



# The West Texas Violence Index

February, 2017

The West Texas Violence Index compares data for four cities on violent events that can overwhelm a community and its people. The four cities are Abilene, Midland, Odessa, and San Angelo.

A distinctive aspect of the Index is that, unlike a snapshot of a crime spree or a rash of accidents, it looks beyond a single type of violence at a specific point-in-time. The Index tracks six indicators of different types of violence over the most recent five-years of available data for each type. The six indicators for the Index are violent crime, family violence, sexual assault, child abuse and neglect, suicide, and accidental deaths.

Community Development Initiatives uses a scoring system to compare differences between the cities on these indicators. It ranks the most recent available data for each type of violence on a 100-point scale with higher scores representing lower rates of incidence for each indicator.

Then, the system uses a five-year trend adjustment factor to decrease the score if a given type of violence is increasing in a city. The adjustment factor, of course, increases the city's score if the trend is toward less of a certain type of violence. The following table reports the current scores of the four cities. Lower current levels of violence and trends toward decreasing violence drive scores higher, and high current levels with increasing trends push the scores lower.

This measure indicates Abilene as the most violent of the West Texas cities. Of the four cities covered in the index, Abilene has the highest current levels of family violence, sexual assault, and child abuse or neglect. Also, the city's rates on these indicators increased more than the other three cities over the past five years. However, a comprehensive look at all six indicators shows that the four West Texas cities generally experience higher rates of violence than the state as a whole.

City Level Indicators of the West Texas Violence Index	Abilene	Midland	Odessa	San Angelo
Violent Crime, 2011-2015	65	100	0	85
Family Violence, 2011-2015	0	56	98	30
Sexual Assault, 2011-2015	0	74	100	67
County Level Indicators of the West Texas Violence Index	Taylor County	Midland County	Ector County	Tom Green County
Child Abuse or Neglect, 2011-2015	0	86	91	38
Suicide, 2010-2014	100	20	45	26
Accidental Death, 2010-2014	82	67	0	87
West Texas Violence Index Score (Average of Indicators)	41	67	56	56

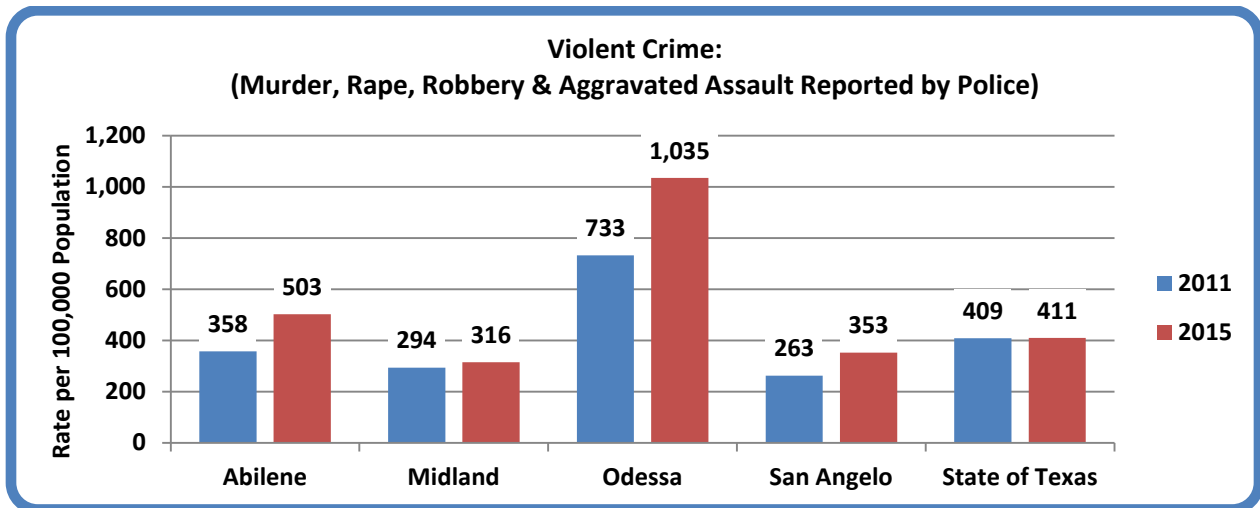
The following fact sheets detail each of the six indicators.



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# Violent Crime

- Of the four West Texas cities, Abilene and Odessa had violent crime rates higher than the State of Texas in 2015.
- Rates of violent crime increased in each of the four West Texas cities between 2011 and 2015. The statewide rate remained essentially constant.
- Odessa has the highest rate of violent crime among the four cities of West Texas. The city's current violent crime is more than twice the rate of any of the other three West Texas cities.
- Odessa's violent crime increased from a rate of 733 per 100,000 residents in 2011 to 1,035 per 100,000 in 2015.



Source: Texas Department of Public Safety,

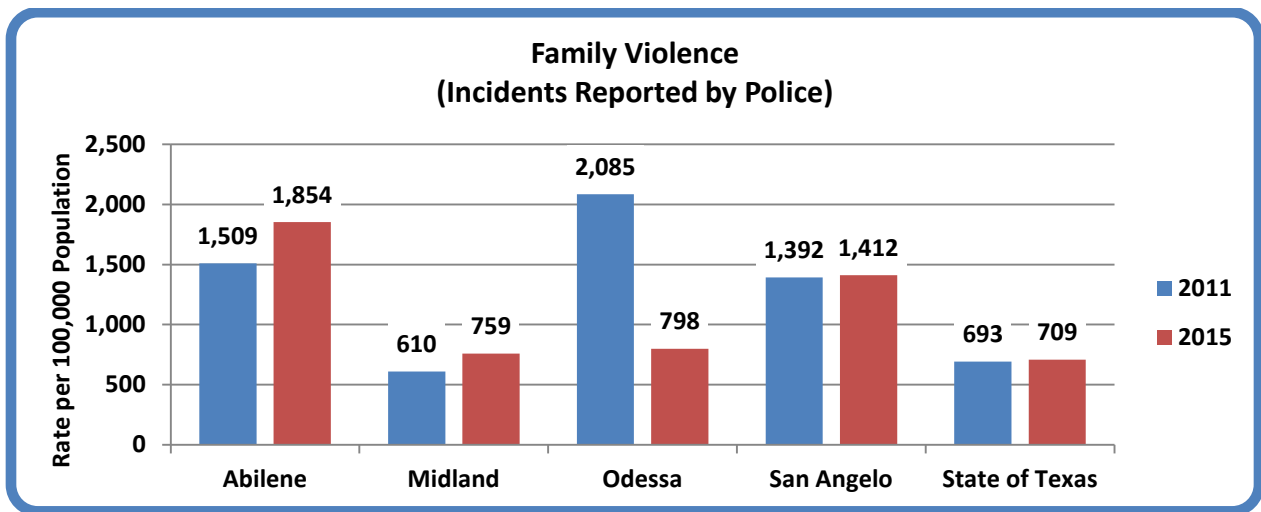
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# Family Violence

- All four West Texas cities have higher current rates of family violence than the state overall. Two cities are substantially higher. These include Abilene and San Angelo.
- Only one West Texas city reduced the rate of family violence between 2011 and 2015. Odessa saw a dramatic reduction from 2,085 incidents per 100,000 population in 2011 to 798 per 100,000 in 2015.



Source: Texas Department of Public Safety,

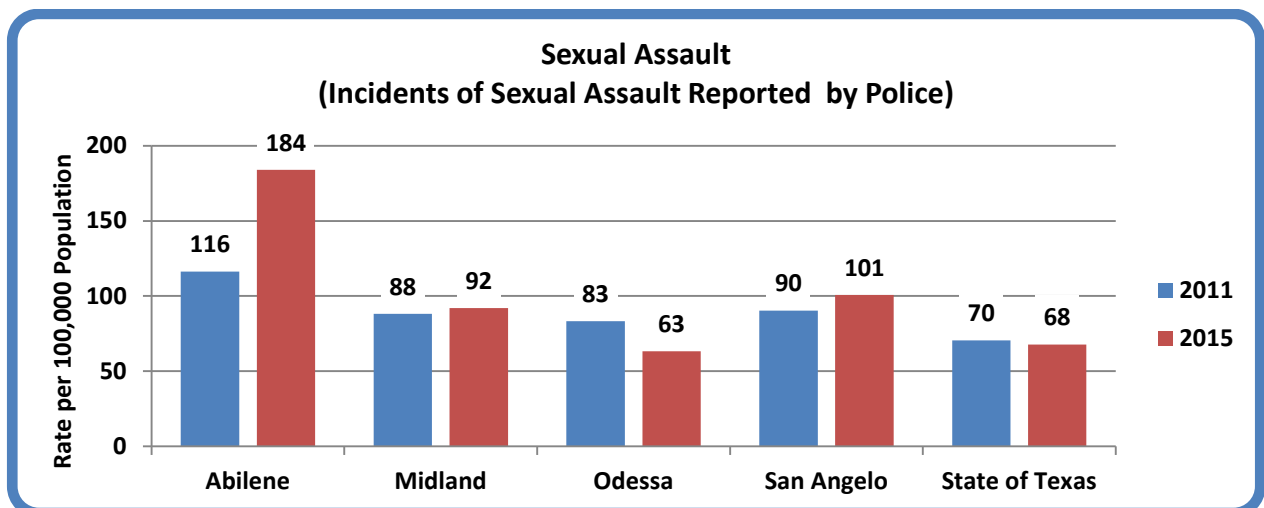
[http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/administration/crime\\_records/pages/crimestatistics.htm](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/administration/crime_records/pages/crimestatistics.htm)



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# Sexual Assault

- Odessa was the only West Texas city with a rate of sexual assault below the statewide benchmark in 2015.
- Abilene had the highest sexual assault rate among the four urban centers of West Texas.
- Abilene experience substantial increase in sexual assault between 2011 and 2015, changing from a rate of 116 to 184 incidents per 100,000 population.
- Midland and Tom Green counties also saw moderate increases in the rate sexual assault between 2011 and 2015.



Source: Texas Department of Public Safety,

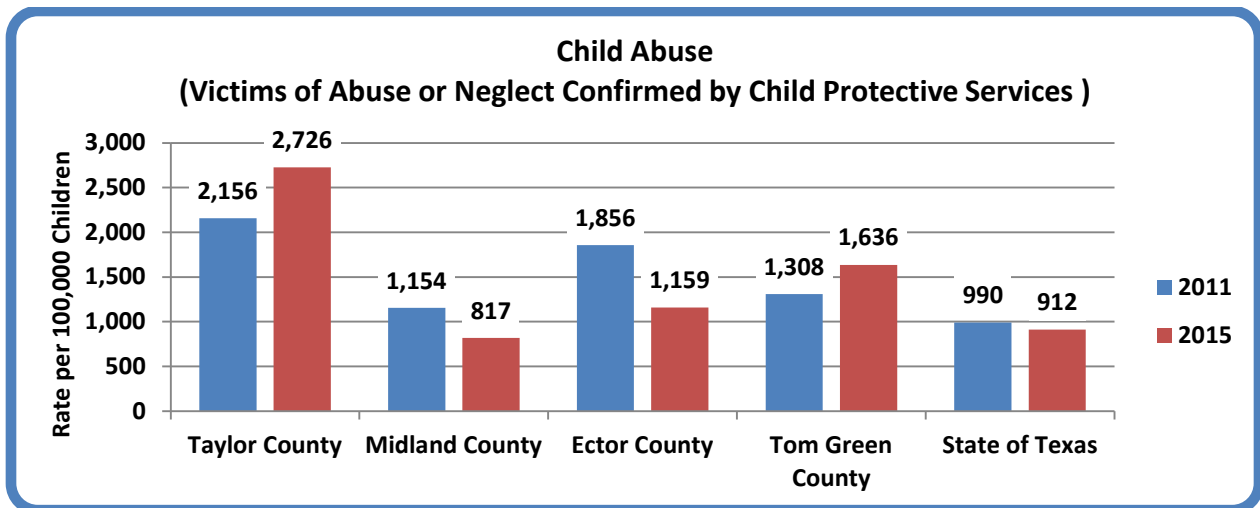
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# Child Abuse or Neglect

- Three of the four West Texas urban centers have higher current rates of child abuse than the State of Texas: Taylor County (Abilene), Ector County (Odessa), and Tom Green County (San Angelo).
- Taylor County (Abilene) has the highest rate of child abuse among the four cities of West Texas in 2015. Taylor County's current rate is three-times higher than the statewide level.
- Taylor County increased from a child abuse rate of 2,156 in 2011 to 2,726 per 100,000 children in 2015. Tom Green County also experienced an increase. Rates of child abuse declined in Midland and Ector counties between 2011 and 2015.



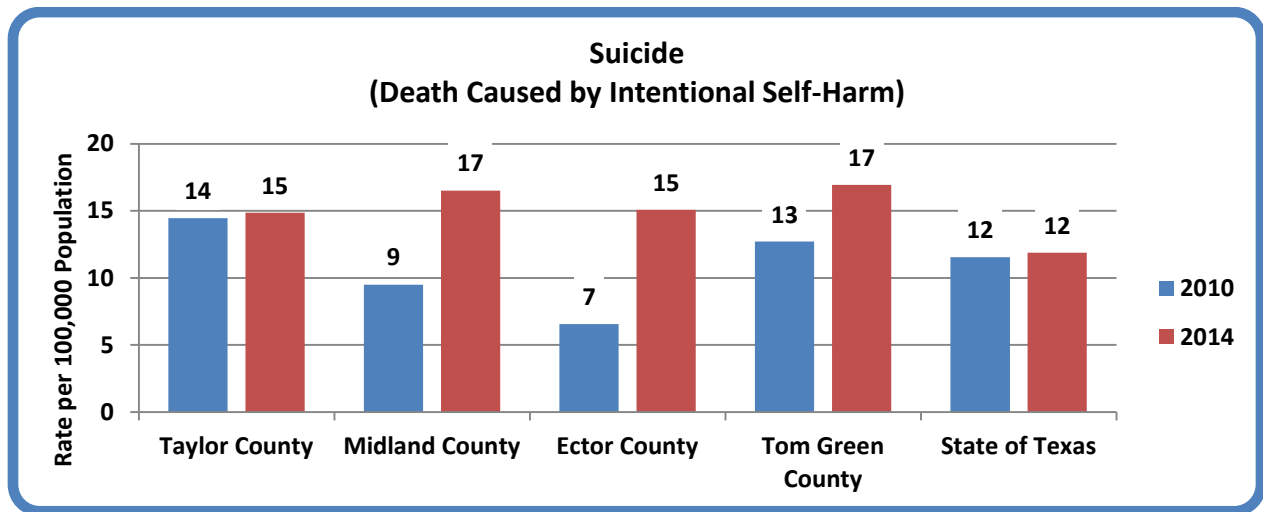
Source: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services,  
[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About\\_DFPS/Data\\_Books\\_and\\_Annual\\_Reports/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/Data_Books_and_Annual_Reports/default.asp)



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# Suicide

- All four West Texas urban centers have higher rates of suicide than the State of Texas for 2014.
- Midland and Tom Green (San Angelo) counties have the highest current rates of suicide among the four urban centers of West Texas.
- All four West Texas cities saw increased rates of suicide between 2010 and 2014.



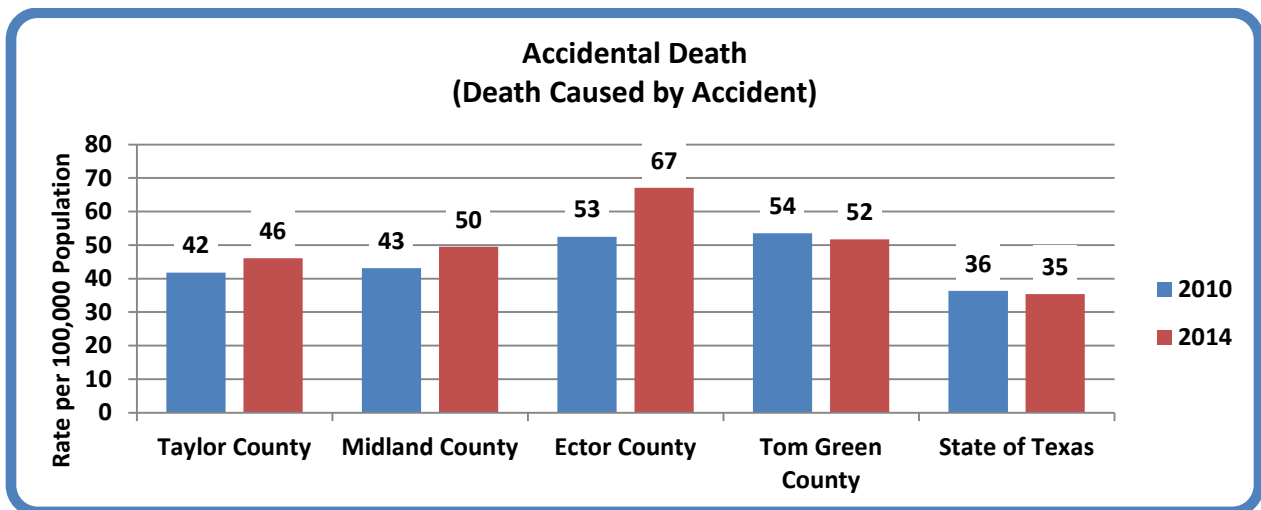
Source: Texas Department of State Health Services,  
<http://soupsfin.tdh.state.tx.us/deathdoc.htm>



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## Accidental Death

- All four West Texas urban centers have current rates of accidental death above the state level for 2014.
- Ector County (Odessa) has the highest current rate of accidental death among the four urban centers of West Texas.
- Three West Texas communities, Midland, Taylor (Abilene), and Ector (Odessa) counties saw increased rates of accidental death between 2010 and 2014. Tom Green County (San Angelo) had a modest decline.



Source: Texas Department of State Health Services,  
<http://soupsfin.tdh.state.tx.us/deathdoc.htm>



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