15	683,932	2.2
2012	19	699,628	2.7
2013	14	723,393	1.9
2014	19	739,482	2.6
2015	22	756,927	2.9
2016	16	757,952	2.1
2017	13	755,393	1.7
2018	17	760,077	2.2
2019	26	762,062	3.4
2020	32	765,309	4.2
2021	17	774,948	2.2

<sup>1</sup> Homicides have been revised throughout this report to reflect corrections.

**Figure 1  
Homicide in North Dakota  
2002-2021**



## VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER

- Sixty-four percent of the 309 total homicide victims during the period 2002-2021 were male.

**Table 3**  
**Gender of Homicide Victims**  
**North Dakota, 2002-2021**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
2002	2	4	6
2003	6	6	12
2004	7	3	10
2005	8	6	14
2006	4	5	9
2007	7	10	17
2008	3	1	4
2009	7	8	15
2010	8	4	12
2011	10	5	15
2012	13	6	19
2013	9	5	14
2014	17	2	19
2015	16	6	22
2016	12	4	16
2017	8	5	13
2018	11	6	17
2019	19	7	26
2020	22	10	32
2021	10	7	17
Total 2002-2021	199 (64%)	110 (36%)	309

## **VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - AGE**

- Of the 309 homicides during the period 2002-2021, 82 percent were adults. See Table 4 below.
- Forty-three 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, 2002-2021**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
2002	2	4	6
2003	2	10	12
2004	3	7	10
2005	2	12	14
2006	3	6	9
2007	4	13	17
2008	2	2	4
2009	4	11	15
2010	1	11	12
2011	4	11	15
2012	6	13	19
2013	2	12	14
2014	1	18	19
2015	4	18	22
2016		16	16
2017		13	13
2018	7	10	17
2019	2	24	26
2020	4	28	32
2021	2	15	17
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>309</b>

**Table 5  
Homicide Victims  
By Age and Gender  
North Dakota, 2002-2021**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Less than 1 year	14	13	27
01-05	1	4	5
06-10	5	3	8
11-15	5	1	6
16-20	18	10	28
21-25	24	8	32
26-30	32	12	44
31-35	19	5	24
36-40	19	13	32
41-45	12	11	23
46-50	17	8	25
51-55	10	5	15
56-60	13	2	15
61-65	3	4	7
Over 65	7	11	18
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>309</b>



## **WEAPONS AND VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS**

- Forty-three percent of deaths due to homicide during the period 2002-2021 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.
- Fifty-nine of the 309 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, 2002-2021**

<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>
2002	1	1			2	2	6
2003	4	7			1		12
2004		5		1	1	3	10
2005	2	1	1	2	5	3	14
2006	1		4		2	2	9
2007	4		3	1	6	3	17
2008			2		2		4
2009	3	3	2	2	3	2	15
2010	2	5	1	1	3		12
2011	2	4	6	1	2		15
2012	1	6	6	1	2	3	19
2013		4	6	2	2		14
2014	1	5	5	1	4	3	19
2015	5	4	4	1	5	3	22
2016	5	4	4	1	2		16
2017	2	4	2	2	1	2	13
2018	8	1	1	1	5	1	17
2019	5	4	7	2	4	4	26
2020	4	11	6	2	5	4	32
2021	7	6	1		2	1	17
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>309</b>

\*One weapon per incident is recognized on this chart.

- Firearms were used in 22 percent of the homicides of juveniles. Forty-seven percent of adult deaths due to homicide involved firearms. See Table 7 below.
- Forty-four percent of homicides of males and 40 percent of homicides of females involved the use of firearms. See Table 8.
- Twenty-one percent of homicides of males and 17 percent of homicides of females involved knives.

**Table 7  
Homicide Victims  
By Weapon and Age Category  
North Dakota, 2002-2021**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	4	53	57
Other Firearm	8	67	75
Knife	3	58	61
Blunt Instrument		21	21
Personal Weapon	27	32	59
Other or Unknown	13	23	38
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>309</b>

**Table 8  
Homicide Victims  
By Weapon and Gender  
North Dakota, 2002-2021**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	39	18	57
Other Firearm	49	26	75
Knife	42	19	61
Blunt Instrument	17	4	21
Personal Weapon	33	26	59
Other or Unknown	19	17	36
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>309</b>

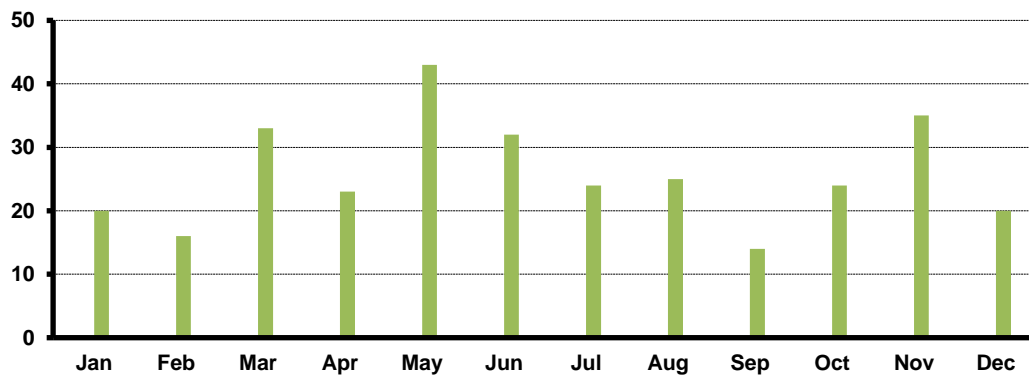
## MONTH OF OCCURRENCE

- During the period 2002-2021, the month of May had the highest number of homicide deaths. See Table 9 below. Figure 2 illustrates this information graphically.

**Table 9**  
**Deaths Due to Homicide**  
**By Month, 2002-2021**

Month	Number	Percent of Total Homicides
January	20	6.5%
February	16	5.2
March	33	10.7
April	23	7.4
May	43	13.9
June	32	10.4
July	24	7.8
August	25	8.1
September	14	4.5
October	24	7.8
November	35	11.3
December	20	6.5
Total 2002-2021	309	100.0

**Figure 2**  
**Homicides by Month of Occurrence**  
**North Dakota, 2002-2021**



## **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 2002-2021, 43 percent of deaths due to homicide involved domestic violence.

**Table 10  
Domestic Violence Deaths  
North Dakota, 2002-2021**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Non-Domestic</b>	<b>No Assailant Identified</b>	<b>Homicide Total</b>
2002	4	1	1	6
2003	8	4		12
2004	6	4		10
2005	6	7	1	14
2006	4	4	1	9
2007	7	10		17
2008		4		4
2009	12	3		15
2010	6	6		12
2011	7	7	1	15
2012	6	13		19
2013	7	7		14
2014	6	12	1	19
2015	9	11	2	22
2016	2	14		16
2017	4	9		13
2018	12	5		17
2019	10	16		26
2020	15	14	3	32
2021	3	13	1	17
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>309</b>

- Persons killed in non-domestic violence incidents were more likely to be killed with a firearm than those killed in domestic incidents.
- Forty-three percent of female deaths in domestic violence incidents involved firearms, while 32 percent of female deaths in non-domestic violence incidents involved firearms.
- Seventy-two percent of female homicide victims were killed in domestic violence incidents, compared to 33 percent of males.

**Table 11**  
**Domestic Violence Deaths**  
**By Type of Weapon and Age Category of Victim**  
**North Dakota, 2002-2021**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Handgun	3	19	1	34
Other Firearm	3	31	5	32
Knife	2	21	1	35
Blunt Instrument		7		14
Personal Weapon	21	11	5	21
Other or Unknown	6	10	6	10
Total 2002-2021	35	99	18	146

**Table 12**  
**Domestic Violence Deaths**  
**By Type of Weapon and Gender of Victim**  
**North Dakota, 2002-2021**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	7	15	32	3
Other Firearm	15	19	30	7
Knife	11	12	29	7
Blunt Instrument	3	4	14	
Personal Weapon	11	21	21	5
Other or Unknown	8	8	7	9
Total 2002-2021	55	79	133	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 National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) program, reflects law enforcement activity. If an arrest is made, the NIBRS program considers the case cleared. NIBRS data does not reflect the results of prosecution of assailants.
- The average clearance rate for homicides in North Dakota during the period from 2002 to 2021 is 96 percent.

**Table 13**  
**Clearance Rates for Homicides**  
**North Dakota, 2002-2021**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Cleared</b>	<b>Total Homicides</b>	<b>North Dakota Clearance Rate</b>	<b>National Clearance Rate*</b>
2002	5	6	83	64
2003	12	12	100	62
2004	10	10	100	63
2005	13	14	86	62
2006	8	9	88	61
2007	17	17	100	61
2008	4	4	100	64
2009	15	15	100	67
2010	12	12	100	65
2011	14	15	93	65
2012	19	19	100	63
2013	14	14	100	64
2014	18	19	95	65
2015	20	22	91	62
2016	16	16	100	59
2017	12	13	92	62
2018	17	17	100	62
2019	26	26	100	61
2020	28	32	88	54
2021	16	17	94	Not Available

\* Clearance rates reported in annual [Crime in the United States](#) reports published by the FBI.

## **IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER**

- During the period 2002-2021, 87 percent of the 313 identified homicide assailants were male.
- Fourteen homicides during 2002-2021 have not had an assailant identified by law enforcement.

**Table 14  
Identified Homicide Assailants  
By Gender  
North Dakota, 2002-2021**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
2002	5		5 *
2003	9		9
2004	13	1	14
2005	13	1	14 *
2006	7	1	8 *
2007	14	4	18
2008	6	1	7
2009	15	2	17
2010	11	1	12
2011	11	2	13 *
2012	15	2	17 *
2013	13	4	17
2014	18	4	22 *
2015	20	2	22 *
2016	17	2	19
2017	11	2	13 *
2018	12	3	15
2019	22	2	24
2020	25	5	30 *
2021	16	1	17 *
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>273 (87%)</b>	<b>40 (13%)</b>	<b>313</b>

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

- Ninety-eight percent of the total 313 assailants identified by law enforcement were adults. See Table 15 below.
- Of the 313 assailants identified by law enforcement, 68 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, 2002-2021**

Year	Juvenile	Adult	Total
2002		5	5 *
2003		9	9
2004		14	14
2005		14	14 *
2006		8	8 *
2007	3	15	18
2008		7	7
2009		17	17
2010		12	12
2011		13	13 *
2012	1	16	17 *
2013		17	17
2014		22	22 *
2015		22	22 *
2016		19	19
2017		13	13 *
2018		15	15
2019	2	22	24
2020		30	30 *
2021		17	17 *
Total 2002-2021	6 (2%)	307 (98%)	313

\* 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, 2002-2021**

Age	Male	Female	Total
Less than 10			0
11-15	2		2
16-20	29	5	34
21-25	61	7	68
26-30	54	8	62
31-35	39	9	48
36-40	14	2	16
41-45	28	5	33
46-50	18	1	19
51-55	9		9
56-60	7	2	9
61-65	6		6
Over 65	6	1	7
Total 2002-2021	273	40	313

## **WEAPONS AND IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS**

- In homicide incidents involving firearms, adult assailants were much more likely to use firearms other than handguns.
- Male assailants were more likely to use firearms in homicide incidents, while females were more likely to use personal weapons or knives.

**Table 17**  
**Identified Assailants**  
**By Type of Weapon and Age Category**  
**North Dakota, 2002-2021**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	1	54	55
Other Firearm	1	67	68
Knife	1	63	64
Blunt Instrument		27	27
Personal Weapon	3	65	68
Other or Unknown		31	31
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>313</b>

**Table 18**  
**Identified Assailants**  
**By Type of Weapon and Gender**  
**North Dakota, 2002-2021**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	53	2	55
Other Firearm	65	3	68
Knife	52	12	64
Blunt Instrument	26	1	27
Personal Weapon	55	13	68
Other or Unknown	22	9	31
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>313</b>

- Forty-two 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 non-domestic incidents than in domestic incidents. See Table 20.
- Knives were more likely to be used by assailants in non-domestic incidents.

**Table 19**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**North Dakota, 2002-2021**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Non-Domestic</b>	<b>Total</b>
2002	4	1	5 *
2003	6	3	9
2004	6	8	14
2005	7	7	14 *
2006	4	4	8 *
2007	9	9	18
2008		7	7
2009	14	3	17
2010	6	6	12
2011	7	6	13 *
2012	6	11	17 *
2013	6	11	17
2014	6	16	22 *
2015	9	13	22 *
2016	2	17	19
2017	4	9	13 *
2018	10	5	15
2019	10	14	24
2020	14	16	30 *
2021	3	14	17 *
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>133 (42%)</b>	<b>180 (58%)</b>	<b>313</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, 2002-2021**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>Non-Domestic</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	22	33	55
Other Firearm	30	38	68
Knife	21	43	64
Blunt Instrument	8	19	27
Personal Weapon	35	33	68
Other or Unknown	17	14	31
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>313</b>

**Table 21**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**By Type of Weapon and Age Category of Assailant**  
**North Dakota, 2002-2021**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Domestic</b>		<b>Non-Domestic</b>	
	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>
Handgun		22	1	32
Other Firearm	1	29		38
Knife		21	1	42
Blunt Instrument		8		19
Personal Weapon	2	33	1	32
Other or Unknown		17		14
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>177</b>

**Table 22**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**By Type of Weapon and Gender of Assailant**  
**North Dakota, 2002-2021**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Domestic</b>		<b>Non-Domestic</b>	
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Handgun	21	1	32	1
Other Firearm	29	1	36	2
Knife	15	6	37	6
Blunt Instrument	8		18	1
Personal Weapon	24	11	31	2
Other or Unknown	9	8	13	1
<b>Total 2002-2021</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>13</b>