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BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS
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RATES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE HIGHER FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

WASHINGTON –Government employees experienced a rate of nonfatal workplace violence that was more than three times the rate for private-sector employees during 2011, the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today.

Local, county, state and federal government employees experienced 18.0 nonfatal violent victimizations in the workplace per 1,000 employees age 16 or older, compared to 5.2 nonfatal violent victimizations per 1,000 private-sector employees.

The higher rate of workplace violence in the public sector was due in part to the high rate of violence against government employees in law enforcement or security. About 56 percent of workplace violence against government employees occurred against law enforcement and security personnel during 2002 through 2011. In both the public and private sectors, law enforcement and security personnel experienced the highest annual average rates of workplace violence.

Excluding law enforcement and security employees, the 2011 rate of workplace violence against government employees was still higher than that against private-sector employees. Government employees reported 8.7 violent victimizations per 1,000 employees, compared to 4.7 violent victimizations per 1,000 employees in the private sector.

Serious violent crime (rape, sexual assault, robbery or aggravated assault) accounted for a larger percentage of workplace violence against private-sector employees (25 percent) than government employees (15 percent) from 2002 to 2011. However, government employees experienced three times more simple assault than those in the private sector.

About 1 in 5 victims of workplace homicide was a government employee in 2011. During that year, the private sector experienced 367 homicides in the workplace, compared to 90 homicides for government employees.

Rates of workplace violence have declined substantially in both the public and private sectors. The annual average rate of violence against government employees declined 82 percent from 1994 to 2011, compared to a 72 percent decline in the private sector.

(MORE)

Among other findings from 2002 to 2011:

- Although government employees accounted for 16 percent of all employed people age 16 or older, they made up 41 percent of victims of nonfatal workplace violence.
- Among government employees, males (68 percent) were more likely than females (38 percent) to face a stranger during an incident in the workplace.
- Government employees (12 percent) were less likely than private-sector employees (20 percent) to face an offender with a weapon during an incident.
- Government and private-sector employees were equally likely to be injured due to workplace violence.

Findings in this report on nonfatal violence against government employees in the workplace are based on data from the BJS National Crime Victimization Survey. Findings on workplace homicide are based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries.

The report, *Workplace Violence Against Government Employees, 1994–2011* (NCJ 241349), was written by BJS statistician Erika Harrell. The report, related documents and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>.

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.