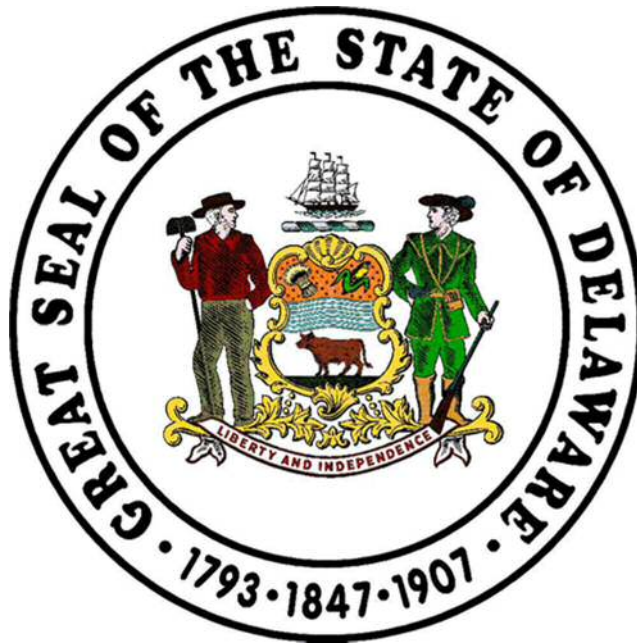


Crime in Delaware: 2008 – 2012 Executive Brief



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Crime in Delaware: 2008 – 2012

Executive Brief

An Analysis of Serious Crime in Delaware

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Crime in Delaware 2008 – 2012

Executive Brief

This executive brief provides an overview of the findings presented in the full report, *Crime in Delaware 2008 – 2012*. *Crime in Delaware* is the official report of serious crime known to Delaware law enforcement agencies. This report covers data about serious crimes reported to state, county, and local police agencies for the years 2008 through 2012.

Crime in Delaware provides information about 22 Violent, Serious Property, Drug/Narcotic and Other Property and Social offenses reported in Delaware's implementation of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) operated by the State Bureau of Investigation of the Delaware State Police. Final data for the years 2008 through 2011 and preliminary data for 2012 are included in this report.

The full *Crime in Delaware 2008 – 2012* report contains extensive data and is available on the Statistical Analysis Center's website (<http://cjc.delaware.gov/sac/publications/crime.shtml>).

Note to the reader

Crime in Delaware 2008-2012 reflects a number of enhancements intended to make the information in the report easier to find, understand, and use. These changes include an expanded narrative to better guide the reader through the vast amount of information contained in the report.

A statistical note: Data for a calendar year are not considered final for the purposes of the *Crime in Delaware* report until offense counts become sufficiently stable, usually 12-15 months after the end of that year. Therefore, final data are provided for the 2008-2011 period and preliminary data for 2012.

*In calculating **differences** between 2012 and previous years, preliminary data were used for all years to remove distortion that make such differences appear larger or smaller than they actually are if final and preliminary data are mixed. Final data are used for comparisons between the years 2008 through 2011. Graphic figures that plot final and preliminary counts are included as appropriate to illustrate trends in the data as these are both useful and much less susceptible to distortion.*

Key Findings/Trends

The full *Crime in Delaware 2008-2012* report contains extensive data and statistics on serious offenses, clearances, adult and juvenile arrests, and crimes against law enforcement officers. The report includes a summary of this data at the state and county levels, followed by a detailed breakdown based on five major topic areas: 1) Violent Offenses, 2) Serious Property Offenses, 3) Drug/Narcotic Offenses, 4) Other Property and Social Offenses, and 5) crimes against law enforcement officers. The data for each topic area are organized by state and county.

Below are key findings from this extensive set of Delaware crime data.

Serious Offenses

Overall, the occurrence of serious crime has decreased notably since 2008. The number of serious criminal offenses known to police in 2008 was 103,274 compared with 95,872 in 2011, a decrease of 7.2% (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1). Preliminary data for 2012 suggest that pattern is continuing, with the number of offenses at just over 93,000, a decline of about 10,000 offenses (around 8%) compared to 2008.

In New Castle County, the number of offenses decreased since 2008 by about 10,000 (around 14%) from 63,368 to about 53,900. For Kent County, there was little change in total offenses compared to 2008, with offenses declining from 19,269 to about 18,900 (a decrease of about 1%). In Sussex County, offenses increased slightly since 2008 from 20,637 to around 20,900 (a roughly 2% increase), but were down compared to the 2009 to 2011 period.

Violent crime is lower in the State. The number of Violent Offenses reported decreased more than 8% from 2008 to 2012. This decrease reflects a steady decline in reported Violent Offenses over the past five years (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).

In New Castle County, Violent Offenses were about 13% lower as compared to 2008, while Kent County saw a decrease of roughly 3%. The number of Violent Offenses in Sussex County was virtually unchanged between 2008 and 2012.

The number of Homicides in 2012 (59) was comparable to the 2008 total (58), but markedly higher than 2009, 2010, and 2011 (43, 49, and 51 respectively). There were 48 Homicides in New Castle County in 2012, up from 44 in 2008 and higher than any point in the previous four years. Kent County had five Homicides in 2012, three fewer than 2008 and the lowest amount in the four years prior to 2012. Sussex County experienced six Homicides in 2012, a number identical to 2008 and higher than any of the three years prior to 2012.

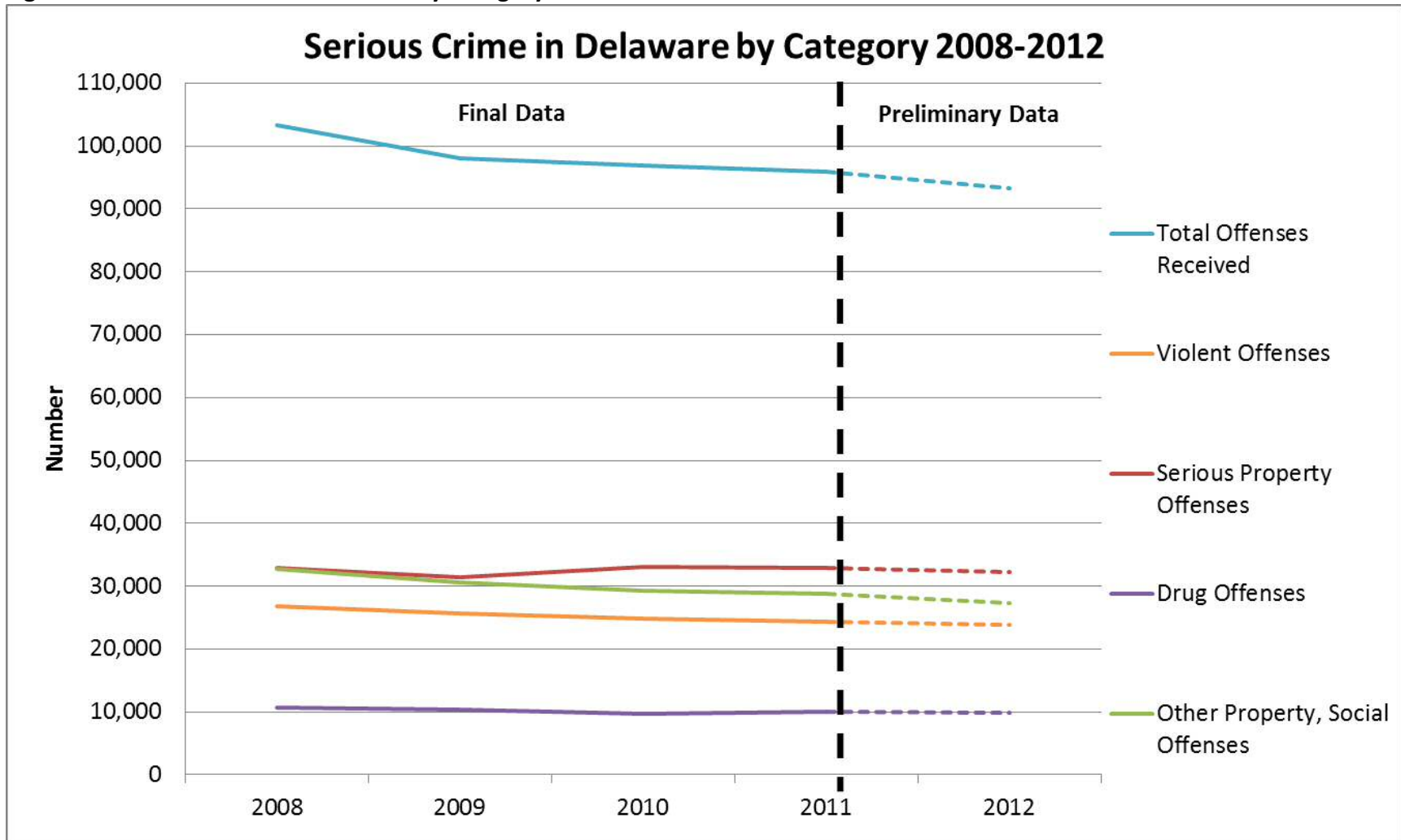
Table E-1: Delaware Statewide Serious Crime Summary 2008 – 2012

Serious Offenses Received 2008 – 2012¹						
	Final Counts				Preliminary Count	
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Violent Offenses	26,800	25,588	24,907	24,312	23,910	
Serious Property Offenses	32,946	31,479	33,036	32,823	32,234	
Drug Offenses	10,760	10,403	9,749	9,967	9,840	
Other Property, Social Offenses	32,768	30,589	29,232	28,770	27,238	
Total Offenses Received	103,274	98,059	96,924	95,872	93,222	
Percentage Difference in Serious Offenses Received						
	Final Differences			Preliminary Differences²		
	08 - 09	09 - 10	10 - 11	11 - 12	08 - 12	Average 08-11 -12
Violent Offenses	-4.52%	-2.66%	-2.39%	-1.15%	-9.12%	-4.89%
Serious Property Offenses	-4.45%	4.95%	-0.64%	-1.77%	-1.43%	-0.66%
Drug Offenses	-3.32%	-6.29%	2.24%	-0.52%	-7.10%	-2.87%
Other Property, Social Offenses	-6.65%	-4.44%	-1.58%	-4.39%	-15.49%	-9.20%
Total Offenses Received	-5.05%	-1.16%	-1.09%	-2.26%	-8.46%	-4.60%

¹ Final data are provided for the 2008-2011 period and preliminary data for 2012.

² Preliminary data were used when making comparisons with 2012. For the other 3 sets of comparisons (2008-09, 2009-10, and 2010-11) final data were used.

Figure E-1: Serious Crime in Delaware by Category 2008-2012



Serious Property crime changed little between 2008 and 2012. Motor vehicle-related theft offenses, however, decreased around 40% while Burglary and Shoplifting offenses increased by about 9% and more than 30% respectively (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).

In New Castle County, the number of Serious Property Offenses in 2012 was about 7% lower compared to 2008. Kent and Sussex Counties experienced increases of roughly 14% and 3% respectively during this period.

In New Castle County, theft of motor vehicles was about 8% lower compared to 2008, while theft of motor vehicle parts and accessories was down around 45%. Burglary offenses were 13% higher and Shoplifting offenses about 16% higher compared to 2008. For Kent County, theft of motor vehicles and of motor vehicle parts and accessories were both around 29% lower since 2008. Burglary offenses were about 5% higher while the number of Shoplifting offenses experienced a major increase (about 81%) compared to 2008. In Sussex County, theft of motor vehicles was approximately 31% lower, with a roughly 30% decrease in the theft of motor vehicle parts and accessories. Burglary offenses were around 6% higher and Shoplifting offenses about 29% higher compared to 2008.

Drug/Narcotic Offenses were lower in 2012. Between 2008 and 2012, these offenses decreased around 7%. There was little change in the number of offenses between 2011 and 2012 (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).

In New Castle and Kent Counties, the number of Drug/Narcotic Offenses decreased about 13% and 10% respectively between 2008 and 2012. Sussex County experienced an increase of roughly 14% during this period.

Substantially fewer Other Property and Social Offenses were reported in 2012. From 2008 to 2012, there was around a 15% decrease in these offenses, with a roughly 4% decrease between 2011 and 2012. There has been a steady decline in this offense category over the past five years (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).

Between 2008 and 2012, New Castle and Kent Counties experienced decreases in Other Property and Social Offenses of approximately 21% and 10% respectively. The number of these offenses in Sussex County was virtually unchanged during this period.

Three of the most frequently reported crimes – Assault offenses; Destruction, Damage, and Vandalism of Property; and Drug/Narcotic offenses – showed distinct downward trends from 2008 to 2012. The number of Burglary offenses trended upward, while Larceny and Fraud occurred at frequencies similar to 2008 (see Figure E-2).

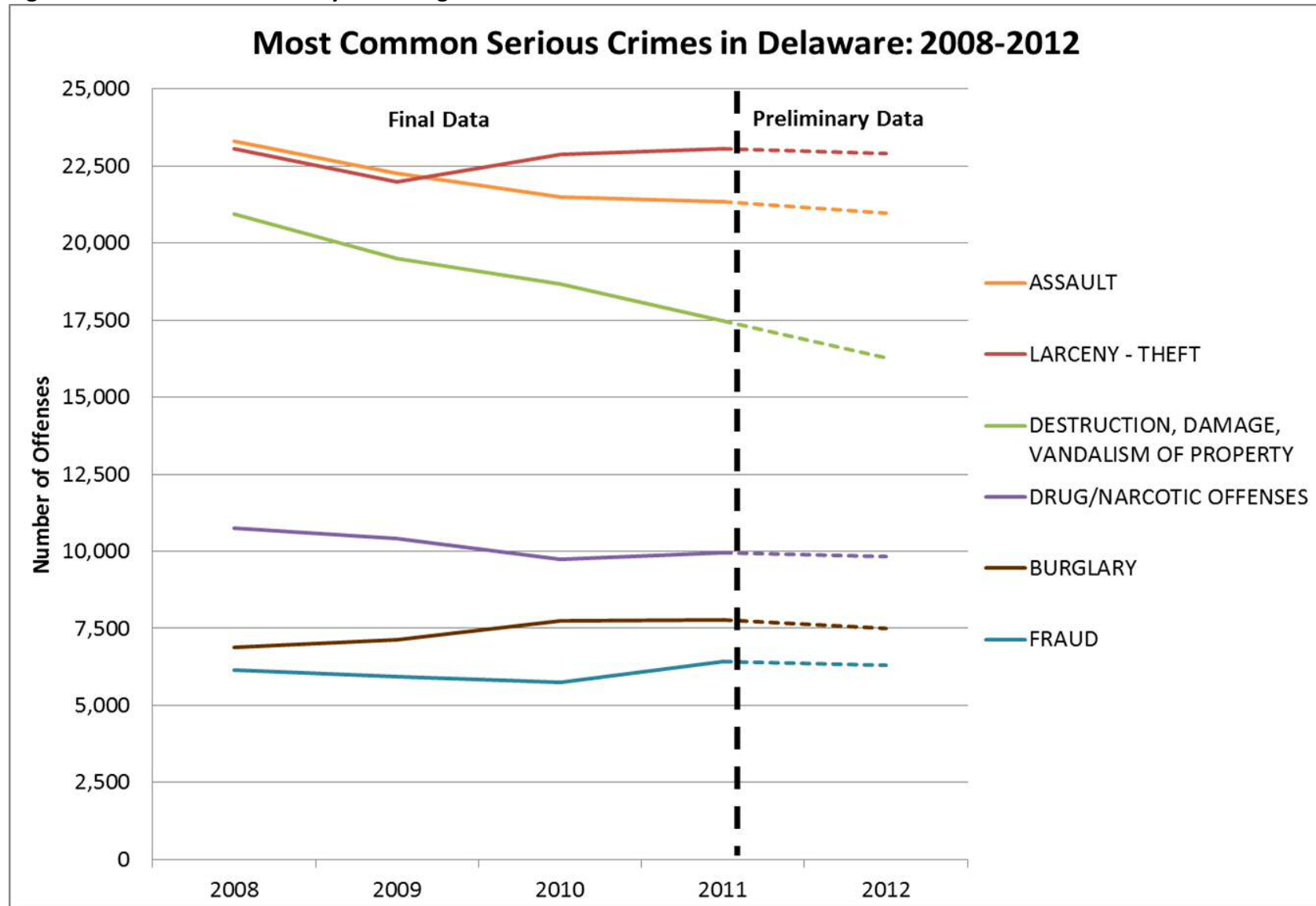
In New Castle County, Larceny, Assault, Destruction/Damage/Vandalism, and Drug/Narcotic offenses all showed distinct downward trends. Burglary offenses trended upward while Fraud offenses occurred at levels similar to 2008. In Kent County, Destruction/Damage/Vandalism and Drug/Narcotic offenses exhibited distinct downward trends. Assault, Burglary, and Fraud offenses occurred at frequencies similar to 2008. Larceny offenses showed a substantial upward trend. In Sussex County, no distinct downward trends were evident for any of the six most frequently reported crimes. For Destruction/Damage/Vandalism, Larceny, and Burglary offenses, declines occurred between 2011 and 2012. Drug/Narcotic offenses experienced an upward trend while Assault and Fraud offenses occurred at levels similar to 2008.

Firearm-related offenses decreased substantially between 2008 and 2012. Weapons Law Violations (2,302 in 2012), Robberies with a Firearm (891 offenses in 2012), and Assaults with a Firearm (968 in 2012) decreased about 20%, 19%, and 6% respectively between 2008 and 2012, although the latter two offenses experienced increases of about 10% from 2011 to 2012.

In New Castle County, Weapons Law Violations were about 24% lower compared to 2008. Robbery and Assault with a Firearm offenses were down roughly 16% and 10%, but around 16% and 20% higher since 2011. In Kent County, Weapons Law Violations and Robbery with a Firearm offenses were approximately 23% and 30% lower respectively. Assault with a Firearm offenses, however, experienced an increase of roughly 34%. The number of Weapons Law Violations in Sussex County was about 12% lower. Robbery and Assault with a Firearm offenses experienced decreases of roughly 28% and 26% respectively since 2008. However, each category saw an increase since 2011, about 12% and 4% respectively.

The Crime Rate is lower. The Statewide Crime Rate moved from 118 offenses per 1,000 persons in 2008 to about 101 in 2012, a difference of around 14%. This change in the Crime Rate reflects a roughly 8% decrease in the number of offenses and a 6% increase in Delaware's population.

Figure E-2: The Most Commonly Occurring Serious Crimes in Delaware 2008-2012



Clearances

For crime reporting and analysis purposes, an offense is considered 'cleared' or solved when a suspect is either arrested and subsequently referred for prosecution or cannot be arrested but is otherwise clearly identifiable.

Based on 2012 preliminary data, ***offenses in all crime categories were cleared at rates comparable to or better than the rates from 2008 through 2011*** (see Figure E-3). Drug and Violent Offenses continue to be cleared at high rates (95.8% and 77.6% respectively). Serious Property Offenses and Other Property and Social Offenses were cleared at rates of 28.7% and 37.4% respectively. Overall, just over half of the offenses (51.3%) in 2012 were cleared by the end of the calendar year.

In New Castle County 46% of all 2012 offenses were cleared, with the highest rates for Drug/Narcotic Offenses (95%) and Violent Offenses (71%). In Kent County 60% of 2012 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (96%) and Violent Offenses (84%) being cleared at the highest rates. In Sussex County about 60% of all 2012 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (95%) and Violent Offenses (86%) having the highest rates. In each county, all four categories of offenses were cleared at rates comparable to the previous four years.

Arrests

In general, the number of all arrests followed the downward trend seen in offenses (see Table E-2 and Figure E-3). The exception was for Serious Property Offenses, which showed a nearly 18% increase in arrests from 2008 to 2012 while offenses decreased less than 2%. Juvenile arrests showed a sharp downward trend across all four crime categories (a 33% decrease overall), while the total number of adult arrests was virtually unchanged, with much variation across the four crime categories.

In New Castle County, arrests generally followed the downward trend seen in offenses. The exception was for Serious Property Offenses, where arrests increased about 7% while offenses decreased by a similar percentage. Overall, juvenile arrests were about 33% lower in 2012, while adult arrests were around 5% lower with much variation among the four main offense categories.

Arrests in Kent County generally followed the same downward trend seen in offenses. However, the size of the increase or decrease was larger for arrests, particularly for Serious Property Offenses which increased about 2.5 times the rate that offenses increased. Overall, juvenile arrests were about 29% lower compared to 2008, while adult arrests were roughly 7% higher.

In Sussex County arrests were slightly higher (about 1%), but the pattern among the offense categories was quite varied. Arrests for Violent Offenses decreased more substantially than did the number of Violent Offenses. Drug/Narcotic Offense arrests increased at rates similar to those offenses, while arrests for Serious Property Offenses increased at five times the rate of that for offenses. Overall, juvenile arrests were about 38% lower than in 2009 and adult arrests around 10% higher.

Table E-2: Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses

Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses					
	Final Counts				Preliminary Counts
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total Arrests	31,517	31,120	29,032	29,389	29,753
Violent Offenses	12,279	12,067	11,127	10,971	10,970
Serious Property Offenses	6,918	7,555	7,320	7,799	8,085
Drug Offenses	6,905	6,640	6,208	6,139	6,396
Other Property and Social Offenses	5,415	4,858	4,377	4,480	4,302

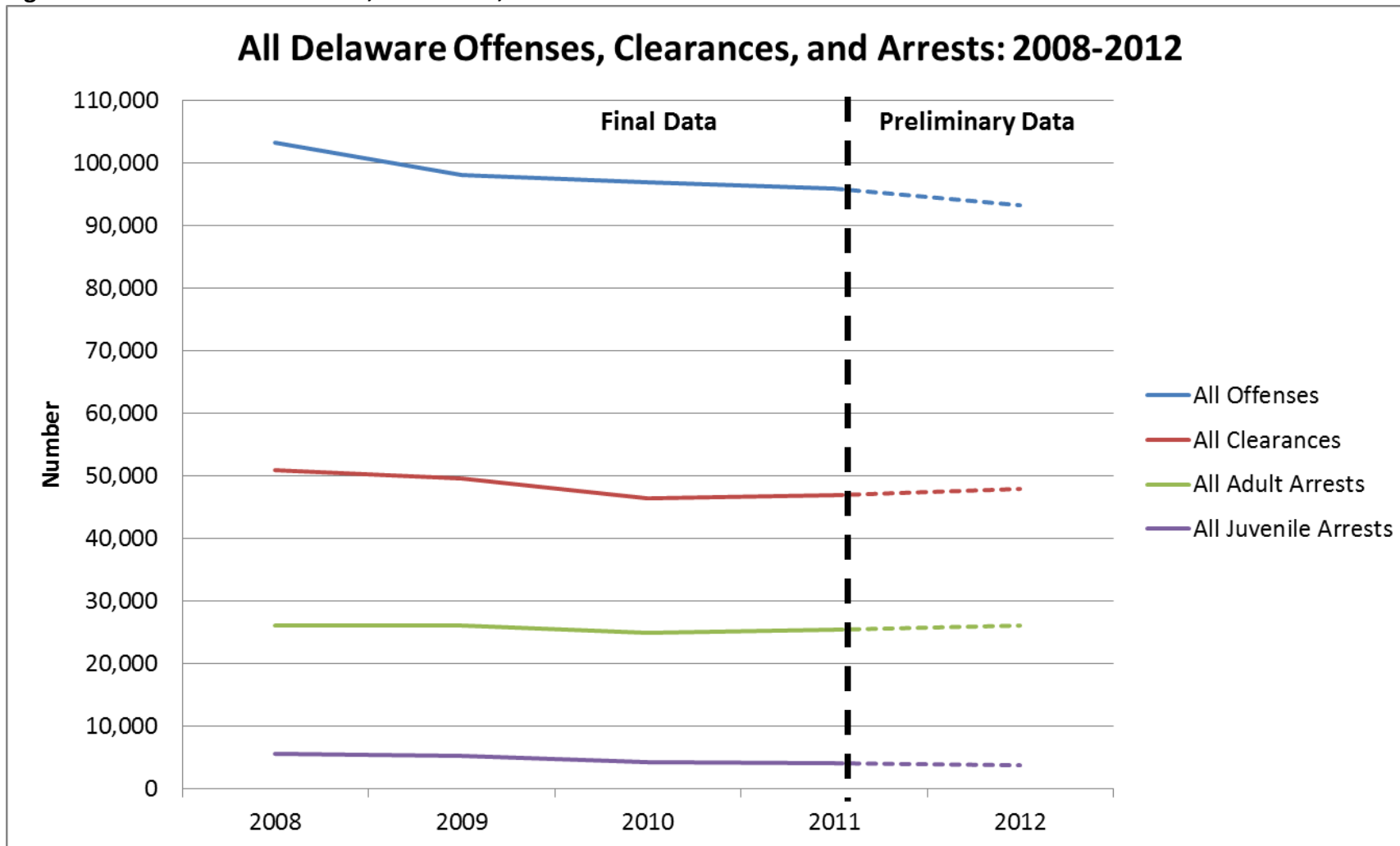
Violent Crime Against Law Enforcement Officers

In 2012, 435 assault-related offenses were committed against law enforcement officers, about one-third lower when compared to 2008. The preliminary 2012 figure is substantially lower than at any time during the 2008 through 2011 period (see Table E-3). ***Almost all offenses (97%) were cleared before the end of 2012.*** Assaults against officers continue to be cleared at rates above 95%.

In New Castle County, there were 254 assault offenses against officers in 2012, down about 36% from 2008. In Kent County, this number (96) was around 17% lower and in Sussex County (85) roughly 45% lower. Clearance rates for all three counties were above 95%.

No officers were killed in 2012, although about 15% of assault-related offenses resulted in injuries. Two officers were killed in the line of duty during 2008 through 2012 period. The

Figure E-3: All Delaware Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests 2008-2012



percentage of assault-related offenses in 2012 that resulted in injury is consistent with the rates for the four prior years.

In New Castle County, 15% of assault offenses against officers in 2012 resulted in injury (lower than three of the four prior years). In Kent County, about 11% resulted in injuries, while in Sussex County 20% led to an injury. For all counties, injury rates were generally comparable to those for the previous four years.

Most assault-related offenses occurred while responding to disturbances, attempting an arrest, and handling prisoners, and most often involved single officer vehicles. Responding to a disturbance, attempting an arrest, and handling prisoners accounted for about two-thirds of assaults against officers during the 2008 through 2012 period. Three out of every four assaults against officers involved the use of hands, fists, or feet as a weapon. One in 20 assaults during this period involved the use of a firearm or a cutting instrument.

Table E-3: Violent Offenses Committed Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers 2008-12

Violent Offenses Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers 2008-2012					
	Final Data				Preliminary Data
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Officers Assaulted	670	504	529	517	435
Officers Killed	0	1	0	1	0
Attempted Homicides on Officers	2	0	5	6	2
Assaults Resulting in Officer Injury	19.6%	17.3%	15.5%	14.7%	15.4%
Assault-related Offenses Cleared	97.0%	96.2%	95.8%	96.3%	97.0%

