



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



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.

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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 2021.¹
- 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)**.

¹ 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

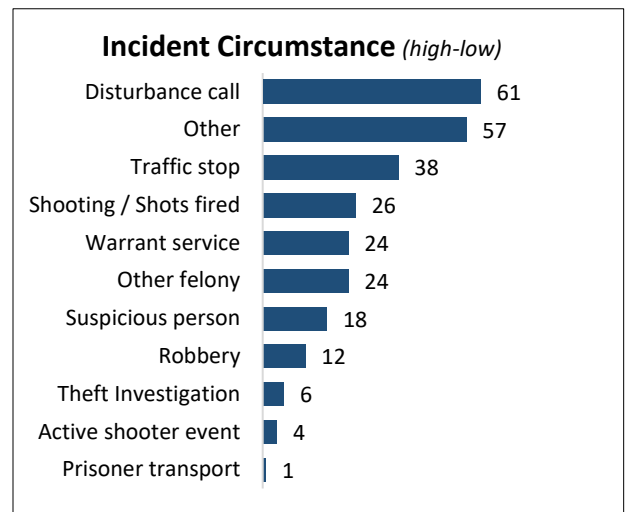
There were **271** incidents in 2021 where law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty, which is a **10 percent** increase over the total number of incidents in 2020. The number of officers shot increased by **11 percent** compared to 2020. The number of officers who died as a result of being 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**).

Circumstance at Time of Incident				
<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*
	271	346	287	64*****



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.

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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.

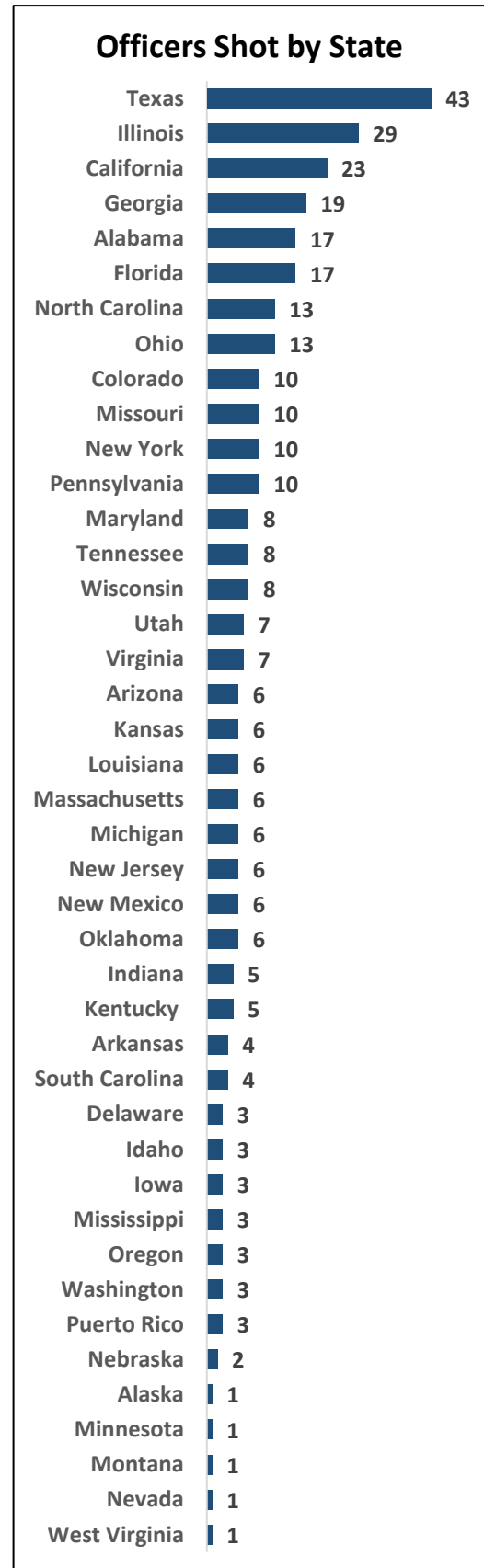
BULLET-RESISTANT VESTS

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.

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INCIDENT DATA BY STATE

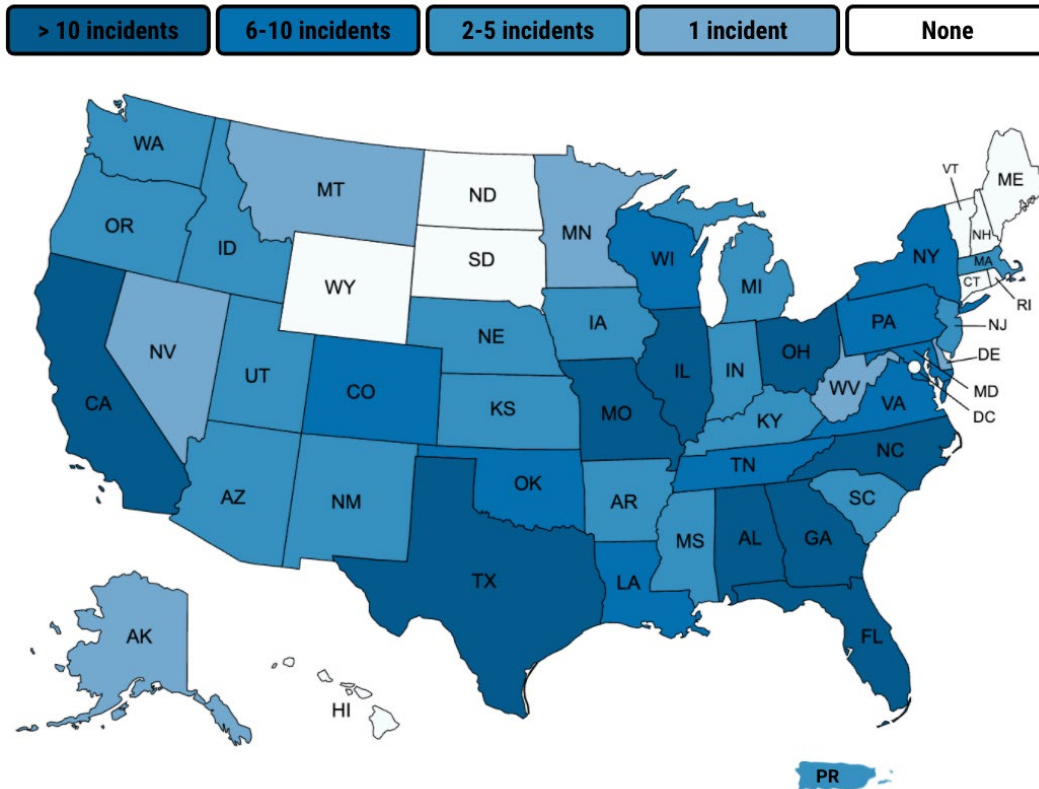
State	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
<i>One (*) equals one officer who was shot prior to 2021 but succumbed to a gunshot wound in 2021.</i>				
Alabama	11	17	14	3
Alaska	1	1	1	0
Arizona	4	6	5	1
Arkansas	4	4	4	0
California	20*	23	18	6*
Colorado	9	10	8	2
Delaware	1	3	3	0
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
	276*****	346	287	64*****



2021 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

INCIDENT LOCATION DENSITY MAP

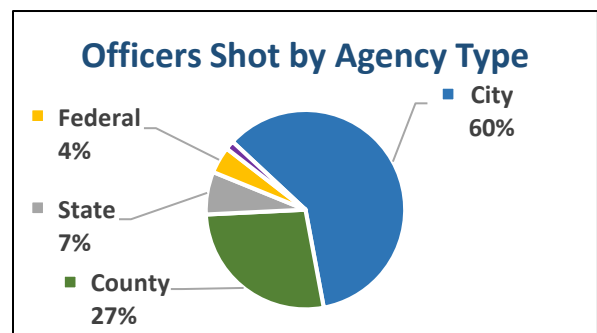
Officer shootings were reported in **42** states and Puerto Rico. Texas had the highest number of shooting incidents at **29**, followed by Illinois at **21**. The state with the next highest number of incidents reported was California (**20**). No officer shootings were reported in **8** states (Connecticut, 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
	288*****	346	287	64*****

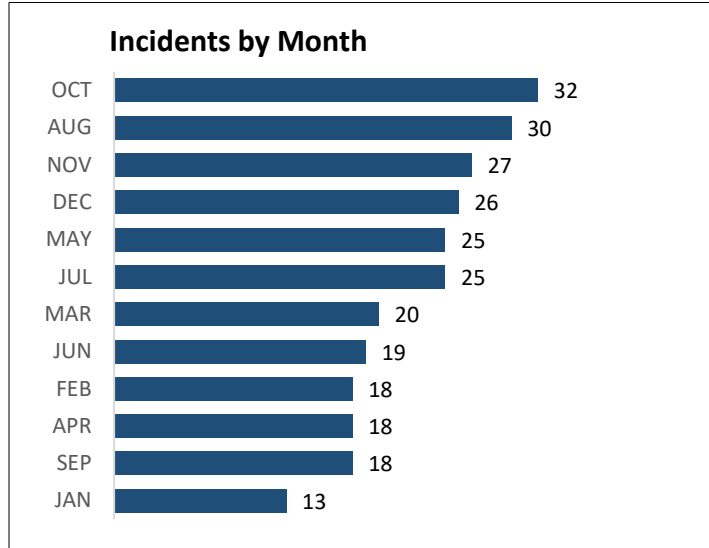


2021 - LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS SHOT IN THE LINE OF DUTY

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).

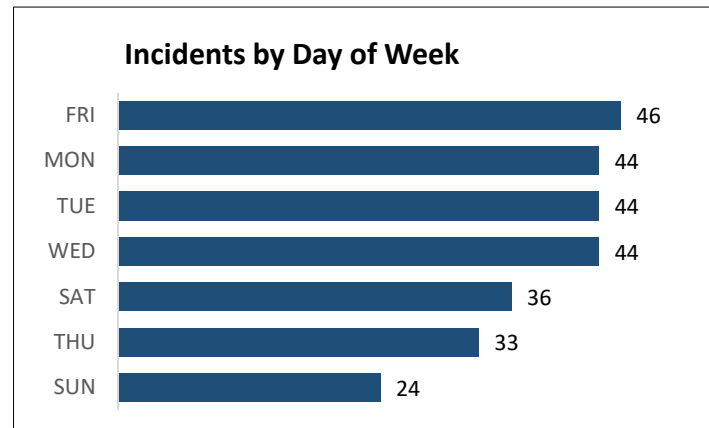
Incident Data by Month				
<i>One (*) equals one officer who was shot prior to 2021 but succumbed to a gunshot wound in 2021.</i>				
Month	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
JAN	13	18	14	4
FEB	18	30	23	7
MAR	20	21	19	4**
APR	18	22	20	4*
MAY	25	37	31	7*
JUN	19	22	19	3
JUL	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
	271	346	287	64*****



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
	271	346	287	59



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
Total Number of Shooting Incidents	13	18	20	18	25	19	25	30	18	32	27	26	271	246	+ 10%
Total Number of Officers Shot	18	30	21	22	37	22	35	35	20	40	33	33	346	312	+ 11%
<i>Number of Officers Survived</i>	14	23	19	20	31	19	28	31	16	33	27	27	287	268	+ 7.0%
<i>Number of Officers Killed</i>	4	7	4**	4*	7*	3	7	4	4	8*	6	6	64	44	+ 36%

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.*