District of Columbia
Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board

Domestic Violence
Homicide
5-Year Trends
2015-2019
INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence and the homicides that result are serious public health problems. Over 10 million women and men in the United States experience physical violence by a current or former partner each year; approximately 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 7 men experience severe physical violence by a partner at some point in their lifetime. An estimated 39 percent of women in DC have been physically or sexually assaulted by an intimate partner. And mirroring national rates, the rate of intimate partner homicides in the District is again increasing.

The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board (DVFRB) works to prevent intimate partner and other domestic violence homicides in the District by improving the response of individuals, the community, and government agencies to domestic violence. Data in this five-year trends report are based on the DVFRB’s expert analysis of available police, court, medical, and media records.

Between 2015-2019, there were 61 homicides in the District of Columbia that were determined to be linked to domestic violence.

The DVFRB divides these cases into aggregate domestic violence homicides, intimate partner-related homicides (IPH), and non-IPH domestic violence homicides. Because its main goal is to prevent future domestic violence deaths by identifying previous gaps in services and issuing recommendations for improvement, the DVFRB closely examines...
all intimate partner homicides. Unlike other domestic violence homicides, intimate partner homicides tend to follow similar patterns and, therefore, can benefit from systemic prevention efforts. A well-developed body of scientific research surrounding intimate partner fatality risk factors and prevention strategies guides the Board’s review of these cases.

To review recent DVFRB’s findings and recommendations, please refer to the Board’s 2020 Abbreviated Annual Report, available from the Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants.

### Types of Domestic Violence Homicide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPH</th>
<th>Non-IPH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Current spouse</td>
<td>• Parent, child, sibling, other family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Former spouse</td>
<td>• 3rd-party to current/former intimate partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Current intimate partner (unmarried)</td>
<td>• Roommate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Former intimate partner (unmarried)</td>
<td>• Landlord/renter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number of Domestic Violence Homicides by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total DV Homicide Victims 5-year trend</th>
<th>IPH Victims 5-year trend</th>
<th>Non-IPH Victims 5-year trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016: 15</td>
<td>2016: 7</td>
<td>2016: 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018: 8</td>
<td>2018: 4</td>
<td>2018: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019: 13</td>
<td>2019: 8</td>
<td>2019: 5</td>
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Domestic Violence Fatalities Defined

According to the DC law that created the DVFRB, [DC Code § 16-1051](#), a “domestic violence fatality” includes a homicide under any of the following circumstances:

- The alleged perpetrator and victim resided together at any time;
- The alleged perpetrator and victim have a child in common;
- The alleged perpetrator and victim were married, divorced, separated, or had a romantic relationship, not necessarily including a sexual relationship;
- The alleged perpetrator is or was married to, divorced, or separated from, or in a romantic relationship, not necessarily including a sexual relationship, with a person who is or was married to, divorced, or separated from, or in a romantic relationship, not necessarily including a sexual relationship, with the victim;
- The alleged perpetrator had been stalking the victim;
- The victim filed a petition for a protective order against the alleged perpetrator at any time;
- The victim resided in the same household, was present at the workplace of, was in proximity of, or was related by blood or affinity to a person who experienced or was threatened with domestic violence by the alleged perpetrator; or
- The victim or the perpetrator was or is a child, parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or cousin of a person in a relationship that is described within this subsection.
Victims and perpetrators of domestic violence homicide ranged broadly in age from their teens through 80s. The average age was 42 for victims and 38 for perpetrators.

Both women and men were victims of domestic violence homicide (1/3 and 2/3, respectively). Men made up 80% of perpetrators.

Most victims and perpetrators were Black. All but four domestic violence homicides were intraracial. (Term Hispanic based on MPD data collection category.)

Half of domestic violence homicides were perpetrated by current or former intimate partners.

Domestic violence homicide victims were largely stabbed or shot. Of the three domestic violence homicides/suicides in this period, all were shootings.

38% of domestic violence homicides occurred in Ward 8.

Please note numbers may not total 100% due to rounding.
The District of Columbia had 30 intimate partner homicides (IPH) from 2015-2019.

Victims and perpetrators of IPH ranged broadly in age.

The median age for victims was 37 and the average age was 39. For perpetrators, the median age was 39 and the average age was 40.

IPH victims were more likely to be women than men. Both perpetrators and victims were majority Black.

(.Term Hispanic based on MPD data collection category.)

90% of IPH victims were stabbed or shot.

83% of IPH victims were in a current relationship with the perpetrator. 16% were former partners.

IPH deaths occurred in every Ward. Ward 8 had twice as many IPH deaths as the next highest Ward.

Please note numbers may not total 100% due to rounding.
The District of Columbia had 31 domestic violence homicides that did not involve intimate partners from 2015-2019.

Non-IPH domestic violence homicide victims and perpetrators ranged in age from their 20s through 80s.

For victims, the median age was 43 and the average was 44. For perpetrators, the median age was 30 and the average was 36.

The majority of non-IPH domestic violence homicide victims and perpetrators were Black men.

Most non-IPH domestic violence homicide victims were killed by a male relative or roommate through shooting or stabbing.

Non-IPH domestic violence homicides occurred in every Ward but 3 and 4.

Please note numbers may not total 100% due to rounding.