



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 19, 2009

NATIONAL PRESS OFFICE
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FBI Releases 2008 Statistics on Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted

According to information released today by the FBI, 41 law enforcement officers were feloniously killed in the line of duty last year; 68 officers died in accidents while performing their duties; and 58,792 officers were assaulted while on duty. The 2008 edition of *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted* released today provides comprehensive tabular data about these incidents and brief narratives describing the fatal attacks.

Felonious Deaths

The 41 felonious line-of-duty deaths took place during 38 separate incidents. All 38 incidents have been cleared by arrest or exceptional means. The felonious deaths occurred in 19 states. The number of officers feloniously killed in 2008 decreased by 17 compared with the 2007 figure (58 officers). The 5- and 10-year comparisons also showed decreases in the number of felonious deaths, down 16 from the 2004 number (57 officers) and a decrease of 1 from the 1999 total (42 officers).

Officer Profiles: Among the officers who were feloniously killed, the average age was 39 years. The victim officers had served in law enforcement for an average of 10 years at the time of the fatal incidents. Thirty-seven of the victim officers were male and 4 were female. Thirty of the officers were white, 9 were black, and 1 was American Indian/Alaskan Native. Race information was not reported for 1 of the victims.

Circumstances: Of the 41 officers feloniously killed, 9 of the slain officers were involved in arrest situations; 8 were performing traffic stops; 7 were investigating suspicious persons/circumstances; 7 were involved in tactical situations (e.g., high-risk entry); 6 were ambushed; 2 were performing investigative duties; 1 was handling, transporting, or maintaining custody of a prisoner; and 1 was answering a disturbance call.

Weapons: Offenders used firearms to kill 35 of the 41 victim officers. Of these 35 officers, 25 were slain with handguns, 6 with rifles, and 4 with shotguns. Four officers were killed with vehicles that were used as weapons, and 2 officers died from injuries as a result of a bomb.

Region: 20 of the felonious deaths occurred in the South, 9 in the West, 9 in the Midwest, and 3 in the Northeast.

Suspects: Law enforcement agencies identified 42 alleged assailants in connection with the 41 felonious line-of-duty deaths. Thirty-six of the assailants had prior criminal records, and 11 of the assailants were under judicial supervision at the time of the felonious incidents. Five of the offenders had received a juvenile conviction on a prior criminal charge.

Accidental Deaths

Of the 68 law enforcement officers killed in accidents while performing their duties in 2008, the majority of officers accidentally killed (39 officers) were the result of automobile accidents. The number of accidental line-of-duty deaths was down 15 from the 2007 total (83 officers) and 14 less than the 2004 total (82 officers). However, a 10-year comparison showed that 3 more officers were accidentally killed in 2008 than in 1999, when 65 officers died in accidents.

Assaults

In 2008, 10,110 law enforcement agencies reported that 58,792 officers were assaulted while performing their duties. Of the officers assaulted in 2008, 26.1 percent were injured. The largest percentage of victim officers (32.0) were assaulted while responding to disturbance calls (family quarrels, bar fights, etc.). Assailants used personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) in 80.7 percent of the incidents, firearms in 3.8 percent of incidents, and knives or other cutting instruments were used in 1.6 percent of the incidents. Other types of weapons were used in 13.9 percent of assaults.

Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted, 2008, is available exclusively on the FBI's Web site at <www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm>. Printed copies of the publication are no longer available.