Officers Killed and Assaulted in the Line of Duty, 2023 Special Report

Executive Summary

While the number of felonious killings of law enforcement officers decreased from 2021 (which, at 73, was the highest in the past two decades), more officers have been feloniously killed from 2021 to 2023 (194) than any other consecutive 3-year period in the past 20 years. Sixty law enforcement officers were feloniously killed in 2023, 45 of which involved a firearm. The past decade shows the rate of assaults against law enforcement officers has been increasing since 2021, with firearms being used in more than 300 assault incidents against officers each year since 2020.

The focus of this report is to provide statistical data and analysis on the deaths (felonious and accidental) and assaults against law enforcement officers.

Introduction

To provide officers with information to study, inform, shape training and policing strategies, and ultimately save officers' lives, the FBI publishes data from the Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) Data Collection each year, which is one of several data collections managed by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. The data collection a collective effort by federal, state, local, tribal, territories, and other types of law enforcement agencies to present a nationwide view of data about sworn law enforcement officers who were killed or assaulted in the line of duty.

For LEOKA data to be used to its fullest potential, it is important that agencies submit to the LEOKA Data Collection as many details about the incidents as possible. More complete data can allow for a more thorough understanding of the evolving policing situations that law enforcement face in their communities.

This report includes information voluntarily reported to the following UCR data collections by participating agencies:

- Police Employee Counts[1]
- Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted[2]

---

[1] The Police Employee Counts data collection includes the total number of all male and female full-time sworn law enforcement officers who were on a department's payroll as of October 31 of the reporting year and who work a normal full-time work week. This data includes positions such as chiefs, sheriffs, commissioners, superintendents, and other sworn department heads. It also includes civilian employees paid from law enforcement funds; however, this report does not include data for civilian employees. It does not include special officers, merchant police, or others who are not paid from law enforcement funds.
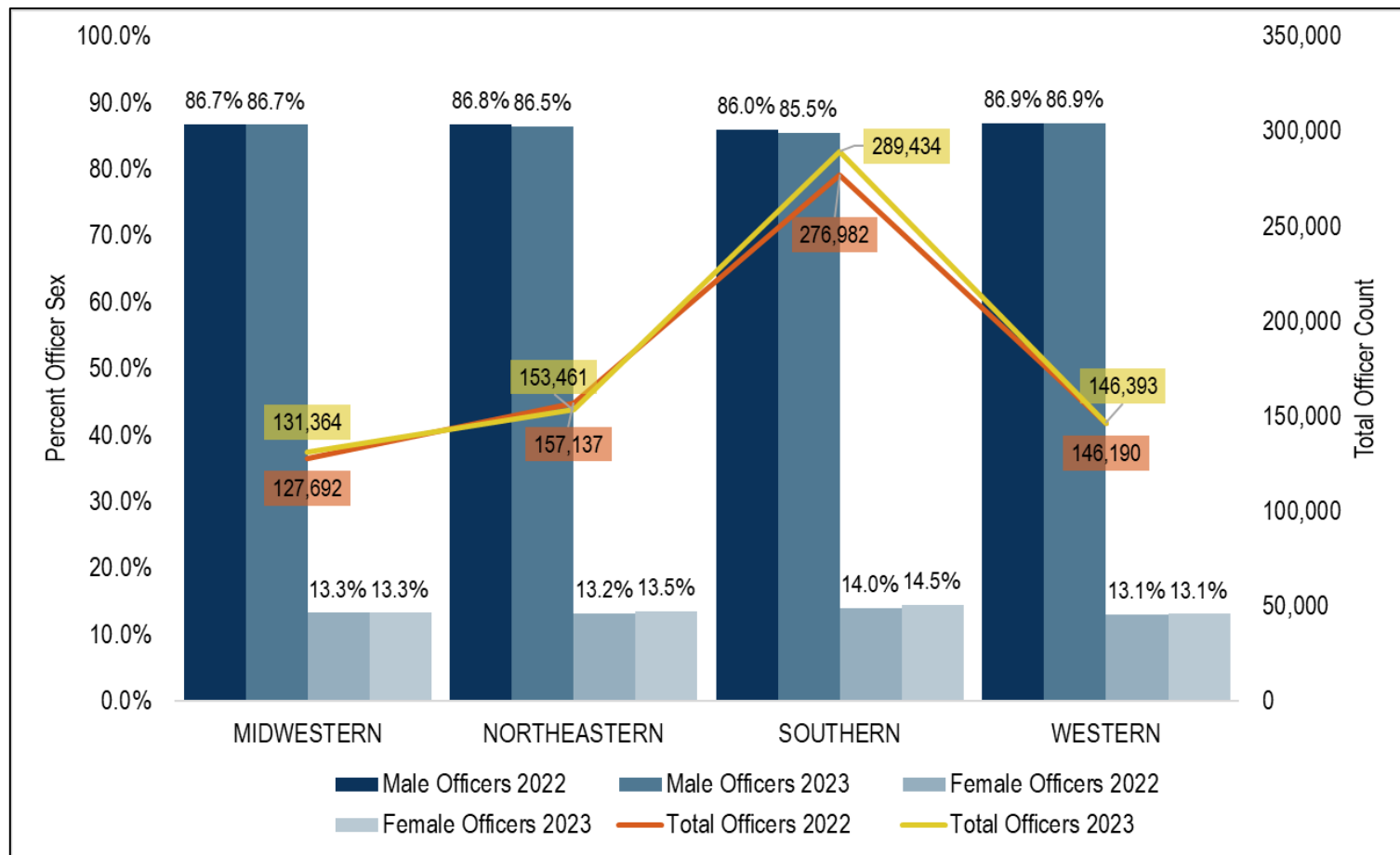
[2] The LEOKA Data Collection includes data on felonious deaths, accidental deaths, and assaults of duly sworn city, university and college, county, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement officers who, at the time of the incident, met the following criteria: wore/carried a badge (ordinarily); carried a firearm (ordinarily); were duly sworn and had full arrest powers; were members of a law enforcement agency; were acting in an official capacity, whether on or off duty, at the time of the incident; and, if killed, the deaths were directly related to the injuries received during the incidents.

Full-time Law Enforcement Employee Counts[3]

The following police employee count provides data for all agencies that submitted their employee count, regardless of if they submitted LEOKA data.

- Based on police employee counts, the percentage of male and female officers have been stable the past two years.
- For the past two years, over 85 percent of the officers in each region were male.
- For 2023, the South employed the most officers, with 289,434 out of the total 720,652 officers.

Figure 1: Employee Officer Counts, by Region, 2022-2023

---

[3] Law enforcement agencies with active originating agency identifiers will have their police employee count data be accepted and released regardless of if the agency submits any LEOKA or crime data; however, the agency will not be included in LEOKA data tables if they do not submit police employee counts and 12 months of LEOKA data.

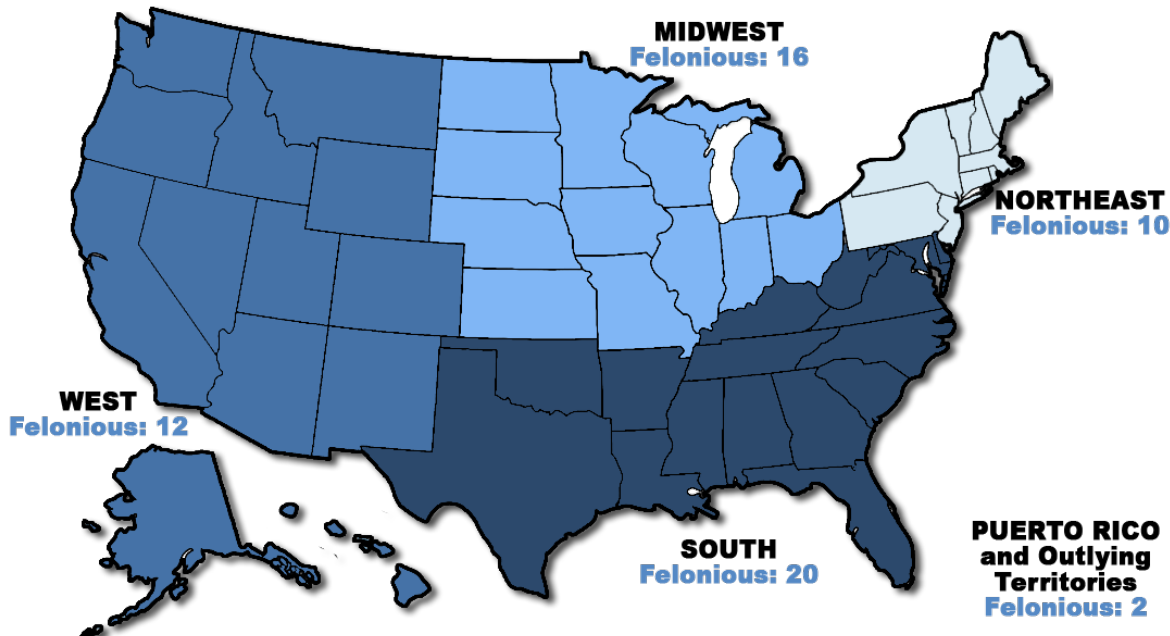## Law Enforcement Officers Feloniously Killed, 2023

The LEOKA Data Collection includes information about duly sworn law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty as a result of felonious incidents. The information presented in this report was collected from local, state, federal, tribal, and territorial agencies across the nation. The following data is considered preliminary and is subject to change prior to the publication of 2023 LEOKA tables, which will be published on the FBI's Crime Data Explorer (CDE) website later this year. In 2023:

- 60 law enforcement officers were feloniously killed in the line of duty and nearly 75 percent of reported incidents involved a firearm.
- Of the 60 officers who were feloniously killed, nearly 52 percent[4] were killed by gunshot wounds.
- Of the officers who died due to felonious incidents, 54 were male, and 6 were female.
- 53 officers were White, 4 were Black/African American. The remaining 3 were of another or unknown race.
- The victim officers' median number of sworn law enforcement experience was 9 years, while the average was 11 years.
- The top reported circumstance encountered at the scene[5] as well as the top call for service[6] in 2023 was for investigative/enforcement reasons.
- More officers were feloniously killed in the South (20) than in any other region.

Figure 2: Victim Officer Data, 2022-2023

Reported Victim Data		
Feloniously Killed	2022	2023
	61	60
Incidents Involving Firearms	2022	2023
	49	45
Killed by Gunshot	2022	2023
	29	31
Male Officers Feloniously Killed	2022	2023
	58	54
Female Officers Feloniously Killed	2022	2023
	3	6
Median Years as a Sworn LEO	2022	2023
	7	9
Investigative/ Enforcement Circumstance Encountered	2022	2023
	13	13
Investigative/ Enforcement Calls for Service	2022	2023
	16	14
Deaths in the South	2022	2023
	32	20

Figure 3: Officer Deaths by Region, 2023

MIDWEST
Felonious: 16

NORTHEAST
Felonious: 10

WEST
Felonious: 12

SOUTH
Felonious: 20

PUERTO RICO
and Outlying
Territories
Felonious: 2

---

[4] It should be noted, this percentage could be low because agencies did not report the type of fatal wound for 19 of the incidents.
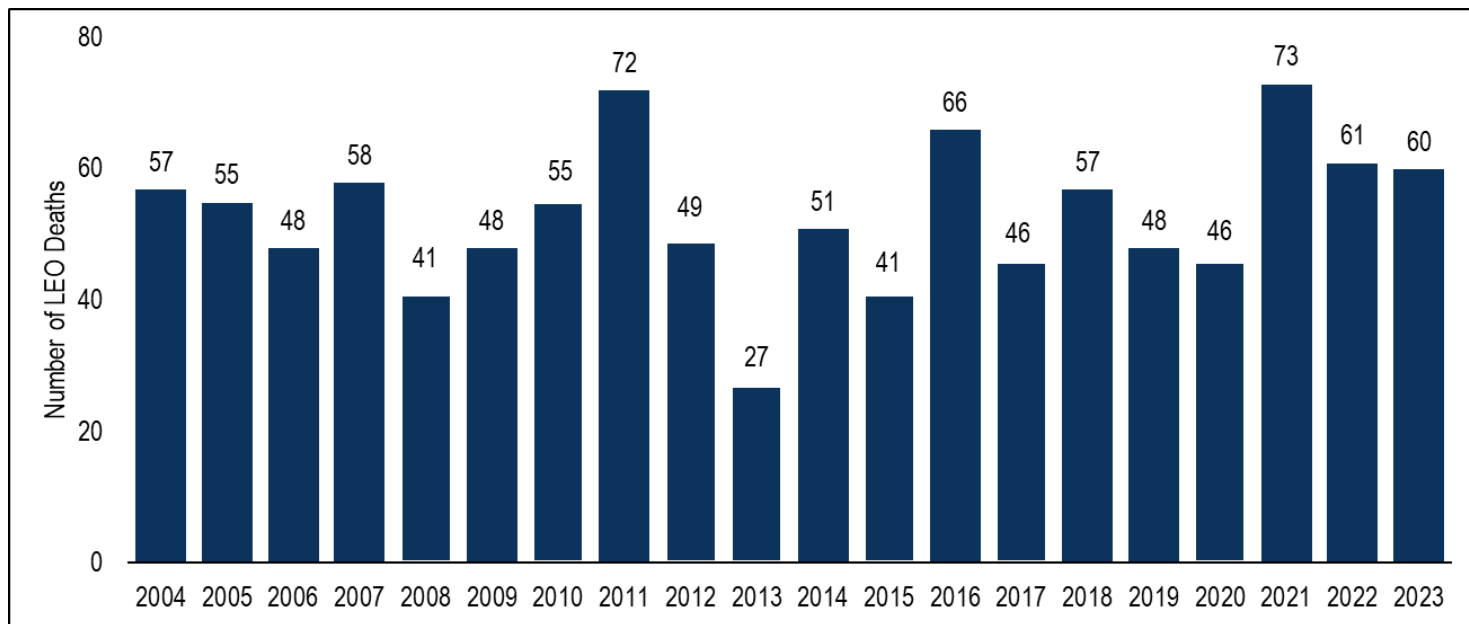[5] A circumstance encountered at the scene is when an officer finds a situation that he/she was not aware of until being on location.
[6] A call for service is when an officer receives a call from dispatch or another officer and goes to the location.

Law Enforcement Officers Feloniously Killed, 2004-2023

The past two decades of feloniously killed officer data shows that 2021 had the most officers killed in one year (73). Additionally, from 2021 to 2023, more officers were feloniously killed (194) than in any other consecutive 3-year period in the past 20 years (73 officers in 2021, 61 officers in 2022, and 60 officers in 2023).

Figure 4: Officers Feloniously Killed, by Year, 2004-2023

Law Enforcement Officers Feloniously Killed Trends, 2014–2023[7]

Those officers feloniously killed in the line of duty from 2014 to 2023 had an average of 12 years of sworn law enforcement experience. However, within the last decade, most victim officers (31.9 percent) had less than 5 years of sworn law enforcement experience.

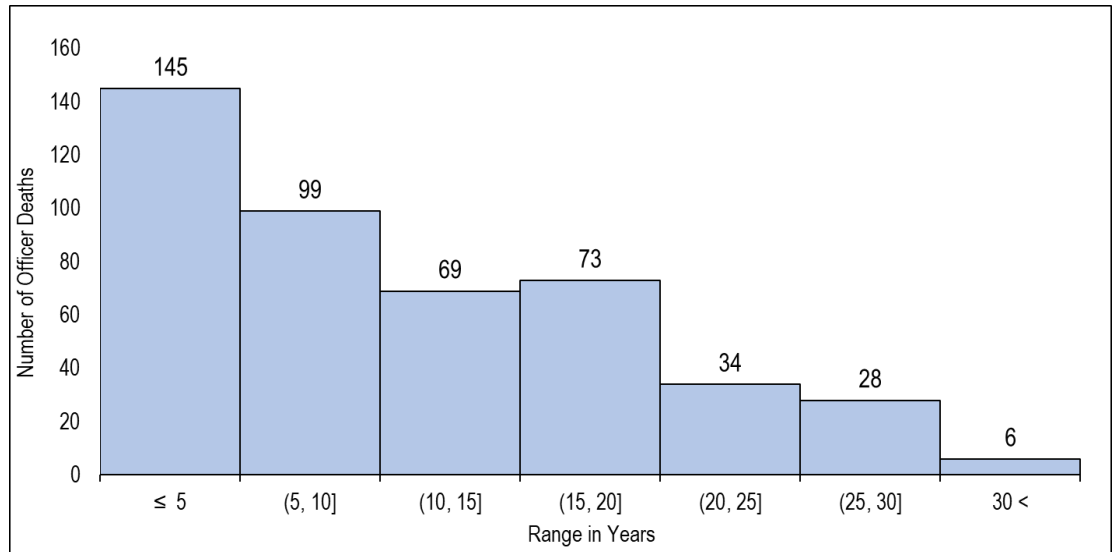*Figure 5: Officers Feloniously Killed, by Years of Service, 2014-2023*
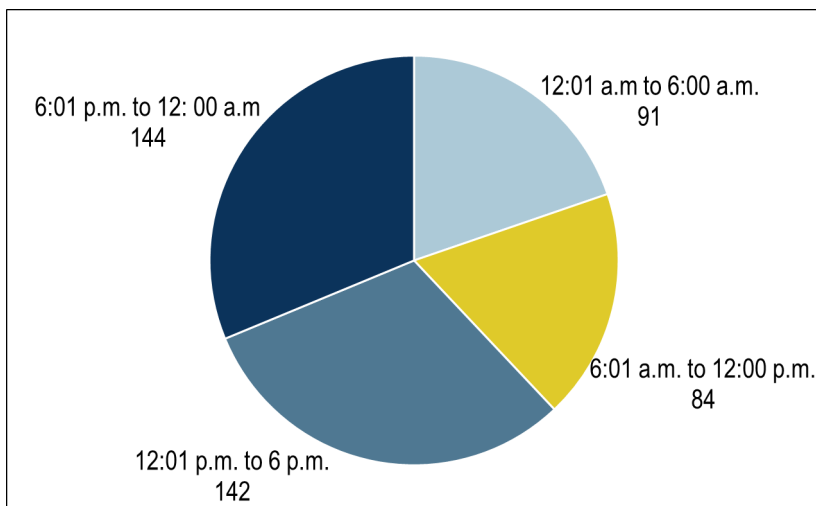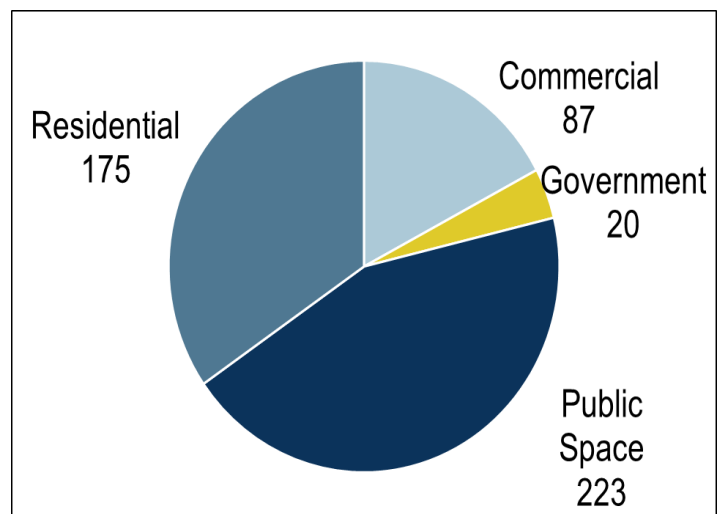

Figure 6: Officers Feloniously Killed, by Time of Day, 2014-2023

From 2014 to 2023, more officers were feloniously killed from 6:01 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. (144 officers out of 461) than any other time of day.
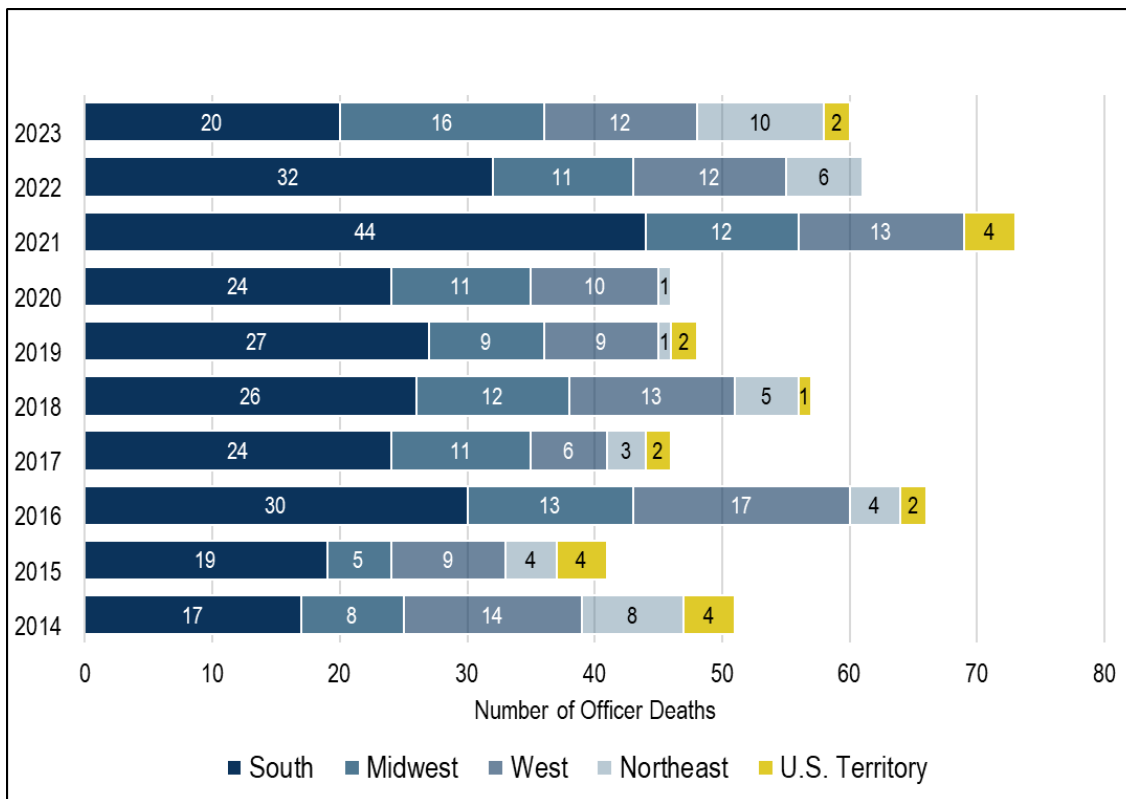
Out of the 515 incidents reported from 2014 to 2023 in which an officer was feloniously killed, 223 occurred in public spaces and 175 occurred in residential locations.

Figure 7: Officers Feloniously Killed, by Location Type at Time of Attack, 2014-2023

---

[7] For this section, 10-year data was used for trend analysis because agencies submitted more complete data for this timeframe. Also, the LEOKA Data Collection changed the questionnaire in 2019, which slightly altered the questions asked. The total number of officers feloniously killed may appear to change from topic to topic in the 10-year trend analysis. This is because agencies may not have answered every question on the questionnaire, thus resulting in different totals for some topics.
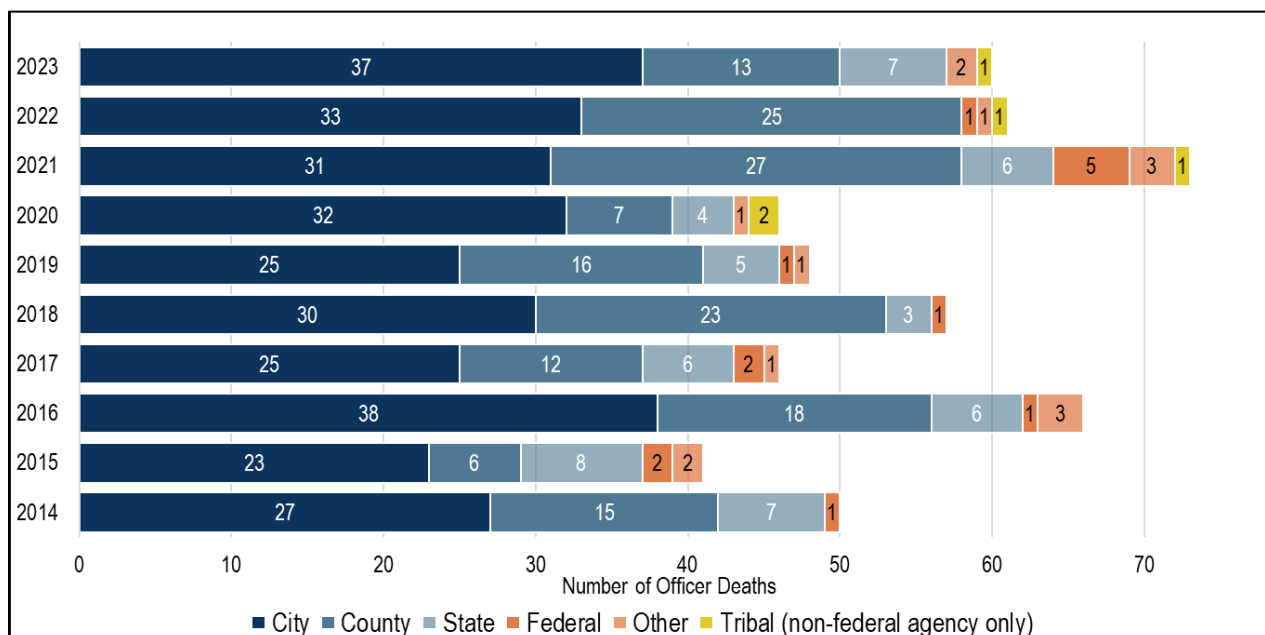
From 2014 to 2023, the majority of felonious officer deaths occurred in the South (263 officers out of 549). In 2023, the South had the least amount of felonious officer deaths (20) in its region since 2015 (19). However, since 2021, officer felonious killings in the Northeast have increased. The most deaths in the Northeast since 2014 (8) occurred in 2023 (10).

Figure 8: Officers Feloniously Killed, by Region, 2014-2023

Most victim officers were employed by city agencies. Victim officers employed by county agencies were the second most reported. City agencies reported 37 officer line-of-duty deaths in 2023, which is the most since 2016. From 2014 to 2023, county agencies reported the most officer line-of-duty deaths in 2021.

Figure 9: Officers Feloniously Killed, by Agency Type, 2014-2023

Offender Information, 2023[8]

- In 2023, agencies reported that 60 officers were feloniously killed, and those incidents included 57 offenders.
- Sex was reported for 55 of the 57 offenders, and 98 percent were male.
- Race was reported for 45 of the 57 offenders. Approximately 62 percent of the offenders were White, and about 38 percent were Black/African American.
- Age was reported for 51 of the 57 offenders. The average age of the offenders was 31 years, which is less than the average victim officer age by 8 years.
- In 2023, 24 offenders were known to the agencies prior to the incident.
- In 2023, 14 percent of offenders were known to have a mental illness by the law enforcement officers.
- Of reported prior arrests:[9]
  - 47 percent were violent offenses.[10]
  - The offenders' judicial supervision status was reported for 7 of the offenders. Of those 7, 2 offenders were on conditional release pending criminal prosecution, 2 were on parole, and 3 were on probation.
- In 2023, firearms were the most-used weapon (45), and vehicles were the second most-used weapon (11).

Figure 10: Offender Data, 2023

Reported Offender Data		
Offenders' Sex (55 reported)	Male	Female
	98%	2%
Offenders' Race (45 reported)	White	Black/African American
	62%	38%
Average Age (Victim: 57 reported) (Offender: 51 reported)	Victim	Offender
	39	31
Known by Agency (57 reported)	Yes	Unknown
	24	33
Known Mental Illness (57 reported)	Yes	Unknown
	14%	86%
Prior Arrests	Violent	Non-Violent
	32	36

Figure 11: Officers Feloniously Killed, by Weapon Type, 2023

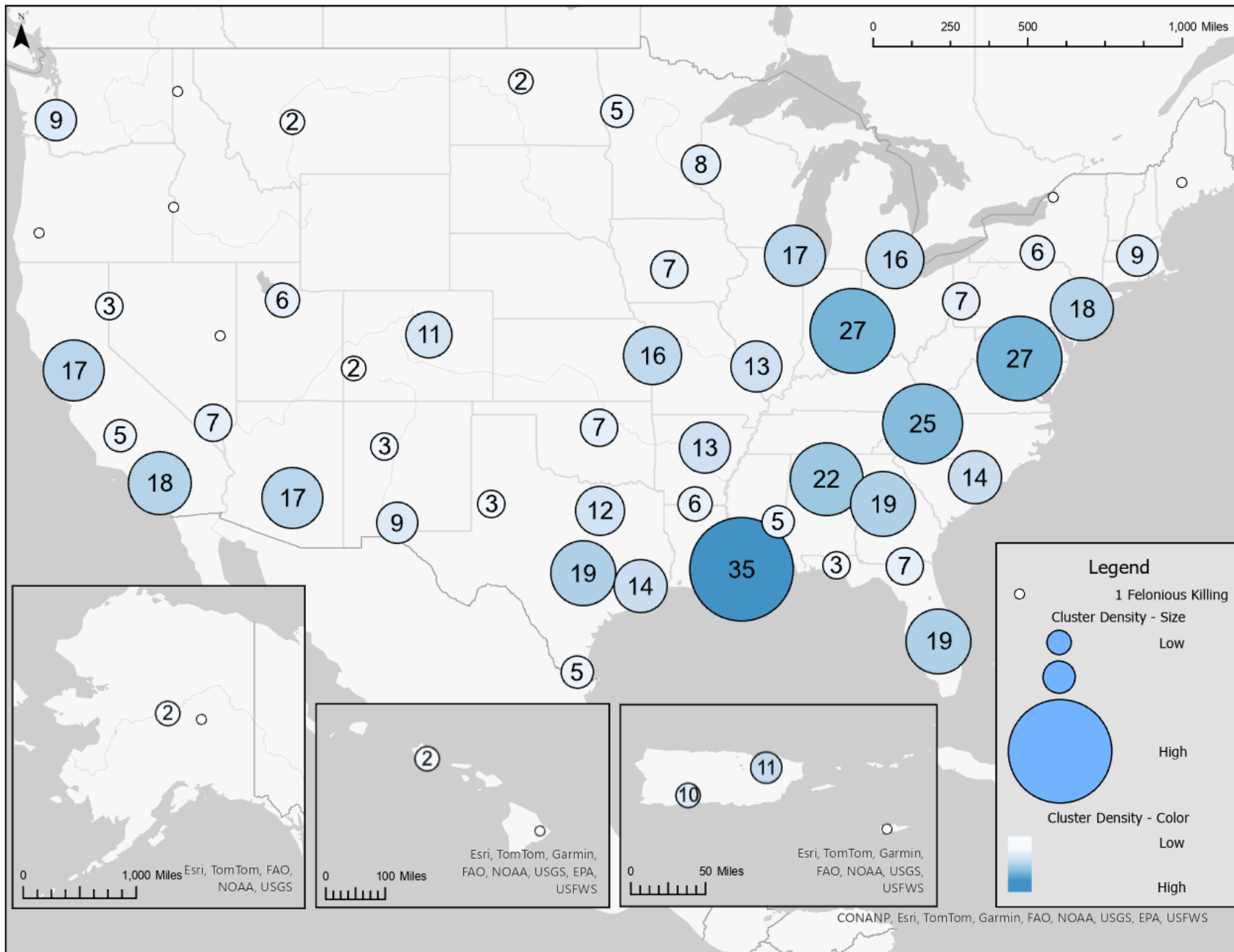| Officers Feloniously Killed, by Weapon(s) Utilized to Injure Victim Officer (2023)	
Weapon Type	**Total**
Firearm	45
	Handgun (16)
	Rifle (9)
	Shotgun (1)
	Unknown/ Not Reported (19)
Vehicle	11
Other	2
Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.), Other	2

[8] Due to the incompleteness of offender data prior to 2023, only 2023 data was used for the offender analysis. The 2023 data is considered preliminary until the release of the LEOKA tables later this year.

[9] One offender may have multiple arrests/offenses.

[10] Violent offenses include aggravated assault, assault on law enforcement officer, domestic violence, murder, robbery, sex offense.

Location Types of Officers Feloniously Killed, 2014-2023

The following map shows the approximate geographical locations where officers were feloniously killed from 2014 to 2023.
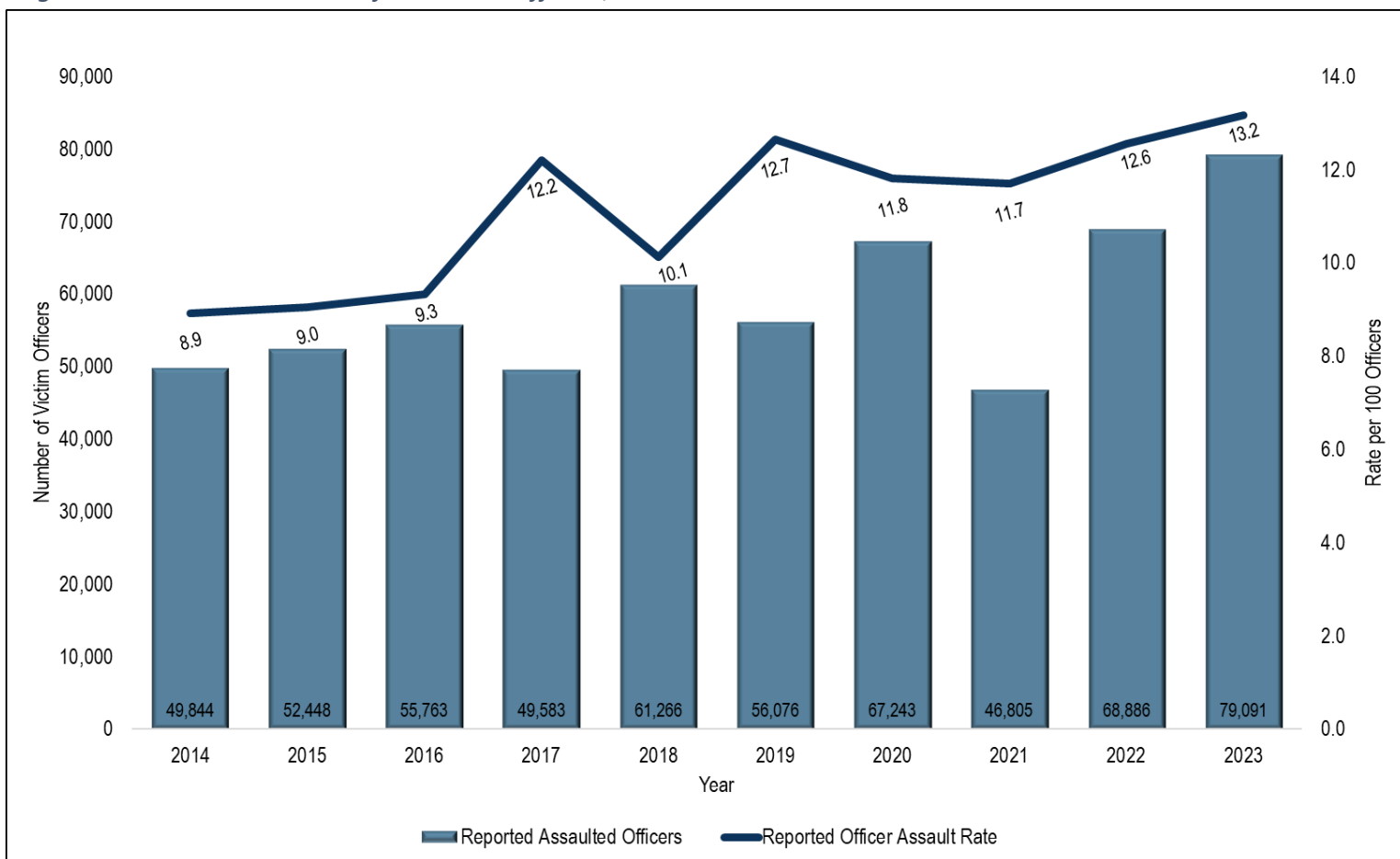
Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted, 2023

The LEOKA Data Collection also reports information about assaults on law enforcement officers. For assault data to be included in this publication and the annual LEOKA table publications, law enforcement agencies must have submitted information for all 12 months of the reporting year regarding their sworn officers who were assaulted, as well as the number of officers and civilians their agencies employed full time for the reporting year. The following officer assault data is considered preliminary and is subject to change prior to the release of 2023 LEOKA assault tables, which will be published on the FBI's CDE website later this year.

In 2023, 10,884 agencies employing 600,120 officers reported 79,091 assaults of officers, indicating a rate of 13.2 assaults per 100 officers. This is the highest officer assault rate in the past ten years, exceeding the second highest rate of 12.7 assaults per 100 officers reported in 2019.

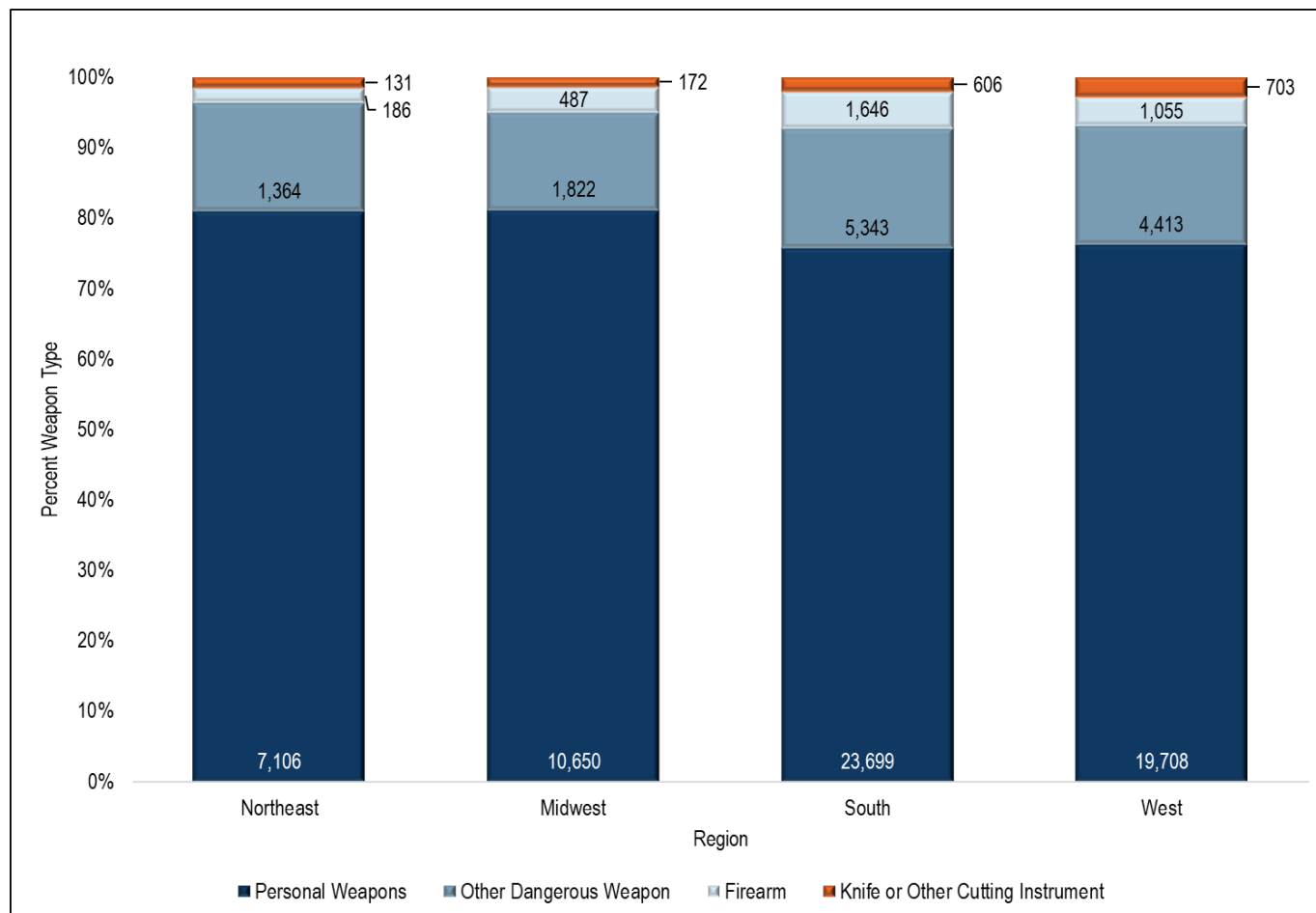*Figure 12: Number and Rate of Assaulted Officers, 2014-2023*

Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted with a Firearm

From 2014 through 2016, officers were assaulted with a firearm at a rate between 3.6 and 3.8 per 1,000 officers each year. The rate increased to 5.4 per 1,000 officers in 2017, then dropped to 3.7 per 1,000 officers in 2018. Since 2019, the rate of officers assaulted with a firearm has remained about 5 per 1,000 officers, reaching a ten-year peak in 2021 with a rate of 5.9 per 1,000 officers in 2021 before declining to 5.8 per 1,000 officers in 2022. In 2023, 5.6 per 1,000 officers were assaulted with a firearm.
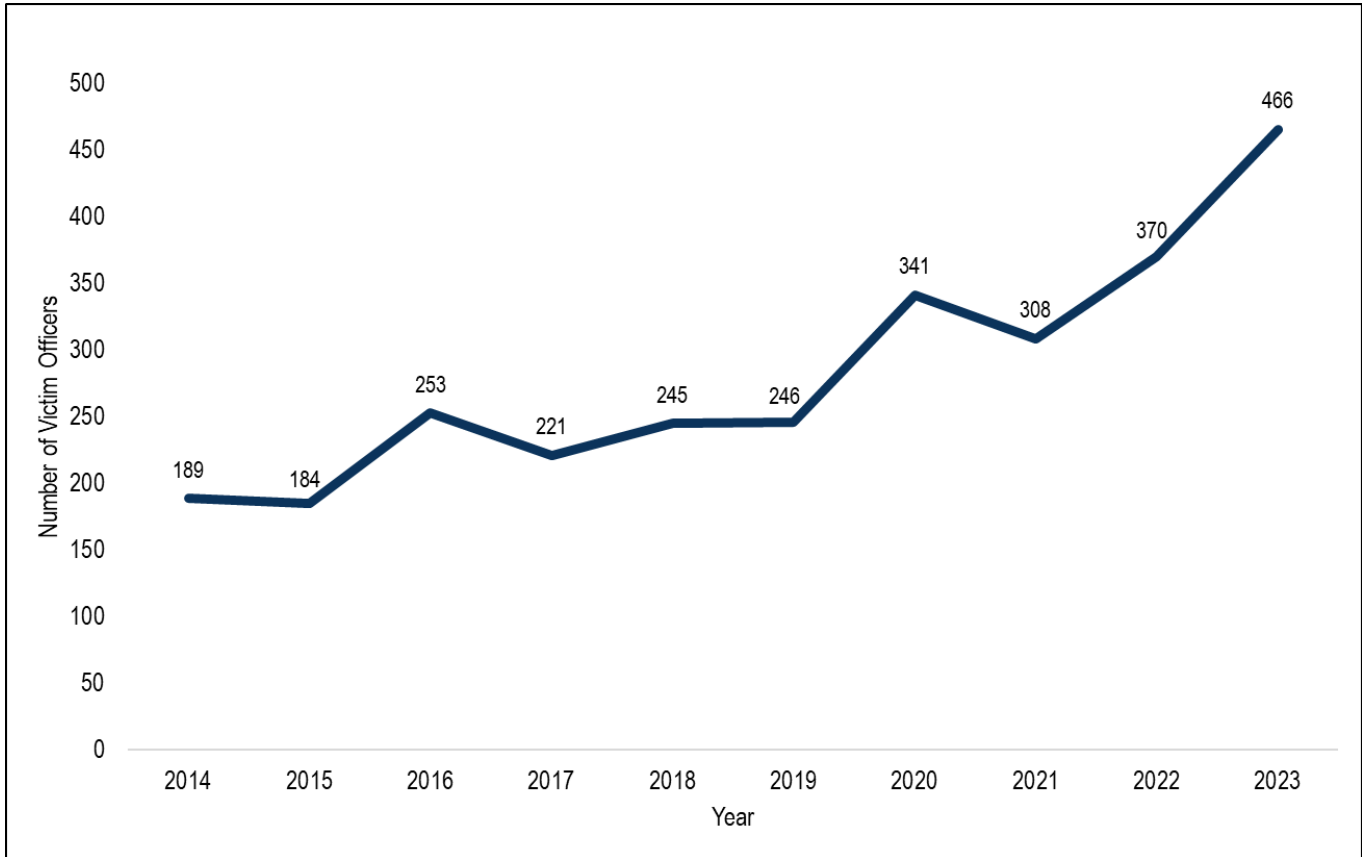
Firearm use against officers varied by geographical region. In 2023, of the reported assaults that were perpetrated using a firearm, 5.3 percent were in the South, 4.1 percent occurred in the West, 3.7 percent were in the Midwest, and 2.1 percent occurred in the Northeast.

Figure 13: Officers Assaulted, by Percentage of Reported Weapon Type, by Region, 2023

In 2014 and 2015, less than 200 officers were assaulted and injured by firearms each year. From 2016 to 2019, the number of officers assaulted and injured surpassed 200 each year and continued to rise to more than 300 each year from 2020 through 2022. In 2023, the number of officers assaulted and injured by firearms reached a ten-year high of approximately 466 officers.

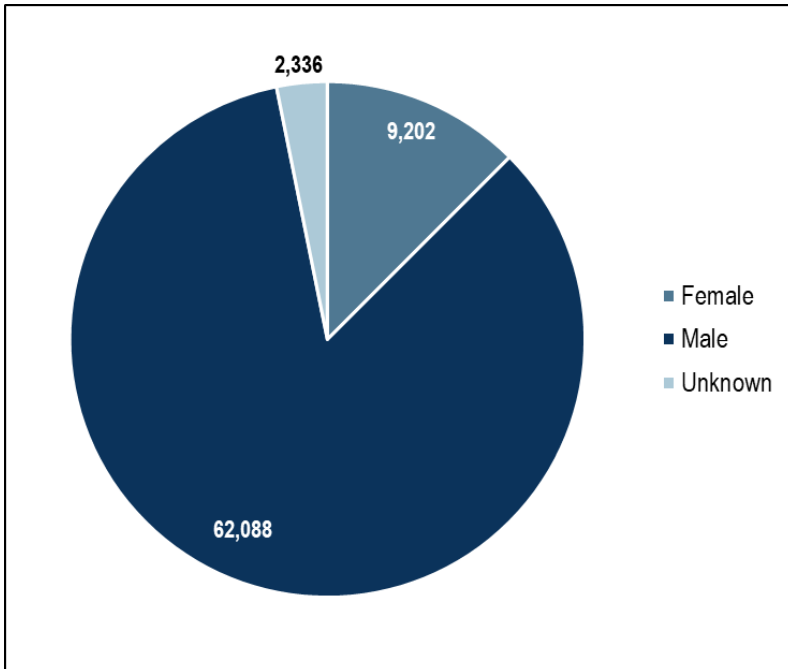Figure 14: Officers Assaulted and Injured by Firearms, 2014-2023

Officers Assault Data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)

Agencies submitting officer assault data through NIBRS can provide additional details on each single crime incident, as well as on separate offenses within the same incident. The FBI's UCR Program defines an *incident* as one or more offenses committed by the same offender, or group of offenders acting in concert, at the same time and place. The FBI's UCR Program defines an *offense* as a violation of the law. For NIBRS purposes, an offense is reported to the FBI when it becomes known to law enforcement. An incident may involve more than one offense. Within the LEOKA Data Collection, assaulted officers are victims of either an aggravated assault[11] offense or a simple assault[12] offense.

In 2023, 6,227 agencies reported at least one LEOKA assault via NIBRS, totaling 73,626 reported assaults of officers in 58,507 incidents.

Figure 15: Officers Assaulted, by Officer Sex, 2023

In 2023, assaulted officers were most often male (84.3 percent), White (80.7 percent), and between the ages of 30 and 39 (34.8 percent).

---

[11] The FBI's UCR Program defines *aggravated assault* as an unlawful attack by one person upon another wherein the offender uses a dangerous weapon or displays it in a threatening manner or the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury, or where there was a risk for serious injury/intent to seriously injure.

[12] The FBI's UCR Program defines *simple assault* as an unlawful physical attack by one person upon another where neither the offender displays a dangerous weapon, nor the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness.

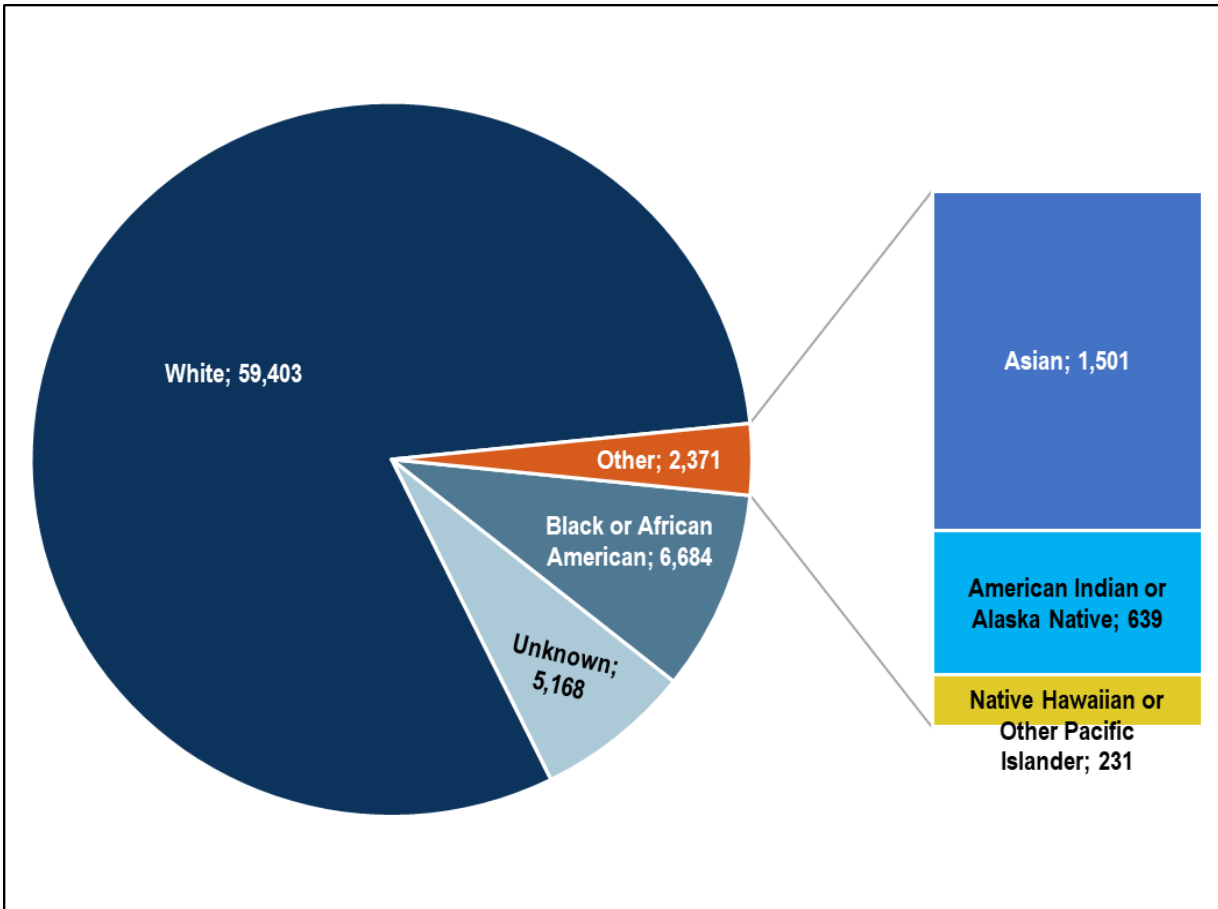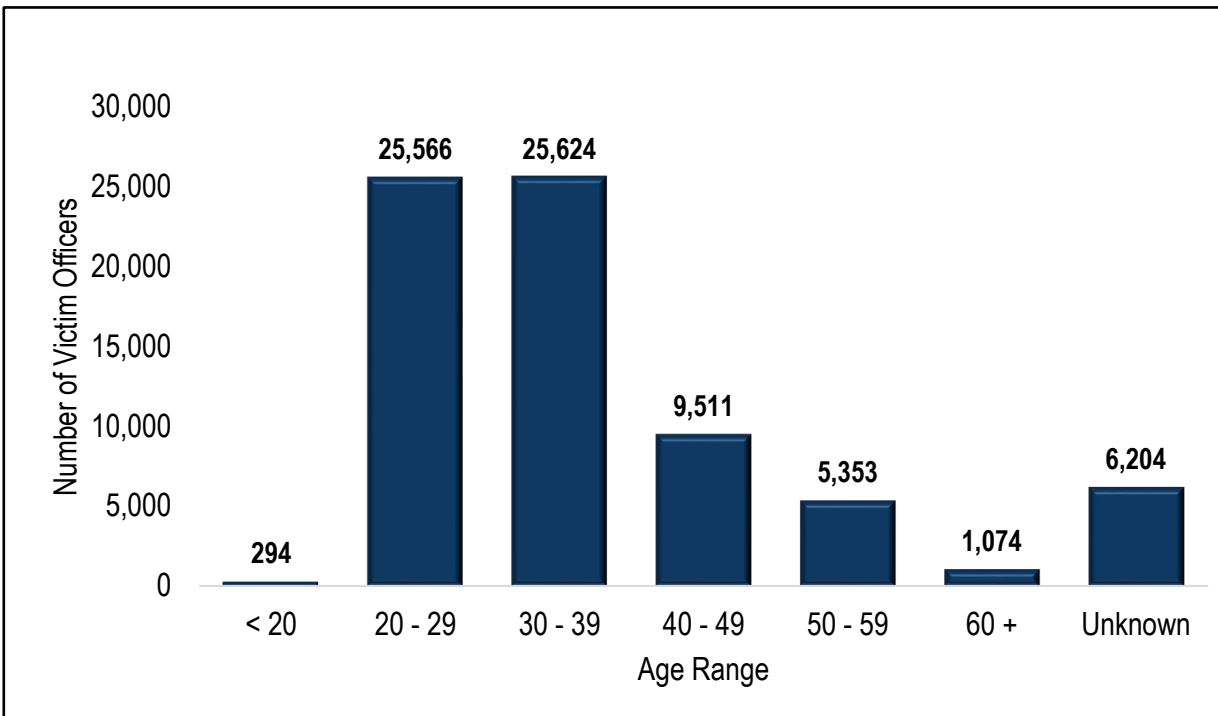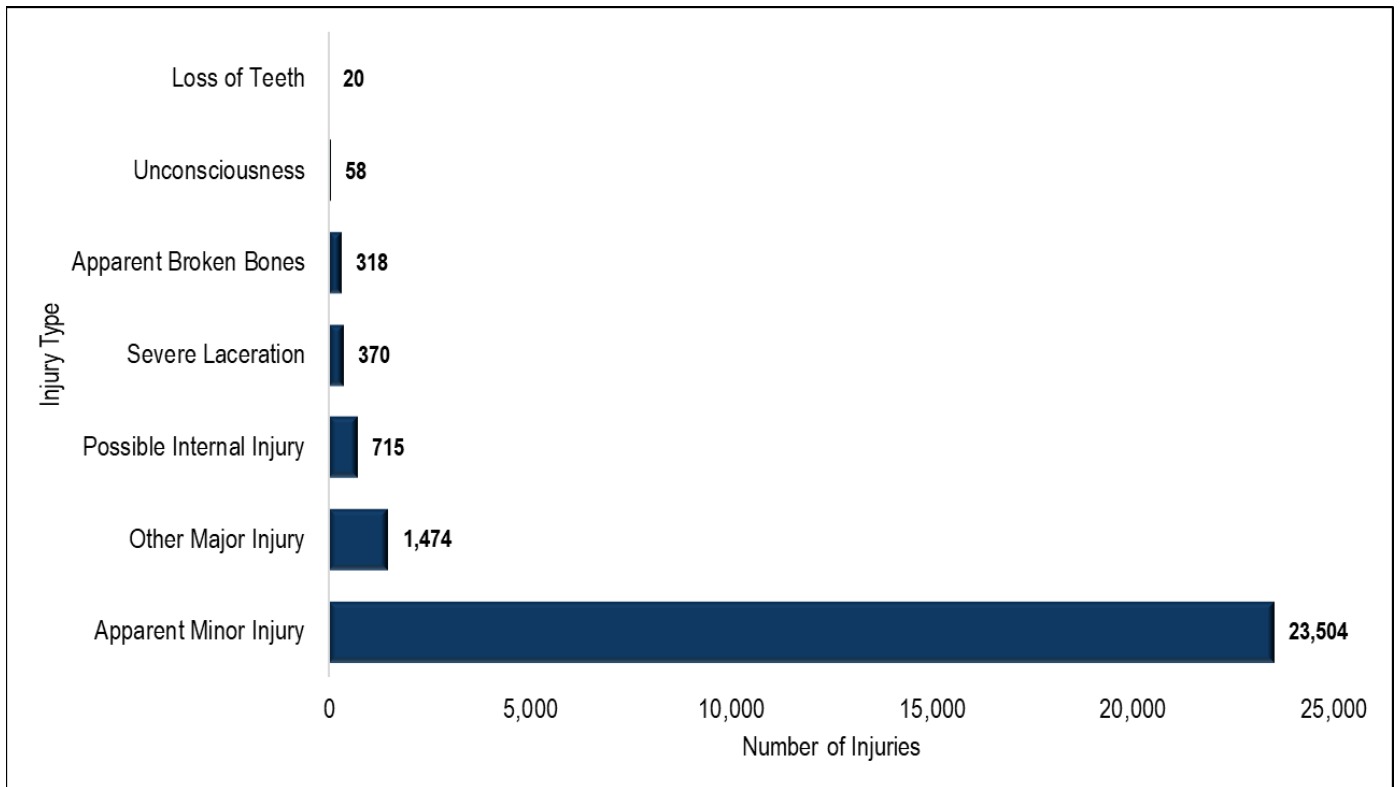*Figure 16: Officers Assaulted, by Officer Race, 2023*

Figure 17: Officers Assaulted, by Officer Age, 2023

Agencies reporting via NIBRS can provide up to five types of bodily injuries sustained by victims of certain offenses, to include aggravated and simple assault. In 2023, 47,467 of the officers who were assaulted were not injured in the attacks. The remaining 26,159 officers received 26,459 injuries from the assaults.

Figure 18: Officers Assaulted, by Injury Type, 2023

Agencies submitting officer assault data through NIBRS can include up to ten Group A offenses occurring within an incident. In 2023, 39.3 percent of reported officer assault incidents involved at least one additional Group A NIBRS offense beyond an assault on an officer. LEOKA assault incidents that did not involve an additional Group A NIBRS offense may have involved Group B NIBRS offenses or circumstances not captured through NIBRS, e.g., traffic stops.[13]

In 2023, the most common NIBRS offenses observed in conjunction with officer assaults were *simple assault against a person other than a law enforcement officer* (reported in 6,783 LEOKA incidents), *drug/narcotic violations* (reported in 4,879 officer assault incidents), *and destruction/damage/vandalism of property* (reported in 4,608 officer assault incidents).

Figure 19: NIBRS Offenses Committed in Conjunction with Assaulting an Officer, 2023.

Top 10 Non-LEOKA Offenses	LEOKA Incidents
Simple Assault (non-officer)	6,783
Drug/Narcotic Violations	4,879
Destruction/Damage/Vandalism of Property	4,608
Aggravated Assault (non-officer)	2,607
Weapon Law Violations	2,515
Drug Equipment Violations	2,509
Intimidation	1,726
Shoplifting	1,225
Stolen Property Offenses	907
Burglary/Breaking & Entering	837

---

[13] Details on Group A and Group B offenses can be found in the NIBRS User Manual.

Law Enforcement Officers Accidently Killed, 2019—2023[14]

The LEOKA Data Collection also collects information on law enforcement officers who were accidentally killed in the line of duty. The following reported data illustrate the data points collected from 2019 to 2023.There were 234 total reported accidental law enforcement officer deaths from 2019–2023.[15]

- The average age of law enforcement officers accidentally killed in the line of duty was 40 years old.

- About 91 percent of law enforcement officers accidentally killed in the line of duty were male.

- The average number of sworn law enforcement service was 11 years. However, most law enforcement officers involved in accidental deaths had 5 years or less of sworn law enforcement service.

- 94 percent of accidental officer deaths occurred in a public space. 196 of the public space locations were along highways/roads/alleys/sidewalks.

- Top (3) Calls for service:
    - Patrol (54)
    - Investigative/enforcement (24)
    - Assisting another law enforcement office (20)
    - Other[16] (20)

Figure 20: Officer Accidental Deaths, 2019-2023

Reported Accidental Deaths	
Average Age (193 reported)	40
Percent Males (234 reported)	91%
Percent Females (234 reported)	9%
Top Years of Service Range (166 reported)	0-5 Years 43%
Top Location (224 reported)	Public Space 94%
Top Call for Service (231 reported)	Patrol 23%
Top Cause (234 reported)	Motor Vehicle Crash 57%

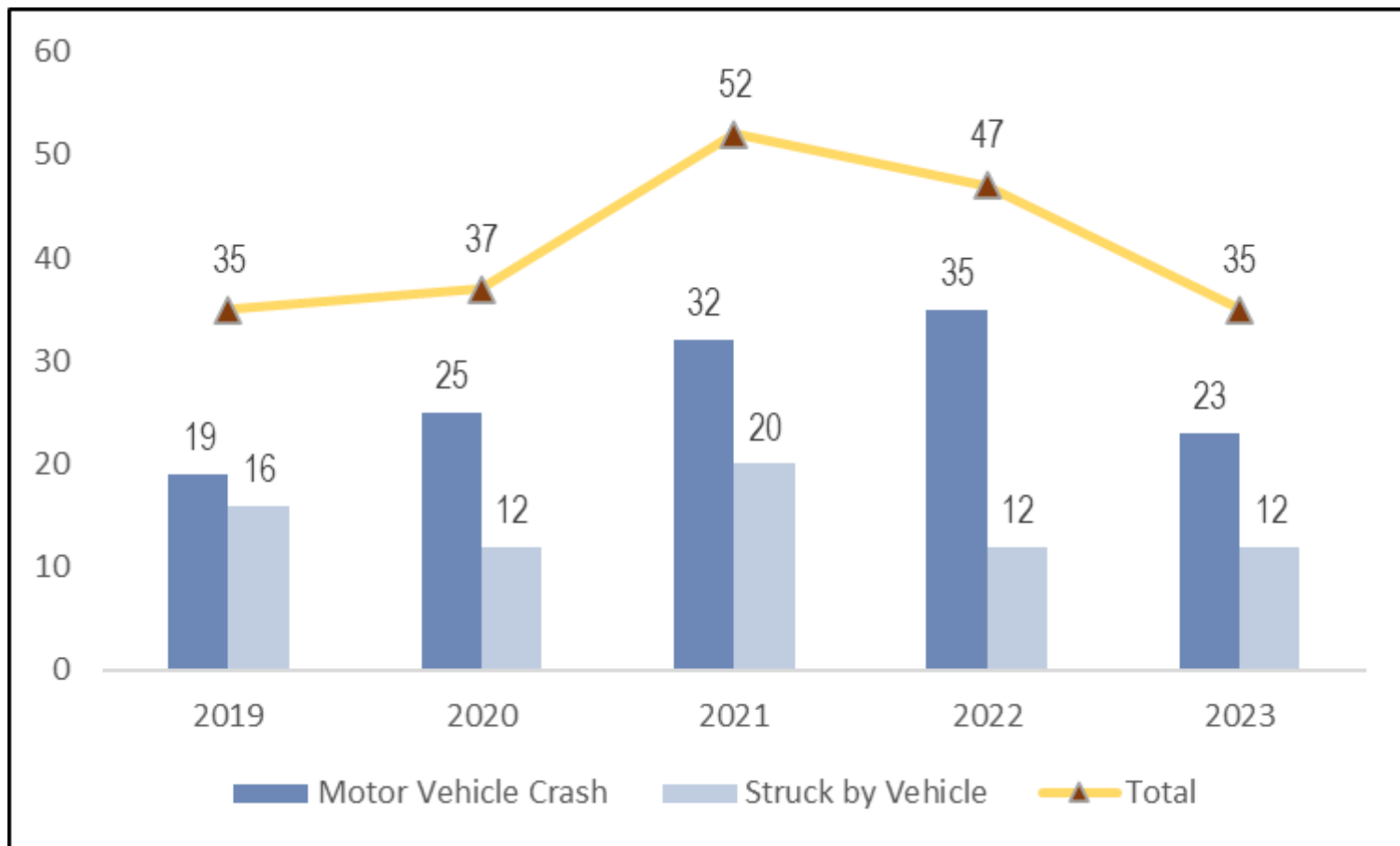- About 57 percent of accidental deaths were related to motor vehicle crashes.

---

[14] The total number of officers accidently killed may appear to change from topic to topic in the 5-year trend analysis. This is because agencies may not have answered every question on the questionnaire, thus resulting in different totals for some topics.
[15] Data from 2023 is preliminary until the release of the LEOKA tables later this year.
[16] "Other" refers to calls for service such as: en route to work (training, office, inmate transfer, and drug take back program), assisting elderly, picking up patrol unit, driving home, clearing roadway, escorting funeral procession, structure fire, security detail, school resource officer, and DOT detail.

Of the officers reported accidentally killed from 2019 to 2023, 57 percent died in motor vehicle crashes, and 31 percent died because they were struck by a vehicle. The data reported for accidental deaths involving motor vehicles for 2019 through 2023—involving both categories of *motor vehicle crash* and *struck by vehicle*—peaked in 2021 but has declined in both 2022 and 2023.

Figure 22: Trend of Motor Vehicle-Related Deaths, 2019-2023

Conclusion

The LEOKA Data Collection compiles an abundance of information that can help a nationwide audience gain insight into the details of officer deaths and assaults. The data presented in this LEOKA report is an effort to aid the law enforcement community by providing information to positively impact their training and keep them safe as they diligently perform their duties.

Analysis of this data shows there has been a slight decline in officer felonious killings over the past 3 years; however, over the same time period, the rate of assaults against officers has increased. Firearms were the most reported weapon in these fatal incidents, followed by vehicles. Additional topics included in this report feature more granular information regarding incident times, locations, and other weapons used by offenders.

LEOKA assault data shows that in 2023, officers were assaulted at a rate of 13.2 assaults per 100 officers, which is the highest officer assault rate in the past ten years. Also in 2023, the number of officers assaulted and injured by firearms reached a ten-year high at approximately 466 officers. From 2020 to 2022, firearms were the weapon most used to assault officers, with each year showing a firearm assault rate of 0.6 assaults per 100 officers. In 2023, assaulted officers most often incurred minor injuries.

For accidental deaths of law enforcement officers, the collected LEOKA data show an overwhelming majority of accidents involved motor vehicles while officers were on patrol in a public space, specifically a highway, road, alley, and/or sidewalk.

LEOKA data can be a crucial tool for the law enforcement community to enhance and update officer safety strategies, especially when the contributed data is complete and rich. Collectively, these statistics provide vital information that can improve awareness of risks to officers in the United States. For this data to be complete and of the utmost benefit to the law enforcement community, it is imperative that agencies submit applicable data to the FBI UCR Program's various data collections.

U. S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Criminal Justice Information Services Division