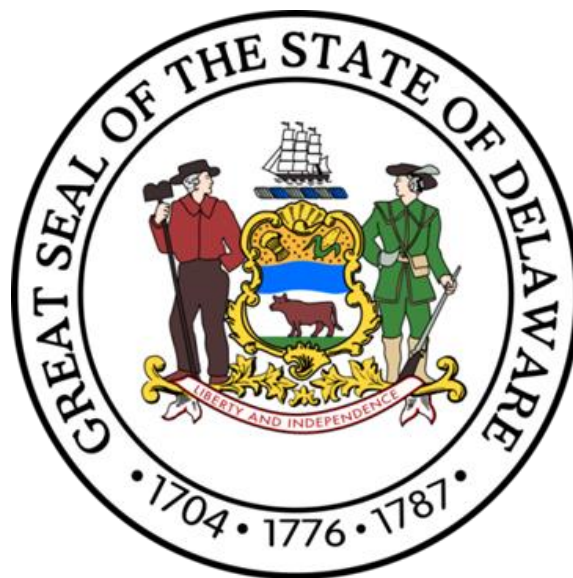


Delaware Shootings 2019

An Analysis of Incidents, Suspects, and Victims



November 2020

State of Delaware
Criminal Justice Council
Statistical Analysis Center
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Executive Summary

Delaware Shootings 2019: An Analysis of Incidents, Suspects, and Victims

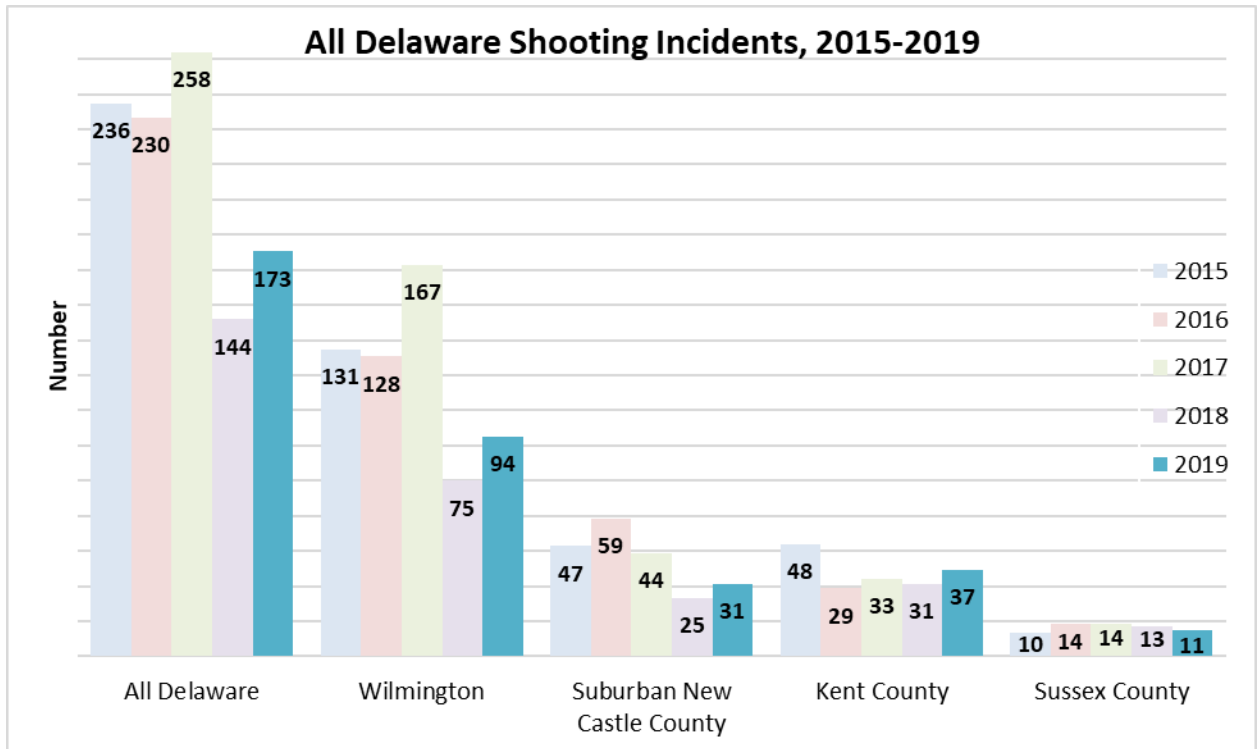
This is the ninth report, covering 2019, in the Delaware Statistical Analysis Center’s statewide shooting incident analysis effort.

Methodology: To identify incidents for inclusion in the analysis, the Center uses a variety of methods, including monitoring media reports and police websites and exploring criminal incident data within Delaware’s Criminal Justice Information System. These methods are described in the Methodology section of the report.

Key Findings:

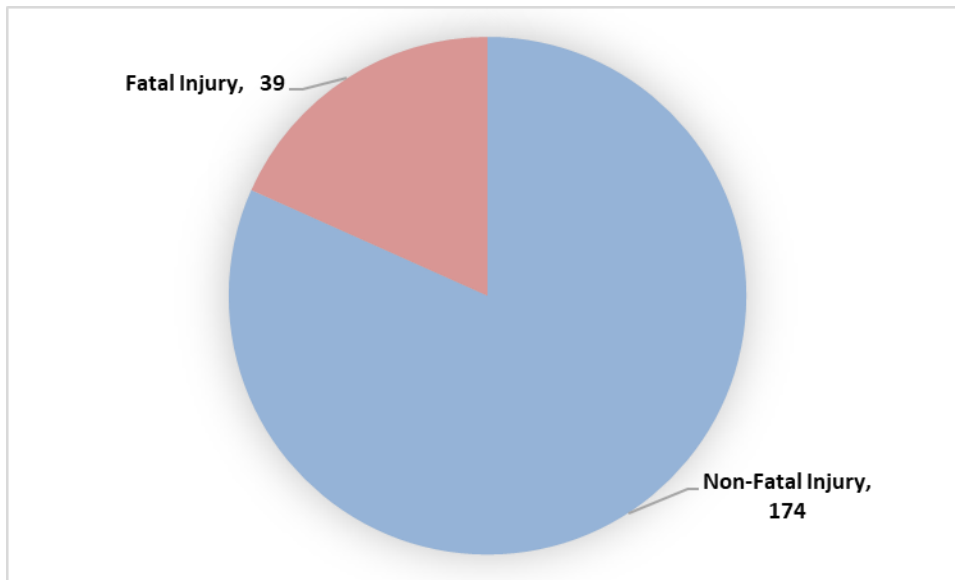
- After a marked decline in 2018, shooting incidents increased in most of the state but remain below 2015 to 2017 levels (Figure E-1).

Figure E-1: Geographic Distribution of Shooting Incidents, 2015-2019



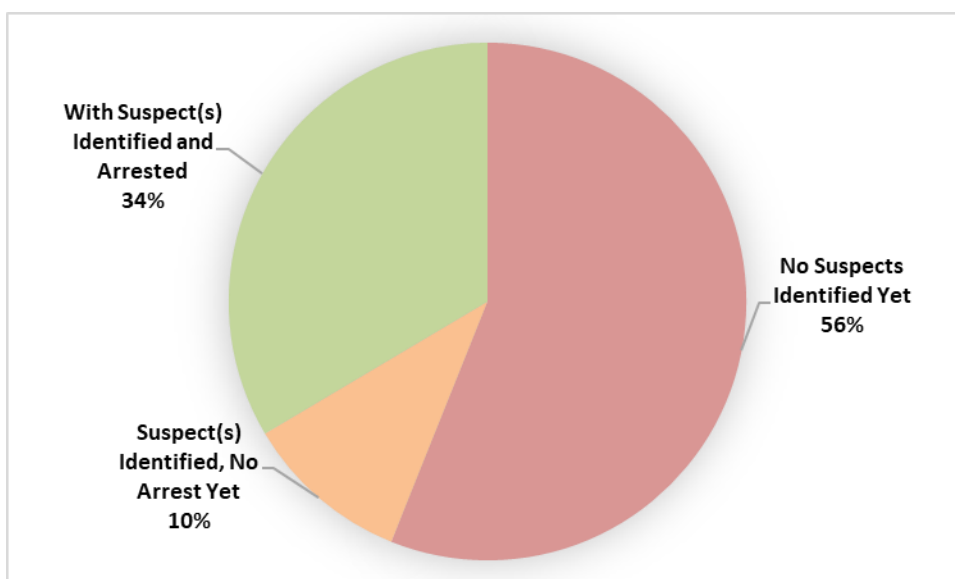
- Overall, more than 170 victims suffered non-fatal injuries, and almost 40 were killed in 37 fatal incidents.

Figure E-2: Most 2019 Victims Suffered Non-Fatal Injuries



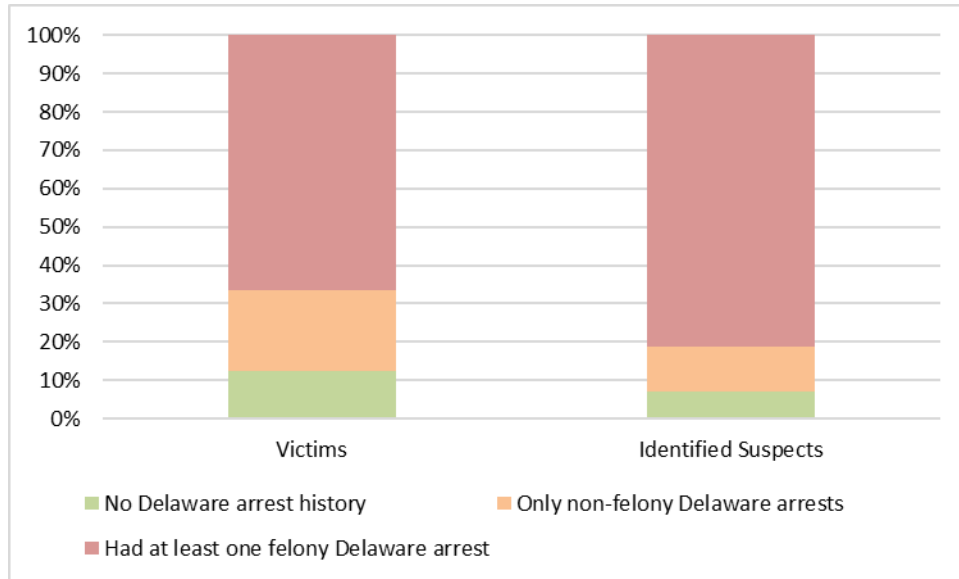
- Statewide, more than 260 suspects were believed to have been involved, with at least one suspect identified in 44% of incidents overall, and arrests made in more than 75% of incidents with an identified suspect.

Figure E-3: Incidents with Suspects Identified and Arrested, Identified Only, and Not Identified



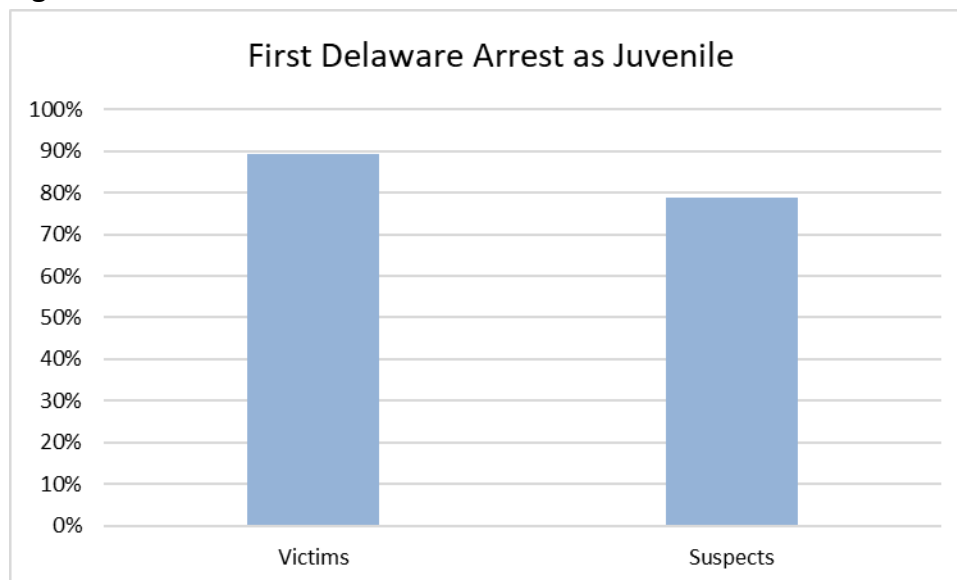
- Most victims and most suspects had a Delaware criminal history prior to the shooting incident each was involved in.

Figure E-4: Most Victims and Identified Suspects Had at Least One Delaware Felony Arrest



- For suspects and victims with a Delaware arrest history, most were first arrested as juveniles.

Figure E-5: Most Delaware First Arrests Occurred as Juveniles.



An Analysis of Delaware Shootings in 2019

The following report is the ninth in a series examining criminal, non-accidental shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of another person. This report examines multiple characteristics of shooting incidents, victims injured as a result, and suspects involved, along with an examination of victim and witness cooperation with subsequent shooting investigations. This iteration of the report includes additional examination of suspect and arrest data, along with some stylistic changes.

For further information and background, see the Technical Appendix.

Shooting Analysis Brief Methodology

The Center actively monitors media and law enforcement agency websites throughout the year to flag shooting incidents as they are publicly announced. This work is supplemented by an extensive examination of data within Delaware's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) to identify additional potential incidents. All of these data are then filtered to identify incidents where a criminal, non-accidental discharge of a firearm resulted in the death or injury of one or more victims (whether the person struck was an intended target or a bystander). Once the final set of qualifying incidents is identified, the additional data needed for the report are downloaded and analyzed.

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 2018 and 2019 Statewide Reports*, located on the SAC's website (<https://sac.delaware.gov/crime/>), for further detail and the methodology used to create them.

The methodology is fully described in the Technical Appendix.

Considerations and Limitations

Criminal investigation of shooting incidents, as is typical for many violent crimes, can be complex. As a result, the data generated can be equally complex leading to challenges in analyzing those data. To account for simple data entry errors and information which can change as an investigation proceeds, the Center employs various quality control measures to ensure the final data set is complete as possible. However, it remains possible that shooting incidents are undercounted in this report, although likely to only a very minor degree.

A more complete discussion of considerations and limitations is included in the Technical Appendix.

Note that this report does not address accidental shooting incidents (of one's self or another, excluding incidents in which a bystander was struck), 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

Incidents and Victims: This study identified 173 shooting incidents reported to Delaware’s police agencies in 2019, up from the record-low of 144 set in 2018, but still well below 2015 to 2017 levels. These incidents resulted in the injury of 174 victims and the death of an additional 39 individuals (213 total victims). Nine incidents were related to an intimate partner relationship, leading to the death of two victims during two of those incidents. The total numbers of incidents and victims, broken out by geography and fatal versus non-fatal incidents, are shown in Table 1. These totals reflect only criminal, non-accidental shootings of another person.

Overall, almost 75% of 2019 incidents occurred in New Castle County, resulting in almost 75% of the overall victim total. The City of Wilmington accounted for 54% of all 2019 shooting incidents and more than half of all victims, while suburban New Castle County accounted for almost 20% of incidents and a similar proportion of victims. Kent County accounted for just over 20% of incidents and victims. Sussex County experienced more than 5% of incidents with a similar proportion of victims.

Statewide, just over one out of every five incidents resulted in a fatal injury to a victim. Incident fatality percentages generally ranged from 22% in Wilmington to 27% in Sussex County, with Kent County the lone exception (14%).

More than 75% of the 37 fatal incidents occurred in New Castle County, with 14% in Kent County and 8% in Sussex County. Wilmington accounted for 57% of all fatal incidents in 2019. Fatality-related proportions can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Incidents and Victims by County

	Incidents				Victims			
	Count				Count			
	Total	Non-Fatal	Fatal	Percent Fatal	Total	Injured	Killed	Percent Killed
Delaware	173	136	37	21.4	213	174	39	18.3
New Castle County	125	96	29	23.2	157	126	31	24.6
<i>Wilmington</i>	94	73	21	22.3	120	97	23	19.2
<i>Suburban NCC</i>	31	23	8	25.8	37	29	8	21.6
Kent County	37	32	5	13.5	44	39	5	11.4
Sussex County	11	8	3	27.3	12	9	3	25.0

Incident and victim counts by police agency can be found in Tables A-1 and A-2 in the Data Appendix. Figures 1 and 2 provide more information about the locations of the 2019 shooting incidents (with 2015 through 2018 location data provided for comparison).

Figure 1: Distribution of 2015-2019 Shooting Incidents (All Incidents)

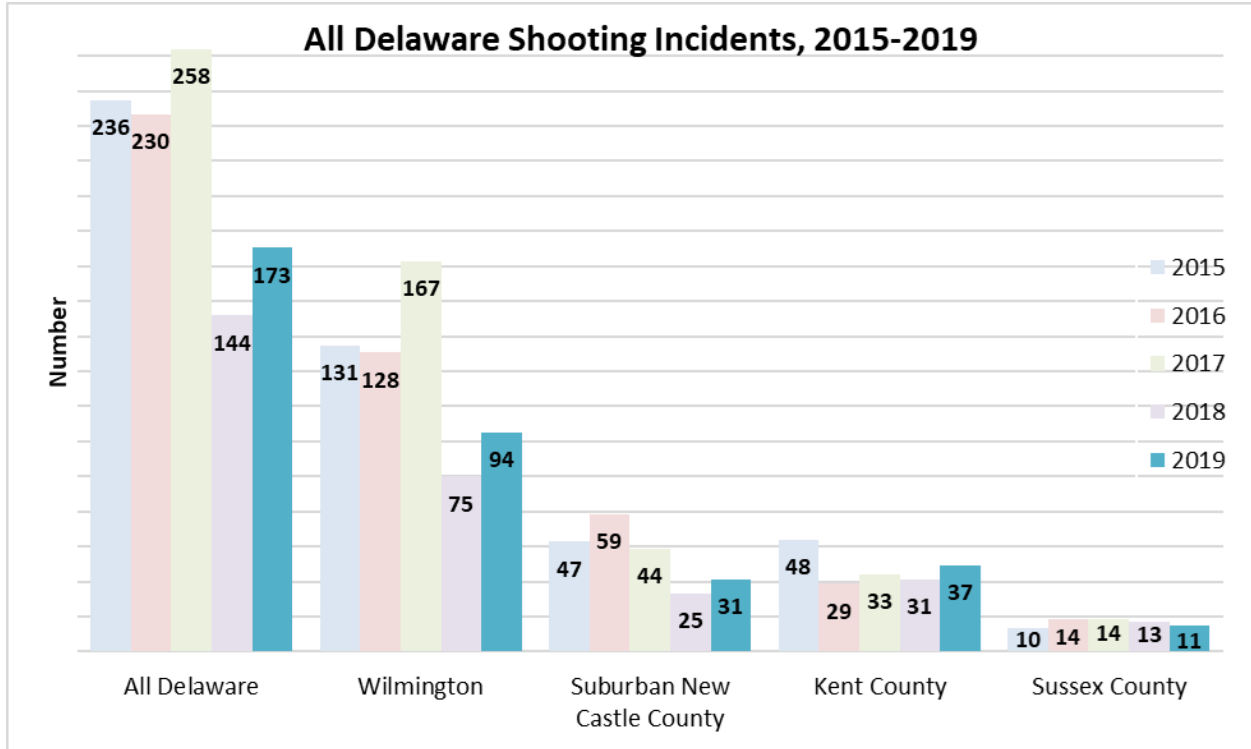
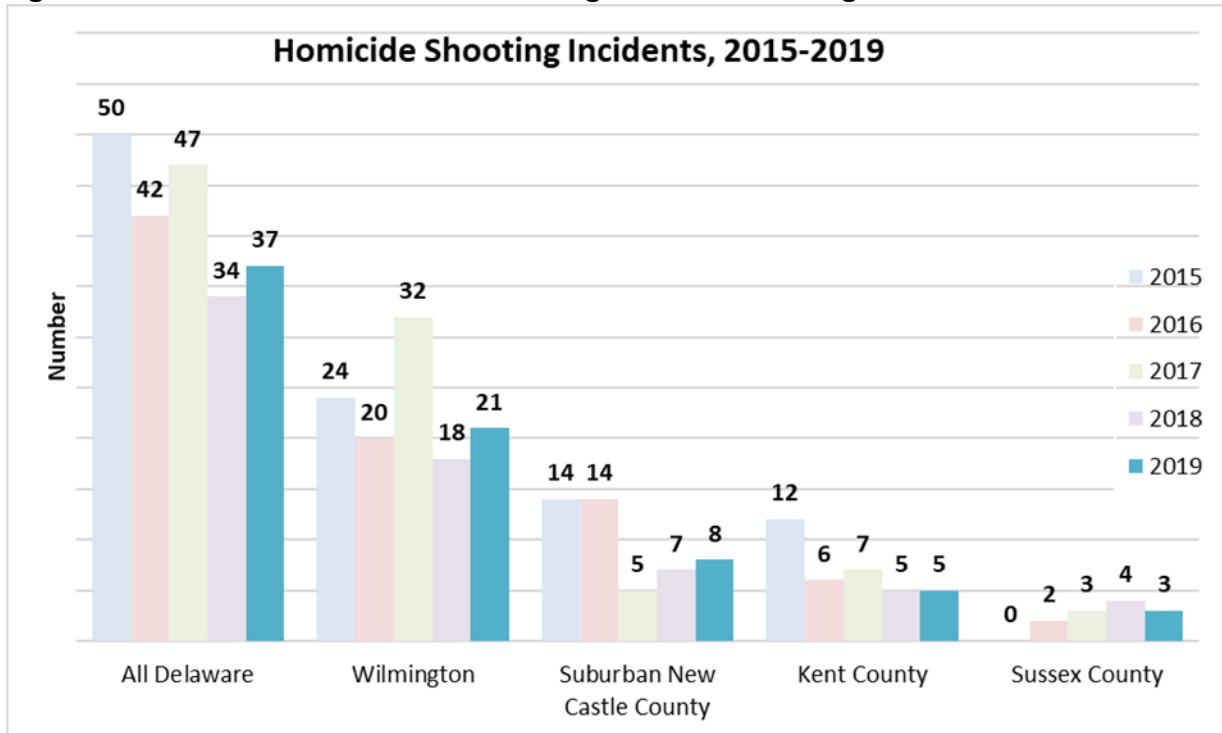


Figure 2: Distribution of 2015-2019 Shooting Incidents Involving Homicide



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 2018 and 2019 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).

Suspects and Arrests: A review of police complaint records shows that at least 266 suspects were thought to be involved in the 173 incidents shown in Table 1. As of May 29, 2020, more than 40% of incidents statewide had at least one suspect identified by name (see Table 2). The percentages for non-fatal and fatal incidents were similar to the overall percentage.

In New Castle County, almost one-third of all Wilmington incidents and nearly 40% of incidents in the suburban portion of the county had at least one identified suspect. Just over two-thirds of Kent County incidents and more than 80% of Sussex County incidents (where the overall number of incidents is very low) had an identified suspect. The percentages for non-fatal incidents for each of the areas above were similar to their overall percentages. For the areas with a small number of fatal incidents (suburban New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties), suspect-identified percentages were markedly higher than their overall and non-fatal rates. In Wilmington, however, this rate was just under 20%.

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 2: Incidents with Identified Suspects and Arrests*

	Total Incidents With Identified Count Suspect Arrest			Non-Fatal With Identified Count Suspect Arrest			Fatal With Identified Count Suspect Arrest		
Delaware									
N	173	76	58	136	59	46	37	17	11
%	--	43.9	33.5	--	43.4	33.8	--	45.9	29.7
New Castle									
N	125	42	36	96	33	29	29	9	7
%	--	33.6	28.8	--	34.4	30.2	--	31.0	24.1
Wilmington									
N	94	30	27	73	26	23	21	4	4
%	--	31.9	28.7	--	35.6	31.5	--	19.0	19.0
Sub. NCC									
N	31	12	9	23	7	6	8	5	3
%	--	38.7	29.0	--	30.4	26.1	--	62.5	37.5
Kent									
N	37	25	16	32	20	13	5	5	3
%	--	67.6	43.2	--	62.5	40.6	--	100.0	60.0
Sussex									
N	11	9	6	8	6	4	3	3	2
%	--	81.8	54.5	--	75.0	50.0	--	100.0	66.7

*With-Arrest counts include two incidents (one fatal) where suspects committed suicide (one at the scene, one shortly after fleeing) and three where suspects (one responsible for two incidents) were killed in later shootings.

Overall Arrest Rates: Nearly one-third of incidents statewide had an arrest by the May 2020 date or were considered closed through an exceptional clearance (Table 2). Percentages for non-fatal and fatal incidents were similar to the overall percentage. Five incidents (including one fatal incident) were classified as exceptional clearances due to the death of a suspect.

In New Castle County, almost 30% of incidents overall in Wilmington and the suburban portion of the county had an arrest. Kent and Sussex counties had arrest rates exceeding 40% and 50%, respectively. Rates for non-fatal incidents were similar to overall rates, while those for fatal incidents varied substantially.

Refined Arrest Rates: Overall incident arrest rates, however, do not tell a complete story. As discussed in other sections of this report, numerous factors affect the ability of law enforcement agencies to identify suspects and gather sufficient evidence for an arrest. When examining arrest rates for incidents where at least one suspect has been identified, a different picture emerges.

Statewide, the *arrest rate for all incidents where a suspect had been identified* was 76%. This percentage was slightly higher for non-fatal incidents (78%) and lower for fatal incidents (65%). In New Castle County, refined arrest rates in Wilmington were 90% for all incidents, 89% for non-fatal incidents, and 100% for fatal incidents. The percentages for suburban New Castle County were 75% for all incidents, 86% for non-fatal, and 60% for fatal incidents. Sussex saw rates of two-thirds for each incident category, while Kent had rates of 64%, 64%, and 60%, respectively.

When interpreting the refined arrest rates for fatal incidents, keep in mind the low numbers with identified suspects.

Individual Suspects and Arrests: Table 3 presents the count of total, identified, and arrested suspects by incident type and geographic region. Of the 266 *total suspects*, nearly 100 (37%) had been identified by late May 2020, with 69 arrests. The percent of *suspects identified* ranged from 27% in Wilmington to 56% in Sussex County. Suspect identification rates for non-fatal incidents were similar to overall rates, while rates for fatal incidents ranged from 13% in Wilmington to 100% in Sussex County (40% statewide). Suspect information by law enforcement agency is located in Tables A-1 and A-2 in the Data Appendix.

The overall *rates of arrest for identified suspects* was 71% statewide, ranging from 66% in Kent County to 82% in Wilmington. Rates for non-fatal incidents were slightly higher (75% statewide), while fatal incident rates were generally lower (57% statewide) and more variable between geographic regions.

Table 3: Suspect and Arrest Counts by Incident Type

	Overall		Non-Fatal		Fatal		Arrested*		
	Total	Identified	Total	Identified	Total	Identified	Overall	Non-Fatal	Fatal
Delaware	266	97	214	76	52	21	69	57	12
New Castle	189	56	148	45	41	11	44	37	7
<i>Wilmington</i>	146	39	115	35	31	4	32	28	4
<i>Sub. NCC</i>	43	17	33	10	10	7	12	9	3
Kent	61	32	53	25	8	7	21	17	4
Sussex	16	9	13	6	3	3	6	4	2

*Arrest counts include five deceased suspects, two who died by suicide (one at the scene of a fatal shooting, one shortly after fleeing). Two additional suspects (one responsible for two incidents) were killed in later shootings. All would otherwise have been arrested for their respective shootings, with each incident classified as an exceptional clearance.

Demographic Profile of Shooting Suspects and Victims

Race, sex, and age information for the unique 2019 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 4. The decision to include this latter group was made to provide a richer sense of the social milieu surrounding shooting incidents. As of May 29, 2020, 101 such individuals had been identified by name. This expanded group of unique identified suspects was entirely male (a change from prior years) and 81% were 30 years old or younger with an average age of 26.1 years. Black males comprised 86% of this expanded suspect group. Two suspects in this table were also of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.

Table 4: Demographic Profile of 2019 Identified Shooting Suspects (Expanded Group)*

Age Range	Race and Sex				Ethnicity and Sex**		Total***
	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	
Under 14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14 to 17	9	5	0	0	0	0	14
Juvenile Total	9	5	--	--	--	--	14
18 to 21	25	4	0	0	1	0	29
22 to 25	26	1	0	0	1	0	27
26 to 30	12	0	0	0	0	0	12
18 to 30 Total	63	5	--	--	2	--	68
31 to 35	5	1	0	0	0	0	6
36 to 40	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
41 to 45	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
46 to 50	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Over 50	2	3	0	0	0	0	5
Average Age	25.3	30.6	NA	NA	21.6	NA	26.1
Overall Total	87	14	0	0	2	0	101

*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 56% 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 2019 incidents would likely be very similar in demographic characteristics to those included in Table 4.

Demographic information for the 2019 shooting victims is shown in Table 5. Most victims (86%) were male. Overall, 65% of victims were between 18 and 35 years old with an average age of 27.5 years. Black males accounted for 78% of all shooting victims in 2019. Less than 3% of all victims were also of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.

Table 5: Demographic Profile of 2019 Shooting Victims

Age Range	Race and Sex				Ethnicity and Sex*		Total**
	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	
Under 14	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
14 to 17	28	3	3	0	1	0	34
Juvenile Total	29	3	3	--	1	--	35
18 to 21	41	2	6	0	1	0	49
22 to 25	22	3	2	0	2	0	27
26 to 30	31	2	6	1	1	0	40
18 to 30 Total	94	7	14	1	4	--	116
31 to 35	17	2	3	1	0	0	23
36 to 40	16	0	4	0	0	0	20
41 to 45	4	2	2	0	0	0	8
46 to 50	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Over 50	5	2	1	1	1	0	9
Average Age	26.6	30.6	28.9	47.0	28.6	NA	27.5
Overall Total	167	16	27	3	6	0	213

*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.

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 2019 shooting incidents can be misleading. Instead, race and age data for the victims and suspects (using the 97 suspects identified by name in Table 3) 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 6 explores the relationship between suspect and victim race based on the categories assigned for each incident. Of the 76 incidents in 2019 where race information was available for both named suspects and victims, eight involved multiple suspects or victims equally split between racial categories, and therefore excluded from further analysis. For the remaining 68 incidents, (91%) involved suspects and victims who were all or mostly of the same race. This percentage was higher for incidents that involved Black victims (96.6% of 58 incidents) and lower for incidents involving White victims (60% of 10 incidents).

Table 6: Correlation Between Victim and Suspect Race by Incident Level

	Victim Race Category Assigned to Incident						Overall Number
	Number	Black		White		Number	
		% of Row Total	% of Column Total	% of Row Total	% of Column Total		
ALL Suspects and ALL Victims of Same Race	53	89.8%	91.4%	6	10.2%	60.0%	59
MAJORITY of Victims and of Suspects BOTH of Same Race	3	100%	5.2%	0	NA	NA	3
Victims Shot by Suspects of DIFFERENT Race	2	33.3%	3.5%	4	66.7%	40.0%	6
Total	58			10			68

Table 7 explores the relationship between suspect and victim age based on the categories assigned for each incident. In 76 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 20 incidents there was no majority age group. In 56 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% 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 40%. Overall, 38 of the 56 incidents examined (68%) involved suspects in the 18 to 30 age group.

Table 7: Victim-Suspect Age Correlation by 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	0	3	0	1	0	4
	18-30	2	24	7	3	2	38
	31-40	0	1	5	0	0	6
	41-50	0	0	1	1	1	3
	Over 50	1	1	1	0	2	5
Victim Category Totals		3	29	14	5	5	56

Criminal Histories of Shooting Suspects and Victims

Table 8 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 101 suspects in this expanded group (93%) and of the 209 shooting victims (88%) had an arrest history in Delaware. Of those with such arrest histories, 82 suspects (87%) and 139 victims (76%) had at least one felony arrest. Of those with a felony history, 66% of victims and 76% of suspects had three or more arrests on felony charges. Note that the number of unique shooting suspects represents less than half 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 8: Delaware Criminal Histories for Shooting Victims and Expanded Suspect Group
(Unique Individuals)

	Unique Suspects		Unique Victims	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Known Suspects and Victims	101		209	
Have Arrest History in Delaware*	94	93.1	183	87.6
 ≥1 Arrest was for a Felony	82	87.2	139	76.0
Felony Drug Arrests	45	47.9	79	43.2
1 or 2	30	66.7	44	55.7
3 or more	15	33.3	35	44.3
Felony Weapons Arrests	59	62.8	88	48.1
1 or 2	47	79.7	72	81.8
3 or more	12	20.3	16	18.2
Other Felony Arrests	73	77.7	121	66.1
1 or 2	36	49.3	69	57.0
3 or more	37	50.7	52	43.0
Violent Felony Arrests**	79	84.0	131	71.6
1 or 2	30	38.0	63	48.1
3 or more	49	62.0	68	51.9

*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.

More than 40% of victims and almost 50% 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’). More than 60% of suspects and almost half of victims had at least one arrest for a felony weapons offense.

Table 9 compares the age at first contact with the Delaware criminal justice system for the shooting suspects and victims from Table 8 who had criminal histories prior to the shooting incident. The table shows that 89% of the 94 suspects in 2019 with histories and 79% of 183 shooting victims with histories were younger than age 18 at the time of their first arrest in Delaware.

Table 9: Age of Suspects in Expanded Group and Victims with Delaware Arrest Histories at First Contact with Delaware’s Criminal Justice System

Age Range	Unique Suspects		Unique Victims	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 14	48	51.1	61	33.3
14 to 17	36	38.3	83	45.4
Juvenile Total	84	89.4	144	78.7
18 to 21	4	4.3	23	12.6
22 to 25	2	2.1	8	4.4
26 to 30	0	0	5	2.7
31 to 35	0	0	1	0.5
36 to 40	2	2.1	0	0
41 to 45	0	0	0	0
46 to 50	1	1.1	0	0
Over 50	1	1.1	2	1.1
Total with Delaware History	94		183	

Day and Time Analysis of 2019 Shootings in Delaware

Table 10 and the two figures that follow show the distribution of 2019 shooting incidents by the day of the week and the month in which they occurred. Incidents most frequently occurred on a Saturday (31 incidents) and least often on Wednesday (21 incidents). More shooting incidents occurred in December (27 incidents) with the fewest occurring in April (5). For illustrative purposes, figures for Delaware and Wilmington showing the monthly progression of shootings for 2011 through 2019 are also included (see Figures 5 and 6).

Table 10: 2019 Shooting Incidents by Month and Day of Week

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Month Total
January	1	2	3	1	3	2	2	14
February	1	1	2	0	3	2	2	11
March	1	2	1	3	3	0	3	13
April	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	5
May	3	1	0	3	3	5	3	18
June	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	7
July	2	1	1	2	3	2	2	13
August	5	2	3	2	2	2	5	21
September	3	6	2	1	2	3	1	18
October	2	3	2	3	1	1	1	13
November	0	5	0	1	0	2	5	13
December	1	5	9	3	2	4	3	27
Day Total	23	28	23	21	23	24	31	173

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

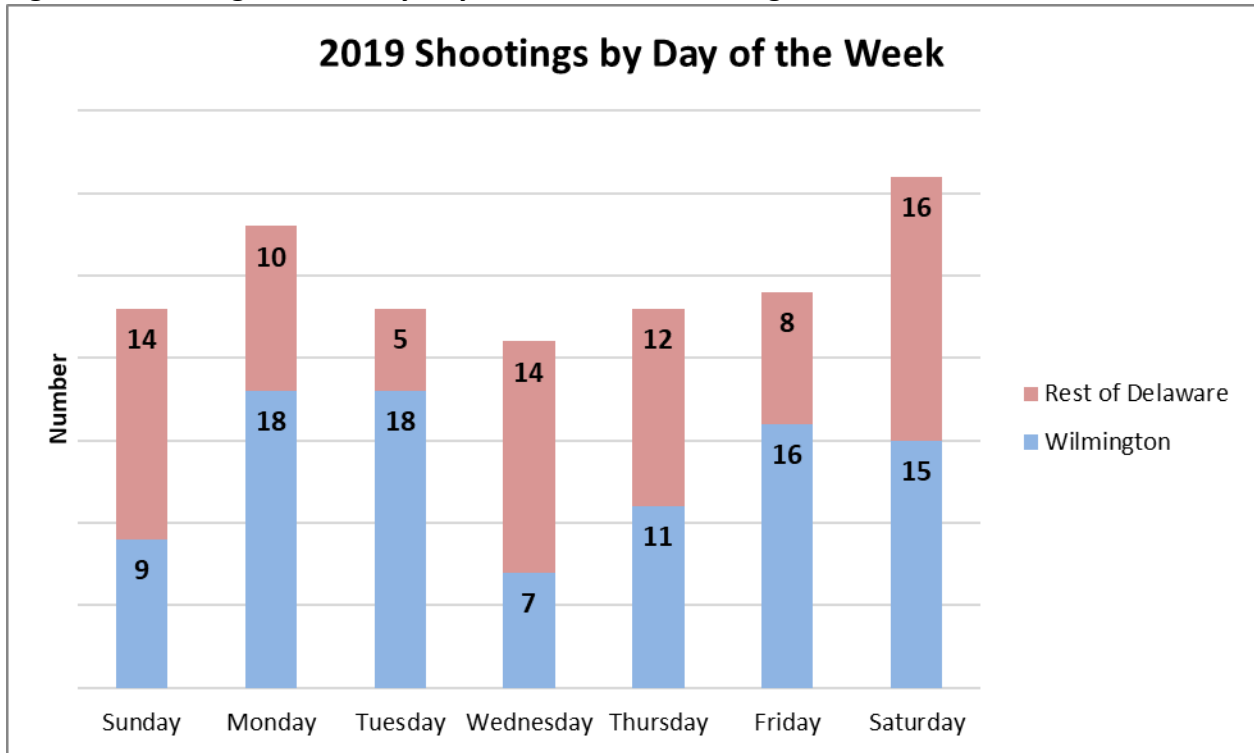


Figure 4: Shooting Incidents by Month—Wilmington and Rest of Delaware

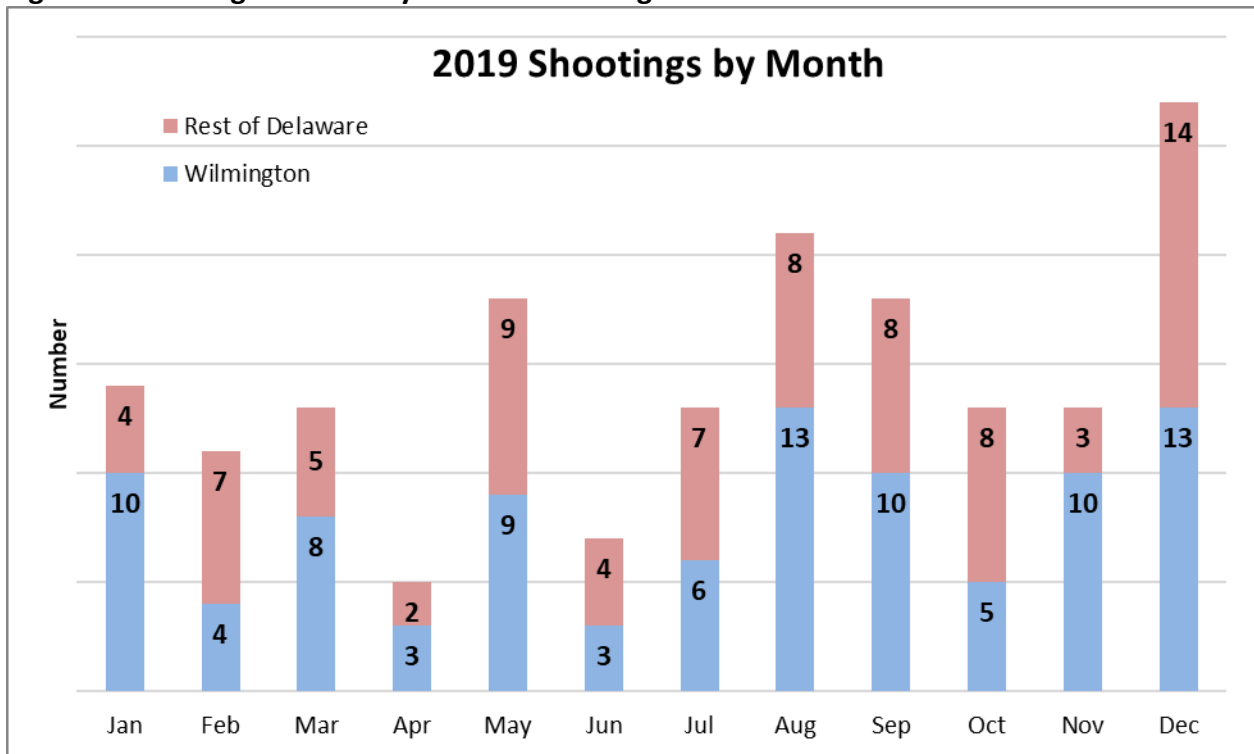


Figure 5: Monthly Progression of Delaware Shooting Incidents, 2011-2019

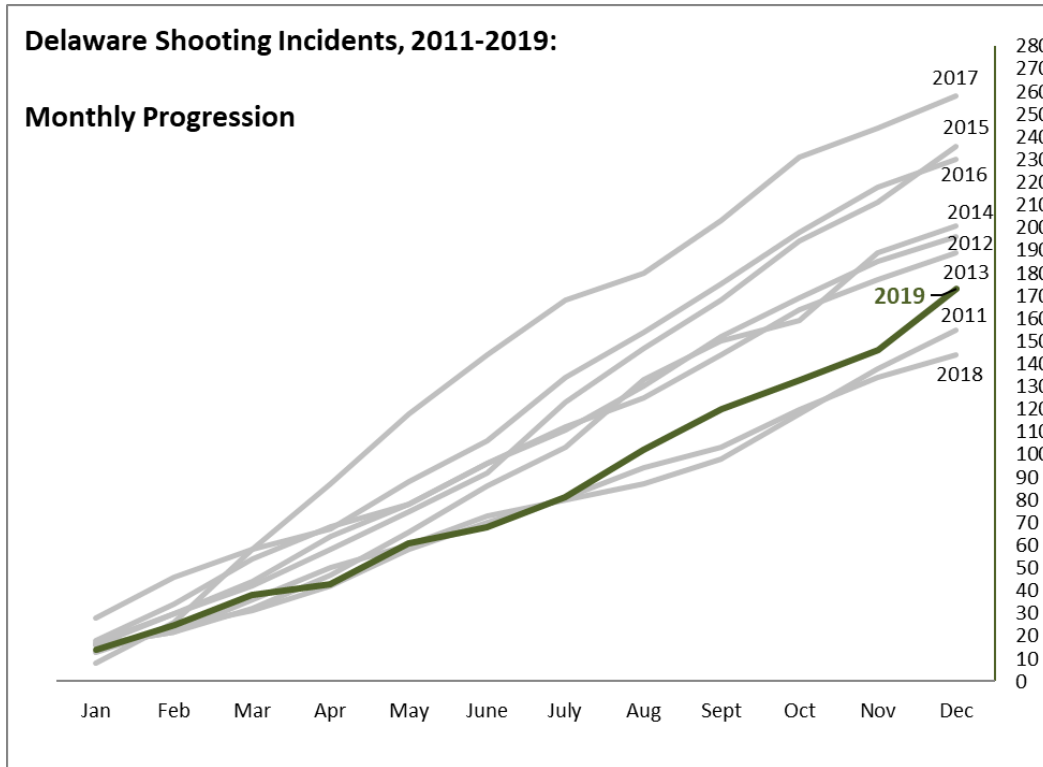


Figure 6: Monthly Progression of Wilmington Shooting Incidents, 2011-2019

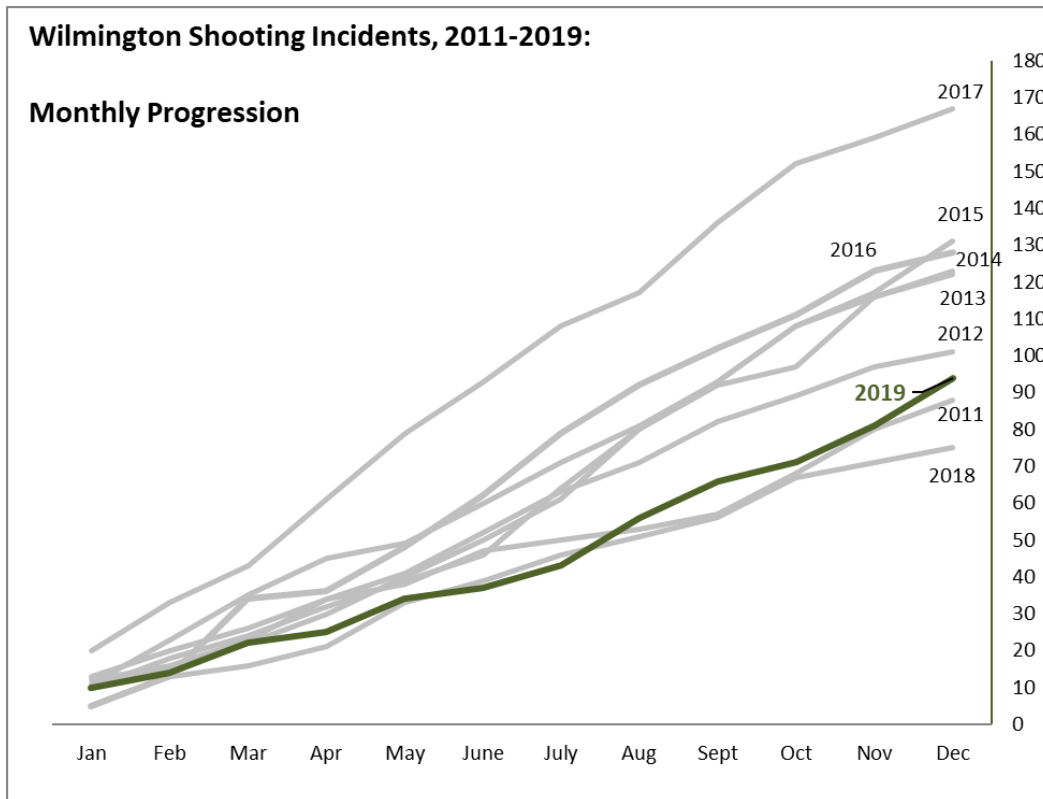
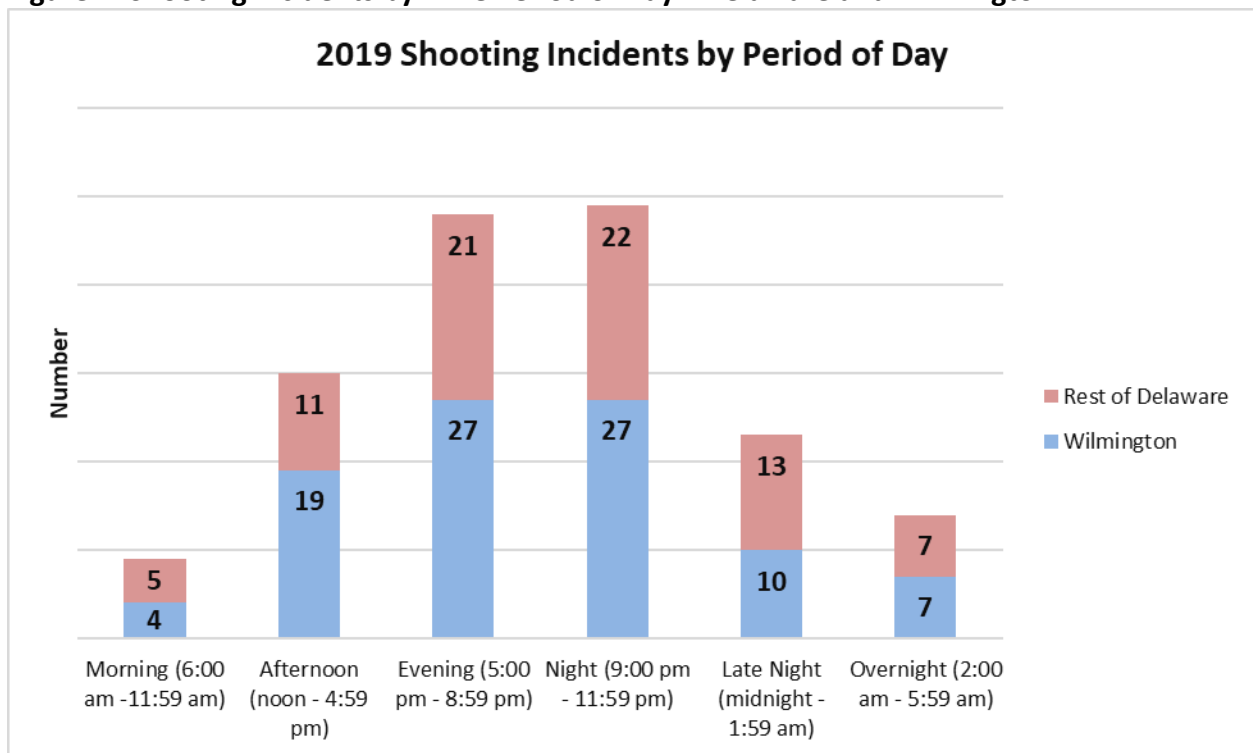


Figure 7 shows the distribution of 2019 shooting incidents by the time period of the day in which they occurred. More than half (56%) of all incidents statewide occurred between 5:00 pm and midnight, with nine incidents (5%) occurring between 6:00 am and noon and 17% during the afternoon hours. Wilmington accounted for 46% of incidents that occurred between midnight and 6:00 am, and 57% of incidents which occurred between 6:00 am and midnight. There was not a single distinct peak period for the state as a whole or Wilmington, with nearly equal percentages occurring in both areas from 5:00 pm to 8:59 pm and 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 11 displays the areas of the body where shooting victims were hit by gunfire. Almost two-thirds of the 212 victims with available injury information had a single gunshot wound: just over 25% to the lower body (legs, feet, buttocks), 17% 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: less than 10% of all victims received injuries to same area of the body (e.g., struck once in each leg; multiple times in the chest), while more than 25% had injuries to more than one body area (e.g., head and chest; leg and abdomen).

Table 11: Shooting Victims by Area of Body Struck

Area of Victim's Body	Number	Percent
Single Injury to Single Area	137	64.3
<i>Legs/Feet/Buttocks</i>	55	25.8
<i>Chest/Back/Abdomen</i>	36	16.9
<i>Arm/Hand</i>	24	11.3
<i>Head/Face/Neck</i>	22	10.3
Multiple Injuries to Single Area	18	8.5
Injuries to Multiple Areas	57	26.8
Unknown	1	0.5
Total Victims	213	

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 12 displays information about apparent motives and/or relevant circumstances for 105 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%), followed by a Drug-Related issue (34%), Robbery (17%), and Retaliation (14%). A bystander or otherwise unintended person was struck in just over 10% of incidents.

Table 12: Motives/Circumstances Related to Shooting Incidents—Incident Level

Motives/Circumstances	Incidents*	Percent of Incidents
Altercation/Dispute/Argument	43	41.0
Drug-related	36	34.3
Robbery	18	17.1
Retaliation	15	14.3
Bystander	12	11.4
Intimate Partner Violence	8	7.6
Other	22	21.0
Unknown, but with secondary circumstances	38	36.2
Total Where Motive/Circumstances Known	105	

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

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/>).

For the 57 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 13. The most frequent victim-to-offender relationship was Otherwise Known (42%), followed by Acquaintance (25%). Family and Spouse/Boyfriend/Girlfriend (current/former) relationships each comprised 12% of relationships. Note that in two of the incidents identified as being related to intimate partner violence, the nature of the circumstances warranted a victim-suspect relationship determination other than Spouse/Boyfriend/Girlfriend (current/former).

Table 13: Victim to Suspect Relationship—Incident Level

Type of Relationship	Number	Percent
Otherwise Known	24	42.1%
Acquaintance	14	24.6%
Family (e.g., sibling, parent, child, in-law)	7	12.3%
Spouse/Boyfriend/Girlfriend (current/former)	7	12.3%
Stranger	3	5.3%
Neighbor	2	3.5%
Total Where Relationship Is Known	57	

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% 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 74% of incidents overall (86% where witnesses were known), at least one witness could be classified as being fully cooperative with the investigation (Table 14). In 40% of incidents overall (50% where a victim was able to cooperate), victims were similarly cooperative (Table 15).

Table 14: Level of Witness Cooperation (Incident Level)

	Number*	Percent
Full Cooperation	116	73.9
Limited Cooperation	15	9.6
Witnesses Refused to Cooperate	4	2.5
No Known Witnesses	22	14.0
Total	157	

*Could not classify 16 incidents

Table 15: Level of Victim Cooperation (Incident Level)

	Number*	Percent
Full Cooperation	59	39.6
Limited Cooperation	48	32.2
No Cooperation	11	7.4
Victim Deceased/Unable to Cooperate	31	20.8
Grand Total	149	

*Could not classify 24 incidents

Conclusion

In 2019, there were 173 criminal, non-accidental shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of another person. The year-end total was higher than the record low set the prior year, but well below the totals for 2015-2017. More than half of all incidents (54%) occurred in the City of Wilmington, with another 18% occurring in suburban New Castle County, 21% in Kent County, and 6% in Sussex County.

One-hundred-seventy-four individuals had non-fatal injuries as a result of these incidents, and 39 died of their wounds in 37 homicide incidents. Two victims died during two incidents related to an intimate relationship. More than 260 individuals were suspected of involvement in the shooting incidents, with 97 suspects identified by name. As of May 29, 2020, arrests or exceptional clearances had been made in 34% of all shooting incidents and 32% of homicide incidents, but 76% and 71%, respectively where at least one suspect had been identified.

Most shooting victims (86%) were male, with Blacks comprising the largest racial group of victims (91% of all victims, 91% of male victims). For the 68 incidents where demographic information was available for both victims and suspects, 91% involved victims and suspects who were predominantly of the same race.

More than 85% of victims and more than 90% of identified suspects had criminal histories in Delaware. Of those with a Delaware arrest history, 76% of victims and 87% of identified suspects had at least one felony arrest. Most victims and identified suspects were juveniles at the time of their first Delaware arrest (89% and 79%, 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 nine 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 74% of incidents overall (86% where witnesses were known), at least one witness could be described as being fully cooperative. Victims had a similar level of cooperation in 40% of incidents overall (50% where a victim was able to cooperate).

Technical Appendix

History of the Statewide Shooting Report

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 2017 report continued the approach taken for 2016, except that the gang-involvement section was eliminated due to insufficient data. The 2018 edition continued the 2017 approach as gang-involvement data remained insufficient.

Detailed 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 2019. 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 (whether the person struck was an intended target or a bystander). 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.

Expanded 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.

Victim and witness cooperation can also impact the Center's ability to accurately count shooting incidents. Occasionally, a shooting investigation will locate a scene complete with blood and spent casings; however, no victim can be located, despite a canvas of hospitals in Delaware and the surrounding states. In some of these cases, the potential victim's injuries may have been minor enough that they chose not to seek treatment at a medical facility. Based on reports of victim behavior, it is also possible that a victim presented for medical treatment but was effective in deceiving medical personnel regarding the nature and cause of the injury, knowing that hospitals would have to report a suspected shooting incident to police.

Additionally, in some incidents where injuries have been minor or where the nature of the wound raised questions about whether the injury was the result of a qualifying incident, a lack of cooperation made it challenging for the Center to classify the incident. In such cases the

Center followed the best available information: determinations by medical personnel, police statements, or absent both of these, the preponderance of information. As a result of these issues and this process, the determinations for some incidents may not reflect the unknown truth. However, in the Center's experience, incidents included and excluded through the determination process generally balance each other out (i.e., there is minimal net effect on the final counts).

Data Appendix

Table A-1: Incidents, Victims, and Suspects by County

Shootings in 2019 by Reporting Agency						
County	Agency	Incidents	Victims	Suspects		
				All Suspects	Identified by Name	Incidents with an Arrest (Individual Arrests)*
New Castle	Wilmington Police Dept.	94	120	146	39	27 (32)
	Suburban New Castle County	31	37	43	17	9 (12)
	New Castle County PD	22	24	32	14	7 (10)
	Delaware State Police Trp. 1	3	5	4	1	1 (1)
	DSP Troop 2	2	4	3	0	0
	DSP Troop 6	2	2	2	0	0
	DSP Troop 9	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	Newark Police Dept.	1	1	1	1	0
	New Castle County Total	125	157	189	56	36 (44)
Kent	Dover Police Dept.	23	28	40	22	13 (17)
	DSP Troop 3	9	11	14	4	2 (2)
	Harrington Police Dept.	3	3	3	3	0
	DSP Troop 9	1	1	3	3	1 (2)
	Smyrna Police Dept.	1	1	1	0	0
	Kent County Total	37	44	61	32	16 (21)
Sussex	DSP Troop 5	6	6	11	4	2 (2)
	DSP Troop 4	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	DSP Troop 7	1	1	1	1	0
	Bridgeville Police Dept.	1	2	1	1	1 (1)
	Georgetown Police Dept.	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	Seaford Police Dept.	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	Sussex County Total	11	12	16	9	6 (6)
Statewide Total	173	213	266	97	56 (69)	

*Arrest counts include five deceased suspects, two who died by suicide (one at shooting scene, one shortly after fleeing). Two additional suspects (one responsible for two incidents) were killed in later shootings. All would otherwise have been arrested for their respective shootings, with each incident classified as an exceptional clearance.

Table A-2: Fatal Shootings by Reporting Agency

Fatal Shootings in 2019 by Reporting Agency						
County	Agency	Incidents	Victims	Suspects		
				All Suspects	Identified By Name	Incidents with an Arrest (Individual Arrests)*
New Castle	Wilmington Police Dept.	21	23	31	4	4 (4)
	Suburban New Castle County	8	8	10	7	3 (3)
	New Castle County PD	4	4	6	4	1 (1)
	DSP Troop 1	2	2	2	1	1 (1)
	DSP Troop 9	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	Newark Police Dept.	1	1	1	1	0
	New Castle County Total	29	31	41	11	7 (7)
Kent	Dover Police Dept.	2	2	3	2	2 (2)
	Harrington Police Dept.	2	2	2	2	0
	DSP Troop 9	1	1	3	3	1 (2)
	Kent County Total	5	5	8	7	3 (4)
Sussex	DSP Troop 5	3	3	3	3	2 (2)
	Sussex County Total	3	3	3	3	2 (2)
Statewide Total		37	39	52	21	11 (12)

*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.