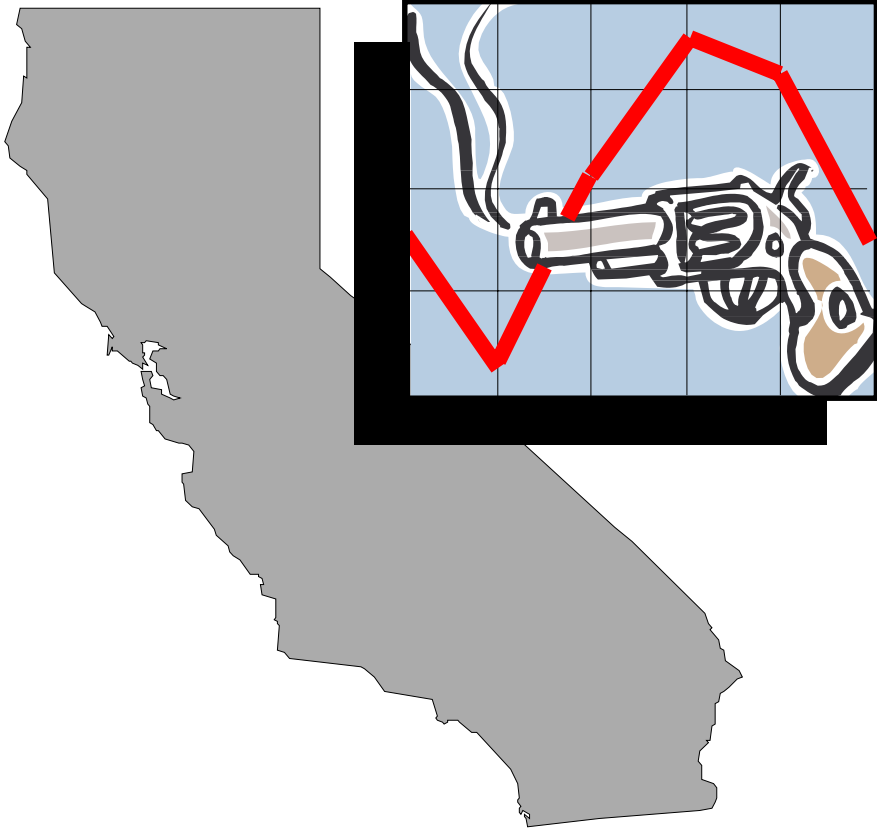


HOMICIDE IN CALIFORNIA, 1997



Bill Lockyer, Attorney General
California Department of Justice
Division of Criminal Justice Information Services

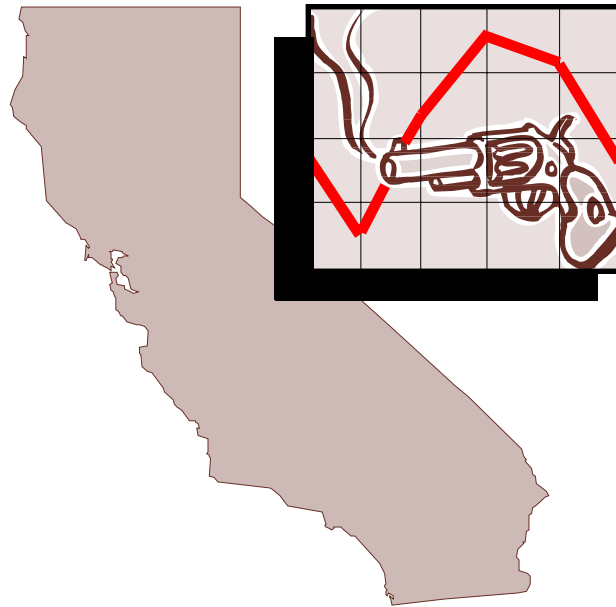
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HOMICIDE IN CALIFORNIA, 1997

Bill Lockyer, Attorney General
California Department of Justice
Division of Criminal Justice Information Services
Bureau of Criminal Information and Analysis

HOMICIDE IN CALIFORNIA, 1997



**I met Murder in the way -
He had a mask like Castlereagh.
SHELLY, "The Mask of Anarchy" (1819), II**

DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION SERVICES

Nick Dedier, Director

BUREAU OF CRIMINAL INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

Doug Smith, Chief

Mike Acosta, Assistant Chief

CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATISTICS CENTER

Steve Galeria, Program Manager

The role of the Criminal Justice Statistics Center is to:

- Collect, analyze, and report statistical data which provide valid measures of crime and the criminal justice process;
- Examine these data on an ongoing basis to better describe crime and the criminal justice system;
- Promote the responsible presentation and use of crime statistics.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTER

John D. Dumbauld Manager
Adele Spears Publication Coordinator/Research Analyst/Data Tables
Ron Lai Publication Consultant
Rebecca Bowe Design/Senior Graphic Artist/Internet
Tricia Clark Research Analyst
LaTanya Henley Crime Studies Technician
Myrna Naughton Adult Criminal Justice Statistical System

STATISTICAL DATA CENTER

Roy V. Lewis, Ph.D. Manager
Debra Callahand/Marie Herbert Homicide Data Base
Benita Burgoa Monthly Arrest and Citation Register Data Base

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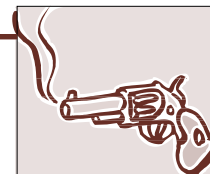
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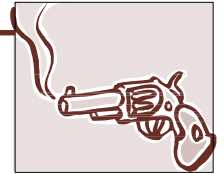
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introduction



Homicide in California, 1997 contains information about the crime of homicide and its victims, demographic information about persons arrested for homicide, and information about the response of the criminal justice system. Information about the death penalty, the number of peace officers killed in the line of duty, and justifiable homicide is also included.

Most data displayed in this publication come from three data bases maintained by the California Department of Justice's Criminal Justice Statistics Center (CJSC). The Homicide File captures willful and justifiable homicide crime data; the Monthly Arrest and Citation Register captures the race/ethnic group, age, and gender of persons arrested for homicide; and the Offender-Based Transaction Statistics system captures information about types of dispositions and sentences. Because of differences in the type of data collected, and the methods used to collect these data, the reader is cautioned against comparing data from these three collection systems.

In response to the publication evaluation survey suggestions, this year's edition of *Homicide in California* includes several changes. The table of contents now lists every data element displayed, and incorporates the data table index which had been located in the back of the publication. Table N-1 (Page 2) was expanded to include 1952 (the first year data were collected) through 1997 homicide data. Rates per 100,000 population were also calculated and included for these years. Homicide clearance rates are now included (see [Table 29](#), Page 83), and CJSC publications available in either printed or electronic format (via the Internet) are listed on the inside of the back cover. Customized statistical reports or additional statistical information may be requested by contacting CJSC at the numbers provided.

HOMICIDE CRIMES (see Pages 2-23)

- From 1996 to 1997, homicide crimes decreased 13.3 percent in rate per 100,000 population (9.0 vs. 7.8). From 1988 to 1997, the homicide crime rate decreased 25.7 percent (10.5 vs. 7.8).
- In 1997, the black homicide victim rate was nine and one-half times that of whites and over two and one-half times that of Hispanics (29.5 vs. 3.1 and 11.1, respectively).
- The homicide rate for victims aged 40 and over decreased 38.9 percent from 1988 to 1997 (7.2 vs. 4.4).
- In 1997, most white victims fell into the "aged 40 and over" category (45.9 percent). Most Hispanic and black victims fell into the "aged 18-29" category (51.0 and 46.7 percent, respectively).
- In 1997, 65.0 percent of homicide victims knew their assailant.
- Proportionately, female victims were 17 times more likely than male victims to be the spouse of the offender (20.4 vs. 1.2 percent) in 1997.
- More victims were killed by firearms in 1997 than by all other types of weapons combined (72.3 percent).
- In 1997, 25.2 percent of homicides were gang-related; In 1988, 12.2 percent were gang-related.
- In 1997, 52.9 percent of homicide victims aged 5-17 were killed as a result of gang-related activities.



HOMICIDE ARRESTS (see Pages 26-29)

- From 1996 to 1997, homicide arrests decreased 13.1 percent in rate per 100,000 population at risk (9.9 vs. 8.6). From 1988 to 1997, the homicide arrest rate decreased 40.3 percent (14.4 vs. 8.6).

DISPOSITIONS OF ADULTS ARRESTED FOR HOMICIDE (see Pages 32-37)

- Approximately three-fourths of adults arrested for homicide, for which 1997 dispositions were received, were convicted of homicide or some other offense.

DEATH PENALTY SENTENCES (see Pages 40-41)

- By the end of 1997, 493 persons were under sentence of death in California. Of these, 40 were sentenced in 1997.

PEACE OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY (see Pages 44-45)

- Since 1988, 66 peace officers have been killed in the line of duty. Seven were killed in 1997.

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