

HOMICIDE IN CALIFORNIA, 2018

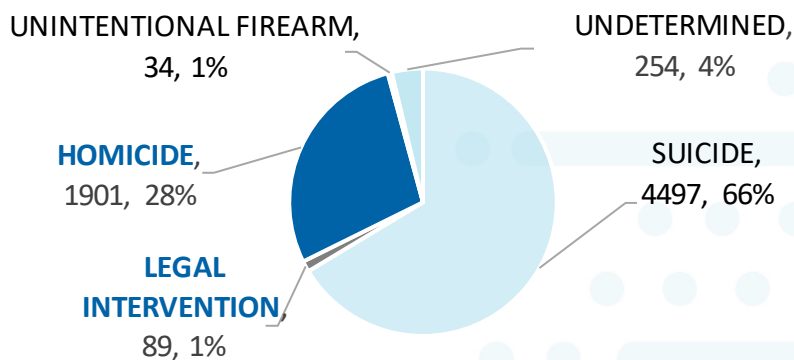
Vital statistics data are collected from death certificates for all violent deaths that occur in California. Enhanced surveillance through CalVDRS is completed for a subset of participating counties by linking vital statistics data to supplemental data abstracted from coroner and medical examiner reports, toxicology reports, and law enforcement reports. Circumstances that contributed to the death that were documented in these reports were abstracted from this supplemental data and included in the surveillance system. This additional data can address the **who, where, when** and **how** of the deaths to help us try to understand **why** they occurred.

This document summarizes demographic data for homicide deaths that occurred to all California residents in 2018. Additionally, circumstance data surrounding the homicide are also summarized for deaths that occurred in the subset of 21 participating CalVDRS counties using CalVDRS supplemental data from multiple sources. Legal intervention deaths, a subset of homicide in which the death results from law enforcement acting in the line of duty, are grouped with homicides in this report.

STATEWIDE HOMICIDE DATA

- There were 6,775 violent deaths to CA residents in 2018.
- Nearly one-third of these were due to homicide (1,990), including the 1% legal intervention deaths (deaths that result from law enforcement acting in the line of duty).
- This is equivalent to more than 5 homicide deaths every day to people living in California.
- The homicide rate was 5.0 deaths per 100,000 population.

Violent death among CA residents, 2018



About CalVDRS

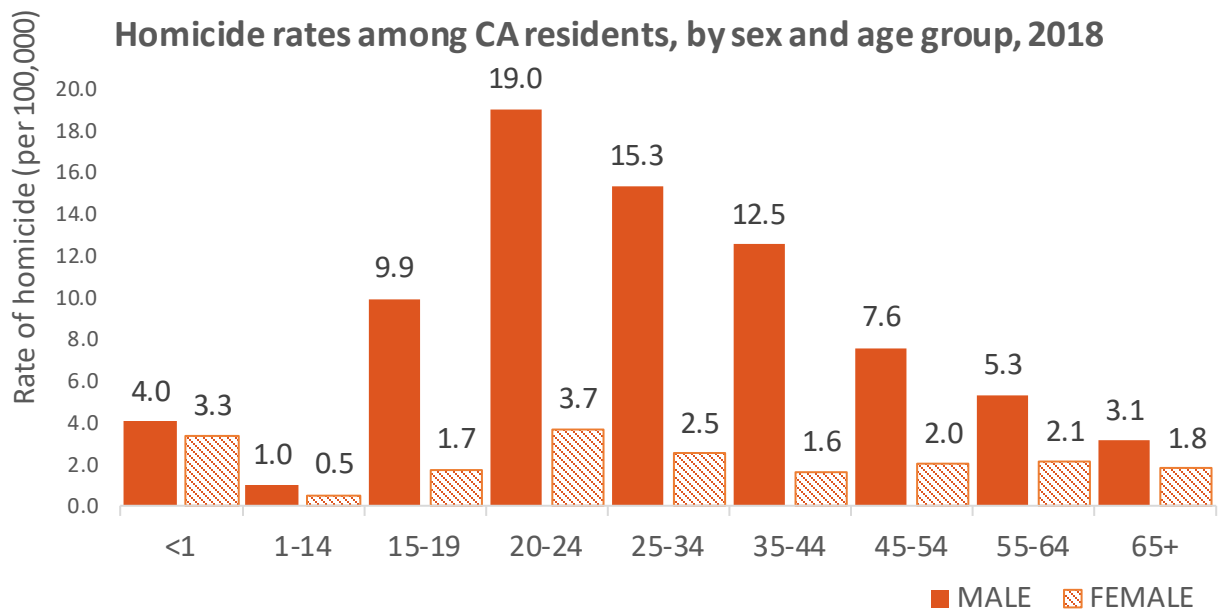
The California Violent Death Reporting System (CalVDRS) is housed in the Injury and Violence Prevention Branch in the California Department of Public Health. CalVDRS is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct statewide surveillance on violent deaths that occur in California. Violent deaths include homicide (including legal intervention deaths that result from law enforcement acting in the line of duty), suicide, unintentional firearm deaths, and deaths of undetermined intent that meet the CalVDRS definition. CalVDRS collects data from multiple sources (i.e., death certificates, medical examiner/coroner reports, and law enforcement reports) in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the circumstances surrounding these deaths. The goal of this system is to promote development of data-driven public health prevention strategies that aim to reduce the number of violent deaths that occur each year.

Sex

- Four of every five homicide victims were male (82%).
- The rate of homicide among males (8.2 per 100,000) was 4.5 times the rate among females (1.8 per 100,000).

Age

- Rates of homicide among males were higher than females at all ages.
- Rates peaked in young adults at 19.0 per 100,000 in male victims and 3.7 per 100,000 in female victims.
- Among male victims, the rate of homicide decreased with age after the peak in young adulthood.



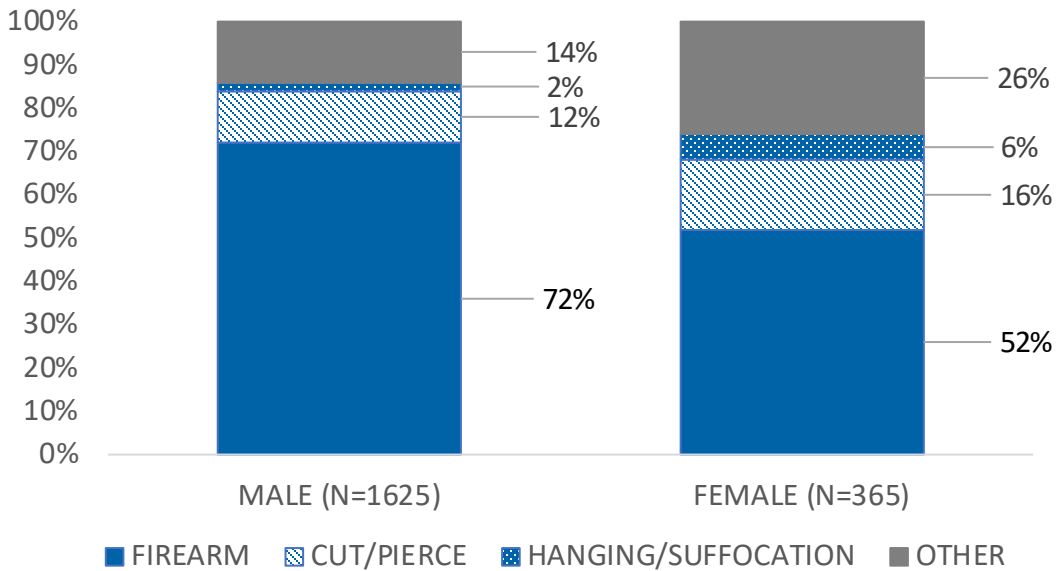
Race/Ethnicity

- Most homicide victims were among people who were Hispanic (46%), followed by 24% among Whites and 23% among Blacks.
- The rate of homicide among people who were black (20.2 per 100,000) was four times the overall rate. People who are Native American also had a higher rate (13.4 per 100,000).

Mechanism of Homicide

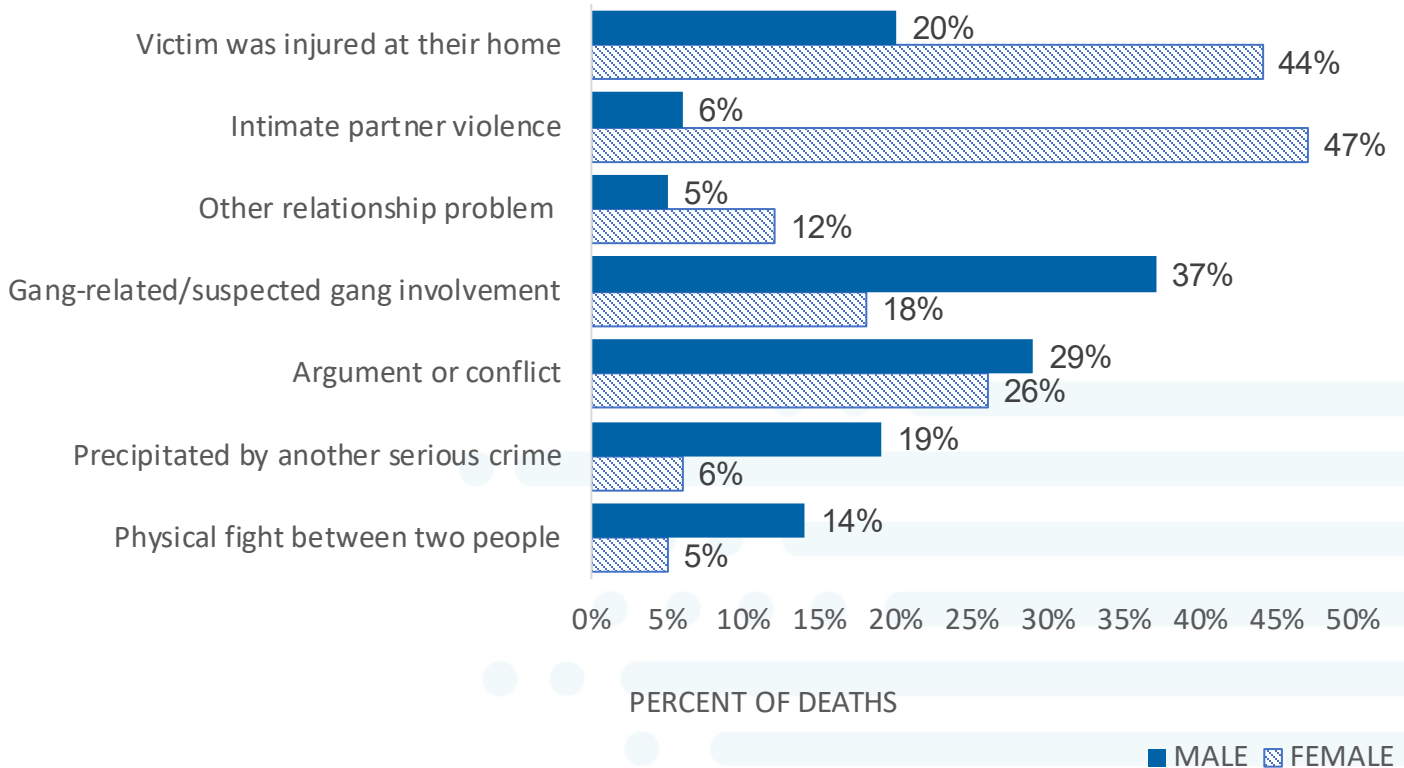
- Firearms were used in more than two of every three homicide deaths (68%).
- Among male victims of homicide, firearms were the weapon used in nearly three of every four deaths (72%).
- Among female victims of homicide, firearms were the weapon used in one-half of deaths (52%).

Mechanism of homicide among CA residents by sex, 2018



HOMICIDE CIRCUMSTANCES (in CalVDRS counties)

- There were 1,028 homicides in the CalVDRS counties with supplemental data reports. 83% had at least one circumstance documented (n=853).
- 8% of homicide victims were known to be homeless and 10% of victims had an alcohol and/or other substance abuse problem.



- 25% of homicides occurred at the victim’s home. This was true in 44% of homicides where the victim was female and in 20% of deaths where the victim was male.
- Violence or conflict with a current or previous intimate partner (IPV), was a contributing factor in 47% of homicides among females and 6% of homicides to males.
- Other relationship problems (e.g., with a family member or friend, but not an intimate partner) contributed to 12% of female and 5% of male homicide death.
- The homicide was gang-related, or had suspected gang member involvement, in 37% of male-victim homicides and 18% of female victims.
- An argument or conflict contributed to 29% of male-victim homicides and 26% of female-victim homicides.
- The homicide was precipitated by another serious crime (e.g., assault, robbery, drug trade) in 16% of all homicides: 19% of homicides to males and 6% to females.
- A physical fight between two people contributed to the death in 14% of cases where the victim was male and 5% of cases where the victim was female.

Resources for violence prevention

[Firearm Violence Prevention](#)

[Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices](#)

[A Comprehensive Technical Package for the Prevention of Youth Violence and Associated Risk Behaviors](#)

Notes about CalVDRS data

In 2018, 21 counties participated in CalVDRS enhanced data collection, including: Amador, Butte, Fresno, Humboldt, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Lake, Los Angeles, Marin, Mono, Placer, Sacramento, San Benito, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, Shasta, Siskiyou, Ventura, and Yolo Counties. Together, the CalVDRS counties represent 60% of the homicide deaths that occurred in 2018 in California and cover a mix of both urban and rural counties across the state.

Circumstance data is reported as a percentage of deaths with at least one known circumstance; circumstances were known for 83% of abstracted homicide deaths in the 21 CalVDRS counties.

Circumstances contributing to the homicide are not mutually exclusive, and more than one can be indicated for a single homicide death.

Data Sources

California Violent Death Reporting System (CalVDRS), Injury and Violence Prevention Branch, Center for Healthy Communities, California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

Vital Statistics data: California Comprehensive Master Death File (CCMDF), CDPH, 2018.

Population numbers used for the calculation of rates: California Department of Finance, Report P-3: State and County Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity, Detailed Age, and Gender, 2010-2060. March 2021.

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For more information on CalVDRS please contact IVPB@cdph.ca.gov.