



Law Enforcement Officers Feloniously Killed

This page provides information about duly sworn city, university and college, county, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement officers who were feloniously killed in the line of duty during 2008 and who met certain other criteria.

Overview

- 41 law enforcement officers were feloniously killed in the line of duty in 2008.
- 22 of the slain officers were employed by city police departments. Of these, 12 were members of law enforcement agencies in cities with 250,000 or more inhabitants.
- Line-of-duty deaths occurred in 19 states. Twenty officers lost their lives in the South, the Nation's most populous region. Nine of the officers died in the West, 9 died in the Midwest, and 3 officers who were feloniously slain were employed in the Northeast.

More information about these topics (including annual totals from 1999 to 2008) is provided in Tables 1, 2, 15, 16, 28, and 29.

Victim profile

- The average age of the officers who were feloniously killed in 2008 was 39 years.
- The slain officers' average length of law enforcement service was 10 years.
- Of the 41 officers slain in 2008, 37 were male and 4 were female.
- 30 of the victim officers were white, 9 were black, and 1 was American Indian/Alaskan Native. The race of 1 officer was not provided.

More information about these topics is provided in Tables 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11.

Circumstances

- 9 officers died in 2008 from felonious attacks during arrest situations.
- 8 officers died during traffic pursuits/stops.
- 7 officers died while investigating suspicious persons/circumstances.
- 7 officers died during tactical situations (barricaded offender, hostage taking, etc.).
- 6 officers died in ambush situations.
- 2 officers died during investigative activity (surveillance, search, interview, etc.).
- 1 officer was killed while handling, transporting, or maintaining custody of a prisoner.
- 1 officer died after responding to a disturbance call.

More information about this topic (including a breakdown of the types of circumstances in which officers were feloniously killed) is provided in Tables 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 31, and 32.

Assignments

- 27 officers who were slain in 2008 were on assigned vehicle patrol.
- 3 of the slain officers were off duty but acting in an official capacity.
- 11 officers were assigned to other duties, such as special assignments or undercover, when they were murdered.
- Of the 41 officers slain in 2008, 18 were assisted at the time of the attacks.
- 20 officers were alone and unassisted at the time of the incidents.

More information about this topic is provided in Tables 15, 17, 23, and 24.

Weapons

- 35 officers were killed in 2008 with firearms. Of these, 25 were killed with handguns. (A breakdown of the types of weapons used in these slayings is provided in Table 27.)
- 4 officers were killed with their own weapons.
- 4 officers attempted to use their weapons; 11 officers fired their weapons.
- 19 officers were slain with firearms when they were 0-5 feet from the offenders.

More information about this topic is provided in Tables 12, 13, 14, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34, and 36.

Body armor

- 32 of the 41 officers feloniously killed in 2008 were wearing body armor at the time of their murders.
- Of the 29 officers who were wearing body armor and killed with firearms:
 - 9 suffered wounds to the front of the head.
 - 6 were shot in the side of the head.
 - 5 were wounded in the front upper torso/chest.
 - 4 were shot in the neck/throat.
 - 3 were shot in the front lower torso/stomach.
 - 1 was shot in the rear of the head.
 - 1 was shot in the rear upper torso/back.

More information about this topic (including annual totals from 1999 to 2008) is provided in Tables 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41.

Regional and outlying area breakdowns

Of the 41 officers who died in 2008 as a result of felonious attacks:

- 20 officers were employed in the South.
- 9 officers were employed in the West.
- 9 officers were employed in the Midwest.
- 3 officers were employed in the Northeast.

More information about this topic (including annual totals from 1999 to 2008) is provided in Tables 1, 21, 22, 29, and 30.

Months, days, and times of incidents

- More officers (8) died from felonious assaults that occurred in January than in any other month.
- 8 officers were involved in fatal assaults that occurred on Friday, more than on any other day of the week.
- More officers (13) were fatally injured in assaults that happened from 12:01 to 4 a.m. than at any other time period.

More information about these topics (including annual totals from 1999 to 2008) is provided in Tables 3, 4, 5, 17, and 18.

Profile of alleged known assailants

In 2008, 42 alleged offenders were identified in connection with law enforcement officers feloniously killed. Of those offenders, the following characteristics are known:

- The average age of the alleged offenders was 32 years old.
- The average height was 5 feet 9 inches tall, and the average weight was 180 pounds.
- 40 of the alleged offenders were male; 2 were female.

- 20 of the alleged offenders were white; 21 were black; and 1 was Asian/Pacific Islander.
- 36 of the 42 alleged offenders had prior criminal arrests.
- 11 of the alleged offenders were under judicial supervision at the time of the incidents.
- 2 of the alleged offenders were intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol at the time of the fatal incidents.

More information about these topics is provided in Tables 42, 43, 44, 45, and 46.