



CSPV FACT SHEET

FS-006

1999

Youth Handgun Violence

- Males are overwhelmingly the perpetrators in homicides involving youth, accounting for more than 90% of incidents involving those 10-17 years of age. Moreover, handgun homicides committed by young males (15-18) between 1980 and 1995 increased by more than 150%, while the rate for females remained low and stable. This increase was fueled entirely by the use of handguns.
- National homicide rates involving youth (aged 15-18) escalated in the mid-1980s through the early 1990s and then began to decline, yet still remained significantly higher than the time of onset. Colorado experienced a similar trend, although the time of onset was the late 1980s.
- For both the nation and Colorado, males, ages 15-18, using handguns as lethal weapons drove this trend.
- While the national and Colorado trends are similar, the recent youth homicide rates in Colorado are about half the magnitude of the national rates.
- Youth are three times more likely than adults to be victims of violence. One quarter of youth violent victimizations involve the use of a firearm.

Guns in Schools

- Nationally, more than 6,000 students were expelled for carrying a gun to school during the 1996-97 year. Handguns were involved in 58% of these expulsions.
- Colorado youth carry weapons to school at the same rate as the national average, but are less likely to carry guns in other places.
- Nationally, 5% of students reported feeling too unsafe to attend school at least once in the thirty days preceding the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey. In Colorado, 4% of students reported feeling too unsafe to go to school.
- Nationally, 20% of high school students reported carrying a weapon (e.g., gun, knife, or club) at least once in the thirty days preceding the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Approximately 8% reported carrying a gun, and 10% reported having carried a weapon on school property on one or more occasions in those 30 days.
- Despite the prevalence of gun carrying in schools, school shootings still remain relatively rare events. Since 1992, approximately 190 shooting deaths have occurred in American schools (both student and faculty/staff). While clearly a serious issue, it must be noted that these 190 school-related deaths represent only about 1% of all youth killed with guns at the present.

The information for this fact sheet was excerpted from the following Center Paper:

Arredondo, S., Aultman-Bettridge, T., Johnson, T.P., Williams, K.R., Ninneman, L., & Torp, K. (1999). *Preventing Youth Handgun Violence: A National Study With Trends and Patterns for the State of Colorado* (CSPV-014). Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado.

Additional References:

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- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Advisory Council on Adolescent Health. (1998, February). *Adolescent Health in Colorado, 1997*. Denver, CO: Author.
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- Sickmund, M., Snyder, H.N., & Poe-Yamagata, E. (1997, August). *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1997 Update on Violence* (NCJ 165703). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.