

# **Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act**

*Report to Congress May 2022*

United States Department of Justice

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)

# Contents

I. Purpose .....	1
II. Background .....	1
III. Coordinator Duties/Activities .....	2
Designation of National Coordinator and Deputy National Coordinator .....	2
Establishment of Advisory Group and quarterly meetings .....	2
Development of voluntary guidelines and protocols .....	3
Information repositories and delivery of technical assistance .....	4
Engagement with stakeholders .....	5
Cooperation with other federal agencies.....	5
Promotion of the Blue Alert Act .....	6
Coordination with United States Attorneys' Offices .....	7
IV. Blue Alerts Issued .....	8
V. Effectiveness and Status of Blue Alert Plans .....	10
VI. Officers Shot in the Line of Duty.....	12
2021 summary data .....	12
VII. Summary of Activities and Projected Next Steps .....	13
Notable past developments/activities.....	13
Notable new developments/activities.....	14
Upcoming activities .....	15
VIII. Attachments .....	16

## I. Purpose

Pursuant to the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-12 (Blue Alert Act or Act), the United States Department of Justice (DOJ or Department) provides this annual report to Congress.

## II. Background

The Blue Alert Act was enacted to “establish a national Blue Alert communications network within the Department of Justice to issue Blue Alerts through the initiation, facilitation, and promotion of Blue Alert plans, in coordination with States, units of local government, law enforcement agencies, and other appropriate entities.” (34 U.S.C. § 50502).<sup>1</sup> Named for two fallen New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers who were ambushed, the Act is intended to facilitate rapid dissemination of information to law enforcement agencies, the media, and the public that will aid in (1) apprehending violent criminals who have killed or seriously injured a law enforcement officer in the line of duty; (2) finding an officer when he or she is missing in connection with his or her official duties; or (3) sharing notice of an imminent and credible threat that an individual intends to cause the serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer.

Officer safety and wellness remains a top priority for the Department. The Department is committed to implementing the Blue Alert Act to protect the lives of the men and women who bravely serve in law enforcement. The nature of police work is uniquely dangerous, and the Department continues its strong support of federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement as they advance public safety.

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), because of its extensive previous work on officer safety and wellness issues, was tasked by the Department with overseeing implementation of the Blue Alert Act and creating the National Blue Alert Network.

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<sup>1</sup> While the legislation does not specifically mention Tribes, in its implementation of the Act the COPS Office is working with tribal law enforcement as well.

### III. Coordinator Duties/Activities

The Blue Alert Act requires an annual report to Congress on the activities of the National Blue Alert Coordinator and the effectiveness and status of Blue Alert plans that are in effect or being developed. The COPS Office has dedicated significant time and effort to implement the Blue Alert Act and reports the following activities:

#### Designation of National Coordinator and Deputy National Coordinator

The Blue Alert Act requires the Attorney General to assign an existing officer of the Department to act as the national coordinator of the Blue Alert communications network—to serve as the nationwide point of contact for the development of a network and regional coordination of Blue Alerts through the network (34 U.S.C. § 50503(a)).

As noted in previous Reports to Congress, the Attorney General designated the Director of the COPS Office as the National Blue Alert Coordinator (Coordinator). For this reporting period, the COPS Office Director was Acting Director Robert Chapman. Acting Director Chapman is a long-standing member of the COPS Office and serves as a Deputy Director. The COPS Office Blue Alert team continued to meet regularly to discuss implementation strategies, timelines, and deliverables. Select members of the team have been trained to provide technical assistance to states and local and tribal law enforcement agencies seeking to establish Blue Alert plans or enhance an existing Blue Alert plan.

#### Establishment of Advisory Group and quarterly meetings

Pursuant to the Blue Alert Act, the Coordinator is required to establish an Advisory Group to assist states, local governments, and other involved entities with initiating, facilitating, and promoting Blue Alert plans (34 U.S.C. § 50503(b)(5)). The Act requires the group to have geographically diverse representation and include the following representatives:

- A law enforcement organization representing rank-and-file officers
- Other law enforcement agencies and public safety communications
- Broadcasters, first responders, dispatchers, and radio station personnel
- Other individuals and organizations the Coordinator determines are necessary for the success of the network

As previously reported, the Coordinator established an Advisory Group that satisfies each of the statutory requirements. Today, there are fourteen members representing the following organizations:

- Fraternal Order of Police (FOP)
- National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO)
- Blue Alert Foundation, Inc.
- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)

- National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)
- National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF)
- Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO)
- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)
- National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)
- Concerns of Police Survivors
- Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI)
- Indian Country Intelligence Network (ICIN)

The Advisory Group meets on a regular basis. To date, Advisory Group members have provided valuable individual feedback to the COPS Office on our guidance and recommendations to states and local governments in developing or enhancing their Blue Alert plans. The COPS Office will add additional Advisory Group members or amend the frequency of meetings, as appropriate, consistent with the discretion granted to the Coordinator by the Blue Alert Act.

### Development of voluntary guidelines and protocols

The Blue Alert Act requires the Coordinator to establish voluntary guidelines for states and local governments to use in developing Blue Alert plans. The guidelines must include a list of resources necessary to establish Blue Alert plans; criteria and guidelines for issuing Blue Alerts; guidelines to protect privacy and civil liberties; and guidelines aligned with the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database operated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and any other relevant crime information repository (34 U.S.C. § 50503(b)(2)).

The Department has developed voluntary guidelines that address two complementary components of the Blue Alert Act: public alerts and law enforcement sensitive (LES) alerts. Public alerts directed at media outlets and affected communities provide suspect or missing officer information that is appropriate for public dissemination. LES alerts directed at affected law enforcement agencies provide sensitive information that is accessible only to law enforcement personnel. Public and LES alerts are often sent concurrently.

Unlike public Blue Alerts, LES Blue Alerts are limited to situations where an investigating agency needs to share information with other state or law enforcement agencies but has elected not to make suspect information publicly known. LES alerts are used when the investigating agency believes that making suspect information known publicly could jeopardize the criminal investigation or when the investigating agency believes that public alerting is not prudent given the facts known at the time. LES alerts are also used when there is a known credible threat to law enforcement in a particular jurisdiction and the investigating agency wishes to alert other law enforcement personnel in the affected jurisdictions or geographical area without making the threat known publicly.

To meet its statutory mandate to establish voluntary guidelines, the COPS Office has issued Blue Alert Guidelines ([https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/blue-alert/blue\\_alert\\_guidelines.pdf](https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/blue-alert/blue_alert_guidelines.pdf)) to provide general information on when a law enforcement agency should issue Blue Alerts consistent with the statutory criteria as set forth in the Blue Alert Act. Blue Alerts may be issued when one of the following sets of threshold criteria are met: (1) death or serious injury of a law enforcement officer in the line of duty; (2) law enforcement officer missing in connection with official duties; or (3) threat to cause death or serious injury to a law enforcement officer.

To supplement the Blue Alert Guidelines, the COPS Office has also developed *Effective Blue Alert Plans: Guidance and Recommendations* to help states and local agencies through the Blue Alert plan development process; enhance and standardize existing state and local Blue Alert plans; and promote nationwide compatibility of Blue Alert plans. This comprehensive guidance identifies and addresses eight key elements to consider in developing new or updating existing Blue Alert plans: (1) activation criteria for alerts; (2) requesting alerts; (3) writing effective alerts; (4) geographic scope of alerts; (5) interstate and intrastate coordination of alerts; (6) duration of alerts; (7) officer privacy protection; and (8) suspect apprehension efforts.

The COPS Office has worked closely with partners at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to establish the most effective way to deliver targeted alerts within the existing alerting infrastructure. We will also continue to work with law enforcement stakeholders and Advisory Group members to increase the effectiveness of our guidance.

## Information repositories and delivery of technical assistance

Since October 2016, the COPS Office has maintained a dedicated webpage on our website at <https://cops.usdoj.gov/bluealert> to promote Blue Alerts and provide educational materials. This National Blue Alert Network webpage serves as a center for resources including the following:

- Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015
- Blue Alert map indicating those states and territories with Blue Alert plans
- Blue Alert Guidelines
- National Blue Alert Network factsheet
- Blue Alert Legislation Compendium
- State Blue Alert Officials Directory (public contact information)
- Information on how to access our secure controlled-access information-sharing platform and who is eligible to use it

Since January 2017, the COPS Office has provided a secure web-based data repository maintained on the FBI Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal (LEEP) that provides controlled access to states, local governments, law enforcement agencies, and other qualified stakeholders as determined by the Coordinator. Individuals with existing LEEP or LEO.gov accounts can access the National Blue Alert

Network on the JusticeConnect platform at <https://justiceconnect.cjis.gov/communities/community/blue-alert>. The National Blue Alert Network provides curated information that may not be appropriate for public dissemination, including the following:

- State Blue Alert Officials Directory (24-hour emergency contact information)
- National Blue Alert Network PowerPoint Presentation
- *Effective Blue Alert Plans: Guidance and Recommendations*
- Sample Blue Alert Policies

The COPS Office will continue to enhance the National Blue Alert Network webpage and the JusticeConnect Network with updated and new information on a regular basis.

Notably, the Blue Alert Act prohibits the Coordinator from lobbying any state officer regarding the funding or implementation of a Blue Alert plan (34 U.S.C. § 50503(e)(2)). The COPS Office does offer free informational resources and technical assistance to any state or local agency wishing to establish or modify its Blue Alert plans. Upon request by the state or local agency, trained COPS Office Blue Alert Team members will review Blue Alert plans and provide feedback to ensure compliance with the voluntary guidelines and protocols.

## Engagement with stakeholders

The COPS Office maintains active partnerships with various stakeholders representing law enforcement and emergency communications in order to administer and expand the National Blue Alert Network. Stakeholder organizations play a key role in ensuring that the COPS Office is aware of relevant issues affecting officer safety and alerting technologies. The COPS Office will continue to work with stakeholders individually and collectively to develop and enhance our national Blue Alert strategy. We will also identify additional stakeholders as needed.

## Cooperation with other federal agencies

The Act requires the Coordinator to cooperate with the FCC, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and other DOJ offices as appropriate (34 U.S.C. § 50503(d)). As previously reported, the COPS Office has established a point of contact with each of the identified federal agencies and the FBI. We have since forged strong working relationships with several key federal partners, most notably the FCC and FEMA.

The FCC oversees the national Emergency Alert System (EAS) used to deliver important emergency information, such as AMBER alerts and weather information targeted to specific areas. The FCC plays a key role in alerting, as it establishes the technical standards, activation procedures, and testing protocols. The FCC has sole authority to create the fixed three-letter EAS event codes used to define alerts and their corresponding actions by broadcasters, cable system operators, wireless carriers, and other parties responsible for alerting the public. On December 14, 2017, the FCC voted unanimously to

approve the creation of a special three-letter EAS event code to be used by alerting authorities when issuing Blue Alerts: BLU. The new FCC rule constituted a major advancement in alerting capabilities and will benefit all 50 states and U.S. territories, including tribal lands. The rule took effect in two phases. The use of the BLU event code for alerts issued via television and radio went into effect on January 18, 2019. The use of BLU for Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) became effective on November 29, 2019.

In tandem with the FCC's role in alerting, the DHS's FEMA is responsible for maintaining and operating the national Integrated Public Alerts and Warning System (IPAWS). In order to ensure that alerting capabilities keep up with current and emerging technologies, FEMA partners with various stakeholders from the public and private sectors representing broadcasting, mobile device manufacturers, and other interested industries.

States and many jurisdictions rely on IPAWS to utilize EAS and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) to alert the public. IPAWS allows alerting authorities to write their own emergency alerts using commercially available software applications approved by FEMA and compliant with common alerting protocols. Alerts are authenticated and delivered simultaneously through multiple communication pathways to quickly reach the public.

The COPS Office will continue its ongoing coordination efforts with FEMA to advance the integration of Blue Alert Plans into IPAWS. The COPS Office will also continue to seek consultation with, and ongoing advice from, our federal partners. We will also identify new federal partners as needed.

## Promotion of the Blue Alert Act

Notably, the Blue Alert statute prohibits the Coordinator from conducting any official travel or hosting a conference for the sole purpose of implementing the Blue Alert Act (34 U.S.C. § 50503(e)(3)). These restrictions have not prevented the COPS Office from promoting the Blue Alert Act, and we have undertaken a number of measures to raise awareness of the Blue Alert Act.

Beginning in 2019, and continuing during this reporting period, the National Blue Alert Coordinator set forth a 'battle plan' to target states that had not yet adopted Blue Alert plans or systems. COPS Office staff partnered with U.S. Attorneys' Offices in the affected states to identify select groups of law enforcement stakeholders who could assist with information sharing regarding the benefits of Blue Alerts and the resources of the National Blue Alert Network. The results led to the creation of working coalitions of concerned stakeholders in the targeted states. Many of these coalitions have gone on to promote Blue Alert legislation and other actions leading to the adoption of Blue Alert plans or systems.

The Department has also promoted awareness of the Blue Alert Act at various national law enforcement conferences, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, and the National Sheriffs' Association. These conferences provide outreach to tens of thousands of law enforcement officers and agencies. The Department has also responded to multiple requests from various state law enforcement agencies for additional information, technical assistance,



and resources, offering stakeholders a roadmap for establishing Blue Alert plans and examples of existing Blue Alert legislation. The following four states engaged in Blue Alert legislative activity during this reporting period: Arkansas, Massachusetts, New Mexico, and New York,

### Coordination with United States Attorneys' Offices

The COPS Office continues to expand its partnerships with U.S. Attorneys' Offices throughout the nation to promote the National Blue Alert Network. COPS Office staff share information with Law Enforcement Coordinators (LECs) about issues affecting officer safety and Blue Alert related news. The Executive Office for United States Attorneys has been instrumental in facilitating coordination between The COPS Office and LECs.

## IV. Blue Alerts Issued

There are twelve known instances where Blue Alerts were issued during this reporting period.

### **Alabama:**

November 2021 - Sumter, AL: A trooper assigned to the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency's Highway Patrol Division was investigating a traffic violation. While in the process of attempting to arrest a suspect for six warrants, the suspect attempted to murder the trooper and fled the scene. A statewide Blue Alert was issued by the Alabama Fusion Center at the request of the State Bureau of Investigation. The next day, the suspect was arrested in Sumter County without incident. The trooper required hospital care for his injuries, but fortunately, survived the attack.

February 2022 - Opelika, AL: A man hit a police officer with his vehicle as the officer was responding to a call for service. The suspect fled the scene. Authorities issued a Blue Alert for the suspect. The officer suffered several non-life-threatening injuries and is expected to recover. The suspect was taken into custody on February 13, 2022, during a traffic stop.

April 2022 - Lauderdale, AL: A statewide Blue Alert was issued after a Lauderdale County, Alabama corrections officer went missing during a transport of a capital murder suspect. A Lauderdale County Sheriff's Office employee left the detention center with the inmate for a mental evaluation at the courthouse. The sheriff later confirmed there was no mental evaluation scheduled. The Blue Alert was recalled when it was determined that the officer was an accomplice, and on May 2, a warrant was issued for the corrections officer for facilitating an escape in the first degree. After nearly a two-week saga, both the inmate and the Sheriff's Office corrections officer were taken into custody. The officer suffered a self-inflicted gunshot wound, was taken to the hospital, and later died.

### **Florida:**

September 2021 - Nassau County, FL: A sheriff's deputy was shot twice during a traffic stop. The suspect fled the area and a large manhunt ensued. Authorities issued a Blue Alert. The suspect was located and arrested a few days later near Callahan, FL. Unfortunately, the sheriff's deputy died shortly after the attack.

June 2021- Daytona Beach, FL: A Daytona Beach police officer was shot in the head while investigating a suspicious vehicle. The suspect fled the area and a large manhunt ensued. Authorities issued a Blue Alert. The suspect was eventually located and arrested near Atlanta, GA. The officer, unfortunately, died days later as a result of his injuries.

February 2022 - Perry, FL: A Taylor County deputy was fighting for his life after being shot by a suspect sought by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). The suspect allegedly shot the Taylor County deputy multiple times during a routine traffic stop. The FDLE issued a Blue Alert as law enforcement agencies searched for the suspect. The suspect was killed during a failed home invasion as he tried to evade capture. The Taylor County deputy was hospitalized in stable condition.

**Georgia:**

October 2021 - Alamo, GA: An Alamo police officer attempted to arrest a man who shoved the officer following a traffic violation. After he failed to comply, the officer discharged his taser. The man was arrested and taken to the Wheeler County Jail. Police believe the officer was then shot and killed later that night outside the Alamo Police Department in retaliation for the man's arrest. A Blue Alert was issued for the suspected perpetrator of the shooting and a known associate of the man who was previously arrested by the officer. The suspect was located the next day and taken into custody.

November 2021 - Clayton County, GA: Henry County Police responded to a domestic dispute. Shortly after arriving, an officer attempted to arrest a suspect when the officer was shot. The suspect fled the scene. A warrant for the suspect's arrest was issued on Aggravated Assault charges. The GBI issued a Blue Alert for the suspect. Unfortunately, the officer died of his injuries. The Blue Alert was cancelled five days later, after the suspect died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound following a standoff with Clayton County Police SWAT.

January 2022 - Thomas County, GA: A man shot two Thomas County Sheriff's Office deputies. The suspect fled the scene. The GBI issued a Blue Alert for the suspect. After a six-day manhunt, the suspect was taken into custody by the Thomas County Sheriff's Office. Fortunately, both deputies' injuries were non-life-threatening injuries.

**Ohio:**

October 2021 - Hancock County, OH: An Ohio state trooper was shot on I-75. The suspect fled the area. The Ohio State Highway Patrol issued a statewide Blue Alert. The suspect was located and arrested after a 12-hour manhunt. Fortunately, the trooper's injuries were not life-threatening.

**Oklahoma:**

January 2022 - Comanche County, OK: A Lawton police officer was conducting a traffic stop on I-44 when the vehicle, with its three occupants, fled the scene. The officer in pursuit and the occupants of the vehicle exchanged gunfire. The suspects reached Lake Ellsworth in Caddo County, where they attempted to flee the vehicle. One suspect was captured at Lake Ellsworth while the two other suspects fled on foot. Authorities issued a Blue Alert and were able to cancel the Alert in less than an hour, when the suspects were located and taken into custody. The two suspects stole an SUV but were quickly apprehended by Oklahoma Highway Patrol. The Lawton Police officer required medical attention but fortunately survived.

**Texas:**

June 2021- Wise County, TX: Wise County Deputies and Rhome, TX Police made a traffic stop of a motorcycle with two riders. One of the riders matched the description of a man wanted for a home invasion. The suspect fired several shots, striking a Rhome Police officer in the leg. The suspect fled and authorities later issued a Blue Alert. The suspect was located a few days later in Arkansas and taken into custody. The officer survived his injuries.

## V. Effectiveness and Status of Blue Alert Plans

In addition to reporting on the activities of the Coordinator, the Blue Alert Act also requires the annual report to Congress to include the effectiveness and status of Blue Alert plans (34 U.S.C. § 50503(f)). The effectiveness of existing Blue Alert plans is difficult to gauge, partly because each state develops and administers its own plan individually. The COPS Office is not yet aware that any of the states with Blue Alert plans have conducted research into their effectiveness. The COPS Office has begun collecting data as it becomes available in order to evaluate the effectiveness of Blue Alert plans.

As previously reported, the COPS Office has made direct outreach calls to each of the 56 states and territories. This includes 37 states that operate Blue Alert systems as well as those 19 states and territories that currently do not have Blue Alert systems.

As previously reported, the COPS Office has also verified which states have Blue Alert plans and the extent to which the plans comport with the voluntary guidelines. We have secured copies of Blue Alert plans and related materials such as program overviews, activation plans, legislation, and brochures from states that currently have Blue Alert plans.

To facilitate analysis of existing Blue Alert plans, the COPS Office has a legislation compendium containing the specific public laws, statutes, or executive orders that authorized and created state Blue Alert systems. The following are highlights of the threshold activation criteria from those states. These highlights illustrate clear and significant differences between states that could limit or complicate coordination efforts when a suspect flees, or is thought to have fled, to another jurisdiction:

- 62 percent (23 states) of plans contain provisions for officers missing in the line of duty
- 16 percent (6 states) of states allow for activation in cases where an officer is threatened with a deadly weapon but not actually injured
- 70 percent (26 states) require sufficient descriptive information about a suspect to enlist the public's assistance
- 57 percent (21 states) require a suspect vehicle description or license tag for activation

The following table is a quick reference of threshold activation criteria for the featured states as of May 2022. The wide range of Blue Alert activation criteria among states highlights the need for uniform guidance and consistent protocols to enhance coordination and maximize interoperability from one state to another.

The COPS Office continues to examine and document the differences and commonalities between existing Blue Alert processes. Our legislative compendium includes policies, forms, brochures, and promotional material from Blue Alert states that will be useful to states and law enforcement agencies in developing or improving their own Blue Alert systems.



## VI. Officers Shot in the Line of Duty

In 2019, the COPS office awarded a grant to the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) to monitor and track shootings of law enforcement officers in the United States and its territories—specifically, shootings in which on-duty officers are wounded or killed. The FOP uses media monitoring software and general research to analyze publicly available information. Based on this data, the Department, in partnership with the FOP, issue a Report on Officers Shot, which documents all known shooting incidents in a calendar year, in order to better understand the nature and frequency of incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert. The 2021 Report contains data on law enforcement officers shot in the line of duty, both fatally and non-fatally. These types of felonious attacks account for nearly all situations where a Blue Alert would be issued. Tracking data does not include assaults by means other than firearms, due to inconsistent availability of data.

The COPS Office acknowledges the significant contributions and leadership of the FOP's staff, including National President Patrick Yoes, Executive Director Jim Pasco, Senior Legislative Liaison Tim Richardson, and Legislative Liaisons Mark McDonald and Matt Brown to this Report.

Highlights of the 2021 Report include the following:

### 2021 summary data

- **Three hundred forty-six** law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty during calendar year 2021 in **271** separate shooting incidents, including **54** incidents where multiple officers were shot. This is a **10** percent increase over the total number of incidents in 2020. The number of officers shot increased by **11** percent compared to 2020.
- **Sixty-four** law enforcement officers died from these shootings in 2021 and **287** officers survived. Of the **64** officers who died, **five** officers were shot during an incident that took place prior to 2021 but succumbed to complications of a gunshot wound in 2021.
- City or municipal law enforcement officers accounted for nearly two-thirds (**60 percent**) of all shooting incidents in 2021.
- Disturbance calls (**61**) and traffic stops (**38**) accounted for **36 percent** of all shooting incidents and resulted in **126** officers shot.
- **One hundred and thirty-three** law enforcement officers were shot in **107** separate ambushes and **32** of those officers died.
- At least **37** officers were protected from gunshots by a protective ballistic vest.
- Shootings occurred in **42** states and Puerto Rico. Texas had the highest number of officers shot at **43**, followed by Illinois at **29**.
- The month that saw the highest number of officers shot was **October (32)** and the day of the week with the highest number of officers shot was **Friday (46)**.

## VII. Summary of Activities and Projected Next Steps

### Notable past developments/activities

The Department reported the following developments and activities in its previous reports to Congress:

- Developed a wide variety of Blue Alert informational resources, including
  - National Blue Alert Network factsheet and PowerPoint presentation;
  - Compendium of state Blue Alert legislation and policies;
  - Directory of state Blue Alert officials;
  - Guidance and recommendations on developing or enhancing Blue Alert plans.
- Launched the National Blue Alert Network SIG on the FBI LEEP platform.
- Conducted periodic Advisory Group meetings.
- Coordinated with FCC to create a dedicated Blue Alert EAS event code.
- Identified all 56 state and territorial IPAWS authorizing officials.
- Coordinated with FEMA to integrate Blue Alert plans into IPAWS.
- Visited the FEMA IPAWS lab and trained on alerting equipment and software, including conducting test Blue Alerts.
- Trained selected COPS Office Blue Alert Team members to provide technical assistance to states and local agencies.
- Performed immediate outreach to states after officers were killed to offer assistance and facilitate interstate coordination.
- Promoted awareness of the Blue Alert Act at various national law enforcement events, including the annual IACP conference and the National Officer Safety and Wellness Group forum.
- New FCC rules authorizing the use of "BLU," the Blue Alert EAS event code, went into effect on January 18, 2019. The same FCC rule authorized the issuance of Blue Alerts via Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) beginning on November 29, 2019. Together, these rules enable alerting authorities throughout the nation to quickly issue Blue Alerts using existing alerting software and systems.
- Members of the COPS Office Blue Alert team and colleagues from the FCC were awarded the Attorney General's Award for Outstanding Contributions to Community Partnerships for Public Safety for their outstanding leadership in implementing Blue Alert plans throughout the United States.
- Members of the COPS Office Blue Alert team monitored media reports and other sources to identify possible Blue Alert situations. When practical, team members contacted the affected law enforcement agency to verify facts and offer assistance if needed.
- The COPS Office launched a targeted outreach plan to establish working coalitions in each state without Blue Alert laws and policies. The purpose of the outreach was to inform key stakeholders about the

benefits of Blue Alerts and about the resources of the National Blue Alert Network. All efforts were coordinated with U.S. Attorneys' Offices in the affected states and districts.

- The National Blue Alert Coordinator represented the COPS Office at dozens of conferences and meetings around the country where he promoted the use of Blue Alerts and available resources.
- The Deputy National Blue Alert Coordinator traveled to Des Moines, Iowa, at the request of the Iowa Peace Officers Association to attend a meeting; while there, he was asked to provide information and answer questions from state officials who were considering the adoption of a statewide Blue Alert plan.
- The Deputy National Blue Alert Coordinator presented information about Blue Alerts at the annual training conference for DOJ Law Enforcement Coordinators (LEC) in Columbia, South Carolina. LECs play a key role in U.S. Attorneys' Offices through their support of state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in their districts.
- The COPS Office published a report describing incidents where law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty during calendar years 2018 and 2019. These reports were the first of their kind and provided meaningful insights into incidents that could give rise to the issuance of Blue Alerts.

### Notable new developments/activities

The Department reports the following new developments and activities in the reporting period:

- Members of the COPS Office Blue Alert team monitored media reports and other sources to identify possible Blue Alert situations. When practical, team members contacted the affected law enforcement agency to verify facts and offer assistance if needed.
- In 2019, the COPS Office awarded a \$100,000 Community Policing Development grant to the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) for data collection activities to help identify and document incidents where on-duty law enforcement officers are shot in the line of duty. In 2022, additional grant funding was awarded to extend the grant for one year. The FOP has a long history of research and involvement in the study of attacks on law enforcement.

Throughout the reporting period, the FOP reported the status of its activities to the COPS Office and to the National Blue Alert Advisory Group. In May 2022, the FOP and the COPS Office are publishing a report on incidents where law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty during calendar year 2021.

- The National Blue Alert Coordinator attended dozens of virtual conferences and meetings around the country and, where appropriate, promoted the use of Blue Alerts and resources offered by the COPS Office. Travel has been restricted due to the COVID pandemic but is expected to resume in the near future.
- The COPS Office created and framed certificates to present to states that have enacted statewide Blue Alert plans for the benefit of all law enforcement agencies within the state. The presentations of these Blue Alert Certificates have been placed on hold due to COVID restrictions.
- The COPS Office conducted a nationwide outreach to solicit active, sworn law enforcement officers and deputies to serve a one-year detail as Law Enforcement Fellows to advance the National Blue Alert



Network and assist with other COPS Office resources. Following a rigorous, competitive process, the COPS Office selected three fellows: a patrol officer from Pennsylvania, a detective from Colorado, and an undersheriff from Washington. The fellows begin their one-year details in April 2021. During their Fellowships, each of the Fellows contributed greatly to advancing the National Blue Alert Network.

## Upcoming activities

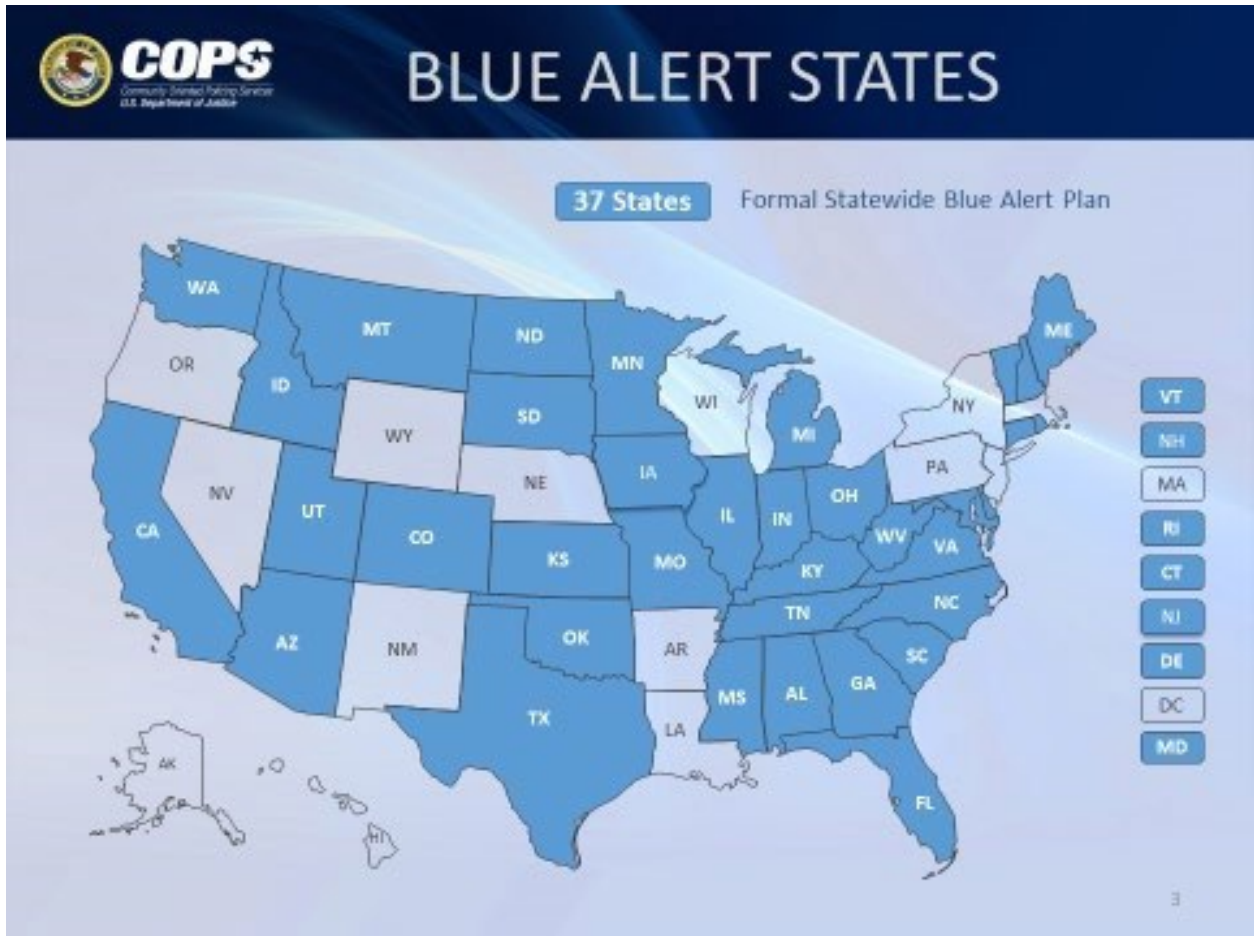
The Department plans to undertake the following activities in the coming year in furtherance of its Blue Alert Mission:

- Conduct additional outreach to states and territories to raise awareness about the availability of free educational resources and technical assistance.
- Continue to work with the FCC, FEMA, and other federal partners to ensure effective coordination of Blue Alert rules and infrastructure.
- Continue to work with law enforcement stakeholders and Advisory Group members to increase the effectiveness of Blue Alert guidance and recommendations.
- Continue to promote the Blue Alert Network to thousands of officers and agencies at upcoming law enforcement events.
- Identify fiscal needs for further implementation of the Blue Alert Act and make appropriate funding requests.
- Continue with COPS Office Blue Alert Team meetings.
- Incorporate the expertise gained from the COPS Office's Law Enforcement Fellows to advance the National Blue Alert Network.
- Continue with periodic Blue Alert Act Advisory Group meetings.

## VIII. Attachments

- State map of Blue Alert plans (May 2022)
- Blue Alert web page screen image
- DOJ Blue Alert Certificate sample
- Blue Alert Fact Sheet (May 2022)
- 2021 Report, Officers Shot in the Line of Duty

### Map of state Blue Alert Plans (May 2022)



Blue Alert webpage screen image

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE



**ABOUT** | **NEWS & EVENTS** | **GRANTS & FUNDING** | **RESOURCES** | **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE** | **TRAINING** | **ACCOUNT ACCESS**

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## NATIONAL Blue Alert NETWORK

The National Blue Alert Network supports the integration of Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to rapidly disseminate information to law enforcement agencies, the media and the public to aid in the apprehension of violent criminals who pose an imminent threat to law enforcement and others.

Congress passed the **Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015** in order to *encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans.*

The law is named after New York City Police Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu who were killed in an ambush attack on December 20, 2014.

THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

NATIONAL Blue Alert NETWORK

COMMUNITY POLICING TOUR

RESOURCE CENTER

THE L. ANTHONY SUTIN CIVIC IMAGINATION AWARD

Dispatch

Supporting Safe Schools





Tweets by @COPSOOffice

**COPS Office** @COPSOOffice

Our first director, Joe Brann, joined us at our #IACP2016 booth; we discussed more than two decades of progress in #community policing.



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BLUE ALERT STATE PLANS



STATES WITH BLUE ALERT PLANS

STATES CONSIDERING BLUE ALERT PLANS

For more information, contact us at [BlueAlert@usdoj.gov](mailto:BlueAlert@usdoj.gov) or call the Response Center at 800-421-6770.

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# Fact Sheet

[www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov)



## National Blue Alert Network

### History

In 2015, Congress passed the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act, named in honor of two New York City police officers killed in an ambush attack on December 20, 2014. The Act establishes a voluntary nationwide system to give police an early warning of threats against police officers and to aid in the apprehension of suspects who have killed or seriously injured an officer. In 2016, the COPS Office was asked to implement the Blue Alert Act and establish a National Blue Alert Network.

### Blue Alerts

Blue Alerts provide for rapid dissemination of information to law enforcement agencies, media, and the public about violent offenders who have killed, seriously injured, or pose an imminent and credible threat to law enforcement. Blue Alerts can be transmitted via wireless devices and through the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The National Blue Alert Network works to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States.

### Blue Alert Activation Criteria

Blue Alerts may be issued when

- a law enforcement officer is killed or seriously injured in the line of duty; or
- an officer is missing in connection with official duties; or
- there is an imminent and credible threat to kill or seriously injure a law enforcement officer; and
- there is actionable information known about a suspect (e.g., name, physical description, or vehicle description).



### Blue Alert Resources

The COPS Office provides resources and technical assistance to states, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders seeking to establish or enhance an existing Blue Alert plan. The National Blue Alert Network also maintains a secure data repository, for law enforcement only, containing many Blue Alert resources collected from around the nation, including examples of legislation, policies, forms, and a directory of state Blue Alert officials.

For more information, visit the COPS Office website at [www.cops.usdoj.gov/bluealert](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/bluealert), email the COPS Office at [BlueAlert@usdoj.gov](mailto:BlueAlert@usdoj.gov), or call the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

### Other Resources

**Federal Emergency Management Agency Integrated Public Alerting and Warning System (IPAWS)**

<https://www.fema.gov/integrated-public-alert-warning-system>

**Federal Communications Commission Emergency Alert System (EAS)**

<https://www.fcc.gov/general/emergency-alert-system-eas>



# Law Enforcement Officers Shot in the Line of Duty

2021 Year-End Summary



**COPS**  
Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice



**NATIONAL FRATERNAL  
ORDER OF POLICE**

May 2022



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This report is compiled from publicly available information using media monitoring software and general research. It contains data on law enforcement officers shot in the line of duty, both fatally and non-fatally, for the express purpose of better understanding the nature and frequency of incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert. Care should be taken into account when comparing these results to those of other entities that collect similar data. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) or contributor(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The COPS Office acknowledges the contributions of the FOP's staff, including National President Patrick Yoes, Executive Director Jim Pasco, Senior Legislative Liaison Tim Richardson and Legislative Liaisons Mark McDonald and Matt Brown, to this report.

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Published 2022

## NATIONAL BLUE ALERT NETWORK

In 2015, Congress passed the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act, named in honor of two New York City police officers killed in an ambush attack on December 20, 2014. The Act directs the Department of Justice to establish a voluntary nationwide system to promote the use of early warnings of threats against law enforcement officers and to aid in the apprehension of suspects who have killed or seriously injured an officer. In 2016, the COPS Office was given the honor of implementing the Act and established the National Blue Alert Network.

The National Blue Alert Network seeks to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States. Blue Alerts provide for rapid dissemination of information to law enforcement agencies, media, and the public to aid in the apprehension of offenders who have killed, seriously injured, or pose an imminent and credible threat to law enforcement. Blue Alerts can be transmitted via wireless devices and through the Emergency Alert System (EAS) in the same manner as AMBER Alerts.

## TRACKING OFFICER SHOOTINGS

This report was compiled by the **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)** in partnership with the **National Fraternal Order of Police** using media monitoring software and general research to analyze publicly available information. It contains data on law enforcement officers shot in the line of duty, both fatally and non-fatally, for the express purpose of better understanding the nature and frequency of incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert. Care should be taken into account when comparing these results to those of other entities that collect similar data. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) or contributor(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice.

## 2021 SUMMARY DATA

- **Three hundred forty-six** law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty during calendar year 2021 in **271** separate shooting incidents, including **54** incidents where multiple officers were shot.
- **Sixty-four** law enforcement officers died from these shootings in 2021 and **287** officers survived. Of the **64** officers who died, **five** officers were shot during an incident that took place prior to 2021, but succumbed to complications of a gunshot wound in 2021.<sup>1</sup>
- City or municipal law enforcement officers accounted for nearly two-thirds (**60 percent**) of all shooting incidents in 2021.
- Disturbance calls (**61**) and traffic stops (**38**) accounted for **36 percent** of all shooting incidents and resulted in **126** officers shot.
- **One hundred and thirty-three** law enforcement officers were shot in **107** separate ambushes and **32** of those officers died.
- At least **37** officers were protected from gunshots by a protective ballistic vest.
- Shootings occurred in **42** states and Puerto Rico. Texas had the highest number of officers shot at **43**, followed by Illinois at **29**.
- The month that saw the highest number of officers shot was **October (32)** and the day of the week with the highest number of officers shot was **Friday (46)**.

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<sup>1</sup> When these incidents are included in the data, they are noted with the use of (\*).



## 2021 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

### 2021 INCIDENT DATA

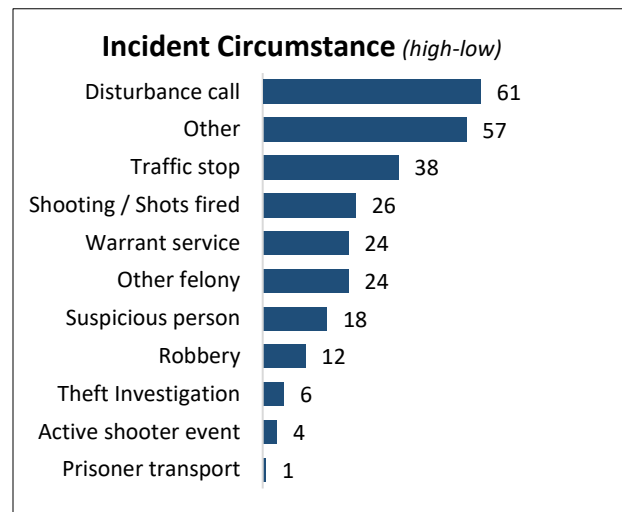
There were **271** incidents in 2021 where law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty, which is a **10 percent** increase over the total number of incidents in 2020. The number of officers shot increased by **11 percent** compared to 2020. The number of officers who died as a result of being shot increased by **36 percent** from 2020. **NOTE: One (\*) represents an officer who was shot prior to 2021 but succumbed to a gunshot wound in 2021.**

	2021 Totals	2020 Totals	% Change
Total number of shooting incidents	271	246	+ 10%
Total number of officers shot	346	312	+ 11%
Number of officers shot and survived	287	268	+ 7.0%
Number of officers shot and killed	64*****	47***	+ 36%

### INCIDENT DATA BY CIRCUMSTANCE

Disturbance calls and traffic stops accounted for more than a third (**36 percent**) of all shooting incidents. The third most common circumstance involved calls regarding a shooting that had occurred (**10 percent**).

<b>Circumstance at Time of Incident</b>				
<i>One (*) equals one officer who was shot prior to 2021 but succumbed to a gunshot wound in 2021.</i>				
Circumstance	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
Active shooter	4	4	3	1
Disturbance call	61	84	69	15*
Prisoner transport	1	1	1	0
Robbery	12	14	14	0
Shooting / Shots fired	26	38	35	4*
Other felony	24	28	22	6
Suspicious person	18	21	18	4*
Traffic stop	38	42	34	8
Warrant Service	24	38	34	5*
Theft Investigation	6	7	7	0
Other	57	69	50	21*
	<b>271</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>64*****</b>



### NATURE OF ATTACKS

Every felonious attack on law enforcement officers, especially by gunfire, is disturbing regardless of the circumstances. Officers are always vulnerable to life-threatening attacks and therefore must always be vigilant and maintain the highest level of situational awareness. In most cases, officers are able to quickly assess situations, recognize threats, and take adequate defensive actions. Tragically, not every threat can be seen or mitigated. Perhaps most troubling and worrisome are ambush-style and other calculated attacks on law enforcement.

Premeditated ambush-style attacks are particularly disturbing and pernicious. These types of attacks are carried out with an element of surprise and intended to deprive officers of the ability to defend against the attack. Premeditated attacks contribute to a worrisome desensitization to evil acts that were once largely considered taboo except by the most depraved. In 2021, **40 percent** of shooting incidents involved a discernable element of premeditation.

## 2021 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

### AMBUSH-STYLE ATTACKS

There were **107** ambush-style incidents where officers were shot without any warning or opportunity to defend themselves, including several pre-planned assassinations. In many cases, officers were shot before they could exit their vehicles after an initial traffic stop or upon arrival at the scene of an incident. In all, **133** law enforcement officers were shot in ambush-style attacks, of whom **32** died. Of the total number of officers who were ambushed, **24 percent** died of their injuries, compared to **15 percent** of officers shot under other circumstances, making ambush-style attacks more lethal to targeted officers.

Examples of ambush-style attacks include the following:

- Deputies responding to a 911 call arrived on the scene only to be met with gunfire. A shooter from inside the home managed to hit one deputy.
- An officer responded to a call for service about a theft; when he arrived and exited his vehicle, he was hit with a hail of gunfire and struck multiple times.
- Officers were serving a search warrant when a man inside a home began shooting at the officers after they announced themselves. A standoff ensued and gunfire was exchanged over the next few hours, with one officer being struck in the vest.

### CALCULATED ATTACKS

Similar to ambush-style attacks, there were **89** incidents where offenders acted in a calculated and premeditated manner to shoot officers in the performance of their duties. These attacks differ only slightly from the more brazen ambush-style attacks in that officers *may* have had some reason to anticipate a threat. In all, **122** officers were shot in calculated attacks, of whom **21** died. **NOTE: An “ambush-style” attack is considered a “calculated” attack.**

Examples of calculated attacks include the following:

- Officers responding to a call for service involving shots being fired arrived to find the suspect barricaded in the home. At one point, the suspect began firing at officers, striking one officer in the chest.
- Following a 911 call to report a domestic abuse incident, the suspect left the apartment and headed into the woods with multiple firearms. After the officers arrived at the scene, they entered the woods with a K9 unit to search for the suspect, who initiated a shootout resulting in the death of the suspect.
- Officers were serving a search warrant. The detectives approached the apartment, identified themselves, and asked to enter. They waited an extended period of time with no response before forcing entry into the apartment. The suspect was lying in wait inside and opened fire as the detectives entered the apartment. Two officers were struck, and one of them was killed.

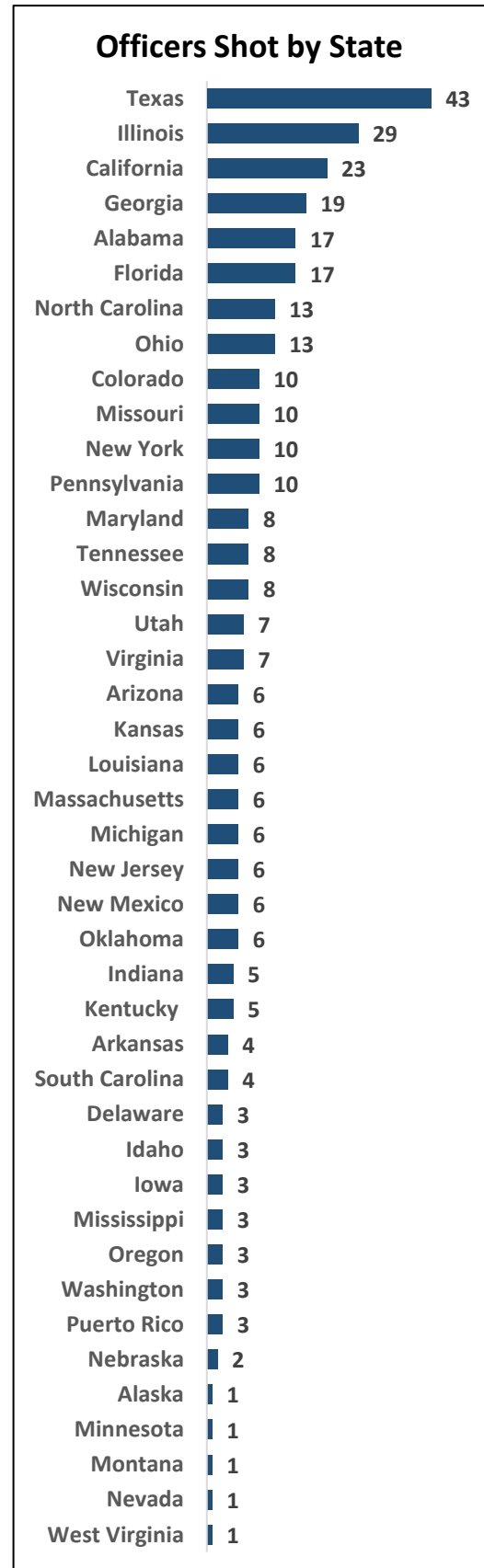
### BULLET-RESISTANT VESTS

At least **37** officers were protected from gunshots that struck a protective ballistic vest. The actual number may be higher, but this element is not consistently apparent from news reporting.

## 2021 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

### INCIDENT DATA BY STATE

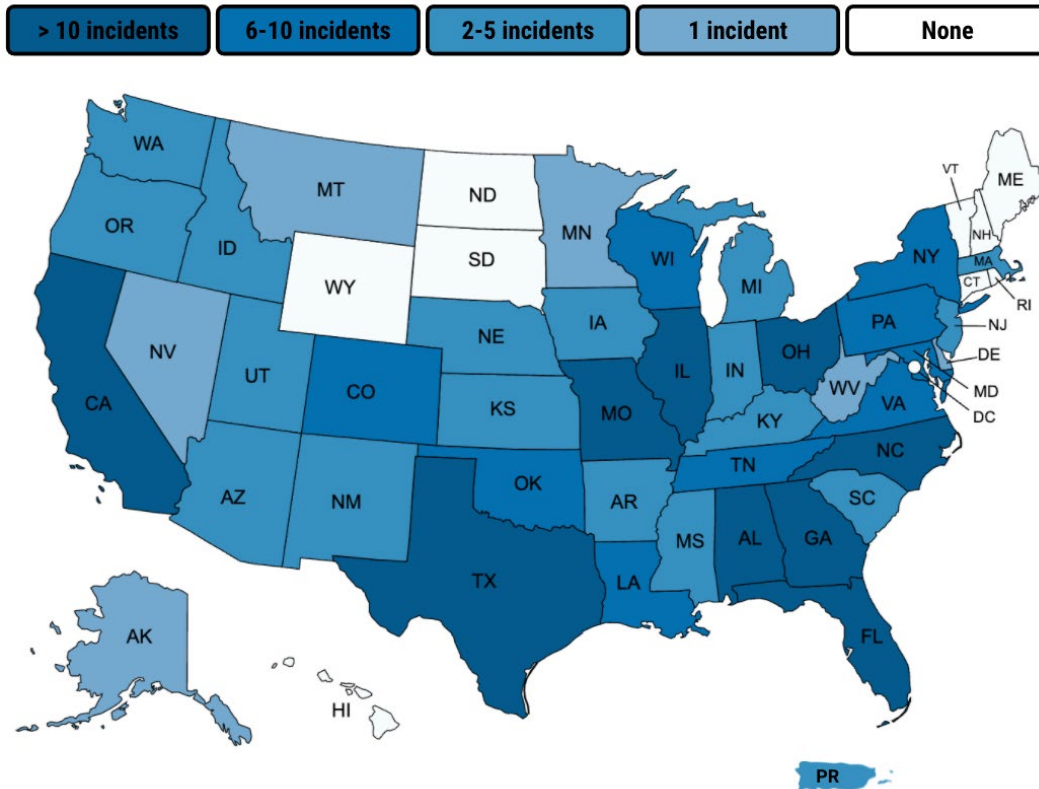
State	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
<i>One (*) equals one officer who was shot prior to 2021 but succumbed to a gunshot wound in 2021.</i>				
Alabama	11	17	14	3
Alaska	1	1	1	0
Arizona	4	6	5	1
Arkansas	4	4	4	0
California	20*	23	18	6*
Colorado	9	10	8	2
Delaware	1	3	3	0
Florida	13*	17	12	6*
Georgia	14	19	14	5
Idaho	3	3	3	0
Illinois	21	29	24	5
Indiana	5	5	4	1
Iowa	3	3	2	1
Kansas	3	6	6	0
Kentucky	5	5	4	1
Louisiana	7*	6	3	4*
Maryland	6	8	7	1
Massachusetts	3	6	6	0
Michigan	5	6	5	1
Minnesota	1	1	0	1
Mississippi	3	3	2	1
Missouri	10	10	9	1
Montana	1	1	1	0
Nebraska	2	2	2	0
Nevada	1	1	1	0
New Jersey	5	6	6	0
New Mexico	3	6	5	1
New York	8	10	10	0
North Carolina	10*	13	11	3*
Ohio	10	13	11	2
Oklahoma	6	6	6	0
Oregon	4*	3	3	1*
Pennsylvania	9	10	9	1
South Carolina	4	4	4	0
Tennessee	7	8	7	1
Texas	29	43	35	8
Utah	5	7	7	0
Virginia	7	7	4	3
Washington	3	3	2	1
West Virginia	1	1	1	0
Wisconsin	6	8	8	0
Puerto Rico	3	3	0	3
	<b>276*****</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>64*****</b>



## 2021 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

### INCIDENT LOCATION DENSITY MAP

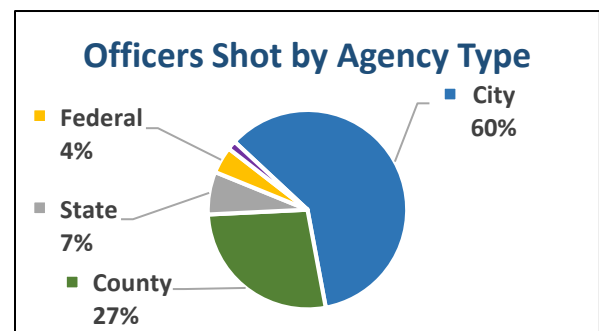
Officer shootings were reported in **42** states and Puerto Rico. Texas had the highest number of shooting incidents at **29**, followed by Illinois at **21**. The state with the next highest number of incidents reported was California (**20**). No officer shootings were reported in **8** states (Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Wyoming) or the District of Columbia. The map below depicts shooting incident density across the nation.



### INCIDENT DATA BY AGENCY TYPE

**Sixty percent** of officers shot were members of city or municipal law enforcement agencies. The data and chart below depict incidents based on agency type. **NOTE: Some incidents involved multiple types of agencies.**

Incidents by Agency Type				
<i>One (*) equals one officer who was shot prior to 2021 but succumbed to a gunshot wound in 2021.</i>				
Agency type	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
CITY	171**	208	183	27**
COUNTY	78***	94	71	26***
STATE	24	24	18	6
FEDERAL	10	15	11	4
TRIBAL/OTHER	5	5	4	1
	<b>288*****</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>64*****</b>

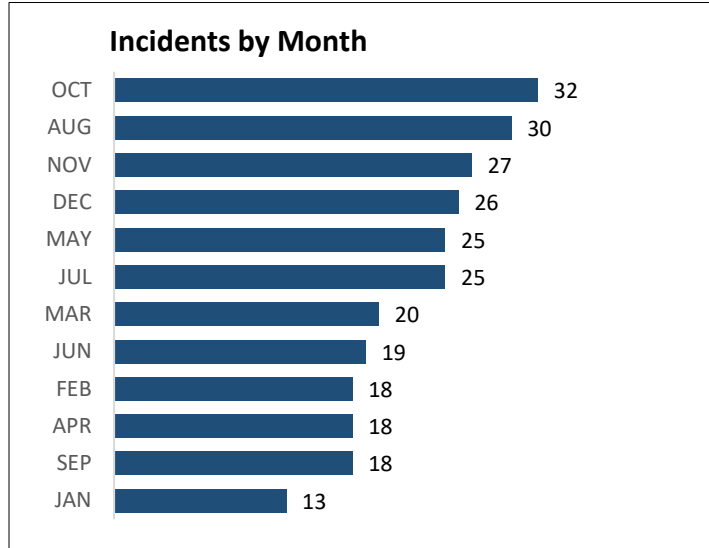


## 2021 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

### INCIDENT DATA BY MONTH

The month that saw the highest number of incidents where officers were shot was October (32), followed by August (30), and November (27).

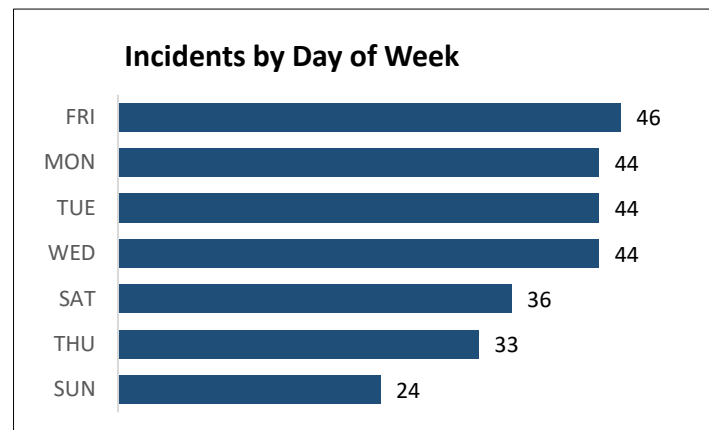
Incident Data by Month				
<i>One (*) equals one officer who was shot prior to 2021 but succumbed to a gunshot wound in 2021.</i>				
Month	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
JAN	13	18	14	4
FEB	18	30	23	7
MAR	20	21	19	4**
APR	18	22	20	4*
MAY	25	37	31	7*
JUN	19	22	19	3
JUL	25	35	28	7
AUG	30	35	31	4
SEP	18	20	16	4
OCT	32	40	33	8*
NOV	27	33	27	6
DEC	26	33	27	6
	<b>271</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>64*****</b>



### INCIDENT DATA BY DAY OF WEEK

The day of the week with the highest number incidents where officers were shot was Friday (46), followed by Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (44). **NOTE:** The five officers (5) who were shot prior to 2021 but succumbed to a gunshot wound in 2021 were not included in the data below.

Incident Data by Day of Week				
Day	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
SUN	24	33	31	2
MON	44	55	41	14
TUE	44	56	48	8
WED	44	58	48	10
THU	33	44	38	6
FRI	46	50	40	10
SAT	36	50	41	9
	<b>271</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>59</b>



# NATIONAL BLUE ALERT NETWORK

## 2021 LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	2021	2020	% Change
<b>Total Number of Shooting Incidents</b>	13	18	20	18	25	19	25	30	18	32	27	26	<b>271</b>	246	<b>+ 10%</b>
<b>Total Number of Officers Shot</b>	18	30	21	22	37	22	35	35	20	40	33	33	<b>346</b>	312	<b>+ 11%</b>
<i>Number of Officers Survived</i>	14	23	19	20	31	19	28	31	16	33	27	27	<b>287</b>	268	<b>+ 7.0%</b>
<i>Number of Officers Killed</i>	4	7	4**	4*	7*	3	7	4	4	8*	6	6	<b>64</b>	44	<b>+ 36%</b>

*Each asterisk (\*) represents one officer who was shot prior to 2021 but succumbed to a gunshot wound in 2021.*

271 Shooting Incidents / 346 Officers Shot



Officer Shot and Wounded (287)



Officer Shot and Killed (64)



*\* Assaults on law enforcement occurring on-duty during calendar year 2021 with firearms resulting in an officer being wounded or killed. Does not include assaults by means other than firearms due to inconsistent availability of data. Markers represent approximate geographic location.*