

Violence in the City of Pittsburgh: First Six Months of the Year, 2015

AUGUST 2015

Homicides and Other Types of Violence

In the first six months of 2015, there were 20 homicides in the City of Pittsburgh, a decrease over the five-year average and since 2014.

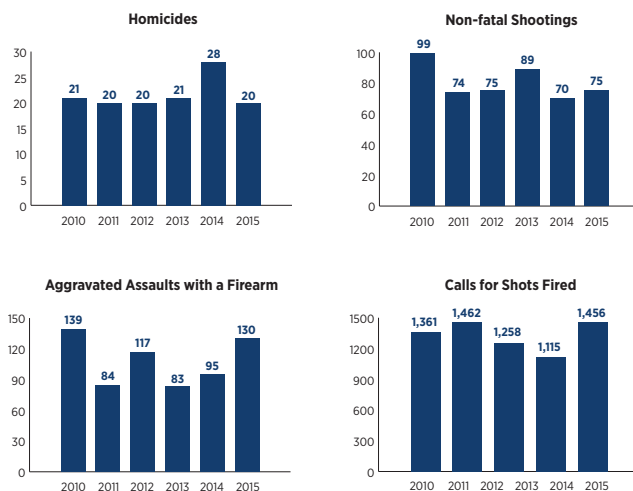
Although homicides are most likely to receive media attention, other types of violence (shootings, aggravated assaults with a firearm and calls for services for shots fired) were more likely to occur than homicides. For example, in the first six months of 2015, there were almost four shootings, seven aggravated assaults with a gun, and 73 calls for shots fired incidents for every homicide.

Trends

No consistent trends were discernable across all types of violence examined; in 2015, homicides were down, while shootings, gun assaults and calls for shots fired incidents were up. Specifically, as seen in **Figure 1**, on average from 2010 through 2014 there were:

- 22 homicides per year over the period. Between January and June 2015, homicide was down nine percent over the average and 29 percent over 2014.
- 81 shootings per year over the period; in 2015, shootings were down eight percent over the average.
- 104 gun assaults without injury over the period; in 2015, they were up 25 percent over the average.
- 1,330 calls for services for shots fired over the period; in 2015, they were up 12 percent over the four-year average (2011-2014).¹

FIGURE 1: Violence Trends in Pittsburgh, First Six Months of 2011–2015



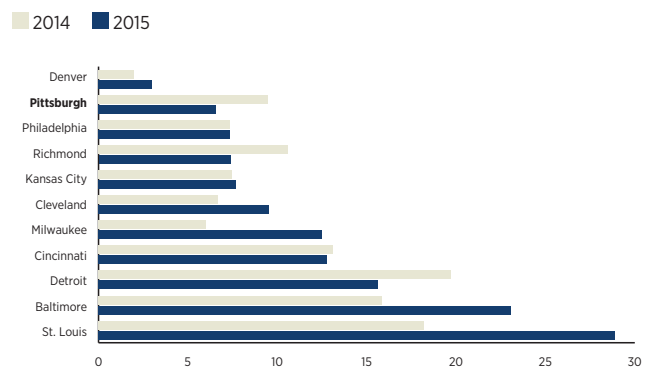
Homicide Comparison to Benchmark Cities

Comparative homicide data for Pittsburgh and most of *PittsburghToday* benchmark cities were obtained from the Federal Crime in United States report, except for Denver, for which information was obtained from the police reports.² The Cities of Boston and Charlotte were excluded as FBI data were not available for the desired time period.

For those first six months of 2015, Pittsburgh's homicide rate (6.5 per 100,000) was lower than the benchmark average (12.3 per 100,000). Richmond and Detroit also saw decreases in violence during this time. On the other hand there were significant increases in Milwaukee, Baltimore, St. Louis and Cleveland (see **Figure 2**).

Milwaukee, which in 2014 had one of its lowest annual homicide totals in city history, recorded 75 murders during the first six months of 2015., more than double the 36 it recorded at the same point in 2014. The number of murders in the first six months of 2015 jumped by 40 percent or more in Baltimore, St. Louis and Cleveland.

FIGURE 2: Homicides, Pittsburgh and Benchmark Cities, First Six Months of 2014 and 2015



Homicide Victims

The demographic characteristics of homicide victims during the first six months of 2015 are consistent with historic demographic trends.

Gender: Men were nearly four times more likely to be victims of homicide than women and made up 80 percent of all homicide victims.

Race: African Americans represented 90 percent of all homicide victims.

Age: Young adults were much more likely to be homicide victims than the rest of the population. The median age of homicide victims was 24. Individuals under 25 accounted for 55 percent of all victims in the City of Pittsburgh. Individuals under 35 accounted for 85 percent of victims.

Offenders

Gender: During the first six months of 2015, there were 13 offenders whose gender was identified; 92 percent were men and eight percent were women.

Race: Over the time period, there were 13 offenders whose race was identified; 77 percent were African American and 23 percent were other (8% Asian and 15% Hispanic).

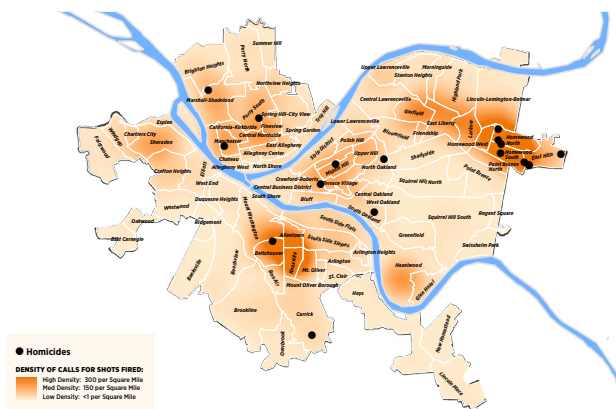
Age: Over the time period, there were 13 offenders whose age was identified. Of those, 23 percent were individuals under 25. Individuals under age 35 accounted for 100 percent of perpetrators identified. The median age of offenders identified was 26.

Where Did Violence Occur?

Figure 3 shows the density of all violence for the first six months of 2015. Sixty-five percent of homicides occurred in the East End of Pittsburgh (Homewood, East Hills, Oakland, Middle Hill, Crawford-Roberts, East Liberty), 25 percent on the Northside (Manchester, Marshall-Shadeland and Perry South) and 10 percent in South Pittsburgh (Beltzhoover and Carrick).

The vast majority of shots fired occurred in East End (Homewood, East Liberty, Hazelwood, East Hills), South Pittsburgh (Knoxville, Beltzhoover, Mount Washington) and the Northside (Marshall-Shadeland, Perry South and Manchester). These neighborhoods also experienced 43 percent of all non-fatal shootings and 35 percent of all aggravated assaults with a gun that did not result in injury.

FIGURE 3: Location of Violence in Pittsburgh, January through June, 2015



Most homicides occurred in Pittsburgh Police Zone 5 (45%), followed by Zone 1 (25%) and Zones 2, 3 and 4 with 10 percent each. No homicides occurred in Zone 6.

When Did Violence Occur?

Violence by Month

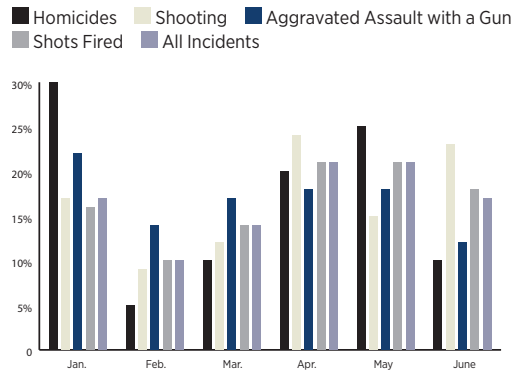
April of 2015 was more violent than had been typical of April; its 348 total incidents represent a 36 percent increase over the April average of the last four years (2011-2014).³ This was offset by a relatively peaceful June of 2015; its 292 incidents were 15 percent less than a typical June over the last four years.

¹ 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.

² <http://www.denverpost.com/2016/03/24/denver-grows-by-another-18582-people-as-citys-boom-accelerates/>

³ 2010 data are not included because calls for shooting data are not considered to be reliable for this year.

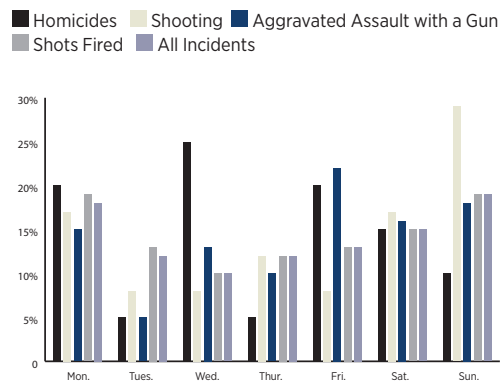
FIGURE 4: Pittsburgh Violence by Month, by Percentage, January through June 2015



Violence by Day of the Week

During the first half of 2015, 53 percent of violence took place on Friday, Saturday or Sunday; this is consistent with the distribution over the last five years.

FIGURE 5: Pittsburgh Violence by Day of Week, by Percentage, January through June 2015



Violence by Time of Day

The majority of violence (66 percent) between January and June of 2015 occurred between 8pm and 4am. However, there was variation by type of violence. Only 55 percent of aggravated assaults with a firearm occurred during this time, where 68 percent of calls for shots fired were recorded during these hours.

FIGURE 6: Pittsburgh Violence by Time of Day, January through June, 2015

