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State of North Dakota
Office of the Attorney General
Bureau of Criminal Investigation

Criminal Justice Statistics Special Report

Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted North Dakota, 1990

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"Assault on a law enforcement officer" is defined as an unlawful attack by a person upon a sworn officer which resulted in serious injury or in which a weapon was used which could have caused serious injury or death. Assaults not causing injury are included if they involve more than verbal abuse or minor resistance to arrest.

Law enforcement agencies throughout the state of North Dakota which participate in the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program reported a total of 23 assaults upon law enforcement officers in 1990. This results in a law enforcement officer assault rate of 2.4 per 100 officers. There were no officers killed in the line of duty in North Dakota in 1990.

The UCR program collects information on the type of activity the law enforcement officer was engaged in when the assault occurred, the type of weapon used in the assault, the officer's type of assignment, whether the officer sustained injuries, and the time when the assault occurred. The information collected by the UCR program is summarized in this report.

It is uncertain whether there were more than the 23 reported assaults on law enforcement officers in 1990. Since many of the small police departments in the state do not report to the UCR program, it is reasonable to assume that some assaults may have gone unreported. It is also possible that some law enforcement officers in the agencies which do report to the UCR program may feel that the abusive treatment that they receive from time to time is "just part of the job" and did not report some of the incidents which could be classified as assaults.

Table I
Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted
by Type of Activity and Type of Weapon
North Dakota, 1990

Type of Activity	Firearm	Knife or Other Cutting Instrument	Other Dangerous Weapon	Hands, Fists, Feet, Etc.	Total Assaults
Responding to disturbance calls (family quarrels, man with gun, etc.)				9	9
Burglary in progress or pursuing burglary suspects					
Robberies in progress or pursuing robbery suspects					
Attempting other arrests				1	1
Civil disorder (riots, mass disobedience)				1	1
Handling, transporting, custody of prisoners				2	2
Investigating suspicious persons or circumstances					
Ambush - no warning		1			1
Mentally deranged				1	1
Traffic pursuits and stops				5	5
All other				3	3
TOTAL		1		22	23

Table I indicates that the primary weapons used in assaults of law enforcement officers were "personal weapons" -- hands, fists, and feet, etc. Personal weapons were used in 22, or 96 percent, of the 23 assaults reported. One assault with a knife was reported.

Thirty-nine percent, or 9, of the reported assaults occurred in responding to disturbance calls. Five assaults occurred during traffic pursuits and stops.

Eighty-seven percent of the officers assaulted sustained personal injury. (See Table II.) Of the 22 officers assaulted with personal weapons, 19 sustained personal injury.

Table III on page 3 presents the type of assignment and type of activity the law enforcement officers were engaged in when the assaults occurred. In 11 of the 23 assaults, officers were assigned to a one-person vehicle. Eight of these were alone and 3 were assisted.

Table II
Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted
by Presence/Absence of Injury and Type of Weapon
North Dakota, 1990

	Assaults	% of Total	Firearm	Knife or Other Cutting Instrument	Other Dangerous Weapon	Hands, Fists, Feet, etc.
Number with personal injury	20	87%		1		19
Number without personal injury	3	13%				3
TOTAL	23	100%		1		22

Table III
Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted
by Type of Activity and Assignment
North Dakota, 1990

Type of Activity	Two-Person Vehicle	One-Person Vehicle		Detective or Special Assignment		Other		Assault Total
		Alone	Assist	Alone	Assist	Alone	Assist	
Responding to disturbance calls (family quarrels, man with gun, etc.)	5	2	1				1	9
Burglary in progress or pursuing burglary suspects								
Robberies in progress or pursuing robbery suspects								
Attempting other arrests	1							1
Civil disorder (riots, mass disobedience)		1						1
Handling, transporting, custody of prisoners				1			1	2
Investigating suspicious persons or circumstances								
Ambush - no warning						1		1
Mentally deranged		1						1
Traffic pursuits and stops		3	2					5
All other	1	1					1	3
TOTAL	7	8	3	1		1	3	23

Table IV
Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted
by Type of Activity, Agency, Weapon and Assignment
North Dakota, 1990

Type of Activity	Type of Agency	Type of Weapon				Total Assaults	Type of Assignment								
		Firearm	Knife or Other Cutting Instrument	Other Dang. Weapons	Hands, Fists, Feet, etc.		Two-Person Vehicle		One-Person Vehicle		Detective or Special Assignment		Other		
							Alone	Assisted	Alone	Assisted	Alone	Assisted	Alone	Assisted	
Responding to disturbance calls (family quarrels, man with gun, etc)	City				5	5	1		2	1					1
	County				4	4	4								
Burglaries in progress or pursuing burglary suspects	City														
	County														
Robberies in progress or pursuing robbery suspects	City														
	County														
Attempting other arrests	City														
	County				1	1	1								
Civil disorder (riot, mass disobedience)	City														
	County				1	1		1							
Handling, transporting, custody of prisoners	City														
	County				2	2					1				1
Investigating suspicious persons or circumstances	City														
	County														
Ambush - no warning	City		1			1								1	
	County														
Mentally deranged	City				1	1		1							
	County														
Traffic pursuits and stops	City				4	4		2	2						
	County				1	1		1							
All other	City				2	2	1	1							
	County				1	1									1
TOTAL	City		1		12	13	2	6	3					1	1
	County				10	10	5	2		1					2

Assaults on officers reported by county sheriff's departments and those reported by city police departments are presented in Table IV. Thirteen, or 57 percent, of the 23 assaults were reported by city police departments.

Forty-eight percent of all assaults reported occurred between the hours of 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. See Table V for a breakdown of reported assaults by time of assault and agency type.

Table VI presents the assaults by type of activity and time of assault.

Table V
Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted
by Time and Agency Type
North Dakota, 1990

Time	City	County	Total
12:01 AM - 2:00 AM	7		7
2:01 AM - 4:00 AM	1		1
4:01 AM - 6:00 AM			
6:01 AM - 8:00 AM			
8:01 AM - 10:00 AM		1	1
10:01 AM TO 12:00 NOON	1		1
12:01 PM - 2:00 PM		1	1
2:01 PM - 4:00 PM			
4:01 PM - 6:00 PM		1	1
6:01 PM - 8:00 PM	1		1
8:01 PM - 10:00 PM	1	5	6
10:01 PM - 12:00 MIDNIGHT	2	2	4
Total	13	10	23

Table VI
Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted
by Type of Activity and Time of Assault
North Dakota, 1990

Type of Activity	A.M.						P.M.						Total
	12:01 2:00	2:01 4:00	4:01 6:00	6:01 8:00	8:01 10:00	10:01 12:00	12:01 2:00	2:01 4:00	4:01 6:00	6:01 8:00	8:01 10:00	10:01 12:00	
Responding to disturbance calls (family quarrels, man with gun, etc.)	2					1					5	1	9
Burglaries in progress or pursuing burglary suspects													
Robberies in progress or pursuing robbery suspects													
Attempting other arrests					1								1
Civil disorder (riot, mass disobedience)												1	1
Handling, transporting, custody of prisoners							1				1		2
Investigating suspicious persons or circumstances													
Ambush - no warning	1												1
Mentally deranged										1			1
Traffic pursuits and stops	3											2	5
All other	1	1							1				3
Total	7	1			1	1	1		1	1	6	4	23

Table VII
Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted
by Reporting Agency and Type of Weapon
North Dakota, 1990

Reporting Agency	Firearm	Knife or Other Cutting Instrument	Other Dangerous Weapon	Hands, Fists, Feet, etc.	Assault Total
Barnes Co. SO				1	1
Bismarck PD				5	5
Burleigh SO				2	2
Cass SO				1	1
Grafton PD				2	2
Jamestown PD				2	2
Stutsman SO				4	4
UND PD		1			1
Ward SO				1	1
West Fargo PD				3	3
Williams SO				1	1
TOTAL		1		22	23

Table VII lists officer assaults by UCR reporting agency and type of weapon used. Bismarck Police Department reported the most assaults with 5 and the Stutsman County Sheriff's Office reported 4 assaults in 1990.

Table VIII is a breakdown of assaults by agency and month in which the assault occurred. Five of the 23 assaults occurred in June and 4 occurred in February. The numbers involved are too small to determine whether any period during the year is more risky in terms of officer assaults.

Table VIII
Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted
by Reporting Agency and Month
North Dakota, 1990

Reporting Agency	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Barnes Co. SO							1						1
Bismarck PD		1					1	1			2		5
Burleigh SO		1							1				2
Cass SO										1			1
Grafton PD					1			1					2
Jamestown PD								1	1				2
Stutsman Co. SO						4							4
UND PD		1											1
Ward SO	1												1
West Fargo PD		1	1			1							3
Williams SO			1										1
TOTAL	1	4	2		1	5	2	3	2	1	2		23

Table IX represents the assault totals by type of activity for the period 1980-1990. Figure I presents the yearly assault totals graphically. The number of reported assaults on officers, at times, has varied substantially from one year to the next. The greatest fluctuation was an increase of approximately 59 percent from 1985 to 1986. The same number of assaults were reported in 1989 and 1990.

Table IX
Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted
by Type of Activity
North Dakota, 1980-1990

Type of Activity	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Responding to disturbance calls (family quarrels, man with gun, etc.)	7 13.7%	4 8.0%	15 35.7%	6 20.7%	10 23.8%	6 20.7%	11 23.8%	14 35.9%	4 16.7%	6 26.1%	9 39.1%
Burglaries in progress or pursuing burglary suspects	1 2.0%			2 6.9%	3 7.1%		1 2.2%				
Robberies in progress or pursuing robbery suspects		2 4.0%						1 2.6%			
Attempting other arrests	6 11.8%	5 10.0%	9 21.4%	11 37.9%	4 9.5%	7 24.1%	13 28.3%	6 15.4%	3 12.5%	6 26.1%	1 4.4%
Civil disorder (riots, mass disobedience)	6 11.8%	3 6.0%	1 2.4%		1 2.4%						1 4.4%
Handling, transporting, custody of prisoners	6 11.8%	10 20.0%	4 9.5%	4 13.8%	6 14.3%	4 13.8%	8 17.4%	6 15.4%	6 25.0%	2 8.7%	2 8.7%
Investigating suspicious persons or circumstances	8 15.7%	4 8.0%	3 7.1%	1 3.5%	3 7.1%	3 10.3%	3 6.5%		2 8.3%		
Ambush - no warning	1 2.0%	1 2.0%	2 4.8%							2 8.7%	1 4.4%
Mentally deranged		3 6.0%	1 2.4%	1 3.5%				2 5.1%	1 4.2%	2 8.7%	1 4.4%
Traffic pursuits and stops	12 23.5%	10 20.0%	5 11.9%	3 10.3%	8 19.1%	6 20.7%	10 21.7%	8 20.5%	5 20.8%	4 17.4%	5 21.7%
All other	4 7.8%	8 16.0%	2 4.8%	1 3.5%	7 16.7%	3 10.3%		2 5.1%	3 12.5%	1 4.3%	3 13.0%
TOTAL	51	50	42	29	42	29	46	39	24	23	23

Law Enforcement Officers Assaulted
1980 - 1990

