

What is Case Clearance?

- The closing of criminal investigations for a particular case, usually by arresting a suspect
- A crucial part of police work
- Shows the ability of police to enforce the law
- Removes dangerous offenders
- Potentially deters future offending
- Multitude of important characteristics in process

Here we will be looking at what factors help solve violent cases, such as assaults and homicides, which involved the use of a firearm.

Homicide clearance rates in Rochester are around 80-85%, with a national average of about 63% in 2012. Assault case clearance rates tend to be lower.

Objectives

Investigations for violent shooting cases rely upon multiple types of evidence in order to identify suspects and obtain an arrest. Here, we will specifically examine two types of evidence:

- **Witness accounts** refers to the information gathered from individuals who have knowledge relevant to an investigation
- **Physical evidence** refers to physical items or material relevant to an investigation such as bullet casings or DNA

Through exploration of previous research and interviewing individuals heavily involved with the investigative process, we are able to identify the general value of these types of evidence in the context of a shooting investigation.

Witness Accounts



- Witnesses are valuable in any investigation as they are able to describe what happened and identify who was involved
- Often witnesses are unwilling to cooperate with the police
 - This may due to anti-snitch culture, distrust of the police, or a fear of retaliation
 - This appears to be especially common with non-fatal shooting investigations
- Severe crimes, such as homicide, may be more likely to be solved due to a greater devotion of resources and more cooperative witnesses

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Investigational Factors



- The ideal number of investigators assigned to a specific case is four investigators
- Police agencies which emphasize crime analysis techniques, such as tracking of criminal data and construction of criminal databases, rather than lab work are generally more successful
- Investigators who are good at interacting with and networking with potential witnesses tend to be more successful

References

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