

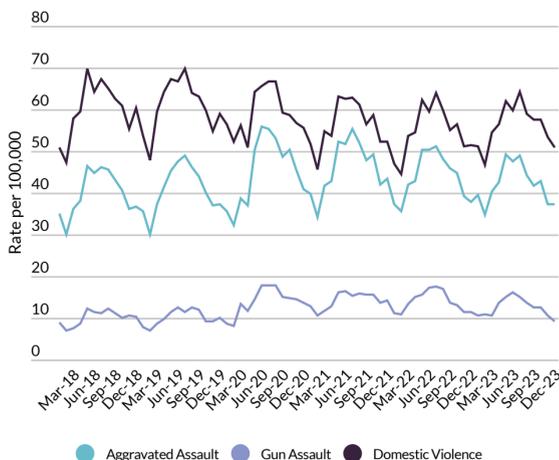
Trends in Assault: What You Need to Know

Assaults are unlawful attacks by one person upon another. Aggravated assaults include the intent to cause a serious injury. Rape and sexual assault are included where noted.

- The rate of aggravated assaults reported to United States law enforcement agencies peaked in 1992, then dropped by 2014 to levels not seen since the mid-1970s.
- In a sample of 25 cities that publish monthly data, the aggravated assault rate fell by 3% from 2022 to 2023 but was 8% higher in 2023 than in 2019, the year before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.
- The majority of reported aggravated assaults involve a weapon, most commonly a firearm.
- Rape, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence have decreased since the early 1990s.
- The adult arrest rate for aggravated assault was more than five times higher than the juvenile rate in 2020; the gap was more than double its size in the 1980s.
- Following the trend seen with other crimes, the clearance rate for aggravated assaults has dropped markedly since the 1960s.

Current Assault Trends in Selected Cities, 2018-2023

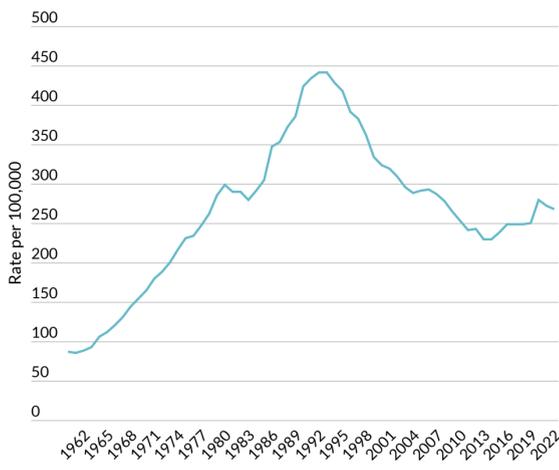
The aggravated assault rate (25 cities) was **8% higher** in 2023 than it was in 2019, while gun assaults (11 cities) were **32% higher** over this same period. Domestic assaults (13 cities) were **6% lower** in 2023 than in 2019. From 2022 to 2023, the aggravated assault rate fell 3%, gun assaults fell 7%, and domestic assaults increased 2%.



Source: Data adapted from [Crime Trends in U.S. Cities: Year-End 2023 Update](#). See the report for the list of cities and sample details.

Aggravated Assault Rates, 1960-2022

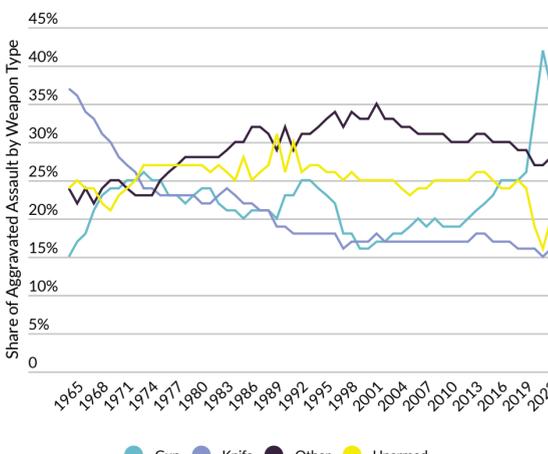
Nationally, the reported aggravated assault rate peaked in 1992 at **442 per 100,000 people**. By 2014, that rate had **dropped 48%** to 229 per 100,000 people, lower than at any point since 1974. The downward trend then reversed, with aggravated assaults rising to a level that was **22% higher** in 2020 than in 2014. This increase was followed by a 4% drop from 2020 to 2022.



Source: 1960-1978: The Disaster Center. (2019). [United States crime rates 1960-2019](#); 1979-2022: Federal Bureau of Investigation. (n.d.). [Crime data explorer](#).

Share of Aggravated Assaults by Weapon Type, 1964-2022

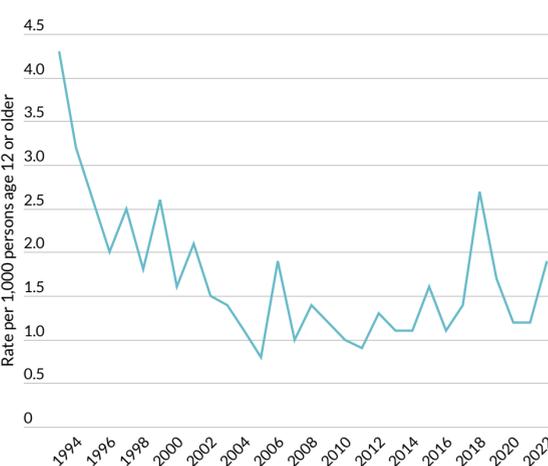
About **75%** of reported aggravated assaults involve a gun, knife, or other weapon. From 1964 to 2022, firearms were involved in about **22%** of aggravated assaults. From 2019 to 2020, the proportion of aggravated assaults involving a firearm **increased 28%**, and increased another 24% from 2020 to 2021. The share of gun assaults **decreased by 12%** from 2021 to 2022 (from 42% to 37%), but it was 67% higher in 2022 than the average share between 1964 and 2022.



Source: Kaplan, Jacob. [Jacob Kaplan's Concatenated Files: Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data: Offenses Known and Clearances by Arrest \(Return A\), 1960-2022](#).

Rape and Sexual Assault, 1993-2022

From 1993 (the first year of available data) to 2005, reported rape and sexual assault **decreased 81%** from a rate of 4.3 per 100,000 to 0.8. The rate stayed below two per 100,000 for most years through 2022. By 2022 the rate was **56% lower** than in 1993.

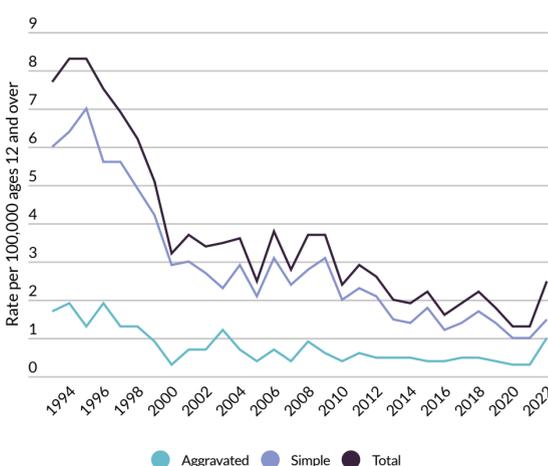


Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. (n.d.). [National crime victimization survey data dashboard \(N-DASH\)](#). See this source for offense and relationship definitions. The trends for rape and sexual assault rely on the National Victimization Survey (NCVS) because the FBI revised its definition of rape in 2013. The NCVS combines rape and sexual assault

Intimate Partner Violence

Violence

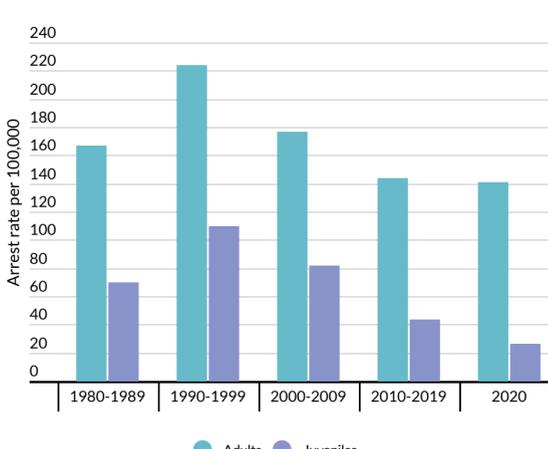
From 1993 to 1995, reported intimate partner violence (e.g., current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends), excluding sexual offenses, **increased 14%** from a rate of 7.7 per 100,000 to 8.3. After this increase, intimate partner violence **dropped 61%** by 2000. By 2021, intimate partner violence was **84% lower** than the 1995 peak. Approximately 79% of intimate partner violence is classified as “simple,” meaning there were no serious physical injuries.



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. (n.d.). [National crime victimization survey data dashboard \(N-DASH\)](#). See this source for offense and relationship definitions.

Aggravated Assault Arrest Rates by Age

In the 1980s, adult aggravated assault arrest rates were **2.4 times** higher than rates for juveniles. During the 1990s, this gap slightly narrowed due to a larger increase in juvenile arrests (+56% compared to +34% for adults). By 2020, the trend reversed and the gap in arrest rates widened, with the adult rate reaching a level **5.4 times higher** than the juvenile rate. Overall, from the 1980s to 2020 the juvenile aggravated assault arrest rate dropped 62%, while the adult arrest rate fell 16%.



National arrest rates are not available from the FBI or OJJDP for 2021-2022. Source: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (n.d.). [Statistical briefing book](#).

Aggravated and Weapon Assault Clearance Rates

Similar to trends in homicide clearance rates, aggravated assault clearance rates **decreased by 37%** from 1964 to 2022, dropping from 66% to 42%. Over this period the gun assault clearance rate **declined 57%** and the clearance rate for assaults committed with a knife or other weapon **decreased 23%**. In 2022, the aggravated assault clearance rate was higher than the clearance rate for robbery (23%) but lower than for homicide (52%).



Source: Kaplan, Jacob. [Jacob Kaplan's Concatenated Files: Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data: Offenses Known and Clearances by Arrest \(Return A\), 1960-2022](#).

*Analyses that use data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System should be viewed with caution due to the low number of reporting agencies. [Click here](#) for additional information.

This brief was prepared for the Council on Criminal Justice Crime Trends Working Group as part of a series examining major crimes as defined by the FBI. It explores relevant data from multiple sources but does not seek to explain the causes of the patterns.