



Crime and Weapons

A Buechner Crime Briefing

By Lynn A. Addington, JD, PhD and Callie Marie Rennison, PhD



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About this Series

The Criminology and Criminal Justice Research Initiative is housed in the Buechner Institute for Governance located in the School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado Denver. The purpose of the *Buechner Crime Briefing* series is to translate academic research into a format that is of greater use and value to those in the criminal justice field, policy makers, practitioners and the general public. This is consistent with the Buechner Institute's mission, which is to facilitate the creation of a bridge between the expertise and knowledge of the academic community with the expertise and knowledge of all other interested audiences.

Acknowledgements

This Buechner Crime Brief presents a summary of findings focused on crime and weapons in Colorado. This research was conducted specifically for the Buechner Crime Briefing series. The study uses data from the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), from NACJD, which are publicly available through the National Archives of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD).

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Crime and Weapons in Colorado

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HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2010, Colorado law enforcement agencies participating in NIBRS reported 36,995 weapon related crimes.
- Among the violent crimes of murder, rape/sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault, the crime of aggravated assault most frequently involved any weapon, according to NIBRS data.
- Firearm-related crimes comprised 10.7% of all crimes involving weapons.
- During 2010, 1.4% of firearm related incidents involved a murder.
- Most weapon-related incidents involved a single victim, and most involved a single offender.
- Slightly more than half of weapon-related criminal incidents ended in arrest (55.8%).
- Regardless of the weapon category, most crimes occurred in a home/residence.
- The majority of victims of crime involving a weapon in Colorado were male, white and non-Hispanic. About three-quarters of all crime involving weapons occurred to victims in the same jurisdiction in which they lived.
- The average age of victims of weapon related violence was about 30 years regardless of the weapon category considered.
- Regardless of the jurisdiction considered, most crimes did not involve weapons.

While firearm-related crimes in Colorado and the nation garner a great deal of attention due to their lethality and violence, these offenses comprise a fairly small percentage of crime overall as well as crime involving weapons. Data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR) help provide a context for understanding weapon-related crime. In particular, data collected as part of the UCR's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) provide the necessary incident details. The FBI certified Colorado to collect its crime data in NIBRS format in 1997. As of January 2013, all Colorado law enforcement agencies submit their crime data in NIBRS format. The present report relies on Colorado NIBRS data from 2010, which are the most current data available to the public through the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data. Since not all Colorado law enforcement agencies submitted their crime data in NIBRS format in 2010, this report only covers those agencies that provided NIBRS data.¹ Colorado law enforcement agencies providing NIBRS data in 2010 covered almost 90% of the crime reported.

For purposes of this report, weapons are defined in three non-mutually exclusive ways: all weapons (which include both traditional and personal weapons), traditional weapons, and firearms. "Traditional weapons" include instruments used as weapons such as firearms, knives, clubs, or bats. For the subgroup of traditional weapons, it is possible that more than one weapon was used in an incident and one of these additional weapons was a personal weapon. To be counted in this category, at least one traditional weapon must be associated with the incident. "Personal weapons" are body parts such as hands, feet, fists, or teeth. "Firearms" are a subset of traditional weapons and include automatic and non-automatic handguns and long guns. As with traditional weapons in the firearm subgroup, it is possible that more than one weapon was used and the additional weapon was not a firearm. To be counted in the firearm category, though, at least one firearm must be associated with the incident.

CRIME AND WEAPONS IN COLORADO, 2010

In 2010, Colorado law enforcement agencies reported 36,995 crimes involving at least one weapon of any type (traditional or personal). Of these weapons-related crimes, 11,112 involved at least one traditional weapon and did not solely use a personal weapon. Specifically crime using at least one traditional weapon accounted for 30% of all crime involving weapons in 2010. A subset of traditional weapons is firearms. During 2010, 3,966 crimes involved firearms in Colorado, which accounted for 10.7% of the total crime involving weapons during 2010.

¹ For a list of reporting agencies in 2010, see <http://crimeinco.cbi.state.co.us/cic2k10/agencylist.php>

SELECTED TYPES OF CRIME BY WEAPON CATEGORY

NIBRS data collects information on 46 specific crimes, but this report only addresses the violent crimes of murder, rape/sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault (see Methodology for details for how these particular crimes are defined in this report). This section examines incidents involving these select criminal offenses by each of the three weapon categories. Since a criminal incident can comprise more than one offense, the numbers presented in Table 1 are the prevalence of these crimes and the crimes presented are not mutually exclusive. That is, for the statistics presented on murder, an incident is only counted once in the murder column even if two murders occurred in that incident (the prevalence count). If a criminal incident involving a murder also included a robbery, then this particular criminal incident is counted once in the murder column and once again in the robbery column (hence, are non-mutually exclusive). Since only the crimes of murder, rape/sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault are reported in Table 1, the columns do not add up to 100%.

As reported in Table 1 for all weapon-related crime incidents, NIBRS-reporting law enforcement agencies reported that 97 or 0.3% of those incidents involved a murder, 10.8% involved a rape/sexual assault, 7.7% involved a robbery, and 20.8% involved an aggravated assault. When incidents involving traditional weapons are considered, 0.8% or 86 incidents involved a murder, 2.5% involved a rape/sexual assault, 15.1% involved a robbery and 46.6% involved an aggravated assault. For firearms-related incidents, 1.4% or 56 incidents involved a murder, 0.7% involved a rape/sexual assault, 27.5% involved a robbery and 33.6% involved an aggravated assault.

Looking across all three categories of weapons, different patterns are observed in the percentage of particular crimes. Firearms are associated with the highest percentage of murders (1.4% as compared to 0.3% or 0.8% for all weapons and traditional weapons respectively) as well as robberies (27.5% as compared to 7.7% and 15.1%). All weapons (traditional and personal) are associated with the highest percentage of rape/sexual assaults (10.8% as compared to 2.5% and 0.7% for traditional weapons and firearms). Traditional weapons are associated with the highest percentage of aggravated assaults (46.6% as compared to 20.8% and 33.6% for all weapons and firearms).

Table 1. Counts of Types of Crime by Weapon Category

Type of Crime	Traditional and Personal Weapons		Traditional Weapons		Firearms	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Total incidents	36,995	100.0	11,112	100.0	3,966	100.0
Murder	97	0.3	86	0.8	56	1.4
Rape/sexual assault	4,005	10.8	273	2.5	27	0.7
Robbery	2,859	7.7	1,674	15.1	1,092	27.5
Aggravated assault	7,690	20.8	5,176	46.6	1,334	33.6

Note: One incident may include multiple types of crime, or it may include multiple instances of the same type of crime.

Note: Total incidents include other crimes in addition to murder, rape/sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault.

INCIDENT CHARACTERISTICS BY WEAPON CATEGORY

As reported in Table 2, most weapon-related incidents involved a single victim. Similarly, most criminal incidents involved a single offender. This pattern is observed across all three weapon

categories although firearm-related incidents have the highest percentage of multiple victims and multiple offenders.

Table 2. Incident Level Characteristics

Characteristic	Traditional and Personal Weapons		Traditional Weapons		Firearms	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
TOTAL	36,995	100.0	11,112	100.0	3,966	100.0
Number of victims						
One	30,480	82.4	8,251	74.3	2,590	65.3
Two or more	6,515	17.6	2,861	25.7	1,376	34.7
Number of offenders						
One	31,081	84.0	8,690	78.2	2,804	70.7
Two or more	5,914	16.0	2,422	21.8	1,162	29.3
Alcohol related	5,793	15.7	1,382	12.4	474	12.0
Arrest						
Arrest made	20,639	55.8	6,202	55.8	1,936	48.8
No arrest	16,356	44.2	4,910	44.2	2,030	51.2

Note: Traditional weapons include instruments used as weapons (i.e., guns, knives, bats). Personal weapons include body parts such as hands and feet. Firearms include both handguns and long guns.

Alcohol is not frequently reported in weapon-related incidents. In 2010, overall 15.7% of all weapon-related criminal incidents involved an offender under the influence of alcohol.

In 2010, slightly more than half of weapon-related criminal incidents ended in an arrest (55.8%). A similar percentage is observed for incidents involving traditional weapons. When a crime involved a firearm, fewer arrests occurred. Specifically, slightly less than half of crime involving a firearm resulted in an arrest (48.8%).

Table 3. Incident Location by Weapon Category

<u>Location of Incident</u>	<u>Traditional and Personal Weapons</u>		<u>Location of Incident</u>	<u>Traditional Weapons</u>		<u>Location of Incident</u>	<u>Firearms</u>	
	<u>Count</u>	<u>Percent</u>		<u>Count</u>	<u>Percent</u>		<u>Count</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Residence/Home	19,409	52.5	Residence/Home	4,584	41.3	Residence/Home	1,344	33.9
Highway/Road/Alley	5,905	16	Highway/Road/Alley	2,742	24.7	Highway/Road/Alley	1,185	29.9
Parking Lot/Garage	2,671	7.2	Parking Lot/Garage	1,083	9.7	Parking Lot/Garage	511	12.9
School/College	1,894	5.1	School/College	497	4.5	Convenience Store	118	3.0
Other/unknown	1,399	3.8	Other/unknown	398	3.6	Other/unknown	118	3.0

Note: NIBRS collects data on 25 specific locations as well as an "other" category. The top five, by each weapon category is shown in this table. More than 83% of all incidents are represented by the top five locations for each weapon category. To see additional locations collected by NIBRS, see the Methodology.

INCIDENT LOCATIONS BY WEAPON CATEGORY

Table 3 shows the most common locations where criminal incidents involving weapons occurred. The five crime locations shown for each weapon category accounted for more than 83% of all incidents in each weapon category. Regardless of the weapon category, a home/residence is the most frequent location where these incidents occurred and highways/roads/alleys and parking lots/garages were the next two most common locations. For all weapons (both traditional and personal) as well as only traditional weapons, the fourth most common location is school/college. This finding is in contrast to firearms-related incidents

where that location is convenience store (tied with "other" location). For all weapons and traditional weapons, the catch-all of "other" location is the fifth most common one. Although school shootings received a great deal of attention particularly in the media, they are quite rare. While school/college is the fourth most common location for non-firearm weapon incidents, it is the 13th most common location for firearm-related incidents (13 out of 25 locations) and accounted for 0.9% (or 35) of firearm-related crimes (not shown in Table 3). The majority (25 or 71%) of all school/college crimes involving firearms were weapons violations.

Victims of Weapon-Related Crime

The previous sections of this report examined weapons-related *criminal incidents*. This section focuses on the *victims* of those incidents. NIBRS collects information on crimes against individual victims as well as non-individual victims including businesses, financial institutions, the government, and society. Non-individual victims can be victims of weapon-related crime. For example, in a robbery of a convenience store by an offender with a gun, the victim is a business.

Table 4 shows that in 2010, the majority of weapon-related crime victims were individuals. Individual victims accounted for 90.5% of victims for all weapon-related crime, 76.7% of victims of traditional weapon related crime, and 65.7% of firearm-related crime.

Table 4. Types of Victims

Type of Victim	Traditional and Personal Weapons		Traditional Weapons		Firearms	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Total Victims	45,901	100.0	15,534	100.0	6,286	100.0
Individual Victims	41,553	90.5	11,915	76.7	4,134	65.7
Non-Individual Victims	4,348	9.5	3,619	23.3	2,152	34.3

INDIVIDUAL VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS BY WEAPON CATEGORY

This section focuses on individual victims of crimes in Colorado. By definition, non-individual victims do not have demographic characteristics so they are excluded from the following discussions about victim characteristics. Because some criminal incidents involve multiple victims, the total number of victims does not equal the total number of incidents presented in earlier parts of this report. Each weapon group is discussed separately in the following text.

Individual Victim Characteristics by All Weapons (Traditional or Personal Weapons)

As reported in Table 5, slightly more than half of all victims of crime using all weapons (traditional or personal) were male (52.4%) in 2010 and a majority of victims were white (84.4%). The average age of victims of crime using any weapon in Colorado was 29 years in 2010.

Law enforcement agencies reported that about half of the victims of all weapon-related crimes were non-Hispanic (51.4%) and about one-quarter (24.3%) were Hispanic. Hispanic origin information was missing for the remaining victims. Given the percentage of missing information, findings regarding Hispanic origin of the victim should be viewed with caution.

Over three-quarters of victims of weapons-related crimes were residents of the jurisdiction where they were victimized. Non-resident status suggests that the victim was temporarily in the jurisdiction where the crime occurred, which may be due to a variety of reasons such as commuting to or from work or school, shopping or touring.

In 2010, law enforcement agencies indicated that for over a quarter (27.5%) of victims of all weapon-related incidents, at least one of the offenders was an intimate partner (current, former or common law spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, or homosexual partner). This percentage compares to 18.4% of victims where at least one of the offenders was a stranger and 16.7% of victims where at least one offender was a friend or acquaintance of the victim. Since NIBRS collected data on up to 10 offenders, the victim-offender information here identifies whether any of the offenders involved had that particular relationship with the

victim. As such, it is possible a victim could appear more than once in the relationships presented. An example of such a case would be an assault involving one offender who was a friend and the other who was an intimate partner. The categories also rely on reported relationships. This distinction is of importance for strangers. If the victim-offender relationship information is missing for that offender, these situations are not interpreted as strangers. Only offenders specifically reported as being strangers are included. Finally since the percentages reported include missing victim-offender relationship cases as well as cases where the relationship is reported, findings regarding the percentage of victim/offender relationship should be viewed with this in mind.

With regard to reported injuries, slightly over one-third (36.7%) of all victims of criminal incidents involving a traditional or personal weapon were not injured. The majority (52.4%) incurred a minor injury.

Table 5. Individual Victim Characteristics in Criminal Incidents Involving All Weapons (Traditional or Personal Weapons)

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Total Individual Victims	41,553	100.0	Age	mean = 28.9 yrs std dev = 14.4	
Victim sex			Resident status		
Female	21,764	52.4	Nonresident	6,947	16.7
Male	19,659	47.3	Resident	32,428	78.0
Unknown	130	0.3	Unknown	2,178	5.2
Victim race			Select victim/offender relationships		
White	35,062	84.4	Intimate Partner	11,436	27.5
Black	4,630	11.1	Friend/Acquaintance	6,952	16.7
Asian	513	1.2	Stranger	7,639	18.4
Native American	236	0.6			
Unknown	1,112	2.7	Injury to the victim		
Victim Hispanic origin			No injury	15,251	36.7
Hispanic	10,106	24.3	Minor injury	21,761	52.4
Non-Hispanic	21,376	51.4	Major injury	3,268	7.9
Unknown	10,071	24.2	Fatal injury	127	0.3
			Not applicable	1,146	2.8

Note: Resident status refers to whether the victim lived in the jurisdiction in which the incident occurred.

Note: Intimate partners include current/former/common law spouse, homosexual relationship or boyfriend/girlfriend. Numbers shown are for three of several victim-offender relationship categories available in the data.

Individual Victim Characteristics by Traditional Weapons

As reported in Table 6 in 2010, the majority of victims of crime involving traditional weapons were male (61.8%) and white (80.2%). The average age of victims of crimes involving traditional weapons was 30 years.

Law enforcement agencies reported that almost half of the victims of crimes involving traditional weapons were non-Hispanic (48.7%) and over one-quarter (28%) were Hispanic. Hispanic origin information was missing for the remaining victims. As noted above, given the levels of missing information, findings regarding Hispanic origin of the victim should be viewed with caution.

In 2010, law enforcement agencies reported that over three-quarters of victims of crimes involving traditional weapons were residents of the jurisdictions where they were victimized.

Similar percentages of victims of crimes with traditional weapons involved intimate partners (14.5%) and friends/acquaintances (14.2%). Over one-quarter (29.3%) were committed by offenders where at least one was a stranger. See the note in the *Victim Characteristics by All Weapons* section for additional information about victim-offender relationship coding.

With regard to reported injuries, about half (49.0%) of all victims of criminal incidents involving traditional weapons were not injured. About one-third (30.5%) incurred a minor injury.

Table 6. Individual Victim Characteristics in Criminal Incidents Involving Traditional Weapons

Characteristic	Count	Percent	Characteristic	Count	Percent
Total Individual Victims	11,915	100.0	Age	mean = 30.0 yrs std dev = 14.5	
Victim sex			Resident status		
Female	4,500	37.8	Nonresident	2,109	17.7
Male	7,359	61.8	Resident	9,227	77.4
Unknown	56	0.5	Unknown	579	4.9
Victim race			Select victim/offender relationships		
White	9,555	80.2	Intimate Partner	1,723	14.5
Black	1,711	14.4	Friend/Acquaintance	1,693	14.2
Asian	201	1.7	Stranger	3,495	29.3
Native American	63	0.5	Injury to the victim		
Unknown	385	3.2	No injury	5,844	49.0
Victim Hispanic origin			Minor injury	3,640	30.5
Hispanic	3,334	28.0	Major injury	1,691	14.2
Non-Hispanic	5,807	48.7	Fatal injury	115	1.0
Unknown	2,774	23.3	Not applicable	625	5.2

Note: Resident status refers to whether the victim lived in the jurisdiction in which the incident occurred.

Note: Intimate partners include current/former/common law spouse, homosexual relationship or boyfriend/girlfriend. Numbers shown are for three of several victim-offender relationship categories available in the data.

Individual Victim Characteristics by Firearms

As reported in Table 7 in 2010, the majority of victims of crime involving a firearm were male (64.1%) and about three-quarters (76.1%) were white. In Colorado during 2010, the average age of victims of crimes involving firearms was 31 years.

Law enforcement agencies reported that almost half (47.1%) of the victims of firearm-related crime in 2010 were non-Hispanic and over one-quarter (27.7%) were Hispanic. Hispanic origin information was missing for the remaining victims. As stated previously, given the levels of missing information, findings regarding Hispanic origin of the victim should be viewed with caution.

Almost three-quarters (74.7%) of victims of crimes involving traditional weapons were residents of the jurisdictions where they were victimized.

In 2010, 42.2% of victims of firearms-related crimes reported that at least one of the offenders was a stranger. Almost 10% were victimized by a friend/acquaintance and 5.8% involved at least one offender who was an intimate partner. See the note in the *Victim Characteristics by All Weapons* section for additional information about victim-offender relationship coding.

With regard to reported injuries, almost three-quarters (71.6%) of all victims of criminal incidents involving a firearm were not injured.

Table 7. Individual Victim Characteristics in Criminal Incidents Involving Firearms

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Total Individual Victims	4,134	65.7	Age	mean = 30.7 yrs std dev = 14.5	
Victim sex			Resident status		
Female	1,454	35.2	Nonresident	840	20.3
Male	2,651	64.1	Resident	3,087	74.7
Unknown	29	0.7	Unknown	207	5.0
Victim race			Select victim/offender relationships		
White	3,147	76.1	Intimate Partner	241	5.8
Black	707	17.1	Friend/Acquaintance	410	9.9
Asian	99	2.4	Stranger	1,752	42.4
Native American	14	0.3			
Unknown	167	4.0	Injury to the victim		
Victim Hispanic origin			No injury	2,961	71.6
Hispanic	1,145	27.7	Minor injury	463	11.2
Non-Hispanic	1,946	47.1	Major injury	304	7.4
Unknown	1,043	25.2	Fatal injury	81	2.0
			Not applicable	325	7.9

Note: Resident status refers to whether the victim lived in the jurisdiction in which the incident occurred.

Note: Intimate partners include current/former/common law spouse, homosexual relationship or boyfriend/girlfriend. Numbers shown are for three of several victim-offender relationship categories available in the data.

Comparison of Victim Characteristics across Weapon Categories

A comparison of victim characteristics across the weapon categories highlights five similarities in terms of victim demographics and resident status. Regardless of the weapon category considered, the majority of victims involved in weapon-related crimes were male, white and non-Hispanic. Most victims were residents of the jurisdiction where the crime occurred. The average age of the victims of these crimes was about 30 years.

This comparison also indicates victim differences by weapon category when considering victim and offender relationship and victim injury. The percentage of victims where at least one offender was an intimate partner decreases as one moves from the all weapons (27.5%) to the traditional weapon subcategory (14.5%) to the firearm subcategory (5.8%). The reverse pattern is observed when at least one offender is identified as a stranger going from 18.4% (for all weapons) to 29.3% (for traditional weapons) to 42.2% (for firearms). With regard to victim injury, the percentage of victims *not* injured increases as one moves from the traditional and personal weapon category (36.7%) to traditional weapons (49.0%), to firearms (71.6%).

Rate per 1,000 of Crime by Weapon Category for Selected Colorado NIBRS Reporting Jurisdictions, 2010

This section presents crime rates of crime per 1,000 individuals, for weapons categories for selected large NIBRS reporting jurisdictions in Colorado. Two important caveats to keep in mind are that (1) only law enforcement agencies reporting their crime data in NIBRS format are eligible to be considered and (2) the names refer to law enforcement agencies and the populations covered may or may not correspond to city and county jurisdictions that use the same names in Colorado.

While the rates are provided, these rates should not be used to rank cities as being more or less “safe.” The FBI, the American Society of Criminology, U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the authors of this report *strongly recommend against ranking jurisdiction crime rates*. Many factors and elements account for an area’s crime rate that is not reflected in these numbers. For example, jurisdictions may differ on important characteristics such as age distribution, poverty, modes of transportation and highway system, degree of tourism, commuting patterns, cultural factor, and citizen attitudes toward police. These characteristics, among others, may influence crime rates.

As the American Society of Criminology noted in a resolution approved by the Executive Board, using rates to *rank* jurisdictions is inappropriate. Michael Tonry, then the President of ASC, stated that such rankings “represent an irresponsible misuse of the data and do groundless harm to many communities” and “work against a key goal of our society, which is a better understanding of crime-related issues by both scientists and the public.”²

While ranking of jurisdictions is strongly discouraged, offering rates of criminal incidents involving weapons for specific jurisdictions can be informative and useful. The purpose of the FBI’s data collection efforts as well as the Colorado Uniform Crime Reporting Program continues to be providing an accurate accounting of crimes reported to law enforcement. These rates are useful in achieving that goal. In addition, crime data enable law enforcement, legislators and policy makers, planners and administrators, as well as the general public to assess the nature and extent of crime in a particular area. While ranking jurisdictions is inappropriate, comparing rates among jurisdictions *that are similar* might be useful. For example, law enforcement may learn about policies or programs used in other areas and their effectiveness in addressing crime. And because correlates of crime are relatively stable year-to-year, jurisdictions may compare their own crime rates over time to assess the effectiveness of policies, programs and practices.

2 See <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/criminologists-condemn-city-crime-rankings-59865032.html> for more information.

Table 8. Rates per 1,000, Select NIBRS Reporting Jurisdictions in Colorado, 2010

	All Incidents	Traditional and Personal Weapons	Traditional Weapons	Firearms
Adams	66.5	12.7	4.3	1.5
Arapahoe	34.1	8.1	1.5	0.5
Arvada	50.4	5.8	1.1	0.3
Aurora	65.5	14.7	4.9	2.0
Boulder	50.3	7.3	1.7	0.3
Broomfield	37.3	3.8	0.6	0.2
Centennial	27.2	4.1	1.0	0.3
Colorado Springs	80.0	11.3	3.9	1.9
Commerce City	74.2	8.4	2.7	0.9
Denver	57.3	9.4	3.9	1.4
El Paso	26.6	5.2	1.5	0.6
Fort Collins	60.6	11.0	2.0	0.5
Grand Junction	76.7	10.0	2.5	0.9
Greeley	69.2	13.2	3.2	0.9
Jefferson	30.3	5.1	1.0	0.2
Lakewood	81.9	14.9	3.9	0.9
Larimer	29.2	5.9	1.6	0.7
Longmont	49.5	8.1	2.4	0.5
Mesa	38.3	8.4	1.8	0.6
Northglenn	66.3	9.5	2.9	0.9
Pueblo	84.6	19.4	6.1	2.2
Weld	30.4	7.5	1.6	0.6
Westminster	53.6	7.4	2.1	0.6
Wheat Ridge	69.6	11.7	3.2	1.1
Mean	54.6	9.3	2.6	0.8
Standard Deviation	19.2	3.8	1.4	0.6

Note: "All incidents" include any criminal incident reported to the police regardless of whether a weapon was involved.

Caveat: The FBI, The American Society of Criminology, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the authors of this report strongly recommends against using FBI data for ranking jurisdictions. Ranking jurisdictions based on crime rates leads to simplistic and misleading perceptions adversely affecting cities and counties, and the persons living there. Further, ranking these data to judge the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in the jurisdictions is misguided and incorrect as there are many factors that influence crime rates other than law enforcement activities.

Jurisdictions in Colorado vary widely on a number of demographic and geographic factors. This diversity is matched by substantial differences in crime rates across selected jurisdictions. As reported in Table 8, the mean rate of all crime incidents (whether they involved a weapon or not) was 54.6 incidents per 1,000 people during 2010 for the 24 large Colorado NIBRS reporting jurisdictions.³

Findings in Table 8 also emphasize that the vast majority of crime in these jurisdictions does not involve a weapon. An examination of criminal incidents that involved any weapon (traditional or personal) reveals a mean of 9.3 incidents per 1,000 people. In other words, while 9.3 incidents per 1,000 involved a weapon, 45.3 incidents per 1,000 did not involve any weapon (54.6 – 9.3 per 1,000).

A fraction of crime in these jurisdictions involved a traditional weapon or more specifically a firearm in 2010. A mean rate of 2.6 per 1,000 criminal incidents with traditional weapons was reported. The mean rate of incidents involving firearms was 0.8 per 1,000 people.

³ These rates are presented using a “per 1,000” measurement. In general, FBI-based statistics are presented using a “per 100,000” measurement. We selected the “per 1,000” approach because few jurisdictions in Colorado have 100,000 or greater population.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses data from the 2010 NIBRS for the State of Colorado. Colorado's NIBRS data are submitted to the FBI from the Colorado Crime Information Center (CCIC) computer located at the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) (<http://crimeinco.cbi.state.co.us/cic2k10/intro.html>). The CCIC and CBI receive crime information from law enforcement agencies such as county sheriffs, local police, and state agencies throughout the state. The 2010 data represent the most recent year of public-use data available through the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NACJD/studies/33601>).

In 2010, 244 Colorado law enforcement agencies submitted crime data to CBI and the FBI. Because Colorado was not submitting from 100% of its jurisdictions, the findings presented in this report are not necessarily based on a representative sample of criminal incidents known to law enforcement in the state. Also, because NIBRS data reflect only crimes reported to law enforcement these findings may not be representative of all crime (reported and unreported) in the state of Colorado. Beginning in January of 2013, all law enforcement agencies were required to submit data to the CBI for NIBRS purposes.

A FEW NOTES ON VARIABLES USED IN REPORT

Crime categories

For the crime of rape/sexual assault, the individual crimes of forcible rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object and forcible fondling were combined together.

Incident characteristics

To identify alcohol related crimes, a variable was created to identify if alcohol use was reported on any of the three variables used to collect this information. For incident location, NIBRS allows up to three locations to be coded. Only information from the first location was used in this report due to the high frequency of only one location being reported. For all weapons 85% of incidents only had one location, for traditional weapons 80% had one location, and for firearms 78% had one location.

In 2010, NIBRS collected information on 24 specific locations and an "other" category. Only the most common five locations are listed in this report. The full list of locations is: air/bus/train terminal, bank/savings and loan, bar/nightclub, church/synagogue/temple, commercial/office building, construction site, convenience store, department/discount store, drug store/doctor's office/hospital, field/woods, government/public building, grocery/supermarket, highway/road/alley, hotel/motel, jail/prison, lake/waterway, liquor store, parking lot/garage, rental storage facility, residence/home, restaurant, school/college, service/gas station, specialty store (TV, fur, etc.), and other.

Victim characteristics

The number of individual victims includes two categories of victims from the NIBRS file: those specifically listed as "individuals" and those listed as "law enforcement officers." NIBRS specifically identifies law enforcement officer victims for purposes of its statistics on law enforcement officers killed or assaulted in the line of duty. For purposes of the present report, law enforcement officers are included in the individual victim category.

For injury to the victim, NIBRS allows up to five injuries to be coded. Only information from the first injury was used in this report due to the high frequency of only one injury being reported. Only 2.3% of victims of crimes involving all weapons incurred more than one reported injury, 4% of victims of crimes involving traditional weapons and 1.6% of victims of firearm-related crimes.

Available NIBRS injury codes are: none, apparent minor injury, apparent broken bones, other major injury, potential internal injury, loss of teeth, severe laceration, and unconsciousness. For purposes of this report, "no injury" includes victims where the injury code is "none", "minor injury" includes victims where the injury code is "apparent minor injury" and "major injury" includes victims with all other injury codes. The "fatal injury" category used in this report is a researcher-created category as NIBRS excludes homicides from injury reporting by definition since the victim is dead. To create the "fatal injury" category, all homicides were recoded and designated as involving a fatal injury.

POPULATION COUNTS FOR REPORTED CRIME RATES

The rates per 1,000 statistics provided in this report are based on populations provided by the FBI included in the public use NIBRS Extract Files available from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data. The population information used to generate rates for the select Colorado jurisdictions covered in this report appear in Appendix Table.

Appendix. Population Sizes for Select NIBRS Reporting Jurisdictions

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>City/County Agency Indicator</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>City/County Agency Indicator</u>
Adams	89,034	County	Grand Junction	59,029	City
Arapahoe	81,034	County	Greeley	92,804	City
Arvada	107,227	City	Jefferson	186,270	County
Aurora	323,483	City	Lakewood	139,615	City
Boulder	99,255	City	Larimer	76,843	County
Broomfield	57,126	City	Longmont	88,913	City
Centennial	98,902	City	Mesa	71,346	County
Colorado Springs	397,886	City	Northglenn	34,467	City
Commerce City	46,771	City	Pueblo	103,612	City
Denver	607,051	City	Weld	55,307	County
El Paso	167,360	County	Westminster	108,383	City
Fort Collins	138,689	City	Wheat Ridge	30,400	City

Note: Populations are used as the denominators for rates per 1,000 presented in this report. Populations are provided on the FBI's NIBRS File.

AFFILIATIONS

Callie Marie Rennison is an Associate Professor in the School of Public Affairs and serves as Director of the Criminology and Criminal Justice Research Initiative (CCJRI) at the University of Colorado Denver.

Lynn A. Addington is an Associate Professor in the Department of Justice, Law & Society at American University in Washington DC and is a Researcher Affiliate at the CCJRI at the University of Colorado Denver.



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