

Delaware Shootings 2015

An Overview of Incidents, Suspects, Victims, and Dispositions

October 2016



State of Delaware
Criminal Justice Council
Statistical Analysis Center
410 Federal Street, Suite 6
Dover, Delaware 19901

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Thomas F. MacLeish, Director
Delaware Statistical Analysis Center

Author
Jim Salt
Research Analyst

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Executive Summary

Overview

The following report is the fifth in a series examining criminal, non-accidental shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of another person. This report focuses on multiple characteristics of shooting incidents that occurred in 2015, victims injured as a result, and suspects involved. An analysis of the dispositions of shooting incidents that occurred in 2011 through 2014 is also presented.

The shooting incident-related data included in this report were obtained from Delaware's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). Complaint records filed by law enforcement agencies were downloaded from CJIS for 2015 then filtered, reviewed, and triangulated against a database of information from media and law enforcement agency websites to identify incidents where a criminal, non-accidental discharge of a firearm resulted in the death or injury of one or more victims. Once all incidents had been identified, suspect and victim demographic information and arrest histories were downloaded and matched with incident information. Analyses were then conducted to examine characteristics of shooting incidents, victims, and suspects. To examine the dispositions of incidents that occurred in 2011 through 2014, case status and outcome data were downloaded from the Delaware Judicial Information Center (JIC) database and reviewed to determine case and incident status and outcomes.

Key Findings

Incidents, Victims, and Suspects

In 2015, there were 236 criminal, non-accidental shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of 281 individuals. This was the highest number of shootings since the SAC initiated its statewide report in 2011 (35 more than the previous high). Just over 50 victims died as a result of their wounds in 50 incidents (also the highest total of homicide incidents) and 230 victims had non-fatal injuries. One victim died during a domestic incident. The number of incidents where a bystander or unintended person was struck (16) was similar to 2014 and eight times higher than in 2013.

More than 360 individuals were suspected of involvement in the shooting incidents, with 158 suspects identified by name. As of August 2016, arrests had been made in 36% of all shooting incidents and 52% of homicide incidents.

Most incidents (75.4%) occurred in New Castle County. The City of Wilmington was the location for more than 130 incidents (55.5% of the state total, 72.3% of the county total). Kent County accounted for 48 incidents (20.3%), an increase of almost 150% over 2014 and the highest

during the SAC's reporting effort. Sussex County experienced 10 (4.2%) incidents, a decrease of 37.5% compared to 2014.

Demographic Characteristics

Most shooting victims (87.9%) were male. Blacks comprised the largest racial group of victims (84.7% overall and also 85.3% of male victims). For the 110 incidents where demographic information was available for both victims and named suspects, 90.9% involved victims and suspects who were all or predominantly of the same race. The gender and race patterns are consistent with the findings of all four previous statewide shooting reports.

Prior Criminal Involvement of Suspects and Victims

Most victims and those suspects who had been identified by name had criminal histories in Delaware (89.3% and 92.7% respectively). Of those with a Delaware criminal history, most victims and suspects had at least one felony arrest (73.1% and 83.5% respectively). Most victims and identified suspects were juveniles at the time of their first Delaware arrest (80.7% and 83.8% respectively). These patterns in criminal history and age at first arrest are consistent with the findings of all four previous statewide shooting reports.

Legal Status and Disposition of 2011 through 2014 Incidents

Just over 40% of shooting incidents (41.1%) that occurred in 2011, 40.3% for 2012, 27.6% for 2013, and 33.3% for 2014 had final dispositions or were still in the process of being disposed. Nearly all incidents that had entered the disposition process (93%) had a final disposition. Most of those incidents (78%) resulted in the conviction of at least one defendant for a shooting-related charge.

Victim and Witness Cooperation with Shooting Investigations

An examination of the cooperation of witnesses and victims in shooting investigations indicates that, in 56.4% of incidents, witnesses could be described as being highly cooperative. Victims had a similar level of cooperation in 32.2% of incidents.

An Overview of Delaware Shootings in 2015

The following report is the fifth in a series examining criminal, non-accidental shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of another person. The first three reports covered 2011, 2012, and 2013 and focused on multiple characteristics of shooting incidents, victims injured as a result, and suspects involved. The 2013 report also included an analysis of the legal status and outcomes of incidents from 2011 and 2012. The 2014 report built on those prior reports and included an examination of victim and witness cooperation with subsequent shooting investigations. The current report continues the improvements made in 2014. Prior to 2011, shooting reports produced by the Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) of the Delaware Criminal Justice Council focused exclusively on incidents occurring in Wilmington, Delaware.

Shooting Analysis Methodology

The data presented in this report were obtained from Delaware's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). First, complaint records filed by law enforcement agencies were downloaded from CJIS for 2015. After the initial download, these records went through multiple stages of filtering to identify incidents where a criminal, non-accidental discharge of a firearm resulted in the death or injury of one or more victims. Detailed records were then reviewed individually to verify that every incident included at least one victim who was injured or killed by a firearm through criminal, non-accidental actions. Once all incidents had been identified, information about suspect and victim demographics and arrest histories was downloaded from CJIS and matched with incident information. Analyses were then conducted to examine characteristics of shooting incidents, victims, and suspects.

To inform the process of identifying, locating, and confirming incidents within CJIS, active monitoring of media and law enforcement agency websites was conducted throughout the year to flag shooting incidents as they were publicly announced.

The methodology for examining the disposition of criminal cases related to shooting incident investigations is described in the 'Dispositions for 2011 through 2014 Shooting Incidents' section of this report.

Considerations and Limitations

Criminal investigation of shooting incidents, as is typical for many violent crimes, can be complex. In some situations, an investigation may be quickly and definitively closed through the clear identification and speedy arrest of a suspect. In many incidents however, much time and effort is required to interview witnesses and victims, sort through and follow up on investigative leads, interview persons of interest and possible suspects, and finally build a criminal case that leads to the issuance of a warrant and eventually to an arrest. Much information can be generated during the course of the investigation and old information can change, particularly as the investigation moves through its early stages. In other cases, an investigation may reveal little information—there may be no witnesses to the incident, the victim may not be able to provide information helpful to the investigation, or, in some situations, the victim may refuse to cooperate with the investigation.

In investigations that generate much information, law enforcement agencies must update complaint records often, introducing numerous opportunities to generate incorrect, missing, or mistakenly-entered data and creating a large amount of data for crime analysis review. In incidents where an investigation generates little information, only limited data is available for analysis.

Data issues in the complaint records submitted by law enforcement agencies, such as incorrectly labeled records, missing or inaccurate information in victim, suspect, and brief text fields, etc. require the use of triangulated data sources to increase the confidence that the final data set is as complete as possible. The various data issues require extensive checking and rechecking of the data to arrive at the final counts presented in this report. Despite these quality control measures, it remains a possibility that shooting incidents are undercounted in this report, although likely to only a very minor degree.

Note that this report does not address accidental shooting incidents (of one's self or another), intentional self-inflicted shooting incidents, or shooting incidents determined by law enforcement investigation to be justified (e.g., self-defense).

Considerations specific to the legal dispositions for 2011 through 2014 incidents are discussed in the 'Dispositions' section of this report.

Shooting Incidents, Victims, and Suspects

This study identified 236 shooting incidents reported to Delaware's police agencies in 2015, 35 more incidents (17.4%) than the previous high set in 2014. These incidents resulted in the injury or death of 281 victims. One incident involved a domestic altercation, leading to the death of one victim. The total numbers of incidents, victims, and suspects for 2015 are shown in Table 1. These totals reflect only criminal, non-accidental shootings of another person.

Wilmington accounted for 55.5% of all 2015 shooting incidents and more than half of all victims (151 victims or 53.7%). Suburban New Castle County accounted for 47 (19.9%) incidents and 20.6% of victims. Overall, 178 of the incidents (75.4%) reported in Delaware in 2015 occurred in New Castle County resulting in 209 (74.4%) victims. Kent County accounted for 48 incidents (20.3%), an almost 150% increase over 2014, which resulted in 60 (21.4%) victims. Sussex County experienced 10 incidents (4.2%), a 37.5% decrease from the prior year, with 12 (4.3%) victims. Figures 1 and 2 on page 8 provide more information about the locations of the 2015 shooting incidents (with 2011 through 2014 location data provided for comparison).

A review of police complaint records shows that at least 367 suspects were thought to be involved in the 236 incidents shown in Table 1. As of August 2016, 158 (43.1%) of the 367 suspects had been identified by name. Arrests had been made in 85 incidents (36%) resulting in 121 individual arrests. In another four incidents, the individual who would have otherwise been arrested for committing the shooting died at the scene. These four individuals are included in subsequent tables, with the incidents classified as exceptional clearances.

Note to the Reader About Suspect Counts

The *actual* number of suspects involved in the shooting incidents cannot be determined as of the report date. A number of factors affect the suspect numbers derived from CJIS, including:

- The number of suspects in an incident may not be known or revealed to police.
- Substantial differences in victim and witness accounts of suspect information.
- In incidents where multiple suspects are identified by name or arrested, determination of who discharged a weapon or otherwise materially participated in the incident (e.g., aided in an attempt to rob a victim) may not be resolved for some time.
- In many incidents, general information about suspects (such as their number, general physical descriptions, and age range) is clear, but their identities remain unknown even after extensive investigation.
- Victim criminal behavior during the incident that may preclude full disclosure of facts.

Each of these factors requires a different response when recording information in the complaint record and these factors can lead to an over- or under-count of suspects involved in the incident. SAC staff reviewed individual complaint records to make appropriate adjustments to the suspects count. However, it is likely that the number of suspects reported in this study undercounts the actual number of offenders who participated in the incidents.

Table 1: Incidents, Victims, and Suspects by County

Shootings in 2015 by Reporting Agency						
County	Agency	Incidents	Victims	Suspects		
				All Suspects	Identified by Name	Incidents with an Arrest (Individual Arrests)*
New Castle	Wilmington Police Dept.	131	151	197	66	41 (52)
	Suburban New Castle County	47	58	82	39	20 (32)
	New Castle County PD	31	39	61	29	14 (26)
	Delaware State Police Trp. 2	4	4	5	3	2 (2)
	DSP Troop 6	4	4	4	3	3 (3)
	DSP Troop 1	3	4	4	3	0
	DSP Troop 9	3	3	5	1	1 (1)
	Middletown Police Dept.	2	4	3	0	0
	New Castle County Total	178	209	279	105	61 (84)
Kent	Dover Police Dept.	27	28	35	19	9 (13)
	DSP Troop 3	15	18	24	17	7 (12)
	Delaware State University PD	2	4	2	1	0
	Milford Police Dept.	2	3	5	3	1 (1)
	DSP Troop 9	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	Harrington Police Dept.	1	6	2	2	1 (2)
		Kent County Total	48	60	69	43
Sussex	DSP Troop 5	2	2	2	2	1 (1)
	DSP Troop 4	2	2	2	2	1 (1)
	DSP Troop 7	2	3	5	1	1 (1)
	Seaford Police Dept.	2	3	6	5	2 (5)
	Laurel Police Dept.	1	1	3	0	0
	Georgetown Police Dept.	1	1	1	0	0
		Sussex County Total	10	12	19	10
	Statewide Total	236	281	367	158	85 (121)

*Arrest counts include four deceased suspects (two by suicide--one at the shooting scene, one at another location) who would otherwise have been arrested for the shooting, with the incident classified as an exceptional clearance.

Shooting incidents in 2015 that resulted in the death of a victim are shown in Table 2. Fifty-one (18.2%) of the 281 victims succumbed to their injuries as a result of 50 separate incidents. Overall, 76% of the 50 fatal shooting incidents occurred in New Castle County and 12 (24%) in Kent County, with none in Sussex County. Wilmington accounted for 24 (48%) of all fatal shooting incidents in Delaware in 2015.

As of August 2016, 56 (70%) of the at least 80 homicide suspects had been positively identified. Arrests had been made in 52% of all fatal incidents resulting in 41 individual arrests (51.3% of all suspects). However, in those incidents where at least one suspect has been named, 81.3% resulted in an arrest.

One of the fatal incidents was domestic in nature, with the suspect shooting a former girlfriend. That suspect committed suicide at the scene of the incident and is included as an exceptional clearance in the arrest data.

Table 2: Fatal Shootings by Reporting Agency

Fatal Shootings in 2015 by Reporting Agency						
County	Agency	Incidents	Victims	Suspects		
				All Suspects	Identified By Name	Incidents with an Arrest (Individual Arrests)*
New Castle	Wilmington Police Dept.	24	24	38	25	12 (18)
	Suburban New Castle County	14	15	22	15	6 (10)
	New Castle County PD	9	10	16	11	5 (9)
	Delaware State Police Trp. 2	2	2	2	2	1 (1)
	DSP Troop 9	2	2	2	0	0
	DSP Troop 1	1	1	2	2	0
	New Castle County Total	38	39	60	40	18 (28)
Kent	Dover Police Dept.	7	7	10	9	5 (8)
	DSP Troop 3	4	4	6	5	2 (4)
	Milford Police Dept.	1	1	4	2	1 (1)
	Kent County Total	12	12	20	16	8 (13)
Statewide Total	50	51	80	56	26 (41)	

*the arrest counts include one deceased suspect who would otherwise have been arrested for committing the shooting, with the incident classified as an exceptional clearance.

Note: Additional information about firearm homicides committed in Delaware since 1996 that involved domestic and family violence can be found in the Delaware Domestic Violence Coordinating Council's *2015 Annual Report and Fatal Incident Review Team Report*, pages 41 through 44, available at: <http://dvcc.delaware.gov/pdf/Final%20Annual%20Report%202015.pdf>

Figure 1: Distribution of 2011-2015 Shooting Incidents (All Incidents)

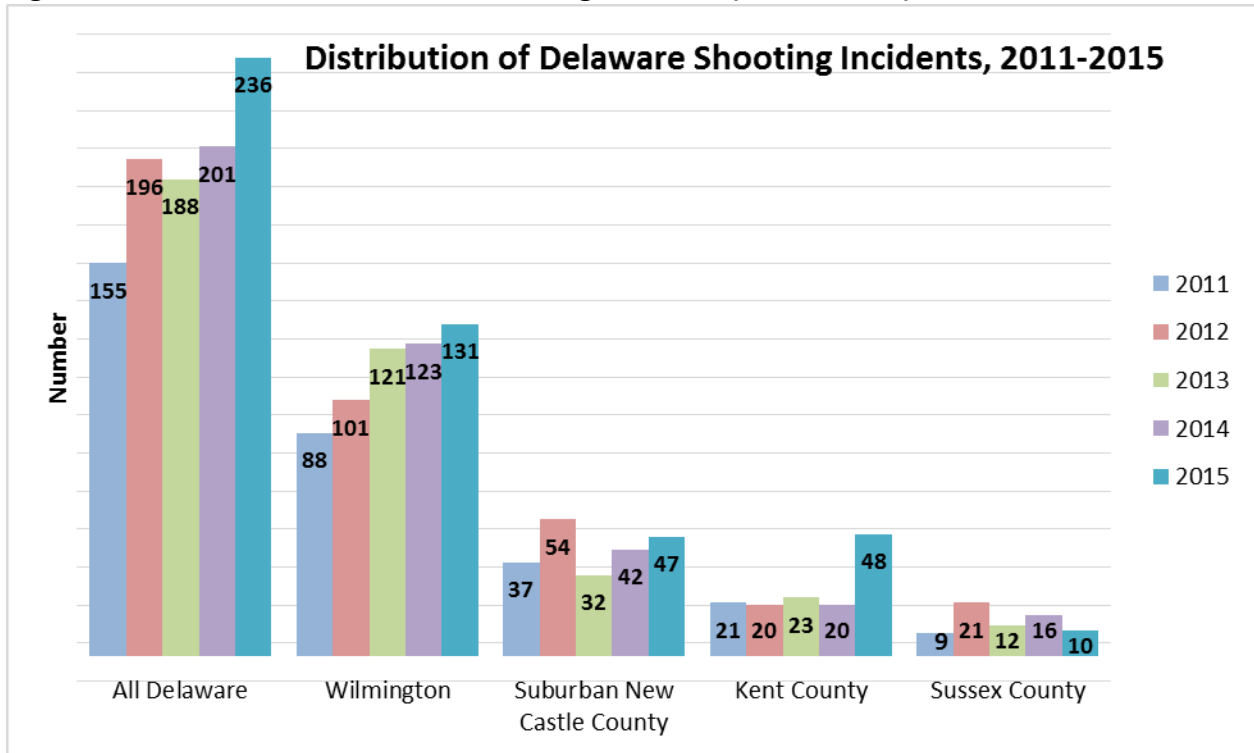
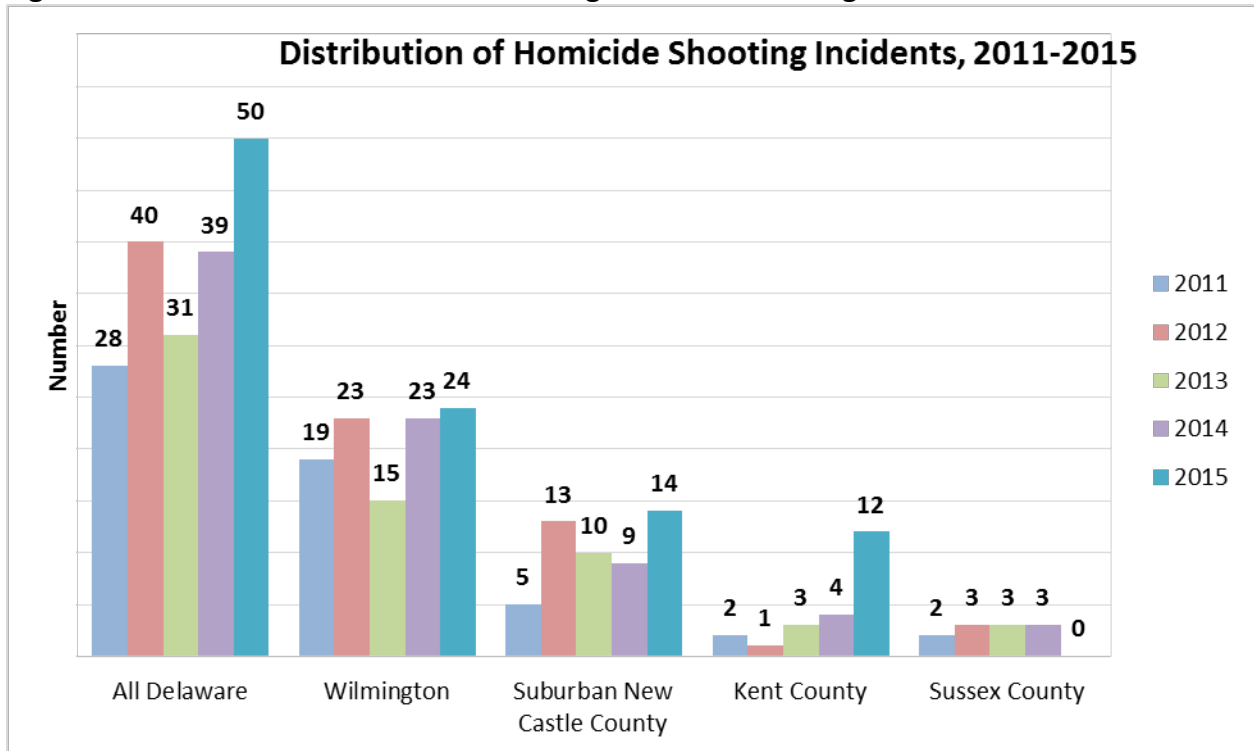


Figure 2: Distribution of 2011-2015 Shooting Incidents Involving Homicide



Demographic Profile of Shooting Suspects and Victims

Race, sex, and age information for the unique 2015 shooting suspects who had been identified by name is shown in Table 3. As of August 2016, 158 (43%) of the 367 shooting suspects had been identified by name. Among these suspects were 150 unique individuals. This group of unique identified suspects was predominantly male (96.7%) and 88.7% were 30 years old or younger with an average age of 23.9 years. Black males comprised 83.3% of all unique identified suspects. Approximately 7% of the suspects in this table were also of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.

Table 3: Demographic Profile of 2015 Identified Shooting Suspects

Age Range	Demographic Profile of 2015 Identified Shooting Suspects*						
	Race, Ethnicity, and Sex						Total***
	Race and Sex				Ethnicity and Sex**		
	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	
Under 14	0	0	0	0	0	0	
14 to 17	17	1	0	0	0	0	18
18 to 21	32	6	0	1	5	0	39
22 to 25	35	7	1	0	3	0	43
26 to 30	28	2	1	2	1	1	33
31 to 35	9	1	0	0	0	0	10
36 to 40	3	1	0	0	0	0	4
41 to 45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
46 to 50	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Over 50	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Average Age	23.5	26.2	25.0	23.1	21.8	NA	23.9
Totals	125	20	2	3	9	1	150

*All suspects in the table have been identified by name.

**Race and Ethnicity are considered separate concepts for demographic purposes. In the 'Race and Sex' columns of this table, each category includes both Hispanic and non-Hispanic suspects. In the 'Ethnicity and Sex' columns, all races are included. Therefore, if a person is Hispanic, he/she would be counted twice in this table – once each in the respective columns for race and ethnicity.

***The figures in this column are based on the race and sex columns, since suspects would otherwise be counted twice if they were Hispanic.

While about 55% of suspects remain unidentified, the larger patterns observed in the incident, victim, and suspect characteristics data since 2011 suggest that unidentified 2015 suspects would likely be very similar in demographic characteristics to those included in Table 3.

Demographic information for the 2015 shooting victims is shown in Table 4. Most victims (87.9%) were male. Overall, 73.0% of victims were between 18 and 35 years old with an average age of 27.1 years. Black males accounted for 74.4% of all shooting victims in 2015. Approximately 5.5% of victims were also of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.

Table 4: Demographic Profile of 2015 Shooting Victims

Demographic Profile of 2015 Shooting Victims							
Age Range	Race, Ethnicity, and Sex						Total**
	Race and Sex				Ethnicity and Sex*		
	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	
Under 14	2	1	3	1	0	0	7
14 to 17	18	1	1	0	2	0	20
18 to 21	51	5	8	1	2	0	65
22 to 25	47	7	7	0	4	0	61
26 to 30	41	5	2	0	1	0	48
31 to 35	24	3	3	1	1	0	31
36 to 40	13	4	0	0	2	0	17
41 to 45	9	3	2	0	0	0	14
46 to 50	3	2	1	0	1	0	6
Over 50	1	5	2	2	2	0	10
Average Age	25.9	32.4	25.9	36.2	30.4	NA	27.1
Totals	209	36	29	5	15	0	279***

*Race and Ethnicity are considered separate concepts for demographic purposes. In the 'Race and Sex' columns of this table, each category includes both Hispanic and non-Hispanic victims. In the 'Ethnicity and Sex' columns, all races are included. Therefore, if a person is Hispanic, he/she would be counted twice in this table – once each in the respective columns for race and ethnicity.

**The figures in this column are based on the race and sex columns, since victims would otherwise be counted twice if they were Hispanic.

***The remaining two victims not included in this table are males whose race is 'Other.'

Demographic Profile of Shooting Incidents

Since a number of shootings involved multiple suspects and/or multiple victims, comparing the total set of victims with the total set of suspects to understand the demographics of 2015 shooting incidents can be misleading. Instead, race and age data for the victims and suspects (where suspects were identified by name) involved in each incident were examined and then consolidated so that each incident could be assigned single categories for victim age, victim race, suspect age, and suspect race. Each victim-suspect category pair could then be compared and the incident categorized on the extent to which suspects and victims were similar to or different from each other based on each pairing.

Table 5 explores the relationship between suspect and victim race based on the categories assigned for each incident. Of the 110 incidents in 2015 where race information was available for both named suspects and victims, 100 (90.9%) involved suspects and victims who were all or mostly of the same race. This percentage was notably higher for incidents that involved Black victims (97.8% of 89 incidents) and markedly lower for incidents involving White victims (65% of 20 incidents).

Table 5: Correlation between Victim and Suspect Race by Incident Level

Correlation between Victim and Suspect Race – Incident Level					
	Victim Race Category Assigned to Incident				
	Black		White		Overall
	Number	Percent of Row Total	Number	Percent of Row Total	Number
ALL Suspects and ALL Victims of Same Race	82	89.1%	10	10.9%	92
MAJORITY of Victims and of Suspects BOTH of Same Race	5	62.5%	3	37.5%	8
Victims Shot by Suspects of DIFFERENT Race	2	20%	7	70%	10*
Total	89		20		110*

*This total includes an additional victim, whose race was 'Other,' shot by a suspect of a different race.

Table 6 explores the relationship between suspect and victim age based on the categories assigned for each incident. In 110 incidents, age information was available for both suspects and victims. One of five broad age categories was then assigned to victims in an incident if at least a majority belonged to the same age group. This same process was repeated for the named suspects in each incident. For 13 incidents there was no majority age group. In 97 incidents, each victim and suspect group could be assigned an age category and were then compared. In the incidents where victim and suspect age categories could be compared, overall, 55.7% of shooting incidents involved suspects and victims who were within the same age range (indicated by the shaded boxes in the table). However, this finding is solely the result of the high proportion of victims and suspects in the age 18 to 30 years group (81.4%). In the four remaining groups, only a minority of victims were shot by suspects in the same age range, with proportions ranging from 0% to 25%. Overall, 72 of the 97 incidents examined (74.2%) involved suspects in the 18 to 30 age group.

Table 6: Victim-Suspect Age Correlation by Incident level

Victim-Suspect Age Correlation - Incident level							
		Victim Age Category Assigned to Incident					Suspect Category Totals
		Under 18	18-30	31-40	41-50	Over 50	
Suspect Age Category Assigned to Incident	Under 18	2	8	1	0	0	11
	18-30	5	48	14	3	2	72
	31-40	2	3	3	3	1	12
	41-50	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Over 50	0	0	0	1	1	2
Victim Category Totals		9	59	18	7	4	97

Criminal Histories of Shooting Suspects and Victims

Table 7 summarizes the Delaware criminal arrest histories for unique shooting suspects and unique victims. Most of the 150 identified/arrested suspects (92.7%) and of the 279 shooting victims (89.2%) had an arrest history in Delaware. Of those with such arrest histories, 116 suspects (83.5%) and 182 victims (73.1%) had at least one felony arrest. Of those with a felony history, 68% of victims and 71% of suspects had three or more arrests on felony charges. Note that the number of known suspects represents just 43% of the total minimum suspect count. Therefore, caution is urged when drawing conclusions about differences between suspect and victim arrest histories. The inclusion of additional known suspects could lead to smaller or larger differences in these patterns.

Table 7: Suspect and Victim Delaware Criminal Histories (Unique Individuals)

Delaware Criminal Histories for Shooting Victims and Suspects Identified by Name				
Criminal History	Identified Suspects		Victims	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Known Suspects and Victims	150		279	
Have Arrest History in Delaware*	139	92.7%	249	89.2%
≥1 Arrest was for a Felony	116	83.5%	182	73.1%
Felony Drug Arrests	61	43.9%	112	45.0%
1 or 2 Arrests	41	67.2%	57	50.9%
3 Arrests of More	20	32.8%	55	49.1%
Felony Weapons Arrests	81	58.3%	98	39.4%
1 or 2 Arrests	64	79.0%	86	87.8%
3 Arrests of More	17	21.0%	12	12.2%
Other Felony Arrests	102	73.4%	160	64.3%
1 or 2 Arrests	56	54.9%	85	53.1%
3 Arrests of More	46	45.1%	75	46.9%
Violent Felony Arrests**	109	78.4%	167	67.1%
1 or 2 Arrests	42	38.5%	63	37.7%
3 Arrests of More	67	61.5%	104	62.3%

*Felony percentages are of those with an arrest history.

**Violent felonies included in this table are those defined in Title 11, §4201c of the Delaware Code.

Around 45% of victims and suspects with felony arrests had been arrested for a felony drug offense. Most suspects and about half of all victims in the drug offense group had one or two arrests for these offenses. Most suspects and victims had at least one arrest for a violent felony or a non-violent, non-drug-related felony (termed 'other felony'). While a greater proportion of suspects had been arrested for a violent felony (as defined in Title 11, §4201c of the Delaware

Code, which includes certain drug and weapons felonies), the proportions of victims and suspects with three or more such arrests were similar.

The percentage of suspects with arrests for felony weapons offenses was 50% higher compared to this percentage for victims. However, most victims and suspects had just one or two such arrests.

Table 8 compares the age at first contact with the Delaware criminal justice system for the shooting suspects and victims who had criminal histories prior to the shooting incident. The table shows that 83.8% of the included 148 identified shooting suspects in 2015 with histories and 80.7% of 249 shooting victims with histories were younger than age 18 at the time of their first arrest in Delaware.

Table 8: Age at First Contact with Delaware’s Criminal Justice System

Age of Suspects and Victims with Delaware Arrest Histories at First Contact with Delaware’s Criminal Justice System				
Age Range	Known Suspects		Victims	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 14	63	42.6%	92	36.9%
14 to 17	61	41.2%	109	43.8%
18 to 21	14	9.5%	28	11.2%
22 to 25	5	3.4%	4	1.6%
26 to 30	3	2.0%	6	2.4%
31 to 35	1	0.7%	4	1.6%
36 to 40	0	0.0%	2	0.8%
41 to 45	0	0.0%	2	0.8%
46 to 50	1	0.7%	0	0.0%
Over 50	0	0.0%	2	0.8%
Total with a Delaware History	148		249	

Day and Time Analysis of 2015 Shootings in Delaware

Table 9 and the three figures that follow show the distribution of 2015 shooting incidents by the day of the week and the month in which they occurred. Incidents most frequently occurred on a Monday (44 incidents) and least often on a Thursday or Friday (28 incidents each). More shooting incidents occurred in July (31 incidents) with the fewest occurring in March (12). For illustrative purposes, figures for Delaware and Wilmington showing the monthly progression of shootings for 2011 through 2015 are also included (see Figures 5 and 6).

Table 9: 2015 Shooting Incidents by Month and Day of Week

Incidents by Month and Day of Week								
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Month Total
January	3	4	2	2	2	3	1	17
February	3	4	0	3	2	0	1	13
March	3	3	1	0	1	2	2	12
April	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	16
May	3	2	2	4	1	2	3	17
June	2	5	4	2	0	1	3	17
July	0	6	6	6	2	5	6	31
August	4	5	3	1	2	4	5	24
September	5	2	2	1	4	3	4	21
October	2	3	4	4	7	2	4	26
November	4	5	1	2	0	2	3	17
December	5	3	2	6	5	2	2	25
Day Total	36	44	31	33	28	28	36	236

Figure 3: Shooting Incidents by Day of the Week—Wilmington and Rest of Delaware

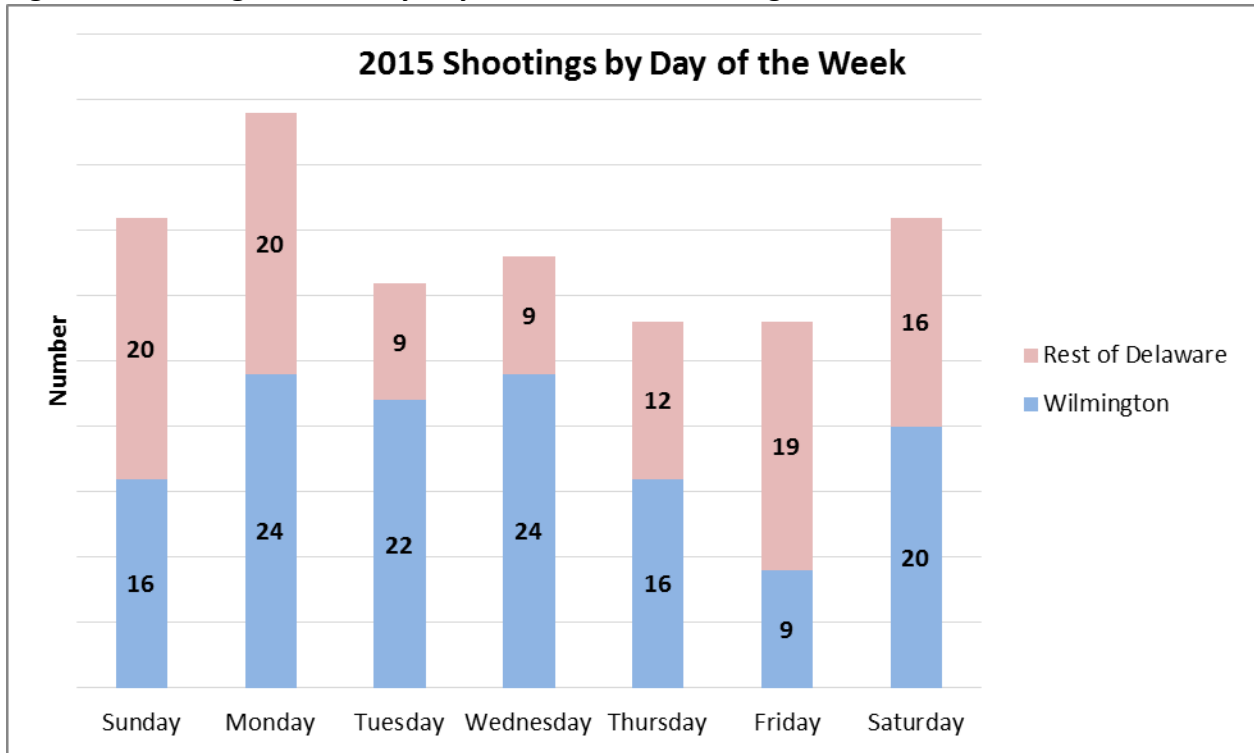


Figure 4: Shooting Incidents by Month—Wilmington and Rest of Delaware

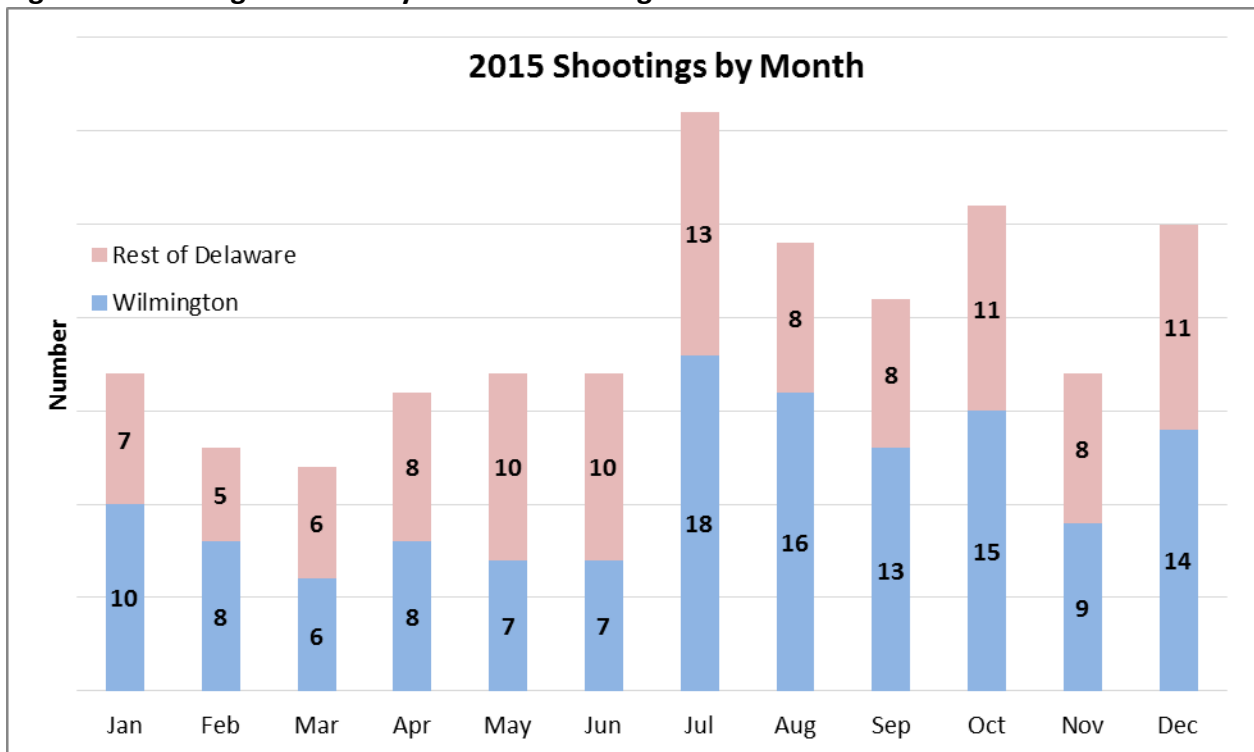


Figure 5: Monthly Progression of Delaware Shooting Incidents, 2011-2015

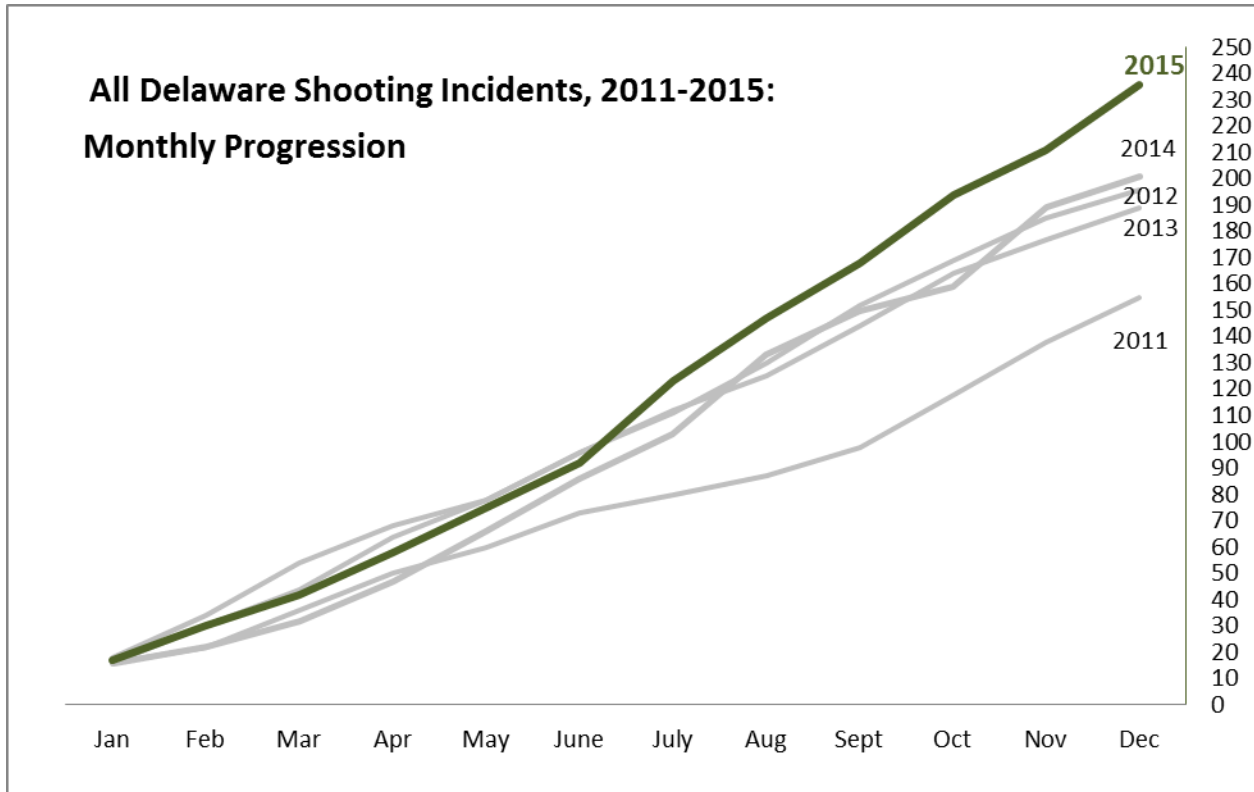


Figure 6: Monthly Progression of Wilmington Shooting Incidents, 2011-2015

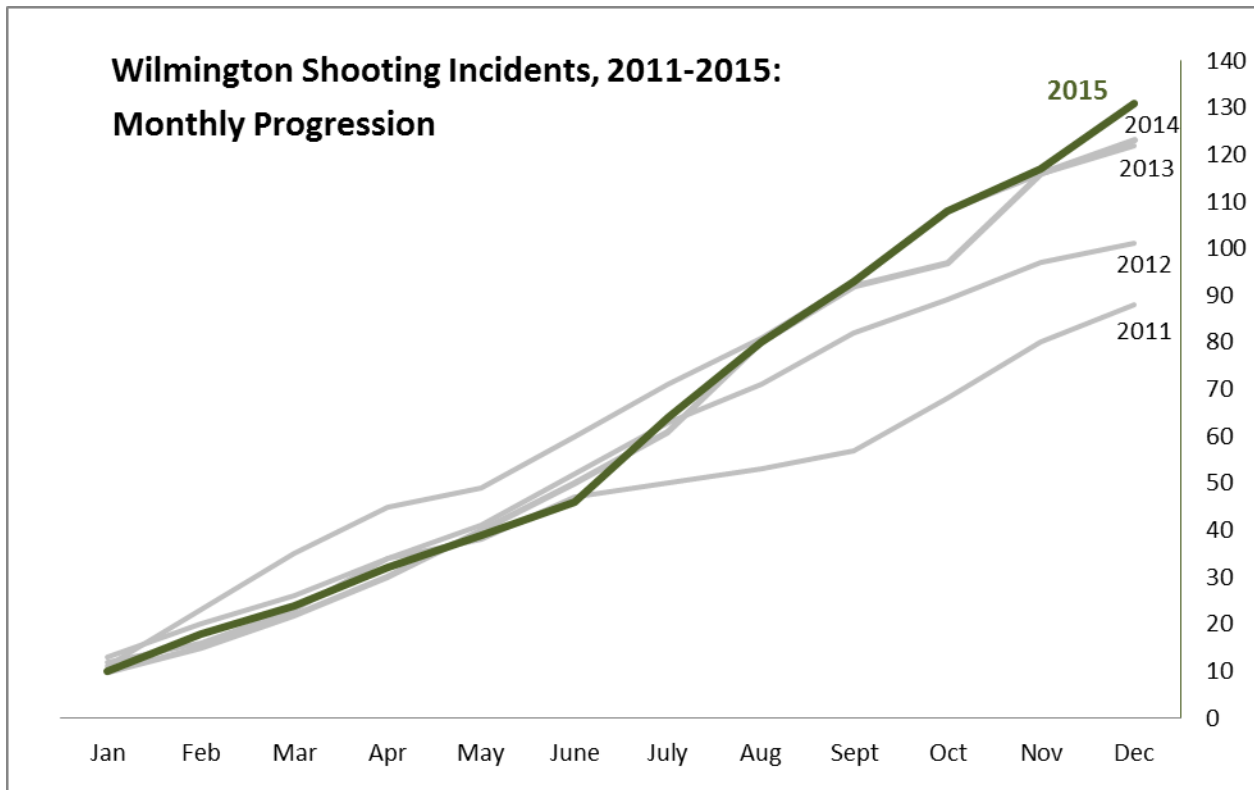
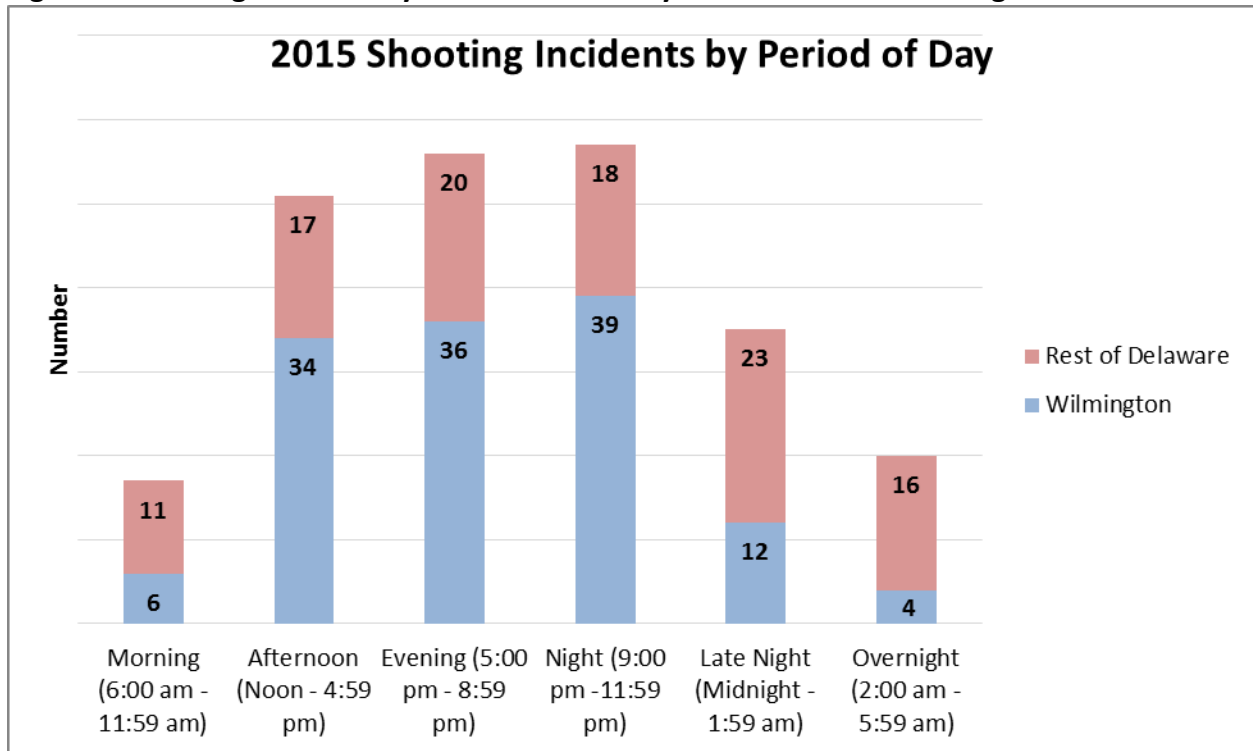


Figure 7 shows the distribution of 2015 shooting incidents by the time period of the day in which they occurred. More than 45% of all incidents statewide occurred between 5:00 pm and midnight, with 17 incidents (7.2%) occurring between 6:00 am and noon and 21.6% during the afternoon hours. Wilmington accounted for less than 45% of incidents that occurred between midnight and 5:00 pm, but two-thirds of incidents which occurred between 5:00 pm and midnight. There was not a single distinct peak period for either Wilmington or Delaware as a whole; comparable proportions of shootings occurred from 5:00 pm to 8:59 pm and from 9:00 pm to midnight.

Figure 7: Shooting Incidents by Time Period of Day—Delaware and Wilmington*



*Time categories were created based on expected variations in criminal behavior. As a result, there is variation in the size of the time span covered by each category.

Victim Injuries, Suspect Motives, and Victim-Offender Relationships

Table 10 displays the areas of the body where shooting victims were hit by gunfire. Just over 60% of the 279 victims with available injury information had a single gunshot wound: more than 20% to the lower body (legs, feet, buttocks), 20% to the upper body (chest, back, abdomen), with the remaining victims struck in either the arm or hand, or the head, face or neck.

Nearly 40% of victims, however, were struck multiple times: 15.4% of all victims received injuries to same area of the body (e.g., struck once in each leg; multiple times in the chest), while almost 25% had injuries to more than one body area (e.g., head and chest; leg and abdomen).

Table 10: Shooting Victims by Area of Body Shot

Victims by Area of Body Shot		
Area of Victim's Body	Number of Victims	Percent of Victims
<i>Single Injury to Single Area</i>	168	60.2%
Legs/Feet/Buttocks	64	22.9%
Chest/Back/Abdomen	56	20.1%
Arm/Hand	20	7.2%
Head/Face/Neck	28	10.0%
<i>Multiple Injuries to Single Area</i>	43	15.4%
<i>Injuries to Multiple Areas</i>	68	24.4%
Total Victims*	279	

*Injury locations could not be determined for 2 victims.

The ultimate motives for committing a crime may not become apparent until well into a criminal investigation or sometimes not even until a case is being adjudicated. Table 11 displays information about apparent motives and/or relevant circumstances for 159 shooting incidents where specific information about any/all motives or circumstances surrounding an incident was available. The most common motive or circumstance was an Altercation (50.9%), followed by a Drug-Related issue (33.3%) and Robbery (28.9%). The number of incidents where a bystander or otherwise unintended person was struck was equivalent to 2014, but eight times higher than in 2013.

Table 11: Motives/Circumstances Related to Shooting incidents—Incident Level

Motives/Circumstances – Incident Level		
Motives/Circumstances	Incidents*	Percent of Incidents
Altercation/Dispute/Argument	81	50.9%
Drug-related	53	33.3%
Robbery	46	28.9%
Retaliation	20	12.6%
Bystander	16	10.1%
Other	7	4.4%
Intimate Partner Violence	2	1.3%
Total Where Motive/Circumstances Known	159	

*Many incidents have more than one motive/circumstance; therefore, counts and percentages reflect the inclusion of multiple motives/circumstances within an incident.

For the 113 incidents where at least one suspect had been identified by name (or where there was good evidence that the victim knew the suspect) and victim-offender relationship information was available, the relationships between all suspects and all victims involved in an incident were examined. The victim-offender relationship for the incident was then classified based on the closest relationship between any suspect and any victim. For example, if the incident involved three suspects and one victim and the three offender-victim relationships were friend, stranger, and someone known in the community, 'friend' would be the relationship level assigned to the incident. This approach provides an additional way of examining the circumstances that may have brought a shooting suspect and victim into the proximity required for the shooting to occur.

The relationships between shooting suspects and their victims at the incident level are shown in Table 12. The most frequent victim-to-offender relationship was Otherwise Known (59.3%), followed by Acquaintance (20.4%), and Stranger (12.4%).

Table 12: Victim to Suspect Relationship—Incident Level

Victim-Suspect Relationship-Incident Level		
Type of Relationship	Number	Percent
Otherwise Known	67	59.3%
Acquaintance	23	20.4%
Stranger	14	12.4%
Other Family (e.g., sibling, child, in-law)	4	3.5%
Friend	4	3.5%
Spouse (current/former)	1	0.9%
Total Where Relationship Is Known	113	

Dispositions for 2011 through 2014 Shooting Incidents

Overview

This portion of the report provides information on the disposition of the legal cases that resulted from arrests for shooting incidents that occurred in calendar years 2011 through 2014. Note that disposition findings for 2011 through 2013 were originally presented in earlier reports. These years are presented again to capture any changes resulting from new arrests and the resolution of pending cases.

This decision to focus the analysis on incidents from this time period was made to maximize the proportion of incidents within a given year that could be examined. Since the amount of time till an arrest is made in an incident and the length of time for resulting criminal cases to work their way through Delaware's legal system can both vary greatly, the analysis window was chosen in order to include as many incidents as possible for a given year.

The minimum study window was approximately 21.5 months, the maximum window, about 57.5 months. Just over 40% of all shooting incidents in 2011 (41.1%) and 2012 (40.3%), and 27.6% in 2013 had final dispositions or were still in the process of being disposed¹. The rate for 2014 was 33.3%.

This analysis focused on the disposition of incidents rather than on individual cases, since some incidents involved only a single defendant while other incidents involved multiple defendants. Focusing only on *individual cases* under these circumstances would provide a misleading picture of the extent to which shooting *incidents* had been disposed.

¹ 155 incidents were identified in the revised 2011 shooting report, 196 in the 2012 report, 188 in the 2013 report, and 201 in the 2014 report. However, for the purposes of calculating the percentage of incidents that had been disposed, four incidents were eliminated from the 2011 incident total. All involved circumstances in which a single named suspect would not have been prosecuted. No equivalent incidents occurred in 2012, but three each occurred in 2013 and 2014.

Questions This Study Seeks to Answer: Since this analysis continues initial efforts to examine the dispositions of shooting incidents, the focus is on exploring a set of basic questions:

- How many shooting incidents with at least one arrest had a ‘final’ disposition within the study window?
- How many incidents were disposed with a conviction for charges directly related to the shooting?
- For convictions, what was the distribution of the method of disposition (e.g., a plea)?
- For convictions, what were the most serious shooting-related charges for which there was a conviction?

Factors That Affect Time Till Disposition

The time between shooting incident occurrence and the final disposition of any resulting criminal cases can vary considerably, ranging from several months to multiple years. This variance is attributable to a variety of factors, including:

- *The amount of time till an arrest is made.* In some cases, arrests are made shortly after an incident. In others, an arrest follows weeks or months of investigation. And, of course, many incidents have not yet resulted in an arrest for factors discussed in the ‘Considerations and Limitations’ section on page 4.
- *The amount of subsequent investigative work required before charges are filed by the Attorney General’s office.*
- *The amount of effort required to prepare criminal cases for prosecution and defense.*
- *A defendant’s decisions at the time of arraignment on charges and at subsequent steps of legal proceedings (e.g., entering a plea of ‘guilty’ versus ‘not guilty’).*
- *The court system’s case load, whether a case will go to trial, and the nature of the judicial process.* Generally, cases involving plea deals will be resolved more quickly than cases that go to trial. Actions by prosecutors and defense counsel (e.g., motions, requests for continuance) can lead to a longer or shorter time till disposition.

Methodology for Examining Dispositions

Complaint numbers for 198 eligible shooting incidents that occurred in 2014 were queried to identify all Delaware Uniform Case (DUC) numbers associated with these incidents. In addition, complaint numbers for 2011, 2012, and 2013 for which, as of the prior analysis, an arrest had not yet been made or where cases were still pending, were similarly queried to update the data for those years.

Each individual defendant within an incident is identified with a separate DUC number. In September 2016, the resultant DUC numbers were used to download charge, case status, and case disposition information from the Delaware Judicial Information Center (JIC) database. The resulting case information was then linked with both complaint numbers and State Bureau of Identification (SBI) numbers to accurately link each case to the appropriate complaint and individual to allow for subsequent analysis at the incident level.

Each incident with at least one criminal case was then reviewed to determine the status/outcome of each case within the incident using a set of decision rules (described below in 'Classifying Cases by Disposition'). Also, where an individual had been convicted of a charge directly related to the shooting incident², the most serious charge for which there was a conviction was noted. Once status/outcome and most serious charge convicted (as applicable) were determined for each case, those elements for the incident as a whole were determined using a similar set of decision rules (described below in 'Classifying Incidents by Disposition').

Classifying Cases by Disposition

'Pending': A case against an individual defendant was assigned this designation if any shooting-related charges filed against the defendant did not yet have a final disposition.

'Conviction for the Shooting': A case was assigned this designation if a defendant was convicted of at least one charge reflecting an active role in the shooting (through plea or trial), regardless of the disposition of any other charges in the case in the incident (except as noted above for 'Pending').

'Conviction for Unrelated Crime(s)': This designation was assigned to an individual case if: 1) no charges were still pending, the defendant was not convicted for the shooting, and there was a conviction for at least one charge not related to the commission of the shooting (e.g., victim

² For the purposes of this analysis, these charges (including attempts) are murder, manslaughter, assault, robbery, and reckless endangerment, along with gun-related weapon violations and conspiracy if an individual was accused in an arrest warrant of participating materially in a shooting incident.

charged with drug possession or a weapon violation, a witness charged with hindering after-the-fact); or 2) if the *only* charges were for crimes not related to the commission of the shooting (e.g., drug dealing, making a false report) and a conviction resulted for at least one charge.

'No Conviction for the Shooting': This designation was assigned if no charges were pending and the defendant, if accused of participating in the shooting or any immediately underlying crime(s), was not convicted of any shooting-related charges. This includes situations where: 1) prosecution was declined for any reason; 2) charges were dismissed; and/or 3) a verdict of 'not guilty' was returned through a jury or non-jury trial.

Classifying Incidents by Disposition

Incidents were classified into one of four main categories: 'Pending,' 'Conviction for the Shooting,' 'Conviction for Unrelated Crime(s),' and 'No Conviction.' The rules for classifying each incident are described below:

'Pending': An incident was assigned this designation if at least one case with shooting-related charge(s) remained pending as described in 'Classifying Cases by Disposition' above.

'Conviction for the Shooting': An incident was assigned this designation if at least one individual accused of having an active role in the shooting pled guilty to or was convicted through a jury or non-jury trial of a charge associated with the shooting, regardless of the disposition of any other cases in the incident (except as noted above for 'Pending').

'Conviction for Unrelated Crime(s)': This designation was assigned if: 1) no cases were pending, no individuals accused of the shooting were convicted for the shooting, and at least one individual accused of a crime not related to the commission of the shooting (e.g., victim charged with drug possession or a weapon violation, a witness charged with hindering after-the-fact) was convicted; or 2) if the *only* cases in the complaint were for crimes not related to the commission of the shooting (e.g., drug dealing, making a false report) and a conviction resulted for at least one of these cases.

'No Conviction for the Shooting': This designation was assigned if no cases were pending and no individuals accused of the shooting were convicted for the shooting. This includes situations where: 1) prosecution was declined for any reason; 2) charges were dismissed against one or more defendants; and/or 3) a verdict of 'not guilty' was returned through a jury or non-jury trial for one or more defendants. In incidents where a separate individual was convicted of charges not related to the shooting, those incidents would also be counted in 'Conviction for Unrelated Crime(s)' category.

Classifying Convictions for a Shooting by Charge Severity

For cases and incidents in the 'Conviction for the Shooting' category, the list of charges with a conviction was reviewed to identify the most serious of these charges and categorized following the below hierarchical categories:

1. Murder
2. Manslaughter
3. Assault
4. Robbery
5. Reckless Endangerment

These categories include 'attempted' charges (where applicable) and do not distinguish between felony severity within a category (e.g., if a case had two convictions, one for Assault 1st degree and one for Assault 3rd degree, the conviction charge severity would be categorized simply as 'Assault').

In some cases, individuals accused as direct participants in a shooting incident or underlying crime were only convicted of a gun-related weapon violation or a conspiracy charge. Since these other charges may be the only means for the prosecution to hold an accused shooter accountable, these charge types are also included in the hierarchy:

6. Gun-related Weapon Violations
7. Other (e.g., Conspiracy)

Once all cases within an incident were appropriately categorized, the most serious charge for the incident was determined by reviewing the case determinations and selecting the case with the most serious determination.

Findings

As of September 2016, a total of 259 complaints (62 from 2011, 79 from 2012, 51 from 2013, and 67 from 2014) had been or were still being processed through Delaware's legal system (see Table 13). Eighteen of these complaints (7%) were still progressing through legal proceedings. Re-examination of 2011, 2012, and 2013 complaints discovered no additional complaints with arrests since the December 2015 analysis, although just three cases from these years remained 'pending.'

For the 241 complaints with a 'final' disposition, 21 (8.7%) involved only charges against one or more individuals not accused of involvement in committing the shooting or any underlying

crime (e.g., a robbery)³. Example incidents include those where a victim or suspect was charged with hindering the investigation of the shooting incident after the incident occurred, a victim charged with various drug offenses as the investigation unfolded, or a victim illegally possessing a firearm that had not been discharged.

Table 13: Outcomes/Status for 2011-2014 Shooting Incidents with at Least One Legal Case

Outcomes/Status - Incidents with at Least One Legal Case								
	Total* Complaints with Cases	Pending	No Conviction-Shooting			Conviction-Shooting		Conviction Unrelated to Shooting
			Nolle Prosequi	Dismissed	Not- Guilty Verdict	Plea	Trial Verdict	
2011	62**	1	9	1	4	39	7	4***
2012	79**	0	8	2	5	49	11	6***
2013	51**	2	5	4	0	24	7	9***
2014	67**	15	9	1	0	31	3	3***
Total	259**	18	31	8	9	143	28	22***

*Incidents disposed without a shooting conviction but with a conviction for a non-shooting charge are counted twice in this table—once under “No Conviction-Shooting” and also under “Conviction Unrelated to Shooting.” Also, ‘no convictions’ for incidents with only non-shooting charges are not included in the table. As a result, the totals in column 1 may be higher or lower compared to the sums of each respective row.

**2 of 62 complaints in 2011, 4 of 79 in 2012, 9 in 2013, and 6 in 2014 with disposition outcomes/status information contained no direct shooting charges.

***for hindering after the fact, filing a false report, weapon offenses not part of the incident, drug offenses, gang participation.

Of the 222 complaints that involved charges against at least one person accused of involvement in a shooting incident, 31 (14%) were classified as being disposed by decisions to not prosecute any of the defendants accused in the shooting. Eight (3.6%) complaints were classified as

³ The inclusion of such charges within shooting complaints reflects law enforcement choices in associating arrest charges with complaints. Since this study continues to comprehensively examine dispositions associated with shooting incidents, a decision was made to continue to include these cases to facilitate understanding. However, in an even smaller number of incidents, cases were either erroneously assigned to the shooting incident (i.e., the case concerned an entirely unrelated matter involving suspects and victims different from those named in the shooting incident) or cases on unrelated matters were included as part of a larger prosecutorial strategy (e.g., offering a plea for charges associated with another criminal incident in exchange for testimony). In these circumstances, such cases were excluded from this study as they had no material tie to the respective shooting incidents they had been associated with.

'Dismissed.' An additional nine complaints (4.1%) were categorized as 'Not Guilty' following a jury or non-jury trial that resulted in a 'not guilty' verdict.

The remaining 171 complaints where at least one defendant was accused of committing a shooting or an underlying crime resulted in a conviction. Most convictions (83.6%) occurred through a guilty plea. The remaining 16.9% resulted from verdicts at jury and non-jury trials.

A total of 412 defendants were involved in legal proceedings in the 259 overall complaints (see Table 14). Most defendants (84.7%) were accused of charges related to participating in a shooting incident. The remaining 15.3% of defendants were accused only of crimes not directly related to the shooting. Examples of these crimes include drug offenses, possession of a firearm by a victim so prohibited, hindering an investigation, and making a false report about the shooting incident.

Table 14: Total Defendants and Convictions, Any Charge and Shooting-Related Only

Defendants and Convictions - Any Charge and Shooting-Related Only						
	Total Complaints with Cases	Total Defendants (any charge)	Total Defendants (shooting only)	Total Convicted (any charge)	Total Convicted for Shooting	Total Pending
2011	62	100	90	77	71	1
2012	79	124	106	95	81	0
2013*	51	81	60	54	38	9
2014**	67	107	93	60	50	27
Total	259	412	349	286	240	37

*While no additional 2013 complaints were found to have arrests, two complaints classified as pending had additional arrests, hence the higher defendant counts compared to the previous report.

**10 individuals in 2014 were/are accused in more than one complaint; eight of these individuals account for 15 of the 27 pending cases in this year.

Table 15 presents a breakdown of the 171 convictions for shooting incidents by the most serious charge for which there was a guilty verdict or plea. For more than half of all incidents with convictions (52.6%), assault was the most serious charge with such an outcome. In 19.9% of incidents with convictions, murder was the most serious charge with a conviction. For 15 incidents (8.8%), the most serious conviction was for manslaughter and 14 (8.2%) for a weapon violation. In two incidents (1.2%), the most serious charge was conspiracy. For these last two charge types, the convictions were against defendants accused in an affidavit as a shooter or an active participant in the shooting.

Table 15: Highest Charge with a Conviction for the Shooting Incident

Highest Charge with a Conviction - Shooting Incident								
		Highest Charge						
	Total Convictions	Murder	Manslaughter	Assault	Robbery	Reckless Endanger	Weapon Violation	Other
2011	46	10	5	25	1	2	1	2*
2012	60	15	6	31	1	4	3	0
2013	31	7	1	15	0	3	5	0
2014	34	2	3	20	4	0	5	0
Total	171	34	15	90	6	9	14	2*

*both were for a conspiracy charge

Important Issues and Considerations: Victim and Witness Cooperation

The data in this report indicate that, where specific suspects are identified by name, most are subsequently arrested (76.5% statewide). However, the cooperation of shooting victims and of witnesses to shooting incidents is often critical in securing the accurate identification of suspects, and the subsequent generation of arrests and successful criminal prosecutions.

In this shooting report, both victim and witness cooperation were explored for all incidents, with cooperation classified at the level of the incident. Based on a review of information available in the complaint reports, cooperation for each group was classified at one of three levels: full cooperation, limited cooperation, or no cooperation. Where possible, statements of police officers were used as the primary criteria in determining cooperation.

This review indicates that 56.4% of incidents, witnesses could be classified as being fully cooperative with the investigation. In 32.2% of incidents, victims were similarly cooperative.

Table 16: Level of Witness Cooperation (Incident-Level)

	Number*	Percent
Full Cooperation	124	56.4%
Limited Cooperation	56	25.5%
Witnesses-Refused to Cooperate	5	2.3%
No Known Witnesses	35	15.9%
Total	220	

*Could not classify 16 incidents

Table 17: Level of Victim Cooperation (Incident-Level)

	Number*	Percent
Full Cooperation	66	32.2%
Limited Cooperation	70	34.1%
No Cooperation	26	12.7%
Victim Deceased/Unable to Cooperate	43	21.0%
Grand Total	205	

*Could not classify 31 incidents

Conclusion

In 2015, there were 236 criminal, non-accidental shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of another person. The year-end total was 35 higher than the previous high in 2014 and the highest since the Center began producing the statewide shooting report in 2011. More than half of all incidents (55.5%) occurred in the City of Wilmington, with another 20% each occurring in suburban New Castle County and in Kent County, which saw its incident total more than double compared to 2014.

Two-hundred-thirty individuals had non-fatal injuries as a result of these incidents and 51 died of their wounds in 50 homicide incidents, also the highest for the center's reporting. One victim died during a single domestic incident. More than 360 individuals were suspected of involvement in the shooting incidents, with 158 suspects identified by name. As of August 2016, arrests had been made in 36% of all shooting incidents and 52% of homicide incidents.

Most shooting victims (87.9%) were male, with Blacks comprising the largest racial group of victims (84.7% of all victims, 85.3% of male victims). For the 110 incidents where demographic information was available for both victims and suspects, 90.9% involved victims and suspects who were predominantly of the same race.

Around 90% of both victims and identified suspects had criminal histories in Delaware. Of those with a Delaware arrest history, 73.1% of victims and 83.5% of identified suspects had at least one felony arrest. Most victims and identified suspects were juveniles at the time of their first Delaware arrest (80.7% and 83.8% respectively).

It is worth noting that the findings for gender, race, arrest history, and age at first Delaware arrest have been highly consistent across all five statewide shooting reports the Center has produced, reflecting an important set of dynamics relevant to decreasing the occurrence of shooting incidents.

Just over 40% of shooting incidents (41.1%) that occurred in 2011, 40.3% for 2012, 27.6% for 2013, and 33.3% for 2014 had final dispositions or were still being disposed. Of those incidents where an arrest for the shooting had been made, 93% had a final disposition. Most of these incidents (78%) resulted in the conviction of at least one defendant for a shooting related charge.

An examination of the cooperation of witnesses and victims in shooting investigations indicates that, in 56.4% of incidents, witnesses could be described as being fully cooperative. Victims had a similar level of cooperation in 32.2% of incidents.