

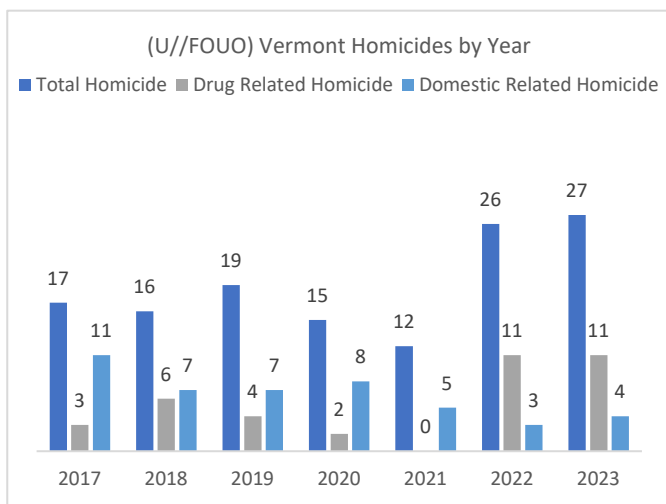


188 Harvest Lane
 Williston, VT 05495
 (802) 872-6110 – dps.vic@list.vermont.gov

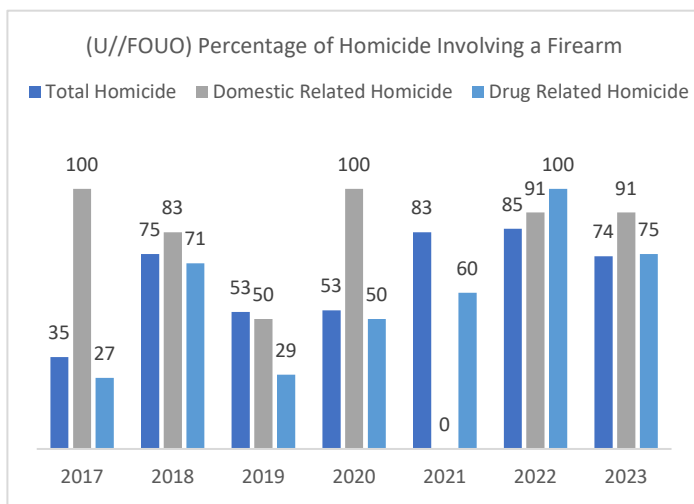
(U) Vermont Firearm Violence: Trends and Outlook

(U) Trend: Drug-Related Violent Crime Involving a Firearm

(U//FOUO) Historically, Vermont’s violent criminal landscape has been dominated by domestic violence. However, over the past few years, the number of homicides related to domestic violence has decreased drastically while the number of homicides related to drugs has significantly increased. The use and sale of drugs are etiologically and systematically linked to violence through the normally aggressive structure of narcotics trafficking. Data from the Vermont State Police Major Crime Unit (MCU) indicates the rate of drug-related homicides increased 450 percent between 2020 and 2023. Approximately 41% of 2023 homicides were directly related to drugs. Data from the Vermont Intelligence Center indicates that approximately 50% of total shootings with victims had a drug nexus.^a The high rate of drug-related violent crime represents a significant public safety threat to the state and requires further evaluation and intervention. As drug-related homicide is etiologically linked to the consumption and sale of drugs, the VIC assesses that the rate of drug-related homicide will continue to increase in congruence with the opioid epidemic.



(U) Source: VIC



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^a Gun Violence Summary Project Methodology: The VIC monitors Vermont law enforcement’s primary Records Management System (RMS), Valcour, using established criteria to collect data on gun violence within the State of Vermont. At the time of this report, we do not have the ability to review the state’s other RMS system for the following agencies: Norwich Police Department, Windsor Police Department and Hartford Police Department. Analysts classify qualifying reports into the following categories: cases in which a firearm is used to wound another person are classified as “Gunshot Wounds Reported;” cases in which a firearm is fired with no reported injuries are classified as “Witnessed Gunfire Incident;” and incidents in which a firearm is present to illicit fear are classified as “Threat with a Firearm.” Based on the early nature of this report, there may be investigations and cases that are incomplete and excluded; data is provisional and is subject to change. The project methodology relies on observational documentation; discrepancies may exist, and the data should not be considered comprehensive.

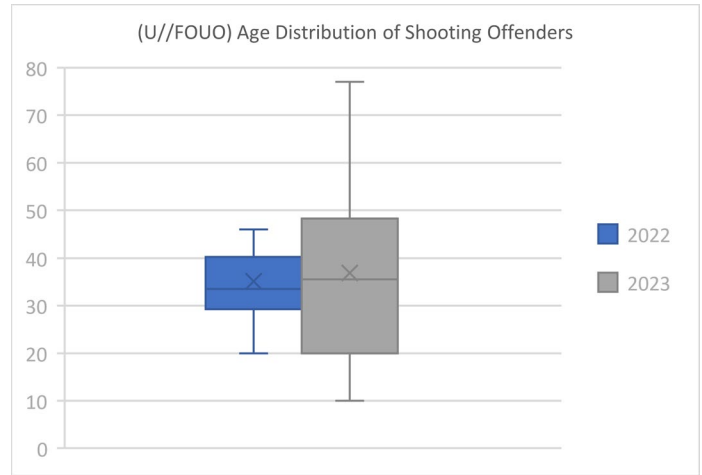


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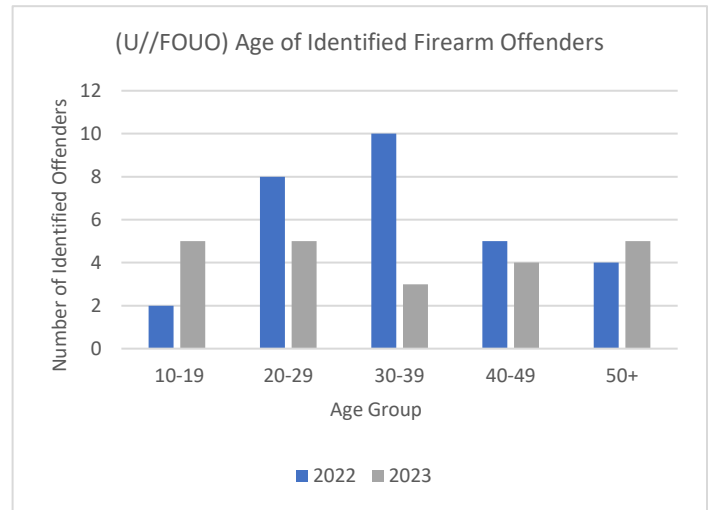
(U) Trend: Juvenile Involvement in Violent Crime

(U//FOUO) In 2023, youth involvement in violent crime trended upwards, representing a significant development within the criminal landscape. The age range of identified firearm offenders in 2023 was wider than that of 2022, and the number of juveniles (ages 19 and younger) identified as an offender in a gunfire incident which caused wounds to another person increased by 150% from 2022 to 2023. Furthermore, two homicides in 2023 involved a juvenile offender under the age of 15, and one also involved a victim of the same age. All homicides involving juveniles utilized a firearm as a weapon. This is significant to note as it is indicative of increased access to firearms among youth as reports from law enforcement agencies across the state indicate that a large number of juveniles are in unlawful possession of firearms.

(U//FOUO) The high rate of juvenile violent crime has significant implications. All violent crime affects the future of the offender, the victim, and their families and communities; but the societal cost of violent crime involving juveniles is particularly high. Furthermore, youth crime may serve as an indicator of future crime trends as the existing criminology literature suggests that individuals who perpetrate violent crime as youth are more likely to become persistent and serious offenders as adults. Given the implications of this trend, evaluation of the social and environmental context of this trend is requisite. Research suggests that risk factors for youth violence include access to alcohol and drugs, access to firearms, lack of access to recreational and educational opportunities, income inequality and poverty, lack of parental supervision, mental health problems, and involvement with gangs. Rising rates of VCIF involving juveniles have significant implications for Vermont communities and families and are indicative of a need for new solutions intended to address the development of violence at its root.



(U) Source: VIC



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