Fort Pierce Police Department

Crime Analysis Unit

Historical Homicide Statistics (1970 – 2009)

Prepared for Chief R. Sean Baldwin
& Sgt Dennis McWillams

This report compares the department's homicide statistics to the nationwide statistics reported by the Federal Bureau of Investigations in their Crime in the United States publication. Since the 2009 report was not published at the time of this report, the focus will be primarily on the 2008 stats for comparison. It should be noted that it is not mandatory for law enforcement agencies to report their crime incidents to their state and/or federal bureaus. Therefore, the information provided is only for those agencies participating in the Uniform Crime Reporting program and only provide estimated crime levels in the Unites States.

Over the past four decades, the City of Fort Pierce's homicide rate has ranged from 10 homicides per 100,000 residents *(1999, 2006, 2007, & 2008)* to 64 homicides per 100,000 residents *(1973)*. This corresponds to a total of 4 homicides and 20 homicides, respectively. Although our homicide rate has fluctuated over the years, the overall trend has been a decline in the rate of homicides experienced by Fort Pierce residents. The chart on the left indicates the homicide rate for the City of Fort Pierce.

According to the FBI's report, homicides accounted for 1.2% of the estimated violent crimes reported in 2008. In the State of Florida, homicides made up .9% of the total violent crimes. During the same year, homicides accounted for .5% of all violent crimes within the City of Fort Pierce.

According to the 2008 Crime in the United States report published by the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the national homicide rate was 5.2 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. For cities across the United States with a similar population size (25,000 to 49,999), the homicide rate was 3.2 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. The homicide rate for Fort Pierce in 2008 was 10 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. The following indicates the homicide rates at various levels.

COMPARISON OF HOMICIDE CRIME RATES									
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
City of Fort Pierce	41	34	20	39	16	26	10	10	10
Saint Lucie County	11	12	5	8	4	5	5	4	4
State of Florida	6	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6
All Metropolitan Cities with similar Population size *(25,000 To 49,999)*	-	-	-	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.2
Unites States	-	-	-	6	5.7	5.9	6.1	5.9	5.6

CASE CLEARANCE

The table on the left indicates the number of homicides per year and the number of homicide cases that were cleared by arrest(s) or exceptional means. The clearance percentage refers to the number of cases cleared during the year compared to the number of incidents reported during that same year. However, the cleared cases may or may not be related to a case that was reported during that year. Also included is the average percent of cleared cases for every decade represented. There has been a steady decrease in the percentage of cleared homicide cases over the decades from the 1970's to 1990's. However, the clearance rate significantly increases during the 2000's. In 2008 the percentage of homicide cases cleared nationwide, as reported in Crime in the United States, was 63.6%. In comparison, 75% of the cases within the City of Fort Pierce were cleared and 88% of the cases were cleared in 2009. The percentage of cases cleared by other jurisdictions within the United States with a similar population size (25,000 to 49,999) was 71.4%. The following table shows a comparison of clearance rates for the City of Fort Pierce to national wide rates for 2004 through 2008.

FORT PIERCE POLICE DEPARTMENT: HOMICIDE STATISTICS				
YEAR	# OFFENSES	# CLEARANCES	% CLEARANCE	10-yr Avg
1970	0	0	-	83.1%
1971	6	5	83%	
1972	11	11	100%	
1973	20	17	85%	
1974	19	15	79%	
1975	9	8	89%	
1976	10	9	90%	
1977	5	3	60%	
1978	11	9	82%	
1979	15	12	80%	
1980	9	8	89%	70.9%
1981	9	7	78%	
1982	12	9	75%	
1983	9	8	89%	
1984	10	10	100%	
1985	14	10	71%	
1986	14	10	71%	
1987	17	11	65%	
1988	-	-	-	
1989	16		0%	
1990	19	16	84%	60.4%
1991	9	7	78%	
1992	10	6	60%	
1993	10	5	50%	
1994	8	5	63%	
1995	11	7	64%	
1996	12	9	75%	
1997	11	5	45%	
1998	5	3	60%	
1999	4	1	25%	
2000	16	10	63%	80.4%
2001	13	10	77%	
2002	8	6	75%	
2003	15	9	60%	
2004	6	4	67%	
2005	10	15	150%	
2006	4	3	75%	
2007	4	3	75%	
2008	4	3	75%	
2009	8	7	88%	

COMPARISON OF HOMICIDE CLEARANCE PERCENTAGE					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
City of Fort Pierce	66.7%	150.0%	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%
All Metropolitan Cities with similar Population size *(25,000 To 49,999)*	69.3%	69.2%	68.8%	68.0%	71.4%
Unites States	62.6%	62.1%	60.7%	61.2%	63.6%

CLOSER LOOK AT 2000 TO 2009

Between 2000 and 2008, the State of Florida reported 8,913 homicides. Of these homicides, 18% or 1621 cases involved some type of domestic violence. The number of cases reported by the Fort Pierce Police Department for the same time period was 80 wherein 17.5% or 14 cases were domestic related. In 2009, 8 additional homicides occurred within the city limits of Fort Pierce increasing the total number of homicides for the decade to 88. There were no domestic related homicides reported during 2009.

Comparing the number of homicides to the previous decade shows an 11% decrease over the previous decade.

In Fort Pierce, seventy-nine (79) homicide victims during this time period were adults and 9 were juveniles. The race and sex of these victims are as follows:

- Black Male 54
- Black Female 8
- White Female 5
- White Male 21

In 2008, FBI reported that 78.2 percent of the homicide victims were male.

In looking at the types of weapons used, a firearm was used in 81.2% of the incidents. This includes handguns, rifles, and shotguns. The table below shows the types of weapons used.

2000-2008 Homicide Weapon Used		
Weapon Type	**Frequency**	**% Frequency**
Blunt Object	5	5.7%
Firearm	72	81.8%
Hands/Fist/Feet	1	1.1%
Knife/Cutting Instrument	7	8.0%
Other Dangerous	3	3.4%

The circumstances surrounding the homicides are outlined in the table on the right.

2000-2008 Homicide Circumstance	
Cir0uimstances of Homicide	**Frequency**
Drinking Argument	1
Lover's Quarell	3
Money Argument	2
Narcotics Related Argument	1
Other	17
Other Felony Involved	10
Unknown Circumstance	54

ANALYTICAL CONCLUSION

In looking at the rate at which homicides have occurred within the City of Fort Pierce over the past four decades, we see an overall decline in occurrences. While the clearance rate of these homicides declined between the 1970's and 1990's, we are inspired by the drastic increase during the 2000's. In comparing our clearance rates to that of the nation, the department's clearance rates have exceeded the nation's rate since 2004.