

Violence in the City of Pittsburgh: First Six Months of 2016

JULY 2016

Homicides and Other Types of Violence

In the first six months of 2016, there were 29 homicides in the City of Pittsburgh, a 34 percent increase over the six-year average.

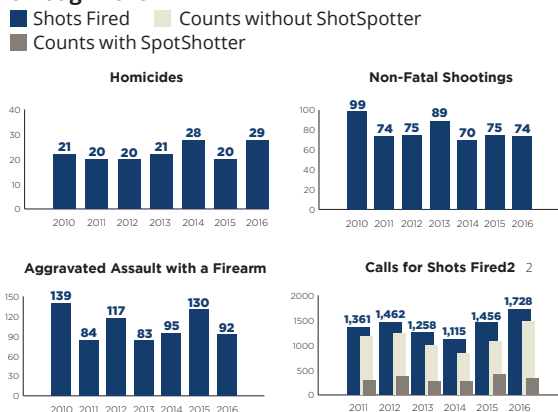
Although homicides are most likely to receive media attention, other types of violence (shootings, aggravated assaults with a firearm and calls for services for shots fired) were more likely to occur than homicides¹. For example, in the first six months of 2016, there were three shootings, three aggravated assaults with a firearm and 58 calls for shots fired incidents for every homicide.

Trends

No consistent trends were noted across all types of violence examined; in the first six months of the year, homicides and calls for shots fired increased, while shootings and aggravated assaults with a firearm decreased (Figure 1). Over a six-year average (January through June, 2010 through 2015) there were:

- 22 homicides per year. Between January and June 2016, homicides increased 34 percent over the six-year average and 45 percent over last year. There was a sharp jump in homicides by arson, with two incidents taking the lives of four people.
- 80 shootings per year. In 2016, shootings decreased eight percent over the average.
- 108 aggravated assaults with a firearm. In 2016, these incidents decreased by 15 percent from the average and 29 percent from 2015.
- 1,330 calls for services for shots fired. In 2016, these calls increased 30 percent over the average and 19 percent over 2015. As described in Violence in the City of Pittsburgh, 2015, some of the increase may be a result of increased reliability of data being collected by ShotSpotter. However, in the first six months of 2016, the increase in calls was seen primarily in neighborhoods without ShotSpotter devices.

FIGURE 1:
Violence Trends in Pittsburgh, First Six Months of 2010 through 2016



Homicide Victims

The demographic characteristics of homicide victims during the first six months of 2016 are largely consistent with historic demographic trends.

Gender: Men were nearly nine times as likely to be victims of homicide than women and made up 90 percent of all homicide victims.

Race: Black victims represented 83 percent of all homicide victims. Around three-quarters of all homicide victims were black males.

Age: Young adults were much more likely to be homicide victims than the rest of the population. The median age of homicide victims was 29; however, there were five homicide victims ages 65 and older, an unusually high number for that age group and more than the previous six years combined.

Offenders

The demographic characteristics of homicide offenders during the first six months of 2016 are largely consistent with historic demographic trends.

Gender: 72 percent of the offenders were men and 28 percent were women. The percentage of female offenders increased from an average of eight percent over the six-year period.

Race: 89 percent of offenders were black and 11 percent were white. The percentage of black offenders was higher than the average of 78 percent over the past six years.

Age: The median age of offenders was 24, identical to the median age of the same period from 2010 to 2015.

Where Did Violence Occur?

Figure 2 shows the location of homicides and the density of all calls for shots fired for the first six months of 2016. Thirty-eight percent of homicides occurred on the North Side (Brighton Heights, Marshall-Shadeland, Perry North, Perry South and Fineview), 21 percent in Homewood North and 17 percent in Pittsburgh's western neighborhoods (Esplen, Crafton Heights, Elliott and Sheraden).

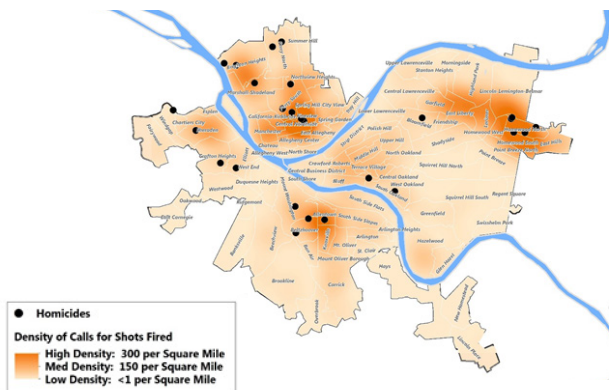
Twenty-eight percent of calls for shots fired came from the East End of Pittsburgh (from Garfield to East Hills), 24 percent from the North Side (Central Northside and surrounding neighborhoods, Brighton Heights) and 12 percent from Pittsburgh's southern neighborhoods (Knoxville, Mt. Washington, Allentown, Carrick, Beltzhoover).

¹ Homicides, non-fatal shootings and aggravated assaults with a firearm are distinct events. Aggravated assaults with a gun includes only those incidents in which the gun was fired.

² Because the current Allegheny County Computer-aided Dispatch CAD system has been in place only since August 2010, data comparison for 2010 is not considered to be reliable.

The five neighborhoods with the highest number of calls for shots fired were East Hills, Homewood South, Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar, Central Northside and Brighton Heights. Together, these neighborhoods experienced 28 percent of all non-fatal shootings.

FIGURE 2: Location of Homicides and Density of Calls for Shots Fired, City of Pittsburgh, First Six Months of 2016



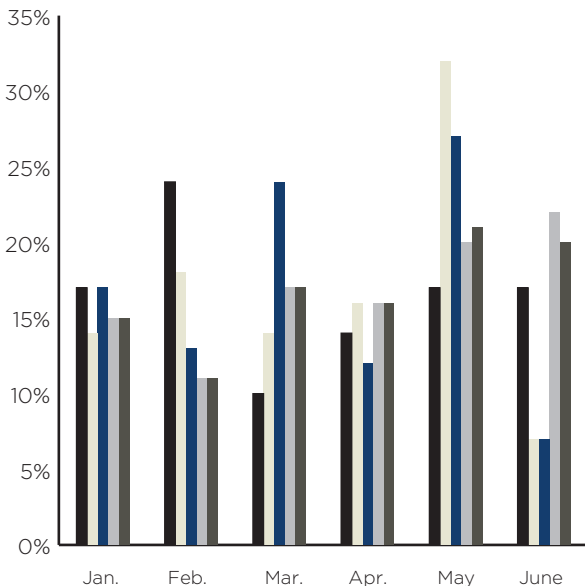
When Did Violence Occur?

Violence by Month

Looking at all incidents over the six-month period, May was the most violent month and February the least violent. Homicides were higher in January and February and calls for shots fired were higher toward the end of the period, whereas aggravated assaults with a firearm and shootings peaked in May and then decreased significantly in June.

FIGURE 3: Pittsburgh Violence by Month, by Percentage, January through June 2016

■ Homicides ■ Shooting ■ Aggravated Assault with a Firearm
 ■ Shots Fired ■ All Incidents

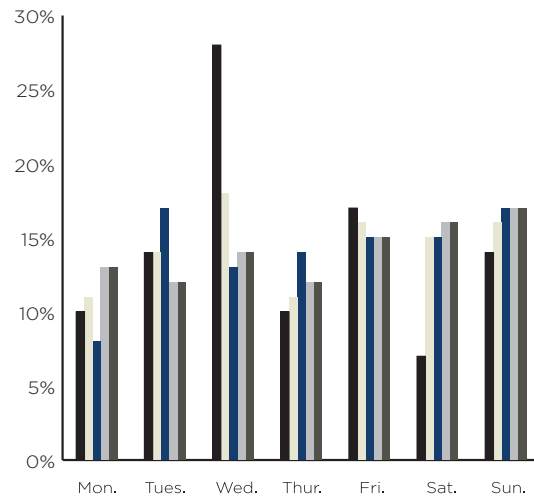


Violence by Day of the Week

During the first six months of 2016, homicides and shootings occurred most frequently on Wednesdays and Sundays; aggravated assaults with a firearm and calls for shots fired fluctuated throughout the days of the week but tended to occur more frequently on weekends.

FIGURE 4: Pittsburgh Violence by Day of Week, by Percentage, January through June 2016

■ Homicides ■ Shooting ■ Aggravated Assault with a Firearm
 ■ Shots Fired ■ All Incidents



Violence by Time of Day

The majority of violent incidents examined in the first six months of 2016 (68 percent) occurred between 8:00 P.M. and 4:00 A.M. However, there was variation by type of violence. Homicides were more evenly distributed compared to other types of violence, with only 28 percent occurring during this time, compared to 49 percent of shootings, 63 percent of aggravated assaults with a firearm and 70 percent of calls for shots fired.

FIGURE 5: Pittsburgh Violence by Time of Day, by Percentage, January through June 2016

■ Homicides ■ Shooting ■ Aggravated Assault with a Firearm
 ■ Shots Fired ■ All Incidents

