



**2013-2016**

# **FIREARM VIOLENCE IN TENNESSEE**



**Tennessee Bureau of Investigation**  
CJIS Support Center



**Bill Haslam**  
Governor

## TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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**Mark Gwyn**  
Director

December 6, 2017

Ladies and Gentlemen:

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

Incident-based reporting views a crime and all of its components as an "incident." Information about the crime, including details of the offense, victim, offender, property, arrestees, and the relationship between the people involved, are all reported. Because of the extent of detailed data collected, the TIBRS program provides an even more accurate depiction of crime in each community than the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) published by the FBI.

The CJIS Support Center staff continually review the crime data reported to TBI. An increase in most violent crime categories occurred from 2015 to 2016. Based upon that increase, the CJIS Support Center staff looked specifically at crimes involving firearms. This report includes information on the crime, the offenders and the victims in incidents when firearms were reported as part of the event. I am deeply concerned with the findings of this report reflecting a substantial increase in firearm related crimes in our state. This increase puts an additional strain on Tennessee's law enforcement resources and poses a serious threat to public safety.

I would like to thank all participating law enforcement agencies for their hard work and contributions to making the TIBRS program successful in Tennessee. It is only with their support that our state continues to provide our citizens information about crime occurring in our state.

Sincerely,

**Mark Gwyn**  
Director





This report will analyze a four-year crime trend regarding firearm offenses reported to the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS) by Tennessee law enforcement agencies, colleges and universities. Information obtained from TIBRS has been verified by reporting agencies for accuracy. This report will illustrate specific information for violent crimes, such as Crimes Against Persons using firearms.

For the purpose of this study, the weapon type listed as a Firearm in TIBRS will be considered for this report. TIBRS defines Firearms as weapons that fire a shot by force of an explosion, i.e. Handguns, Rifles, Shotguns, Flare Guns, etc. Other weapons, such as Knife/Cutting Instruments, Poison, Explosives, and Fire/Incendiary devices are excluded.

### **Quick Facts:**

**From 2013 to 2016, Firearm offenses increased by 24.8%.**

**Handguns made up the greatest weapon category type used.**

**Aggravated Assault and Robbery accounted for the most reported Group A offenses.**

**Residence/Home locations accounted for 51.8% of reported locations indicating the most common location for Firearm Offenses.**

**Saturday (16.5%) and Sunday (16.2%) resulted in the greatest reported number of Firearm offenses.**

**The most reported time frame for Firearm Offenses occurred 9:00pm-11:59pm.**

**Males were nine times more likely to engage in firearm offenses than Females.**

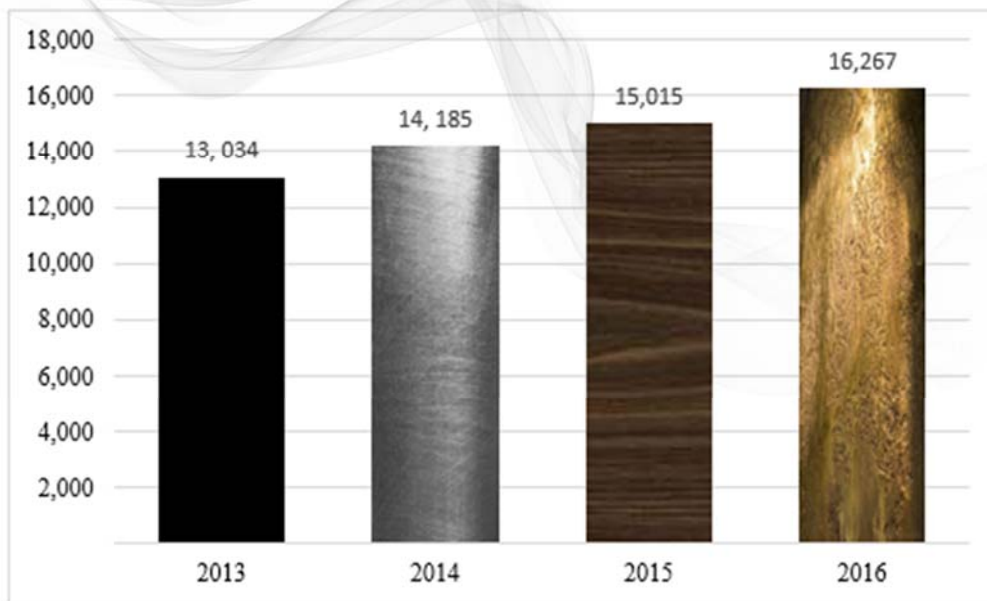
**The most prevalent Offender Age group category for Firearm offenses was 18-24.**

**Of the 66,119 Victims reported, 61.3% were Male and 38.5 were Females. Victims with an unknown gender accounted for 0.2%**

**“Stranger” made up the highest category for “Victim to Offender Relationship” from 2013 to 2016.**



**Figure 1: Crimes Involving a Firearm by Year**



**Four-Year Analysis**

This study provides a four year review of offenses reported as crimes involving a Firearm. Per TIBRS, Crimes Against Persons represents offenses in which the victim is always an Individual. Of the 58,501 number of crimes reported in this study period, data revealed an overall 24.8% increase from 2013 to 2016. The lowest number of reported crimes during this time frame was 13,034 in 2013.

**Table 1: Weapon Type by Year**

Type of Weapon Used	2013	2014	2015	2016
Firearm (Type Not Stated)	1,117	1,144	1,237	1,531
Firearm-Automatic (Type Not Stated)	50	57	39	14
Handgun	6,694	7,429	8,013	9,003
Handgun-Automatic	103	217	130	63
Rifle	325	514	514	593
Rifle-Automatic	19	19	8	8
Shotgun	665	554	612	578
Shotgun-Automatic	8	26	1	0
Other Firearm	363	503	579	497
Other Firearm-Automatic	3	0	7	2

**Weapon Type**

Handguns made up the greatest proportion of the weapon type used and continues to increase year to year. Data indicated a 34.5% increase from 2013 to 2016; however, Handgun-Automatic weapon type decreased by 38.8%. Shotgun-Automatic weapons were only used in 35 offenses during this study period, with 2016 having zero reported occurrences.





**Table 2: Offense Type by Year**

Offense Type	2013	2014	2015	2016
Murder	232	239	306	359
Negligent Manslaughter	8	2	6	11
Kidnapping/Abduction	177	187	254	253
Forcible Sex Offenses	76	88	103	88
Forcible Fondling	11	21	6	6
Aggravated Assault	8,686	9,715	10,277	11,331
Robbery	4,021	4,120	4,317	4,472

**Note:** Table 2 represents TIBRS offenses reported with the weapon type of a Firearm. Up to three weapons may be chosen with an offense.

### Offense Type

The offenses listed in Table 2 are Group A offenses categorized as violent crimes, where the victims in this study are classified as Individuals. Violent crimes, such as Aggravated Assault and Robbery, accounted for the most reported offense type. Data revealed 8,686 Aggravated Assault offenses in 2013 compared to 11,331 reported in 2016, accounting for a total of a 30.5% increase. Robbery offenses increased by 11.2% from 2013 to 2016. Additionally, Murder increased by 54.7% followed by Kidnapping/Abduction at 42.9%.

Forcible Sex Offenses, in this study, include Forcible Rape, Forcible Sodomy, and Sexual Assault W/Object. From 2013 to 2016, Forcible Sex Offenses increased by 15.8%.

**Table 3: Time of Day by Year**

Year	12:00am-2:59am	3:00am-5:59am	6:00am-8:59am	9:00am-11:59am	12:00n-2:59pm	3:00pm-5:59pm	6:00pm-8:59pm	9:00pm-11:59pm
2013	1,957	754	404	889	1,399	1,927	2,654	3,221
2014	2,290	1,018	509	922	1,453	1,989	2,784	3,401
2015	2,361	1,032	602	1,055	1,568	2,047	3,009	3,592
2016	2,384	1,041	737	1,258	1,790	2,378	3,217	3,707

### Firearm Offenses by Time of Day

Time of Day is another important element when examining firearm violence in Tennessee. Data revealed the most predominate time frame was from 9:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m., accounting for 23.5 % of all reported offenses. The second most frequently reported time period was from 6:00 p.m. to 8:59 p.m., accounting for 19.7%. The time frame that had the least number of offenses reported was from 6:00 a.m. to 8:59 a.m. which accounted for 3.8% from 2013 to 2016.



**Table 4: Location Type by Year**

Location Type	2013	2014	2015	2016
Residence/Home	6,906	7,669	7,799	8,487
Highway/Road/Alley	2,713	2,946	3,355	3,556
Parking Lot/Garage	1,463	1,487	1,760	1,982
Auto Dealership New/Used	12	12	13	14
ATM Machine Separate from Bank	7	8	15	17
Bank/Savings and Loan	47	44	48	54
Bar/Night Club	107	154	129	141
Commercial/Office Building	61	51	84	78
Convenience Store	437	509	496	555
Department/Discount Store	99	126	128	165
Doctor's Office	0	4	1	2
Hospital	44	14	22	21
Hotel/Motel/Etc.	166	180	222	237
Grocery/Supermarket	55	83	101	94
Liquor Store	8	13	13	19
Pharmacy	13	28	28	15
Rental Storage Facility	10	5	6	7
Restaurant	220	194	195	252
Service/Gas Station	115	137	142	156
Shopping Mall	10	6	9	11
Specialty store (TV, Fur, etc.)	75	81	77	115
Daycare Facility	4	2	4	0
School – College/University	16	15	10	24
School – Elementary/Secondary	26	53	26	32
Church/Synagogue/Temple	29	14	16	38
Government/Public Building	17	18	16	20
Field/Woods	110	82	74	70
Lake/Waterway	12	17	28	18
Park/Playground	123	123	132	160
Other/Unknown	274	252	243	316

**Note:** Table 4 does not display all reportable locations used in TIBRS.

### Firearm Offense by Location

Table 4 displays the location in which the firearm offense occurred. Residence/Home locations accounted for a total of 51.8% of all reported locations indicating the most common location for firearm offenses in this study period. Similarly, Highway/Road/Alley made up 21.1% of all reported locations in TIBRS followed by Parking Lot/Garage (11.2%).

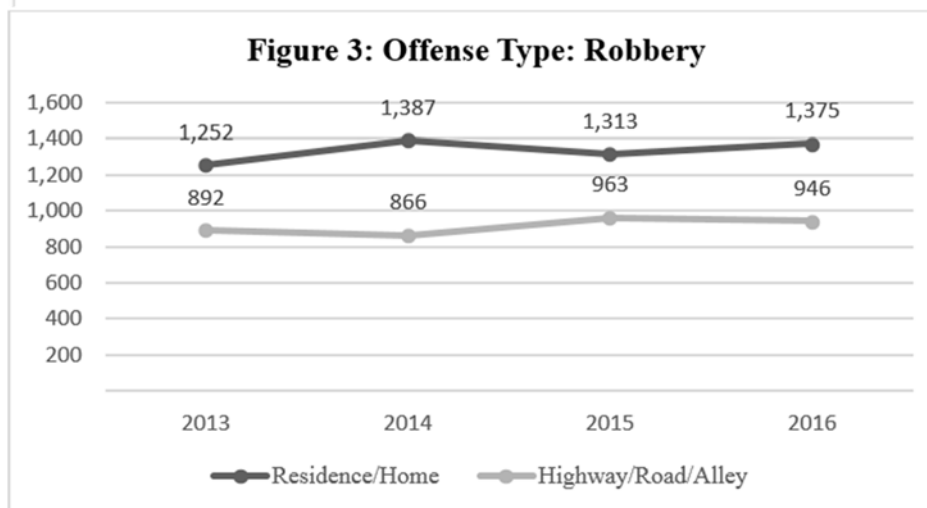
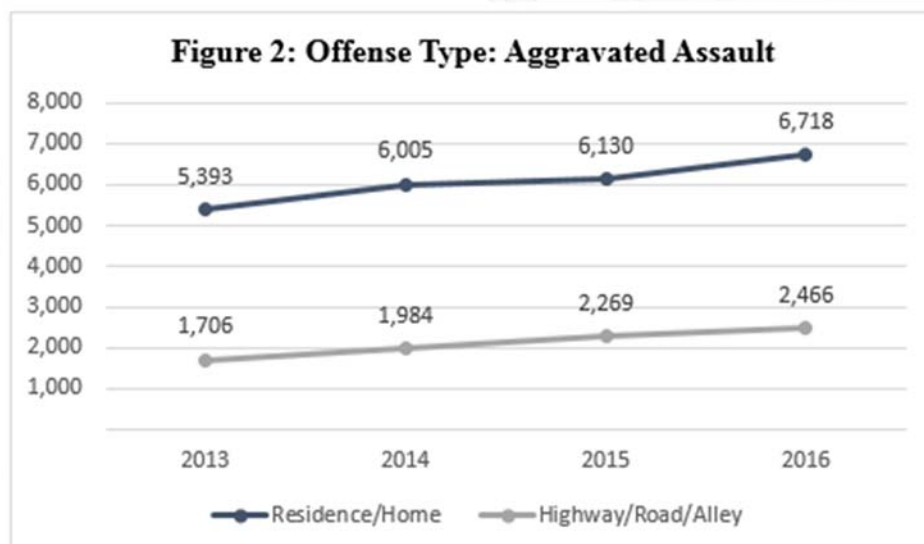




**Additional Analysis**

The graphs below display a separate analysis examining the two highest reported offense location types in this study period. A yearly comparison is shown between two specific locations— Residence/Home and Highway/Road/Alley; and four specific offenses— Aggravated Assault Robbery, Murder, and Kidnapping.

Aggravated Assault offenses, where the offender was armed with a Firearm, occurred predominately in the Residence/Home location. Findings show a 24.6% increase from 2013 to 2016. Highway/Road/Alley has continuously increased and of the 8,425 offenses reported, 2016 was the highest reported year with 2,466.



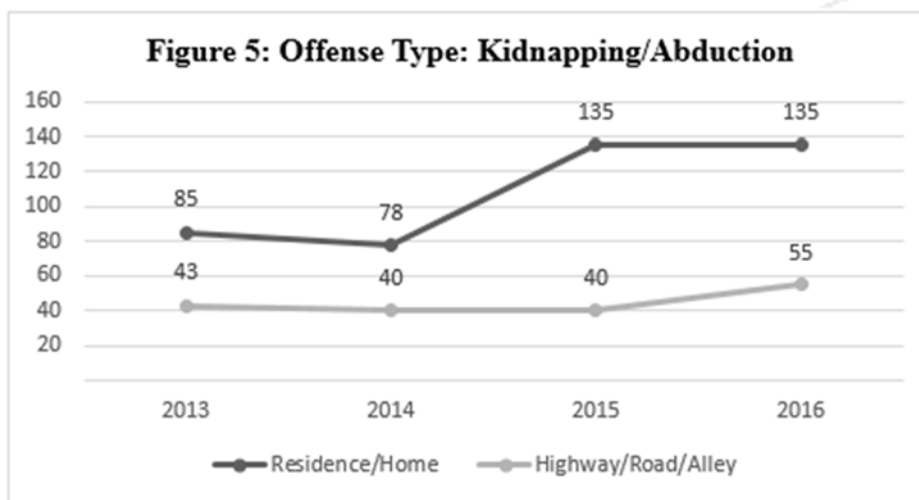
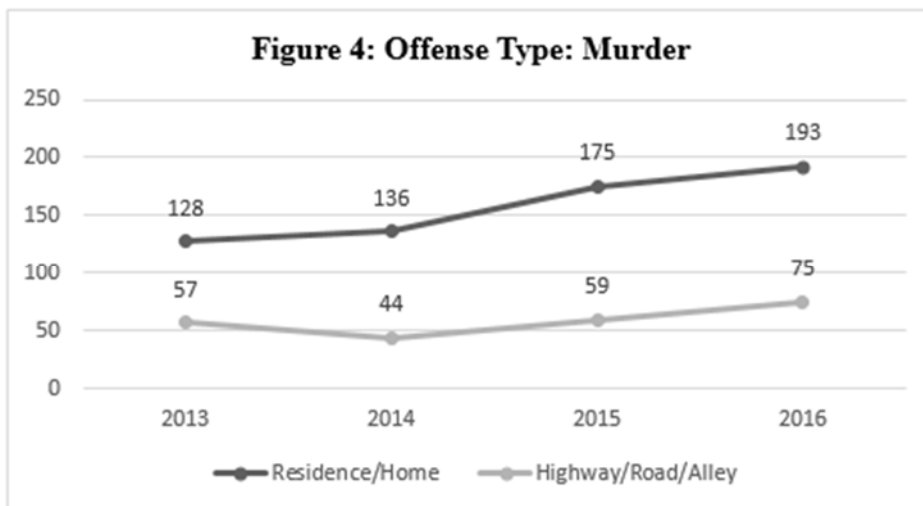
Robbery offenses involving a Firearm, with the location of Residence/Home increased by 9.8% from 2013 to 2016. Though data revealed an overall increase of 5.9% for Robbery offenses occurring in Highway/Road/Alley locations, data in Figure 3 also revealed a slight decrease of 1.9% from 2015 to 2016.





**Additional Analysis Continued**

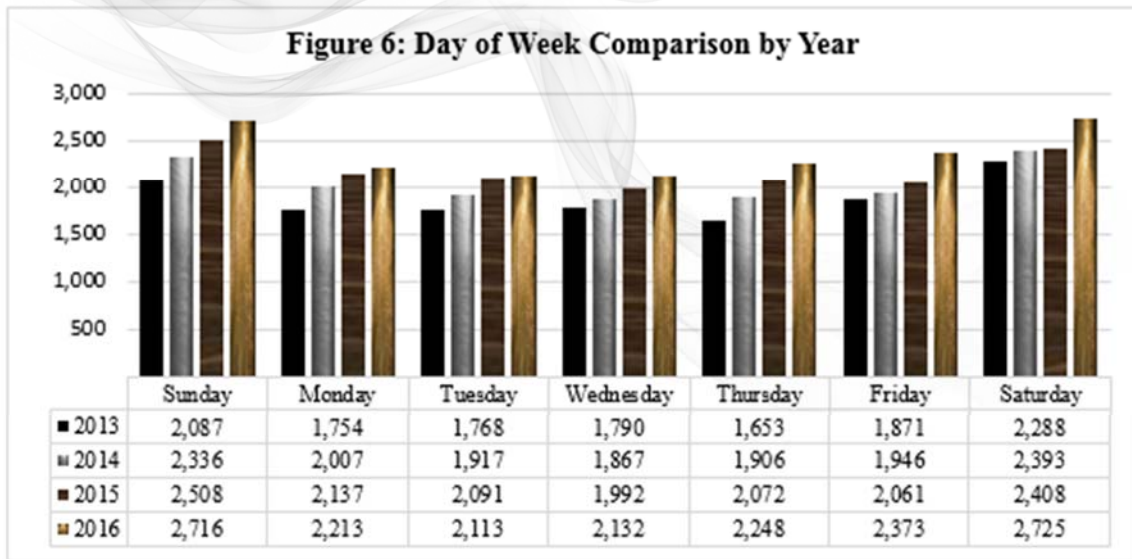
Murder offenses involving a Firearm occurred predominately in Residence/Home and Highway/Road/Alley locations. Residence/Home location made up 42.3% of all reported location types in TIBRS; whereas, Highway/Road/Alley made up 15.7%.



Kidnapping offenses involving a Firearm, with the location of Residence/Home increased by 58.8% from 2013 to 2016. Additionally, data revealed a 73.1% increase from 2014 to 2016. Equally important, Kidnapping offenses, where the location is Highway/Road/Alley, have remained relatively constant within the study period.

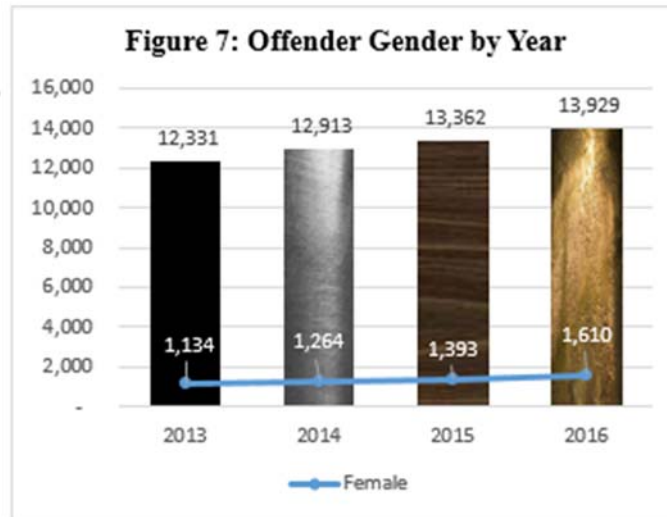






**Day of Week**

Saturday (16.5%) and Sunday (16.2%), had the greatest number of reported firearm offenses. From 2013 to 2016 firearm offenses increased on Thursdays by 36.0% from 1,653 offenses in 2013 to 2,248 offenses reported in 2016. Of the 59,372 firearm offenses reported in this study period, further analysis indicated offenses are less likely to occur on Wednesdays.



Note: Figure 7 does not include yearly totals for Unknown.

**Offender Analysis**

During this study period, a total of 61,225 known offenders were reported to TIBRS. Males (85.8%) were nine times more likely to engage in firearm offenses than Females (8.8%). Females accounted for 5,401 offenders from 2013 to 2016. Offenders reported as Unknown accounted for 5.4%.



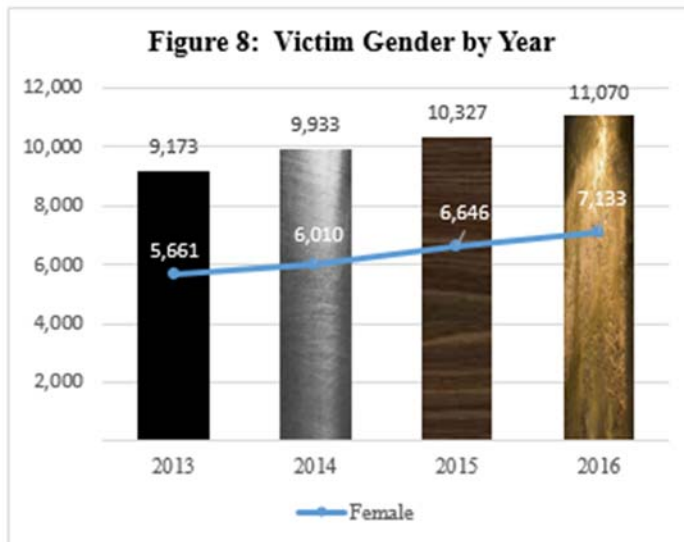


**Table 5: Offender Age by Year**

Age	18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 and over
2013	4,431	2,793	1,048	691	305	171
2014	4,637	3,201	1,093	679	322	147
2015	4,884	3,413	1,268	690	343	193
2016	4,662	3,675	1,398	775	414	195

**Offender Analysis Continued**

In addition, Group A Offender information displayed in Table 5 indicated individuals from 18 to 24 years old constituted the largest group. Table 5 also shows a 35.7% increase from 2013 to 2016 for offenders aged 55 to 64. The second largest age group reported was 25-34—accounting for 13,061 or 31.6% of firearm offenses from 2013 to 2016. In addition, findings show a decrease in firearm offenses once individuals reach the 45 and over age group.



**Note:** Figure 8 does not include yearly totals for Unknown.

**Victim Analysis**

From 2013 to 2016, a total of 66,119 victims were involved in violent crimes involving the use of a Firearm. Males (61.3%) were three times more likely to be victimized than Females (38.5%). Victims with an Unknown gender only accounted for 0.2%. Additionally, Figure 8 data reveals a 25.6% increase for Female victims in this study period. Similarly, Male victims have increased by 20.7% from 2013 to 2016.



**Table 6: Yearly Female Victim Comparison**

Offense Type	2013	2014	2015	2016
Murder	46	41	73	55
Negligent Manslaughter	2	1	4	4
Kidnapping/Abduction	93	106	125	137
Forcible Sex Offenses	72	85	94	79
Forcible Fondling	10	17	6	5
Aggravated Assault	3,651	3,935	4,445	4,898
Robbery	1,787	1,825	1,899	1,955

**Note:** Table 6 represents TIBRS offenses reported with the weapon type of a Firearm.

### Female Victims

From 2013 to 2016, a total of 16,929 women were victims of Aggravated Assault. Additionally, Table 6 data reveals a 34.2% increase in Aggravated Assault offenses made against women. Kidnapping increased by 47.3% from 93 in 2013 to 137 in 2016. In addition, a total of 7,466 women were victims of Robbery in this study period, accounting for the second highest reported offense type.

**Table 7: Yearly Juvenile Victim Comparison**

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
Offense Type	Juvenile			
Murder	18	10	17	17
Negligent Manslaughter	3	2	2	4
Kidnapping/Abduction	29	24	31	43
Forcible Sex Offenses	5	8	10	11
Forcible Fondling	4	8	1	2
Aggravated Assault	1,273	1,571	1,611	1,798
Robbery	405	398	486	514

**Note:** Table 7 represents TIBRS offenses reported with the weapon type of a Firearm.

### Juvenile Victims

From 2013 to 2016, a total of 127 Kidnapping/Abduction incidents involving the use of a firearm were reported. Aggravated Assault against juveniles accounted for the highest reported offense type showing an increase of 41.2% from 2013 to 2016. Upon further analysis, findings revealed Forcible Fondling decreased by half from 2013 to 2016. Whereas, Forcible Sexual Offenses increased by 120.0%.





**Table 8: Yearly Male Victim Comparison**

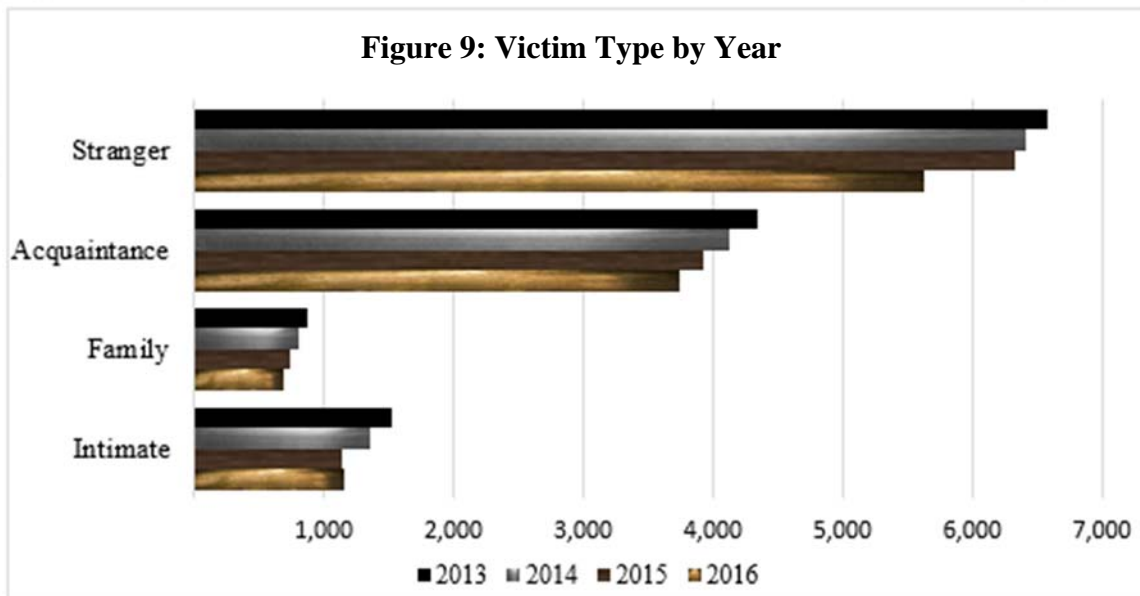
Offense Type	2013	2014	2015	2016
Murder	186	198	233	304
Negligent Manslaughter	6	1	2	7
Kidnapping/Abduction	84	80	128	115
Forcible Sex Offenses	4	3	9	9
Forcible Fondling	1	4	0	1
Aggravated Assault	5,008	5,739	5,795	6,402
Robbery	3,884	3,908	4,160	4,232

**Note:** Table 8 represents TIBRS offenses reported with the weapon type of a Firearm.

**Male Victims**

From 2013 to 2016, a total of 22,944 men were victims of Aggravated Assault. Table 8 also reveals a 63.4% increase in Murder offenses among the male population in Tennessee. Additionally, 16,184 men were victims of Robbery in this study period, accounting for the second highest reported offense type.

**Figure 9: Victim Type by Year**

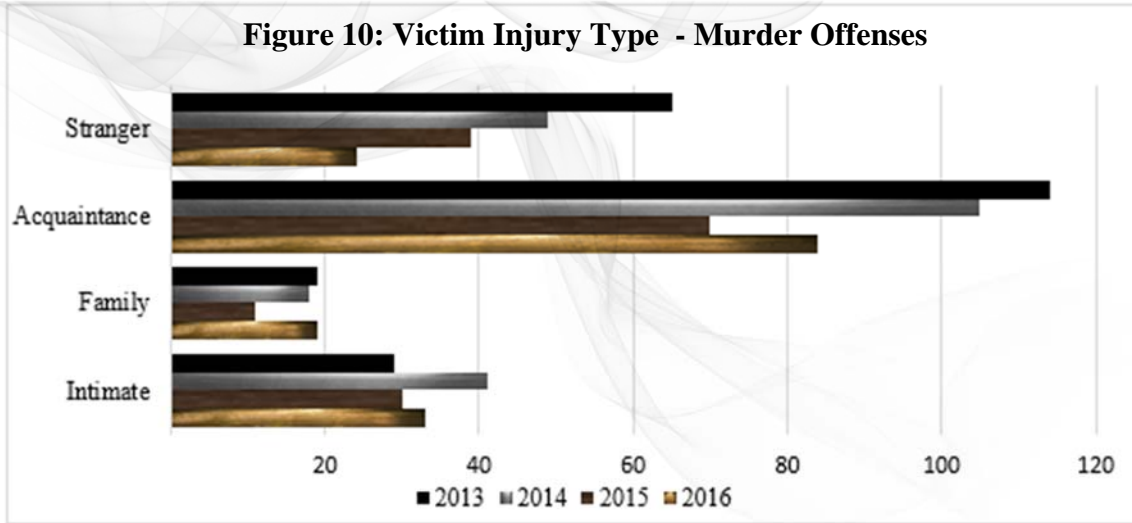


**Victim to Offender Relationship**

Victim relationship to an offender is another important element when analyzing firearm crime in Tennessee. Figure 9 data reveals the majority of Victim to Offender Relationships fall under the Stranger category type at 50.5% followed by Acquaintance at 32.7%. Unknown and Missing were not included in Figure 9.







**Victim to Offender Relationship**

Additional analysis indicates, Acquaintance (49.7%) made up the highest reported Victim Type Category for Murder offenses involving a Firearm in this study period. Family and Intimate Victim to Offender Relationships only made up 17.9% of the total reported Murder offenses. Victim to Offender Relationship category Unknown was not included in Figure 10.

**Table 9: Victim Injury Type**

Victim Injury Type	2013	2014	2015	2016
Apparent Broken Bones	48	65	62	68
Possible Internal Injury	269	307	267	318
Severe Laceration	238	270	254	296
Apparent Minor Injury	1,556	1,672	1,732	1,808
Other Major Injury	823	900	945	975
Loss of Teeth	18	20	23	21
Unconsciousness	34	49	40	39
None	11,490	12,370	13,205	14,222
Death	232	239	306	359

**Note:** Up to five Injury Types may be reported in each incident and up to three Weapon Types may be reported per offense. Data retrieved from TIBRS does not differentiate which injury was caused by which weapon.

**Victim Injury Type**

Data in Table 9, instead, captures reported Injury Types for offenses involving a Firearm. Of the eight reportable Injury Types, None accounted for 79.6%, indicating the Offender predominately “displayed” the Firearm while committing an offense. Death is not considered an injury type in TIBRS. However, for the purpose of this study, Death is included to display the significant increase of 54.7% within the study period. The year totals of Death include both Murder and Negligent Manslaughter.



**Table 10: Total Group A Offenses vs. Yearly Firearm Offenses vs. Tennessee Population**

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	% Change 2013-2016
Total Group A Offenses	550,221	542,563	540,484	554,658	0.8%
Yearly Firearm Offenses	13,034	14,185	15,015	16,267	24.8%
Tennessee Population	6,494,821	6,544,663	6,595,056	6,651,194	2.4%
<b>Crime Rate per 100,000 population</b>					
Total Group A Offenses	8,471.7	8,290.2	8,195.3	8,339.2	-1.6%
Total Firearm Offenses	200.7	216.7	227.7	244.6	21.9%

### Tennessee Population

Factors such as population are critical when examining the volume of Firearm violence in Tennessee. Data in Table 10 revealed a lack of correlation between population increase and Firearm offenses. From 2013 to 2016 the Tennessee population increased by 2.4% which is a significantly lower rate of increase than the 24.8% increase of offenses involving firearms. In all, findings indicated the increase of Firearm Offenses is not due to population increase.

### Conclusion

Of the 58,501 reported number of crimes reported in this study period, data revealed an overall 24.8% increase from 2013 to 2016. Handguns made up the greatest proportion of the weapon type used and continues to increase each year. Violent crimes, such as Aggravated Assault and Robbery, accounted for the most reported offense type. Equally important, Residence/Home locations accounted for 51.8% of all reported locations in this study, indicating the most common location for firearm offenses in this study period. Murder offenses involving a firearm increased by 54.7% followed by Kidnapping/Abduction with a Firearm at 42.9%.

Saturday (16.5%) and Sunday (16.2%), had the greatest number of reported firearm offenses. Data revealed the most predominate time frame was from 9:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. accounting for 23.5 % of all reported offenses. Males (85.8%) were nine times more likely to engage in firearm offenses than Females (8.8%). Offenders reported as Unknown accounted for 5.4%. In addition, Group A Offender information indicated individuals from 18 to 24 years old constituted the largest group. From 2013 to 2016, a total of 65,953 victims were involved in violent crimes involving the use of a Firearm. Of those victims, 61.3% were Males and 38.5% were Females. Unknown victims only accounted for 0.2%. Data revealed the majority of Victim to Offender Relationships fall under the “Stranger” category type at 50.5% followed by “Acquaintance” at 32.7%. Of the eight reportable Injury Types, “None” accounted for 79.6%, indicating the Offender predominately “displayed” the Firearm while committing an offense.

