

**Statistical Analysis Center  
Planning, Grants, & Research  
Idaho State Police**

# **Suspected Alcohol or Drug-Related Violent Crimes: 1998-2004**

**An Analysis of  
NIBRS Data**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this report is to provide an understanding of violent crime in Idaho and the possible role that drugs and alcohol play. In this report, NIBRS data between 1998 and the end of 2004 is examined. The data is analyzed to determine if there are differences in incident, victim, and offender characteristics based on an offender's suspected alcohol or drug use around the time of the crime.

### Methods

The data used for this report was extracted from Idaho's repository for the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which collects data on each criminal incident reported to law enforcement.

The data is limited to:

- Violent crimes reported to the police, not all crime in Idaho.
- Incident, victim, offense, and offender information for the years 1998 to the end of 2004.
- Violent crimes involving one offender.

Data considerations:

- An offender can only be *suspected* of consuming alcohol or drugs during or just prior to the crime. The investigating officer reports the offender's suspected alcohol/drug use based on evidence at the crime scene, information from victims and witnesses, and arrestee confessions.
- The offender's suspected alcohol/drug consumption may not always be reported consistently by investigating officers. However, there is no indication that non-reporting of an offender's alcohol or drug use is common.
- Not all Idaho police agencies report to NIBRS. Approximately 98% of Idaho's population is covered by 105 law enforcement agencies, which report to NIBRS.

### Results

- From 1998 to the end of 2004, there was an average of 14,828 violent crimes involving one offender each year in Idaho.
- Violent crimes involving alcohol or drugs have declined in recent years. Between 1998 and 2004, about 15.6% of violent crimes involved an offender suspected of using drugs or alcohol. That percentage has declined to 14% in the last two years.
- An offender was suspected of using the following substances: alcohol in 14% of violent crimes, drugs in 1% of violent crimes, and both alcohol and drugs in .5% of violent crimes.
- If an offender used alcohol or drugs around the time of the crime, the crime was most likely to occur at someone's home (66%), between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m. (57%), on a weekend (56%), in the months of July and August (21%), with the use of a weapon or with force (97%).
- Looking at only those crimes that occur at a bar/nightclub, a greater proportion are committed by an offender who used alcohol or drugs around the time of the crime (13% compared to 2%).
- Victims whose offender was suspected of using alcohol or drugs around the time of the crime were most likely to be female (59%), between the ages of 25-34 years (29%), White (96.7%), not Hispanic (91.1%), suffer an injury (63.6%), and suffer a major injury (10%).

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- Compared to how often Hispanics and Native Americans are victimized; they are victimized more often if the offender was using alcohol or drugs. Strangers to the offender and victims of aggravated assault are also victimized more often if the offender was using alcohol or drugs.
  - Violent offenders are most likely to be male (80%), White (96%), and about 28 years old and in the age range of 25-34 years (26%).
  - If the offender was using drugs or alcohol at the time of the crime, the offender is even more likely to be male (83%) and older (averaging 32 years of age).
  - Compared to how often Native Americans are violent offenders; they offend more often if they were using alcohol or drugs (3.6%).

## Conclusion

The literature indicates that somewhere from 25-40% of violent crimes are committed when the offender was using drugs or alcohol at the time of the crime or just before committing it. The findings presented in this analysis suggest alcohol and drugs play a much smaller role in violent acts in Idaho than other research indicates. Only an average of 15.7% of violent crimes in Idaho between 1998 and the end of 2004 involved an offender who was suspected of using drugs or alcohol during or just before the violent act. Further, when an association was found between alcohol/drug use and other variables, the association was very weak and accounted for very little variation in the occurrence of violent crimes.

This finding may be explained by a number of factors.

- Alcohol use and misuse appears to be declining.
- Idahoans drink alcohol and use drugs at a lower rate than Americans as a whole do.
- Limitations to this study may hamper the ability to create a complete picture of the role alcohol and drug use has in violent crime. For example, the accuracy of the data used in this study depends on how accurately and consistently the police report an offender's drug or alcohol use at the time of the crime. In addition, 13% of all violent crimes between 1998 and the end of 2004 are missed by the necessity to restrict cases to those involving one offender. (However, further analysis has shown that, with a few exceptions, the relationships between variables in this report are the same when multiple offenders in each incident were considered).

Given these limitations, this study only supports the idea that alcohol and drug use plays some role in violent crime, even if it is a minimal role. Further research is needed to determine what this role is and the strength of the association. Although the use of incident based data helps in this endeavor, other research methods such as victimization surveys, surveys of arrestees and prisoners, and urinalysis of arrestees may provide a better picture of the role alcohol and drugs play in violent crime in Idaho.

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## INTRODUCTION

The role of alcohol and drugs in criminal behavior has been a topic of research interest for some time. Although most studies have not found a causal link between alcohol, drugs, and crime, most conclude that there is some connection between them. The goal of the research presented in this report is to gain understanding of the role alcohol and drugs play in violent crimes in Idaho. To do this, 1998-2004 data from Idaho's repository for the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) is analyzed. Before the findings of this analysis are presented, however, the current research on alcohol, drugs and crime is reviewed.

## THE LITERATURE

Multiple research methods have been used to estimate how many offenders used alcohol or drugs and to determine the association between alcohol/drugs and crime. These methods include surveys of offenders in prisons, jails, and those on probation; surveys of victims; urinalysis and interviews with arrestees shortly after their arrest; and studies of offenders in treatment programs. Through these methods, many researchers have concluded that there is an association between alcohol/drug use and crimes of violence <sup>(2, 8, 14)</sup>.

### SAMHSA Survey

Each year the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) conducts a national survey on drug and alcohol use among Americans aged 12 or older. In 2003, the results of this national survey showed that about half of the population aged 12 or older are current drinkers; they had at least one alcoholic drink in the last 30 days. Approximately 22.6% of respondents reported binge drinking; they had five or more drinks on the same occasion at least once in the past 30 days. Further, 8.2% of these Americans reported using an illicit drug during the prior month and 11.5% were abusers of, or

dependent on, alcohol or illicit drugs. Additionally, 32.5% of heavy drinkers were also current illicit drug users, creating a strong association between heavy drinking and illicit drug use <sup>(9)</sup>.

According to the SAMHSA, Idaho's alcohol and illicit drug intake was slightly lower than the national average. An estimated 7.2% of Idahoans aged 12 or older used an illicit drug in the last month, compared to 8.2% of Americans. In addition, 47.7% of Idahoans were current drinkers; they had at least one alcoholic drink in the last 30 days. Moreover, 21% of Idahoans, and 22.6% of Americans, older than 11 years reported binge drinking within 30 days prior to the survey. An estimated 9.75% of Idahoans, and 11.5% of Americans aged 12 or older, abused or were dependent on alcohol or illicit drugs <sup>(9)</sup>.

### National Victimization Survey

One way to measure the use of drugs and alcohol in crimes is to ask victims if their offenders were using alcohol or drugs at the time of their victimization. The National Crime Victimization Surveys do just that. In their analysis of the 1992-1995 National Crime Victimization Surveys (NCVS), the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 37% of violent crime victims who could tell whether their offender was using alcohol or drugs responded that their offender had been using at the time of the crime. About 66% of alcohol-involved crimes were simple assaults. In about 20% of victimizations, in which the victim reported alcohol use by the offender, the victim also believed the offender had been using drugs <sup>(4)</sup>.

Further analysis of the 1992-1995 NCVS revealed that about 66% of violent acts in which the offender was perceived by the victim to have been drinking, the offender was an intimate partner. In only 31% of victimizations involving strangers, the victim perceived alcohol use by the offender. In comparison, the Bureau of Justice

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Statistics found in their analysis of 1995 NIBRS data that about half of the incidents involving alcohol were between intimates <sup>(4)</sup>.

### Idaho Victimization Survey

The Idaho Statistical Analysis Center has conducted four victimization surveys since 1999. In these surveys, respondents aged 18 or older are asked if they or a household member have been a victim of certain crimes. If a respondent answers in the affirmative, then one follow up question is whether the offender was under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the crime. In 2003, 38% of respondents who could discern whether their offender was intoxicated believed that the offender was drinking alcohol, using drugs, or both, at the time of the violent crime. This was a decrease from 2001, when 40% of respondents, and 41% of respondents in 2000 reported that the offender was drinking, using drugs, or both, at the time of the crime.

### Arrestee Surveys

In the United States, urinalysis and interviews with arrestees participating in the Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) program, now called the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) program, has helped researchers understand the link between alcohol, drugs, and crime. Since 1987, these programs have interviewed arrestees in urban areas and drug tested them within 48 hours of their booking.

One study using 1992 Drug Use Forecasting data was conducted by Valdez and his colleagues in three Texas cities. Analysis revealed that 35.6% of male inmates arrested for an aggressive crime were frequent users of alcohol and 49.4% tested positive for drugs at the time of their arrest. The researchers also found that study participants who frequently used alcohol, were more likely to have been arrested for an aggressive crime than those who tested positive for drugs <sup>(12)</sup>. Six years later, other researchers found similar results.

In 1998, another study utilizing data collected through the ADAM program found a strong association between alcohol and violent crimes compared with other types of crimes. Analysis of this data showed that 25% of participants who were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crime were arrested for a violent crime; only 17% were arrested for a property-related crime <sup>(7)</sup>.

In addition, there was crossover between drug and alcohol use. Analysis revealed that 15% of those arrested for violent offenses were under the influence of alcohol and tested positive for illicit drugs. Further, 18% of violent arrestees tested positive for drugs and had used alcohol within 72 hours of their arrest, but were not intoxicated <sup>(7)</sup>.

Researchers in this study also found that men and women were different in their substance abuse habits and offense tendencies. First, women were more likely to test positive for cocaine, but men were more likely to have used alcohol before the offense or to be under its influence during the incident. Second, drinking just prior to a family offense or a homicide was much more likely to be reported by men than women <sup>(7)</sup>.

### Other Studies

Other surveys of offenders in the criminal justice system also support the idea that alcohol and violent crime are connected in some way. The Bureau of Justice Statistics found that approximately 41% of probationers and those in local jails, 38% of those in state prisons, and 20% of those in federal prisons had been using alcohol when they committed a violent crime <sup>(4)</sup>.

Population studies show that as alcohol consumption increases, so does violent offending <sup>(4, 6)</sup>. In one study, researchers compared data collected from arrestees through interviews and urinalysis from 1989 through 1998 in 22 cities and the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) on crimes for the same time period. This

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comparison revealed that in most cities, as arrestee alcohol use increased, so did violent crime <sup>(6)</sup>.

These studies show that those between ages 18-25, and men, were more likely to use both alcohol and drugs. Compared to their population rates, Native Americans/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders were more likely than those of other races to be binge and heavy drinkers and current illicit drug users. Around 25-33% of those in the criminal justice system were using or under the influence of alcohol at the time of their crime. Approximately 37% of victims, who knew whether their offender was using alcohol or drugs at the time of the crime, reported their offender was drinking alcohol or using drugs. Offenders in the criminal justice system consumed more quantities and had higher rates of drug and alcohol use.

All of these studies shed light on the relationship between alcohol, drugs and crime. A better understanding of this association may help us identify ways to reduce both the occurrence and negative effects of violence and alcohol or drugs. The goal of this report is to provide understanding of violent crime in Idaho and the role that drugs and alcohol play.

## METHODS

The data used for this report was extracted from Idaho's repository for the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which collects data on each criminal incident reported to police. A law enforcement official responding to a reported incident collects the information contained in NIBRS. The police department then submits the information to the Idaho State Police, where Idaho's repository for NIBRS is located. The data used is limited to incident, victim, offense and offender information for the years 1998 to 2004 in which a violent crime was involved.

A few things must be considered when interpreting the results of the following research. First, the offender may only be suspected of using alcohol or drugs at the time of the crime. The investigating officer reports the offender's suspected alcohol/drug use. The officer uses evidence at the crime scene, information from victims and witnesses, and arrestee confessions to determine whether any of the offenders in the incident were suspected of consuming alcohol or using drugs/narcotics during or shortly before the incident.

Second, the analysis is limited to violent crimes. Violence is defined here as an act causing physical injury, the use of force, or threat of force. Thus, violent crimes in this analysis include the crimes of homicide, rape, sexual assault (forcible rape, sodomy, fondling; sexual assault with an object), robbery, intimidation, kidnapping/abduction, aggravated assault, and simple assault (for definitions of each crime, see Appendix A).

Third, the analysis is further limited to cases where a single offender committed a violent crime. When multiple offenders are involved in a crime, it is impossible to determine which offender(s) were suspected of using alcohol or drugs at the time of the crime. This is because offender alcohol/drug use is stored in a separate table from offender information, and does not identify which offender was using alcohol or drugs at the time of the crime. Therefore, in order to analyze offender characteristics and their alcohol/drug use in relation to their victims and crimes, it was necessary to limit analysis to cases involving only one offender.

Fourth, NIBRS only contains information about crimes reported to the police, not all crime in Idaho. Additionally, Lemhi County did not start reporting to NIBRS until 2004. Furthermore, all Tribal law enforcement agencies do not report to NIBRS. However, approximately 98% of Idaho's

population is covered by 105 law enforcement agencies that report to NIBRS.

Finally, there is a risk of counting some incidences twice. This risk of double counting may result from counting multiple police responses to one location as different incidences. The risk may also result from documenting incidences occurring to the same victim-offender independently. These data limitations and considerations should be considered when interpreting the description of violent crimes and offender suspected alcohol/drug use provided in this report.

## FINDINGS

### Violent Crimes

There was an average of 14,817 violent crimes involving one offender each year in Idaho since 1998. In about 15.7% of these crimes, offenders were suspected of using alcohol or drugs shortly before or during the incident. The year 1998 had the highest percentage of violent alcohol/drug related crimes. Eighteen percent of violent offenders in 1998 were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the crime. The years 2003 and 2004 had the lowest percentage with approximately 14% of violent crimes involving alcohol or drugs (refer to Table 1).

Table 1  
Offenders' Use of Alcohol/Drugs During the Crime By Year

Year	Not Using %	Using %	All %
1998	82.1	17.9	14,857
1999	83.2	16.8	13,992
2000	83.8	16.2	14,435
2001	83.8	16.2	14,679
2002	85.0	15.0	15,056
2003	85.9	14.1	15,461
2004	86.1	13.9	15,237
	N = 87,458	16,259	103,717

Numbers are per incident. a. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Cramer's V = .038)

The most common substance an offender used was alcohol. In 14.1% of violent crimes, the investigating officer described the offender as being under the influence of alcohol. Only 1% of violent crimes involved an offender who was using drugs and only .5% involved an offender who was using both alcohol and drugs.

Shown in Table 2, most violent crimes (63.4%) occurred at a residence. If the offender was using alcohol/drugs at the time, the violent crime was more likely to occur at a residence (65.6%) or a bar/nightclub (13%). When looking at only those crimes that occurred at a bar or nightclub, it is not surprising to find that 13% involved an offender who was using alcohol/drugs and only 2% involved an offender who was not using<sup>1</sup>.

Table 2  
Offenders' Use of Alcohol/Drugs During the Crime by Location of Violent Crime

	Not Using %	Using %	All %
Residence	63.0	65.6	63.4
Highway	10.8	9.7	10.6
School/College	7.8	0.8	6.7
Open Area	4.1	4.4	4.2
Bar/Nightclub	2.0	13.0	3.7
Store/Restaurant	4.5	2.3	4.2
Office/Gov't/Public bldg.	2.6	0.7	2.3
Other	2.3	2.3	2.3
Unknown	3.0	1.3	2.7
	N = 87,455	16,258	103,713

Numbers are per offense/incident. a. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Cramer's V = .241)

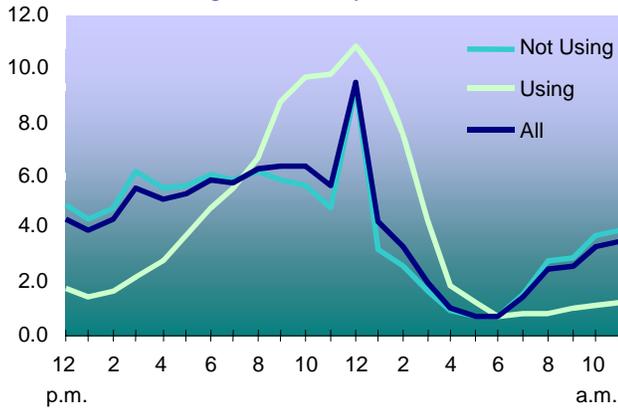
A less common location for violent crimes involving alcohol or drugs was an open area, such as a lake or waterway, parking lot/garage, and a field or wooded area (4.4%). Alcohol/drug related crimes were least likely to occur at a school/college (.8%), or an office, government, or public building (.7%).

A violent crime was more likely to occur between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m. if the offender involved was

<sup>1</sup>. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at <.01; Phi =.211.

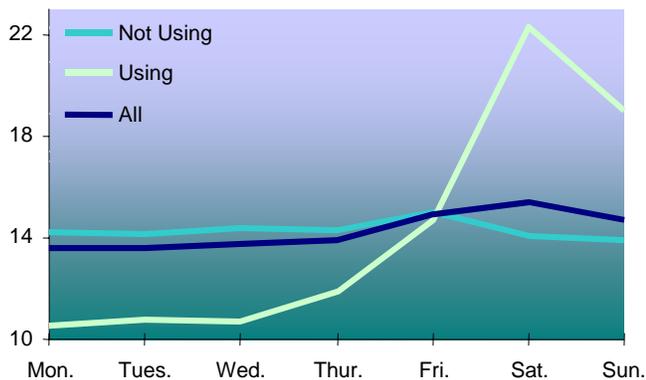
drinking alcohol or using drugs. Although only 35.4% of all violent crimes involving one offender occur between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m., 56.5% of those involving alcohol or drugs occurred between these hours (refer to Chart 1).

Chart 1 Percent of Alcohol/Drug Using and Non-Using Offenders by Time of Incident



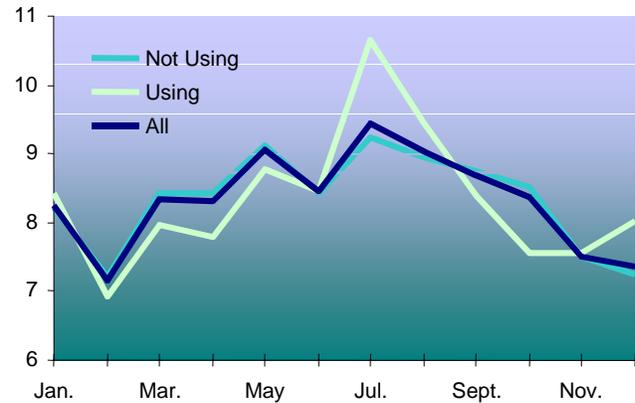
A violent crime involving one offender is almost equally likely to occur on any day of the week if the offender is not using alcohol or drugs. If an offender was under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the crime was most likely to occur at the end of the week (see Chart 2). In fact, 56.0% of violent alcohol/drug related crimes occurred on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The highest proportion of violent crimes involving alcohol/drug use was on Saturday (22.3%) and lowest on Monday (10.6%).

Chart 2 Percent of Alcohol/Drug Using and Non-Using Offenders by Weekday of Incident



The proportion of alcohol/drug related crimes of violence increased during the summer months. This is especially true for July and August when offenders who were under the influence of alcohol or drugs committed 20.1% of violent crimes. A disproportionate amount of alcohol/drug related crimes of violence also occurred in December<sup>2</sup>. The month of February experienced the least amount of violent crime, 7.2%, regardless of whether an offender was using alcohol or drugs (refer to Chart 3).

Chart 3 Percent of Alcohol/Drug Using and Non-Using Offenders by Month of Incident



A weapon or force was used in 89.1% of violent crimes involving one offender. The use of a weapon or force was most likely if the offender was using alcohol or drugs at the time of the crime. In 96.6% of the cases where an offender was using alcohol or drugs, the use of a weapon or force was used. The most common weapon used was a personal weapon (82.4%), like an offender's hands, fists, or feet. An offender who was under the influence of drugs/alcohol was slightly more likely to use their person as a weapon (84.3%), but the association is very weak. In fact, whether the offender used any substances before or during the crime had very little to do with the type of weapon or force they used (see Table 3).

On a national level, Greenfield (1998) stated that 1995 NIBRS data showed that about 70% of

<sup>2</sup> Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at <.01; Phi = .011.

alcohol involved incidents of violence occurred in a residence; 11 p.m. was the most frequent time of occurrence; and about 20% of incidences involved the use of a weapon other than hands, fists, or feet <sup>(4)</sup>. This is similar to Idaho's 1998-2004 NIBRS data. Around 66% of alcohol/drug involved violence occurred in a residence; the hour of midnight was the most frequent time of occurrence; and approximately 15% involved the use of a weapon other than hands, fists, or feet.

## Victims

Victims of violent crime involving one offender were likely to be female, between 1-17 years of age, White, and not Hispanic. However, if the offender was using alcohol or drugs at the time of the crime, the victim was most likely to be female, between the ages of 25-34 years, White, not Hispanic, suffer an injury, and suffer a major injury. Compared to how often Hispanics and Native Americans are victimized, they are victimized more often if the offender was using alcohol or drugs.

### GENDER

Females make up 58.5% of all violent crime victims. Victims are slightly more likely to be female if offenders were using alcohol or drugs (59.4%), than if they were not, 58.3% (see Table 4).

### AGE

Victims of violent crime are likely to average an age of 26.6 years. However, when broken down by age category, the largest portions of victims are in the age range of 1 to 17 years. If the offender was drinking alcohol or using drugs at the time of the crime, then a higher proportion of victims are older, in the age range of 25-34 years, and average 30.7 years of age.

Table 3

### Offenders' Use of Alcohol/Drugs During the Crime by Weapon

Weapon was used <sup>a</sup>	Not Using		Using		All	
	N	%*	N	%*	N	%*
Hands, fists, etc. <sup>b</sup>	64,068	82.1	13,297	84.3	77,365	82.4
Firearm	2,397	3.1	488	3.1	2,885	3.1
Blunt Object <sup>c</sup>	1,664	2.2	430	2.7	2,094	2.3
Sharp Instrument <sup>d</sup>	2,589	3.4	597	3.8	3,186	3.4
Other Weapon <sup>e</sup>	6,013	7.8	1,087	6.9	7,100	7.6

\*Totals do not equal 100% because up to three weapons are recorded for each incident. a. Chi<sup>2</sup> Sig. at < .01 (Phi = .104) b. Chi<sup>2</sup> Sig. at < .01 (Phi = .022) c. Chi<sup>2</sup> Sig. at < .01 (Phi = .015) d. Chi<sup>2</sup> Sig. at < .01 (Phi = .009) e. Chi<sup>2</sup> Sig. at < .01 (Phi = -.012)

Table 4

### Victim Characteristics by Offenders' Use of Alcohol/Drugs During the Crime

	Not Using	Using	All
	%	%	%
<b>Gender<sup>a</sup></b>	N = 96,086	18,405	114,491
Female	58.3	59.4	58.5
Male	41.7	40.6	41.5
<b>Age</b>	N = 94,648	18,209	112,857
Mean Age <sup>b</sup>	25.8	30.7	26.6
Median Age	23.0	30.0	24.0
<b>Age Category<sup>c</sup></b>	N = 94,335	18,132	112,467
1-17	32.1	11.9	28.8
18-24	20.9	22.1	21.1
25-34	20.3	29.0	21.7
35-44	16.5	24.0	17.7
45 & Up	10.2	13.0	10.7
<b>Race<sup>d</sup></b>	N = 93,480	17,991	111,481
Asian	0.4	0.4	0.4
Black	0.8	0.7	0.8
Native American	0.7	2.3	1.0
White	98.1	96.7	97.9
<b>Ethnicity<sup>e</sup></b>	N = 91,126	17,539	108,665
Not Hispanic	91.6	91.1	91.5
Hispanic	8.4	8.9	8.5
<b>Injury<sup>f</sup></b>	N = 85,902	17,840	103,742
No	48.4	36.4	46.4
Yes	51.6	63.6	53.6
<b>Injury Severity<sup>g</sup></b>	N = 44,304	11,352	55,656
Minor Injury	91.9	89.6	91.4
Major Injury	8.1	10.4	8.6

Numbers are per victim. a. Chi<sup>2</sup> Sig. at < .01 (Phi = .008) b. t-test sig. at < .01. c. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Eta = .171) d. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Cramer's V = .058) e. Chi<sup>2</sup> Sig. at < .05 (Phi = .006) f. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Phi = .091) g. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Phi = .033)

## ETHNICITY

Although Hispanics account for 7.9% of Idaho’s population, they make up 8.5% of Idaho’s violent crime victims <sup>(11)</sup>. This disparity is still more evident if their offender was using alcohol/drugs during the crime, accounting for 8.9% of victims whose offender was using alcohol or drugs.

This .4% difference between Hispanic victims whose offenders used alcohol/drugs and those victims whose offenders didn’t use alcohol/drugs doesn’t seem like much. However, because the number of Hispanic victims is small compared to all victims, statistical analysis shows that this difference is significant.

## INJURY

A majority of violent crime victims suffered an injury (53.6%). An injury to the victim occurred more often when the offender was using alcohol or drugs. About 6 out of 10 victims, whose offender was using alcohol/drugs, suffered an injury. About 5 in 10 victims, whose offender was not using, suffered an injury.

Not only was a victim more likely to suffer an injury if the offender was using substances around the time of the crime, they were more likely to suffer a severe injury. About 10.4% of victims whose offender used alcohol/drugs during the crime suffered a major injury. A smaller percentage of injured victims whose offender was not using alcohol/drugs suffered a major injury, 8.1%. (Major injuries are severe lacerations, apparent broken bones, apparent internal injuries, loss of teeth, or unconsciousness. Minor injuries are classified by the investigating officer).

## Type of Violent Crime

The most prevalent type of violent crime is simple assault (66.0%), which include physical attacks where a weapon isn’t displayed and the victim doesn’t suffer a severe or aggravated bodily injury like broken bones, a severe laceration, etc. The second most common violent crime is aggravated assault (12.6%). Both simple assaults and aggravated assaults occurred more often if the attacker was using alcohol or drugs than if they were not using. For victims whose attackers were suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, 74.5% were victims of simple assault and 16.2% were victims of aggravated assault. In all other violent crimes, a larger proportion of victims had offenders who were not described by the investigating officer as having used alcohol or drugs during or just before the crime (see Table 5).

## Aggravated Assault/Homicide Circumstances

Of the 14,626 aggravated assaults and homicides between 1998 and the end of 2004, 56.1% had to do with an argument. Further, it was more likely that the circumstance of the crime was an argument if the offender had been using alcohol

**Table 5**  
**Type of Alcohol/Drug Related Crime by Offenders' Use of Alcohol/Drugs During the Crime**

	Not Using		Using		All	
	N	%*	N	%*	N	%*
Simple Assault <sup>a</sup>	62,230	64.4	13,742	74.5	75,972	66.0
Aggravated Assault <sup>b</sup>	11,466	11.9	2,996	16.2	14,462	12.6
Intimidation <sup>c</sup>	10,259	10.6	559	3.0	10,818	9.4
Sex Offenses <sup>d</sup>	10,135	10.5	943	5.1	11,078	9.6
Robbery <sup>e</sup>	1,493	1.5	107	0.6	1,600	1.4
Kidnapping <sup>f</sup>	1,124	1.2	144	0.8	1,268	1.1
Murder/Non-Neg.	141	0.1	23	0.1	164	0.1
Negligent Manslaughter <sup>g</sup>	16	0.0	8	0.0	24	0.0

\*Totals more than 100%, more than one offense can be recorded for each victim. a. Chi<sup>2</sup> Sig. at < .01 (Phi = .078) b. Chi<sup>2</sup> Sig. at < .01 (Phi = .048) c. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Phi = -.095) d. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Phi = -.067) e. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Phi = -.030) f. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Phi = -.013) g. Chi<sup>2</sup> Sig. at < .05 (Phi = .007)

or drugs before or during the crime (61.9%), than if they hadn't (54.5%). Additionally, the attacker's alcohol or drug use increased the likelihood that a lover's quarrel, assault on an officer, or another felony were the circumstances of the aggravated assault or homicide (see Table 6).

### Victim-Offender Relationship

The most common victim-offender relationship was a non-family member whom the victim knew (37.3%). If an offender was suspected by the investigating officer to have used substances during or just before the crime, the victim was most likely the offender's intimate. Of the victims whose offenders used alcohol or drugs, 43.9% were intimates. Only 27.4% of victims whose offender was not using alcohol or drugs were intimate partners with the offender. An offender was a stranger 8.1% of the time but they accounted for 12.1% of the victims whose offender was using alcohol/drugs at the time of the crime. If an offender was not using these substances at the time of the crime, he/she was most likely the victim's family member or known to the victim outside of the family unit. Of the 94,215 victims whose offender did not use alcohol/drugs around the time of the crime, 17.5% were the offender's family member and 39.2% were the offender's acquaintance, friend, or other person they knew outside of their family (refer to Table 7).

### Offenders

Violent offenders, who offend alone, are most likely to be male, White, and about 28 years old and in the age range of 25-34 years. However, if the offender was using alcohol or drugs at the time of the crime, the offender is even more likely to be male and older (averaging 32 years of age).

**Table 6**  
**Aggravated Assault/Homicide Circumstances by Offenders' Use of Alcohol/Drugs During the Crime**

	Not Using		Using		All	
	N	%*	N	%*	N	%*
Argument <sup>a</sup>	6,339	54.5	1,873	61.9	8,212	56.1
Lover's quarrel <sup>b</sup>	387	3.3	238	7.9	625	4.3
Assault on an officer <sup>c</sup>	314	2.7	182	6.0	496	3.4
Gang-related <sup>d</sup>	110	0.9	16	0.5	126	0.9
Other felony involved <sup>e</sup>	56	0.5	28	0.9	84	0.6
Drug dealing involved	31	0.3	12	0.4	43	0.3
Negligence	16	0.1	8	0.3	24	0.2
Other Circumstances	2,564	22.1	475	15.7	3,039	20.7
Unknown	11,899	16.3	261	8.6	2,160	14.7

\*Totals more than 100%, more than one circumstance can be recorded for each victim. There were 14,626 victims of Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter and Aggravated Assault. a. Chi<sup>2</sup> Sig. at < .01 (Phi = .060) b. Chi<sup>2</sup> Sig. at < .01 (Phi = .091) c. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Phi = -.074) d. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Phi = -.018) e. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Phi = .024)

**Table 7**  
**Victim's Relationship To Offender by Offenders' Use of Alcohol/Drugs During the Crime**

	Not Using	Using	All
	%	%	%
Intimate	27.4	43.9	30.1
Family	17.5	11.4	16.5
Known outside of family	39.2	27.7	37.3
Stranger	7.3	12.1	8.0
Relationship unknown	8.7	4.9	8.1
	N = 94,215	18,058	112,273

Numbers are per victim. a. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Cramer's V = .162).

Native Americans are violent offenders more often if they were using alcohol or drugs (3.6%) than if they were not (1.1%).

### GENDER

Males make up 80.4% of violent criminal offenders. A male offender is more likely to use alcohol/drugs around the time of the crime (83.0%), than not (80.0%). On the other hand, females make up a disproportionate amount of offenders who did not use alcohol/drugs, 20.0% compared to 17.0% of using offenders. This

gender difference is expected given the fact that women drink alcohol less often and consume lesser quantities of alcohol than men <sup>(9)</sup>.

### AGE

As expected, offenders who used alcohol or drugs are likely to be older than those who didn't. Violent offenders are likely to average an age of 27.7 years and be in the age range of 25-34 (26.1%). However, if the offender was drinking alcohol or doing drugs at the time of the crime, then they average an age of 31.7 years. Also, higher proportions are in the older age ranges. Only 3.0% of using offenders were under the age of 18, compared to 20.9% of offenders who were not suspected of using alcohol or drugs.

### RACE

Whites account for most violent offenders, 96.1%. However, compared to their population rates, a disproportionate amount of Native Americans are offenders if they used alcohol or drugs before or during the crime. Although Native Americans comprise 1.4% of Idaho's population, they consisted of 3.6% of offenders who were suspected of using alcohol/drugs <sup>(11)</sup>.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

These findings indicate that violent crimes involving alcohol or drugs have declined in recent years. If an offender did use alcohol or drugs around the time of the crime, the crime was more likely to occur: at a bar or nightclub, between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m., on a weekend, in the months of July and August, with the use of a weapon or force. The offender's alcohol/drug use increased the chances that a victim was: female, between the ages of 25-34 years, a victim of aggravated assault or simple assault, and the offender's intimate or a stranger. Compared to how often Hispanics and Native Americans are victimized; they are victimized

**Table 8**  
**Violent Offender Characteristics by Offenders' Use of Alcohol/Drugs During the Crime**

		Not Using %	Using %	All %
<b>Gender<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>N =</b>	<b>83,999</b>	<b>15,814</b>	<b>99,813</b>
Female		20.0	17.0	19.6
Male		80.0	83.0	80.4
<b>Age</b>	<b>N =</b>	<b>96,644</b>	<b>18,442</b>	<b>115,086</b>
Mean Age <sup>b</sup>		26.8	31.7	27.7
Median Age		25	32	27
<b>Age Category<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>N =</b>	<b>80,771</b>	<b>15,572</b>	<b>96,343</b>
1-17		20.9	3.0	18.0
18-24		21.4	21.2	21.4
25-34		24.9	32.5	26.1
35-44		21.0	29.8	22.4
45 & Up		11.9	13.5	12.1
<b>Race<sup>d</sup></b>	<b>N =</b>	<b>81,180</b>	<b>15,496</b>	<b>96,676</b>
Asian		0.5	0.3	0.5
Black		1.9	1.5	1.9
Native American		1.1	3.6	1.5
White		96.4	94.6	96.1

Numbers are per offender/incident. a. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Phi = .033) b. t-test sig. at < .01. c. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Eta = .179) d. Chi<sup>2</sup> sig. at < .01 (Cramer's V = .075)

more often if the offender was using alcohol or drugs. Further, not only was a victim more likely to suffer an injury if the offender was using substances around the time of the crime, he/she was also more likely to suffer a major injury. The offender's alcohol/drug use increased the chances that an offender was: male, about 32 years of age, and in the age range of 25-34 years. Compared to how often Native Americans are violent offenders; they offend more often if they were using alcohol or drugs.

The literature indicates that somewhere from 25-40% of violent crimes are committed when the offender was using alcohol or drugs at the time of the crime or just before committing it. This literature also suggests some link between alcohol/drug consumption and violent crime. However, the findings on the reported crime data presented in this analysis suggest alcohol and drugs

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play a much smaller role in violent acts (at least those that are reported to the police). Only an average of 15.7% of violent crimes in Idaho between 1998 and the end of 2004 involved an offender who was suspected of using alcohol or drugs during or just before the violent act. Further, when an association was found between alcohol/drug use and other variables, the association was very weak and accounted for very little variation in the occurrence of violent crimes. This finding may be explained by a number of factors.

Although it was expected that alcohol and drug use would have a greater impact on violent crime than found in this study, many factors must be considered. First, Greenfeld and Henneberg state that research indicates that a decreasing amount of violent crime is attributable to offender drinking and there is a decline in alcohol use and misuse<sup>(5)</sup>. Second, Idahoans don't drink alcohol, or use drugs, as much as Americans as a whole. Therefore, it is expected that the influence of alcohol and drugs may not have as great an impact on violent crime in Idaho as it does at the national level, or other locations where previous studies were conducted.

In addition, limitations to this study may hamper the ability to create a complete picture of the role alcohol and drug use has in violent crime. First, this study relies on archival incident and arrest report data that may understate alcohol's presence. The accuracy of this study depends on how accurately and consistently the police report an offender's drug or alcohol use at the time of the crime. A second limitation of this study is the necessity to restrict cases to those involving one offender. By limiting cases to those involving only one offender, 13% of all violent crimes from 1998 to 2004 are missed in the analysis. However, further analysis has shown that, with a few exceptions, the relationships between variables in this report are the same when

multiple offenders in each incident were considered. If there are differences, it is most likely that the relationships between variables are the same but the association is either stronger or weaker when multiple offenders are considered.

When cases involving multiple offenders are considered, there are only a few completely different findings in relation to offender alcohol/drug use. Lone offenders who used alcohol/drugs at the time of the crime are more likely to use a weapon in the "other" category. Also, the aggravated assault or homicide circumstances are more likely to be in the "other felony involved" category. When cases involving multiple offenders are considered, these differences do not exist. Further, there are not any significant differences between lone offender's alcohol/drug use and the use of a firearm or having negligent circumstances. However, cases involving multiple offenders where at least one offender was using alcohol/drugs at the time of the crime are more likely to involve a firearm and the aggravated assault or homicide circumstances are more likely to be negligent. Finally, cases involving multiple offenders are more likely to be alcohol/drug related than those involving a single offender.

Given these limitations, this study only supports the idea that alcohol and drug use plays some role in violent crime, even if it is a minimal role. Further research is needed to determine what this role is and what the strength of this association is. Although the use of incident based data helps in this endeavor, other research methods such as victimization surveys, surveys of arrestees and prisoners, and urinalysis of arrestees may provide a better picture of the role alcohol and drugs play in Idaho's violent crimes.

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## APPENDIX A: VIOLENT CRIME DEFINITIONS

Definitions are from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook: National Incident-Based Reporting System Edition, available at: [www.fbi.gov/ucr/handbook/ucrhandbook04.pdf](http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/handbook/ucrhandbook04.pdf)

### MURDER AND NONNEGLIGENT MANSLAUGHTER

**Definition:** The willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another.

As a general rule, any death due to injuries received in a fight, argument, quarrel, assault, or commission of a crime is classified in this category. The killings of a felon by a peace officer in the line of duty, or of a felon by a private citizen, are the only willful killings that are not classified as Murder/Non-negligent manslaughter. Suicides, accidental deaths, assaults to murder, traffic fatalities, and attempted murders are not classified as murder or negligent manslaughter. The findings of a court, coroner's inquest, etc., do not affect the reporting of offenses in this category; these are law enforcement statistics. Assaults to murder and attempted murders are classified as aggravated assaults.

### NEGLIGENT MANSLAUGHTER

**Definition:** The killing of another person through negligence.

Included in this offense are killings resulting from hunting accidents, gun cleaning, children playing with guns, etc. Not included are deaths of persons due to their own negligence; accidental deaths not resulting from gross negligence; and accidental traffic fatalities.

### AGGRAVATED ASSAULT

**Definition:** An unlawful attack by one person upon another wherein the offender uses a weapon or displays it in a threatening manner, or the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness.

Note: This also includes assault with disease (as in cases when the offender is aware that he/she is infected with a deadly disease and deliberately attempts to inflict the disease by biting, spitting, etc.). Attempts are not included.

### SIMPLE ASSAULT

**Definition:** An unlawful physical attack by one person upon another where neither the offender displays a weapon, nor the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness.

Included are offenses such as minor assault, hazing, assault and battery, and injury caused by culpable negligence. As with aggravated assault, there are no attempted simple assaults.

### INTIMIDATION

**Definition:** To unlawfully place another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words and/or other conduct, but without displaying a weapon or subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.

Intimidation involves an offender making some type of threat to the victim without actually using or displaying a weapon. Such threats can be made in person, over the telephone, or in writing.

## KIDNAPPING/ABDUCTION

**Definition:** The unlawful seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will, or of a minor without the consent of his/her custodial parent(s) or legal guardian.

This offense includes not only kidnapping and abduction, but hostage situations as well. Although the object of a kidnapping may be to obtain money or property, this category is intended to capture information only on the persons actually kidnapped or abducted, not those persons or organizations paying ransoms.

## FORCIBLE RAPE

**Definition:** The carnal knowledge of a person, forcibly and/or against that person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity (or because of his/her youth).

This offense includes the forcible rape of both males and females. If no force or threat of force was used and the victim was under the statutory age of consent, the crime should be classified as statutory rape. Attempts are included.

## FORCIBLE SODOMY

**Definition:** Oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person, forcibly and/or against that person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her youth or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

If a victim is both raped and sodomized in one incident, then both offenses are reported.

## FORCIBLE FONDLING

**Definition:** The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, forcibly and/or against that person's will; or, not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her youth or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental incapacity.

Forcible fondling includes indecent liberties and child molesting. Because forcible fondling is an element of forcible rape, forcible sodomy, and sexual assault with an object, it is reported only if it is the sole forcible sex offense committed against a victim.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT WITH AN OBJECT

**Definition:** To use an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, forcibly and/or against that person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her youth or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

An object or instrument is anything used by the offender other than the offender's genitalia. Examples are a finger, bottle, handgun, stick, etc.

## ROBBERY

**Definition:** The taking, or attempting to take, anything of value under confrontational circumstances from the control, custody, or care of another person by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear of immediate harm.

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