Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Criminal Justice Services
Jackson Miller, Director

Criminal Justice Research Center

Assault & Murder Trends – Quarterly Update

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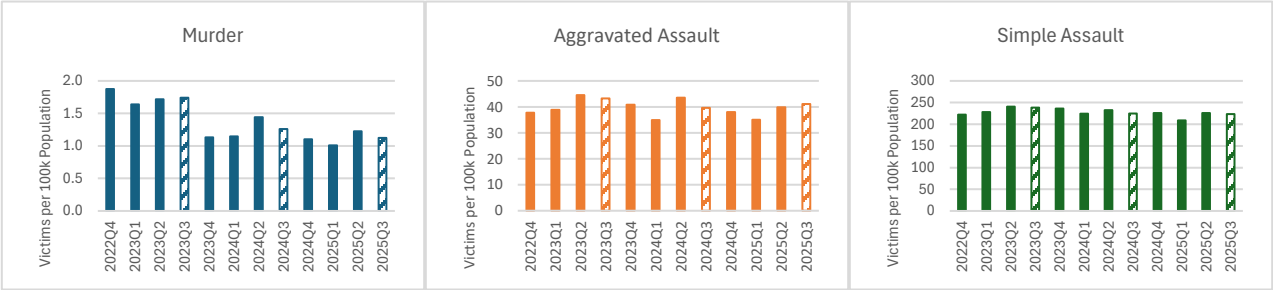
Violent attacks can be minor enough to be categorized as misdemeanor-level simple assaults, or so serious that they cause the death of the victim and are categorized as murder. There are similarities and differences in the trends for simple assaults, aggravated assaults, and murder. This report compares these trends, both annually and quarterly, using data through the third quarter (July-September) of CY2025.

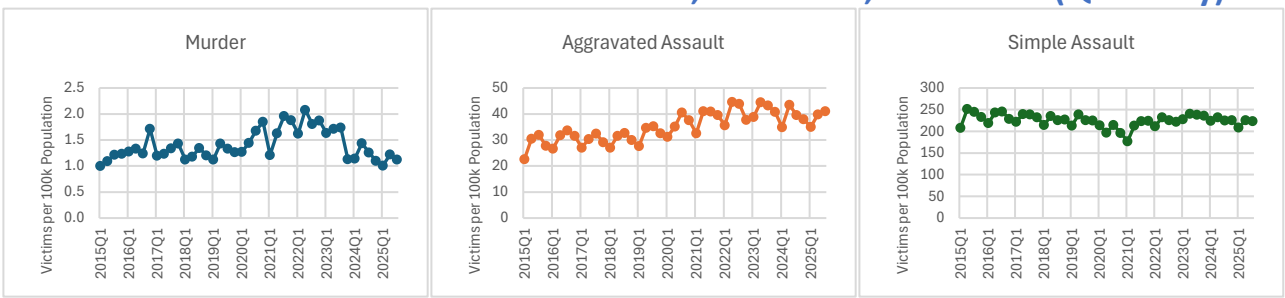
Data for the report were retrieved from the Virginia State Police's Virginia Crime Repository on December 29, 2025. The repository receives daily updates, which may include incidents from 2025Q3 and previous quarters. Updated data are available to the public via the repository's website at https://va.beyond2020.com/. Please note that the repository's category of "murder/nonnegligent manslaughter" appears here as simply "murder."

Third Quarter Victimization Rates, Statewide, 2022-2025



- The murder victimization rate for 2025Q3 (1.1 per 100,000 population) was 8% lower than 2025Q2 and 11% lower than 2024Q3.
- The aggravated assault victimization rate for 2025Q3 (41.1 per 100,000) was 3% higher than 2025Q2 and 4% higher than 2024Q3.
- The simple assault victimization rate for 2025Q3 (223.5 per 100,000) was 1% lower than 2025Q2 and 1% lower than 2024Q3.

Seasonal Variation in Victimization Rates, Statewide, 2015-2025 (Quarterly)



- Victimization rates increase between Q2 and Q3 in some years and decrease in others without a strong tendency towards one direction.
- Otherwise, victimization rates for all three offenses have a strong tendency to drop between Q4 and Q1 and rise between Q1 and Q2. Aggravated assault and simple assault victimization rates also tend to fall between Q3 and Q4, whereas the murder victimization rate does not show a clear tendency for that transition.

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Data Source: Virginia State Police, Virginia Crime Repository, https://va.beyond2020.com/
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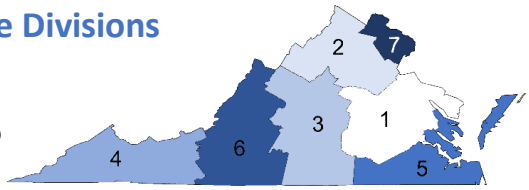
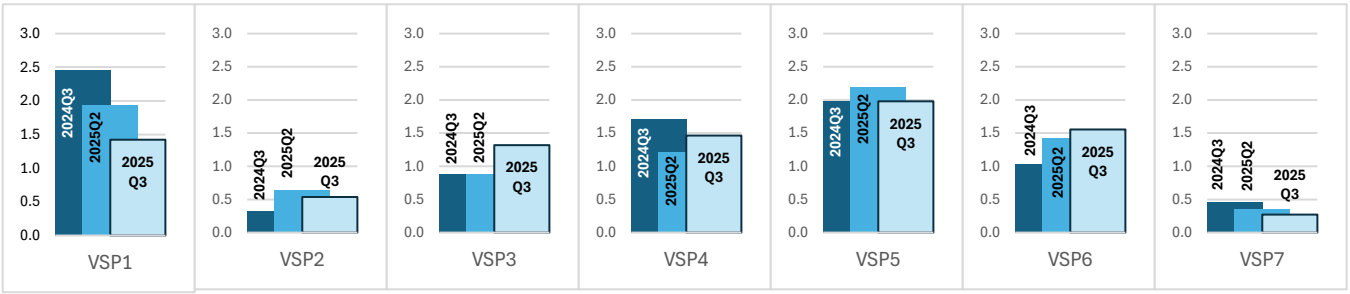
Regional Victimization Rates, Virginia State Police Divisions Change After One Quarter and One Year



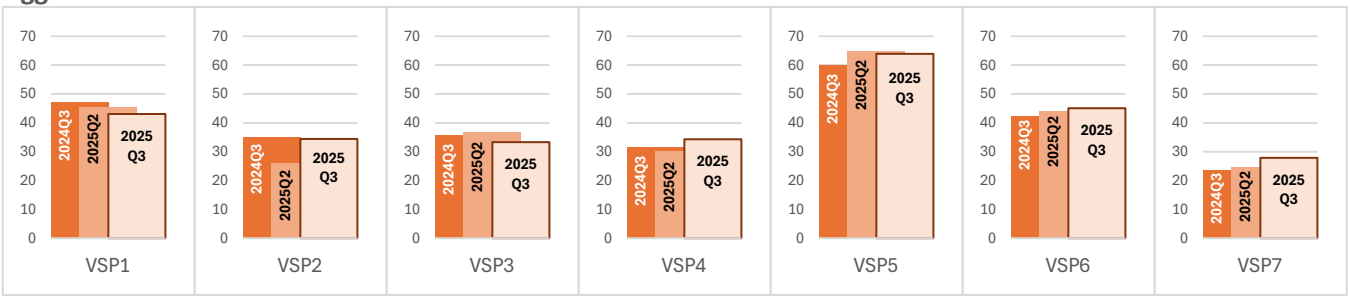
The charts below compare the murder and assault rates in 2025Q3 to 2025Q2 and 2024Q3 for each of the seven Virginia State Police (VSP) Divisions (see map). Note that quarterly rates are lower than annual rates, as they are measured against the same population estimate but for only a quarter of the year.

Murder



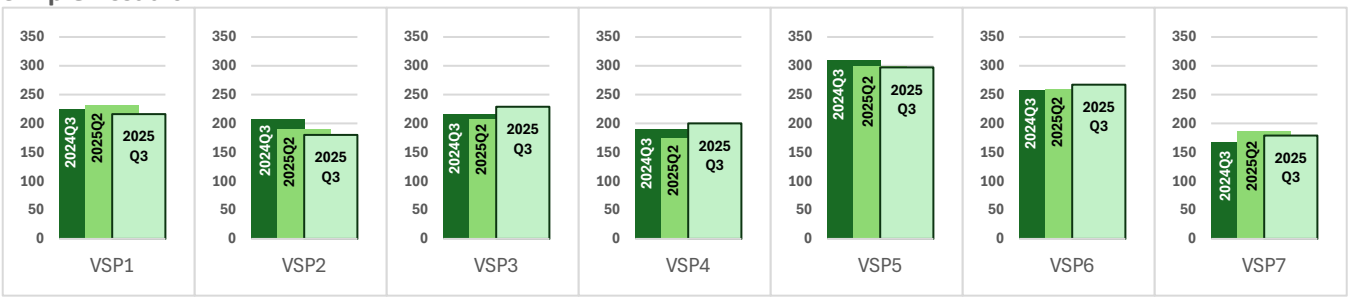
VSP Divisions 1 and 5 generally have the highest murder victimization rates, although Division 6 had the second highest rate in 2025Q3. Divisions 2 and 7 have the lowest. Statewide, the murder victimization rate was lower in 2025Q3 than in 2025Q2 and 2024Q3: VSP Divisions 3 and 6 show the most notable departures from this trend in that their 2025Q3 rates were higher than 2025Q2 and 2024Q3.

Aggravated Assault



VSP Division 5 has the highest aggravated assault victimization rate, whereas Division 7 has the lowest. Statewide, the aggravated assault victimization rate was higher in in 2025Q3 than in 2025Q2 and 2024Q3: VSP Divisions 1 and 3 show the most notable departures from this trend in that their 2025Q3 rates were lower than 2025Q2 and 2024Q3.

Simple Assault



VSP Division 5 has the highest simple assault victimization rate, whereas Divisions 2, 4, and 7 have the lowest rates. Statewide, the simple assault victimization rate in 2025Q3 was similar to (1% less than) that of 2025Q2 and 2024Q3. VSP Division 2 shows the most notable divergence in that the Division's rate for 2025Q3 was substantially lower than in 2025Q2 and 2024Q3.

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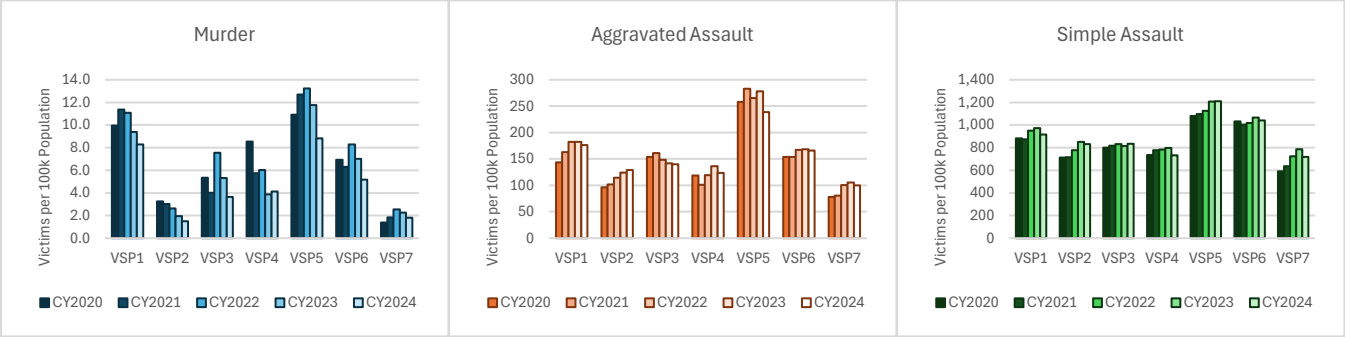
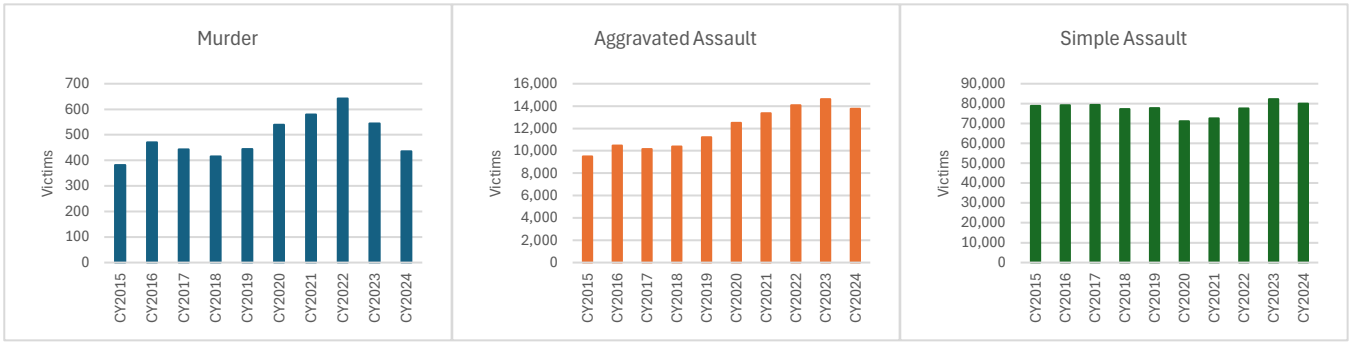
Annual Regional Rates, 2020-2024
VSP Divisions



Over the period CY2020-2024, the region with the highest aggravated assault and simple assault rates has consistently been VSP Division 5, whereas VSP Division 7 had the lowest rates. The same has generally been true for murders, although VSP Division 2 had the lowest rates in 2023 and 2024.

Victimization rates generally dropped in CY2024. The only exceptions were murders in VSP Division 4, aggravated assaults in VSP Division 2, and simple assaults in VSP Divisions 3 and 5.

Number of Victims, Ten-Year Trends, Statewide, 2015-2024



- The number of murders in 2024 was down 20% from 2023 and 32% from 2022.
- Aggravated assaults dropped 6% between 2023 and 2024 after a 44% increase between 2017 and 2023.
- Simple assaults dropped 3% between 2023 and 2024 after a 16% increase between 2020 and 2023.

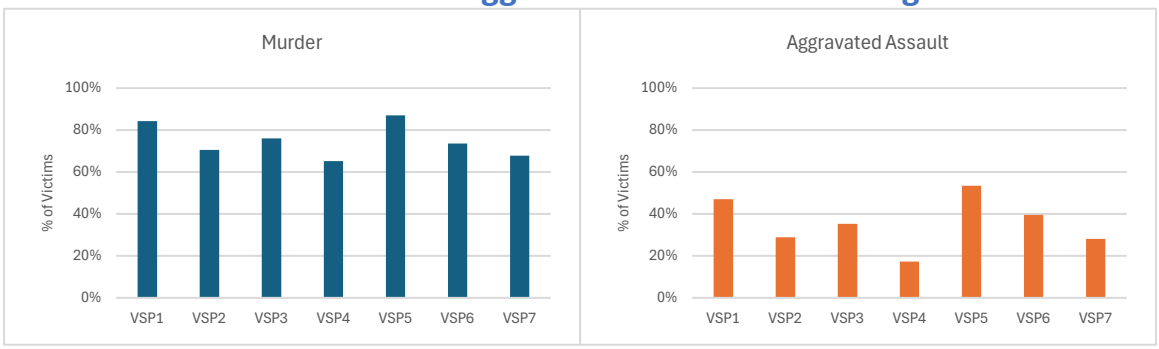
Weapon Use, Statewide, 2020-2024 (Total)

Offense	Firearm	Blade, Blunt Objects*	Asphyxiation	Motor Vehicle, Vessel	Fire, Explosives	Poison, Drugs	Punches, Kicks, Etc.†	Other	Unknown	None	Total victims
Murder	81%	8%	0%	1%	1%	1%	4%	2%	4%	0%	2,741
Agg. Assault	42%	19%	5%	3%	0%	1%	21%	9%	3%	2%	68,328

Note: Official categories are Dangerous Weapons (*) and Personal Weapons (†).

81% of murders and 42% of aggravated assaults involved a firearm. Blades and blunt objects; punches, kicks, etc.; and asphyxiation accounted for a much greater share of aggravated assaults than murders. By definition, simple assaults do not involve weapons other than the offender's own body (e.g., punches, kicks).

Firearm Trends, Regional, 2020-2024 (Total)
Percent of Murders and Aggravated Assaults Involving a Firearm



Murders in Divisions 5 and 1 had the highest likelihood of involving a firearm (87% and 84%, respectively). Murders in Division 4 and 7 were least likely to involve a firearm, but a firearm was still involved in about two-thirds of all murders (65% in Division 4 and 68% in Division 7). Aggravated asaults in Divisions 5 and 1 had the highest likelihood of involving a firearm (54% and 47%, respectively), while those in Division 4 had the lowest likelihood (17%).

Victim-Offender Relationship, Statewide, 2020-2024 (Total)

Intimate partners and acquaintances appear to be the most common offenders in simple assaults. Victim-offender relationships were unknown or missing for a substantial number of murder and aggravated assault victims, preventing any conclusive generalizations.

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