

# Mass Casualty Shootings

Mass casualty shootings are rare compared to other forms of homicide; however, due to extensive media and policy attention, as well as the number of people affected by each event, they are an important subset of crime.\* Measuring mass casualty shootings is complicated by the absence of a commonly recognized definition. Federal agencies define a mass casualty shooting as the murder of three or more individuals. Due to the rarity of these events, federal agencies do not collect data on mass shootings, but they do collect data on “active shooters.” Active shooter incidents are defined as incidents where “one or more individuals actively engage in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area.”<sup>A</sup> This definition does not include gang- or drug-related incidents, the accidental discharge of a firearm, or family- and intimate partner-related shootings. A majority of mass casualty research only accounts for people physically injured or killed, and discounts individuals who witnessed the shooting or were threatened by the shooter, even though they often experience psychological trauma as well.

## Active Shooter Trends

The number of annual active shooter incidents has **increased dramatically** over the past 15 years, from 1 incident in 2000 to 20 in 2015. In addition, the number of people killed or injured annually in active shooter incidents has increased by more than 100%, from 7 in 2000 to 134 in 2015.<sup>A,B</sup>

Active Shooter Incidents and Total Killed or Injured<sup>A,B</sup>



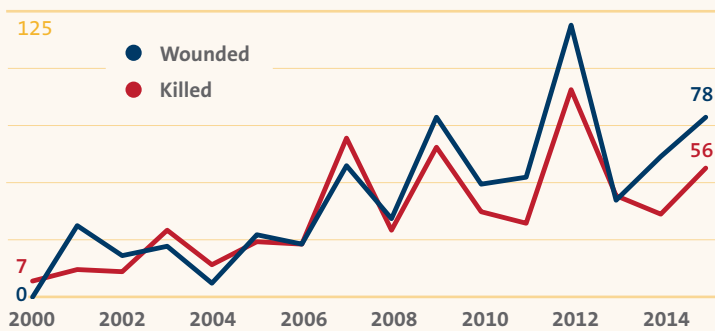
### Did You Know?

In 2012, **less than 1%** of gun murder victims were killed in a mass shooting.<sup>C</sup>

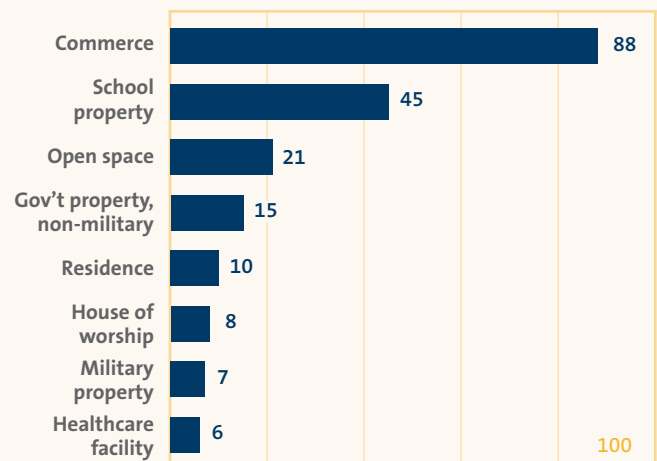
**71%** of mass shooting incidents occur in a **residence**.<sup>C</sup>

The largest proportion of active shooter incidents (44%) occurs in areas of commerce, including businesses both open and closed to the public. Generally, 23% of active shooter incidents occur at schools, including colleges and universities; and 11% of active shooter incidents occur in open spaces, including public streets, open parking lots, and parks.<sup>A,B</sup>

Active Shooter Incidents<sup>A,B</sup>  
by number killed or wounded



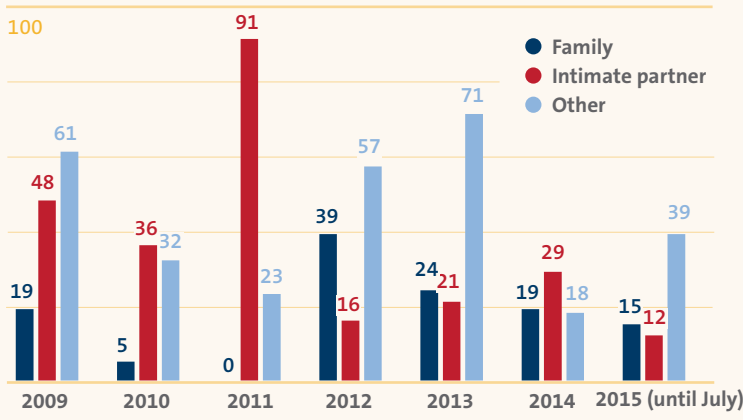
Number of Active Shooter Incidents<sup>A,B</sup>  
by type of location from 2000–2015



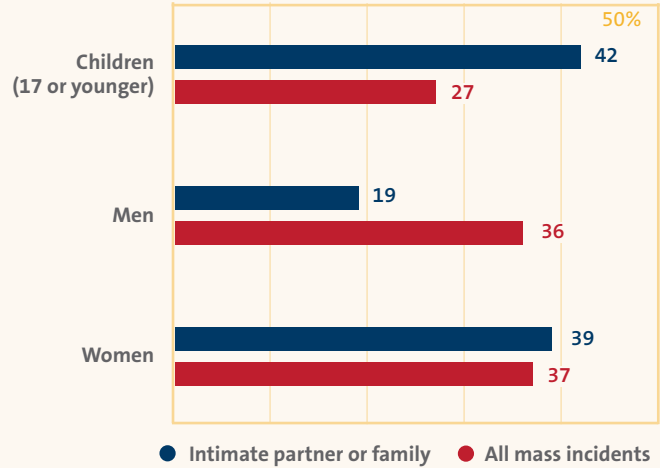
# Current Data on Mass Casualty Shootings

**Everytown for Gun Safety**, an organization that works around the United States to prevent gun violence, defines a mass shooting as an incident where **four or more people** (excluding the shooter) are murdered with a firearm, including incidents where the perpetrator shot an intimate partner or a family member.<sup>C</sup> **More than half of mass shootings** between January 2009 and July 2015 involved a shooter who killed a current or former **intimate partner or another family member**. Adult women and children under the age of 17 are the most frequent victims of intimate partner or family shooting incidents, though men and women are equally victimized when accounting for all mass shootings.<sup>E</sup>

**Mass Shooting Fatalities<sup>C,E</sup>**  
by type of shooting event

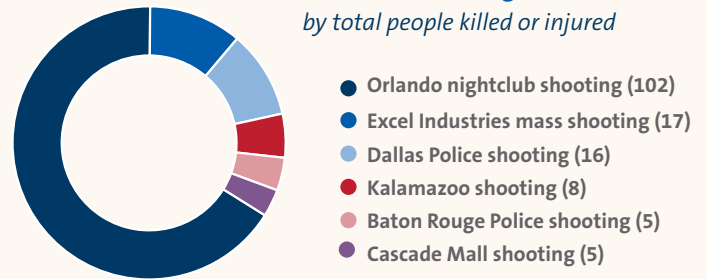


**Gender and Age of Victims<sup>E</sup>**  
mass shooting events 2009–July 2015

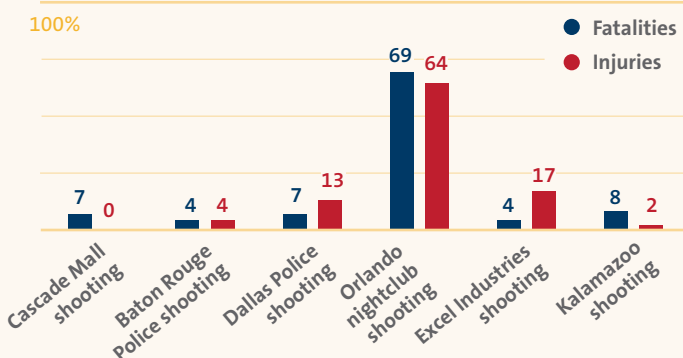


**Mother Jones**, a nonprofit investigative news organization, defines a mass shooting as any incident in which **three or more people** (besides the shooter) are killed, excluding shootings originating with armed robbery, gang violence, and intimate partner or family violence. As of November, there were **6 mass shooting incidents in 2016**, resulting in the deaths of 71 people and injuring 83. On June 12, 2016, 49 people were killed and 53 people were injured at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, the largest mass shooting in United States history. Many of those present inside the nightclub were part of the LGBT community, and many were Latinx, highlighting the need for culturally specific services following mass casualty shooting incidents.<sup>D</sup>

**2016 Mass Shooting Incidents<sup>D</sup>**  
by total people killed or injured



**Persons Killed or Injured in a Mass Shooting Incident<sup>D</sup>**  
by 2016 incident



**\*NOTE:** While mass casualty events besides shootings do occur, they are even more rare than mass shootings and are not consistently counted by a majority of tracking agencies.

## SOURCES

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- B Katherine W. Schweit, *Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2014 and 2015*, (FBI, 2016), [https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/activeshooterincidentsus\\_2014-2015.pdf/view](https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/activeshooterincidentsus_2014-2015.pdf/view)
- C Everytown for Gun Safety, *Analysis of Recent Mass Shootings*, (2016), <https://everytownresearch.org/documents/2015/09/analysis-mass-shootings.pdf>; *Appendix*, <http://everytownresearch.org/documents/2015/10/mass-shootings-analysis-appendix.pdf>
- D Mother Jones, "U.S. Mass Shootings, 1982-2016," (2016), [www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data](http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data)
- E Melissa Jeltsen, "We're Missing the Big Picture on Mass Shootings," *Huffington Post* (Sept. 15, 2015), [www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/mass-shootings-domestic-violence-women\\_us\\_55d3806ce4b07addcb44542a](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/mass-shootings-domestic-violence-women_us_55d3806ce4b07addcb44542a)