

## Violence Against Police Officers in the United States

Chuck Canterbury, President  
National Fraternal Order of Police

Violence is a risk that police officers face every day on the job. Officers face the worst offenders that society has to offer in their ongoing fight to protect the general public. Every day police officers are assaulted on the job, and many lose their lives in the course of duty.

Law Enforcement Officers are assaulted daily in the United States in the course of duty. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigations<sup>1</sup>, in 2008 alone 58,792 police officers reported line of duty assaults, about a fourth of whom sustained serious injuries as a result of the attack. Domestic violence calls continue to be a major source of these assaults, with approximately 32% of these officers attacked while responding to such calls.

### Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted<sup>1</sup> Region and Geographic Division, 2008

Area	Total*	Rate per 100 officers	Assaults with injury	Rate per 100 officers	# of reporting agencies	Number of officers employed
Number of victim officers	58,792	11.3	15,366	3.0	10,110	518,120
NORTHEAST	8,260	9.4	2,704	3.1	2,112	87,528
MIDWEST	6,961	11.5	1,767	2.9	2,112	60,697
SOUTH	28,455	12.4	7,050	3.1	4,262	228,689
WEST	15,116	10.7	3,845	2.7	1,624	141,206

\*Regional and divisional totals do not include data for Illinois, Michigan, and West Virginia, which were not available for inclusion in this table.

Between the years 2000 and 2008 488 law enforcement officers were feloniously killed, averaging approximately 54 police officers murdered every year.<sup>1</sup> This excludes all accidental and natural deaths occurring in the course of duty, and does not include any deaths in connection with the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. The numbers since 2008 have been just as bleak, with an estimated 64 officers murdered last year and 33 murdered so far this year<sup>2</sup>. Recently we have also seen an upswing in police officers being assassinated for no reason other than the fact that they are law enforcement. We had two officers in Arkansas gunned down with AK-47s in the course of duty just days ago. One of the more extreme cases in our recent history involved four officers ambushed and murdered in a Washington State coffee shop while they were on break and catching up on paperwork, targeted for execution solely based on their choice to serve and protect their community. This happened only a month after another officer was killed in Seattle while sitting in his patrol car with a trainee, shot by a man who had previously fire-bombed four other patrol cars.

**Law Enforcement Officers Feloniously Killed  
Region, Geographic Division, and State, 2000–2008<sup>1</sup>**

Area	Total	2000	2001*	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of victim officers	488	51	70	56	52	57	55	48	58	41
NORTHEAST	41	0	3	5	3	8	5	7	7	3
MIDWEST	91	13	14	12	8	10	10	6	9	9
SOUTH	243	32	29	25	28	27	28	22	32	20
WEST	92	4	18	9	13	9	10	11	9	9
PUERTO RICO AND OTHER OUTLYING AREAS	21	2	6	5	0	3	2	2	1	0

\*The 72 deaths that resulted from the events of September 11, 2001, are not included in this table.

In spite of these tragic losses and the other risks our law enforcement officers face in their daily lives, our police force remains strong. Our men and women in law enforcement are dedicated to preserving the peace and safety of the public, putting their safety and lives on the line to protect their communities.

**Works Cited**

<sup>1</sup> "Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted". Federal Bureau of Investigations. May 20, 2010 <<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm#leoka>>.

<sup>2</sup> "The Officer Down Memorial Page". The Officer Down Memorial Page, Inc.. May 20, 2010 <<http://www.odmp.org/>>.