



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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Bureau of Justice Statistics  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs)  
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### **RATE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE DROPPED** **BY MORE THAN ONE-HALF FROM 1993 TO 2002**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The rate of family violence fell by more than one-half between 1993 and 2002, from an estimated 5.4 victims to 2.1 victims per 1,000 U.S. residents 12 years old and older, reflecting the general decline in crimes against people during the same period, the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today.

Family violence accounted for 11 percent of all reported and unreported violence between 1998 and 2002. Of these offenses against family members, 49 percent were a crime against a spouse, 11 percent a parent attacking a child, and 41 percent an offense against another family member.

Seventy-three percent of family violence victims were female and 76 percent of persons who committed family violence were male. Simple assault was the most frequent type of family violence.

Drugs or alcohol were involved in 39 percent of family violence victimizations. In 20 percent of family violence incidents, the offender had a weapon.

About four in 10 family violence victimizations did not come to police attention between 1998 and 2002. Thirty-four percent of victims of unreported family violence said they did not tell law enforcement officials about the matter because it was private or personal. Another 12 percent said they did not report it to protect the offender.

One-half of convicted family violence offenders in prison in 1997 were serving a sentence for committing a sex crime against a family member. Forty-five percent of convicted family violence offenders in local jails in 2002 had been subject to a restraining order at some point in their life.

About one in five persons murdered in 2002 was killed by a family member. In all homicides that year, almost 9 percent were the killing of a spouse, 6 percent the murder of a son or daughter and 7 percent the killing of another family member.

Fifty-eight percent of family murder victims were female, and 26 percent were under age 18. Among murdered children under age 13, 66 percent were killed by a family member.

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Eighty-three percent of those who killed a spouse were males, as were 75 percent of those who killed a boyfriend or girlfriend.

The average age of a son or daughter killed by a parent was 7 years old, and 80 percent were younger than 13 years old.

The report, "Family Violence Statistics" (NCJ-207846), was written by BJS statisticians Matthew R. Durose, Caroline Wolf Harlow, Patrick A. Langan, Mark Motivans, Ramona R. Rantala, and Erica L. Smith. Following publication, the document can be accessed at:

[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/fvs.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/fvs.htm).

Additional information about BJS statistical reports and programs is available from the BJS website at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs).

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