

FAMILY AND  
INTIMATE  
PARTNER  
VIOLENCE  
*HOMICIDE*

VIRGINIA: 1999

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Virginia Department of Health  
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner  
February 2001, Issue 1

## Definitions

**Family and Intimate Partner Homicide** is characterized by a familial or intimate partner relationship between the victim and alleged offender.

**Intimate partner** includes the following relationships regardless of whether they lived together: person's married, separated or divorced, persons who have or had an intimate relationship, boyfriend, girlfriend and same sex partner's current or ex.

**Child** includes persons under the age of 18, killed by a caretaker.

**Family** includes persons related by blood or marriage.

**Intimate Partner Associated** includes homicide victims who died as a result of a violent relationship between intimate partners. It can include alleged abusers killed by law enforcement or others who intervened, or friends, co-workers, neighbors, and relatives caught in the crossfire.

**Elder** includes persons over the age of 55, killed by a caretaker.

### **Fatal Agency**

Mechanism of injury including: firearm [handgun, rifle, shotgun, automatic weapon], instrument [blunt or sharp], personal weapon [hand, foot, head, leg, arm, or other parts of the body], other [motor vehicle, poison, fire, strangulation, drown or smother].

### **Homicide-Suicide**

Homicide followed within in one week by a suicide.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner initiated the surveillance of Family and Intimate Partner Homicides in 1999. The purpose of collecting information regarding family and intimate partner homicides is to accurately and completely characterize these events for public health planning, policy, and prevention. Unlike nonfatal injuries that result from family and intimate partner violence, deaths due to family and intimate partner violence can be measured and tracked over time with greater precision.

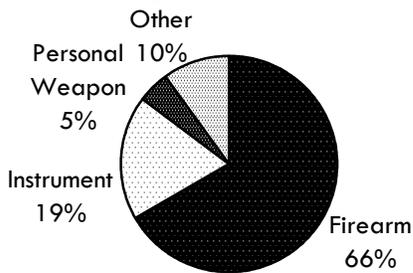
The data presented in this report represent all deaths in which the manner of death or circumstances that caused the injury resulting in death is homicide as determined by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. This first section describes all homicides in Virginia in 1999; the second section describes family and intimate partner homicide in more detail. The data may differ from state mortality figures as it includes all homicides that occurred in Virginia whether or not the person was a resident. In addition, state mortality data includes the deaths of Virginians who died in other states and includes deaths by legal execution.

- In 1999, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner conducted medico-legal death investigations of 434 homicides.

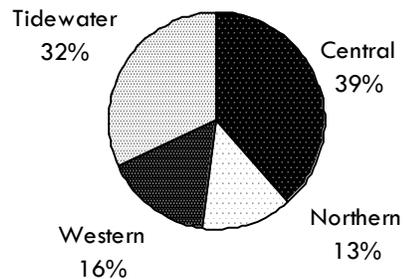
**Table 1. Homicides in Virginia by Sex and Medical Examiner District, 1999**

	Central	Northern	Tidewater	Western	Total	
					No.	(%)
Female	42	18	29	28	117	(27)
Male	127	40	110	40	317	(73)
Total	169	58	139	68	434	(100)

**Figure 1. Homicides in Virginia by Fatal Agency, 1999**



**Figure 2. Homicides in Virginia by Medical Examiner District, 1999**



**Table 2. Homicides in Virginia by Sex and Fatal Agency, 1999**

	Firearm	Instrument	Personal Weapon	Other	Total	
					No.	(%)
Female	62	25	8	22	117	(27)
Male	227	56	12	22	317	(73)
Total	289	81	20	44	434	(100)

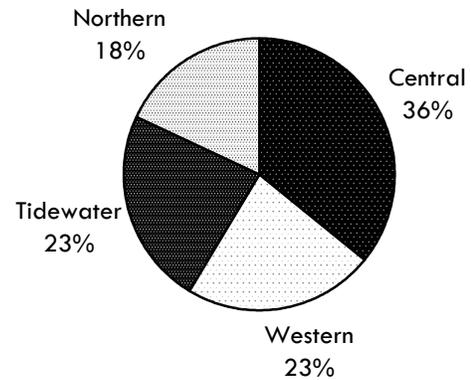
- 67% or 289 homicides were committed using a firearm.

**Table 3. Homicides in Virginia by Age Group and Race, 1999**

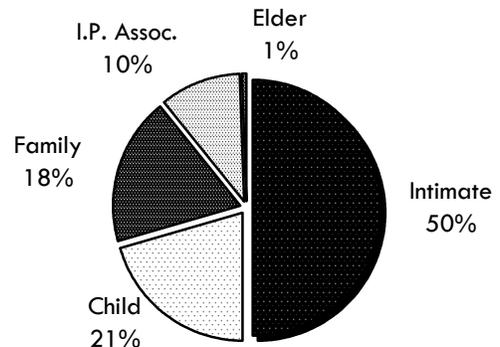
	White	Black	Other	No.	Total (%)
<b>4 and under</b>	10	12	3	25	( 6)
<b>5-14</b>	4	2	-	6	( 1)
<b>15-24</b>	22	85	10	117	(27)
<b>25-34</b>	29	70	6	105	(24)
<b>35-44</b>	43	45	2	90	(21)
<b>45-54</b>	21	22	2	45	(10)
<b>55-64</b>	12	5	-	17	( 4)
<b>&gt; 64</b>	19	10	-	29	( 7)
<b>Total</b>	160	251	23	434	(100)

- Of the 434 homicides, 145 or 33% were family or intimate partner violence homicides.
- 45% of all female homicides were killed by intimate partners.
- 6% of all male homicides were killed by intimate partners.
- Intimate partners accounted for 72 or 50% of family violence homicides and 17% of all homicides.
- Females accounted for 74% of the intimate partner homicides whereas males accounted for 73% of all homicides.
- Children accounted for 30 or 21% of family violence homicides. 25 or 83% were under the age of 4.
- Parents, Grandparents, In-laws and Other family members accounted for 19% or 27 of the family violence homicides. 49% or 13 were over the age of 55.
- In 22 family and intimate partner homicides, a total of 42 children under the age of 18 witnessed the event.

**Figure 3. Family and Intimate Partner Homicide by District, N= 145**



**Figure 4. Family and Intimate Partner Homicide by Type, N= 145**



**Table 4. Intimate Partner Homicides by Sex and Fatal Agency, 1999**

	Firearm	Instrument	Other	Total	
				No.	(%)
Female	33	12	8	53	(74)
Male	9	10	0	19	(26)
Total	42	22	8	72	(100)

- A firearm was used in 42 or 50% of the intimate partner homicides.

**Table 5. Intimate Partner Homicide by Sex and Victim-Alleged Offender Relationship, 1999**

	Spouse*	Boy/Girl Friend	Ex Boy/Girl Friend	Same Sex Partner	Perceived** B/G Friend	Total	
						No.	(%)
Female	27	16	8	0	2	53	(74)
Male	5	10	0	3	1	19	(26)
Total	32	26	8	3	3	72	(100)

\* Includes 2 former spouses

\*\*Homicides where there is documentation that one of the parties has pursued a relationship with the other or perceived that they had a relationship with the other where at least one of the following was historically noted: rejection, threats, harassment, stalking, possessiveness, or protective order.

- Of the 72 intimate partner homicides, 44% were committed by a spouse or former spouse, 36% by a boyfriend or girlfriend, 11% a former boyfriend or girlfriend, 4% by a same sex partner and 4% by persons who perceived they were in an intimate relationship.

**Table 6. Intimate Partner Homicide by Sex and Age Group, 1999**

	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-55	> 55	Total	
						No.	(%)
Female	6	16	18	6	7	53	(74)
Male	1	4	8	3	3	19	(26)
Total	7	20	26	9	10	72	(100)

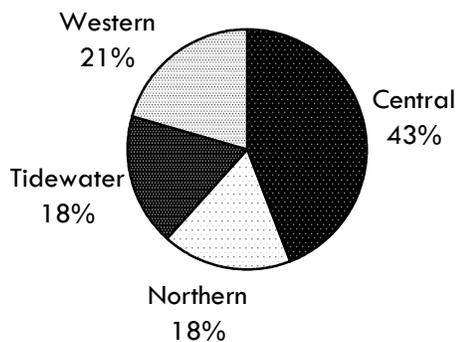
**Table 7. Intimate Partner Homicide by Sex and Race, 1999**

	Black	White	Other	Total	
				No.	(%)
Female	19	30	4	53	(74)
Male	13	6	0	19	(26)
Total	32	36	4	72	(100)

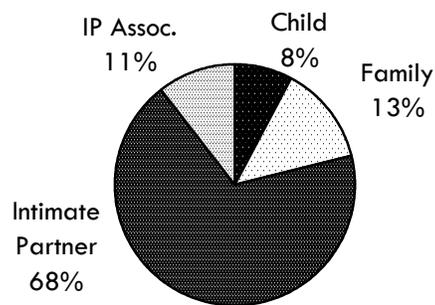
- 79% or 57 of the intimate partner homicides occurred in a residence. 4% or 3 occurred in the workplace and the remaining 17% or 12 occurred in public places including parking lots, streets, campgrounds, woods and motels.

- Of the 57 intimate partner homicides that occurred in the home, 56% or 32 of the homicides occurred in homes where both the victim and alleged offender lived, 30% or 17 where the victim lived and 9% or 5 where the alleged offender resided. The remaining homicides occurred in homes of other family members or friends.
- A history of previous violence among the intimate partners was seen in 49 homicides.<sup>1</sup>
  - 26 reported previous threats of violence.
  - 14 reported previous calls to 911.
  - 18 reported excessive jealousy by the alleged offender.
  - 6 reported previous history of stalking by the alleged offender.
- 90% or 44 of the 49 with a history of previous violence in the relationship were female and 10% or 5 were male victims. Of the 5 male victims, **all** had a history of perpetrating violence toward alleged offender.

**Figure 5. Homicide-Suicide Events by Medical Examiner District, N= 34**



**Figure 6. Homicide-Suicide Deaths by Type, N= 38**



- Virginia recorded 34 homicide-suicide events in 1999 resulting in 38 homicides.
- 100% of the homicide-suicides were committed with a firearm.
- Of the 26 homicide-suicide cases involving intimate partners, all of the victims were female.
- 97% of the perpetrators of homicide-suicide were males.

<sup>1</sup> During the course of a death investigation, information regarding the history of violence in the relationship is gathered and reported in this report. However, it is likely that the information available at the time of death may be incomplete, so readers should interpret this information cautiously as it probably underreports the actual history of previous violence.

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**Medical Examiner Districts**

**Central** Counties of Albermarle, Amelia, Buckingham, Brunswick, Caroline, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Essex, Fluvanna, Greene, Greensville, Gloucester, Goochland, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, James City, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Louisa, Lunenburg, Mathews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, Nelson, New Kent, Northumberland, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince George, Prince Edward, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Surry, Sussex, Richmond, Westmoreland, and the Cities of Charlottesville, Colonial Heights, Emporia, Fredericksburg, Hopewell, Petersburg, Richmond, South Boston, and Williamsburg.

**Northern** Counties of Clarke, Culpepper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Fredrick, Loudoun, Madison, Orange, Page, Prince William, Rappahannock, Shenandoah, Warren, and the Cities of Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church and Winchester.

**Tidewater** Counties of Accomack, Isle of Wight, Northampton, Suffolk, Southampton and York and the Cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach.

**Western** Counties of Allegheny, Amherst, Appomattox, Augusta, Bath, Bedford, Bland, Botetourt, Buchanan, Campbell, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Franklin, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Highland, Henry, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Pulaski, Roanoke, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise and Wythe, and the Cities of Bedford, Bristol, Buena Vista, Covington, Clifton Forge, Danville, Galax, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Norton, Radford, Roanoke, Salem, Staunton, and Waynesboro.

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