



Law Enforcement Officers Shot in the Line of Duty

2019 Year-End Summary



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

March 2020

This report is compiled from 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 to account for differing methodology when comparing these results with 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 or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Recommended citation:

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. 2020. *Law Enforcement Officers Shot in the Line of Duty: 2019 Year-End Summary*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Published 2020





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

The COPS Office utilizes DOJ Libraries—verified news reporting services to monitor and track shootings of law enforcement officers in the United States and its territories—specifically, shootings of *on-duty* officers resulting in an officer being *wounded or killed*. In this way, it hopes to better understand the nature and frequency of incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert; 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.

2019 SUMMARY DATA

- **273** law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty during calendar year 2019 in **224** separate incidents, including **34** incidents where multiple officers were shot.
- **44** law enforcement officers died from their injuries and **229** survived.
- State law enforcement officers who were shot died at a slightly higher rate (**22 percent**) than city and county officers (**16 percent**).
- Disturbance calls (**68**) and traffic stops (**40**) accounted for nearly half of all shooting incidents and resulted in **20** officer deaths.
- **32** law enforcement officers were shot and **11** died as a result of being ambushed.¹
- Another **87** officers were shot and **14** died in situations where an offender acted without warning in a premeditated and calculated manner, taking an officer by surprise.
- **34 percent** of officers ambushed died of their injuries, compared to **17 percent** of officers attacked by other means; making ambush-style attacks twice as lethal for victim officers than other shooting circumstances.
- **22** officers were protected from gunshots that struck a protective ballistic vest.
- Shootings occurred in **45** states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
- Texas had the highest number of shooting incidents at **29**, followed by California at **14**.
- The highest number (**24**) of shooting incidents occurred during the month of August.

¹ In order to identify any emerging patterns, more data was collected about ambush-style and calculated shootings during this reporting period than in 2018.

2019 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

2019 INCIDENT DATA

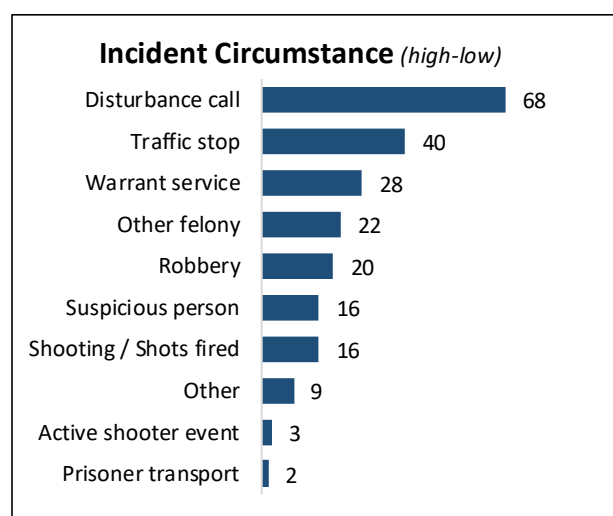
There were **224** incidents in 2019 where law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty, a **10 percent** increase over the number of incidents in 2018. However, the number of officers who died as a result of being shot decreased by **14 percent** from 2018.

| | 2019 Totals | 2018 Totals | % Change |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Total number of shooting incidents | 224 | 204 | + 10% |
| Total number of officers shot | 273 | 251 | + 9% |
| Number of officers shot and survived | 229 | 200 | + 15% |
| Number of officers shot and killed | 44 | 51 | - 14% |

INCIDENT DATA BY CIRCUMSTANCE

Disturbance calls and traffic stops accounted for nearly half (**48 percent**) of all shooting incidents. The third most common circumstance involved the serving of warrants, typically performed by tactical teams.

| Circumstance at Time of Incident | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Circumstance | Shooting incidents | Officers shot | Number survived | Number killed |
| Active shooter | 3 | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| Disturbance call | 68 | 75 | 63 | 12 |
| Prisoner transport | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Robbery | 20 | 24 | 19 | 5 |
| Shooting / Shots fired | 16 | 23 | 21 | 2 |
| Other felony | 22 | 29 | 24 | 5 |
| Suspicious person | 16 | 15 | 13 | 2 |
| Traffic stop | 40 | 45 | 37 | 8 |
| Warrant Service | 28 | 44 | 38 | 6 |
| Other | 9 | 9 | 5 | 4 |
| | 224 | 273 | 229 | 44 |



NATURE OF ATTACKS

Every felonious attack on law enforcement officers, especially by gunfire, is disturbing regardless of the circumstances. Officers are always susceptible to life-threatening attacks and must practice the highest levels of officer safety. 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 attack 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 of evil acts that were once largely considered taboo except by the most depraved. In 2019, **42 percent** of shooting incidents involved a discernable element of premeditation.

2019 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

AMBUSH-STYLE ATTACKS

There were **27** 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, **32** law enforcement officers were shot in ambush-style attacks, of whom **11** died. **Thirty-four percent** of officers ambushed died of their injuries, compared to **17 percent** of officers shot under other circumstances, making ambush-style attacks twice as lethal for victim officers.

Examples of ambush-style attacks include the following:

- An officer was handling a traffic accident when an uninvolved subject rode by on a bicycle and shot the officer numerous times without warning and continued to fire when she fell to the ground. The officer died.
- Officers were dispatched to a domestic disturbance. The suspect hid behind a fence and waited for officers to arrive. As officers approached the house, the suspect shot an officer in the face. The officer survived.
- A sheriff's deputy stopped a vehicle for a traffic violation. After retrieving the driver's identification, the deputy was shot in the back of the head while walking back to his cruiser. The officer died.
- An officer was sitting in his marked police cruiser at a police station when a suspect approached and shot the officer ten times in a planned assassination. The officer died.

CALCULATED ATTACKS

In addition to ambush-style attacks, there were **68** 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, **87** officers were shot in calculated attacks, of whom **14** died.

Examples of calculated attacks include the following:

- Officers were serving an arrest warrant at a residence when the suspect emerged from a bedroom and opened fire on officers. One officer died.
- A suspect was being pursued for armed robbery when he stopped his vehicle and fired a shotgun at an approaching officer. The officer survived.
- Deputies responded to reports of a home invasion in progress. The suspect fired a shot at the responding deputies from inside the home, striking a deputy in the chest. The deputy survived.

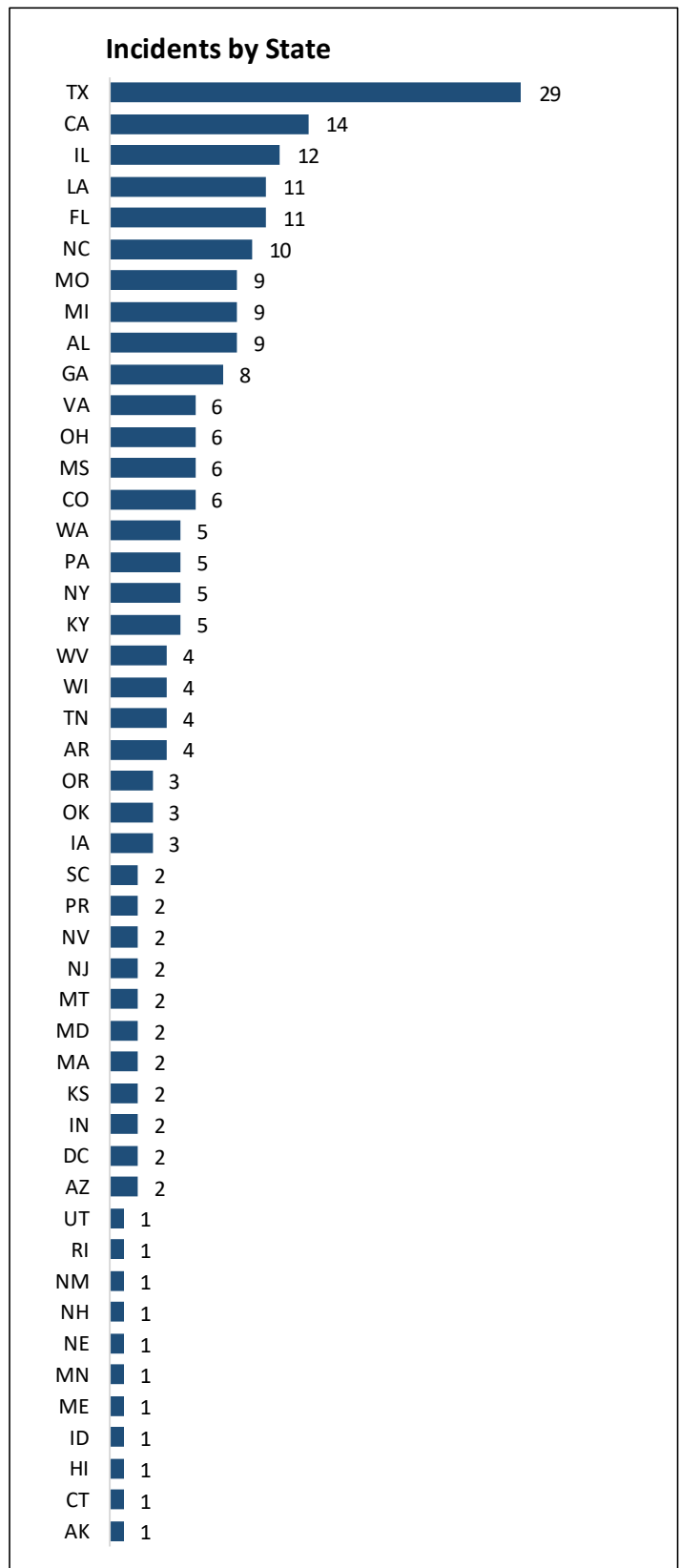
BULLET-RESISTANT VESTS

At least **22** 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.

2019 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

INCIDENT DATA BY STATE

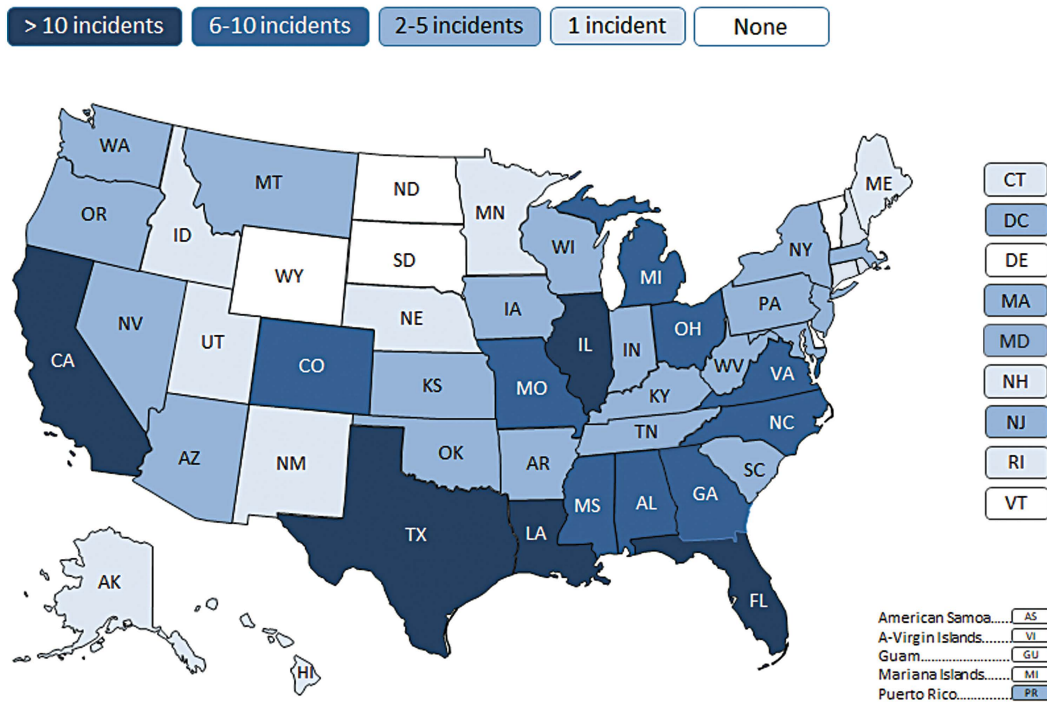
| State | Shooting incidents | Officers shot | Number survived | Number killed |
|-------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| AK | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| AL | 9 | 12 | 6 | 6 |
| AR | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| AZ | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| CA | 14 | 18 | 12 | 6 |
| CO | 6 | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| CT | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| DC | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| FL | 11 | 12 | 12 | 0 |
| GA | 8 | 11 | 8 | 3 |
| HI | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| IA | 3 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| ID | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| IL | 12 | 15 | 12 | 3 |
| IN | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| KS | 2 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| KY | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| LA | 11 | 12 | 11 | 1 |
| MA | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| MD | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| ME | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| MI | 9 | 13 | 12 | 1 |
| MN | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| MO | 9 | 9 | 8 | 1 |
| MS | 6 | 7 | 6 | 1 |
| MT | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| NC | 10 | 11 | 10 | 1 |
| NE | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| NH | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| NJ | 2 | 7 | 6 | 1 |
| NM | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| NV | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| NY | 5 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| OH | 6 | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| OK | 3 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| OR | 3 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| PA | 5 | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| PR | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| RI | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| SC | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| TN | 4 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| TX | 29 | 34 | 27 | 7 |
| UT | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| VA | 6 | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| WA | 5 | 9 | 7 | 2 |
| WI | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| WV | 4 | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| | 224 | 273 | 229 | 44 |



2019 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

INCIDENT LOCATION DENSITY MAP

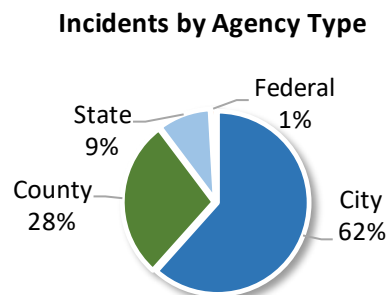
Officer shootings were reported in **45** states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Texas had the highest number of shooting incidents at **29**, followed by California at **14**. The next highest number of incidents in a state was **12** reported in Illinois. No officer shootings were reported in **5** states (DE, ND, SD, VT, WY). The map below depicts shooting incident density across the nation.



INCIDENT DATA BY AGENCY TYPE

62 percent of all shooting incidents involved city or municipal law enforcement agencies. The data and chart below depict incidents based on agency type. State law enforcement officers who were shot died at a slightly higher rate (**22 percent**) than city and county officers (**16 percent**).

| Incidents by Agency Type | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Agency type | Shooting incidents | Officers shot | Number survived | Number killed |
| CITY | 138 | 167 | 142 | 25 |
| COUNTY | 63 | 81 | 67 | 14 |
| STATE | 21 | 23 | 18 | 5 |
| FEDERAL | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| | 224 | 273 | 229 | 44 |

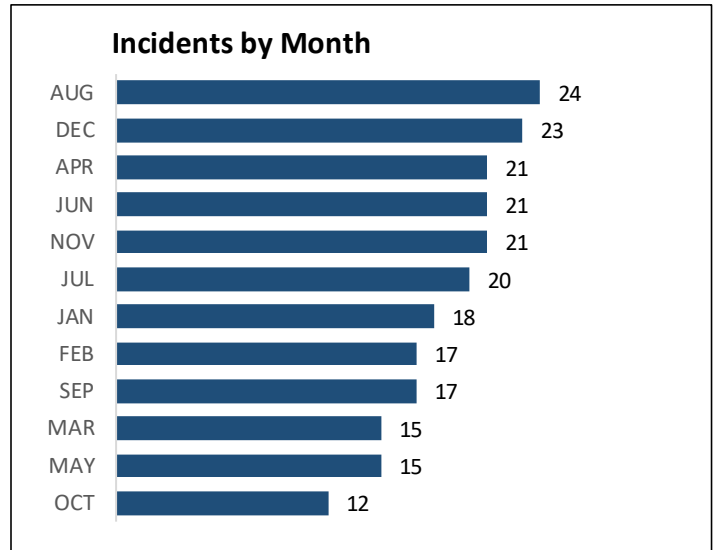


2019 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

INCIDENT DATA BY MONTH

The highest number of shooting incidents (**24**) occurred during the month of August. The deadliest months were February, May, June, November, and December, when **5** law enforcement officers died from shooting injuries.

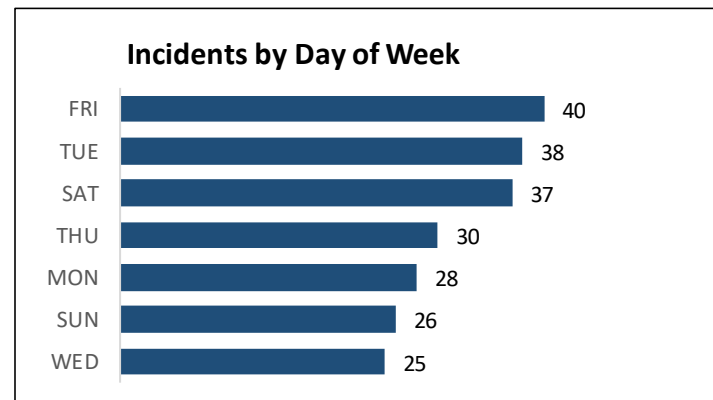
| Incident Data by Month | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Month | Shooting incidents | Officers shot | Number survived | Number killed |
| JAN | 18 | 25 | 21 | 4 |
| FEB | 17 | 23 | 18 | 5 |
| MAR | 15 | 17 | 13 | 4 |
| APR | 21 | 23 | 21 | 2 |
| MAY | 15 | 19 | 14 | 5 |
| JUN | 21 | 22 | 17 | 5 |
| JUL | 20 | 20 | 17 | 3 |
| AUG | 24 | 36 | 34 | 2 |
| SEP | 17 | 17 | 14 | 3 |
| OCT | 12 | 16 | 15 | 1 |
| NOV | 21 | 26 | 21 | 5 |
| DEC | 23 | 29 | 24 | 5 |
| | 224 | 273 | 229 | 44 |



INCIDENT DATA BY DAY OF WEEK

More shooting incidents occurred on Fridays and Tuesdays than other days of the week.

| Incident Data by Day of Week | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Day | Shooting incidents | Officers shot | Number survived | Number killed |
| SUN | 26 | 30 | 23 | 7 |
| MON | 28 | 36 | 31 | 5 |
| TUE | 38 | 50 | 44 | 6 |
| WED | 25 | 33 | 29 | 4 |
| THU | 30 | 36 | 32 | 4 |
| FRI | 40 | 49 | 43 | 6 |
| SAT | 37 | 39 | 27 | 12 |
| | 224 | 273 | 229 | 44 |



NATIONAL BLUE ALERT NETWORK

2019 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

| | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | 2019 | 2018 | % Change |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|----------|
| Total number of shooting incidents | 18 | 17 | 15 | 21 | 15 | 21 | 20 | 24 | 17 | 12 | 21 | 23 | 224 | 204 | + 10% |
| Total number of officers shot | 25 | 23 | 17 | 23 | 19 | 22 | 20 | 36 | 17 | 16 | 26 | 29 | 273 | 251 | + 9% |
| Number of officers shot and survived | 21 | 18 | 13 | 21 | 14 | 17 | 17 | 34 | 14 | 15 | 21 | 24 | 229 | 200 | + 15% |
| Number of officers shot and killed | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 44 | 51 | - 14% |

224 Shooting Incidents / 273 Officers Shot



Officer Shot and Wounded (229)



Officer Shot and Killed (44)



* Assaults with firearms on on-duty law enforcement officers resulting in an officer being wounded or killed in calendar year 2019.
 Does not include assaults by means other than firearms due to inconsistent availability of data. Markers represent approximate geographic location.

This report contains data on law enforcement officers shot in the line of duty, both fatally and non-fatally, for the purpose of better understanding the nature and frequency of incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert. 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.



COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
145 N Street NE
Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details on COPS Office programs, call
the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.