

# 2021

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN TENNESSEE

- *DOMESTIC OFFENSE BREAKDOWN*
- *VICTIM ANALYSIS*
- *VICTIM-OFFENDER RELATIONSHIPS*



A PUBLICATION OF THE TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTER | CRIME STATISTICS UNIT



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**DAVID B. RAUSCH**  
Director

November 17, 2022

Ladies and Gentlemen:

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

The issue of domestic violence is by no means a novel problem in American society. The persistence of domestic violence and the large number of related incidents reported to law enforcement necessitate continued awareness about this issue. In an effort to gain more insight into the problem of domestic violence within the state of Tennessee, the current study analyzes crime data collected from the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System, hereafter referred to as TIBRS. Utilizing this TIBRS crime data, offenses flagged as domestic violence for 2021 are included in the report.

I would like to thank all contributing agencies for their hard work and contributions to making this report a thorough and accurate picture of crime in Tennessee. It is only with their support the state continues to maintain such a successful program.

Sincerely,

David B. Rausch  
Director



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The issue of domestic violence is by no means a novel problem in the American society. However, the persistence of domestic violence and the large number of related incidents reported to law enforcement necessitate continued awareness about this issue. In an effort to gain more insight into the problem of domestic violence within the state of Tennessee, this study analyzes recent crime data collected from the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS). Utilizing this TIBRS crime data, offenses flagged as domestic related in 2021 were examined.

## **OVERALL FINDINGS**

Upon initially examining the TIBRS data submitted for domestic violence offenses, several parameters for the study were established. The data included in this study had to meet the following criteria: Crimes Against Persons offense(s); offense(s) flagged by the law enforcement agency as being domestically related; and victim gender could not be reported as Unknown. The total number of domestic violence victims reported in the state for 2021 totaled 67,590. It should be noted that individuals who reported domestic abuse in more than one incident during the study period will be duplicated accordingly in this report's victim count. The majority of these victims were female (71.87%) outnumbering male victims by almost 3 to 1.

An analysis of race breakdown revealed that White victims, the race majority for all offenses, accounted for 55.61% of victims reported in 2021. A total of 7,248 juveniles, or individuals under age eighteen, accounted for 10.73% of all victims. When examining relationship types, domestic violence occurred predominately in Boyfriend/Girlfriend relationships at 42.92%, followed by Spouse at 15.91% in 2021. The most common weapon reported was Personal Weapons (hands, feet, teeth, etc.) at 67,040. A total of 57.97% of domestic violence cases were cleared in 2021.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFFENSES**

Crimes identified as domestically related in TIBRS must always have the victim type of Individual. Crimes Against Society and Crimes Against Property cannot be flagged as domestic violence in TIBRS. There are 17 offenses considered to be Crimes Against Persons. Of these, 12 were included in the study with the five omitted offenses being Negligent Manslaughter, Negligent Vehicular Manslaughter, Justifiable Homicide, Commercial Sex Acts, and Involuntary Servitude. Findings found that from 2020 to 2021, domestic violence offenses decreased 3.47%.

<b>Domestic Violence Offense Type</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Murder	95	98	83
Kidnapping/Abduction	1,288	1,433	1,538
Rape	729	708	684
Sodomy	182	160	147
Sexual Assault W/Object	74	64	91
Fondling	743	725	661
Incest	29	34	12
Statutory Rape	117	117	87
Aggravated Assault	10,639	11,175	11,066
Simple Assault	48,018	46,099	44,154
Intimidation	8,672	8,534	8,054
Stalking	845	871	1,013
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,431</b>	<b>70,018</b>	<b>67,590</b>

<b>Statewide Violent Offense Totals</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Murder	524	692	696
Kidnapping/Abduction	1,904	2,054	2,186
Rape	2,403	2,271	2,299
Sodomy	535	469	439
Sexual Assault W/Object	220	235	282
Fondling	2,744	2,350	2,657
Incest	34	43	25
Statutory Rape	433	423	346
Aggravated Assault	31,631	37,922	38,333
Simple Assault	79,237	73,205	74,281
Intimidation	25,758	24,422	24,948
Stalking	1,619	1,605	1,825
<b>Total</b>	<b>147,042</b>	<b>145,691</b>	<b>148,317</b>

Note: The above chart has been generated from data gathered from the 2021 "Crime in Tennessee" publication.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS**

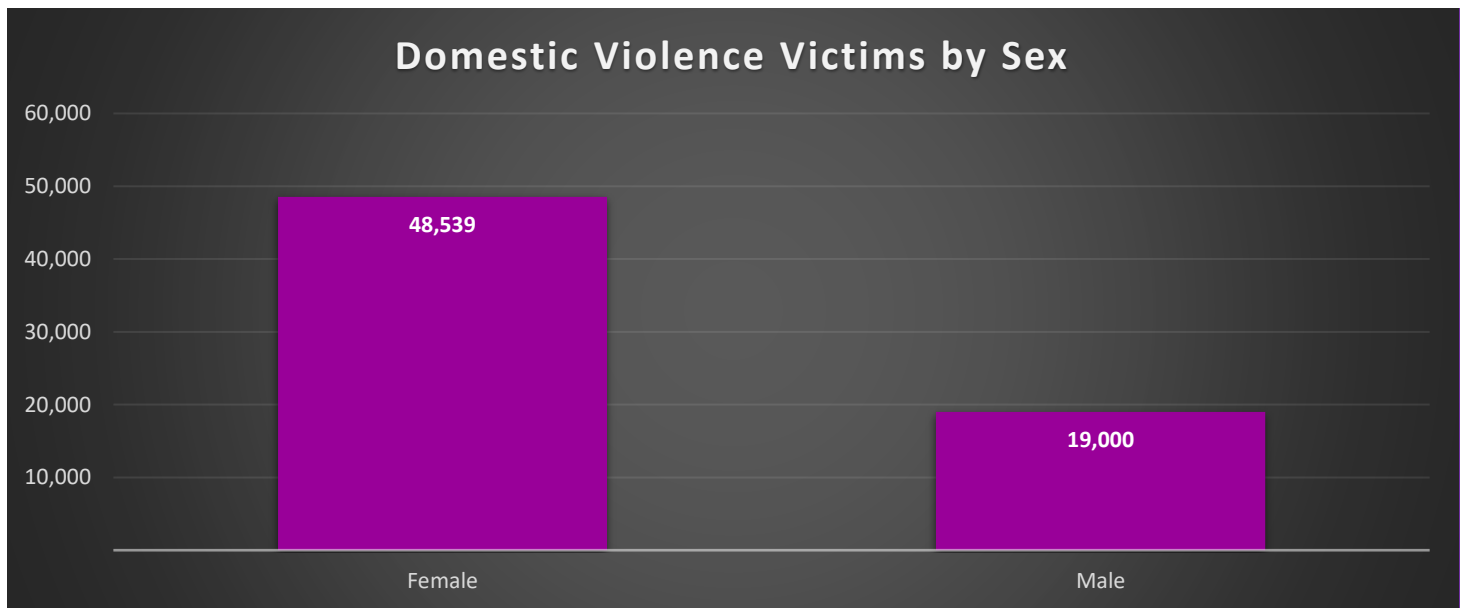
Domestic violence may often be perceived as violence against women. There are numerous agencies nationally and locally which advocate specifically for battered and abused women. The current analyses of domestic offenses in the state of Tennessee support this notion that domestic violence is most often reported as being committed toward a female victim.

## Total Percentage of Victims by Offense

Offense	Female		Male		Unknown		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Murder	54	0.11%	29	0.15%	0	0.00%	83	0.12%
Kidnapping/Abduction	1,096	2.26%	442	2.33%	0	0.00%	1,538	2.28%
Rape	674	1.39%	10	0.05%	0	0.00%	684	1.01%
Sodomy	93	0.19%	54	0.28%	0	0.00%	147	0.22%
Sexual Assault W/Object	88	0.18%	3	0.02%	0	0.00%	91	0.13%
Fondling	577	1.19%	82	0.43%	2	3.92%	661	0.98%
Incest	10	0.02%	2	0.01%	0	0.00%	12	0.02%
Statutory Rape	80	0.16%	7	0.04%	0	0.00%	87	0.13%
Aggravated Assault	7,261	14.96%	3,793	19.96%	12	23.53%	11,066	16.37%
Simple Assault	31,422	64.74%	12,700	66.84%	32	62.75%	44,154	65.33%
Intimidation	6,314	13.01%	1,737	9.14%	3	5.88%	8,054	11.92%
Stalking	870	1.79%	141	0.74%	2	3.92%	1,013	1.50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,539</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>19,000</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>67,590</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Note: Unknown is listed in this table to accurately represent data reported in 2021. The category of unknown will not be listed in other tables or charts throughout this report.

In 2021, a total of 67,590 domestic violence victims were reported to the TIBRS program. Per TIBRS reporting guidelines, up to 10 offenses may be reported per each incident, such as the ones listed in the above table.



Domestic violence victims in 2021 were overwhelmingly Female, accounting for 71.87% of victims of a known sex. This makes up nearly triple the amount of Male victims, who make up 28.13% of domestic violence victims.

## Domestic Violence Victims by Race

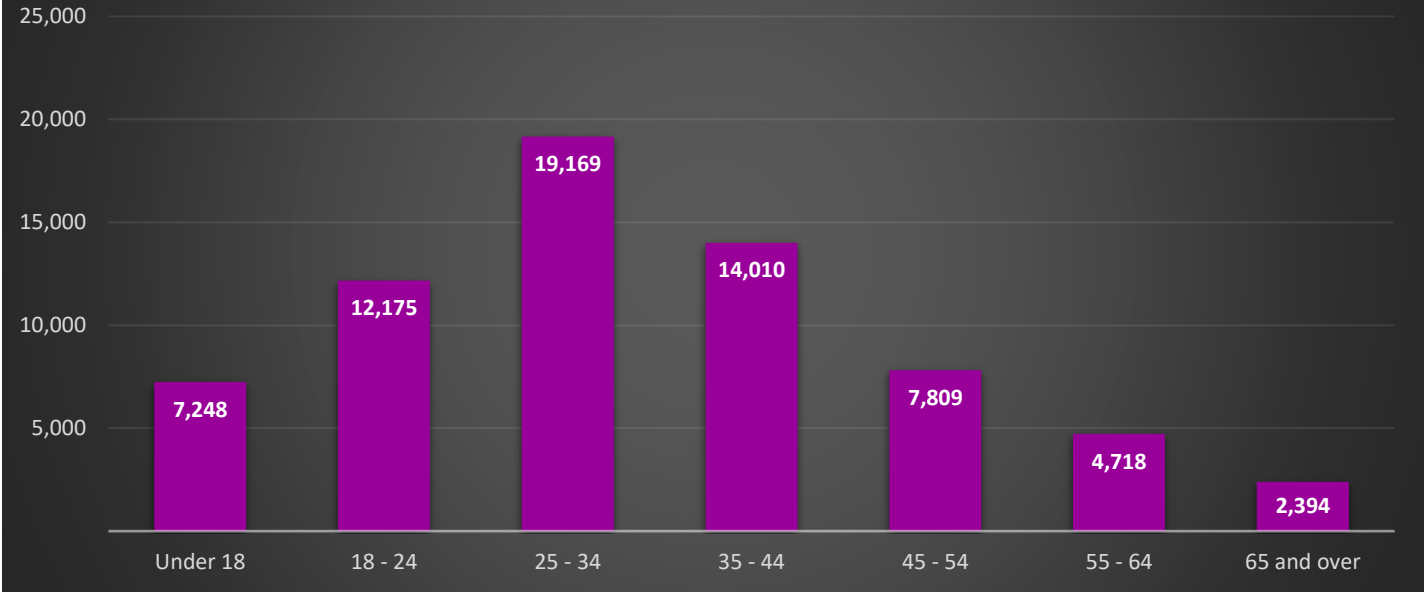


The races of victims of domestic violence in 2021 almost entirely fell into either the category of White or Black or African American, with all other races making up 1.19% of reported victims. Of the groups with a larger portion of reports, White victims made up the slight majority at 55.61% of reported victims and Black or African American provided the remaining 43.19% of victims.

Offense Type	White	Black or African American
Murder	48	34
Kidnapping/Abduction	707	819
Rape	492	180
Sodomy	97	49
Sexual Assault W/Object	62	26
Fondling	446	200
Incest	11	1
Statutory Rape	60	25
Aggravated Assault	5,530	5,433
Simple Assault	25,812	17,766
Intimidation	3,820	4,167
Stalking	505	495

When breaking down different domestic violence offenses between White and Black or African American victims, a few notable details emerge. Firstly, while reported victims categorized as White make up a higher amount of most offenses as would be expected, the opposite is true for Kidnapping/Abduction and Intimidation crimes, where the majority of victims are reported as Black or African American. Furthermore, while the difference in number of crimes follows as would be expected given the racial breakdown illustrated by the above graph, the number of reported victims categorized as White tended to show noticeably higher portion of victims of sex crimes.

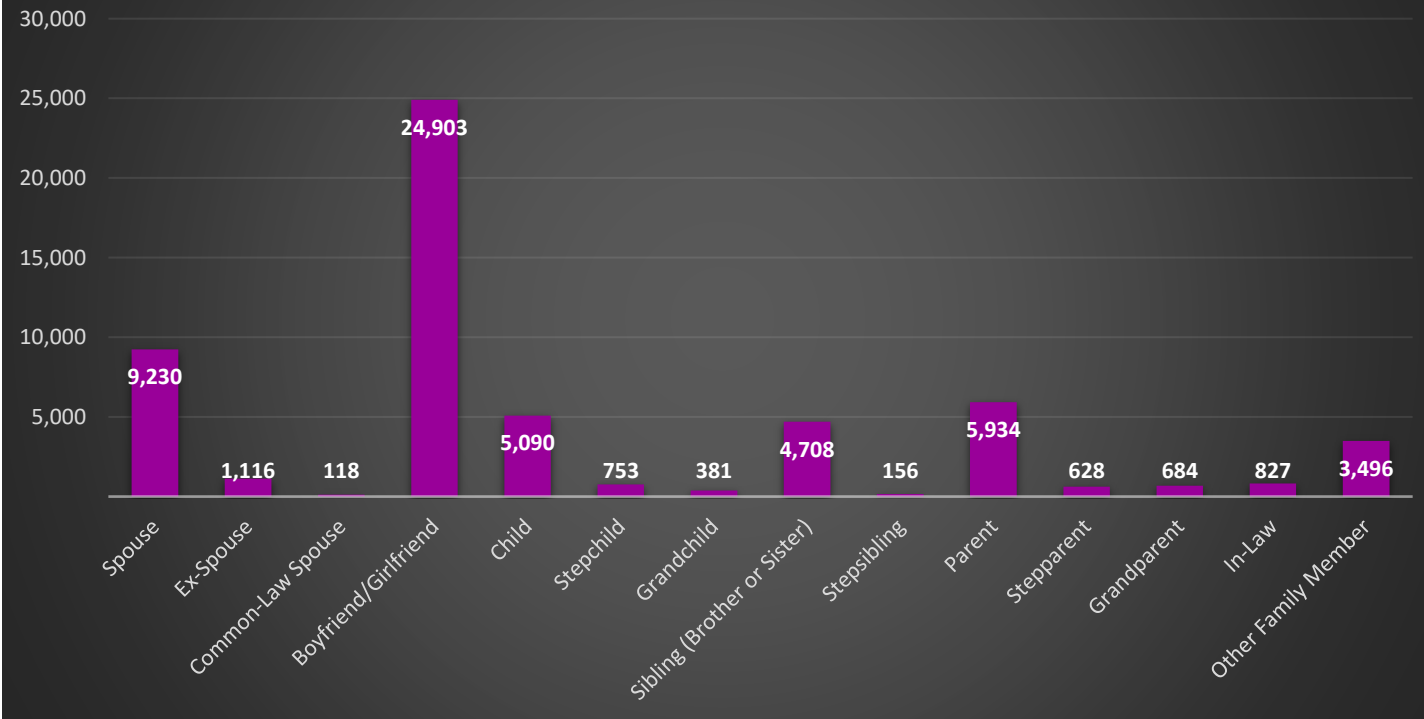
## Domestic Violence Victims by Age



Another facet of reported domestic violence victims examined was to look at them by their age. When examining reported age groups, the peak number of reported victims were in the age range 25-34, accounting for 28.39% of domestic violence victims. After age 34, reported victims taper off until victims aged 65 or older make up the smallest age group at 3.55%.

## VICTIM TO OFFENDER RELATIONSHIPS

### Victim Offender Relationships



When breaking down domestic violence reports by victim offender relationships, the most commonly reported relationship by far is Boyfriend/Girlfriend, constituting nearly half, or 42.92% of reported relationships. Following that, Spouse was the second most reported relationship at 15.91%.

Spouse	2021	%
<b>Male</b>	<b>2,382</b>	
White	1,738	17.01%
Black or African American	644	6.30%
<b>Female</b>	<b>6,722</b>	
White	4,960	48.56%
Black or African American	1,762	17.25%
<b>Ex-Spouse</b>	<b>2021</b>	
<b>Male</b>	<b>287</b>	
White	214	2.09%
Black or African American	73	0.71%
<b>Female</b>	<b>824</b>	
White	594	5.81%
Black or African American	230	2.25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,215</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Note: Due to the racial groups White or Black or African American being reported in the vast majority of cases, other racial groups were not statistically significant enough to be included in the above table.

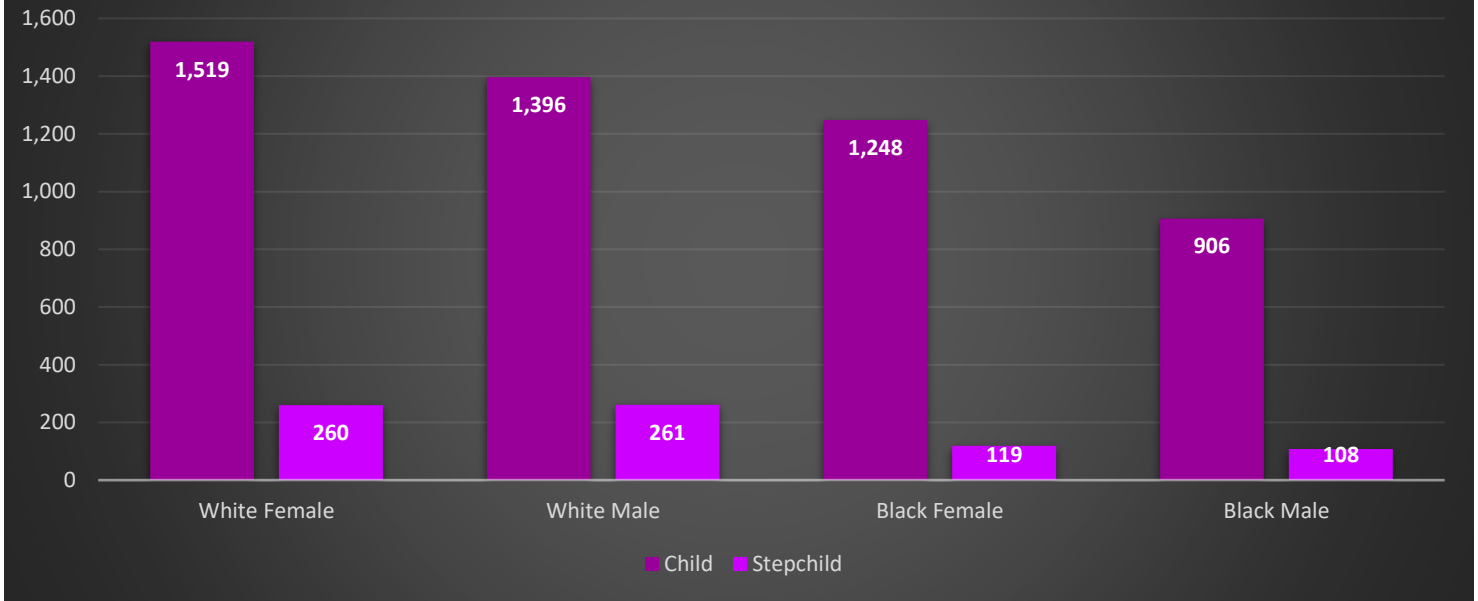
In all Spouse and Ex-Spouse domestic violence incidences, the number of victims reported as White outnumber those reported as Black or African American, with most categories that have reported White victims having nearly 3 times as many reports.



As with the race breakdown in overall domestic violence incidents, White and Black or African American make up the two main groups represented by victims categorized as Boyfriend/Girlfriend, accounting for 99.49% of reported relationships between the two. More specifically, White victims accounted for 52.48% of these victims, with Black or African American victims composing the remaining 47.01%.



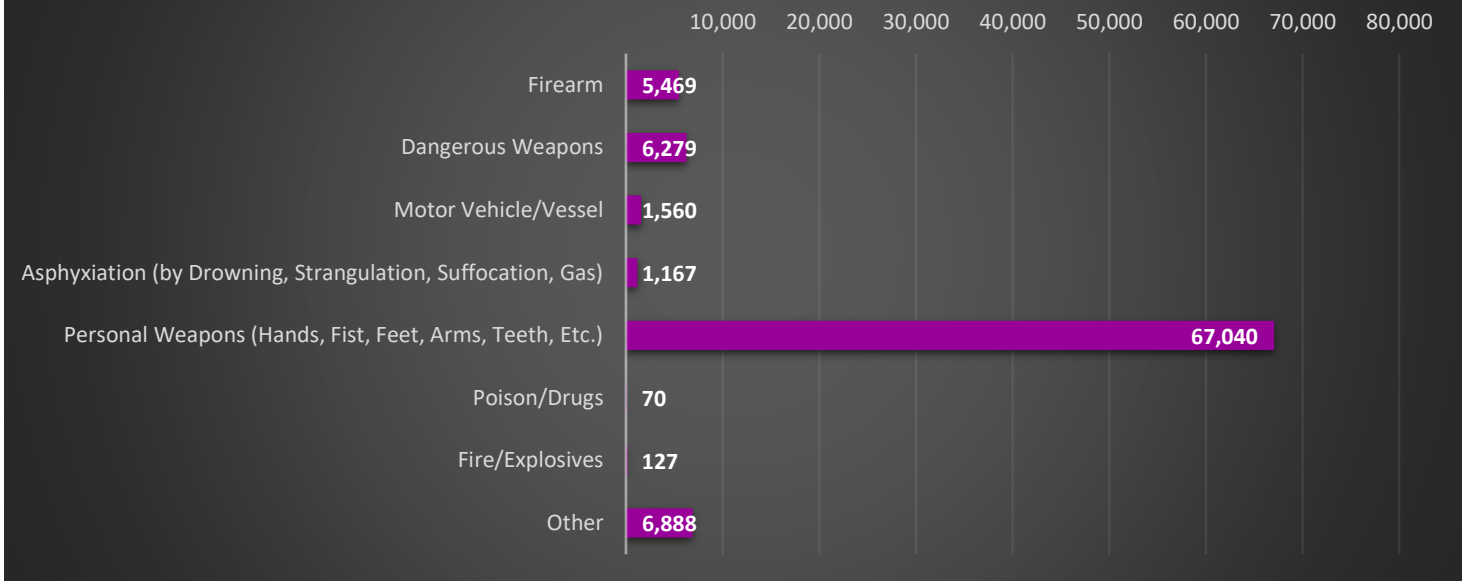
## Child and Stepchild by Race and Gender



Domestic Violence victims categorized Child happened drastically more often than those reported as Stepchild, with the two totaling 5,069 and 748 victims respectively. Despite a lower amount of Black or African American victims when compared to White victims, both show the same general trend of victims within their respective groups.

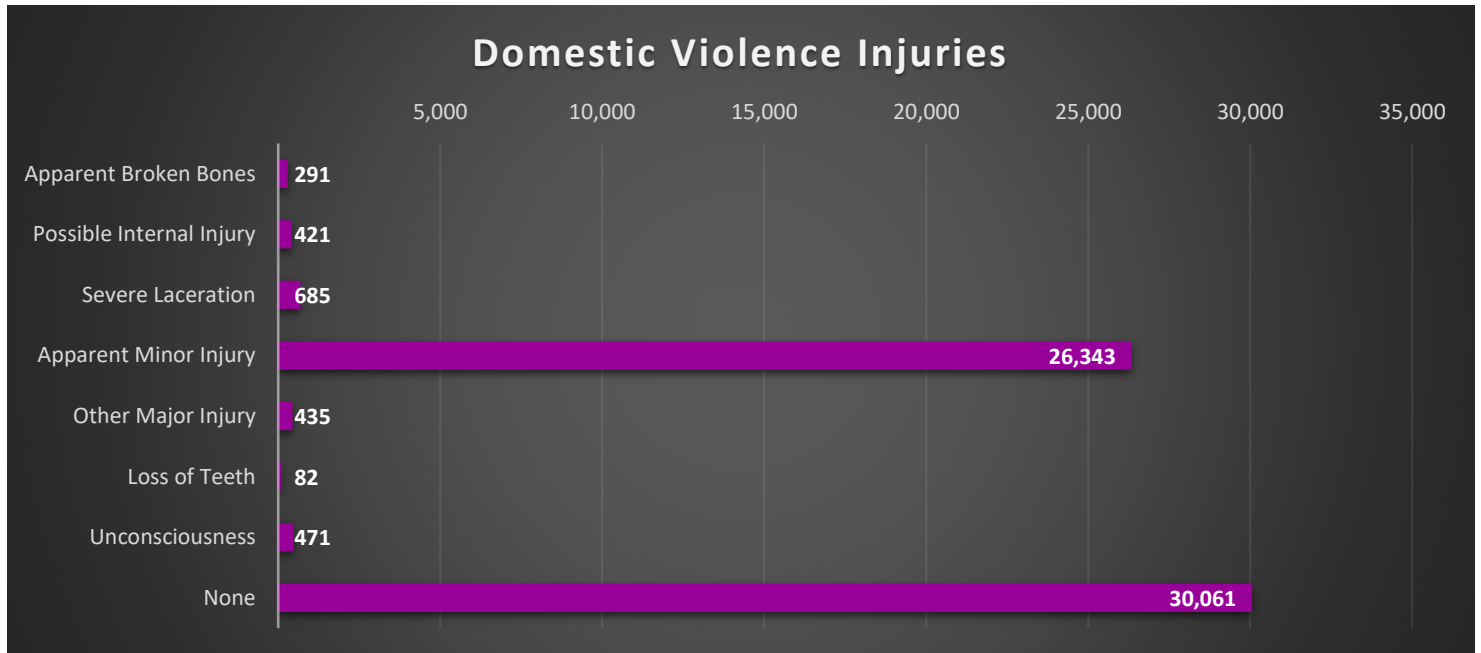
## WEAPONS AND INJURIES

### Domestic Violence Weapons Used



Per TIBRS, up to three weapons may be submitted per offense when reporting weapons used. In 2021, a total of 88,600 weapon types were reported. Unsurprisingly, given the fact that Simple Assault counted for the majority of reported domestic violence offenses, Personal Weapons accounted for the vast majority, at 75.67%

of reported weapon types. The other weapon types with a relatively significant amount of reports were Other, Dangerous Weapons, and Firearms, with 7.77%, 7.09%, and 6.17% of reported weapon types respectively.



When examining reported injuries stemming from Domestic Violence incidents, the most commonly reported category was None, accounting for 51.13% of reported injury types, followed by Apparent Minor Injury at 44.81%. All other categories only made up the remaining 4.06% of reported injuries.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CLEARANCES



Clearing domestic violence incidents can be difficult when considering the compounding factors that contribute to the cooperation of victims and potential witnesses. Because of the very nature of domestic violence and the close interpersonal relationships that exist between the victim and offender, it can be challenging for law enforcement to complete an arrest. Cohabiting domestic violence victims and offenders can present an

obvious challenge in clearing an incident due to victims not cooperating in order to prevent subsequent abuse and turmoil within the household.

In 2021, 57.97% of domestic violence incidents were cleared either by arrest or by exceptional means. In the majority of cases, clearances occurred via arrest with that occurring for 78.67% of cases. When looking at exceptional clearances, the majority of occurrences were categorized as Victim Refused to Cooperate, making up 17.55% of total clearances. As defined by TIBRS, Victim Refused to Cooperate can only clear an incident when the victim has actually stated or made it known to the agency that they refuse to cooperate or pursue prosecution of the offender.

## **SUMMARY**

Findings of the study revealed that the number of domestic incidents decreased 3.47% from 2020 to 2021. Overall, females were roughly three times more likely to be reported as victims than males, and victim Race was most often documented as White (55.61%). Victim demographic information gives insight into which populations are most at-risk for domestic violence in the state. Although the injury type of None (30,061) accounted for the highest reported injury type in 2021, Apparent Minor Injury (26,343) was often reported in Simple Assault cases. TIBRS data supports the fact that women generally have the highest potential for domestic abuse victimization. Local, state, and national agencies across several disciplines, including law enforcement and social and child services avidly oppose domestic violence and advocate for its victims. These various institutions and coalitions battle domestic abuse by providing prevention training, intervention, shelter, and counseling for both victims and potential victims of domestic violence. Hopefully, the current assessment of domestic violence in Tennessee exposes the need for continued and increased efforts in the battle against domestic abuse within our community.



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