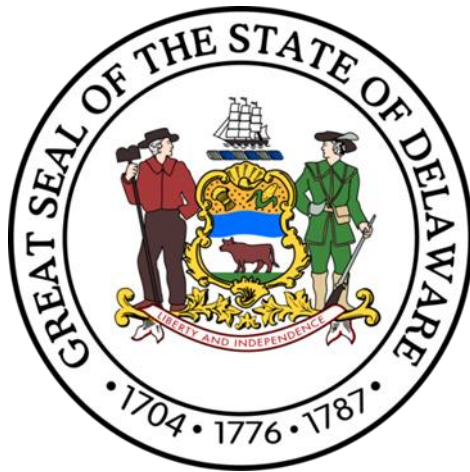


# Delaware Shootings 2017

## An Overview of Incidents, Suspects, and Victims

November 2018



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## Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
An Overview of Delaware Shootings in 2017 .....	3
Shooting Analysis Methodology .....	3
Considerations and Limitations .....	4
Shooting Incidents, Victims, and Suspects .....	5
Demographic Profile of Shooting Suspects and Victims.....	10
Demographic Profile of Shooting Incidents .....	12
Criminal Histories of Shooting Suspects and Victims .....	14
Day and Time Analysis of 2017 Shootings in Delaware .....	16
Victim Injuries, Suspect Motives, and Victim-Offender Relationships.....	20
Important Issues and Considerations .....	23
Victim and Witness Cooperation .....	23
Conclusion.....	24

## Executive Summary

### Overview

The following report is the seventh 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 2017, victims injured as a result, and suspects involved.

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 2017 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.

### Key Findings

#### ***Incidents, Victims, and Suspects***

In 2017, there were 258 criminal, non-accidental shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of 291 individuals. This was the highest number of shootings since the Delaware Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) initiated its statewide report in 2011. Forty-eight victims died as a result of their wounds in 47 incidents and 243 victims had non-fatal injuries. Four victims died during incidents related to an intimate relationship. The number of incidents where a bystander or unintended person was struck (24) was about 60% higher than the three prior years.

More than 390 individuals were suspected of involvement in the shooting incidents, with 135 suspects identified by name. As of May 2018, arrests had been made in 28.3% of all shooting incidents and 46.8% of homicide incidents.

Most incidents (81.8%) occurred in New Castle County. The City of Wilmington was the location for 167 incidents (64.7% of the state total, 79.2% of the county total). Kent County accounted for 33 incidents (12.8%), and Sussex County experienced 14 (4.8%) incidents. Maps of shooting incidents for these geographic areas are located in *Shooting Incidents in Delaware: Mapping Supplement for the 2016 and 2017 Statewide Reports*, located on the SAC's website (<https://sac.delaware.gov/crime/>).

### ***Demographic Characteristics***

Most shooting victims (89%) were male. Blacks comprised the largest racial group of victims (91.1% overall and 93% of male victims). For the 92 incidents where demographic information was available for both victims and named suspects, 91.3% 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 six 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 (89.8% and 92.4% respectively). Of those with a Delaware criminal history, most victims and suspects had at least one felony arrest (78.4% and 80.6% respectively). Most victims and identified suspects were juveniles at the time of their first Delaware arrest (79.2% and 82.1% respectively). These patterns in criminal history and age at first arrest are consistent with the findings of all six previous statewide shooting reports.

### ***Victim and Witness Cooperation with Shooting Investigations***

An examination of the cooperation of witnesses and victims in shooting investigations indicates that, in 64% of incidents that could be assessed, witnesses could be described as being highly cooperative. Victims had a similar level of cooperation in 31.3% of assessable incidents.

## **An Overview of Delaware Shootings in 2017**

The following report is the seventh 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 and 2015 reports built on those prior reports and included an examination of victim and witness cooperation with subsequent shooting investigations. To reflect an apparent increase in gang-related activity, a brief section on apparent gang involvement was added to the 2016 report, while the legal status and outcomes section was temporarily eliminated due to the complex impact of gang-related arrest and prosecution activity during 2016 and 2017 on relevant data.

The current report continues the approach taken for 2016, except that the gang-involvement section was eliminated due to insufficient data. It is anticipated that a legal status and outcomes supplemental report will be produced in 2019, as data quality and completeness allow.

Maps of shooting incidents for the state, each county, and the cities of Wilmington and Dover were also created. Please see *Shooting Incidents in Delaware: Mapping Supplement for the 2016 and 2017 Statewide Reports*, located on the SAC's website (<https://sac.delaware.gov/crime/>), for further detail and the methodology used to create them.

### **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 2017. 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.

## **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 for errors and missing 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.

Occasional data issues in the complaint records submitted and maintained by law enforcement agencies (e.g., incorrectly labeled records, missing or inaccurate information in victim, suspect, and brief text fields, records updated after the SAC's filtering process begins, etc.) require the use of triangulated data sources to increase the confidence that the final data set is as complete as possible. These 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).

## Shooting Incidents, Victims, and Suspects

This study identified 258 shooting incidents reported to Delaware's police agencies in 2017, breaking the record high of 236 set in 2015. These incidents resulted in the injury or death of 291 victims. Nine incidents were related to an intimate partner relationship, leading to the death of four victims. The total numbers of incidents, victims, and suspects for 2017 are shown in Table 1. These totals reflect only criminal, non-accidental shootings of another person.

Wilmington accounted for 64.7% of all 2017 shooting incidents and more than two-thirds of all victims (196 victims or 67.4%). Suburban New Castle County accounted for 44 (17.1%) incidents and 15.1% of victims. Overall, 211 incidents (81.8%) reported in Delaware in 2017 occurred in New Castle County resulting in 240 (82.5%) victims. Kent County accounted for 33 incidents (12.8%), with 37 (12.7%) victims. Sussex County experienced 14 incidents (5.4%) with 14 (4.8%) victims. Figures 1 and 2 on page 8 provide more information about the locations of the 2017 shooting incidents (with 2013 through 2016 location data provided for comparison).

A review of police complaint records shows that at least 392 suspects were thought to be involved in the 258 incidents shown in Table 1. As of May 2018, 135 (34.4%) of the 392 suspects had been identified by name. Arrests had been made in 73 incidents (28.3%) resulting in 96 individual arrests. In another three incidents, the individual who would have otherwise been arrested for committing the shooting died at the scene. Two additional individuals were killed during later incidents while investigations were ongoing. Two more individuals were killed in justified shootings as police attempted an arrest. These seven total 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 general descriptions, number, 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 undercount 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 2017 by Reporting Agency						
County	Agency	Incidents	Victims	Suspects		
				All Suspects	Identified by Name	Incidents with an Arrest (Individual Arrests)*
New Castle	Wilmington Police Dept.	167	196	245	67	40 (50)
	Suburban New Castle County	44	44	67	22	16 (18)
	New Castle County PD	29	29	44	15	11 (12)
	Delaware State Police Trp. 2	4	4	6	2	2 (2)
	Middletown Police Dept.	4	4	7	1	1 (1)
	DSP Troop 6	3	3	3	1	1 (1)
	New Castle City PD	2	2	4	1	0
	DSP Troop 1	1	1	1	0	0
	Newark Police Dept.	1	1	2	2	1 (2)
<b>New Castle County Total</b>		<b>211</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>56 (68)</b>
Kent	Dover Police Dept.	21	24	37	20	7 (14)
	DSP Troop 3	6	6	14	10	1 (1)
	Milford Police Dept.	2	3	2	1	1 (1)
	Smyrna Police Dept.	2	2	4	2	1 (2)
	DSP Troop 9	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	Harrington Police Dept.	1	1	2	2	1 (2)
	<b>Kent County Total</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>36</b>
Sussex	DSP Troop 5	5	5	7	6	4 (6)
	DSP Troop 7	5	5	6	2	1 (1)
	Seaford Police Dept.	3	3	6	2	0
	Milford Police Dept.	1	1	1	0	0
	<b>Sussex County Total</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Statewide Total</b>		<b>258</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>73 (96)</b>

\*Arrest counts include seven deceased suspects. Two died by suicide and one via self-defense—all at the shooting scene. Two were killed in justified shootings as police attempted an arrest. One was developed as a suspect after his death. All would otherwise have been arrested for their respective shootings, with each incident classified as an exceptional clearance. An additional suspect was arrested but not charged due to lack of victim cooperation and was killed in a later shooting incident; this incident is also counted as an exceptional clearance.

Shooting incidents in 2017 that resulted in the death of a victim are shown in Table 2. Forty-eight (16.5%) of the 291 victims succumbed to their injuries as a result of 47 separate incidents. Overall, 78.7% of the 47 fatal shooting incidents occurred in New Castle County and seven (14.9%) in Kent County, with three (6.4%) in Sussex County. Wilmington accounted for 32 (68.1%) of all fatal shooting incidents in Delaware in 2017.

As of May 2018, 36 (51.4%) of the at least 70 homicide suspects had been positively identified. Arrests had been made in 46.8% of all fatal incidents resulting in 32 individual arrests (45.7% of all suspects). However, in those incidents where at least one suspect has been named, 88% resulted in an arrest.

Four of the fatal incidents were related to intimate relationships, with four suspects shooting a current or former girlfriend or spouse. Two suspects committed suicide at the scene of the incident and are included as an exceptional clearance in the arrest data.

**Table 2: Fatal Shootings by Reporting Agency**

Fatal Shootings in 2017 by Reporting Agency						
County	Agency	Incidents	Victims	Suspects		
				All Suspects	Identified By Name	Incidents with an Arrest (Individual Arrests)*
New Castle	Wilmington Police Dept.	32	33	45	15	11 (14)
	Suburban New Castle County	5	5	5	4	3 (3)
	New Castle County PD	4	4	4	3	2 (2)
	DSP Troop 2	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	<b>New Castle County Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14 (17)</b>
Kent	Dover Police Dept.	4	4	9	9	3 (8)
	DSP Troop 3	1	1	4	1	0
	DSP Troop 9	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	Milford Police Dept.	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	<b>Kent County Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5 (10)</b>
Sussex	DSP Troop 5	3	3	5	5	3 (5)
	<b>Sussex County Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3 (5)</b>
<b>Statewide Total</b>		<b>47</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22 (32)</b>

\*The arrest counts include three deceased suspects who would otherwise have been arrested for committing the shooting, with each incident classified as an exceptional clearance.

**Note:** Additional information about Delaware domestic violence homicides is available in the Delaware Domestic Violence Coordinating Council's *Fatal Incident Review Team Reports* ( <https://dvcc.delaware.gov/reports/> ).

Figure 1: Distribution of 2013-2017 Shooting Incidents (All Incidents)

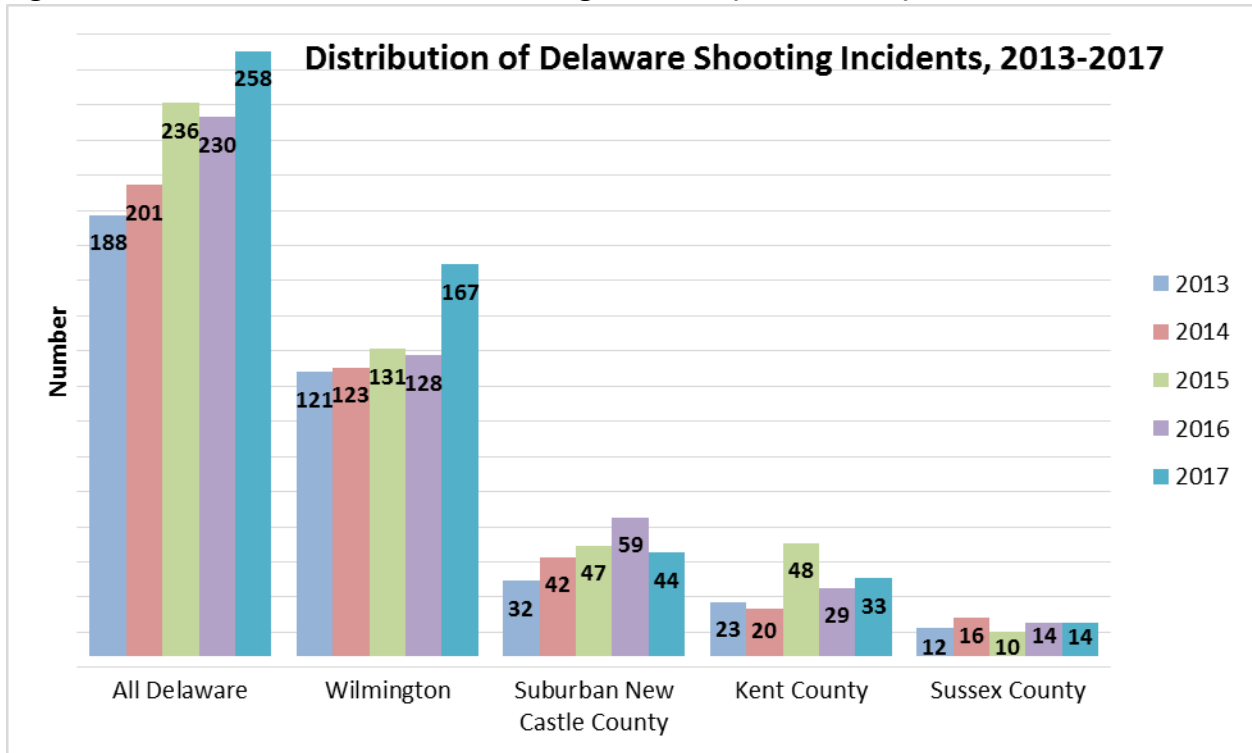
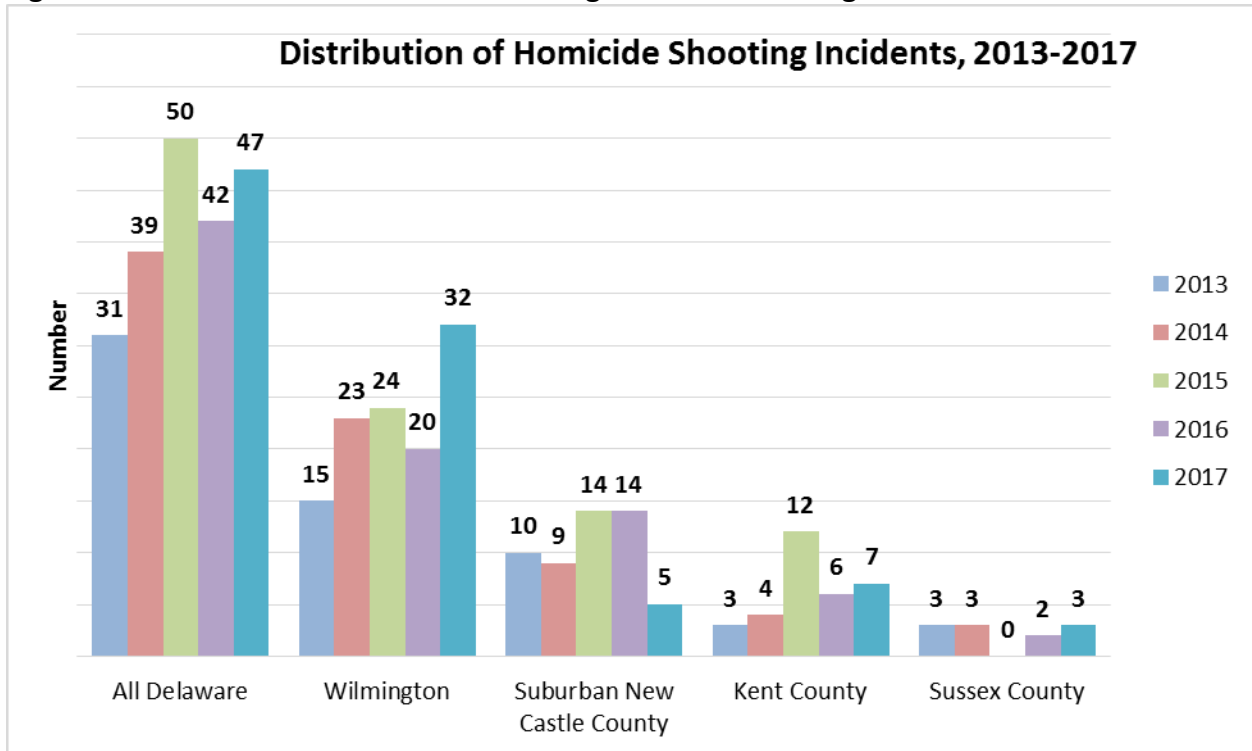


Figure 2: Distribution of 2013-2017 Shooting Incidents Involving Homicide



**Note:** Further geographic information regarding fatal and non-fatal shooting incidents in this report may be found in *Shooting Incidents in Delaware: Mapping Supplement for the 2016 and 2017 Statewide Reports*, located on the SAC's website (<https://sac.delaware.gov/crime/>). This supplement contains maps for the entire state (pages 3-4), each county (pages 5-10), and the cities of Wilmington (pages 11-12) and Dover (pages 13-14).

## Demographic Profile of Shooting Suspects and Victims

Race, sex, and age information for the unique 2017 shooting suspects who had been identified by name, and unique individuals who appear likely to have been involved in a shooting incident in a direct or accessory role but for whom the threshold for being classified as an identified suspect was not reached is shown in Table 3. The decision to include this latter group was made to provide a richer sense of the social milieu surrounding shooting incidents. As of May 2018, 145 such individuals had been identified by name. This expanded group of unique identified suspects was predominantly male (95.2%) and 83.5% were 30 years old or younger with an average age of 25.3 years. Black males comprised 89% of this expanded suspect group. Less than 2% of the suspects in this table were also of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.

**Table 3: Demographic Profile of 2017 Identified Shooting Suspects (Expanded Group)**

Demographic Profile of 2017 Expanded Shooting Suspect Group*							
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	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
14 to 17	20	1	0	0	1	0	21
18 to 21	39	2	1	1	0	0	43
22 to 25	32	0	1	1	0	0	34
26 to 30	19	1	1	1	0	1	22
31 to 35	8	2	0	0	0	0	10
36 to 40	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
41 to 45	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
46 to 50	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Over 50	2	3	0	1	0	0	6
<b>Average Age</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>25.3</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>145</b>

\*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 64% of shooting incidents remain without an identified primary suspect, the larger patterns observed in the incident, victim, and suspect characteristics data since 2011 suggest that unidentified suspects in the remaining 2017 incidents would likely be very similar in demographic characteristics to those included in Table 3.

Demographic information for the 2017 shooting victims is shown in Table 4. Most victims (89%) were male. Overall, 70.5% of victims were between 18 and 35 years old with an average age of 24.8 years. Black males accounted for 82.1% of all shooting victims in 2017. Almost 4% of victims were also of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.

**Table 4: Demographic Profile of 2017 Shooting Victims**

Demographic Profile of 2017 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	1	0	0	1	0	1	2
14 to 17	18	0	7	0	0	0	25
18 to 21	55	3	6	1	2	0	65
22 to 25	49	5	5	1	1	0	60
26 to 30	40	2	2	0	1	0	44
31 to 35	27	5	4	0	4	0	36
36 to 40	23	2	1	0	1	0	26
41 to 45	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
46 to 50	9	0	0	0	0	0	9
Over 50	9	1	1	3	1	0	14
<b>Average Age</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>28.2</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>289***</b>

\*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 2017 shooting incidents can be misleading. Instead, race and age data for the victims and suspects (using the 135 suspects identified by name in Table 1) 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 92 incidents in 2017 where race information was available for both named suspects and victims, 84 (91.3%) involved suspects and victims who were all or mostly of the same race. This percentage was higher for incidents that involved Black victims (96.3% of 80 incidents) and markedly lower for incidents involving White victims (50% of 12 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	% of Row Total	% of Column Total	Number	% of Row Total	% of Column Total	Number
ALL Suspects and ALL Victims of Same Race	77	92.8%	96.3%	6	7.2%	50.0%	<b>83</b>
MAJORITY of Victims and of Suspects BOTH of Same Race	1	100%	1.3%	0	NA	NA	<b>1</b>
Victims Shot by Suspects of DIFFERENT Race	2	25.0%	2.5%	6	75.0%	50.0%	<b>8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>			<b>12</b>			<b>92</b>

Table 6 explores the relationship between suspect and victim age based on the categories assigned for each incident. In 93 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 9 incidents there was no majority age group. In 84 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, 57.1% of shooting incidents involved suspects and victims who were within the same age range (indicated by the shaded boxes in the table). Except for the age 18 to 30 category, the remaining groups saw only a minority of victims shot by suspects in the same age range, with proportions ranging from 0% to 50%. Overall, 60 of the 84 incidents examined (71.4%) involved suspects in the 18 to 30 age group.

**Table 6: Victim-Suspect Age Correlation by Incident level**

<b>Victim-Suspect Age Correlation - Incident level</b>							
		Victim Age Category Assigned to Incident					<b>Suspect Category Totals</b>
		Under 18	18-30	31-40	41-50	Over 50	
<b>Suspect Age Category Assigned to Incident</b>	Under 18	4	4	0	1	1	<b>10</b>
	18-30	8	37	8	5	2	<b>60</b>
	31-40	1	6	4	0	0	<b>11</b>
	41-50	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	Over 50	0	0	0	0	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Victim Category Totals</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>84</b>



## Criminal Histories of Shooting Suspects and Victims

Table 7 summarizes the Delaware criminal arrest histories for unique victims, unique shooting suspects, and unique individuals who appear likely to have been involved in a shooting incident in a direct or accessory role but for whom the threshold for being classified as an identified suspect was not reached. The decision to include this latter group was made to provide a richer sense of the social milieu surrounding shooting incidents. Most of the 145 suspects in this expanded group (92.4%) and 255 of the shooting victims (89.8%) had an arrest history in Delaware. Of those with such arrest histories, 108 suspects (80.6%) and 200 victims (78.4%) had at least one felony arrest. Of those with a felony history, 70.5% of victims and 67.6% of suspects had three or more arrests on felony charges. Note that the number of unique shooting suspects represents just 34% 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 Expanded Suspect Group				
Criminal History	Unique Suspects		Unique Victims	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Known Suspects and Victims	145		284	
Have Arrest History in Delaware*	134	92.4%	255	89.8%
≥1 Arrest was for a Felony	108	80.6%	200	78.4%
Felony Drug Arrests	53	39.6%	123	48.2%
1 or 2 Arrests	41	77.4%	67	54.5%
3 Arrests of More	12	22.6%	56	45.5%
Felony Weapons Arrests	82	61.2%	131	51.4%
1 or 2 Arrests	62	75.6%	100	76.4%
3 Arrests of More	20	24.4%	31	23.7%
Other Felony Arrests	93	69.4%	166	65.1%
1 or 2 Arrests	48	51.6%	84	50.6%
3 Arrests of More	45	48.4%	82	49.4%
Violent Felony Arrests**	97	72.4%	187	73.3%
1 or 2 Arrests	34	35.1%	70	37.4%
3 Arrests of More	63	65.0%	117	62.6%

\*Felony percentages are of those with an arrest history.

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

Almost 50% of victims and 40% of suspects with an arrest history had at least one arrest for a felony drug offense. Most suspects and victims had at least one arrest for a violent felony (as defined in Title 11, §4201(c) of the Delaware Code, which includes certain drug and weapons felonies) or a non-violent, non-drug-related felony (termed ‘other felony’). Just over 60% of suspects and 51% of victims had at least one arrest for a felony weapons offense.

Table 8 compares the age at first contact with the Delaware criminal justice system for the shooting suspects and victims from Table 7 who had criminal histories prior to the shooting incident. The table shows that 82.1% of the 134 suspects in 2017 with histories and 79.2% of 255 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**

<b>Age of Suspects in Expanded Group and Victims with Delaware Arrest Histories at First Contact with Delaware’s Criminal Justice System</b>				
Age Range	Unique Suspects		Unique Victims	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 14	57	42.5%	88	34.5%
14 to 17	53	39.6%	114	44.7%
18 to 21	17	12.7%	29	11.4%
22 to 25	2	1.5%	10	3.9%
26 to 30	2	1.5%	7	2.8%
31 to 35	0	0.0%	2	0.8%
36 to 40	1	0.8%	1	0.4%
41 to 45	0	0.0%	2	0.8%
46 to 50	0	0.0%	1	0.4%
Over 50	2	1.5%	2	0.8%
<b>Total with a Delaware History</b>	<b>134</b>		<b>255</b>	

## Day and Time Analysis of 2017 Shootings in Delaware

Table 9 and the two figures that follow show the distribution of 2017 shooting incidents by the day of the week and the month in which they occurred. Incidents most frequently occurred on a Wednesday (49 incidents) and least often on a Saturday (29 incidents). More shooting incidents occurred in May (31 incidents) with the fewest occurring in March and August (12). For illustrative purposes, figures for Delaware and Wilmington showing the monthly progression of shootings for 2011 through 2017 are also included (see Figures 5 and 6).

**Table 9: 2017 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	9	4	7	2	1	4	1	<b>28</b>
February	1	1	4	3	4	3	2	<b>18</b>
March	1	0	1	5	1	2	2	<b>12</b>
April	6	6	5	4	2	3	3	<b>29</b>
May	3	6	4	8	2	5	3	<b>31</b>
June	4	2	5	4	3	5	3	<b>26</b>
July	4	0	1	6	4	3	6	<b>24</b>
August	0	1	3	2	4	1	1	<b>12</b>
September	3	6	3	2	3	2	4	<b>23</b>
October	6	4	7	6	3	1	1	<b>28</b>
November	3	3	0	3	1	2	1	<b>13</b>
December	2	1	2	4	2	1	2	<b>14</b>
<b>Day Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>258</b>

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

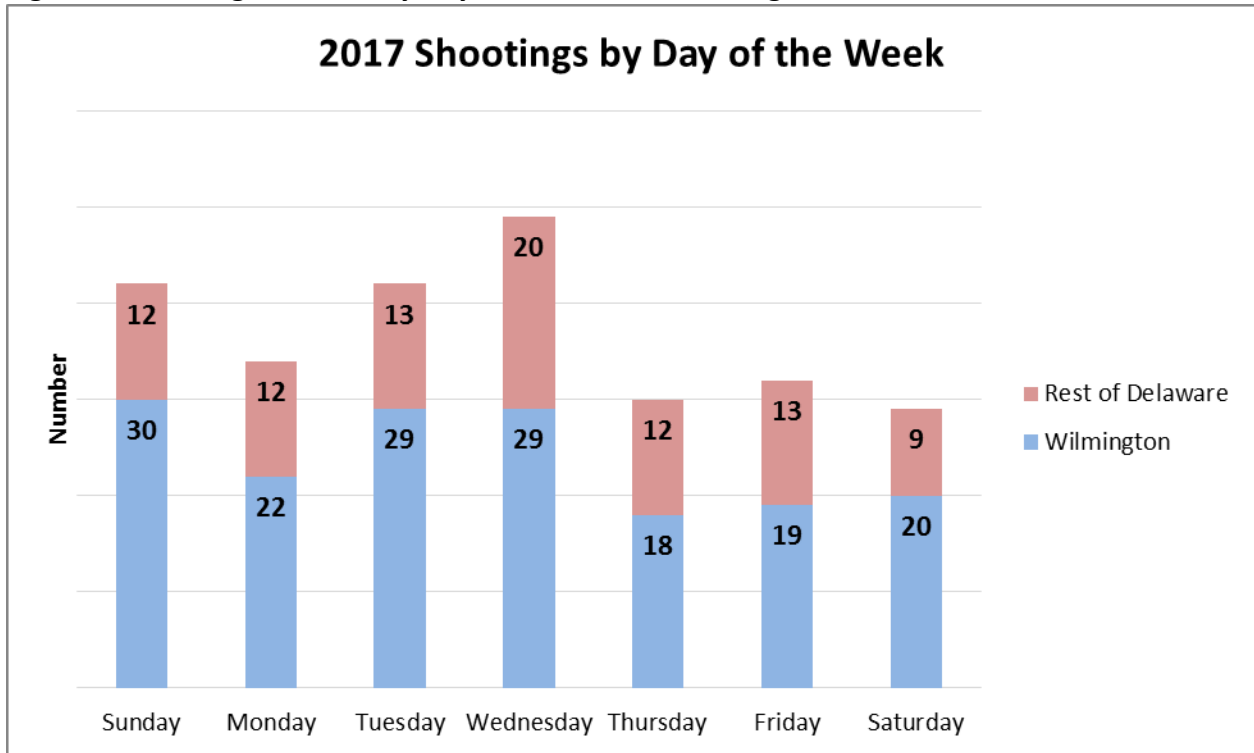
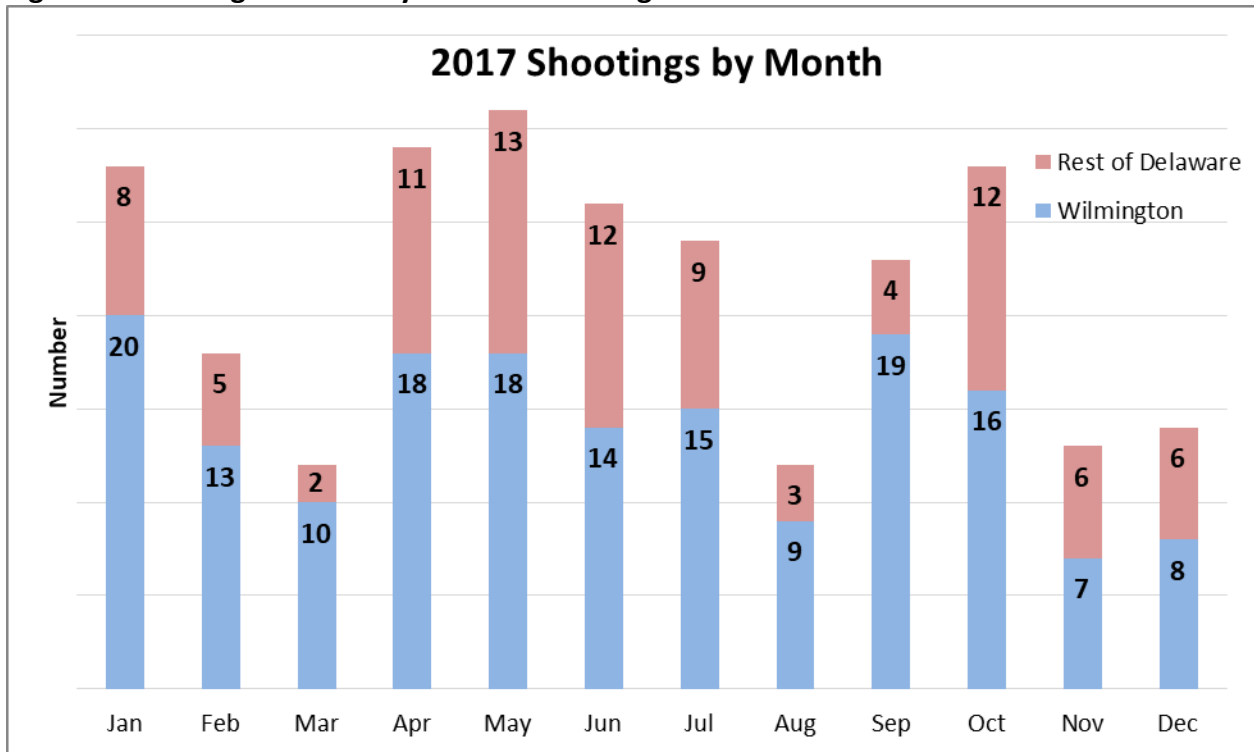
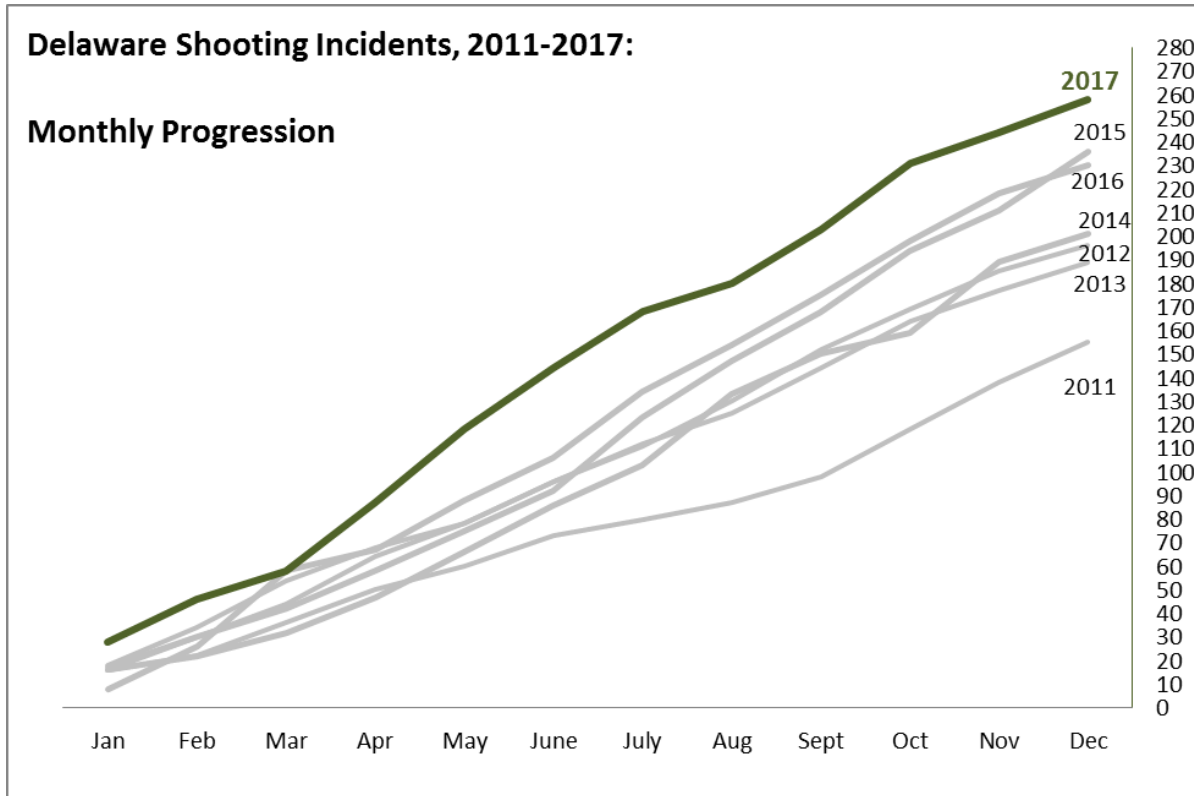


Figure 4: Shooting Incidents by Month—Wilmington and Rest of Delaware



**Figure 5: Monthly Progression of Delaware Shooting Incidents, 2011-2017**



**Figure 6: Monthly Progression of Wilmington Shooting Incidents, 2011-2017**

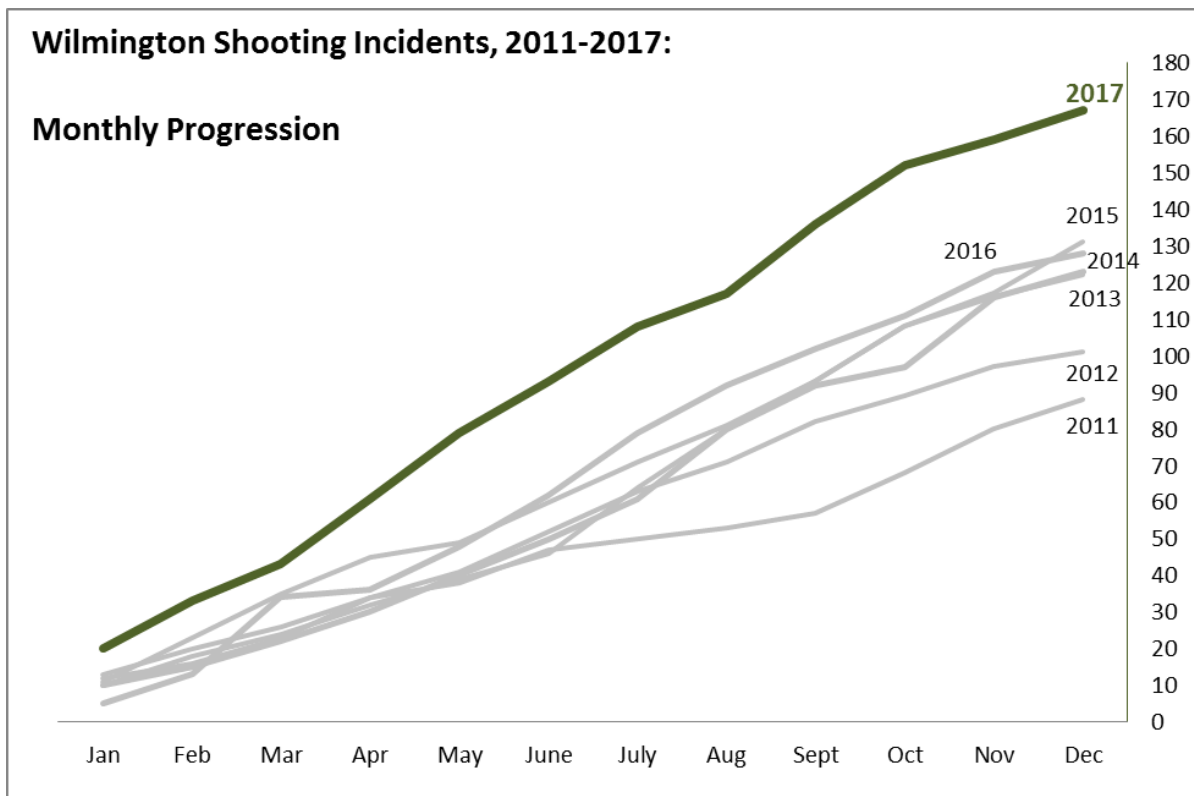
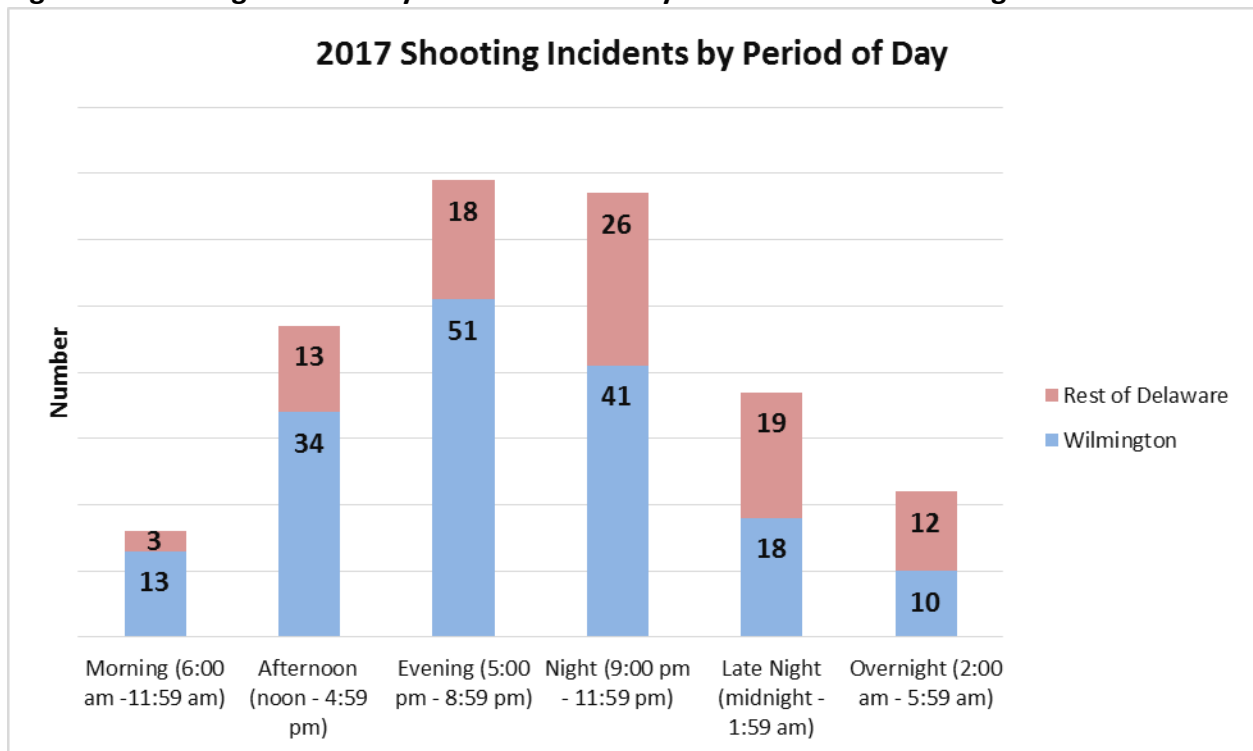


Figure 7 shows the distribution of 2017 shooting incidents by the time period of the day in which they occurred. More than half (53%) of all incidents statewide occurred between 5:00 pm and midnight, with 16 incidents (6.2%) occurring between 6:00 am and noon and 18.2% during the afternoon hours. Wilmington accounted for less than 50% of incidents that occurred between midnight and 6:00 am, but 70% of incidents which occurred between 6:00 am and midnight. While there was not a single distinct peak period for the state as a whole, Wilmington saw its highest percentage of shootings occur from 5:00 pm to 8:59 pm. The peak for the remainder of Delaware was 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. Almost two-thirds of the 285 victims with available injury information had a single gunshot wound: more than 25% to the lower body (legs, feet, buttocks), 19% to the upper body (chest, back, abdomen), with the remaining victims struck in either the arm or hand, or the head, face or neck.

More than one-third of victims, however, were struck multiple times: 9.1% of all victims received injuries to same area of the body (e.g., struck once in each leg; multiple times in the chest), while just over 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
<b><i>Single Injury to Single Area</i></b>	<b>184</b>	<b>64.6%</b>
Legs/Feet/Buttocks	77	27.0%
Chest/Back/Abdomen	53	18.6%
Head/Face/Neck	35	12.3%
Arm/Hand	19	6.7%
<b><i>Multiple Injuries to Single Area</i></b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
<b><i>Injuries to Multiple Areas</i></b>	<b>75</b>	<b>26.3%</b>
<b>Total Victims*</b>	<b>285</b>	

\*Injury locations could not be determined for 6 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 158 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 (41.1%), followed by a Drug-Related issue (34.2%) and Robbery (22.2%). The number of incidents where a bystander or otherwise unintended person was struck is about 60% higher than the three prior years.

**Table 11: Motives/Circumstances Related to Shooting Incidents—Incident-Level**

<b>Motives/Circumstances – Incident Level</b>		
Motives/Circumstances	Incidents*	Percent of Incidents
Altercation/Dispute/Argument	65	41.1%
Drug-related	54	34.2%
Robbery	35	22.2%
Retaliation	30	19.0%
Bystander	24	15.2%
Intimate Partner Violence	9	5.7%
Other	16	10.1%
Unknown, but with secondary circumstances	43	27.2%
<b>Total Where Motive/Circumstances Known</b>	<b>158</b>	

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



For the 76 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 (48.7%), followed by Acquaintance and Stranger (both 15.8%).

**Table 12: Victim to Suspect Relationship—Incident-Level**

<b>Victim-Suspect Relationship-Incident Level</b>		
Type of Relationship	Number	Percent
Otherwise Known	37	48.7%
Acquaintance	12	15.8%
Stranger	12	15.8%
Spouse/Boyfriend/Girlfriend (current/former)	8	10.5%
Friend	4	5.3%
Family (e.g., sibling, parent, child, in-law)	3	4.0%
<b>Total Where Relationship Is Known</b>	<b>76</b>	

## 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 (71.1% statewide). However, the cooperation of shooting victims and of witnesses to shooting incident investigations 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 in 64% of incidents, witnesses could be classified as being fully cooperative with the investigation. In 31.3% of incidents, victims were similarly cooperative.

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

	Number*	Percent
Full Cooperation	151	64.0%
Limited Cooperation	41	17.4%
Witnesses-Refused to Cooperate	5	2.1%
No Known Witnesses	39	16.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>236</b>	

\*Could not classify 22 incidents

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

	Number*	Percent
Full Cooperation	70	31.3%
Limited Cooperation	63	28.1%
No Cooperation	45	20.1%
Victim Deceased/Unable to Cooperate	46	20.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>224</b>	

\*Could not classify 34 incidents

## Conclusion

In 2017, there were 258 criminal, non-accidental shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of another person. The year-end total was the highest since the Center began producing the statewide shooting report in 2011. Almost two-thirds of all incidents (64.7%) occurred in the City of Wilmington, with another 17.7% occurring in suburban New Castle County, 12.8% in Kent County, and 4.8% in Sussex County.

Two-hundred-forty-three individuals had non-fatal injuries as a result of these incidents and 48 died of their wounds in 47 homicide incidents, also the highest for the center's reporting. Four victims died during incidents related to an intimate relationship. More than 390 individuals were suspected of involvement in the shooting incidents, with 135 suspects identified by name. As of May 2018, arrests had been made in 28.3% of all shooting incidents and 46.8% of homicide incidents.

Most shooting victims (89%) were male, with Blacks comprising the largest racial group of victims (91.1% of all victims, 93% of male victims). For the 92 incidents where demographic information was available for both victims and suspects, 91.3% involved victims and suspects who were predominantly of the same race.

Almost 90% of victims and 92.4% of identified suspects had criminal histories in Delaware. Of those with a Delaware arrest history, 78.4% of victims and 80.6% of identified suspects had at least one felony arrest. Most victims and identified suspects were juveniles at the time of their first Delaware arrest (79.2% and 82.1% 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 seven statewide shooting reports the Center has produced, reflecting an important set of dynamics relevant to decreasing the occurrence of shooting incidents.

An examination of the cooperation of witnesses and victims in shooting investigations indicates that, in 64% of incidents, witnesses could be described as being fully cooperative. Victims had a similar level of cooperation in 31.3% of incidents.