

Legal Intervention Deaths in Oklahoma

Oklahoma Violent Death Reporting System (OKVDRS) data were used to determine the extent of legal intervention deaths in Oklahoma. Legal intervention is defined as any victim killed by a law enforcement officer or other peace officer (persons with specified legal authority to use deadly force, excluding legal executions) acting in the line of duty.

- From 2004 to 2014, there were 171 legal intervention deaths, accounting for an average of 16 deaths per year; 14 victims were out of state residents; the number of deaths per year ranged from 9 in 2006 and 2009 to 29 in 2014 (Figure 1).
- The mean age of victims was 35 years; victims ranged in age from 15 to 73.
- 94% of legal intervention victims were males; 60% of the deaths were among persons 15-34 years of age (Figure 2).
- The rate among African Americans (0.96) was more than 3 times higher than the rate for whites (0.28) and twice the rate for American Indians (0.48) (Table 1).
- Circumstances surrounding the deaths included substance abuse problem (16%), mental health problem (8%), recent crisis (5%), alcohol problem (5%), and intimate partner problem (4%).
- 14% of the incidents were drug related and 4% were gang related.

Figure 1. Legal Intervention Deaths by Year, Oklahoma, 2004-2014

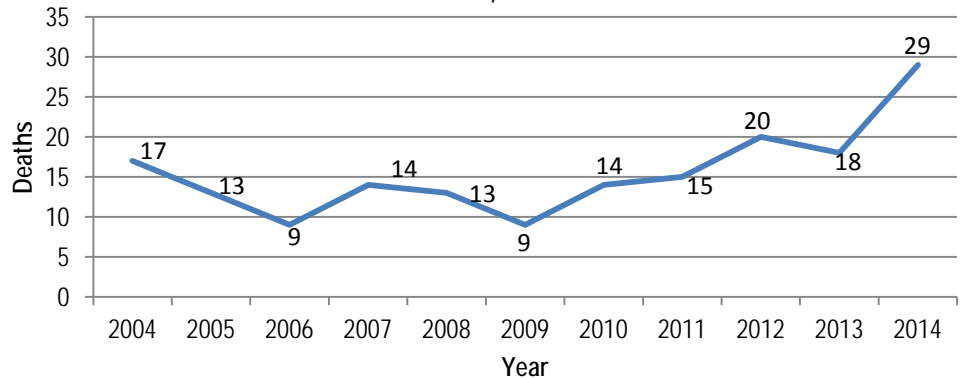


Figure 2. Legal Interventions by Age, Oklahoma, 2004-2014

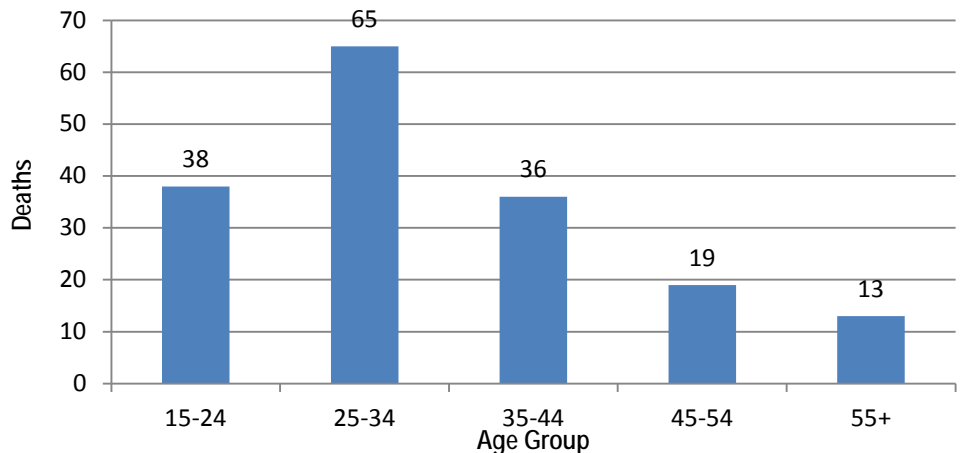


Table 1. Race/Ethnicity of Legal Intervention Victims, Oklahoma, 2004-2013

| Race/Ethnicity | Rate* |
|------------------|-------|
| African American | 0.96 |
| American Indian | 0.48 |
| Hispanic** | 0.42 |
| White | 0.28 |

*Rate per 100,000 population.

**Hispanic ethnicity is not a racial category.

- 78% of the victims actually used or made a threatening gesture to use a weapon during the incident.
- Compared to Oklahoma's population, legal intervention victims were less likely to have had some college or a college degree (Table 2).
- 34% of victims had a positive blood alcohol content (BAC) at the time of death; 24% of BACs were ≥ 0.08 mg/dL.
- 93% of legal interventions were known to be precipitated by a crime; assault/homicide (66%) was the most prevalent crime (Table 3).
- Legal interventions occurred in 42 Oklahoma counties, 32% were in Oklahoma County, followed by Tulsa (19%), Cleveland (6%), Comanche (4%), and Canadian (3%) counties.
- 95% of victims were killed by a firearm. Of victims killed by a firearm, 44% sustained 1 or 2 wounds, 50% sustained 3 – 8 wounds and 6% sustained more than 9 wounds during the incident (Figure 3).
- In 12% of legal interventions, the victims were veterans.
- 49% of victims were single/never married, 25% divorced/separated, 24% married, and 2% were widowed.

Table 2. Educational Attainment of Legal Intervention and Oklahoma's Population, 2004-2014

| Educational Level | Legal Intervention | Oklahoma's |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| | Victims | Population** |
| | Percent | Percent |
| 8 th Grade or Less | 6% | 5% |
| 9-12 th Grade | 21% | 9% |
| High School / GED | 54% | 32% |
| Some College/Associates Degree | 14% | 31% |
| Bachelor Degree | 5% | 16% |
| Graduate or professional degree | 0% | 8% |

*Includes victims 25 years of age and older.

**U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey. Includes educational attainment of Oklahoma's population 25 years of age and older.

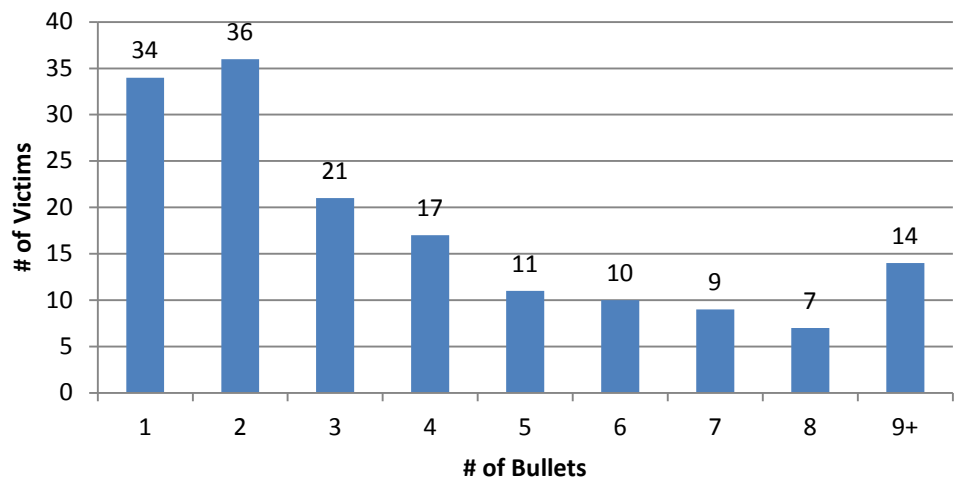
Table 3. Nature of Crime that Precipitated the Incident, Oklahoma 2004-2014

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Assault, Homicide* | 66% |
| Robbery | 7% |
| Motor Vehicle Theft | 6% |
| Burglary | 4% |
| Drug Trade | 4% |
| Other**/ Unknown | 14% |

*An unlawful fatal or nonfatal attack that involves bodily injury or threat with a deadly weapon.

**Other includes sexual assault, arson, and witness intimidation.

Figure 3. Number of Bullets Sustained by Legal Intervention Victims



The Oklahoma Violent Death Reporting System (OKVDRS) is a statewide surveillance system for suicides, homicides, undetermined manner deaths, unintentional firearm injury deaths and legal intervention deaths. Data are collected from medical examiner reports, death certificates, law enforcement reports, and child fatality review data. The data are included in the National Violent Death Reporting System and can be accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/>.