

## The Reality of Self-Defense Gun Use and Concealed Carry

In the wake of the June 14, 2017 attack at a Congressional baseball game practice that left five wounded including House Majority Whip Steve Scalise and two Capitol Police officers, some pro-gun advocates and Members of Congress have invoked self-defense as a reason to weaken federal laws regarding the carrying of concealed handguns. At the same time, numerous news sources report that the shooter, James T. Hodgkinson, was in possession of an SKS assault rifle and a 9mm pistol and had himself obtained a concealed carry permit.

The facts show clearly show two things. First and foremost, that guns are rarely used in self-defense, in both justifiable homicides and non-lethal self-defense incidents. Secondly, concealed handgun permit holders are far more likely to take lives than to save them.

### **GUNS ARE RARELY USED TO KILL CRIMINALS OR STOP CRIMES.**

The May 2017 Violence Policy Center study [Firearm Justifiable Homicides and Non-Fatal Self-Defense Gun Use](#) analyzes the most recent and best federal data available, which shows that private citizens use guns to harm themselves or others far more often than to justifiably kill in self-defense. The study analyzes data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program's Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) and cites survey data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).

The study finds that in 2014, the most recent year for which data is available, there were only 224 justifiable homicides involving a private citizen using a firearm reported to the SHR. Eighteen states reported zero justifiable homicides in 2014. That year, there were 7,670 criminal firearm homicides reported to the SHR. **In 2014, for every justifiable homicide in the United States involving a gun, guns were used in 34 criminal homicides.** This ratio does not even take into account the tens of thousands of lives needlessly lost in gun suicides and unintentional shootings that year.

The study also finds only a tiny fraction of the intended victims of violent crime or property crime employ guns for self-defense. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), over the three-year period from 2013 to 2015, only 1.1 percent of victims of attempted or completed *violent crimes* used a firearm, and only 0.2 percent of victims of attempted or completed *property crimes* used a firearm.

### **CONCEALED HANDGUN PERMIT HOLDERS DON'T SAVE LIVE, THEY TAKE THEM**

*Concealed Carry Killers* ([concealedcarrykillers.org](http://concealedcarrykillers.org)) is an online resource maintained and regularly updated by the Violence Policy Center that includes hundreds of examples of non-self defense killings by private citizens with permits to carry concealed, loaded handguns in public that took place since May 2007.

As of June 2017, concealed handgun permit holders are responsible for at least 1,082 deaths not involving self defense since May 2007. Since there is no comprehensive recordkeeping of fatal

incidents involving concealed carry permit holders, and many states actually keep this information secret, this tally most likely represents a small fraction of the actual total.

Overall, [Concealed Carry Killers](#) documents 880 fatal, non-self defense incidents since May 2007 in 40 states and the District of Columbia, resulting in the deaths of 1,082 people. Thirty-one of the incidents were fatal mass shootings as defined by federal law (three or more victims killed), resulting in the deaths of 147 victims. At least 18 law enforcement officers have died at the hands of concealed carry killers since May 2007.

In the vast majority of the 880 incidents documented in [Concealed Carry Killers](#) (762, or 87 percent), the concealed carry permit holder either committed suicide (398), has already been convicted (289), perpetrated a murder-suicide (58), or was killed in the incident (17). Of the 88 cases still pending, the vast majority (75) of concealed carry killers have been charged with criminal homicide, four were deemed incompetent to stand trial, and nine incidents are still under investigation. An additional 30 incidents were fatal unintentional shootings involving the gun of the concealed handgun permit holder. [Concealed Carry Killers](#) does not include the small number of incidents that are eventually determined to involve self-defense or where no verdict is reached at trial. All such incidents are removed from the database's ongoing totals.

The VPC has also identified [several incidents](#) in which armed civilians were present at mass shootings but failed to intervene successfully.

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## CITED MATERIALS

### ***Firearm Justifiable Homicides and Non-Fatal Self-Defense Gun Use***

Full study: <http://www.vpc.org/studies/justifiable17.pdf>

Press Release: <http://www.vpc.org/press/self-defense-gun-use-is-rare-new-vpc-study-confirms-2/>

### ***Concealed Carry Killers***

Website: <http://concealedcarrykillers.org/>

Most Recent Press Release (June 2017): <http://www.vpc.org/press/more-than-1000-deaths-at-the-hands-of-concealed-carry-killers-since-2007-latest-vpc-research-shows/>

### ***Armed Citizens Are Not the Answer to Mass Shootings***

Fact sheet: <http://concealedcarrykillers.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Armed-Citizens-not-the-Answer-Fact-Sheet-June-2017.pdf>

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The Violence Policy Center (VPC) is a national educational organization working to stop gun death and injury. Follow the VPC on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).