

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FATALITIES IN PENNSYLVANIA

2011

**TOTAL FATALITIES 166**

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VICTIMS **118**

PERPETRATORS **48**

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS **124**

NUMBER OF MURDER/SUICIDES **27**

NUMBER OF COUNTIES **36**

**TOTAL FATALITIES INVOLVING FIREARMS 110**

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VICTIMS KILLED BY GUNS **66**

PERPETRATORS WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE OR  
WERE KILLED BY POLICE OR OTHERS USING GUNS **44**

# A GRIM TASK, A DEADLY TOLL

It's always a grim task counting up the lives lost to domestic violence each year in Pennsylvania. However, if there is any glimmer of hope to be found amid the horror and heartbreak, it's that the numbers dropped – ever so slightly – for the second consecutive year: from 172 deaths in 2010 to 166 in 2011.

**“I know Trish. She fought ‘til the end. She didn’t just go down.”**

Regrettably, 119 victims and 47 perpetrators still died in 2011. And many of those senseless deaths involved children -- as victims, witnesses and survivors. Motives for these killings ranged from the usual jealousy, retaliation and custody conflicts to something as trivial as, in one case, a bowl of noodles.

Once again firearms were the preferred weapon of perpetrators, accounting for 66 percent of the fatalities.

We must rely on media accounts to compile these fatality numbers because no centralized and complete database of domestic violence deaths exists in Pennsylvania. We count fatalities involving current and former intimate partners; new partners killed by jealous former partners; family members; and bystanders and interveners in domestic violence situations. Our count is based on information available at the time of printing.

Every year we know we miss some victims whose stories never attracted media attention because they lived in poor, crime-ridden neighborhoods. Other victims are missed because the police or media didn't identify the relationship between victim and perpetrator or the motive for the killing. Still other domestic violence murders remain unsolved or take years to solve.

We exclude cases where no arrests have been made, even if intimate partners or family members are suspects. We also exclude child abuse and neglect deaths because they are reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

We also know, from local advocates' anecdotal accounts, that some victims take their own lives in response to unrelenting abuse.

We mourn for all the victims of domestic violence – counted and uncounted -- and we dedicate this report to the effort to prevent more deaths.

A summary of each 2011 fatality by county is available at [www.pcadv.org](http://www.pcadv.org)

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# VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS

## 118 VICTIMS

ADULT FEMALE VICTIMS **60**

ADULT MALE VICTIMS **45**

CHILDREN/TEENS **13**

12 & UNDER **8**

13-17 **5**

YOUNGEST VICTIM **1**

OLDEST VICTIM **90**

## 127 PERPETRATORS

MALE **102**

FEMALE **25**

COMMITTED SUICIDE **38**

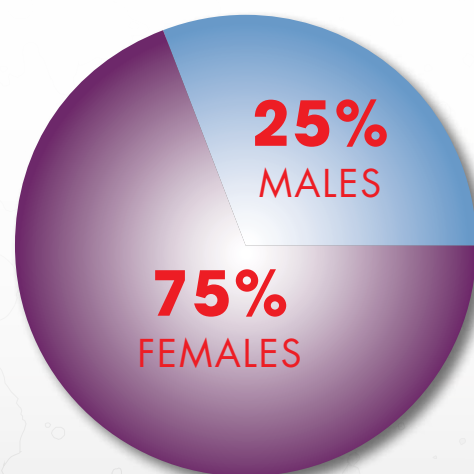
KILLED BY POLICE OR OTHERS **10**

YOUNGEST PERPETRATOR **16**

OLDEST PERPETRATOR **92**

VICTIMS KILLED BY  
CURRENT OR FORMER  
INTIMATE PARTNERS

TOTAL **53**



### ALL FEMALE VICTIMS

KILLED BY MEN **61**

KILLED BY WOMEN **7**

### ALL MALE VICTIMS

KILLED BY MEN **31**

KILLED BY WOMEN **19**

# HOW VICTIMS WERE KILLED

**“If I don’t come to work, call the police. He’s said he’s going to kill me.”**

## LETHAL GUN VIOLENCE

**GUN DEATHS: 110**

**66** VICTIMS

**44** PERPETRATORS WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE OR WERE KILLED BY POLICE OR OTHERS

**66%** OF ALL FATALITIES INVOLVED FIREARMS

**56%** OF VICTIMS KILLED BY FIREARMS

**92%** OF PERPETRATORS COMMITTED SUICIDE OR WERE KILLED BY GUNS

**SHOT: 63**

**1** SHOT AND SET ON FIRE

**1** SHOT AND BLUDGEONED WITH A HAMMER

**1** SHOT AND STABBED

**TOTAL: 66**

**STABBED: 33**

**STRANGLED: 4**

**BEATEN: 3**

**BLUDGEONED WITH BASEBALL BAT: 3**

**STRANGLED AND THROAT SLASHED: 1**

**STABBED AND THROAT SLASHED: 1**

**BLUNT HEAD TRAUMA: 1**

**CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING: 1**

**STRANGLED, BLUNT FORCE HEAD TRAUMA AND CARDIO RESPIRATORY ARREST: 1**

**RUN OVER BY CAR: 1**

**SHOT WITH ARROW FROM CROSSBOW: 1**

**OTHER: 2**



# EXAMPLES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN 2011

A 39-year-old Fulton County woman was fatally shot by her boyfriend, who then killed himself, 12 hours after he had been released on bail after holding her hostage for 24 hours.

A 60-year-old Pike County man threw a liquid chemical on his wife, causing burns over a large part of her body, before fatally shooting himself. It was their 18th wedding anniversary.

A Philadelphia woman drove a car over a sidewalk and pinned her boyfriend against a wall, killing him.

Two men crossed state lines and drove hundreds of miles to kill in Pennsylvania:

One man killed his estranged wife, her new boyfriend and the boyfriend's 7-year-old son in Virginia and then took his 6-year-old daughter along as he drove 300 miles to shoot his mother-in-law in Bucks County. Afterwards, he left the girl at a local hospital and killed himself as police pursued him.

Another Virginia man hired a Lincoln Town Car and driver to take him to Lackawanna County where he killed his former fiancée's boyfriend. He shot himself after police stopped the car on the way to New York.

A Westmoreland County man demanded that his girlfriend make him noodles late at night. He then refused to eat the noodles. When she threw them against a wall, he pushed her, causing her head to hit the doorjamb, and kicked her in the face, neck and chest. As she struggled to breathe, he went to sleep. When he awoke later, she was dead.

An Allegheny County man, released from a hearing on charges of harassment and making terroristic threats so that he could bring in his guns to comply with a Protection From Abuse order that his estranged wife and their three children had against him, killed himself on the street with one of those guns.

**“ I choked my fiancée to death.”**

**“ It was unsettling to know someone so close to us needed help. I didn't know. We were sleeping peacefully and someone was in trouble,” a neighbor after a man killed his wife and then himself.**

**“ He owned the women he was with.”**

**“ This young lady did everything she was supposed to do, and she's dead.”**

# THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

- A Lebanon County man killed his 33-year-old wife and the family dog, and then used his 10-year-old daughter as a human shield when police arrived. The child was uninjured.
- In Allegheny County a 7-year-old girl called her grandmother to say her mother's boyfriend was threatening them shortly before he killed her, her mother, her 1-year-old sister and then himself.
- A 62-year-old Berks County man, distraught because of his impending divorce and the loss of his job, called his 17-year-old daughter and told her she had 15 minutes to save his life. She arrived at his home to find her father standing in a doorway, holding a shotgun, with his pants and the house on fire. She urged him to come out, but instead he walked into the burning home while pointing a shotgun at his head. Then she heard a gunshot.
- A teenaged grandson found his grandparents dead in their Philadelphia home of gunshot wounds to the head in a murder-suicide.
- In Cumberland County a woman killed her ex-girlfriend. The victim's 17-year-old son, who was in his upstairs bedroom, heard the sound of an argument and then a bang. When he opened his door to investigate, he was face-to-face with the perpetrator who pointed a handgun at him and fired. As he slammed the door, the bullet sailed over his head. While he called 911, the perpetrator killed herself.
- A 16-year-old Dauphin County girl was killed by her father, who then shot himself.
- A Bucks County man bludgeoned his wife and 7-year-old son to death with a baseball bat and then he stepped in front of a train.
- In Cambria County a man killed his 29-year-old ex-girlfriend and himself in the parking lot of their son's daycare center.
- Two of a Harrisburg teacher's three children were home when her estranged husband sneaked inside and stabbed her multiple times. She fled to the street. He followed her, and as she called for help he stood over her, pointed a .380-caliber pistol point-blank at her head and fired.
- In Greene County, an 8-year-old girl and her 22-month-old brother were shot by their father, who also killed their mother and then himself.
- A Lawrence County woman shot her 12-year-old son and 81-year-old mother before killing herself.
- An 18-year-old Luzerne County man witnessed his mother's boyfriend shoot her with a sawed-off shotgun. His 13-year-old and 2-year-old sisters also were home at the time.
- Two boys, ages 4 and 8, were in an adjoining room when their father stabbed their mother in the Montgomery County apartment they shared. The 8-year-old heard her scream.
- A 2-year-old girl remained in a Montour County apartment with her father for 14 hours after he fatally stabbed her mother 27 times. During that time he slipped several times in the victim's blood in the kitchen.
- An 18-year-old man and his 12-year-old brother were watching a movie in their Northampton County home when their mother ran into the room during an argument with their father. "My father came into the room and started firing," the 18-year-old told police. He killed her. The father then shot himself and asked his son to "finish" him. The son took the gun, herded his younger brother out of the house and called police.
- A Pike County man killed his wife and injured himself while their children ages 9, 7, 4 and 3 were in the home.

**Police described the home where four members of a family were killed in a triple murder/suicide as “absolutely horrifying” and “like a horror movie.”**

## SOME DETAILS

**4** VICTIMS AND **1** PERPETRATOR WERE PREGNANT

**2** FATALITIES ON VALENTINE'S DAY; **1** ON  
THANKSGIVING AND **1** ON CHRISTMAS

**1** VICTIM WAS A POLICE OFFICER

**2** PERPETRATORS WERE POLICE OFFICERS

**13** VICTIMS WERE **65** OR OLDER,  
INCLUDING **6** WHO WERE **80** OR OLDER

**“No one saw this coming, and no one could imagine that violence could come to that household.”**

## SHEDDING LIGHT ON CHILD VIOLENCE

INCIDENTS **4**

**VICTIMS 4**

FEMALES **2**  
(AGES 16 & 17)

MALES **2**  
(AGES 18 & 19)

**PERPETRATORS**

MALES **4**  
(AGES 16, 18,  
19 & UNKNOWN)

**“I have a strong fear that he will kill me.”**

## YOUNG VICTIMS

**13** CHILDREN/TEENS KILLED

**3** BY MOTHER

**5** BY FATHER

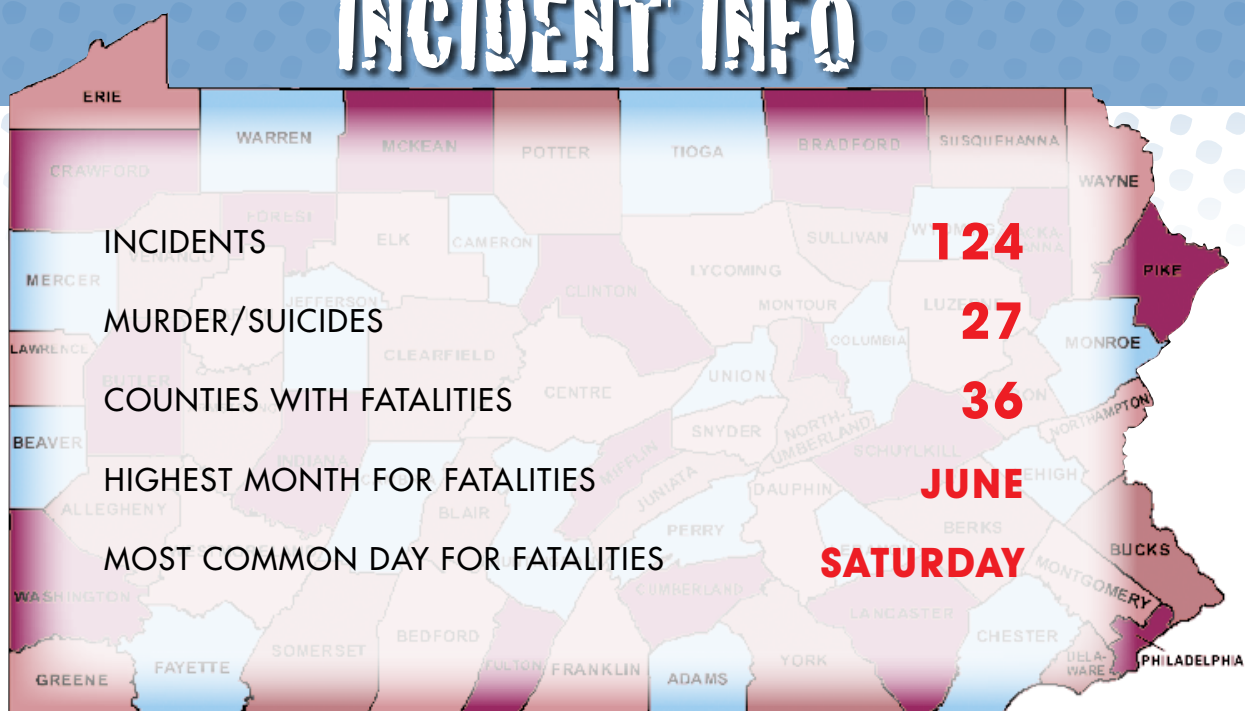
**2** BY MOTHER'S BOYFRIEND

**1** BY MALE TEEN WITH  
CRUSH ON VICTIM

**1** CAUGHT IN CROSSFIRE  
DURING ARGUMENT  
BETWEEN 2 BROTHERS

**1** KILLED BY EX-BOYFRIEND

# INCIDENT INFO



# FATALITIES BY COUNTY

COUNTY	VICTIM(S)	PERPETRATOR(S)	TOTAL
Allegheny	10	3	13
Beaver	1	0	1
Bedford	1	0	1
Berks	5	3	8
Blair	2	4	6
Bucks	6	5	11
Butler	2	0	2
Cambria	1	1	2
Chester	0	1	1
Columbia	1	2	3
Crawford	2	1	3
Cumberland	5	3	8
Dauphin	2	1	3
Erie	1	0	1
Fayette	2	0	2
Fulton	1	1	2
Greene	3	1	4
Lackawanna	3	1	4
Lancaster	1	1	2

COUNTY	VICTIM(S)	PERPETRATOR(S)	TOTAL
Lawrence	4	1	5
Lebanon	1	0	1
Lehigh	6	0	6
Luzerne	8	3	11
Mercer	0	1	1
Monroe	2	2	4
Montgomery	6	2	8
Montour	1	0	1
Northampton	3	0	3
Philadelphia	26	1	27
Pike	1	1	2
Schuylkill	2	0	2
Somerset	2	2	4
Tioga	1	1	2
Washington	1	3	4
Westmoreland	2	2	4
York	3	1	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>166</b>