



Crime in Oklahoma, 2017

Selected Findings

June 2018

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 246 murders in 2017.

Murders accounted for 1.4% of all violent crimes. In 2017, 167 murders were cleared by arrest or exceptional means, representing a statewide clearance rate of 67.9%. 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 2017, white victims accounted for 48.4% of all murders, while 40.7% were black, 6.1% were Native American, and 1.2% were Asian. In 2017, 46.9% of persons arrested for murder were black, 46.3% were white, 6.3% were Native American, and 0.6% were Asian.

The majority of murders were committed using a firearm.

Sixty-eight percent of all murders in Oklahoma were committed with a firearm. The most common firearm type was a handgun (133), followed by firearms of not stated type (23). A knife or cutting instrument was used in 9.8% of murders. Other methods used by offenders to commit murder included personal weapons (20), shotgun (6), rifle (5), blunt object (11), and chemical (7).

Law enforcement identified the offender in 72% of reported murders.

The offender knew the victim in 61.8% of murders reported in 2017. Murders committed by a family member accounted for 13.4% of all reported murders in 2017.

The number of reported murders has slightly increased during the last 10 years.

In 2017, Oklahoma law enforcement reported 246 murders. From 2008 to 2014, Oklahoma law enforcement reported, on average, 208 murders per year. Over the last three years (2015-2017), Oklahoma law enforcement has reported, on average, 242 murders per year.

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

Oklahoma and Tulsa counties comprise 40.6% of Oklahoma’s population. Even though they do not have the highest murder rates, they are the only counties with over 70 murders in 2017.

Murder in Oklahoma, 2008-2017

