



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITY REVIEW BOARD

DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE  
**HOMICIDE**

5-YEAR TRENDS  

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2015-2019



## INTRODUCTION

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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.<sup>1</sup> An estimated **39 percent** of women in DC have been physically or sexually assaulted by an **intimate partner**.<sup>2</sup> And mirroring national rates, the rate of intimate partner homicides in the District is again **increasing**.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup> Data in this five-year trends report are based on the DVFRB's expert analysis of available **police, court, medical, and media records**.<sup>5</sup>

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

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- 1 Truman, J.L., & Morgan, R.E. (2014). *Nonfatal Domestic Violence, 2003-2012* (Rep.). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. doi:<https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ndvO312.pdf>
  - 2 Smith, S.G., Chen, J., Basile, K.C., Gilbert, L.K., Merrick, M.T., Patel, N., Walling, M., & Jain, A. (2017). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR34305.v1>
  - 3 Fridel, E.E., & Fox, J.A. (2019). "Gender Differences in Patterns and Trends in U.S. Homicide, 1976-2017." *Violence and Gender*, 6(1), 27-36. <https://doi.org/10.1089/vio.2019.0005>
  - 4 D.C. Code §16-1052
  - 5 Media records include data from *DC Witness*, which tracks all homicides in the District of Columbia. Only those homicides of victims 16 years and older that were attributed to domestic violence are included in this report.

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

### IPH

- Current spouse
- Former spouse
- Current intimate partner (unmarried)
- Former intimate partner (unmarried)

### Non-IPH

- Parent, child, sibling, other family
- 3rd-party to current/former intimate partner
- Roommate
- Landlord/renter

## Number of Domestic Violence Homicides by Year



## 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.

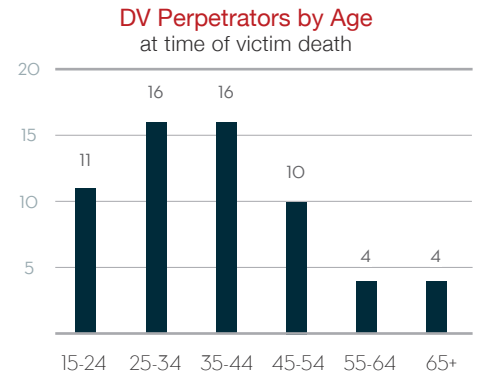
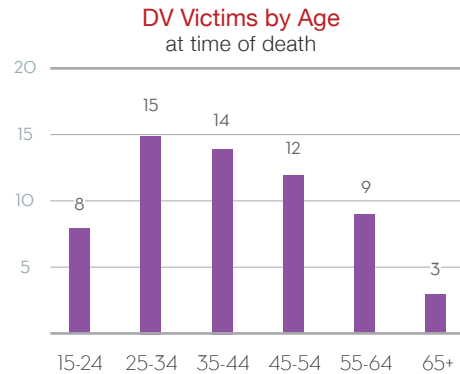
# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDE

## 5-Year Trends: 2015-2019

The District of Columbia had **61** domestic violence homicides from 2015-2019.

Victims and perpetrators of domestic violence homicide ranged broadly in age from their teens through 80s.

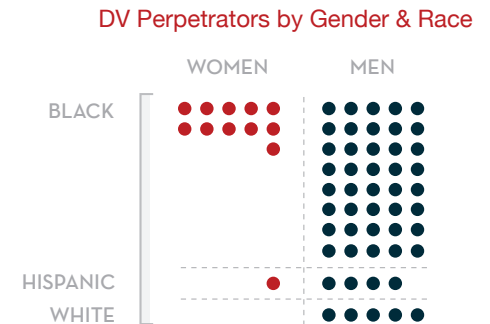
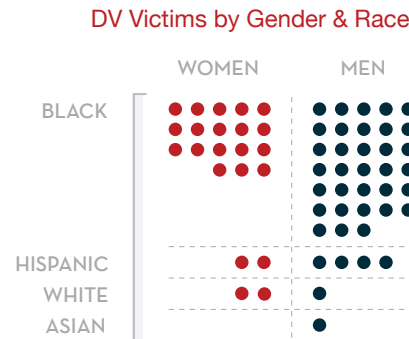
The average age was **42** for victims and **38** for perpetrators.



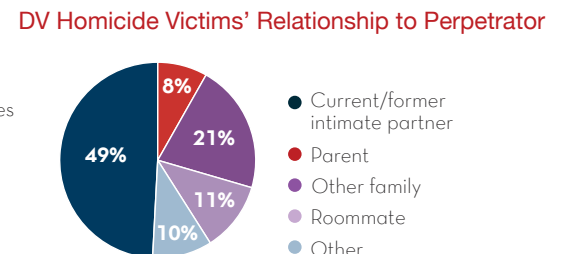
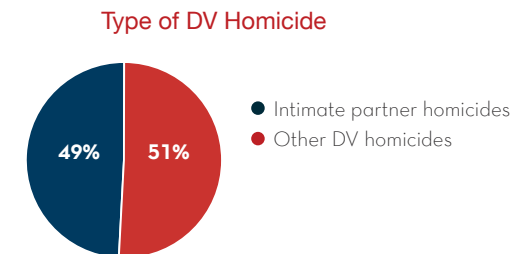
Both women and men were victims of domestic violence homicide (**1/3** and **2/3**, respectively). Men made up **80%** of perpetrators.

Most victims and perpetrators were Black. All but four domestic violence homicides were intraracial.

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

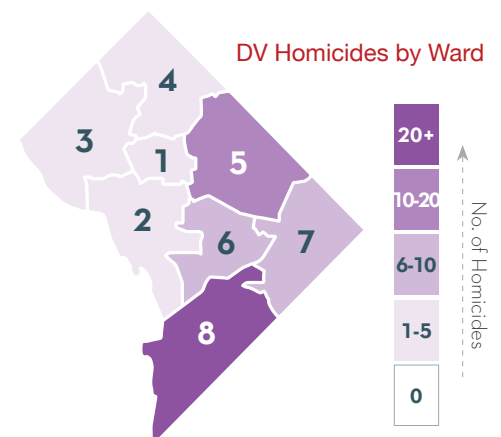
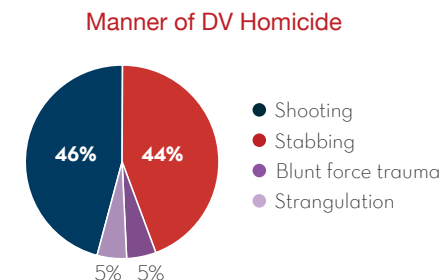


Half of domestic violence homicides were perpetrated by current or former intimate partners.



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

38% of domestic violence homicides occurred in Ward 8.



# INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE

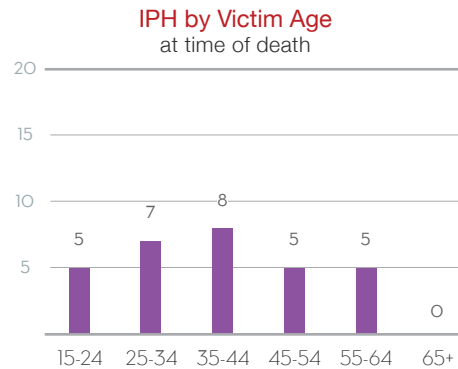
## 5-Year Trends: 2015-2019

The District of Columbia had **30** intimate partner homicides (IPH) from 2015-2019.

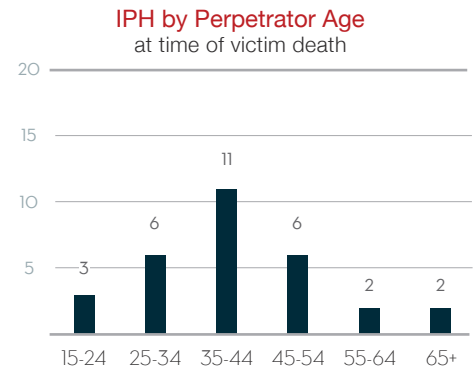
Victims and perpetrators of IPH ranged broadly in age.

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**.



The youngest victim was **16** years old and the oldest was **64**.

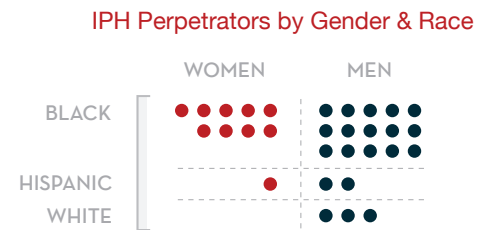
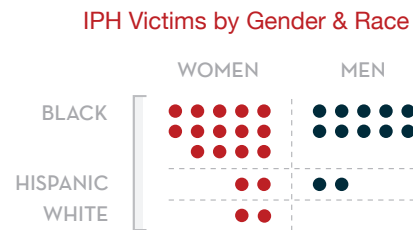


The youngest perpetrator was **18** years old and the oldest was **70**.

IPH victims were more likely to be women than men.

Both perpetrators and victims were majority Black.

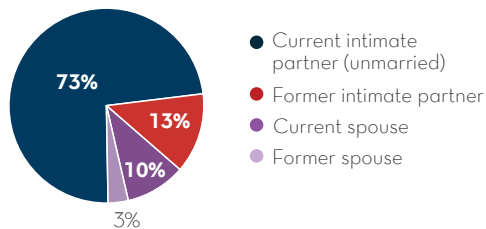
(Term *Hispanic* based on MPD data collection category.)



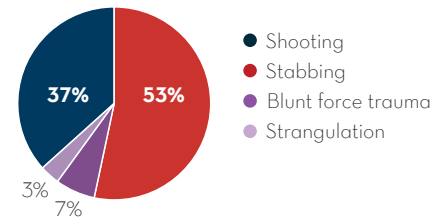
90% of IPH victims were stabbed or shot.

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

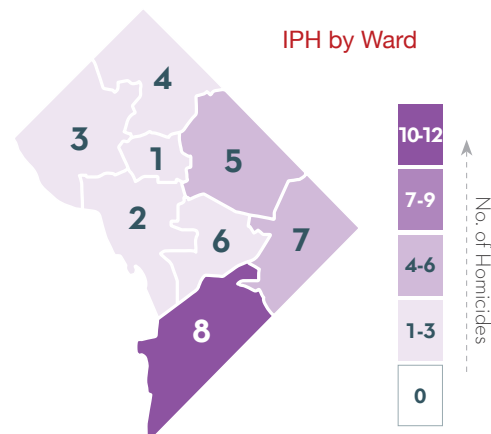
**IPH Victims' Relationship to Perpetrator**



**Manner of Homicide**



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.



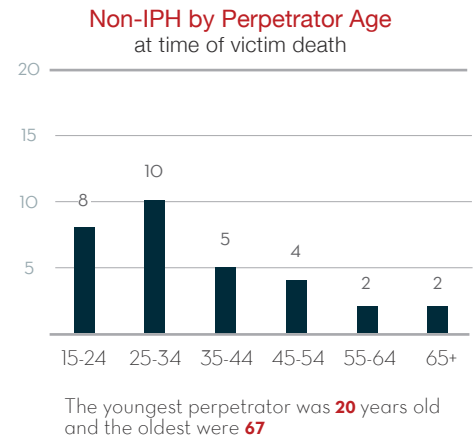
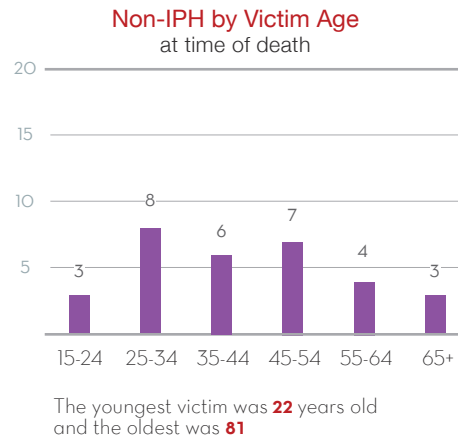
# NON-IPH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDE

## 5-Year Trends: 2015-2019

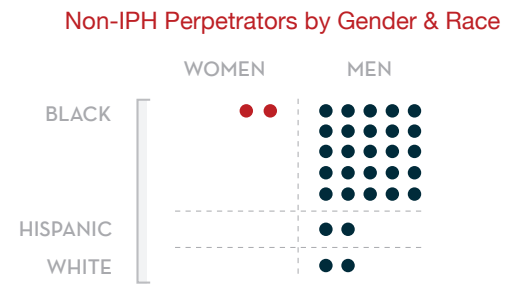
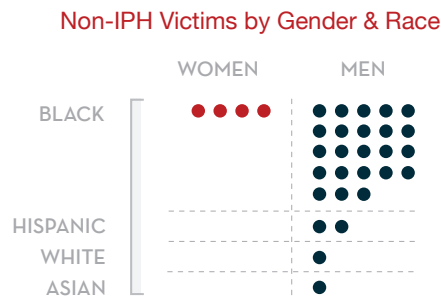
The District of Columbia had **31** domestic violence homicides that did **not** involve intimate partners from 2015-2019.

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**.

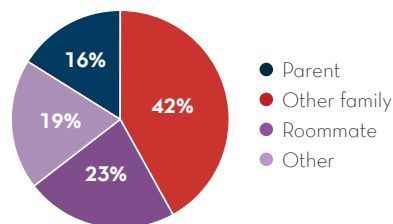


The majority of non-IPH domestic violence homicide victims and perpetrators were Black men.

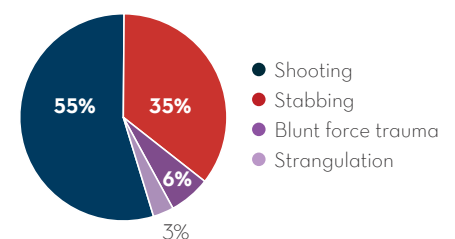


Most non-IPH domestic violence homicide victims were killed by a male relative or roommate through shooting or stabbing.

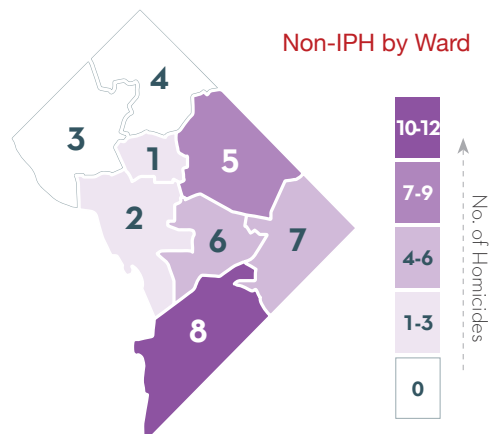
**Non-IPH Victims' Relationship to Perpetrator**



**Manner of Homicide**



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



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

