

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITIES IN PENNSYLVANIA

**TOTAL FATALITIES: 141**

**2012**

**110 VICTIMS (58 Deaths By Gun)**



**31 PERPETRATORS (29 Deaths By Gun)**



**DEATH BY GUN**

# FEWER DEATHS, SAME BRUTALITY

Pennsylvania's domestic violence fatality count in 2012 was the lowest it's been since 2008, although the numbers are still shocking. In 105 separate incidents, 110 victims and 31 perpetrators died. Regrettably, we cannot report any decrease in the brutality and senselessness of the deaths that did occur.

As usual, firearms were the weapons of choice in 2012; nearly 53% of victims were shot. The next most common method of killing was stabbing, which accounted for 20% of victim fatalities.

**“This was a cold-blooded, preplanned killing. The defendant executed his wife, the mother of his four children, with casual efficiency.”**

This year's fatalities included:

- An elementary school music teacher shot by her ex-husband as she played the organ during her church's Sunday service.
- A 17-year-old girl whose boyfriend is accused of deliberately wrecking the car they were riding in and sitting on her as she lay trapped in the overturned car until she was smothered to death.
- A 20-year-old woman beaten, bludgeoned with a shovel, strangled, drowned and buried alive. An ex-girlfriend and her new partner are accused.

Other victims were smothered, burned, poisoned, drowned, pushed down stairs, drugged, had their throats slashed and were bludgeoned with baseball bats, pipe wrenches and other implements.

Because Pennsylvania has no central database or reporting requirements for domestic violence fatalities, we relied on media reports and police data to compile this report. We based our count on information available at the time of printing.

**We counted killings among current, former and new intimate partners and family members. We also included perpetrator suicides and killings and bystander and intervenor deaths during domestic violence situations.** Perpetrator deaths are part of our count because they also are a loss of life and a tragedy that impacts families and communities.

We know that every year this report misses victims whose stories didn't attract media attention because they lived in poor, crime-ridden communities. It also doesn't include cases where the relationship between victim and perpetrator, or the perpetrator's motive, was unavailable.

We exclude unsolved cases, cases where no arrests have been made even if intimate partners or family members are suspects and child abuse and neglect deaths that the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare reports.

Sometimes justice is delayed for decades in domestic violence cases. A glaring example of that occurred in 2012 when a Pennsylvania man was finally charged with strangling his young lover in 1979!

We also know, from local advocates' anecdotal accounts, that some victims of domestic violence commit suicide in response to unrelenting abuse.

We mourn for all victims of domestic violence – named and unnamed, counted and uncounted. We dedicate this report to their memory and to the effort to prevent more deaths.

# GUNS TAKE THE HIGHEST TOLL

Between 2000 and 2012, 1,320 victims of domestic violence were killed in Pennsylvania; 780 of those victims were shot. Every year guns top the list of methods abusers use to kill their victims.

In a year during which the gun control debate reignited over the tragic shootings of 20 children and six adults at a school in Newtown, Conn., PCADV continues to support strengthening state and federal gun violence prevention laws and remains firmly opposed to increasing access to firearms.

**“He had a bullet with her name on it.”**

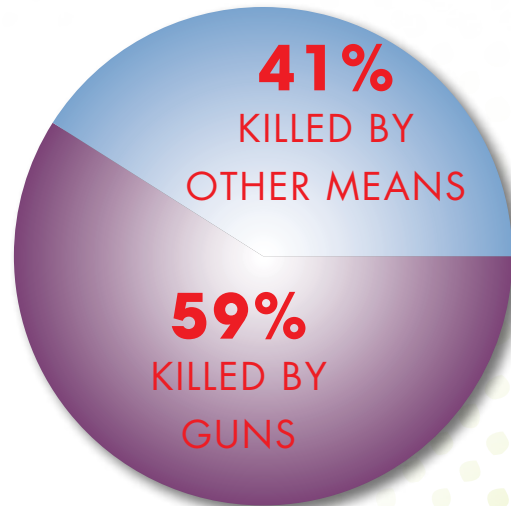
## PCADV's Policy on Firearms

“Consistent with both our mission to end domestic violence, and the fact that firearms too often turn domestic violence into domestic homicide, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence supports gun violence prevention legislation and opposes efforts to encourage domestic violence victims to obtain guns.”



A summary of each 2012 fatality, by county, is available at [www.pcadv.org](http://www.pcadv.org).

## VICTIM DEATHS 2000-2012



A USA Today analysis of FBI records identified 146 mass shootings nationally, in which a total of 934 people died, between 2006 and early 2013; nearly half involved family members.

A separate analysis by Mayors Against Illegal Guns found 56 mass shootings nationally since 2009; 57% involved domestic violence.

**“It’s sad. Mike didn’t deserve it. Mike was a nice guy. He would have done anything to help anybody.”**

# VICTIM AND PERPETRATOR PROFILES

**105** INCIDENTS = **141** FATALITIES IN 2012

**110** VICTIMS KILLED

FEMALE VICTIMS **72**

MALE VICTIMS **38**

YOUNGEST AGE **Infant**

OLDEST AGE **86**

AGES 0-12 **7**

AGES 13-17 **1**

AGES 18-64 **90**

AGES 65 AND OLDER **12**

**108** TOTAL PERPETRATORS

MALE **95**

FEMALE **13**

YOUNGEST AGE **13**

OLDEST AGE **87**

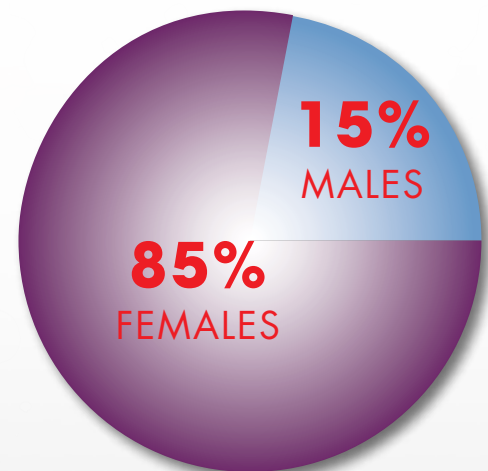
**31** PERPETRATORS DIED

COMMITTED SUICIDE **29**

KILLED BY POLICE OR OTHERS **2**

VICTIMS KILLED BY A  
CURRENT OR FORMER  
INTIMATE PARTNER

TOTAL **67**



**57** Females Killed By Current  
Or Former Intimate Partners

**10** Males Killed By Current  
Or Former Intimate Partners



# HOW THEY DIED

## THE VICTIMS

TOTAL SHOT: **58**

SHOT: **56**

SHOT & STABBED : **1**

SHOT & BURNED: **1**

STABBED: **17**

BEATEN: **10**

STRANGLER: **9**

THROAT SLASHED: **3**

BURNED: **2**

STABBED & BEATEN: **2**

STABBED & PUSHED DOWN STAIRS: **1**

STABBED & STRANGLER: **1**

SMOTHERED: **1**

POISONED & DROWNED: **1**

POISONED & SUFFOCATED: **1**

DRAGGED BY TRUCK: **1**

PUSHED DOWN STAIRS: **1**

DRUGGED: **1**

BEATEN, BLUDGEONED, STRANGLER,  
DROWNED, BURIED ALIVE: **1**

## THE PERPETRATORS

SUICIDES BY GUN: **27**

SUICIDES BY OTHER MEANS: **2**

SHOT BY POLICE: **1**

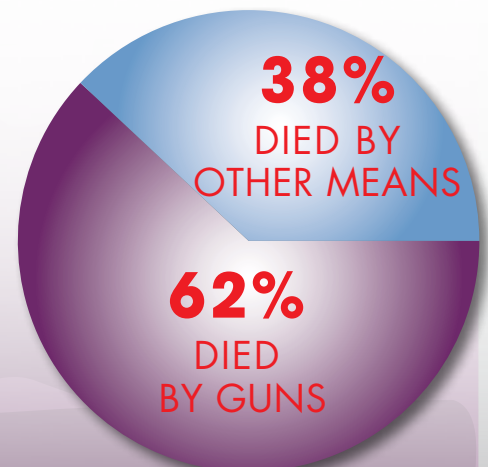
SHOT BY OTHER INTERVENOR: **1**

TOTAL GUN DEATHS: **87**

**58** VICTIMS

**29** PERPETRATORS

VICTIM AND  
PERPETRATOR  
DEATHS IN 2012



LETHAL GUN VIOLENCE

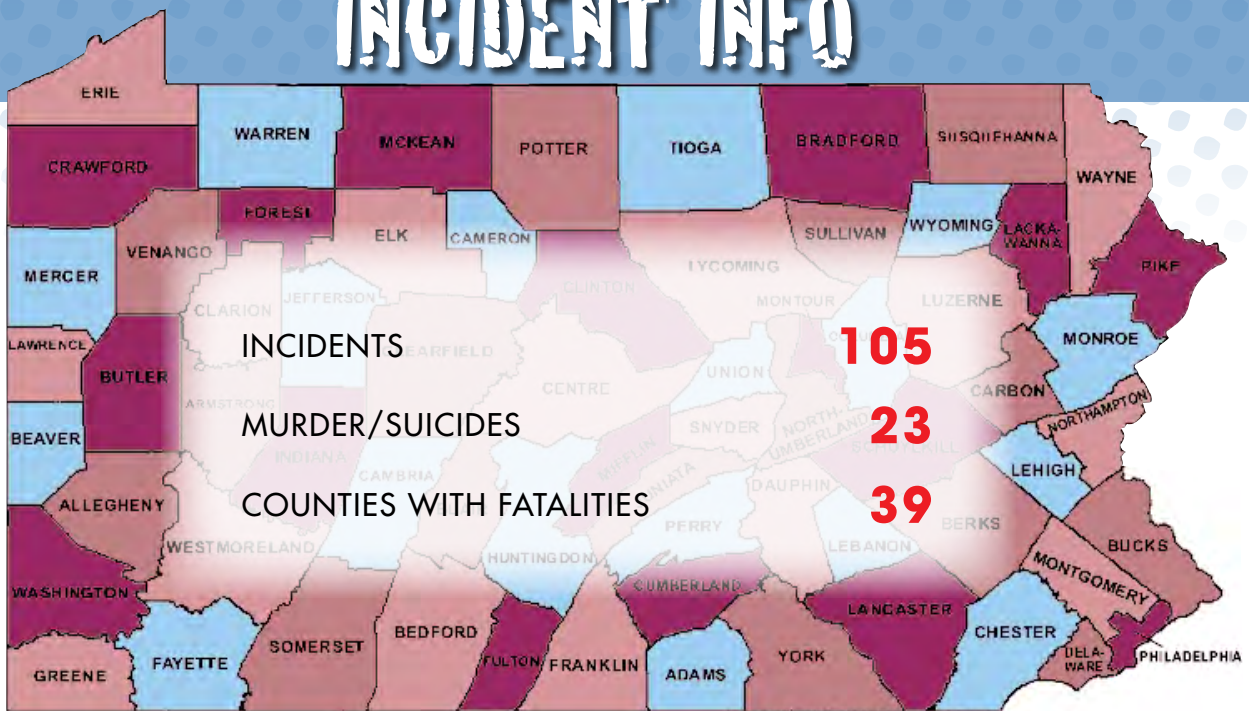
# THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

- A **3-year-old** boy died in a house fire set by a man who mistakenly thought his ex-girlfriend was inside. The boy's **2-year-old** sister and mother escaped with injuries.
- A father slit the throats of his **6-year-old** daughter, **11-year-old** stepdaughter and their mother. He also killed the family's pets – a dog, goat and pony. He pleaded guilty to 3 counts of first-degree murder.
- **Eighteen-month-old** twins were poisoned and then one was drowned and the other suffocated. Their **4-year-old** sister survived poisoning. Their mother was charged. She allegedly wanted to get back at their father for an affair.
- A 39-year-old woman bludgeoned her **11-year-old** daughter to death before setting their home on fire and killing herself.
- A woman, her new boyfriend and his mother were fatally shot by the woman's estranged husband, who had come to check on his **4-year-old** daughter. He then fled the state with her. He was charged in the deaths.
- A **12-year-old** girl found her mother dead at the bottom of the stairs. The mother's live-in boyfriend, who was charged with the death, allegedly told the girl "I hate you, bitch" and kicked and tried to punch the daughter as she fled the house.
- Two children, **ages 8 and 10**, discovered the bodies of their parents after their father shot their mother and then himself.
- A 27-year-old woman was fatally shot in her apartment, with her **6-year-old** daughter and **3-year-old** cousin sleeping in the next room. Her boyfriend was charged.
- A 21-year-old woman was fatally shot in the head in her apartment with her **4-month-old** baby and the baby's grandmother present. The woman's ex-boyfriend, the father of the baby, was charged.
- A 24-year-old pregnant woman was fatally stabbed in front of her **5-year-old** daughter. The victim's boyfriend was charged.
- Two children, **ages 7 and 12**, were upstairs asleep when their mother was killed downstairs. Her boyfriend was charged.
- A 31-year-old man was fatally shot while his **6-month-old** son lay in a crib nearby. His girlfriend was convicted of third-degree murder.
- A 38-year-old man, who had been fatally shot in his bed, was discovered by his **16-year-old** daughter. Her twin sister also was in the house. His ex-girlfriend, their mother, was charged. She told a friend she had worn earplugs during the shooting because she didn't want to hear him scream.
- A pregnant woman was fatally shot in the head when her **8-year-old** son and **preschool-age** daughter were in the house. Her boyfriend, who was upset that she was pregnant, was charged.

**“Death is always a difficult thing. But this one ... this passing away of this 3-year-old and the circumstances involved. This one had me tossing and turning in my sleep.”**

**Pastor at victim's funeral**

# INCIDENT INFO



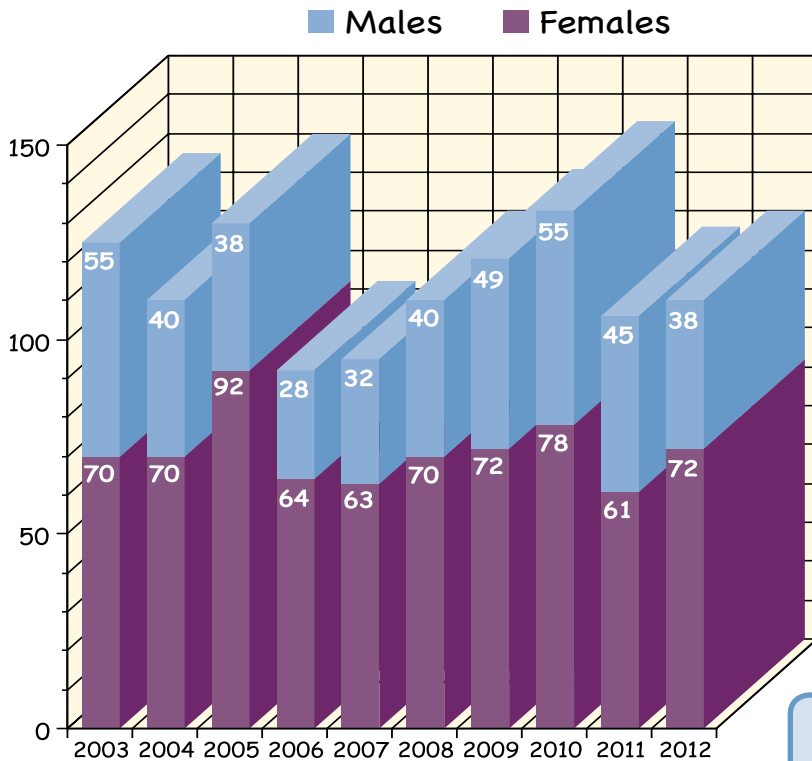
# FATALITIES BY COUNTY

COUNTY	VICTIM(S)	PERPETRATOR(S)	TOTAL
Adams	1	1	2
Allegheny	9	2	11
Berks	5	1	6
Blair	2	2	4
Bucks	2	0	2
Butler	0	2	2
Cambria	2	1	3
Carbon	3	2	5
Chester	2	0	2
Clarion	1	0	1
Clinton	0	1	1
Columbia	1	0	1
Crawford	1	0	1
Dauphin	3	1	4
Delaware	4	0	4
Erie	1	0	1
Fayette	1	0	1
Franklin	3	0	3
Indiana	4	0	4
Jefferson	1	1	2

COUNTY	VICTIM(S)	PERPETRATOR(S)	TOTAL
Lancaster	6	1	7
Lawrence	1	1	2
Lebanon	1	1	2
Lehigh	6	1	7
Luzerne	3	2	5
Monroe	1	0	1
Montgomery	3	0	3
Northampton	2	0	2
Northumberland	1	1	2
Philadelphia	24	6	30
Potter	1	0	1
Schuylkill	1	1	2
Somerset	1	0	1
Susquehanna	1	0	1
Venango	2	0	2
Washington	1	0	1
Wayne	2	1	3
Westmoreland	1	0	1
York	6	2	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>141</b>

# GENDER BREAKDOWN 2003-2012

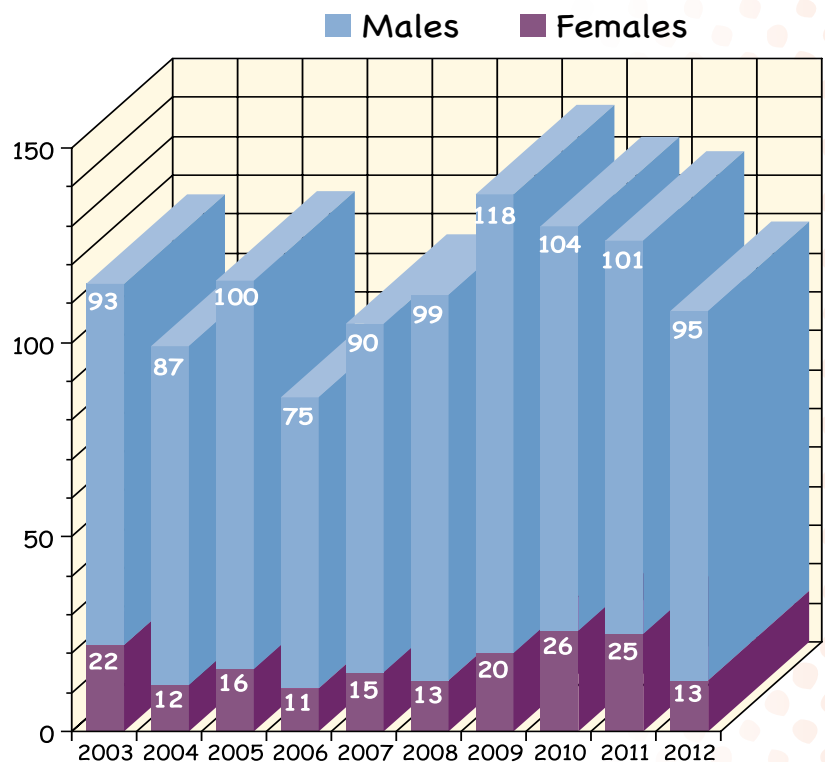
## VICTIMS WHO DIED



**“No woman should be afraid to go home.”**

**“If he couldn’t have her, no one could.”**

## PERPETRATORS WHO KILLED



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**NO MORE** | TOGETHER WE CAN END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT