

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 2017



TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
TN.GOV/TBI |    @TBINVESTIGATION



**Bill Haslam
Governor**

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

901 R.S. Gass Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee 37216-2639
(615) 744-4000
Facsimile (615) 744-4500
TDD (615) 744-4001



**Jason Locke
Acting Director**

June 12, 2018

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Each year the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation releases annual reports on crimes reported by law enforcement agencies to the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS) program in seven different reports. The TIBRS data contains a wide range of incident level information including victim and offender demographics.

The issue of domestic violence is by no means a novel problem in American society. The persistence of domestic violence and the large number of related incidents reported to law enforcement necessitate continued awareness about this issue. In an effort to gain more insight into the problem of domestic violence within the state of Tennessee, the current study analyzes crime data collected from the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System, hereafter referred to as TIBRS. Utilizing this TIBRS crime data, offenses flagged as domestic violence for 2017 are included in the report.

I would like to thank all participating law enforcement agencies for their hard work and contributions to making this report a thorough and accurate picture of crime in Tennessee. It is only with their support the state continues to maintain such a successful program.

Sincerely,

Jason Locke
Acting Director



Quick Facts

- ❖ A total of 77,846 offenses were flagged as domestic related in 2017.
- ❖ Of the 77,846 domestic related offenses reported in 2017, 52,118 of them were reported as Simple Assault.
- ❖ Females were three times more likely to be victimized than males; accounting for 71.5% of all domestic violence victims.
- ❖ Males accounted for the other 28.4%.
- ❖ Juveniles made up 9.8% of the reported victim types in 2017, with *Fondling* being the most reported offense made against juveniles.
- ❖ Data on Spouse/ Ex-spouse revealed that *White Females* were the most frequently reported victim type for domestic abuse.
- ❖ Domestic violence resulted in 81 Murder victims in 2017.
- ❖ 35,773 domestic violence cases were flagged as *Boyfriend/Girlfriend*.
- ❖ The most common weapon reported with domestic violence offenses was *Personal* (hands, feet, teeth, etc.) at 50,727.
- ❖ Data on Injury Types revealed that *None* accounted for the most frequently reported at 48.3% followed by *Apparent Minor Injuries* at 47.3%.
- ❖ 59.0% of domestic violence incidents were *Cleared* in 2017.

Introduction

The issue of domestic violence is by no means a novel problem in the American society. However, the persistence of domestic violence and the large number of related incidents reported to law enforcement necessitate continued awareness about this issue. In an effort to gain more insight into the problem of domestic violence within the state of Tennessee, this study analyzes recent crime data collected from the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS). Utilizing this TIBRS crime data, offenses flagged as domestic related in 2017 were examined.

Overall Findings

Upon initially examining the TIBRS data submitted for domestic violence offenses, several parameters for the study were established. The data included in this study had to meet the following criteria: Crimes Against Persons offense(s); offense(s) flagged by the law enforcement agency as being domestically related; and victim gender could not be reported as Unknown. The total number of domestic violence victims reported in the state for 2017 totaled 77,355. It should be noted that individuals who reported domestic abuse in more than one incident during the study period will be duplicated accordingly in this report's victim count. The majority of these victims were female (71.5%) outnumbering male victims by almost 3 to 1.

An analysis of race breakdown revealed that White victims, the race majority for all offenses, accounted for as much as 57.6% of victims for the following offenses: Simple Assault, Aggravated Assault, and Intimidation. White victims made up 59.3% of Murders that were domestic related in 2017. In addition to gender and race, victim age was also analyzed. A total of 7,550 juveniles, or individuals under age eighteen, accounted for 9.8% of all victims.

The overall numbers reveal a decrease of 1.8 % from 2016 to 2017. Additionally, the four TIBRS Assault Offenses combined in 2017 accounted for 96.4% percent of all domestic violence reported in 2017. These findings will be further examined later in the report.

Domestic Violence Offenses

Crimes identified as domestically related in TIBRS must always have the victim type of Individual. Crimes Against Society and Crimes Against Property cannot be flagged as domestic violence in TIBRS. There are 17 offenses considered to be Crimes Against Persons. Of these, 12 were included in the study with the four omitted offenses being Negligent Manslaughter, Negligent Vehicular Manslaughter, Justifiable Homicide, Commercial Sex Acts, and Involuntary Servitude.

Simple Assault made up the highest reported domestic related offenses in 2017. Aggravated Assault and Intimidation were second and third respectively accounting for 14.8% and 13.4%. Statutory Rape offenses decreased by 25.8% from 2016 to 2017. Data also revealed a noticeable decrease of 13.8% in Murder offenses. The number of reported Sodomy cases decreased by 4.3% followed by Stalking at 2.4%. Further analysis revealed a slight decrease of 0.32% for Sexual Assault W/Object offenses reported from 2016 to 2017. The TIBRS offenses of Incest, however, remained constant showing 33 cases in 2016 and 2017.

Domestic Violence Victims

There were a total of 77,355 domestic violence victims reported in 2017 compared to the 77,846 domestic related offenses reported in 2017. Per TIBRS reporting guidelines, more than one offense may be reported in Group A incidents, such as the ones listed in Table 1. The table below displays the number of domestic related offenses reported by Gender for 2017. Data display on Table 1 revealed Females were victimized more often than Males in 2017. Only 59 cases were reported with an Unknown Victim type.

Table 1: 2017 Domestic Violence Offenses by Gender

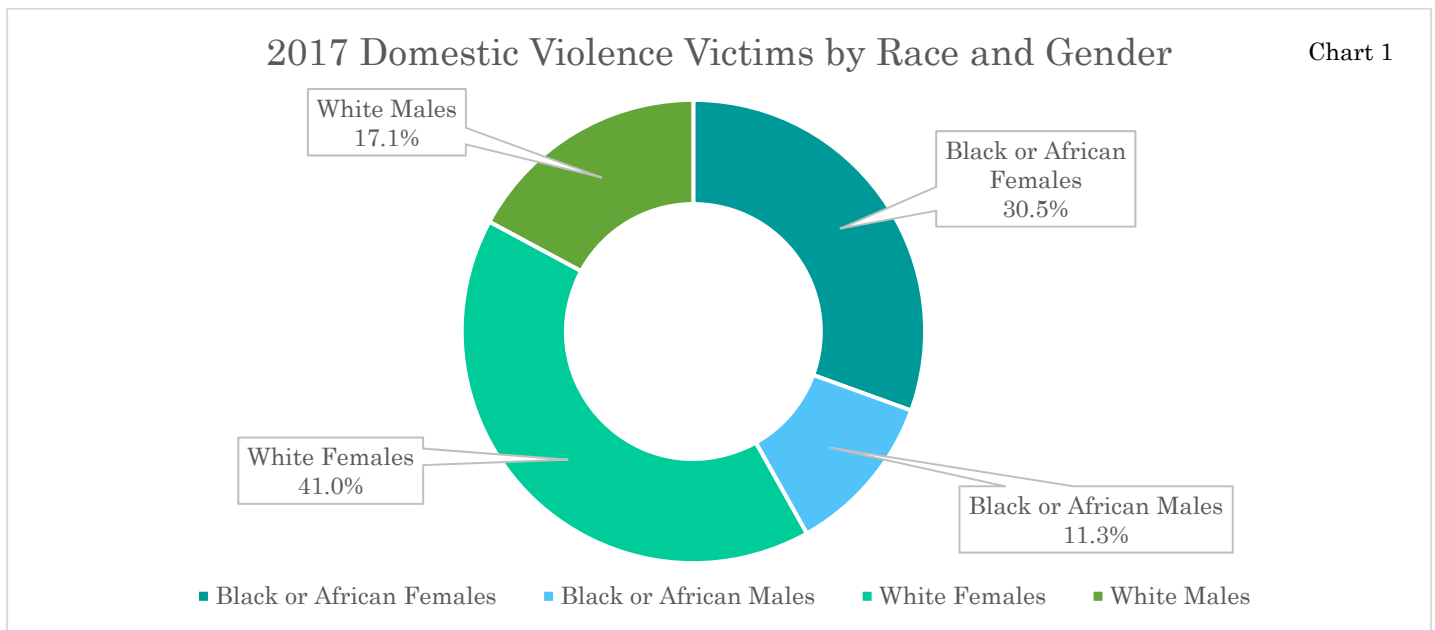
Offense	Female	%	Male	%	Unknown	%	Total	%
	Number		Number				Number	
Murder	52	0.1%	29	0.1%	0	0.0%	81	0.1%
Kidnapping/Abduction	766	1.4%	289	1.3%	0	0.0%	1055	1.4%
Rape	624	1.1%	8	0.0%	0	0.0%	632	0.8%
Sodomy	83	0.1%	94	0.4%	0	0.0%	177	0.2%
Sexual Assault W/Object	60	0.1%	8	0.0%	0	0.0%	68	0.1%
Fondling	564	1.0%	121	0.6%	0	0.0%	685	0.9%
Incest	27	0.0%	6	0.0%	0	0.0%	33	0.0%
Statutory Rape	109	0.2%	3	0.0%	0	0.0%	112	0.1%
Aggravated Assault	7,329	13.1%	4,152	18.9%	11	18.6%	11,492	14.8%
Simple Assault	37,540	67.3%	14,538	66.1%	40	67.8%	52,118	67.0%
Intimidation	7,857	14.1%	2,594	11.8%	7	11.9%	10,458	13.4%
Stalking	793	1.4%	141	0.6%	1	1.7%	935	1.2%
Total	55,804	100.0%	21,983	100.0%	59	100.0%	77,846	100.0%

Note: Unknown is listed in Table 1 to accurately represent data reported in 2017. The category of unknown will not be listed in other tables or charts throughout this report.

Domestic violence may often be perceived as violence against women. There are numerous agencies nationally and locally that advocate specifically for battered and abused women. The current

analyses of domestic offenses in the state of Tennessee support this notion that domestic violence is most often reported as being committed towards female victims.

Data collected from TIBRS revealed that women were consistently the primary victims of domestic violence offenses accounting for 71.5%. Male victims accounted for 28.4% of all domestic violence victims in 2017. As such, females in Tennessee are almost three times more likely than males to become victims of domestic abuse.

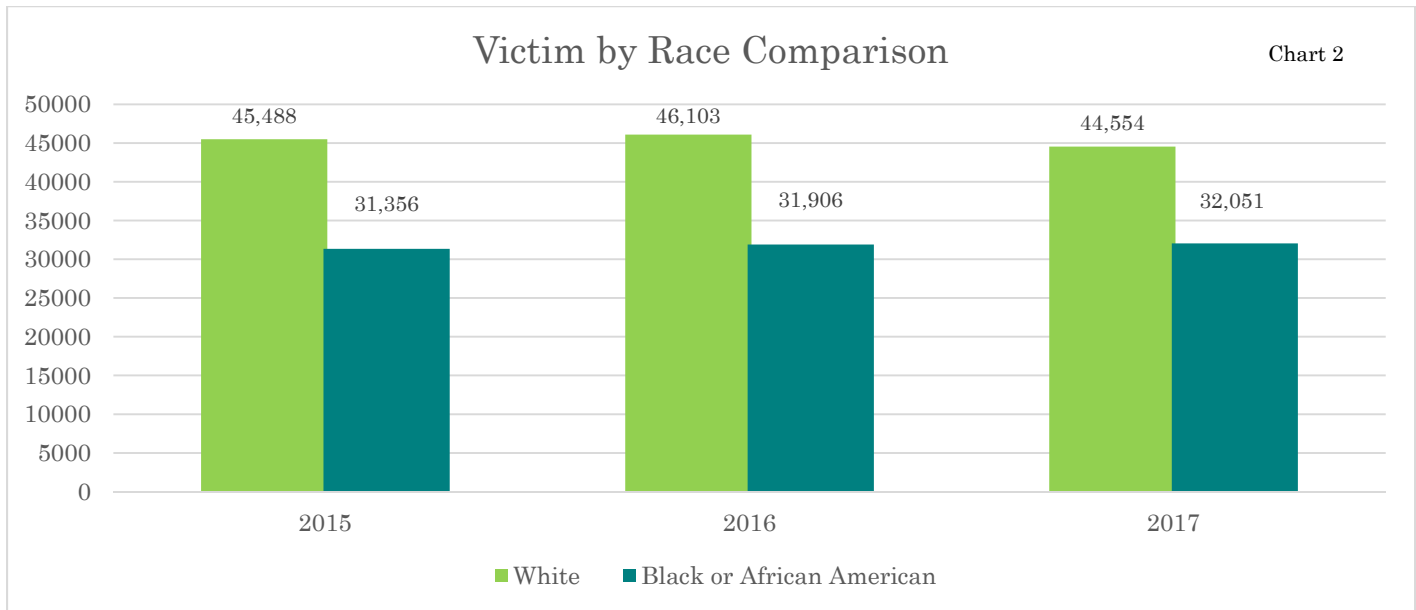


The TIBRS data element of Race found that of the 77,355 domestic abuse victims with a known gender reported in 2017, those identified as having a Race other than White or Black or African-American accounted for less than one percent, and therefore are not shown in Chart 1. As a result, White and Black or African-American victims will be specifically highlighted in this study. Though not omitted from the total victim count, due to the very low representation, other victim races (i.e. Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Unknown) will not be detailed through graphs and tables in the current study.

Black or African-American males were the least likely to be victimized accounting for a total of 8,662 of the 77,355 victims reported in 2017. White males were victimized at a slightly higher rate accounting for 13,125 of all the reported domestic violence males. Data shown in Chart 1 reveals that White females were predominately the highest reported victim type at 31,402, followed Black or African American females at 23,388.

Domestic Violence Victims continued

Though White victims (57.6%) were victimized at a higher rate overall than Black or African-American victims (41.4%), there were several offenses that showed even greater disparity between these two racial groups in terms of victimization. Of the Incest victims, 84.8% reported their race as White; 75.9% of the Fondling offenses had White victims; and a total of 59.3% of Murder offenses flagged as domestically related identified the victim race as White.



Please note: Adding only given figures for Black or African-American and White victims will not give an accurate total.

Aggravated Assault and Simple Assault offense types reported the highest percentage of Black or African-American victims accounting a combined total of 82.0% victims of those particular offenses. Of the 10,458 Intimidation offenses reported in 2017, 45.0% of the victims were classified as Black or African American—accounting for the third highest reported offense type among Black or African Americans.

Juvenile Domestic Violence Victims

Among domestic violence victims, juveniles accounted for 9.8% of all domestic abuse victims in 2017. Data revealed the most frequently reported domestic related offense made against juveniles in 2017 was Fondling, accounting for 84.0% among all other age group categories. The TIBRS offense of Sodomy made up the second highest reported domestic related offense, accounting for 73.4% followed by Sexual Assault W/Object at 70.8%. Similarly, of the 632 reported Rapes in 2017, juveniles accounted for the highest age group category at 46.5%.

Juvenile Domestic Violence Victims continued

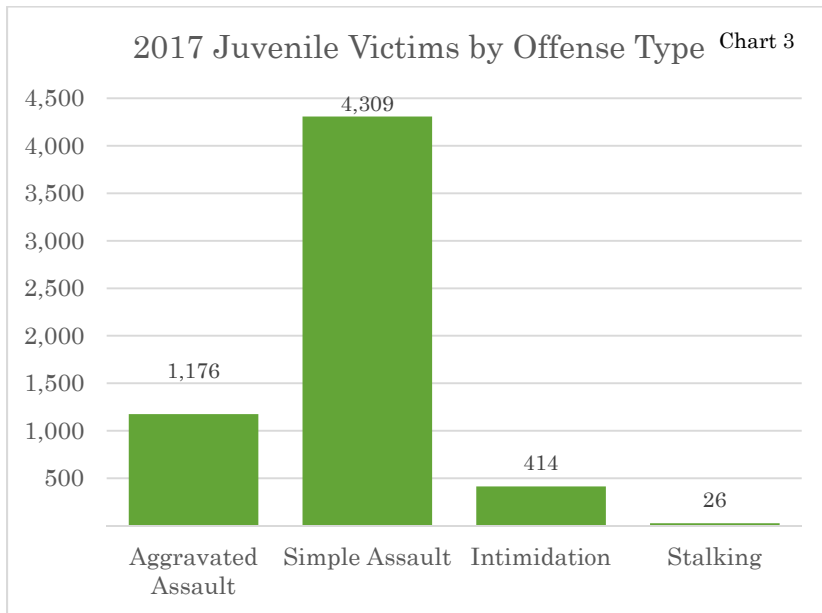


Chart 3 examines the four TIBRS assault offenses. Simple Assaults, flagged as domestic related, accounted for the most frequently reported offense in 2017, followed by Aggravated Assaults.

Of the 52,118 domestic related Simple Assaults in 2017, 8.3% cases comprised juvenile victims. Juveniles only comprised 2.8% of all domestic related Stalking offenses in 2017.

Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships

Table 2: TIBRS Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships	
Within Family	
Spouse	Grandchild
Common-Law Spouse	In-Law
Parent	Stepparent
Sibling	Stepchild
Child	Stepsibling
Grandparent	Other Family Member
Outside Family	
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	Ex-Spouse
Child of Boyfriend/Girlfriend	Homosexual

Though domestic violence victims and offenders can have various interpersonal relationships, the intimate relationship is the most common when addressing domestic abuse. Intimate relationships may be presented as formal relationships such as a marriage or less formal relationships such as dating.

To examine such relationships, TIBRS collects information concerning the particular relationship between the victim and offender using the Victim to Offender relationship; and more specifically, the intimate Victim to Offender relationships of Spouse, Ex-Spouse, and Boyfriend/Girlfriend.

Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships continued

Spouse/Ex-Spouse

Spouse and Ex-Spouse relationships were examined together for comparison purposes. Results revealed that the number of domestic abuse victims reporting Spouse as the Victim to Offender relationship greatly outnumbered Ex-Spouse relationships each year by approximately 6 to 1. Over the three year reporting period, as shown below, White females were the most frequently reported victim for domestic abuse. Black or African-American females were victimized at a higher rate, in 2017, than their male counterparts accounting for 15.8% of victims reporting Spouse Victim to Offender relationship and 3.4% of victims with an Ex-Spouse relationship.

Table 3: Spouse/Ex-Spouse Relationship by Gender and Race

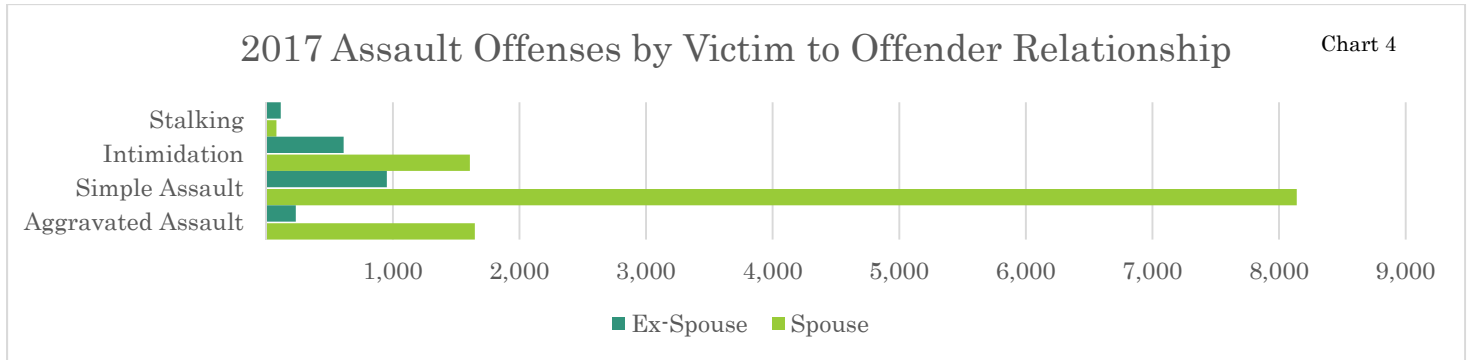
	2015		2016		2017	
Victim to Offender Relationship	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
Spouse	11,772		11,803		11,460	
Male	3,010	22.0%	3,018	22.0%	2,916	21.7%
Black or African-American	742	5.4%	785	5.7%	811	6.0%
White	2,268	16.6%	2,233	16.3%	2,105	15.7%
Female	8,762	64.0%	8,785	64.0%	8,544	63.7%
Black or African-American	2,126	15.5%	2,117	15.4%	2,117	15.8%
White	6,636	48.5%	6,668	48.6%	6,427	47.9%
Ex-Spouse	1,908		1,927		1,953	
Male	471	3.4%	496	3.6%	491	3.7%
Black or African-American	138	1.0%	136	1.0%	170	1.3%
White	333	2.4%	360	2.6%	321	2.4%
Female	1,437	10.5%	1,431	10.4%	1,462	10.9%
Black or African-American	349	2.6%	380	2.8%	454	3.4%
White	1,088	8.0%	1,051	7.7%	1,008	7.5%
Total	13,680	100.0%	13,730	100.0%	13,413	100.0%

Please note: This table only reflects the relationships of spouse and ex-spouse for Black or African American and White victims.

Data shown in Table 3, also reveals that White males have been victimized at a higher rate than Black or African American Males. White male victims, in a Spouse Victim to Offender Relationship accounted 15.7% in 2017 compared to 6.05% of the Black or African American males. Additionally, White Females make up the highest victim type for domestic abuse from 2015 to 2016.

Domestic Violence Intimate Relationships continued

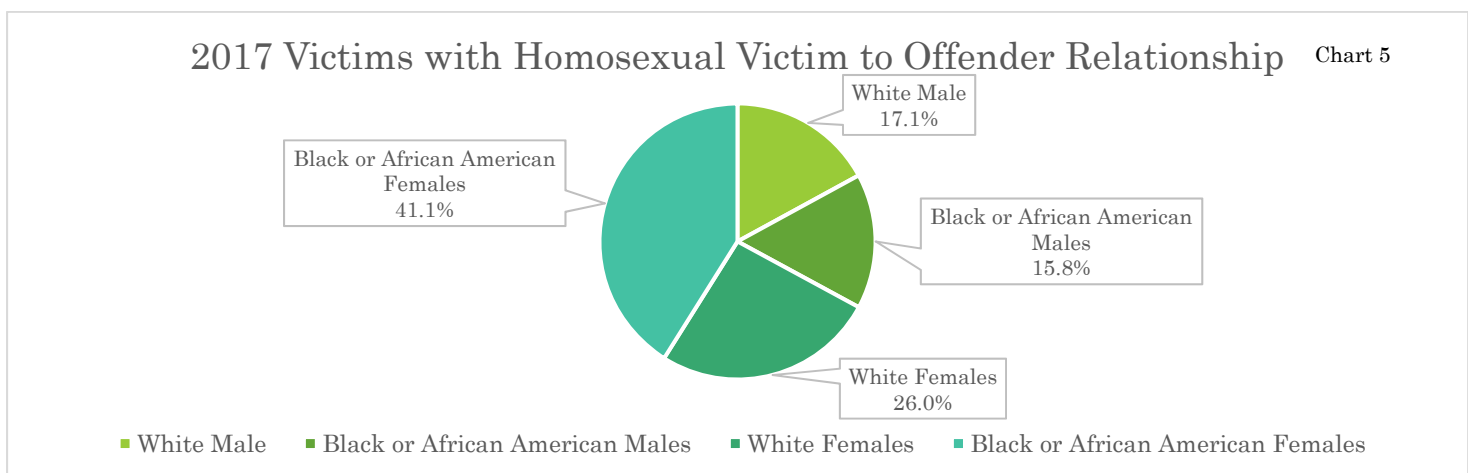
The offense of Simple Assault accounted for the most frequently reported offense type among marriages in 2017. A total of 196 domestic related Stalking offenses were reported in 2017. Of those 196 reported, 115 cases involved an Ex-Spouse.



Note: This chart only reflects the relationships of Spouse and Ex-Spouse for Black or African American and White Victims.

Homosexual Relationship

A total of 1,641 Homosexual Victim to Offender relationships were documented as domestic violence in 2017. This particular TIBRS code specifies the victim and offender as being individuals of the same sex that are involved in an intimate relationship. Given this definition, the gender data element being reported for victims will inherently be mirrored for the respective offenders. The largest number of domestic violence offenses reported was Simple Assault at 1,132 (69.0%). Aggravated Assault was the second most frequently reported offense at 230. Females were most likely to be victims (67.1%) of domestic violence between same-sex couples. When cross examining race and gender, Black or African-American females accounted for the largest percentage of victims at 41.1%. White and Black or African-American males showed very little difference in the number of Homosexual Victim to Offender relationships at 17.1% and 15.8% respectively.

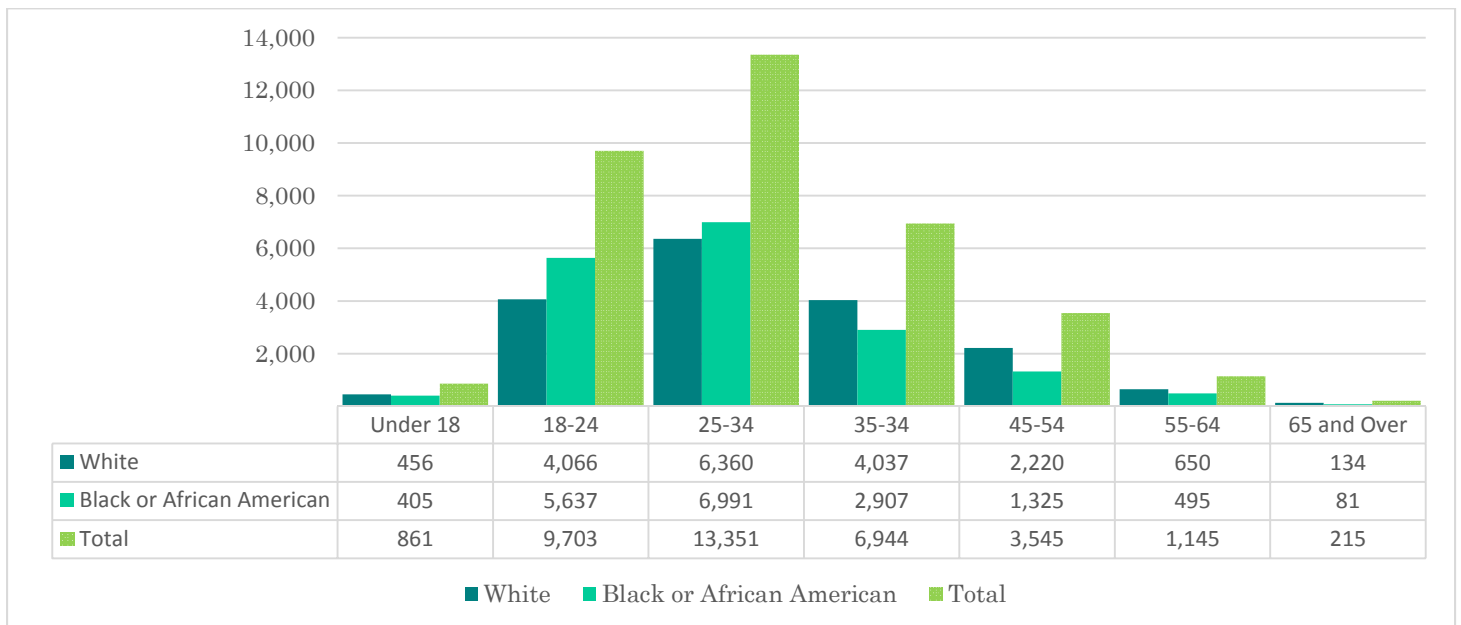


Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships continued

Boyfriend/Girlfriend

The research literature often documents the relationship between domestic victims and their abusers as Boyfriend/Girlfriend. In 2017, Tennessee law enforcement agencies reported 35,773 Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender relationships flagged as domestic violence incidents. Specific demographic information of both victims and offenders were examined to better understand domestic abuse within Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships. Of these victims, 50.1% identified their race as White and 49.9% were Black or African-American. Victims reporting their offender as a Boyfriend/Girlfriend were most frequently females.

Chart 6: 2017 Domestic Violence Victims with Boyfriend/Girlfriend Relationship Type



Note: This chart only reflects the relationships of Spouse and Ex-Spouse for Black or African American and White Victims.

Child and Stepchild

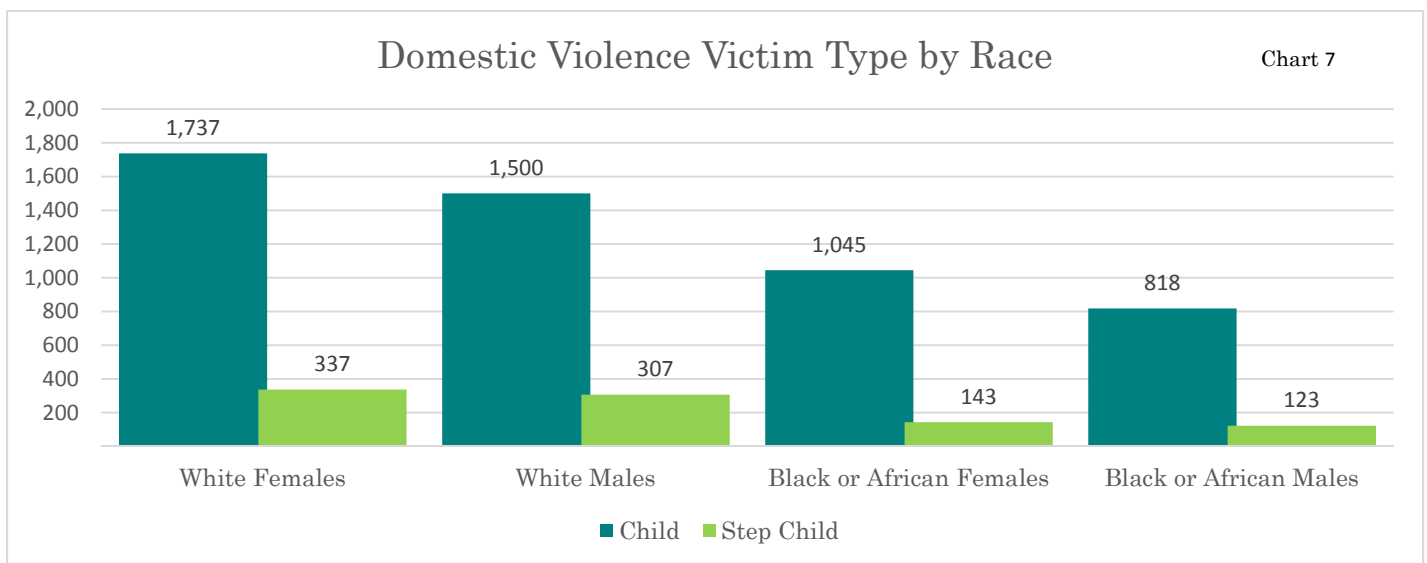
The Victim to Offender relationship Child or Stepchild denotes the offender as being the parent or stepparent (mother or father) of the victim. In the state of Tennessee, a total of 6,079 such relationships were reported in domestic violence offenses. This particular TIBRS data element, when specifically addressing juvenile victims, can be considered a direct indication of child abuse.

Domestic Violence Victim to Offender Relationships continued

Child and Stepchild

The majority of domestic violence incidents indicating a Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationship reported to TIBRS in 2017 had victims of Females.

Several local and state agencies such as the Department of Children’s Services and Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee advocate strongly on behalf of juveniles that are abused and/or neglected and try to prevent future abuse. Chart 7, as shown below, illustrates the difference of victimization rates by Race and Gender.

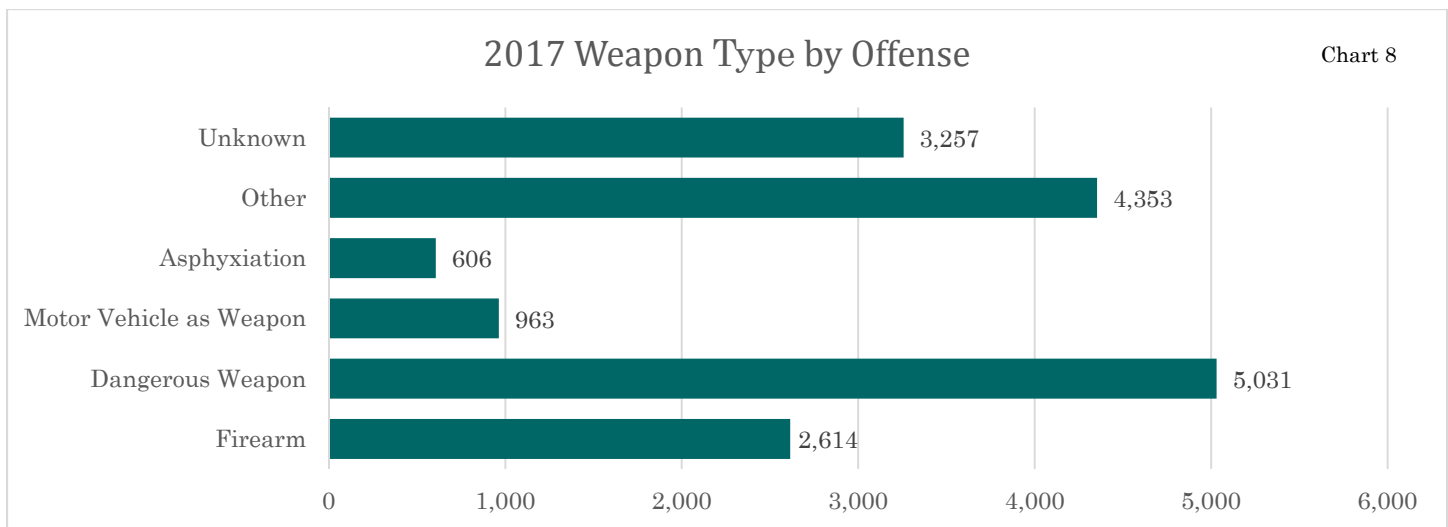


Juveniles accounted for 9.8% of victims reported in 2017. More specifically, females under age 18 were most frequently reported as being victimized by their parents accounting for 30.9% of all Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationships at 6,010. This demographic group was victimized at a higher rate than any other combination of race, sex, and age group when analyzing Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationships.

Victims identified as White were victimized by their parent(s) or stepparent(s) at approximately two times the rate of Black or African-American victims. Of the 6,010 juvenile victims with a Child or Stepchild Victim to Offender relationship identified as having a race of Black or African-American, 1,188 were female and 941 were male.

Weapons Used in Domestic Violence

Per TIBRS, Up to three weapons can be submitted per offense when reporting weapons used. A total of 67,689 weapon types were reported in 2017. The most common weapon reported with domestic violence offenses was Personal (hands, feet, teeth, etc.) at 50,727 usually occurring with Simple Assault offenses, the most commonly reported domestic violence offense.



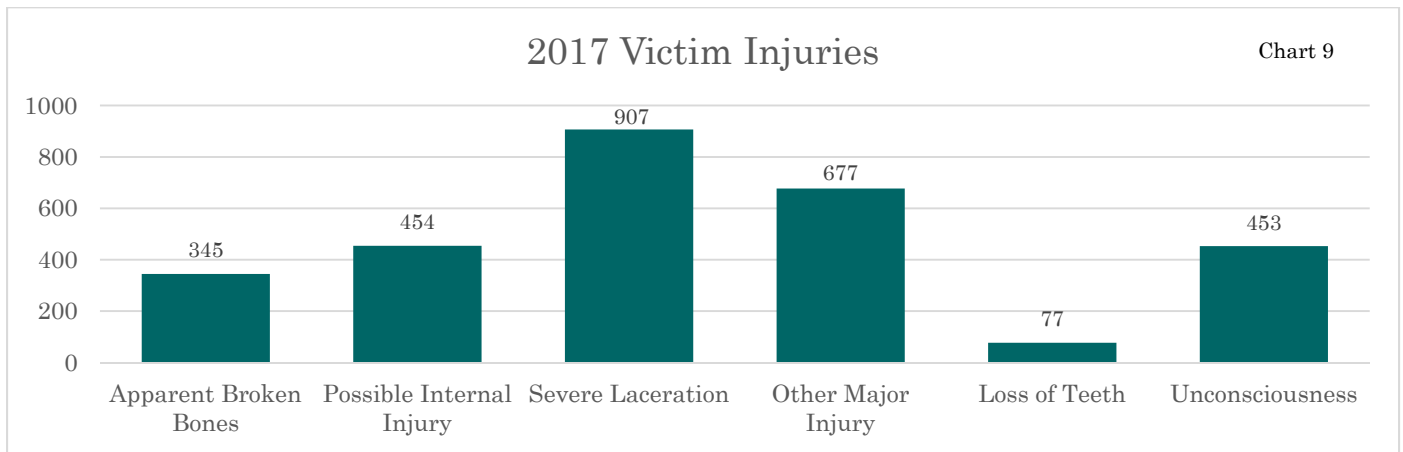
Note: The weapon type of Personal Weapons is not included in the graph above.

The second most frequently reported weapon type in 2017 was Dangerous Weapon, followed by Firearm. The weapon categories of Poison/Drugs and Fire/Explosives made up less than one percent and therefore are not included in Chart 8. The most frequently reported weapon for Aggravated Assault offenses was Dangerous Weapon which includes knife/cutting instrument and blunt object. The weapon type of Firearm in 2017 was reported mostly in Aggravated Assault cases. Another noteworthy finding in data revealed that 963 domestic violence cases involved the weapon type of Motor Vehicle as Weapon. Of those 963 cases, two cases resulted in Murder.

Victim Injuries

When reporting domestic violence offenses to TIBRS, up to five injury types may be reported for applicable offenses. The two most predominant injury types reported in 2017 were None (48.3%) and Apparent Minor Injuries (47.3%). 27,013 domestic related Simple Assault cases were reported with an injury type of Apparent Minor Injury.

Victim Injuries Continued



Note: The chart above excludes None (31,501) and Apparent Minor injuries (32,140).

Additionally, the injury type of Severe Laceration made up the third most frequently reported injury type in 2017, with Aggravated Assault being the most common offense. Of the 453 Unconsciousness injury types shown in Chart 9, 423 of them were involved in domestic related Aggravated Assault offenses.

Clearance of Domestic Violence Offenses

Clearing domestic violence incidents can be difficult when considering the compounding factors that contribute to the cooperation of victims and potential witnesses. Because of the very nature of domestic violence and the close interpersonal relationships that exist between the victim and offender, it can be challenging for law enforcement to complete an arrest. Cohabiting domestic violence victims and offenders can present an obvious challenge in clearing an incident due to victims not cooperating in order to prevent subsequent abuse and turmoil within the household.

Offense Type	Occurrence
Death of the Offender	45
Prosecution Declined	1,519
In Custody	10
Victim Refused to Cooperate	8,012
Juvenile/No Custody	65
Total	9,651

In 2017, 59.0% of domestic violence cases were cleared. Table 4 displays the different exceptional clearance types. Data revealed that the vast majority of exceptional clearances, were documented as Victim Refused to Cooperate. As defined by TIBRS, Victim Refused to Cooperate can only clear

an incident when the victim has actually stated or made it known to the agency that they refuse to cooperate or pursue prosecution of the offender. Death of the Offender, In Custody of Other Agency/Jurisdiction, and Juvenile/No Custody each accounted for less than one percent of all clearances during the study period.

Summary

The problem of domestic violence has consistently plagued our society. Given the prevalence of domestic violence and its consequences to individuals, as well as the local and state community, the current study assessed domestic abuse as a whole within the state of Tennessee. Findings of the study revealed that the number of domestic incidents decreased by 1.8% between 2016 to 2017. Overall, females were three times more likely to be reported as victims than males, and victim Race was most often documented as White (57.6%). This victim demographic information gives insight into what populations are most at-risk for domestic violence in the state.

The overwhelming majority of domestic related offenses reported in 2017 were assault offenses accounting a combined total of 96.4% in 2017. Simple Assault was the most frequently reported offense with 52,118 reported cases in 2017.

Examination of Victim to Offender relationships revealed that Spouses are abused at a rate almost six times than that of Ex-Spouses. The data from the Boyfriend/Girlfriend Victim to Offender relationship element showed very little percentage difference between Black or African-American and White female victims.

TIBRS data supports the fact that women and children generally have the highest potential for domestic abuse victimization. Local, state, and national agencies across several disciplines, including law enforcement and social and child services, avidly oppose domestic violence and advocate for its victims. These various institutions and coalitions battle domestic abuse by providing prevention training, intervention, shelter, and counseling for both victims and potential victims of domestic violence. Hopefully, the current assessment of domestic violence in Tennessee exposes the need for continued and increased efforts in the battle against domestic abuse within our community.