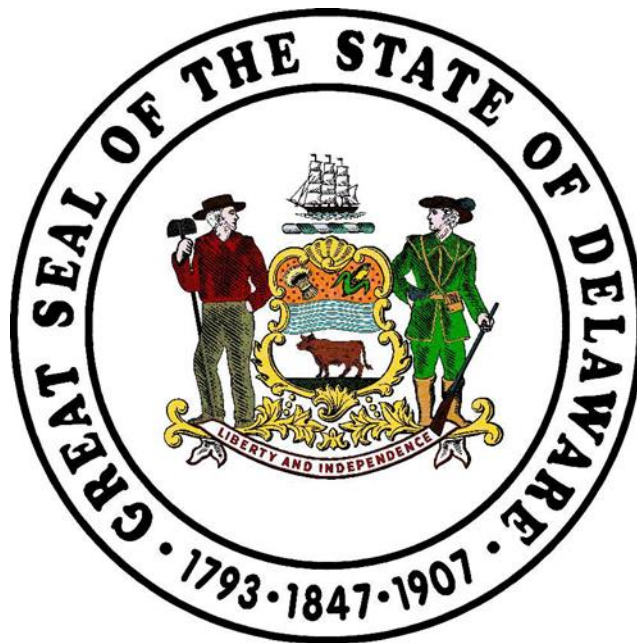


Crime in Delaware 2015 – 2019 Executive Brief



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Statistical Analysis Center
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Crime in Delaware: 2015 – 2019

Executive Brief

An Analysis of Serious Crime in Delaware

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The points of view expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the official position of the United States Department of Justice.

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Please visit our website at <http://cjc.delaware.gov/sac/publications/crime.shtml>

Crime in Delaware 2015 – 2019

Executive Brief

This executive brief provides an overview of the findings presented in the full report, *Crime in Delaware 2015 – 2019*. *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 2015 through 2019.

Crime in Delaware provides information for 24 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 Identification of the Delaware State Police. Additional years of data are included in specific graphs to illustrate long term trends.

The full *Crime in Delaware 2015 – 2019* report contains extensive data and is available on the Statistical Analysis Center's website (<http://cjc.delaware.gov/sac/publications/crime.shtml>).

Detailed, jurisdiction level offense data can be viewed and downloaded from the Delaware Open Data Portal.

<https://data.delaware.gov/Public-Safety/State-of-Delaware-NIBRS-Crime-Report-Totals-by-Jur/8njr-fz7r>

Key Findings/Trends

The full *Crime in Delaware 2015 – 2019* report contains extensive data and statistics on serious offenses, clearances, adult and juvenile arrests, and crimes against law enforcement officers. This report includes a summary of this data at the state and county levels, followed by a more 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 is organized by state and county. Below are key findings from this extensive set of Delaware crime data.

Serious Offenses

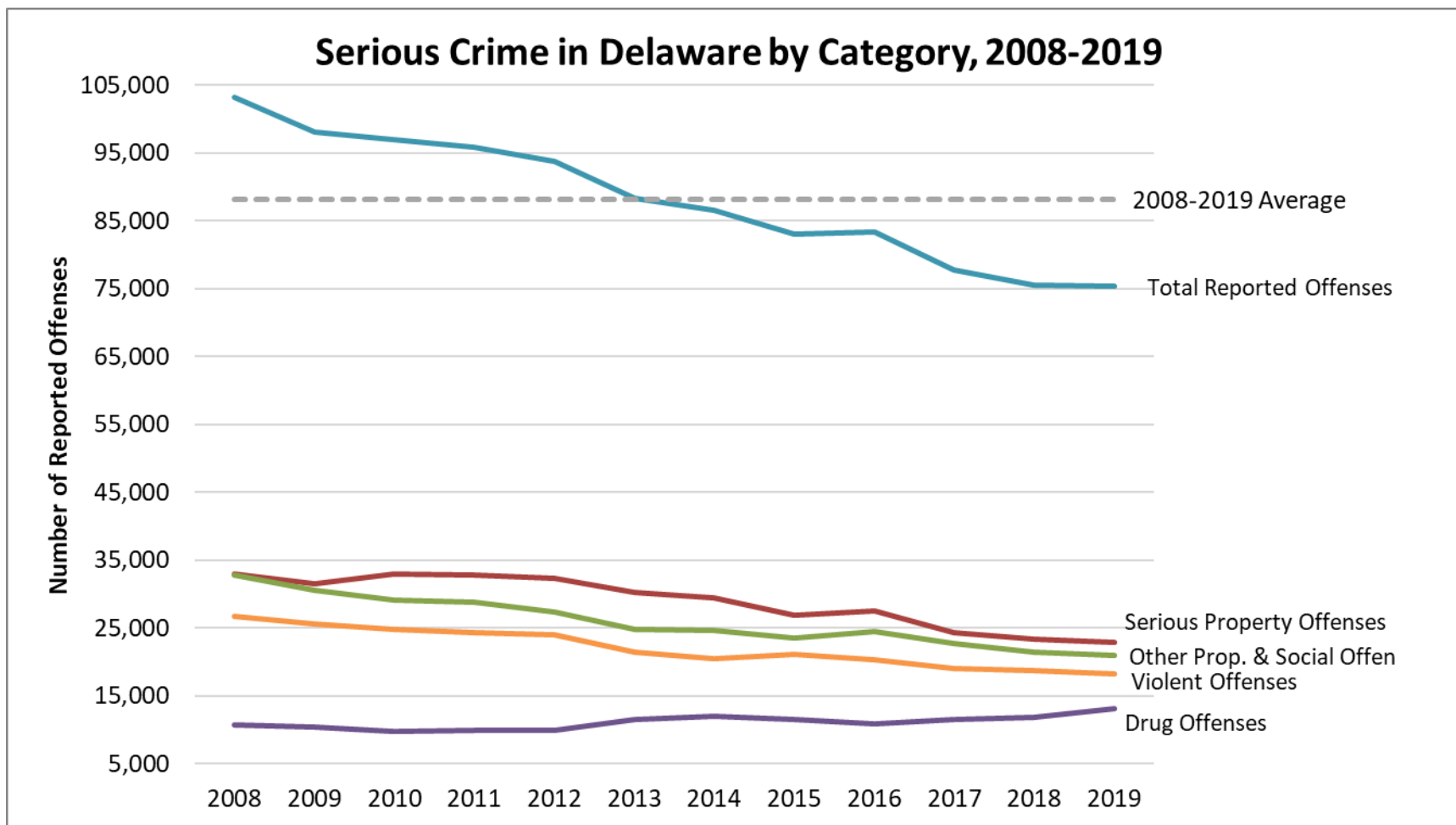
- **Overall, across the state, reported serious crime has decreased notably since 2015.** The number of serious criminal offenses known to police in 2015 was 83,082 compared with 75,348 in 2019, a decrease of over 9% (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1). Data from 2019 shows a continued downward trend in overall offenses since 2008.
 - In New Castle County, the number of total offenses has decreased since 2015 by over 9% (45,659 to 41,263).
 - For Kent County, the number of total offenses in 2019 compared to 2015 decreased over 11%, with offenses declining from 17,487 to 15,501.
 - In Sussex County, offenses decreased since 2015 from 19,936 to 18,584 (a decrease of almost 7%). Offense trends by county are presented at the end of this brief (Figures E4-E6).
- **Statewide violent crime is lower overall.** The number of Violent Offenses reported decreased 13% from 2015 to 2019. (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1).
 - In New Castle County, Violent Offenses were almost 18% lower when compared to 2015 while Kent County saw an 11% decline.
 - Sussex County saw almost a 4% decline.
- **There were 52 statewide homicides in 2019 which is a decrease from a high of 66 in 2015.** It should be noted that reported homicides rose from 2018 to 2019 after a steady decline since the 2015 high.
 - There were 39 homicides in New Castle County in 2019, a slight increase from 2018.
 - Kent County had 8 homicides in 2019, an increase from a low in 2018.
 - Sussex County experienced 5 homicides in 2019, a slight decrease from 2018.

Note: Beginning in 2019, the FBI began counting Vehicular Homicides under the Criminally Negligent Homicide category. Those offenses were not previously included in the NIBRS Homicide summary totals. This change included 3 Homicides in the 2019 totals.

Table E-1: Delaware Statewide Serious Crime Summary, 2015 – 2019

Serious Offenses Reported, 2015 – 2019						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Violent Offenses	21,101	20,343	19,115	18,684	18,306	
Serious Property Offenses	26,834	27,565	24,298	23,420	22,872	
Drug Offenses	11,613	10,920	11,545	11,940	13,195	
Other Property, Social Offenses	23,534	24,514	22,776	21,440	20,975	
Total Offenses Reported	83,082	83,342	77,734	75,484	75,348	
Percentage Difference in Serious Offenses Reported						
	15 – 16	16 - 17	17 - 18	18 - 19	15 – 19	Average 15-18 vs 19
Violent Offenses	-3.6%	-6.0%	-2.3%	-2.0%	-13.2%	-7.6%
Serious Property Offenses	2.7%	-11.9%	-3.6%	-2.3%	-14.8%	-10.4%
Drug Offenses	-6.0%	5.7%	3.4%	10.5%	13.6%	14.7%
Other Property, Social Offenses	4.2%	-7.1%	-5.9%	-2.2%	-10.9%	-9.1%
Total Offenses Reported	0.3%	-6.7%	-2.9%	-0.2%	-9.3%	-5.7%

Figure E-1: Serious Crime in Delaware by Category, 2008 – 2019



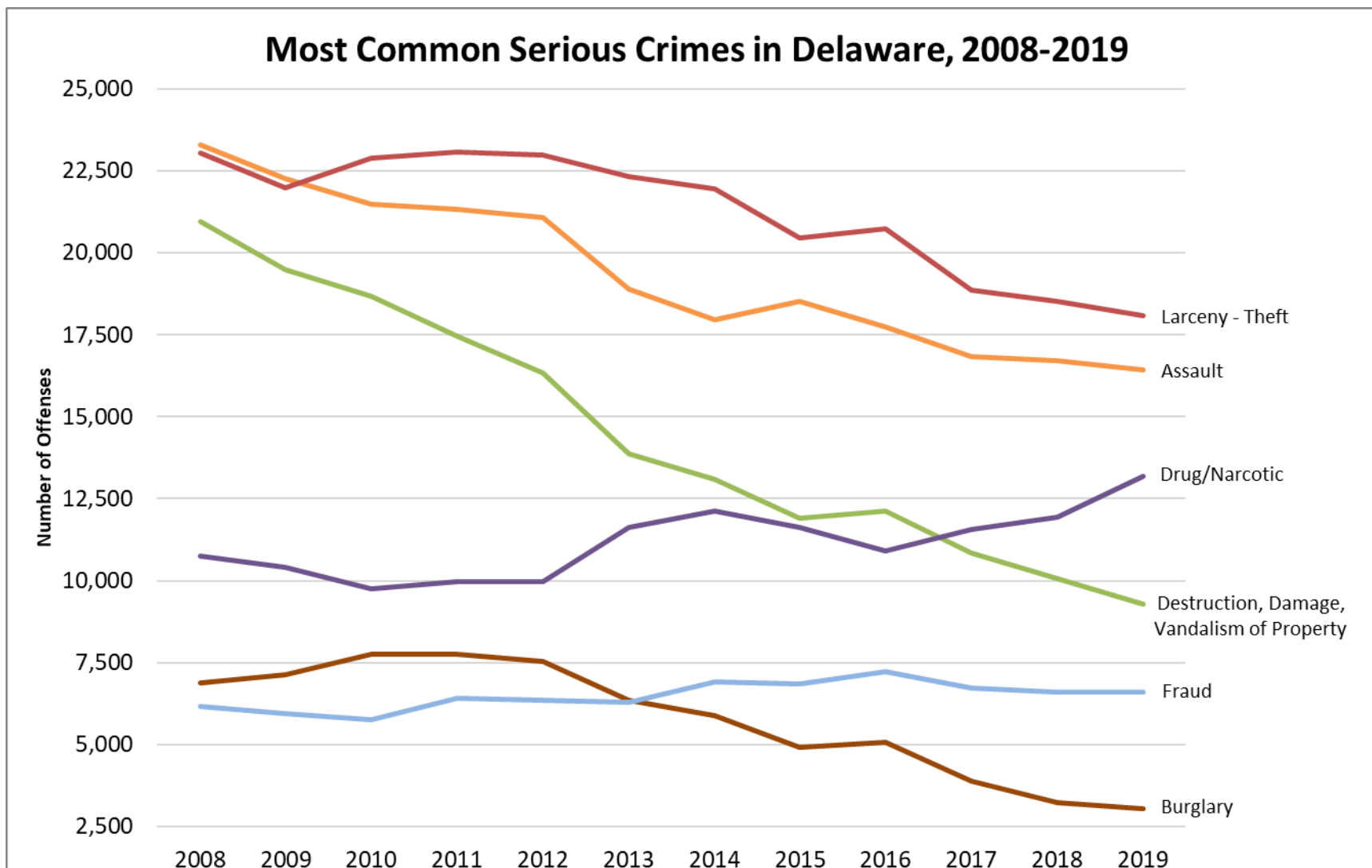
- **The crime rate is lower.** The Statewide Crime Rate decreased from 87.8 offenses per 1,000 persons in 2015 to 77.5 in 2019, a difference of about 12%. This change in the Crime Rate reflects a 9% decrease in the number of offenses and a 3% increase in Delaware’s population.
- **Serious property crime is down.** The number of reported Serious Property Offenses decreased almost 15% from 2015 to 2019. This category of offenses has been on an overall decline since 2016. Burglary offenses decreased 38% from 2015 to 2019 which continues a long decline since 2011. (See Table E-1 and Figure E-1)
 - In New Castle County, the number of Serious Property Offenses in 2019 was 12% lower compared to 2015. Burglary has decreased 33% from 2015. Despite a spike in 2016, Larceny has decreased 11% since 2015.
 - Kent County saw almost a 16% decrease from 2015 to 2019. Burglary has decreased 39% since 2015 which mirrors the overall state trend. Larceny offenses decreased 14% over the same period.
 - Sussex County saw a 20% decrease from 2015 to 2019. Burglary has dropped 46% since 2015, which is the largest percentage decrease of the three counties. Larceny has decreased 11%.
- **Overall Drug/Narcotic Offenses increased 14% from 2015.** Drug/Narcotic Possession Offenses have increased 41% over this period, while Drug Equipment Offenses decreased 25%. (See Table E-1 and Figure E-1)
 - In New Castle County, from 2015 to 2019 Possession Offenses increased almost 39% while Drug Equipment offenses decreased 38%.
 - In Kent, there was a 27% increase in Possession Offenses from 2015 to 2019; however, Equipment Offenses were down 27%.
 - Sussex County Possession Offenses are up almost 60% from 2015. Drug Equipment Offenses are down 8%.

Note: In December 2015, Delaware passed legislation that decriminalized certain Marijuana Possession Offenses. Depending on various circumstances, these offenses are civil offenses. Due to the Federal Government still recording these offenses as criminal, they are part of the Drug Offense totals in this report.

- ***Fewer Other Property and Social Offenses were reported from 2015 to 2019.*** From 2015 to 2019, there was an 11% decrease in these offenses (see Table E-1 and Figure E-1). Weapon Law Violations saw a 14% decrease. Stolen Property Offenses decreased 26%.
 - Between 2015 and 2019, New Castle, Kent, and Sussex Counties experienced decreases in Other Property and Social Offenses of 8%, 14%, and 14% respectively.
 - Property Destruction/Vandalism Offenses have decreased over 20% across all three counties.

- ***The trends for firearm-related offenses from 2015 to 2019 were mixed.*** Weapons Law Violations (1,943 in 2019) were 14% lower compared to 2015 totals. Robberies with a Firearm (324 offenses in 2019) decreased 57% from 2015 with a significant decline since 2016. Assaults with a Firearm (1,136 in 2019) have increased over 6% since 2015 have had an almost 27% increase from 2018 to 2019.
 - In New Castle County, offenses of Robbery with a Firearm are down 59% since 2015 and have decreased steadily since 2015. Assault with a Firearm Offenses have decreased 3% since 2015 but saw a sharp increase (34%) from 2018 to 2019. Weapons Law Violations are down over 14% from 2015.
 - In Kent County, Robbery with a Firearm has shown a 43% decrease from 2015, and a steady decline since 2016. Assault with a Firearm Offenses have increased 28% from 2015 totals but saw an 18% increase from 2018 to 2019. Weapons Law Violations have decreased 13% from 2015.
 - In Sussex County, offenses of Robbery with a Firearm are down 65% compared with 2015 totals. Assault with a Firearm Offenses have increased 23% since 2015. The number of Weapons Law Violations has decreased 13%.

Figure E-2: Most Common Serious Crimes in Delaware, 2008 – 2019



Clearances

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

- **Based on 2019 data, offenses in all crime categories were cleared at rates comparable to the rates from 2015 through 2018** (see Figure E-3). Overall, all crime categories had clearance rates at or near those of previous years, while just over half of the offenses (56.1%) in 2019 were cleared by the end of the calendar year. 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 30.8% and 39.9% respectively.
 - In New Castle County, 49.3% of all 2019 offenses were cleared, with the highest rates for Drug/Narcotic Offenses (93.7%) and Violent Offenses (71.7%).
 - In Kent County, 63.1% of 2019 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (96.5%) and Violent Offenses (82.5%) being cleared at the highest rates.
 - In Sussex County, 65.2% of all 2019 offenses were cleared, with Drug/Narcotic Offenses (98.2%) and Violent Offenses (85.5%) having the highest rates.

Arrests

- The number of arrests in 2019 decreased almost 20% compared to 2015 with a 9% decrease in the number of reported offenses over the same period. Declines occurred across all main offense categories (see Table E-2 and Figure E-3). The most notable decreases were for Serious Property Offenses (26% since 2015) and Drug Offenses (32%). Juvenile arrests were lower across all crime categories during this period (a 26% decrease overall)¹. Total adult arrests were 19% lower with all categories showing decreases. Arrest trends by county are located at the end of this report (Figures E4-E6).
 - In New Castle County, total arrests were 21% lower compared to 2015. Overall, juvenile arrests were 26% lower in 2019, with decreases in arrests for all categories. Total adult arrests were 21% lower with all categories decreasing. It should be noted that adult Drug and Serious Property Arrests were over 30% lower from 2015 to 2019.
 - In Kent County, the number of total arrests was almost 20% lower, with decreases among all four categories. Overall, juvenile arrests were 26% lower than in 2015, with an almost 45% decrease in Serious Property Arrests. Adult arrests were 19% lower, with decreases in all categories.

¹ After exploratory research, the Statistical Analysis Center found that the statewide Juvenile Civil Citation program, along with other procedural changes, appears to have contributed notably to the decrease in juvenile arrests. This appears most notably in Drug and Larceny arrests.

- In Sussex County, arrests were almost 17% lower than in 2015 with decreases in all categories. Overall, juvenile arrests were 25% lower than in 2015 overall, with decreases in all categories. The number of total adult arrests was down 16%. While overall Drug Arrests for Sussex County are down 23%, Drug Offenses are up almost 26% from 2015 to 2019.

Since 2016, there have been noticeable declines in drug arrests despite relatively stable reported and cleared drug offenses. The primary cause for this arrest decline can be attributed to the civil marijuana possession statute changes that were implemented in December 2015. A smaller, yet still significant, portion is due to the surge in statewide overdoses over the last few years. In many overdose situations, an individual that has overdosed and survives is typically not arrested for the drug possession that led to the overdose unless there are other circumstances involved in the incident.

Table E-2: Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses, 2015 – 2019

Statewide Arrests for Serious Offenses					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Arrests	27,994	26,039	23,739	21,695	22,456
Violent Offenses	9,508	9,313	8,591	8,493	8,699
Serious Property Offenses	7,442	7,218	6,201	5,338	5,508
Drug Offenses	7,016	5,300	4,928	4,513	4,807
Other Property and Social Offenses	4,028	4,208	4,019	3,351	3,442
Total Adult Arrests	24,792	23,031	21,103	19,416	20,078
Violent Offenses	8,030	7,910	7,356	7,364	7,502
Serious Property Offenses	6,602	6,487	5,530	4,793	4,945
Drug Offenses	6,587	4,937	4,577	4,225	4,541
Other Property and Social Offenses	3,573	3,697	3,640	3,034	3,090
Total Juvenile Arrests	3,202	3,008	2,636	2,279	2,378
Violent Offenses	1,478	1,403	1,235	1,129	1,197
Serious Property Offenses	840	731	671	545	563
Drug Offenses	429	363	351	288	266
Other Property and Social Offenses	455	511	379	317	352

Figure E-3: All Delaware Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2008 – 2019

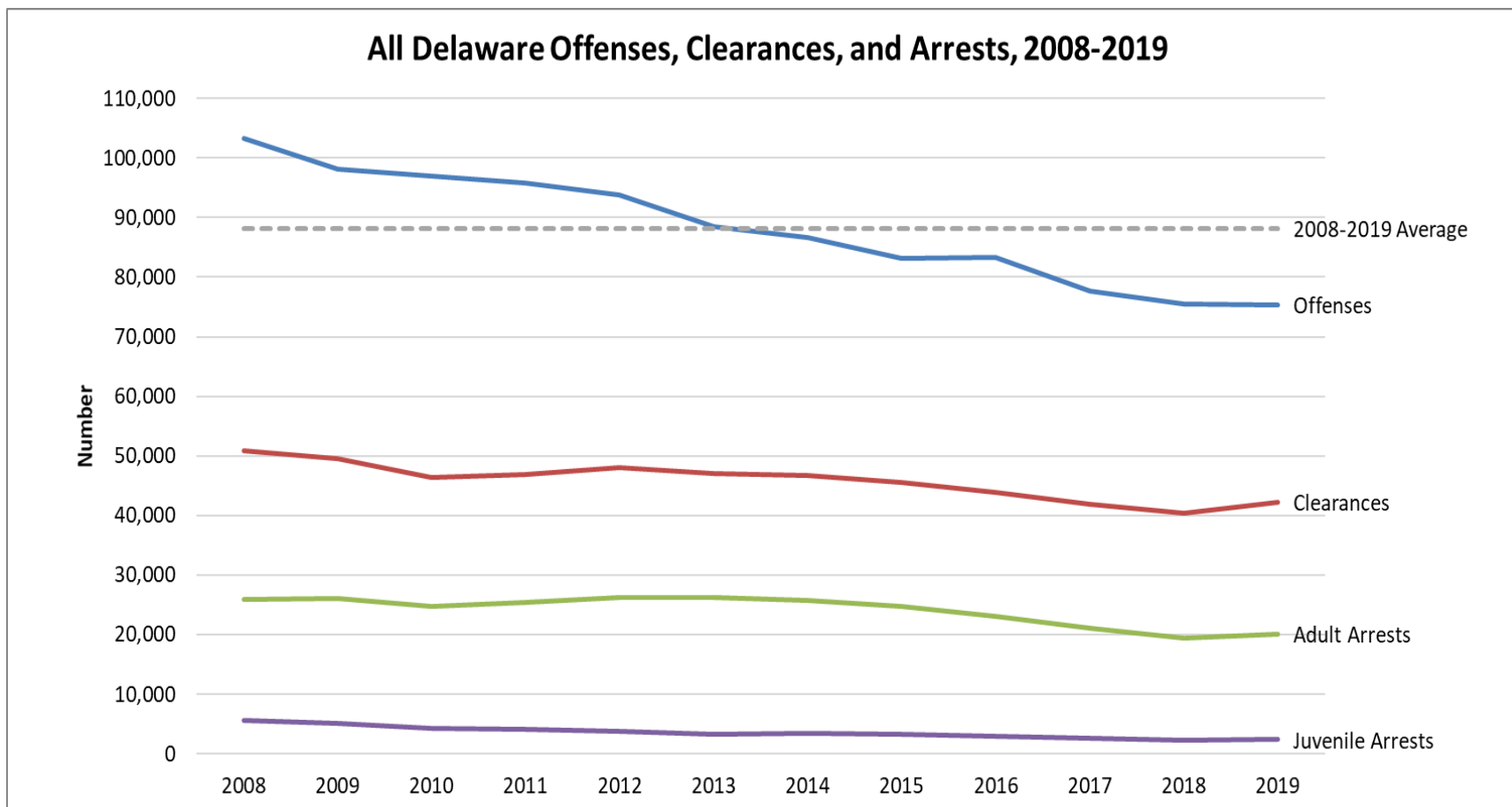


Figure E4: All New Castle County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2008 -2019

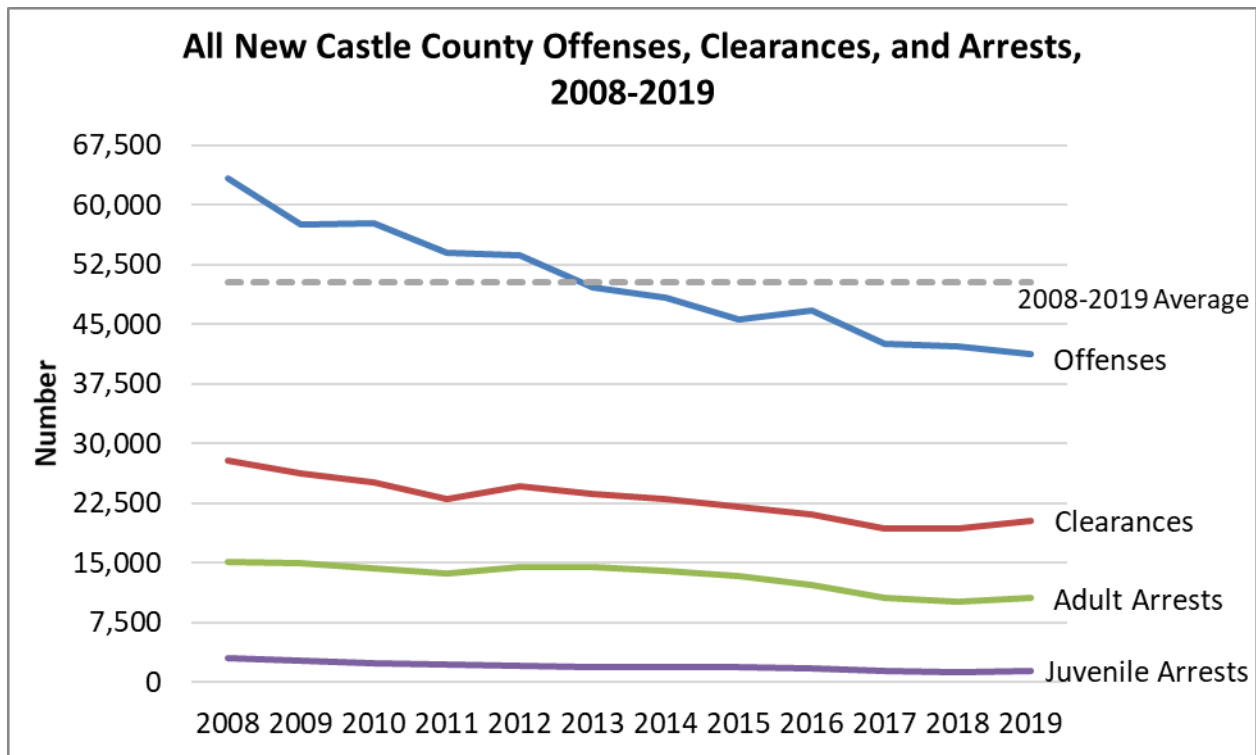


Figure E5: All Kent County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2008-2019

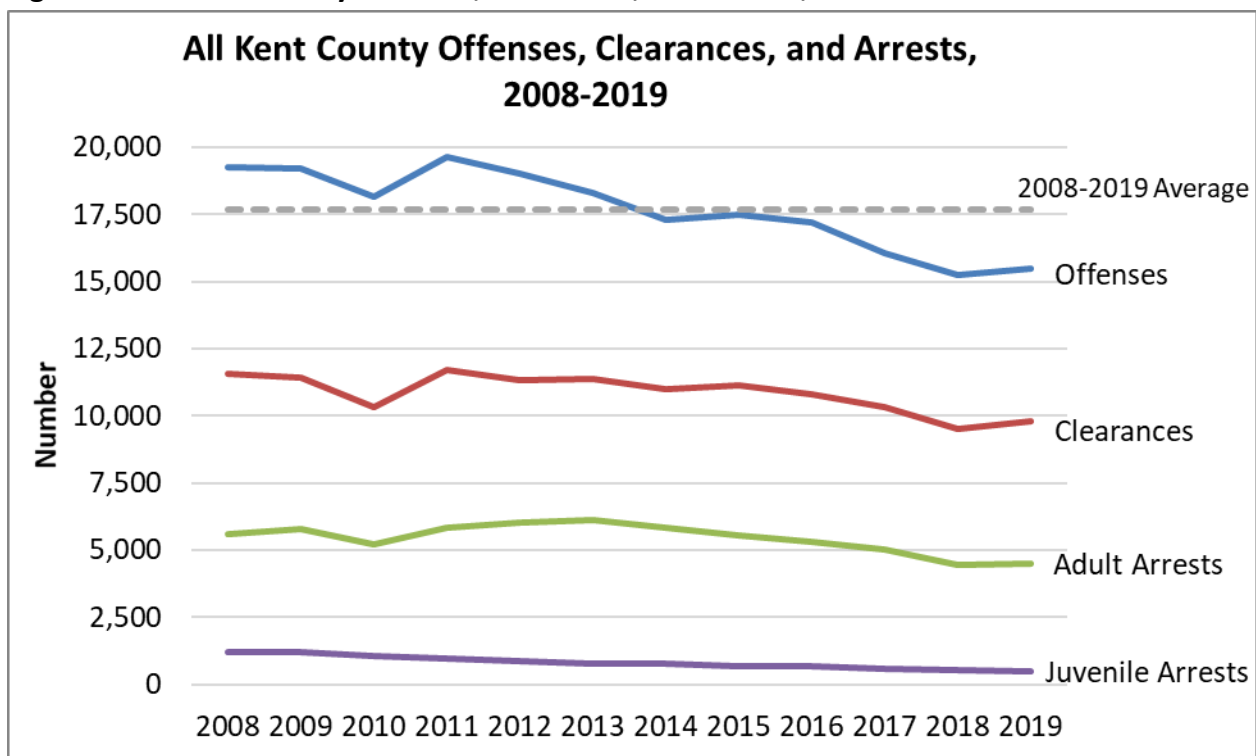
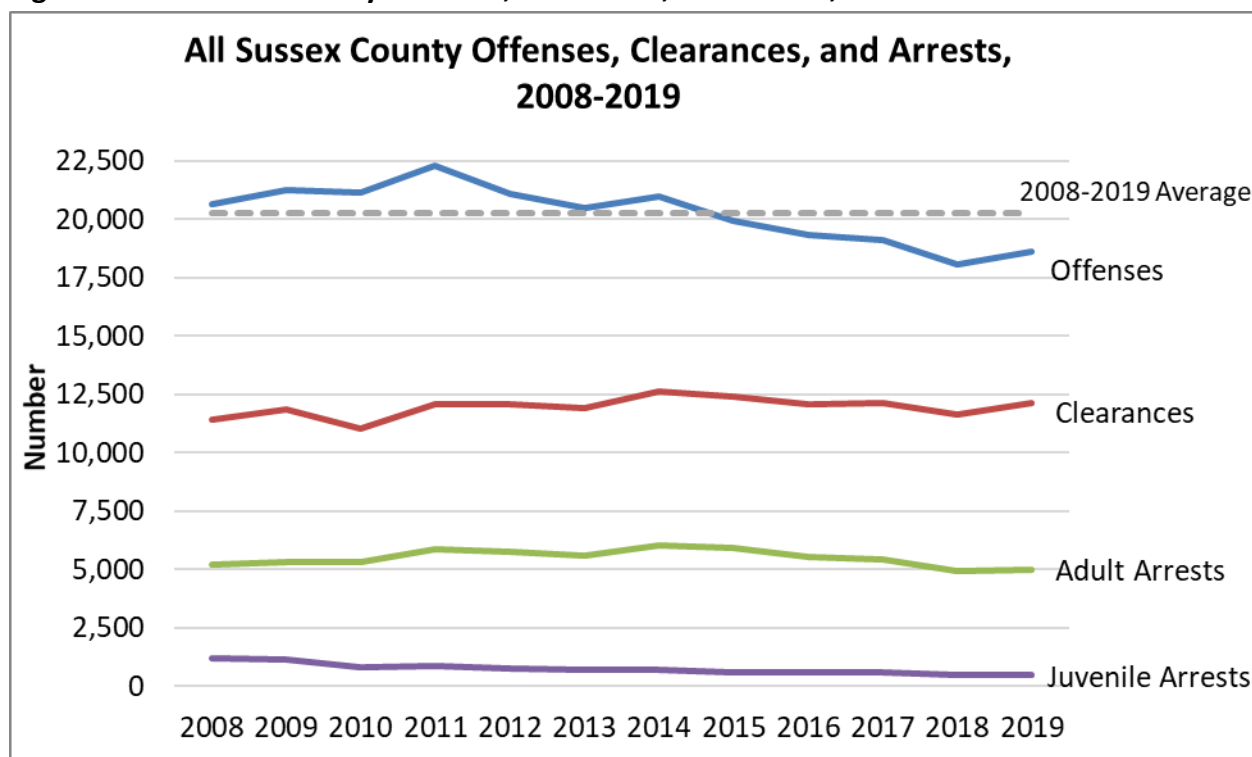


Figure E6: All Sussex County Offenses, Clearances, and Arrests, 2008 – 2019



Violent Crime Against Law Enforcement Officers

- ***In 2019, 448 assault-related offenses were committed against law enforcement officers, about 16% higher when compared to 2015.*** Almost all offenses (94%) were cleared before the end of 2019. Assaults against officers continue to be cleared at rates near or above 95%.
 - In New Castle County, there were 247 Assault Offenses against officers in 2019, up 12% from 2015. About 19% of Assault Offenses against officers in 2019 resulted in injury.
 - In Kent County, assaults on officers (99) was 39% higher than 2015 and near a report period high. 18% of assaults resulted in injuries in Kent County.
 - Sussex County assaults on officers (102) was up almost 9% from 2015 while almost 28% of those assaults led to an injury.

Most assault-related offenses occurred while responding to disturbances, attempting an arrest, and handling prisoners. Responding to a disturbance, attempting an arrest, and handling prisoners accounted for just over 60% of assaults against officers in 2019. These activities have accounted for 60-70% of assaults during the 2015 to 2019 period. Almost three out of four assaults on an officer are using the subjects' hands, fists or feet. Although firearms were not often used to injure a law enforcement officer (3.6%), they increased slightly from 2018 (2.1%). The period high in 2017 (6.6%) may be influenced by one incident in 2017 that accounted for many assaults.

No officers were killed in 2019 and almost 21% of assault-related offenses resulted in injuries. Overall, two officers were killed in the line of duty during the 2015 through 2019 period. The percentage of assault-related offenses in 2019 that resulted in injury is roughly comparable to the past four years but is a high for that same period. There were a record 24 attempted homicides of officers in 2017. Eighteen offenses were attributed to the shooting death of an officer and a subsequent stand-off where the subject fired upon multiple responding officers. There was 1 attempted homicide of an officer in 2019.

Table E-3: Violent Offenses Committed Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers, 2015–19

Violent Offenses Against Delaware Law Enforcement Officers 2015 – 2019					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Officers Assaulted	386	414	407	425	448
Officers Killed	0	0	2	0	0
Attempted Homicides on Officers	0	1	24	0	1
Assaults Resulting in Officer Injury	17.9%	18.8%	17.4%	16.7%	20.5%
Assault-related Offenses Cleared	96.1%	97.1%	93.6%	93.4%	94.4%