

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

**Criminal Justice Statistics Special Report**

**Homicide in North Dakota, 1999**



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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.

## HOMICIDE IN 1999

- In 1999, eleven homicide deaths were known to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. Based on a population estimate of 634,000, the resulting homicide rate for the state of North Dakota was 1.7 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:** Ten 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 1999.
- **Weapons:** Three people were stabbed to death. Two died after being struck by an automobile. One victim was beaten with a blunt object. Firearms were involved in five homicide deaths.
- **Domestic Violence:** Six of the eleven homicides in 1999 resulted from domestic violence incidents. See definition on page 10.
- **Assailant Gender:** Eight of the nine 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 in this report all homicide incidents occurring within the state's borders.

**Table 1  
Summary of Homicide Incidents  
North Dakota, 1999**

Date and Location of Incident	Victim(s)		Assailant(s)		Weapon Used	Relationship of Victim(s) to Assailant(s)	Circumstances
	AGE	SEX	AGE	SEX			
01/30/99 Grand Forks	Infant	F	24	M	Shotgun	Daughter	Victim was shot by father who then shot and injured himself.
02/21/99 Bismarck	25	M	22	M	Handgun	Acquaintance	Victim was shot during a liquor store robbery.
03/20/99 Fargo	77	M	55	M	Blunt Object	Acquaintance	Victim was an attorney that had represented the assailant in the past. Victim's apartment was set on fire.
05/16/99 Hamilton Pembina County	34 44	F F	40	M	Shotgun	Girlfriend Acquaintance	One of the victims had a restraining order regarding the assailant and was staying with a friend. The assailant killed both and later committed suicide.
06/06/99 Grand Forks	30	M	19	M	Knife	Step-Father	Victim was stabbed once in the back.
07/29/99 Cannon Ball Standing Rock Res.	52	M	37	F	Knife	Boyfriend	Victim was stabbed seven times.
08/21/99 Grand Forks	41	F	43	M	Shotgun	Wife	Murder-suicide. Wife had recently filed for divorce.
10/17/99 Minot	18 29	M M	29	M	Automobile	Unknown Friend	Assailant drove into a crowd of people after being asked to leave a party and getting into a fight.
11/19/99 Fargo	24	M	44	M	Knife	Friend	Victim was stabbed in the neck by a man he had been drinking with earlier.

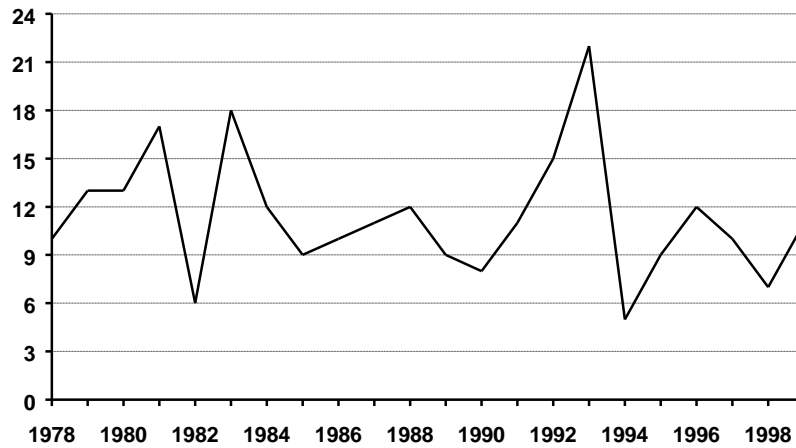
**HOMICIDE TOTALS AND RATES**

- Table 2 on page 3 provides yearly homicide totals and homicide rate information for North Dakota during the period 1978-1999.
- The average number of homicide deaths per year during this period is 11.

**Table 2**  
**Homicide Rate**  
**North Dakota, 1978-1999**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Homicide Total</b>	<b>Population Estimate</b>	<b>Rate/100,000 Population</b>
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	11	672,000	1.6
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	5	638,000	0.8
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	11	634,000	1.7

**Figure 1**  
**Homicide in North Dakota**  
**1978-1999**



### **VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER**

- Sixty percent of the 250 total homicide victims during the period 1978-1999 were male.

**Table 3  
Gender of Homicide Victims  
North Dakota, 1978-1999**

<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	5	11
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	1	4	5
1995	6	3	9
1996	6	6	12
1997	7	3	10
1998	5	2	7
1999	7	4	11
Total 1978-1999	149 (60%)	101 (40%)	250



**VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - AGE**

- Of the 250 homicides during the period 1978-1999, 84 percent were adults. See Table 4 below.
- Forty-seven 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, 1978-1999**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Age Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
1978		9	1	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	9		11
1988	1	11		12
1989	2	7		9
1990		8		8
1991	3	8		11
1992	3	12		15
1993	7	15		22
1994		5		5
1995	2	7		9
1996		12		12
1997		10		10
1998	1	6		7
1999	1	10		11
<b>Total 1978-1999</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>250</b>

**Table 5  
Homicide Victims  
by Age and Gender  
North Dakota, 1978-1999**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Unknown		2	2
Less than 1 year	5	6	11
01-05	4	4	8
06-10	1	6	7
11-15	2	3	5
16-20	13	6	19
21-25	29	10	39
26-30	20	12	32
31-35	10	11	21
36-40	14	12	26
41-45	12	5	17
46-50	9	7	16
51-55	11	6	17
56-60	1	3	4
61-65	5	3	8
Over 65	13	5	18
Total 1978-1999	149	101	250

## **WEAPONS AND VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS**

- Fifty-two percent of deaths due to homicide during the period 1978-1999 resulted from firearm use. See Table 6 below.
- Table 7 on page 8 provides information on age category of victims and type of weapon involved.
- Firearms were used in 46 percent of the homicides of juveniles. Fifty-three percent of adult deaths due to homicide involved firearms.
- In homicides involving firearms, the weapon was somewhat more likely to be a long gun than a handgun.
- Nineteen of the 250 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, 1978-1999**

<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				11
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				2	5
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		2	11
<b>Total 1978-1999</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>250</b>

- Forty-eight percent of homicides of males and 57 percent of homicides of females involved the use of firearms. See Table 8.
- Twenty-four percent of homicides of males and 12 percent of homicides of females involved knives.

**Table 7  
Homicide Victims  
by Weapon and Age Category  
North Dakota, 1978-1999**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Age Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	8	49		57
Other Firearm	9	62	1	72
Knife	1	47		48
Blunt Instrument	2	14		16
Personal Weapon	5	14		19
Other or Unknown	12	25	1	38
<b>Total 1978-1999</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>250</b>

**Table 8  
Homicide Victims  
by Weapon and Gender  
North Dakota, 1978-1999**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	35	22	57
Other Firearm	36	36	72
Knife	36	12	48
Blunt Instrument	12	4	16
Personal Weapon	13	6	19
Other or Unknown	17	21	38
<b>Total 1978-1999</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>250</b>

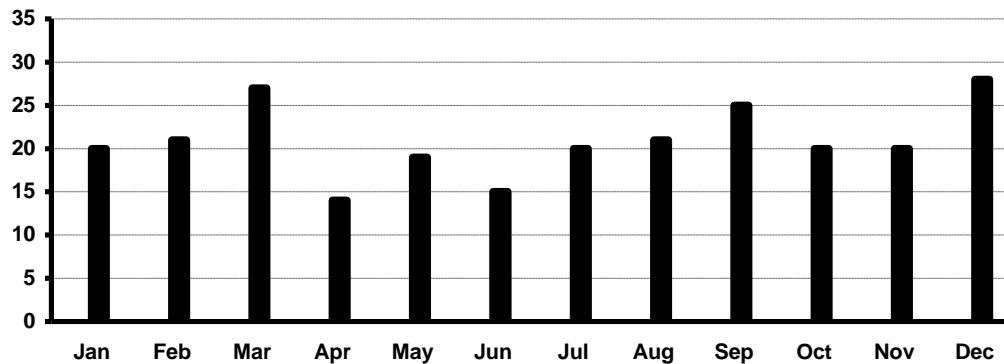
## MONTH OF OCCURRENCE

- During the period 1978-1999, more homicides occurred in the month of December than in any other month. See Table 9 below. Figure 2 illustrates this information graphically.

**Table 9**  
**Deaths Due to Homicide**  
**by Month, 1978-1999**

Month	Number	Percent of Total Homicides
January	20	8.0 %
February	21	8.4
March	27	10.8
April	14	5.6
May	19	7.6
June	15	6.0
July	20	8.0
August	21	8.4
September	25	10.0
October	20	8.0
November	20	8.0
December	28	11.2
Total 1978-1999	250	100.0

**Figure 2**  
**Homicides by Month of Occurrence**  
**North Dakota, 1978-1999**



## 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 1978-1999, 50 percent of deaths due to homicide involved domestic violence.

**Table 10**  
**Domestic Violence Deaths**  
**North Dakota, 1978-1999**

Year	Domestic	Non-Domestic	No Assailant Identified	Homicide Total
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	3	7	1	11
1988	6	5	1	12
1989	5	3	1	9
1990	5	2	1	8
1991	5	4	2	11
1992	11	4		15
1993	11	11		22
1994	4	1		5
1995	3	6		9
1996	7	5		12
1997	2	8		10
1998	5	2		7
1999	6	5		11
Total 1978-1999	125	113	12	250

- Persons killed in domestic violence incidents were more likely to be killed with a firearm than those killed in non-domestic incidents.
- Sixty-eight 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 35 percent of males.

**Table 11**  
**Domestic Violence Deaths**  
**by Type of Weapon and Age Category of Victim**  
**North Dakota, 1978-1999**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic		
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Age Unknown
Handgun	5	26	3	20	
Other Firearm	8	41	1	19	1
Knife		20	1	23	
Blunt Instrument	1	3	1	11	
Personal Weapon	4	3	1	11	
Other or Unknown	5	9	6	15	
<b>Total 1978-1999</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>1</b>

**Table 12**  
**Domestic Violence Deaths**  
**by Type of Weapon and Gender of Victim**  
**North Dakota, 1978-1999**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	13	18	19	4
Other Firearm	17	32	17	4
Knife	13	7	20	4
Blunt Instrument		4	12	
Personal Weapon	4	3	9	3
Other or Unknown	5	9	11	10
<b>Total 1978-1999</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>25</b>

## **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 1999 was 95 percent.

**Table 13**  
**Clearance Rates for Homicides**  
**North Dakota, 1978-1999**

<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	10	11	91	70
1988	11	12	92	70
1989	8	9	89	68
1990	7	8	88	67
1991	9	11	82	67
1992	15	15	100	65
1993	22	22	100	66
1994	5	5	100	64
1995	9	9	100	65
1996	12	12	100	67
1997	10	10	100	66
1998	7	7	100	69
1999	11	11	100	Not Available

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



## **IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER**

- During the period 1978-1999, 89 percent of the 247 identified homicide assailants were male.
- Twelve homicides during 1978-1999 have not had an assailant identified by law enforcement.

**Table 14**  
**Identified Homicide Assailants**  
**by Gender**  
**North Dakota, 1978-1999**

<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	10		10 *
1988	9	3	12 *
1989	8		8 *
1990	3	3	6 *
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	8	1	9
<b>Total 1978-1999</b>	<b>219 (89%)</b>	<b>28 (11%)</b>	<b>247</b>

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

- Eighty-five percent of the total 247 assailants identified by law enforcement were adults. See Table 15 below.
- Of the 247 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, 1978-1999**

<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	8	10 *
1988		12	12 *
1989	2	6	8 *
1990		6	6 *
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	0	9	9
<b>Total 1978-1999</b>	<b>37 (15%)</b>	<b>210 (85%)</b>	<b>247</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, 1978-1999**

<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	43	4	47
21-25	50	3	53
26-30	29	2	31
31-35	25	7	32
36-40	16	4	20
41-45	14	6	20
46-50	5		5
51-55	5		5
56-60	5		5
61-65	4		4
Over 65	4		4
<b>Total 1978-1999</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>247</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 only slightly 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, 1978-1999**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	2	46	48
Other Firearm	19	50	69
Knife	6	46	52
Blunt Instrument	4	18	22
Personal Weapon	2	19	21
Other or Unknown	4	31	35
<b>Total 1978-1999</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>247</b>

**Table 18**  
**Identified Assailants**  
**by Type of Weapon and Gender**  
**North Dakota, 1978-1999**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Handgun	42	6	48
Other Firearm	65	4	69
Knife	40	12	52
Blunt Instrument	21	1	22
Personal Weapon	20	1	21
Other or Unknown	31	4	35
<b>Total 1978-1999</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>247</b>

- Forty-four 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, 1978-1999**

Year	Domestic	Non-Domestic	Total
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	3	7	10 *
1988	6	6	12 *
1989	4	4	8 *
1990	4	2	6 *
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	4	9
Total 1978-1999	109 (44%)	138 (56%)	247

\* 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, 1978-1999**

Weapon	Domestic	Non-Domestic	Total
Handgun	25	23	48
Other Firearm	39	30	69
Knife	20	32	52
Blunt Instrument	3	19	22
Personal Weapon	8	13	21
Other or Unknown	14	21	35
Total 1978-1999	109	138	247

- Blunt instruments were more likely to be used by assailants in non-domestic incidents.
- Seventy-one percent of identified female assailants were involved in domestic incidents, compared to 41 percent for males. See Table 22.

**Table 21**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**by Type of Weapon and Age Category of Assailant**  
**North Dakota, 1978-1999**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Handgun	1	24	1	22
Other Firearm	5	34	14	16
Knife	3	17	3	29
Blunt Instrument		3	4	15
Personal Weapon	1	7	1	12
Other or Unknown	2	12	2	19
Total 1978-1999	12	97	25	113

**Table 22**  
**Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents**  
**by Type of Weapon and Gender of Assailant**  
**North Dakota, 1978-1999**

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	21	4	21	2
Other Firearm	35	4	30	
Knife	11	9	29	3
Blunt Instrument	3		18	1
Personal Weapon	7	1	13	
Other or Unknown	12	2	19	2
Total 1978-1999	89	20	130	8