Assault

Assault may be broken into two categories—aggravated or simple. Aggravated assault is defined as an attack with a weapon, an attack that causes serious bodily harm, or threatened assault with a weapon. Simple assault is defined as an unlawful attack or threat of attack that does not cause serious bodily harm. Assault victimization varies largely by sex and geography. Some professions, including law enforcement and emergency room nurses are also at an increased risk.

Trends

Consistent with crimes trends as a whole, assault victimization rates have decreased substantively over the past two decades. In 2015, rates for both aggravated and simple assault were 70% lower than in 1995.

Did You Know?

While population size is not the only factor contributing to aggravated assault victimization rates, cities with populations over 1 million have, on average, lower rates of aggravated assault compared to cities with populations between 500,000 and 999,999.
In 2015, 33% of aggravated assault victimizations were committed with a knife, 23% with a firearm, and 11% without a weapon. One-third of aggravated assaults were either committed with another form of weapon or an unidentified weapon.

An estimated 3 in 1,000 people were victims of aggravated assault in 2015. Of these, 56% of women reported that they were either home or close to their home at the time of the assault. Comparatively, 43% of men reported that they were in a parking lot, commercial place, or other public area at the time of assault.

In 2015, most aggravated assaults were committed by someone the victim knew. Women who were assaulted knew their assailant more than 60% of the time, compared to roughly 50% of men.

In 2015, individuals age 35 to 49 and those 50 and over accounted for more than half of aggravated assault victimizations.

Sources: