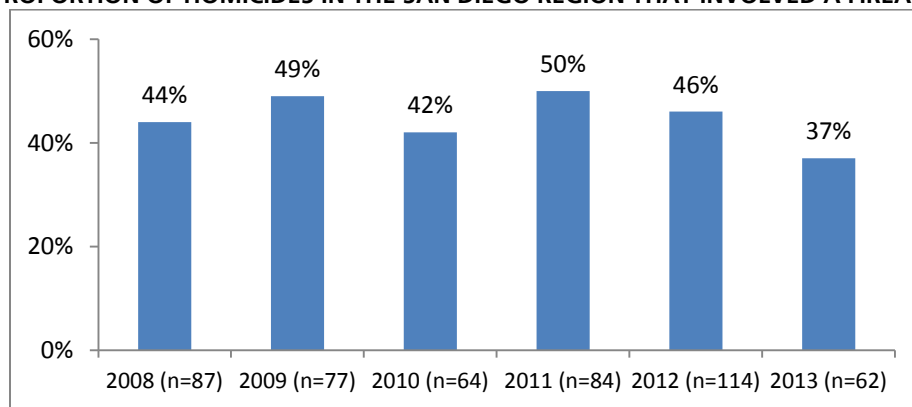


Gun Crime Down in 2013, But Still a Public Safety and Public Health Issue

Over the past 30 years, reported crimes have decreased significantly, with relatively small increases in some crimes seen only recently, as reflected by national and local crime statistics and national victimization surveys. However, despite these decreases, many individuals perceive that gun crime is higher now nationally than it was 20 years ago (56%), while only 14 percent think it is lower.¹ With the recent increases in some crime types, gun crime data for the first nine months of 2013, compiled by SANDAG for Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN)², is summarized here and compared to data from one and five years earlier. This information supplements other crime and arrest statistics released as part of the San Diego Regional Criminal Justice Clearinghouse that are available on the SANDAG web site www.sandag.org/cj.

- During the first nine months of 2013, there were 1,187 gun-related crimes reported to law enforcement across the San Diego region, an average of about 4 per day. This number represented a 6 percent decrease from the first nine months of 2012 (when there were 1,266) and a 13 percent decrease from the same time period in 2008 (when there were 1,364). Gun crime was reported in 88 of the 113 ZIP codes (78%) in the San Diego region during the first nine months of 2013.
- Gun crime occurs almost equally across the days of the week, but the most common time of day is between 6:00 pm and 12:00 am (39%).
- Of the 1,187 gun crimes reported between January and September 2013, 36 percent involved an aggravated assault, 35 percent a robbery, and 2 percent a homicide. However, of all aggravated assaults, only 9 percent involved a firearm in 2013 (to date), compared to 19 percent of robberies. As Figure 1 shows, the proportion of homicides that involved a firearm is greater than these other two crimes, but has varied over the years, with the lowest proportion reported to date in 2013 (37%) and the highest proportion was in 2011 (50%).

Figure 1
PROPORTION OF HOMICIDES IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION THAT INVOLVED A FIREARM



While the number of gun crimes in San Diego County has not increased, it is important to note the public health and safety implications of gun violence, with recent estimates suggesting it costs over \$2 billion a year in hospital charges to treat victims of gun-related violence.³ Recent local efforts to target gun crime through prevention, suppression, and enhanced prosecution (through PSN), as well as legislation (AB 231) to increase penalties for unauthorized use of unsecured firearms, are important components of a comprehensive strategy to keep our communities safe.

¹ Pew Research Center (2013). *Gun homicide rates down 49% since 1993 peak: Public unaware*. Available on-line at www.pewsocialtrends.org.

² As part of PSN, community members, law enforcement, and prosecutors, have been working together since 2003 to develop and implement comprehensive strategies to target gun-related crime. SANDAG served as the research partner for this effort.

³ Tabachnick, C. (2013, November 4). *The public health costs of gun violence*. Available on-line at www.thecrimereport.org.