



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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### **POLICE RESPONDED TO NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF REPORTED NONFATAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMIZATIONS IN 10 MINUTES OR LESS**

WASHINGTON — Police were notified in more than half (56 percent) of the 1.3 million nonfatal domestic violence victimizations that occurred annually during the 10-year period from 2006 to 2015 in the United States, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. Police responded to nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of these victimizations in 10 minutes or less. When police responded to the scene, they took a report 78 percent of the time. During some initial responses, they also questioned persons (36 percent), conducted searches (14 percent) or collected evidence (11 percent).

These findings are based on data reported by victims in the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) and not from police records. Nonfatal domestic violence includes serious violence (rape or sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault) and simple assaults committed by intimate partners (spouse, former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend), immediate family members (parent, child or sibling) or other relatives.

The victim notified the police in about three-quarters (76 percent) of reported domestic violence victimizations, while about a quarter (24 percent) of notifications came from other persons. Victims of violence by an intimate partner reported the victimization to the police at the same rate as victims of violence by other relatives. The rate of reporting to police was also the same for domestic violence victimizations involving serious violence as for those involving simple assault.

The domestic violence offender was arrested or charged in about 2 out of every 5 victimizations reported to police, either during the initial police response or during follow-up. The victim or other household member signed a criminal complaint against the offender in about half (48 percent) of reported victimizations. When a victimization involved a serious injury and a criminal complaint was signed, the offender was arrested or charged 89 percent of the time.

Domestic violence against females involving a serious injury (54 percent) was reported to police at about the same rate as domestic violence involving no injury (55 percent). A greater percentage of male domestic violence victimizations were reported to police when a serious injury was involved (77 percent), compared to when there was a minor injury (57 percent) or no injury (49 percent).

During the 10-year period, an average of about 582,000 nonfatal domestic violence victimizations were not reported to police each year. In about a third (32 percent) of these unreported victimizations, victims cited the personal nature of the incident as a reason for not reporting it to police. Some victimizations were not reported because the victim wanted to protect the offender (21 percent), felt the crime was minor or unimportant (20 percent) or feared reprisal from the offender or others (19 percent).

Domestic violence victimizations involving serious violence (31 percent) were more likely than victimizations involving simple assault (13 percent) to go unreported to police due to fear of reprisal. Female victimizations (24 percent) were four times as likely as male victimizations (6 percent) to go unreported to police due to fear of reprisal.

Other key findings in the report are from BJS's most recent Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics survey:

- In 2013, 92 percent of sheriff's offices, 89 percent of local police departments and 70 percent of state law enforcement agencies formally addressed domestic violence with a specialized unit, other dedicated personnel, policies, procedures or training in 2013.
- 47 percent of state and local law enforcement agencies employing 100 or more full-time sworn personnel operated a full-time domestic violence unit in 2013.
- 90 percent of local police departments serving 250,000 or more residents operated a specialized domestic violence unit with full-time personnel in 2013.

The report, *Police Response to Domestic Violence, 2006-2015* (NCJ 250231), was written by BJS statistician Brian A. Reaves. The report, related documents and additional information about BJS's statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at [www.bjs.gov](http://www.bjs.gov).

The Office of Justice Programs, headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Alan R. Hanson, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART). More information about OJP and its components can be found at [www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov).

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