



Crime in Oklahoma, 2011

Selected Findings

December 2012

Murder in Oklahoma

According to Uniform Crime Reporting requirements, murder is defined as “the unlawful killing of a human being in which the element of malice aforethought was present.”

Any death due to a fight, argument, quarrel, assault, or commission of a crime is included. Manslaughters, suicides, accidental deaths, and justifiable homicides are excluded from this category.

Oklahoma law enforcement reported 219 murders in 2011.

Murders accounted for 1.2% of all violent crimes. In 2011, 177 murders were cleared by arrest or exceptional means, which represents a clearance rate of 80.8%. For reporting purposes, clearance rates are calculated by dividing the number of clearances by the number of offenses.

The majority of offenders and victims of murder were white males.

In 2011, 52.9% of persons arrested for murder were white, 35.9% were black, and 11.2% were American Indian. White victims accounted for 59.4% of all murders, while 34.2% were black and 5.5% were American Indian.

The majority of murders were committed using a firearm.

Sixty-three percent of all murders in Oklahoma were committed with a firearm. The most common firearm type was a handgun (103 murders), followed by a shotgun (10 murders). A knife was used in 13.7% of murders. Other methods used by offenders to commit murder included personal weapons (28 murders), explosives or fire (4 murders), and other blunt objects (7 murders).

In 2011, most victims of murder were known by the offenders.

In 91.8% of murders, the offender knew the victim. Approximately 22% of murders were committed by a family member.

The number of murders has steadily increased over the last ten years.

In 2002, Oklahoma law enforcement reported 163 murders. When compared to the 219 murders in 2011, this represents an increase of 34.4% over the ten-year period. On average, Oklahoma law enforcement has reported 202 murders per year over the last ten years.

High murder rates are found in both urban and rural counties.

Even though Oklahoma and Tulsa counties comprise more than one-third of the state’s population, they do not have the highest murder rates. Even so, they are the only counties with 50 or more murders in 2011.

Murder in Oklahoma, 2002-2011

