

# Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act

*Report to Congress May 2024*

United States Department of Justice  
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)

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# 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 U.S. 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 they are missing in connection with their 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 remain top priorities for the DOJ. The Department is committed to implementing the Blue Alert Act to protect the lives of those who bravely serve in law enforcement. The nature of police work is uniquely dangerous, and the DOJ is steadfast in its strong support of federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement officers 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, is responsible for overseeing implementation of the Blue Alert Act and supporting the National Blue Alert Network.

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<sup>1</sup> Although 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 implementing the Blue Alert Act and reports the following activities:

#### Designation of national coordinator

The Blue Alert Act requires the Attorney General to assign an existing officer of the DOJ to act as the national coordinator of the Blue Alert communications network and 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 has designated the Director of the COPS Office as the National Blue Alert Coordinator. Throughout this reporting period Hugh T. Clements, Jr., the Director of the COPS Office, has served as the National Blue Alert Coordinator. Director Clements joined the Office in January 2023, following his appointment by the Attorney General. He brings a wealth of law enforcement experience, having served for nearly 40 years at the Providence (Rhode Island) Police Department immediately prior to becoming the COPS Office Director. There, Director Clements started as a night patrol officer with Providence's Uniform Division, worked in both the Special Investigations Bureau and the Detective Bureau, served as deputy chief, and then in 2012 was appointed chief and promoted to the rank of colonel. Director Clements's experience in policing, of having risen through the ranks and served in many different roles and worked alongside many community partners, will help him to continue the COPS Office's valuable work supporting constitutional policing for the law enforcement profession and promoting the National Blue Alert Network.

Notably, Director Clements's home state of Rhode Island is a Blue Alert state. In January 2020, then-U.S. Attorney Aaron L. Weisman presented a certificate of recognition to Colonel James M. Manni, Superintendent of Rhode Island State Police and Director of Public Safety, to acknowledge the importance of Rhode Island's Blue Alert System, which meets all national guidelines as set forth by the National Blue Alert Network. The COPS Office is pleased to have supported the leadership of Colonel Manni and other state leaders in their decision to join the National Blue Alert Network.

The COPS Office Blue Alert team continues 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 regular 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 to 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 14 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
- 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 its 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 DOJ has developed voluntary guidelines that address two complementary components of the Blue Alert Act: (1) public alerts and (2) 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.

The COPS Office has also developed *Effective Blue Alert Plans: Guidance and Recommendations* ([https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/blue-alert/Blue\\_Alert\\_Guidance\\_2018.pdf](https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/blue-alert/Blue_Alert_Guidance_2018.pdf)) to help states and local agencies through the Blue Alert plan development process, to enhance and standardize existing state and local Blue Alert plans, and to 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 web page on our website at <https://cops.usdoj.gov/bluealert> to promote Blue Alerts and provide educational materials. This National Blue Alert Network web page 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 with Blue Alert plans
- *Blue Alert Guidelines*
- National Blue Alert Network fact sheet
- 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 at <https://cops.usdoj.gov/bluealert> on the JusticeConnect platform. 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 web page 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 agencies 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 U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the U.S. 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 also 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 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 all 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). 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 use 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

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)(1) and (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 DOJ 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, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies (ASCI). These conferences enable outreach to tens of thousands of law enforcement officers and agencies. The Department has also responded to requests from various local 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 COPS Office continues to monitor state legislative activity toward enactment of Blue Alert legislation. There are no new states that have enacted Blue Alert legislation this reporting period. The most recent state to enact Blue Alert legislation is New York, which enacted Blue Alert legislation in December 2022 that became effective in March 2023.

## 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 12 known instances of Blue Alerts issued during this reporting period.

### Colorado

1. **September 2023, Colorado Springs, Colorado.** The Colorado Bureau of Investigation issued a Blue Alert when two state parole officers were hit by a suspect's car in a hit and run while they were attempting to serve a warrant. Both officers were taken to the hospital. Tragically, one officer died from his injuries. The other officer was later released and, thankfully, is expected to make a full recovery. The suspect was later taken into custody.

### Idaho

2. **March 2024, Boise, Idaho.** The Idaho Department of Corrections (IDOC) issued a Blue Alert when officers transporting a prisoner to a local hospital for medical care were ambushed by that prisoner and his accomplice in an escape attempt. Two IDOC officers were shot by one of the suspects, with the third mistakenly shot by a responding Boise Police Officer. All three injured officers were treated for their wounds and determined to be in stable condition. Both suspects were located the next day and taken into custody after a short car chase. This was Idaho's first Blue Alert activation.

### Iowa

3. **September 2023, Algona, Iowa.** An Algona Police Department officer was shot and killed while attempting to arrest a suspect with an active warrant. The Iowa Department of Public Safety issued a Blue Alert in response, which was the first activation in the state. The suspect was later found in Minnesota and extradited to face first-degree murder charges.

### Maryland

4. **March 2024, Baltimore, Maryland.** The Maryland State Police issued a Blue Alert after two officers sustained minor injuries while conducting a traffic stop. The suspect remains at large.

### Mississippi

5. **May 2023, Mound Bayou, Mississippi.** After a trooper was shot in the arm during a high-speed chase, Mississippi Highway Patrol issued a Blue Alert. The trooper's injuries were not life-threatening and, thankfully, he is expected to make a full recovery. The suspect was arrested two days later and has been charged with attempted murder and felony possession of a firearm.

### Missouri

6. **August 2023, Troy, Missouri.** Missouri State Highway Patrol issued a Blue Alert after an officer was shot while responding to a domestic violence incident. The suspect fled after setting their

home on fire and was later found deceased hours later. It is unclear how the suspect died. Thankfully, the injured officer is expected to make a full recovery.

## North Carolina

- 7. December 2023, Greensboro, North Carolina.** The North Carolina Center for Missing Persons issued a Blue Alert after an off-duty watch commander who witnessed a robbery at a gas station was fatally shot while confronting a suspect. After the Blue Alert, three men were arrested in relation to the crime. One suspect has been charged with first-degree murder, larceny, and conspiracy, while the remaining two were charged with accessory after the fact to first-degree murder. This was the first Blue Alert activation within the state.

## Oklahoma

- 8. June 2023, Okmulgee, Oklahoma.** The Oklahoma Bureau of Investigation issued a Blue Alert after an Okmulgee Police Department officer was ambushed and shot while responding to a burglary and the suspect fled the scene. The suspect was apprehended days later. The injured officer was transported to the hospital and later released.
- 9. October 2023, Wynnewood, Oklahoma.** While pursuing a suspect and attempting to conduct a traffic stop, a Cleveland County deputy was shot in an exchange of gunfire with the suspect, prompting the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety to issue a Blue Alert. The officer was transported to the hospital and stabilized. Tragically, a civilian was killed in the crossfire. A weeklong manhunt was concluded when the suspect was found dead.

## Tennessee

- 10. October 2023, LaVergne, Tennessee.** Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) issued a Blue Alert for a suspect wanted for shooting two LaVergne police officers at a Dollar General store, both of whom are in stable condition. The suspect, wanted for two counts of attempted first degree murder, was added to the TBI Most Wanted list. On October 24th, the suspect was found dead in his car after leading officers on a high-speed car chase.
- 11. February 2024, Blount County, Tennessee.** The TBI issued a Blue Alert after two Blount County deputies were shot while conducting a traffic stop and the suspect fled the scene. One officer was sent to the hospital with serious injuries and later released, while, sadly, the other officer died from his wounds. Following issuance of the Blue Alert, a nearly five-day statewide manhunt ensued, concluding with two accomplices being taken into custody and charged with accessory after the fact and the shooter arrested with charges of first-degree murder, attempted murder, and felon in possession of a weapon.

## Texas

- 12. August 2023, Houston, Texas.** The Texas Department of Public Safety issued a Blue Alert following the shooting of a deputy during a traffic stop, leaving him in critical but stable condition. A Blue Alert was issued for two suspects in relation to the shooting. One suspect was

located, questioned, and released without charges. The second suspect was arrested after a five-hour standoff, which left two additional officers with non-critical gunshot wounds. The apprehended suspect has been charged with three counts of attempted capital murder.

## 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. The COPS Office is not yet aware that any of the states with Blue Alert plans have conducted research into their effectiveness.

As previously reported, the COPS Office has made direct outreach calls to all 50 states and all 6 territories, which includes 38 states that operate Blue Alert systems as well as those 12 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 of plans (24 states) contain provisions for officers missing in the line of duty.
- 16 percent of plans (6 states) allow for activation in cases where an officer is threatened with a deadly weapon but not actually injured.
- 70 percent of plans (26 states) require sufficient descriptive information about a suspect to enlist the public's assistance.
- 57 percent of plans (21 states) require a suspect vehicle description or license tag for activation.

Table 1 is a quick reference of threshold activation criteria for the featured states as of April 2024. 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 DOJ, in partnership with the FOP, issues a *Report on Officers Shot* that documents all known shooting incidents in a calendar year to better understand the nature and frequency of incidents that could give rise to the issuance of a Blue Alert. The 2023 report contains data on law enforcement officers shot in the line of duty, both fatally and nonfatally. These types of felonious attacks account for nearly all situations where a Blue Alert would be issued. Tracking data do not include assaults by means other than firearms because of inconsistent availability of data.

The COPS Office acknowledges the significant contributions and leadership of the FOP's staff to this report, including National President Patrick Yoes, Executive Director Jim Pasco, Senior Legislative Liaison Tim Richardson, and Legislative Liaisons David Taboh, Asa Render, and Benjamin Stokes.

Highlights of the 2023 report include the following:

### 2023 Summary data

- **Three hundred seventy-eight** law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty during calendar year 2023 in **308** separate shooting incidents, including **52** incidents where multiple officers were shot.
- A total of **46** law enforcement officers died in 2023 as a result of being shot in the line of duty. **Forty-four** law enforcement officers died after being shot in 2023 and **332** officers survived. Additionally, in 2023, **two** officers succumbed to complications from a gunshot wound that occurred during an incident prior to 2023.
- **City or municipal** law enforcement officers accounted for nearly two-thirds (**62 percent**) of all shooting incidents in 2023.
- **Disturbance calls (47 incidents)** and **felony investigations (41 incidents)** accounted for **28.7 percent** of all shooting incidents and resulted in **114** officers shot.
- **One hundred thirty-eight** law enforcement officers were shot in **115** separate ambushes. **Twenty** of those officers died.

- At least **45** officers were known to have been protected from gunshots that struck a protective ballistic vest.
- Shootings occurred in **43** different states, the **District of Columbia**, and **Puerto Rico**. **Texas** had the highest number of officers shot with **39**, followed by **Pennsylvania** with **25** and **California** with **22**.
- **August** saw the highest number of officers shot in 2023, with **43**, followed by **38** officers shot in **March**.
- The day of the week that experienced the highest number of officers shot was **Wednesday**, which saw a total of **68** officers shot in 2023.

## VII. Summary of Activities and Projected Next Steps

### Notable past developments/activities

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

- Developed a wide variety of Blue Alert informational resources, including the following:
  - National Blue Alert Network fact sheet 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 LECs 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 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 were placed on hold because of COVID restrictions but will resume in the coming reporting period.
- 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: (1) a patrol officer from Pennsylvania, (2) a detective from Colorado, and (3) an undersheriff from Washington. The fellows began their one-year details in April 2021. During their fellowships, each of the fellows contributed greatly to advancing the National Blue Alert Network.
- The COPS Office published a report describing incidents in which 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.

- 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 in which 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 2023, the FOP and the COPS Office published a report on incidents in which law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty during calendar year 2022.
- In April 2023, the COPS Office released a solicitation seeking a grantee to raise awareness of the Blue Alert system through the production of an educational video and to research, gather, and compile accurate and timely information from credible sources about all reported incidents in which law enforcement are shot in the line of duty throughout the United States, territories, and Tribal lands. The grant has a 24-month period of performance. The grant was awarded to the Fraternal Order of Police via the competitive process.

## Notable new developments/activities

The DOJ reports the following new developments and activities in the current 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.
- The National Blue Alert Coordinator attended (virtually and in person) numerous conferences and meetings around the country and, where appropriate, promoted the use of Blue Alerts and resources offered by the COPS Office.

## Upcoming activities

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

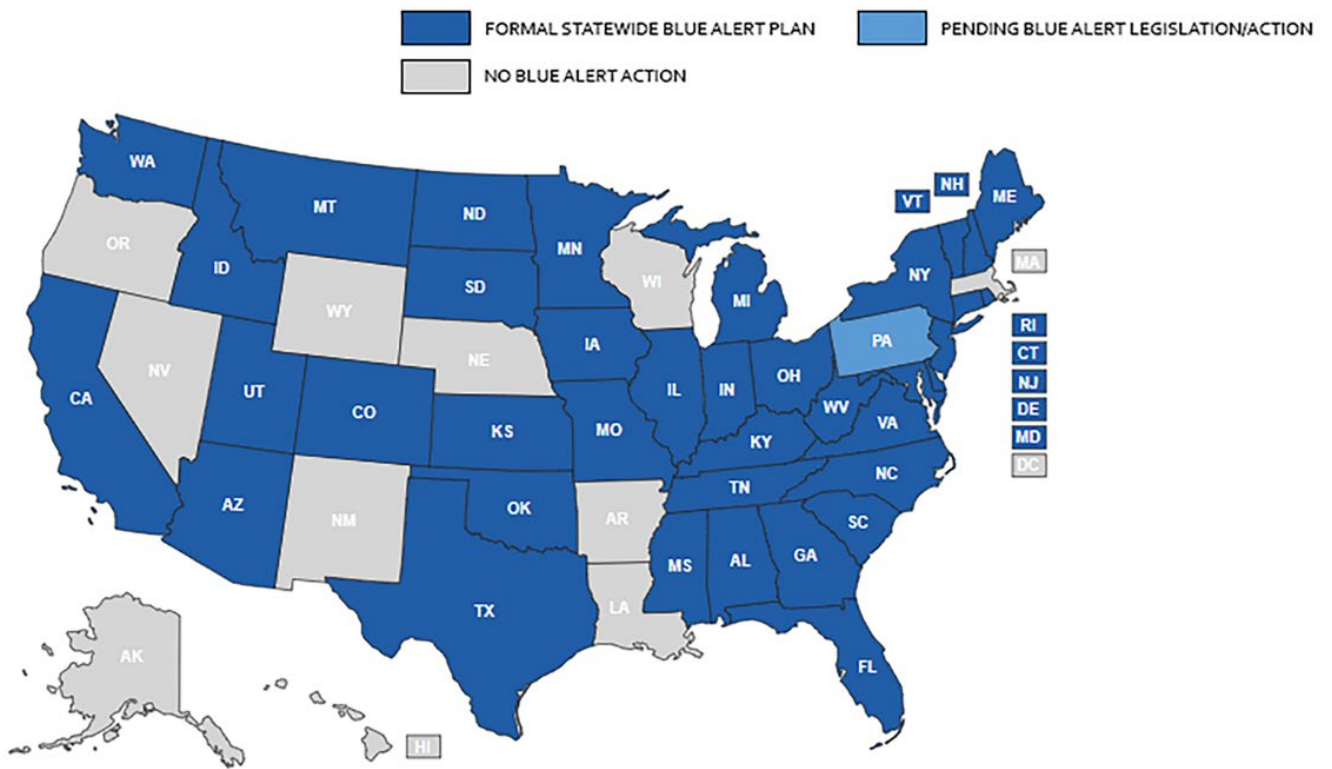
- Conduct additional outreach to states and territories to raise awareness about the availability of free educational resources and technical assistance.
- Continue to work with the FCC, FEMA, and other federal partners to ensure effective coordination of Blue Alert rules and infrastructure.
- Continue 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.
- Continue with periodic National Blue Alert Advisory Group meetings.
- Continue to work with grantee, Fraternal Order of Police, under award to promote awareness of the National Blue Alert Network. Specific program goals include the following:
  - Production of a short educational video to raise public awareness of the National Blue Alert Network
  - Collection of information on officers shot in the line of duty
  - Preparation of an annual report on officers shot and other materials, both for the advisory group and for public dissemination

## VIII. Attachments

- Map of state Blue Alert plans (May 2024)
- Blue Alert web page screen image
- DOJ Blue Alert certificate sample
- Blue Alert fact sheet (May 2024)
- 2023 Report, Officers Shot in the Line of Duty

# Map of state Blue Alert plans (May 2024)





DOJ Blue Alert certificate sample



# Blue Alert fact sheet (May 2024)

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



## 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 in any of the following circumstances, provided there is actionable information known about a suspect (e.g., name, physical description, or vehicle description):

- When a law enforcement officer is killed or seriously injured in the line of duty
- When an officer is missing in connection with official duties
- When there is an imminent and credible threat to kill or seriously injure a law enforcement officer



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

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

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





# Law Enforcement Officers Shot in the Line of Duty

2023 Year-End Summary



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



**NATIONAL FRATERNAL  
ORDER OF POLICE**

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May 2024

# 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 U.S. 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 Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) was tasked with implementing the Act and establishing 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 **COPS Office** 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 nonfatally, 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.

## 2023 SUMMARY DATA

**Three hundred seventy-eight** law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty during calendar year 2023 in **308** separate shooting incidents, including **52** incidents where multiple officers were shot.

A total of **46** law enforcement officers died in 2023 as a result of being shot in the line of duty. **Forty-four** law enforcement officers died after being shot in 2023; **332** officers survived. In addition, in 2023, **two** officers succumbed to complications from gunshot wounds that occurred during incidents that took place prior to 2023.<sup>2</sup>

**City or municipal** law enforcement officers accounted for nearly two-thirds (**62 percent**) of all shooting incidents in 2023.

**Disturbance calls (47 incidents)** and **felony investigations (41 incidents)** accounted for **28.7 percent** of all shooting incidents and resulted in **114** officers shot.

**One hundred thirty-eight** law enforcement officers were shot in **115** separate ambushes. **Twenty** of those officers died. At least **45** officers were known to have been protected from gunshots by protective ballistic vests.

Shootings occurred in **43** different states, the **District of Columbia**, and **Puerto Rico**. **Texas** had the highest number of officers shot with **39**, followed by **Pennsylvania** with **25** and **California** with **22**.

**August** saw the highest number of officers shot in 2023, with **43**, followed by **38** officers shot in **March**.

The day of the week that experienced the highest number of officers shot was **Wednesday**, which saw a total of **68** officers shot in 2023.

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<sup>2</sup> When these **two** incidents are included in a specific datapoint, they will be noted with the use of (\*).

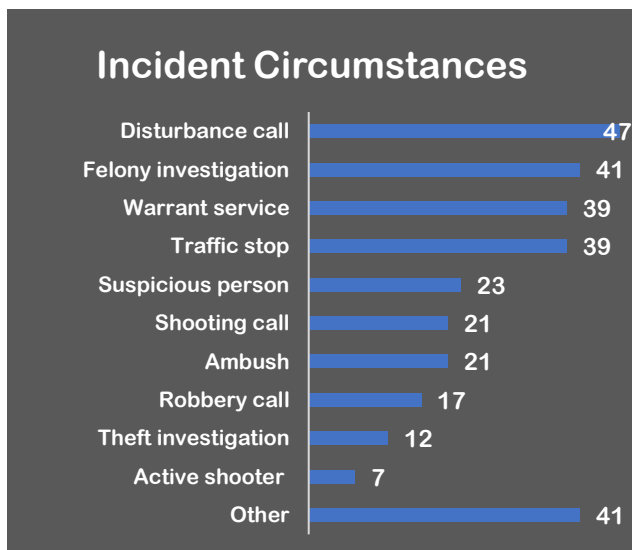
## 2023 INCIDENT DATA

There were **308 incidents** in 2023 in which law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty, a **15.3 percent** increase from the total number of incidents in 2022. The number of officers shot in the line of duty in 2023 increased by **14.2 percent** compared to 2022, after that year had seen a **4.3 percent** decrease from 2021. The number of officers who died in 2023 as a result of being shot decreased by **25.8 percent** compared to 2022, which was a decrease of **3.1 percent** compared to 2021. *NOTE: One (\*) represents an officer who succumbed to a gunshot inflicted in a previous year.*

	2023 totals	Change from 2022 to 2023	2022 totals	2021 totals	Change from 2021 to 2022
Total number of shooting incidents	308	+ 15.3 %	267	271	- 1.5 %
Total number of officers shot	378	+ 14.2 %	331	346	- 4.3 %
Number of officers shot and survived	332	+ 22.1 %	272	287	- 1.5 %
Number of officers shot and killed	46**	- 25.8 %	62***	64*****	- 3.1 %

## INCIDENT DATA BY CIRCUMSTANCE

**Disturbance calls (47 incidents)** and **felony investigations (41 incidents)** accounted for **28.7 percent** of all shooting incidents.



## 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, which contributes to a worrisome desensitization to evil acts that were once largely considered taboo except by the most depraved.

## AMBUSH-STYLE ATTACKS

There were **115** ambush-style incidents in which officers were shot without any warning or opportunity to defend themselves, including several 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, **138** law enforcement officers were shot in ambush-style attacks, of whom **20** died. In 2023, **37 percent** of shooting incidents were considered ambush-style.

Of the total number of officers who were ambushed, **14.5** percent died of their injuries, compared to **10.4** percent of officers shot under other circumstances, making ambush-style attacks more lethal to their targets.

Examples of ambush-style attacks include the following:

An officer was sitting in their patrol car when the suspect drove alongside and opened fire, striking and killing the officer.

The suspect fled the scene but was captured a few days later.

Officers had stopped to assist a disabled motorist. The driver then opened fire, striking an officer. Officers returned fire, striking the suspect. The suspect fled the scene in the officer's vehicle but eventually crashed and died because of their injuries.

Officers were executing a search warrant at a residence when the suspect opened fire, striking an officer. Officers were able to take the suspect into custody after a brief standoff.

## CALCULATED ATTACKS

Similar to ambush-style attacks, there were **166** incidents where offenders acted in a calculated and premeditated manner to shoot officers who were performing 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, **209** officers were shot in calculated attacks, and **21** of those officers were killed.

Examples of calculated attacks include the following:

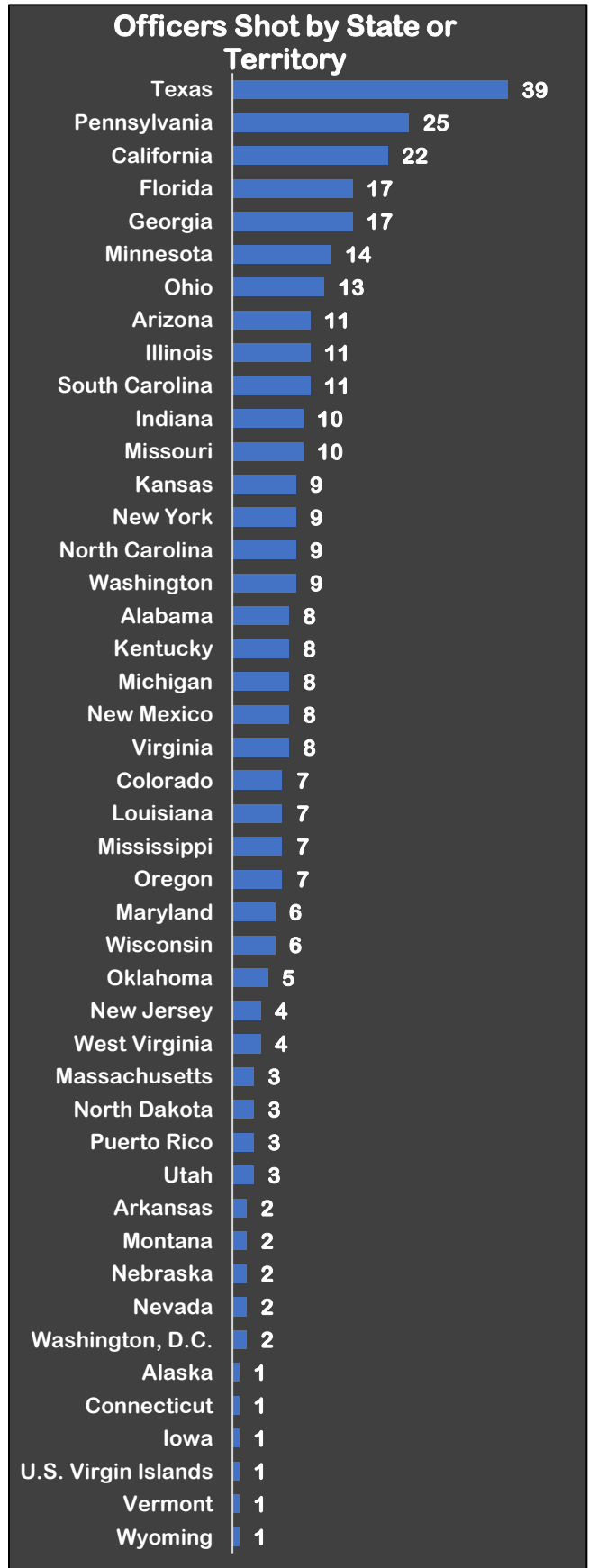
Officers were responding to reports of shots fired. When officers arrived at the scene, the suspect opened fire, striking an officer. The suspect surrendered to officers after the incident.

Officers were searching for a suspect who had an arrest warrant and tracked him to an apartment. When officers tried to enter, the suspect opened fire, striking an officer. Officers returned fire, killing the suspect.

Officers were responding to reports of a domestic violence incident. When officers arrived at the scene and tried making contact with the suspect, the suspect opened fire, striking an officer. The suspect was arrested after a standoff.

# INCIDENT DATA BY STATE

State or territory	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
<i>Each asterisk (*) equals one officer who was shot prior to 2023 but died from that gunshot wound in 2023.</i>				
Alabama	6	8	7	1
Alaska	1	1	1	0
Arizona	8	11	11	0
Arkansas	2	2	2	0
California	20	22	18	4
Colorado	7	7	6	1
Connecticut	1	1	1	0
Florida	16	17	17	0
Georgia	15	17	15	2
Illinois	11	11	9	2
Indiana	8	10	9	1
Iowa	1	1	0	1
Kansas	5	9	8	1
Kentucky	7	8	7	1
Louisiana	6	7	4	3*
Maryland	4	6	6	0
Massachusetts	3	3	3	0
Michigan	7	8	8	0
Minnesota	7	14	13	1
Mississippi	6	7	5	2
Missouri	6	10	9	1
Montana	2	2	2	0
Nebraska	1	2	2	0
Nevada	2	2	2	0
New Jersey	4	4	3	1
New Mexico	8	8	6	2*
New York	8	9	9	0
North Carolina	8	9	8	1
North Dakota	1	3	2	1
Ohio	10	13	13	0
Oklahoma	5	5	5	0
Oregon	5	7	6	1
Pennsylvania	17	25	20	5
Puerto Rico	1	3	2	1
South Carolina	10	11	11	0
Tennessee	16	21	19	2
Texas	33	39	35	4
U.S. Virgin Islands	1	1	0	1
Utah	3	3	3	0
Vermont	1	1	1	0
Virginia	8	8	7	1
Washington	7	9	9	0
Washington, D.C.	2	2	2	0
West Virginia	3	4	3	1
Wisconsin	4	6	2	4
Wyoming	1	1	1	0
	<b>308</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>46**</b>

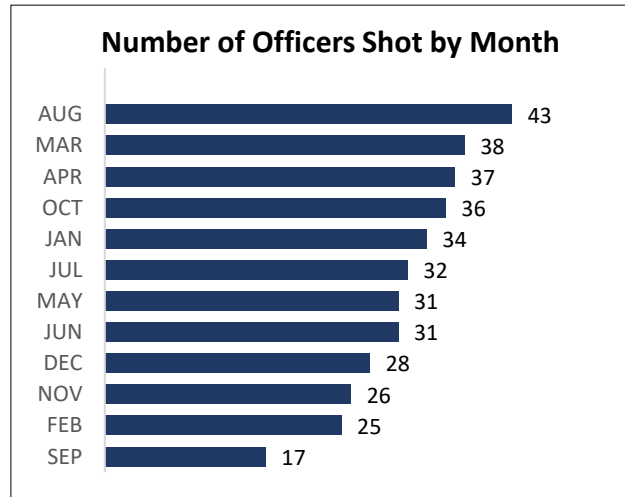




## INCIDENT DATA BY MONTH

**August** saw the highest number of officers shot in 2023, with **43**, followed by **38** officers shot in **March**.

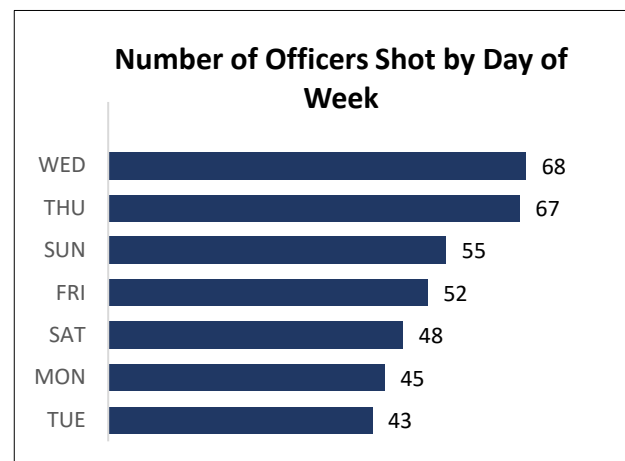
Incident Data by Month				
<i>Each asterisk (*) equals one officer who was shot prior to 2023 but died from that gunshot wound in 2023.</i>				
Month	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
JAN	27	34	31	3
FEB	19	25	21	4
MAR	30	38	34	4
APR	29	37	32	5*
MAY	26	31	26	5
JUN	27	31	27	4
JUL	26	32	24	8
AUG	32	43	41	2*
SEP	16	17	15	2
OCT	27	36	33	3
NOV	24	26	24	2
DEC	25	28	24	4
	<b>308</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>46**</b>



## INCIDENT DATA BY DAY OF WEEK

**Wednesday** was the day of the week that saw the highest number of officers shot, with **68** officers shot, followed by **Thursday** (**67**) and **Sunday** (**55**).

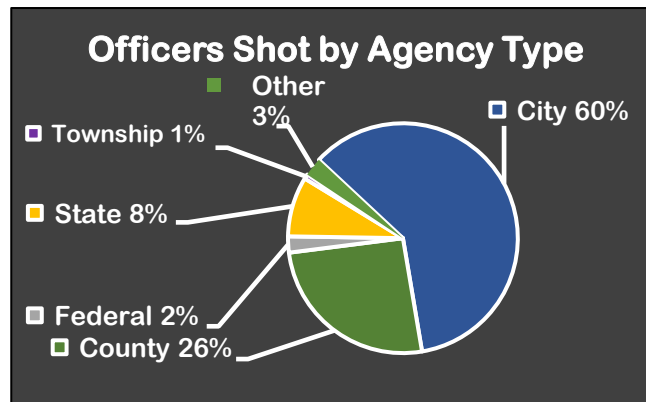
Incident Data by Day of Week				
<i>Each asterisk (*) equals one officer who was shot prior to 2023 but died from that gunshot wound in 2023.</i>				
Day	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
SUN	46	55	50	5*
MON	35	45	38	7*
TUE	36	43	37	6
WED	55	68	63	5
THU	51	67	63	4
FRI	44	52	44	8
SAT	41	48	37	11
	<b>308</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>46**</b>



## INCIDENT DATA BY AGENCY TYPE

**Two hundred twenty-six** of the officers shot in 2023 were members of city or municipal law enforcement agencies. The data and chart below depict incidents broken down by agency type. *NOTE: Some incidents involved multiple types of agency.*

Incidents by Agency Type				
<i>Each asterisk (*) equals one officer who was shot prior to 2023 but died from that gunshot wound in 2023.</i>				
Agency type	Shooting incidents	Officers shot	Number survived	Number killed
City	186	226	195	31**
County	79	98	89	9
Federal	7	10	10	0
State	25	2	2	0
Township	2	2	2	0
Other	9	11	9	2
	<b>308</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>46**</b>



	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	2023	2022	% Change
<b>Total number of shooting incidents</b>	27	19	30	29	26	27	26	32	16	27	24	25	<b>308</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>+ 15.3%</b>
<b>Total number of officers shot</b>	34	25	38	37	31	31	32	43	17	36	26	28	<b>378</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>+ 14.2%</b>
<i>Number of officers survived</i>	31	21	34	32	26	27	24	41	15	33	24	24	<b>332</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>+ 15.7%</b>
<i>Number of officers killed</i>	3	4	4	5*	5	4	8	2*	2	3	2	4	<b>46**</b>	<b>62***</b>	<b>- 25.8%</b>

*Each asterisk (\*) represents one officer who was shot prior in one year but died from that gunshot wound in a subsequent year.*