



Crime in Oklahoma, 2016

Selected Findings

May 2017

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 in the commission of a crime is included. Manslaughters, suicides, accidental deaths, and justifiable homicides are excluded from this category.

Oklahoma law enforcement reported 239 murders in 2016.

Murders accounted for 1.4% of all violent crimes. In 2016, 151 murders were cleared by arrest or exceptional means, representing a statewide clearance rate of 63.2%. For reporting purposes, clearance rates are calculated by dividing the number of murders cleared by the total number of murders reported.

The majority of victims of murder were white males.

In 2016, white victims accounted for 56.9% of all murders, while 34.3% were black, 4.6% were Native American, and 1.7% were Asian. In 2016, 52.0% of persons arrested for murder were white, 41.3% black, 6.1% Native American, and 0.6% were Asian.

The majority of murders were committed using a firearm.

Seventy percent of all murders in Oklahoma were committed with a firearm. The most common firearm type was a handgun (132), followed by rifle (9). A knife or cutting instrument was used in 13.4% of murders. Other methods used by offenders to commit murder included personal weapons (18), shotgun (8), blunt object (6), and chemical (4).

Law enforcement identified the offender in 74% of reported murders.

The offender knew the victim in 64% of murders in 2016; of those, 17% of murders were committed by a family member.

The number of murders has remained steady over the last 10 years.

In 2016, Oklahoma law enforcement reported 239 murders. Over the last 10 years, law enforcement in Oklahoma has reported, on average, 216 murders per year.

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

Oklahoma and Tulsa counties comprise 40% of Oklahoma’s population. Even though they do not have the highest murder rates, they are the only counties with more than 40 murders in 2016.

Murder in Oklahoma, 2007-2016

