

General Discussion

Injuries were sustained by 32.8 percent of the law enforcement officers assaulted this year. There were 854 assaults with injury reported, for an assault with injury rate of 3.6 per 100 full-time officers. Pittsburgh had the highest assault with injury rate, 12.0 percent; and those jurisdictions with populations of Under 1,000 had the lowest rate, .0 per 100 full-time officers.

Statewide, 94.4 percent of the assaults on police officers were cleared by arrest. Three of the 12 population groups had clearance rates of 95 percent or above.

Clearance rates of 95 percent or more were reported for assaults in three of the 11 categories of police activity.

Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) were employed in 79.6 percent of the assaults on Pennsylvania police officers this year, while 12.6 percent of the assaults were committed with dangerous weapons other than firearms and knives or cutting instruments. Assaults with firearms and knives or other cutting instruments accounted for 6.7 and 1.0 percent of attacks, respectively.

Assaults with other dangerous weapons produced the highest rate of personal injury; 34.5 percent of the officers attacked with these weapons were injured.

This year 34.9 percent of the assaults happened while officers were responding to disturbance calls. This category of police activity, together with officers attempting other arrests,* officers investigating suspicious person or circumstances, and officers engaged in traffic pursuits and stops accounted for the majority of assaults on police officers.

Personal weapons, predominantly, were employed in the assaults during most types of police activity and 78.5 percent of the police officers were assigned to vehicle patrols at the time of assault. Analysis revealed that 32.2 percent of the assaults on officers assigned to two-man vehicles happened while the officers were responding to disturbance calls, while 59.0 percent of assaults on officers assigned to one-man vehicles occurred while they were responding to disturbance calls or attempting other arrests.

This year 29.7 percent of assaults on officers or detectives on special assignment took place while they were attempting other arrests, and 25.8 percent of assaults on officers on other assignments occurred when they were handling, transporting, or in custody of prisoners.

Most assaults on police officers occurred in May (257), while the fewest occurred in October (185).

This year 51.2 percent of the reported assaults on police officers were committed between the hours of 6:01 p.m. and 2:00 a.m., while 24.4 percent occurred during the 4-hour period between 8:01 p.m. and midnight. Only 2.8 percent of the assaults were reported between 6:01 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.

* At the time of assaults, the officer was making or attempting to make an arrest for an offense other than disturbance call, burglary, robbery, civil disorder, or traffic.