



Mass Casualty Shootings

Mass casualty events—**mass shootings, bombings, or other crimes with multiple fatalities**—receive extensive media and policy attention due to the number of victims and the impact on their communities. While many agencies and organizations record and publish information on mass casualty events, measuring and reporting on these crimes is complicated by the absence of a commonly recognized definition. **Mass casualty events continue to increase in both number and scope.**

DEFINING MASS CASUALTY SHOOTINGS

In the United States, **mass shootings** are the most common and most closely tracked type of mass casualty event. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) defines mass shootings as events where more than four people are killed with a firearm “within one event, and in one or more locations in close proximity.” Congress uses the term “**mass killings**” and describes these events as “three or more killings in a single incident.” The FBI uses the term “**Active Shooter**,” which it defines as “an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area.” Non-governmental organizations, including Mother Jones, USA Today, and the Stanford Mass Shootings in America (MSA) data project, use various combinations of these definitions.

The decision to include **gang- or drug-related incidents**, the **accidental discharge** of a firearm, or **family- and intimate partner-related shootings** further complicates the definition of a mass shooting. Mother Jones, the FBI, CRS, the MSA, and Congress do not include these incidents in their definitions, while USA Today does.¹

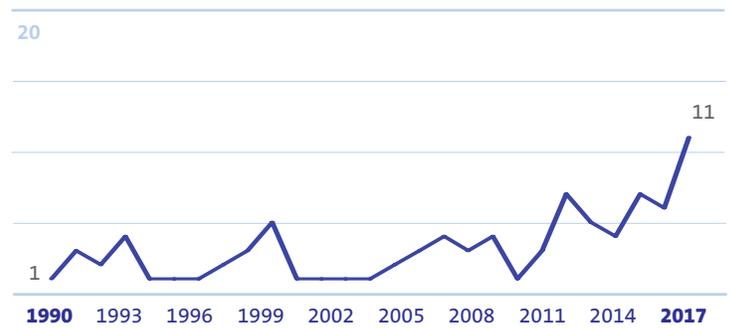
CRIME TRENDS

Since 1990, there have been **87 recorded mass shootings** in the United States. This count from Mother Jones defines a mass shooting as:

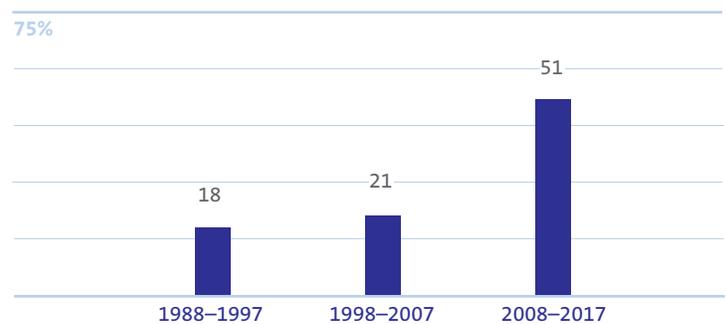
- a shooting incident occurring in a **public place** with a firearm,
- where the motive “appeared to be **indiscriminate killing**,” and
- where a lone shooter took the lives of **at least three people** (not including the shooter).²

The number of mass shootings occurring in the past ten years is **2.4x greater** than the decade prior (1998 to 2007). In fact, **more than half (57%) of all recorded mass shootings occurred within the past 10 years.**

Mass Shooting Events by Year

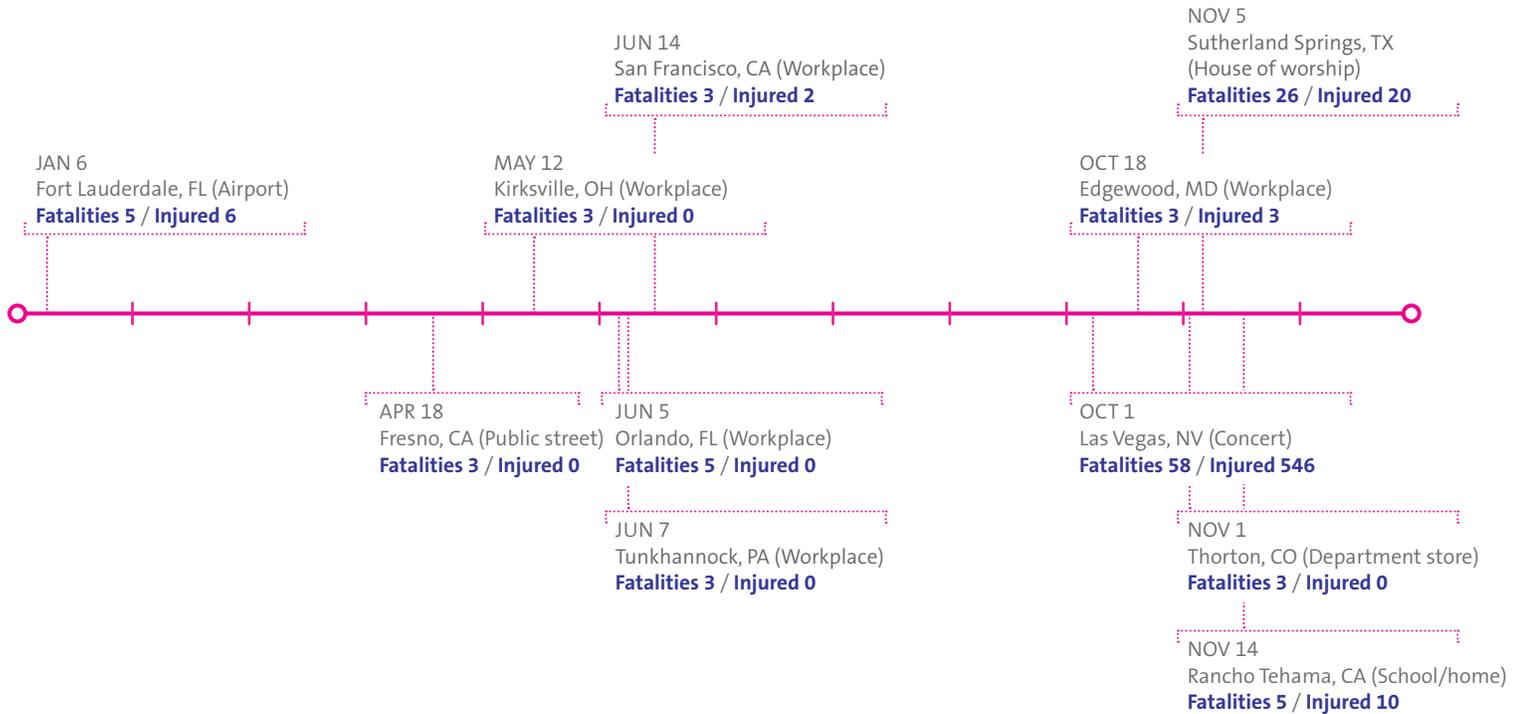


Mass Shootings by Decade



CURRENT DATA ON MASS SHOOTINGS

There were **11 mass shootings in 2017**, more than in any other year in recorded history. Of all recorded shootings occurring in 2017, there were **117 fatalities** and **587 casualties**. Almost 50% of all fatalities and more than 90% of casualties occurred on October 1, 2017, at a music festival in Las Vegas where a gunman opened fire on the crowd. Below is a brief timeline of each shooting that occurred in 2017.



DID YOU KNOW?

For more information on the methodologies and data collection methods for mass shootings or active shooter events, please see these additional resources:

- The Congressional Research Service recorded **66 mass public shootings** between 1999 and 2013.
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation Active Shooting database recorded **220 active shooter incidents** between 2000 and 2016.
- The Mass Shootings in America project by Stanford University recorded **279 mass shootings** between 1990 and April 29, 2016.
- “Behind the Bloodshed, The Untold Story of America’s Mass Killings” by *USA Today* recorded **58 mass public shootings** between 2006 and 2017.

NOTES

- 1 How mass shootings are defined greatly influences the number tracked. For example, USA Today recorded more than 350 mass shootings between 2006 and 2017, while Mother Jones has recorded 95 since 1982. This fact sheet presents data published by Mother Jones, as it is kept current and most closely follows the federal agency definitions.
- 2 Until 2013, the fatality threshold was 4 or greater.

SOURCES

- A J. Pete Blair and Katherine W. Schweit, *A Study of Active Shooter Incidents, 2000-2013*, (Texas State University, FBI, 2014), www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-study-2000-2013-1.pdf/view
- B Katherine W. Schweit, *Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2014 and 2015*, (FBI, 2016), 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
- 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