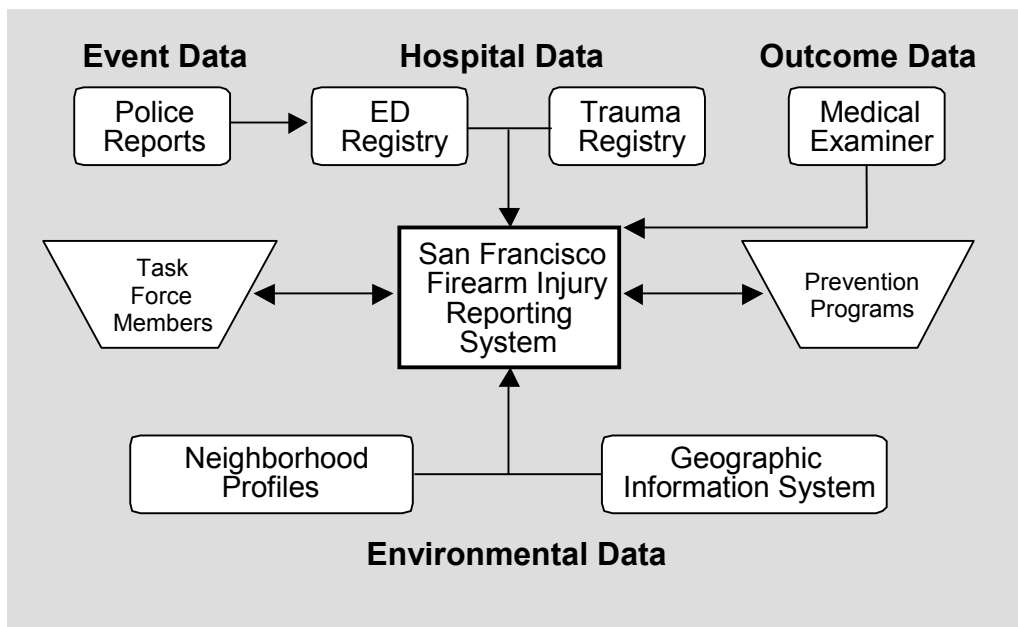

San Francisco Firearm Injury Reporting System



Annual Report February 2002

Firearm-related Injury Incidents in 1999

<http://www.dph.sf.ca.us> and <http://www.nviss.org>

San Francisco Department of Public Health and San Francisco Injury Center



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

**SAN FRANCISCO INJURY CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO**

To the people of San Francisco:

The *Annual Report of the San Francisco Firearm Injury Reporting System (SFFIRS)* is a detailed account of firearm-related deaths and injuries occurring in San Francisco during 1999. This report shows the value of collaboration between the San Francisco Police Department, Medical Examiner's Officer, San Francisco General Hospital, San Francisco Injury Center, and the Department of Public Health. For the first time, we have shared data that links information from several agencies for nearly 500 victims and suspects involved in incidents of firearm violence.

The social and economic disparities that must be overcome to further reduce violence in the homes and in particular neighborhoods of San Francisco pose a significant challenge. The amount of resources devoted to dealing with victims and perpetrators of violence are straining our systems and are disproportionate to the investment in prevention efforts. This report provides compelling reasons for increased funding for efforts that would prevent individuals from ending up in our hospitals and jails. The report also demonstrates that firearm violence is not constrained to geographic boundaries—nearly one-quarter of the victims and suspects were not residents of San Francisco. This points to the need for regional leadership that will bring counties together to share in developing “best practices” for working within our communities.

While this report focuses on firearm-related deaths and injuries, one of the key recommendations is to begin work that will expand this system to include all forms of violent injury and death. Unfortunately, this will add another 1,200 victims and suspects to the reporting system each year. This report is a first step. We envision that the reporting system will provide a framework for actions needed to expand and evaluate violence reduction efforts in our County. Towards this end, much important work in violence prevention is already underway. For those who work directly with victims and perpetrators, we ask for your help in undertaking a commitment to work more closely than we have in the recent past. Lastly, looking beyond the pages of this report, we must remember that there are faces behind these numbers including not only of the fatal victims, but also those of the surviving victims, perpetrators, witnesses, children, parents, friends, educators, law enforcement officers, emergency and health care providers who are all impacted in many ways by these events.

Mitchell H. Katz, MD
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City and County of San Francisco

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represent the official views of the CDC.

March 1998, San Francisco Examiner

We have to approach it holistically, not partially...They do one study over there, we do another study over here. We all have to work together on it.

—Lieutenant David Robinson
Homicide Investigations, San Francisco Police Department
(from article "Guns killing more blacks in City", 5 March 1998)

February 2002 SFFIRS Annual Report

The multi-agency database provides our department with a more clear and exact breakdown of data that allows us to focus on the impact of firearm-related deaths and injuries. Additionally, the data provided in the report shows us where in our community the need for education is paramount.

—Lieutenant Judie Pursell
Homicide Investigations, San Francisco Police Department

This report of the SFFIRS offers one of the first and most comprehensive looks at the problem of firearm deaths and injuries in a single county. From a review of the data contained in this report, two clear areas emerge where injury prevention efforts should be focused: substance abuse, which can be implicated in many violent crimes, and suicide prevention.

—Peggy Knudson, MD
Director, UCSF-San Francisco Injury Center, Professor of Surgery

Behavior modification and general education improvements resulting in improved living conditions will likely reduce gun use. Gun safety can be taught in public schools—just like tobacco and traffic safety programs. Linking data is a foundation to defining, understanding, and reducing gun-related deaths.

—Boyd Stephens, MD
Chief Medical Examiner, San Francisco

The San Francisco Firearm Injury Reporting System delineates the most comprehensive summary of both victims and perpetrators to date. Only by identifying risk factors will we be able to identify at-risk individuals in the Emergency Department and initiate appropriate interventions and referrals such as the Trauma Recovery Center. This reporting system is also an excellent basis for evaluation of interventions. Expanding the scope of this report to include all forms of violence would be a valuable next step.

—Alan Gelb, MD, FACEP
Chief, SFGH Emergency Services; Clinical Professor UCSF

This report has application to several ongoing endeavors of SFPD. The material will be useful for the Use of Force instructors at the Police Academy to help better prepare officers for street work. Additionally, I believe the SFFIRS material will be of benefit to our Field Operations Bureau, specifically in its recently inaugurated Operation Cease-fire program. This program involves a multidisciplinary approach, utilizing academics and practitioners, focusing resources in targeted areas where firearm-related homicides are more prevalent, and perhaps, partially susceptible to reduction in frequency.

—William Welch

Deputy Chief, San Francisco Police Department

The creators and contributors to the San Francisco Firearm Injury Reporting System have demonstrated the power of collaboration across agency and departmental boundaries. This very rich data source will certainly enhance the work of health care providers and researchers as we attempt to eliminate gun violence and its aftermath in our community.

—Chris Wachsmuth, RN, MS

Associate Hospital Administrator, SFGH-Emergency Services

The data linkage will assist us in documenting the facts about shootings and violence in general. The targeted geographical areas and the correlation between criminal history and drug involvement can be linked to the environment of poverty, unemployment, lack of job training, over-crowded housing, a lack of organized recreational activities and the negative culture that can breed violence. This comprehensive level of information can be used to identify our targeted populations, reinforce the program rationale and methodology we have chosen; as well as strengthen our policy recommendations for blended funding and coordination of programs.

—Cynthia Selmar, LCSW, MPH, BCDVC III

Director, African-American Health Initiative, Community Health
Promotion & Prevention, San Francisco Department of Public Health

The report takes the much needed step of integrating information from the different agencies that deal with gun violence. This linkage of existing data sources can help us to understand the distribution of firearm violence in our County that affects both residents and nonresidents.

—Randy Reiter, PhD, MPH

Community Health Epidemiology & Disease Control,
San Francisco Department of Public Health

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