

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE HOLIDAYS

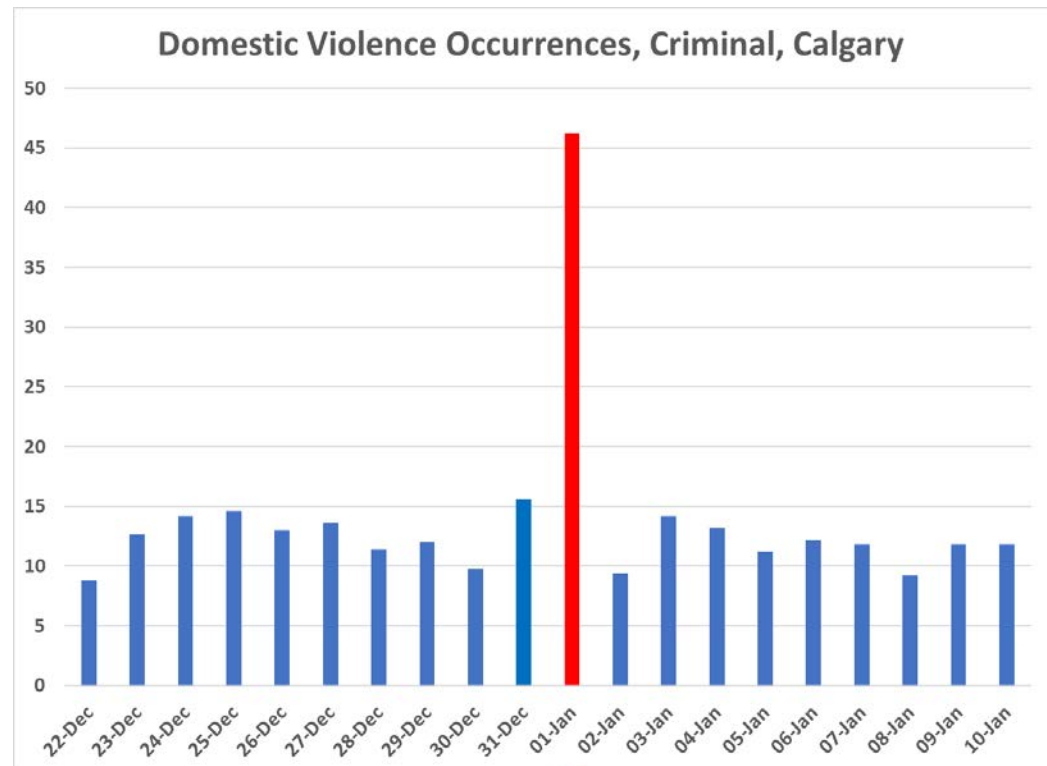
Occurrences of domestic violence spike on January 1st each year.

The figure presents data showing the average number of occurrences of domestic violence in Calgary each day between December 22nd and January 10th, recorded from 2013 to 2017. Our focus is on occurrences of domestic violence that result in an intervention by police and satisfy a definition of criminal behavior used by [Statistics Canada](#). These occurrences typically involve criminal offenses such as assault, criminal harassment, sexual offences, or homicide.

Not shown in the figure are occurrences of domestic violence that fail to meet that criminal threshold and those not coming to the attention of police. An estimate from a [study](#) by Statistics Canada released in 2014, suggests that less than one in five cases of spousal abuse are reported to the police.

The total number of reported domestic violence occurrences that meet Statistics Canada's criminal threshold has increased in Calgary in each of the past five years, from 2,795 occurrences in 2013 to 4,847 in 2017.

Research at [The School of Public Policy](#) and [elsewhere](#) has highlighted holidays, sporting events, and the financial stress from deteriorating economic conditions, as being associated with the timing of domestic violence incidents. The spike in occurrences shown in the figure for January 1st, a date often associated with a number of these triggers, is consistent with those findings.



Source: Data kindly provided by Calgary Police Service. Average number of occurrences between December 22nd and January 10th for the years of 2013 to 2017.

The Social Policy research team at The School of Public Policy studies ways in which public policies can be better designed to more effectively serve those in need. While our research is typically reliant on hard data and statistical inferences, our work with social agencies has also taught us that many social ills can be addressed through simple acts of kindness and by being respectful toward one another. Particularly during the December holiday season, many of those in need rely heavily on help provided by charities and other organizations. You can help by giving generously.