

Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center

FACT SHEET



JUSTICE CENTER

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Assaults Committed Against Alaska Police Officers, 2002-2011

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Assaults committed against Alaska police officers. This fact sheet presents information reported to the Alaska Department of Public Safety (DPS) by Alaska police agencies on the frequency of assaults committed against police officers for the period 2002-2011. All of the data presented were extracted from DPS's annual *Crime in Alaska* report.

Figure 1 presents annual rates of assault against Alaska police officers for the 10-year period 2002-2011, as well as the percentage of assaults that resulted in injury to police officers. The rate of assaults against police officers resulting in officer injury are depicted in dark grey; the rate of assaults against police officers that did not result in officer injury are depicted in light grey; the black line depicts the *percentage* of assaults against police

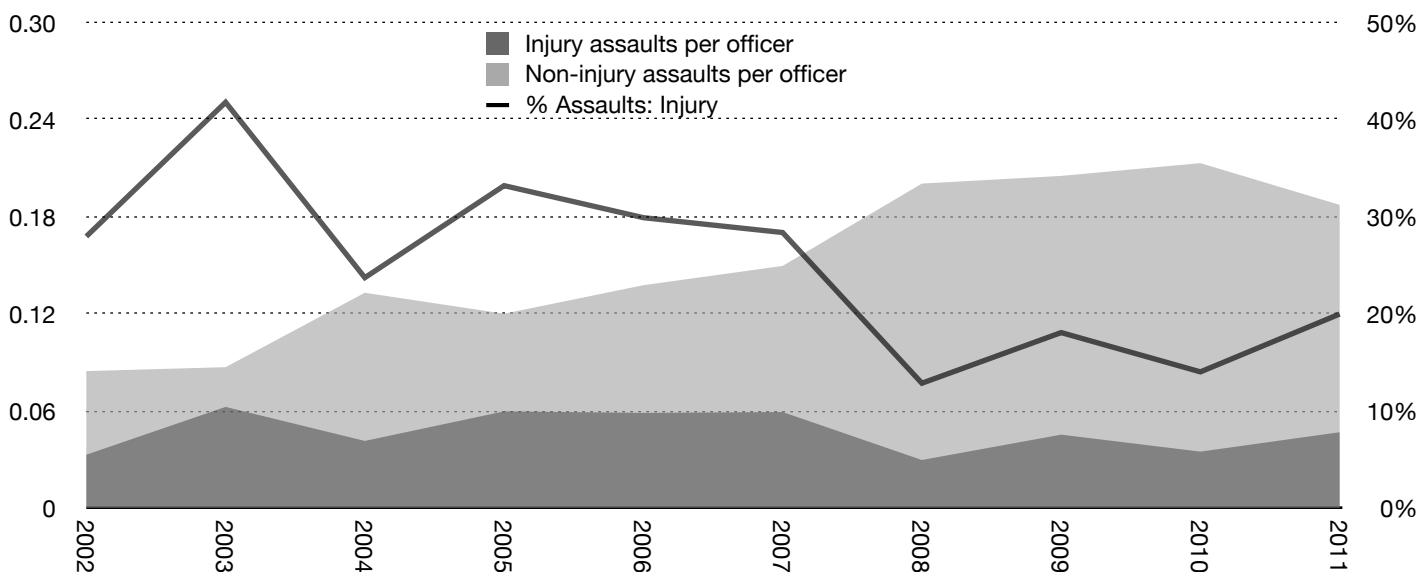
officers that resulted in officer injury.

In 2011, the rate of assaults on police officers resulting in officer injury was .05 per officer per year; the rate of non-injury assaults on police officers was .19. Rates of both types of assaults on Alaska police officers increased since 2002 - 66% for injury assaults, and 137% for non-injury assaults. Each year, approximately 70 percent of all assaults against police officers in Alaska are reported by the state's two largest agencies: the Alaska State Troopers (AST) and the Anchorage Police Department (APD).

Figure 2 (next page) presents the annual rates of assaults on officers for AST, APD and officers from Other Alaska police agencies. (The data presented for Other agencies in Figure 2 do not include assaults on AST or APD officers. AST and APD data appear separately.) The dotted lines overlaid on each

FIGURE 1.

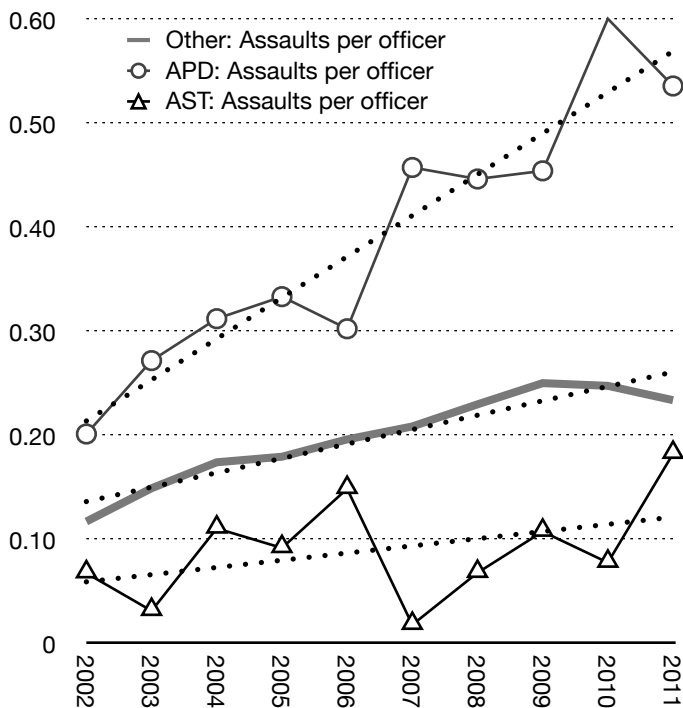
Rate of assaults on Alaska police officers resulting in injury, rate of assaults on police officers not resulting in injury, and percentage of assaults on police officers resulting in injury: 2002-2011.



Source: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2003-2012). *Crime in Alaska*. Juneau, AK.

FIGURE 2.

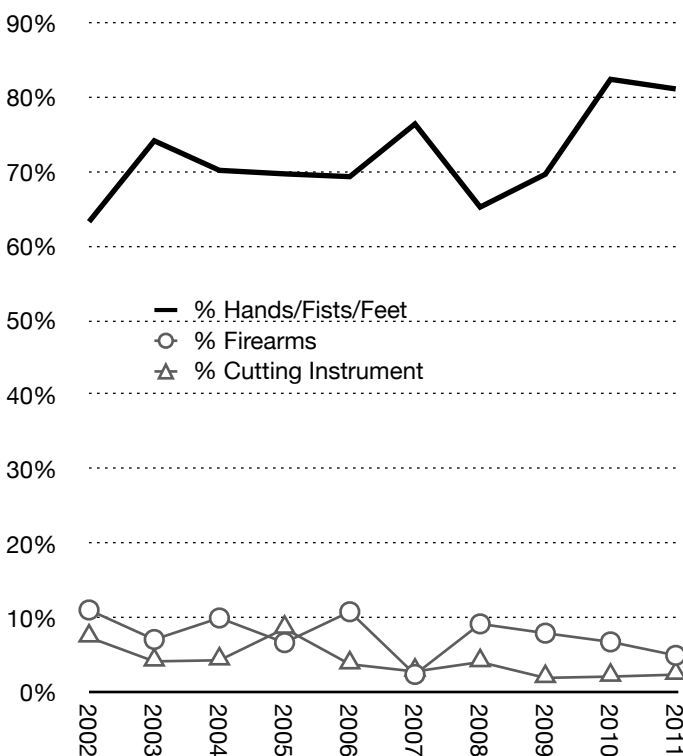
Rate of assault for Alaska State Troopers (AST), Anchorage Police Department (APD), and Other Alaska police agencies. Assaults per sworn officer per year, by Agency



Source: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2003-2012). *Crime in Alaska*. Juneau, AK.

FIGURE 3.

Percentage of assaults against Alaska police officers committed with hands/fists/feet, firearms, cutting instruments: 2002-2011.



Source: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2003-2012). *Crime in Alaska*. Juneau, AK.

trend line represent the “best fit” regression line. The slope of each regression line shows the average annual increase in each trend over the 2002-2011 time period.

In 2011, the rate of assaults on police officers for APD was .54, or roughly one assault every other year during the 10-year period. This represents an increase of 170 percent in the rate of assaults committed against APD officers since 2002.

The rate of assaults on AST officers in 2011 was .18, or roughly one assault every five years. Since 2002, the rate of assaults on AST officers increased by more than 150 percent.

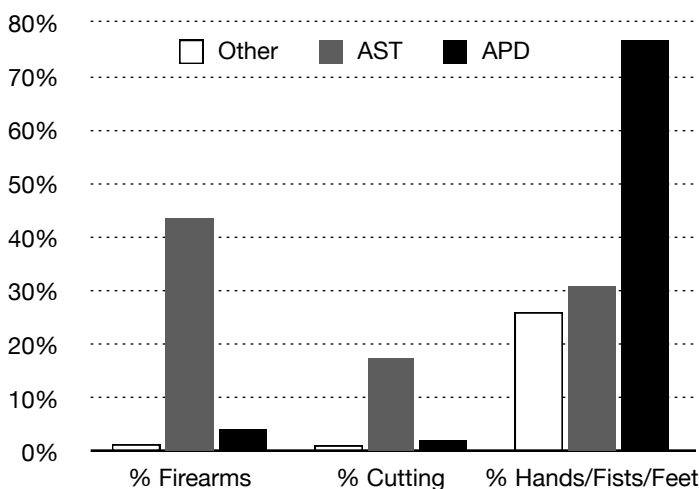
The rate of assaults on officers employed by other Alaska police agencies also increased during the 2002-2011 time period. Excluding the assaults committed against AST and APD officers, the rate of assaults on other Alaska police nearly doubled, from .12 assaults per officer per year in 2002 to .23 assaults per officer per year in 2011.

Officer injury. Despite the increase in the rates of both types of assaults against Alaska police officers, the overall *percentage* of assaults resulting in officer injury declined over the period (see Figure 1). In 2011, 19.9 percent of Alaska officers who were assaulted sustained injuries. For the U.S. as a whole, an estimated 26.6 percent of assaults resulted in officer injury in 2011.

Weapon use in assaults against police. The frequency with which hands/fists/feet are used in assaults of police increased between 2002 and 2011 (see Figure 3). On average, perpetrators used their hand/fists/feet in 72 percent of all assaults committed against police officers in Alaska over this

FIGURE 4.

Average percentage of assaults against police officers committed with firearms, cutting instruments and hands/fists/feet, 2002-2011: Alaska State Troopers (AST), Anchorage Police Department (APD) and Other Alaska police agencies.



Source: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2003-2012). *Crime in Alaska*. Juneau, AK.

period. Use of firearms and cutting instruments during the commission of an assault on a police officer declined over the 2002-2011 period. (Data for unspecified “other” weapons is not shown.)

Figure 4 presents the average percentage of assaults against police committed with firearm, knives or other cutting instruments and hand/fists/feet for the 2002-2011 period. (Data for unspecified “other” weapons is not shown.) Data are presented for AST, APD, and other police agencies combined. (Other agency estimates presented were computed with AST and APD data removed. AST and APD data appear separately.) On average, between 2002 and 2011 43.5 percent of assaults on AST officers were perpetrated with a firearm, 17.4 percent were committed with a knife or other cutting instrument, and 30.9 percent involved the use of hands/fists/feet. For APD, 4.2 percent of assaults against officers were perpetrated with a firearm, 2.2 percent were committed with a knife or other cutting instrument, and 76.7 percent involved the use of hands/fist/feet. For all other Alaska police agencies combined, estimates were 1.4 percent, 1.2 percent and 26.0 percent, respectively.

Type of police activity. For each assault on an officer, reporting agencies record the type of activity the officer was engaged in at the time. Data on the five activities officers were most often engaged in when assaulted - responding to a disturbance call, attempting an “other” arrest, handling/transporting a prisoner, investigating a suspicious person, and a traffic pursuit or stop - are presented in Figure 5. Fully 85 percent of all assaults occurred when officers were engaged in one of these five activities. The remaining officer activity categories documented by DPS in its *Crime in Alaska* reports - burglaries and robberies in progress, civil disorders, ambushes, encounters with mentally deranged persons, and “all other” circumstances - are not presented in Figure 5.

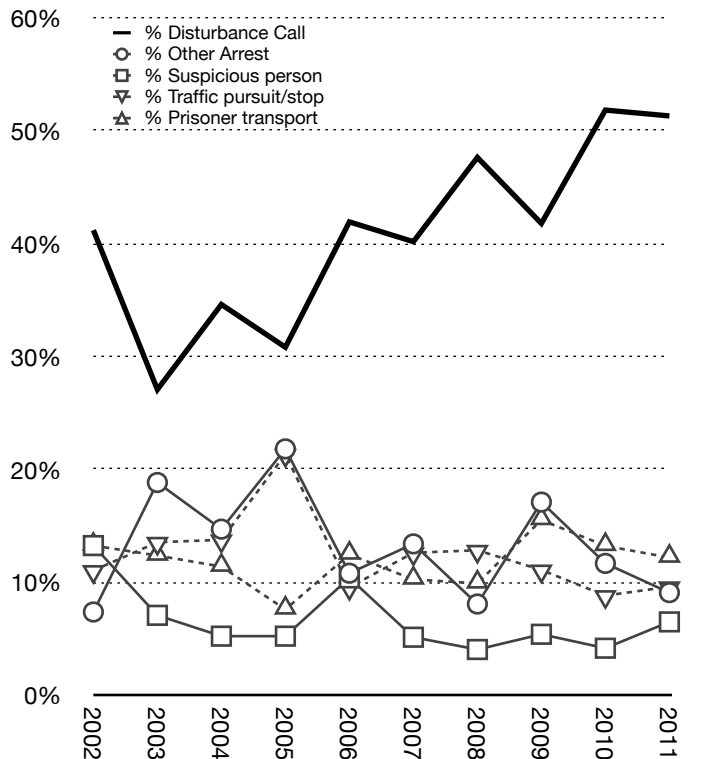
For the period 2002-2011, an estimated 40.8 percent of all assaults on police officers occurred while officers responded to a disturbance call. In 2011, 51.3 percent of all assaults happened within the context of a disturbance call. Since 2003, the frequency of disturbance call assaults on officers increased 89 percent.

Between 2002 and 2011, the percentage of assaults on police officers occurring while officers were attempting to make an “other” arrest also increased, from 7.4 percent in 2002 to 9.1 percent in 2011.

Declines were observed in the frequency of assaults on police officers occurring within the context of investigating a suspicious person, a traffic pursuit or stop, or prisoner transport, as presented in Figure 5.

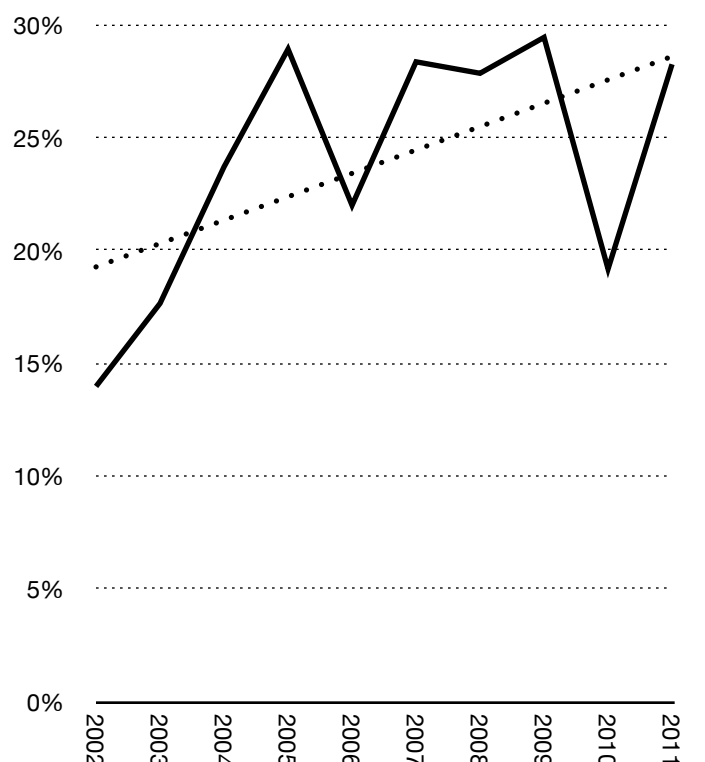
Number of officers present. Figure 6 presents the percentage of assaults on police officers that

FIGURE 5. Percentage of assaults against Alaska police officers, by activity type: 2002-2011.



Source: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2003-2012). *Crime in Alaska*. Juneau, AK.

FIGURE 6. Percentage of assaults on Alaska police officers in which a single officer was present: 2002-2011.



Source: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2003-2012). *Crime in Alaska*. Juneau, AK.

occurred during the 2002-2011 period, when only one officer was present. Overall, the frequency with which police officers were assaulted when only one officer was present increased between 2002 and 2011. Conversely, the frequency of assaults on police officers when two or more officers were present declined for the 2002-2011 time period.

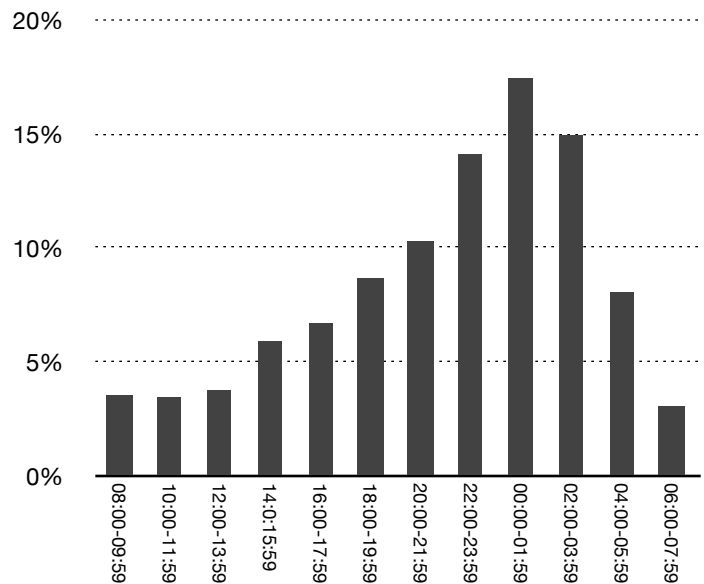
Time of day. Figure 7 presents the frequency of assaults committed against Alaska police officers according to the time of day. The frequency of assaults on police increased throughout the day, peaking between midnight and 2:00 a.m. Nearly two-thirds of all assaults on police (65.5%) occurred between 6:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m.

Officers killed in the line of duty. Figure 8 presents the number of Alaska law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty from 1960 through 2011. Since 1960, a total of 41 law enforcement officers have been killed while in the performance of their duties. The year with the most officer fatalities was 1974, when four officers were slain. The ten-year period with the most police officers killed in the line of duty was 1994-2003, with 13 fatalities. For the ten-year period covered in this fact sheet (2002-2011), a total of five Alaska law enforcement officers were killed in the line of duty.

Summary. This fact sheet presented data on assaults committed against Alaska police officers for the period 2002-2011. Several aspects of assaults on police were examined: rates of assault on police officers (including both injury and non-injury assaults), the overall percentage of assaults on police resulting in injury, weapons used when officers were assaulted, the types of activities officers were engaged in when assaults occurred, the number of officers present when police were assaulted, the time

FIGURE 7.

Percentage of assaults against Alaska police officers by time of day: 2002-2011.



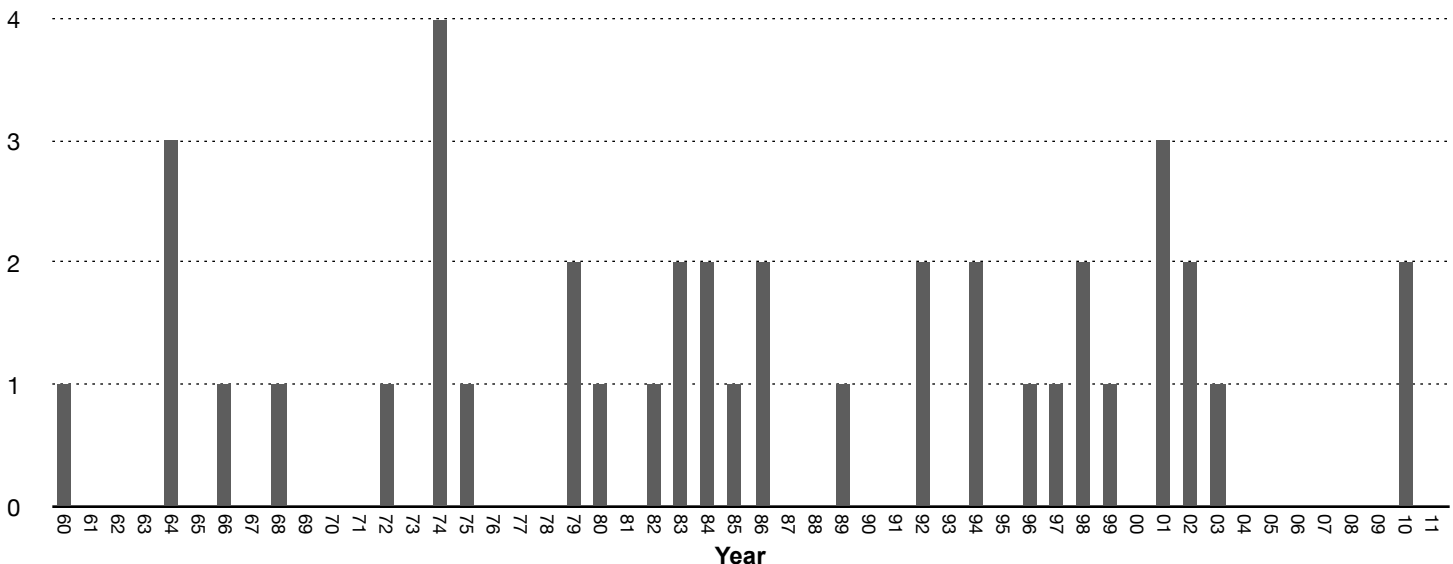
Source: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2003-2012). *Crime in Alaska*. Juneau, AK.

of day assaults occurred, and the total number of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty (1960-2011).

Since 2002, the overall rate of assault on Alaska police officers increased. The risk of non-injury assaults, in particular, increased dramatically (137%) between 2002 and 2011. Despite this increase in the rate of assaults on Alaska police officers, the overall *percentage* of assaults resulting in injury declined significantly. On average, hands/fists/feet were used in 72 percent of all assaults on Alaska police officers. The percentage of assaults committed with a cutting

FIGURE 8.

Number of Alaska law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty: 1960-2011.



Source: Alaska Department of Public Safety, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau (2012). *Crime in Alaska*. Juneau, AK.

instrument or firearm declined between 2002 and 2011. Assaults on police were most likely to occur within the context of a disturbance call. Between 2002 and 2011, approximately 40 percent of all assaults on officers occurred when officers were responding to a disturbance, and the percentage is increasing. The percentage of assaults on officers committed when a single officer was present also increased between 2002 and 2011. The 2002/2011 data additionally reveal that assaults on police

officers were most likely to occur during late night hours, and were especially concentrated between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. Finally, data pertaining to the number of Alaska law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty were presented. Since 1960, a total of 41 Alaska law enforcement officers have been killed while in the performance of their duties. Between 2002 and 2011 a total of five officers were slain.

Notes

Uniform Crime Reports

First initiated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1930 to measure the volume of crime in the United States, the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program collects monthly information from nearly 18,000 law enforcement agencies on eight serious crimes (called Part I offenses) and more than twenty less serious offenses (called Part II offenses). Part I offenses include four violent crimes (murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and four property crimes (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson). These eight offenses are the most frequently cited crimes statistics in the United States.

The primary objective of the UCR program is to produce reliable data on crime for use in law enforcement administration, operation, and management. UCR data are not intended to be used to rank agencies or the jurisdictions in which they are located, and thus UCR data should not be used to designate American cities, counties, or other jurisdictions as “safe” or “dangerous” in the absence of careful consideration of the limitations of these data.

UCR in Alaska

Since 1982 the Alaska Department of Public Safety (DPS), Division of Administrative Services, has administered the UCR program for the state of Alaska. The Division of Administrative Services collects, tabulates, reports, and publishes UCR data voluntarily submitted by Alaska law enforcement agencies. As is the case nationally, submitting agencies retain responsibility for the accuracy of the data. Because the UCR is a voluntary program, the number of agencies reporting data to DPS varies from year to year. As of 2011, 34 agencies provided crime data to DPS. An estimated 99.4 percent of the state’s total population fell within the jurisdiction of the submitting agencies.

The Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center

About

The Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center (AJSAC) was established by Administrative Order No. 89, signed by Governor William Sheffield on July 2, 1986. Since that time the AJSAC has been housed within the University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center. The AJSAC assists Alaska criminal justice agencies, as well as state and local governments and officials, with the development, implementation, and evaluation of criminal justice programs and policies through the collection, analysis, and reporting of crime and justice statistics.

Since 1972, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and its predecessor agency, the National Criminal Justice Information and Statistics Service, has provided support to state and territorial governments to establish and operate Statistical Analysis Centers (SACs) to collect, analyze, and report statistics on crime and justice to federal, state, and local levels of government, and to share state-level information nationally. There are currently 53 SACs located in the United States and its Territories. The AJSAC is a member of the Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA), a national nonprofit organization comprised of SAC directors, researchers, and practitioners dedicated to policy-oriented research and analysis.

Contact Information

Location

The Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center (AJSAC) is housed in the University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center, which is located on the second floor of the UAA/APU Consortium Library, Suite 213.

Mailing Address

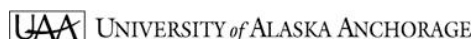
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