



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND WOMEN'S HOMICIDES

Every day in the United States women are killed or severely injured because of domestic violence abusers' access to firearms. Abusers use firearms as their primary weapon of choice in domestic violence homicides and third weapon of choice in non-fatal domestic violence assaults.¹ When abusers have access to firearms, both women's safety and women's lives are in danger.

U.S. WOMEN'S HOMICIDES

- From 2001 through 2012, 6410 women were murdered in the United States by an intimate partner using a gun – more than the total number of U.S. troops killed in action during the entirety of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined.²
- From 2002 through 2011, an average 3,551 women were killed *every year* in the United States³ and firearms were used to kill more than half of the women murdered in the U.S.⁴ during this same time period.
- Women in the United States are eleven times more likely to be murdered with guns than women in other high-income countries.⁵
- In the U.S. more domestic violence homicides are committed by dating partners than by spouses.⁶ There is a high correlation between stalking and women's homicides.⁷

WOMEN IN THE U.S. ARE AT AN INCREASED RISK OF HOMICIDE WHEN ABUSERS HAVE ACCESS TO FIREARMS

- From 1980 to 2008, 40% of all women murdered in the United States were murdered by a current or former intimate partner,⁸ this number increased to 50% of women murdered between 2010 and 2011.⁹ More than three times as many women are murdered with guns used by their husbands or intimate partners than are murdered with strangers' guns, knives, or other weapons combined.¹⁰
- Homes with guns have a 3-fold increased homicide risk as compared to homes without guns. This risk increases to 8-fold when the perpetrator is an intimate partner or relative of the victim. When previous incidents of domestic violence exist, the risk of homicide is 20 times greater.¹¹
- In addition, recent studies have shown that self-defense gun use is rare; in 2012 only 1 in 32 homicides committed were justifiable under self-defense.¹²
- Women are 46% less likely to be shot to death by former or current intimate partners in states that require background checks before firearms purchases.¹³
- Abusers are often deadliest when victims wish to leave.¹⁴ One-fifth of homicide victims with restraining orders are murdered within two days of obtaining the order, and one third are murdered within the first month.¹⁵

¹ *When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2011 Homicide data: Females Murdered by males in Single Victim/Single Offender Incidents*, Violence Policy Center, Washington, D.C., 2013, www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2013.pdf (and refer to previous annual *When Men Murder*

Women reports); Truman, Jennifer L. and Rachel E. Morgan, *Nonfatal Domestic Violence, 2003-2012*, U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice statistics, April 2014, <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ndv0312.pdf>.

² Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Supplemental Homicide Data* (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001 -2012); U.S. Department of Defense, *U.S. Casualty Status Fatalities* (2014), available at <http://defense.gov/news/casualty.pdf>

³ *Homicide in the U.S. Known to Law Enforcement, 2011*, U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, December 2013, <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/hs11.pdf>.

⁴ *Homicide in the U.S. Known to Law Enforcement, 2011*, U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, December 2013, <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/hs11.pdf>.

⁵ D. Hemenway and E.G. Richardson, "Homicide, Suicide, and Unintentional Firearm Fatality: Comparing the United States with Other High-Income Countries, 2003," 70 *Journal of Trauma* 238-42 (2011), available at doi:10.1097/TA.0b013e3181dbaddf.

⁶ U.S. Department of Justice, *Homicide Trends in the United States 1980-2008*, available at <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=2221>

⁷ TK Logan, "Research on Partner Stalking: Putting the Pieces Together" (Lexington, KY; University of Kentucky, Department of Behavioral Science & center on Drug and Alcohol Research, 2010), available at

<http://www.victimsofcrime.org/docs/Common%20Documents/Research%20on%20Partners%20Stalking%20Report.pdf?sfvrsn=0>; Judith M. McFarland and others, "Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide", *Homicide Studies* 3 (4) (1999): 300-316.

⁸ Fox JA, Zawitz MW. *Homicide Trends in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics; 2006.

⁹ *When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2011 Homicide data: Females Murdered by males in Single Victim/Single Offender Incidents*, Violence Policy Center, Washington, D.C., 2013, www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2013.pdf (and refer to previous annual *When Men Murder Women reports*); Truman, Jennifer L. and Rachel E. Morgan, *Nonfatal Domestic Violence, 2003-2012*, U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice statistics, April 2014, <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ndv0312.pdf>.

¹⁰ *When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2010 Homicide Data: Females Murdered by Males in Single Victim/Single Offender Incidents*, Violence Policy Center, Washington, D.C., 2012, <http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2012.pdf>; *When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2011 Homicide data: Females Murdered by males in Single Victim/Single Offender Incidents*, Violence Policy Center, 2013, www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2013.pdf, (and see prior annual *When Men Murder Women analyses*). Additionally, handguns are more likely than rifles or shotguns to be used in homicides in which men kill women. In 2010 and 2011, handguns were used, respectively, in 70 and 73 percent of the cases where men used firearms to kill women. Ibid.

¹¹ Kellermann AL, Rivara FP, Rushforth NB, et al. Gun ownership as a risk factor for homicide in the home. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 1993;329(15):1084-1091

¹² *Firearm Justifiable Homicides and Non-Fatal Self-Defense Gun Use*, Violence Policy Center, Washington DC 2015, <http://www.vpc.org/studies/justifiable15.pdf>

¹³ *State Background Check Requirements and Rates of Domestic Violence Homicide*, Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund, New York, NY 2015, <http://everytown.org/documents/2015/01/dv-background-checks-fact-sheet.pdf>.

¹⁴ J. C. Campbell, J.C., Webster, D., Koziol-McLain, J. and et al., *Risk Factors For Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From A Multi-Site Case Control Study*, *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(7), 2013.

¹⁵ Vitte, K. A. & Sorenson, S. B. (2008). Restraining orders among victims of intimate partner homicide. *Injury Prevention*, 14(1), 191-195.