

An Garda Síochána - Knife Related Crime Analysis 2015 - 2024

An Garda Síochána's Analysis Service has carried out an analysis of Knife Related Crime over a 10 year period 2015 – 2024.

Key Findings:

- Most Assaults Causing Harm with a Knife occur in Residential locations not on street/ open spaces
- The majority of Murder/ Manslaughter incidents with a knife occur in Residential locations not on street/ open spaces
- 40% reduction in robbery with knife in retail spaces over the 5-year period 2020/ 2024 compared 2015/ 2019
- 35% reduction in robbery with knife in Street/ Open Spaces over the 5-year period 2020/ 2024 compared 2015/ 2019
- Assault Causing Harm with a knife accounted for just 5% of Assault Causing Harm incidents in 2024
- Assault Causing Harm with a knife accounted for on average less than 7% of Assault Causing Harm incidents over the 10 years
- 28% increase in knives seized by An Garda Síochána over the 5-year period 2020/ 2024 compared 2015/ 2019*
- 14% increase in prosecutions for possession of knife over the 5-year period 2020/ 2024 compared 2015/ 2019

Over the last 10 years

Knife seizures

- On average 5 knives are seized and taken off our streets every day
 - 18,906 knives seized*
 - 28% increase in knives seized over the 5-year period 2020/ 2024 compared 2015/ 2019*
 - Most knives seized in 2020 (2,260), least knives seized 2016 (1,213) knives*
 - No of knives seized in 2024, 2023, 2022 similar at nearly 2,200 each year
 - Dublin Region accounts for generally 40% - 50% of knife seizures
 - Dublin divisions of North Central, South Central, North, West generally have the highest levels of knife seizures

Prosecutions

- Nearly 20,000 prosecutions for possession of Knife/ Flick Knife (over 10 years)
 - Nearly 40 prosecutions every week
 - 14% overall increase in prosecutions over the 5-year period 2020/ 2024 compared 2015/ 2019
 - 8% Decrease in prosecutions for Flick Knives over the 5-year period 2020/ 2024 compared 2015/ 2019

Assaults

- Fewer than 2 Assaults Causing Harm with a knife occur in street/ open space per week across the country
- Assault Causing Harm with a knife accounted for just 5% of Assault Causing Harm incidents in 2024
- Assault Causing Harm with a knife accounted for on average less than 7% of Assault Causing Harm incidents over the 10 years
 - Despite an increase in Assaults Causing Harm over the 10-year period only a slight increase of less than 1 incident per month of assaults causing harm with a knife in street/ open space over the 5-year period 2020/ 2024, compared to 2015/ 2019
- Most Assaults Causing Harm with a knife used occur in Residential locations, fewer than 3 incidents per week on average across the country
 - Despite an increase in Assaults causing Harm over the 10-year period only a slight increase of fewer than 3 incidents per month of assaults causing harm with a knife in residential space over the 5-year period 2020/ 2024, compared to 2015/ 2019
- Males account for 86% of offenders, for detected incidents
 - age range 18-34 years account for most offenders (57%), followed by 35-49 years (27%). Teenagers, u18years account for 9%

Murder/ Manslaughter

- Less than 1 Murder with a knife on average per month over 10-year period
 - The majority of Murder/ manslaughter incidents with a knife each year occurred in Residential locations
 - Murder/ Manslaughter with a knife on average accounts for about 1 in 4 of Murder/ Manslaughter incidents
- Males account for 87% of offenders, for detected incidents
 - age range 18-34 years account for most offenders (50%) followed by 35-49 years (36%). Teenagers, u18years account for 7%

Robbery with Knife

- Less than 30% of Robberies overall involve a knife
- 40% reduction in robberies in retail spaces over the 5-year period 2020/ 2024 compared 2015/ 2019
 - Fewer than 5 Robberies with knives recorded on average each week in Retail spaces across the country
- 35% reduction in Robberies in Street/ Open Spaces over the 5-year period 2020/ 2024 compared 2015/ 2019
 - on average 3 Robberies with Knives recorded each week in street/ Open Spaces across the country
- Males account for 94% of offenders, for detected incidents
 - age range 18-34 years account for most offenders (54%) followed by 35-49 years (24%). Teenagers, u18years account for 18%

Hospital Admissions (Data supplied by HSE)*

- 1784 persons admitted to hospital following an Assault by Knife (10 years)
 - On average 15 person per month
 - Fewer persons admitted to hospital for treatment following an Assault by Knife than recorded incidents of Assault Causing Harm by Knife
 - 2023 had highest number of persons admitted (213), 2024 recorded below 10-year average
 - 87% of hospital admissions were male with 6% under the age 18

Commentary:

As highlighted earlier this month CSO figures show Ireland has recorded a 7% reduction in crime (2024/ 2019) while undergoing a 9.3% increase in population since 2019, and a far greater reduction in crime (2024/ 2002) from a peak in 2008, while experiencing a 37% increase in population since 2002.

The most prevalent offences, which sometimes involve knives, are generally sustaining a downward trend in the first half of 2025, following previous reduction during full year 2024.

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| • Robbery from Person | -24% | (H1 2025) | -4% (2024) |
| • Robbery of Establishment | -23% | (H1 2025) | -10% (2024) |
| • Assault Causing Harm | -3% | (H1 2025) | -4% (2024) |

Fewer than 30% of Robberies and 7 %of Assaults causing Harm involve knives over the last 10 years.

Seizure and Prosecutions of knives have both increased over the most recent 5 years.

The maximum penalty for the offences of possession of a knife with the intention of unlawfully intimidating or injuring another person, trespassing with a knife, and producing a knife while committing or appearing to be about to commit an offence, increased from five years to seven years imprisonment from September 2024.

The maximum penalty for 'assault causing harm' under section 3 of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997 was increased in 2023 from five to ten years imprisonment.

Crime Prevention Advice:

The simple message - carrying a knife without good reason or lawful authority is illegal.

Carrying a knife is not a good idea.

Some people carry a knife because they think 'everyone else is' but that is not the case.

Some people think if you carry a knife then it will provide protection. If you carry a knife or weapon you are more likely to end up being hurt. You can be seen as threatening. You might also end up being hurt by your own weapon.

Some people think you will be respected or even feared for carrying a knife. But all it really does is put you, your friends and family in danger.

Consequences

Carrying a knife can have significant consequences

Carrying a knife is illegal.

Carrying a knife increases your risk of being seriously injured, or in a worst-case scenario, you could be killed.

Carrying a knife increases the risk of the people around you being seriously injured, and can cause great distress and upset to your family.

Gardaí can stop and search you if they believe a knife is being carried.

Found in possession of a knife by An Garda Síochána could lead to a criminal conviction.

A criminal conviction could impact your education, your job prospects and could place restrictions on you travelling to some countries.

You could go to jail for up to five years if you're found in possession of a knife, or up to seven years in certain circumstances.

You could go to jail for up to 10 years for a conviction of Assault Causing Harm or in a worst-case scenario, you could get life imprisonment for murder.

While walking away from an altercation is often the hardest thing to do, it is the safest.

Note to Editor:

*The increase in the number of knives seized in 2017 and 2018 in particular, was driven in part by the implementation of the Property and Exhibits Management System (PEMS) during 2016, which introduced electronic recording and tracking of items, replacing the traditional property book.

*A notable increase in Possession of an Offensive Weapon (knife) used between 2023 and 2024 is attributed to a new data quality process implemented by the Garda Information Services Centre (GISC) in October 2023 which has increased the frequency of recording of the Knife Used MO. This allows us to more readily determine when a knife (as opposed to other types of non-firearm) was the offensive weapon being carried.

*HSE Data was supplied by the HSE Healthcare Pricing Office (HPO) to year-end 2024, which provided an annual count of Hospital Inpatient Discharges following an Assault by Knife for the 2015 to 2024 period.