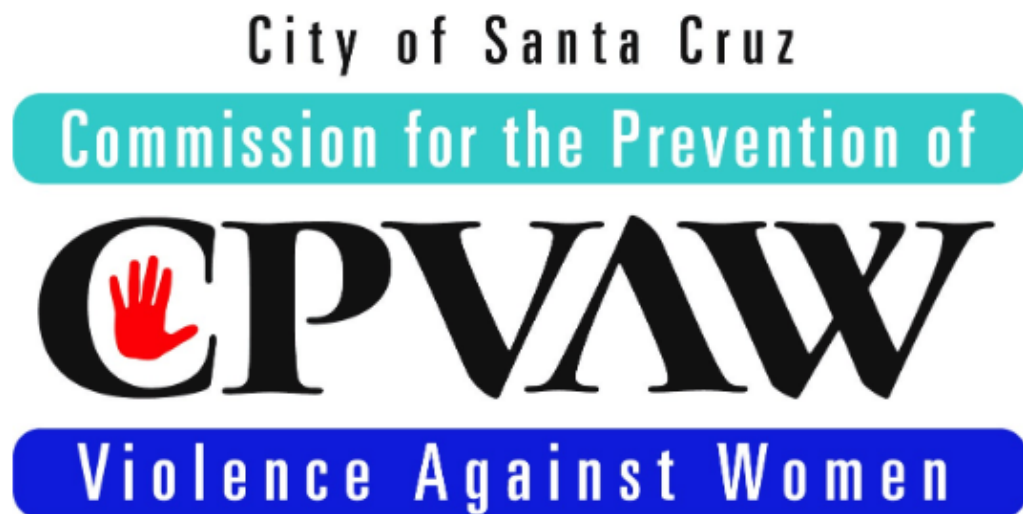


The 2023 Annual Report & Joint Report on Sexual Assault  
Presented by the Commission for the Prevention of Violence  
Against Women  
&  
The Santa Cruz Police Department



Dear Mayor Keeley and Esteemed Council Members,

On behalf of the Santa Cruz City Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women (CPVAW) and the Santa Cruz Police Department, we are pleased to present the 2023 Joint Annual Report on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence. This report represents a collaboration between CPVAW and the Santa Cruz Police Department, aimed at addressing sexual and domestic violence against women in our community.

**Purpose and Impact:** We are confident that this report serves as a resource for community education and the activation of initiatives to reinforce safety measures and prevent violence against women. Through our unified endeavors, CPVAW and the Santa Cruz Police Department are steadfast in our commitment to safeguarding the well-being of our residents and nurturing a secure environment for all.

**Progress and Challenges:** This report also serves as a vital compass for mobilizing initiatives to combat violence against women, which is at the core of CPVAW's mission. Our collaborative efforts are dedicated to ensuring the safety and welfare of every resident while upholding the dignity and rights of all individuals.

**Ongoing Initiatives:**

- The Police Department remains committed and dedicated to conducting thorough, timely, and professional investigations, ensuring justice for survivors.
- CPVAW will persist in collaborating with educational and preventative programs, fostering awareness and prevention.
- Both entities will closely collaborate during critical events, emphasizing outreach and support.

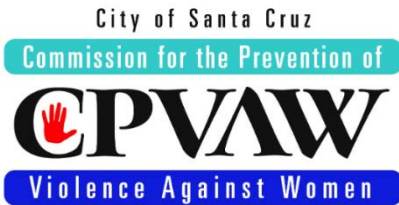
Together, we are resolutely committed to eradicating sexual assaults and domestic violence in Santa Cruz. Our dedication extends to fostering community engagement and supporting programs and initiatives aimed at preventing violence against women. We sincerely thank you for your unwavering support in our shared endeavor to create a safer environment for all members of our community.

CPVAW and the Santa Cruz Police Department stand committed to nurturing a culture of safety and support, enriching the lives of each resident we serve. Our commitment to delivering the highest level of service remains unwavering. Together, we strive to eliminate sexual assault and domestic violence through collaboration, community engagement, and effective solutions.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of CPVAW and the Santa Cruz Police Department,

Danielle Long  
Chair, CPVAW

Bernie Escalante  
Chief of Police, SCPD



## **MISSION**

To collaborate with local stakeholder partners and law enforcement to ensure best practices to respond to and prosecute violent crimes against women.

## **VISION**

To end sexual assault, sexual harassment, and domestic violence in the City of Santa Cruz through prevention, programs, and public policy.

## **ABOUT CPVAW**

To end sexual assault, sexual harassment, and domestic violence in the City of Santa Cruz through prevention, programs, and public policy. Its creation was a response to the high rates of domestic violence and sexual assault in the city and the need for a community-led effort to address these issues.

The Commission's main focus areas and priorities include:

- Providing education to the community and raising awareness of the resources available to survivors of violence.
- Advocating for the development of programs and services that support survivors.
- Promoting the prevention of violence by addressing its root causes.

Their primary goal is to raise awareness of the impact of violence against women and to promote healthy, non-violent relationships. In addition, the Commission seeks to engage and empower community members to prevent violence through education, support, and resources. They also collaborate with other organizations and agencies to develop coordinated responses to violence against women, which includes training and educating first responders and law enforcement.

The Commission also has several specific goals and priorities that they have identified, including developing prevention programs for youth, working to increase the availability and accessibility of services for survivors, improving data collection and reporting on violence against women, and addressing the intersections of violence with issues such as racism and poverty. There have been some developing changes in the last year to focus on three goals areas:

1. Increase CPVAW's Visibility and Impact
2. Strengthen CPVAW's Partnerships
3. Strengthen CPVAW's Processes

Overall, the Commission of Prevention of Violence Against Women is committed to creating a safe and supportive community for all women, free from violence and oppression.

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**Who We Are:**

Established in 1981 by Ordinance 81-29, CPVAW consists of seven city resident volunteers who are appointed by the Santa Cruz City Council. Originally brought forward by community members, then approved by the City Council, the Commission is a City Council Advisory Body.

**2023 Commissioners:**

Danielle Long - Chair  
Ann Simonton - Vice Chair  
Brandon Bollinger  
Ilene Feinman  
Karen Madura  
Anissa Novak  
Gabriella Dolora Trigueiro

**CPVAW Meetings**

CPVAW schedules six meetings per year on the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm. We encourage members of our community and city government to attend CPVAW meetings. We hope to foster an open dialogue with our community to share information and concerns, and to work together to develop policies and programs that further our mission.

**Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of the report is to provide a better understanding for our community members regarding the issue of sexual assault, domestic violence and identify local trends and key findings. This report should be used to tailor educational outreach, define opportunities for our community to reduce sexual assault, and identify ways for Santa Cruz Police Department to remain up to date on the best practices when working with victims, and investigations.

**Definitions:**

The following definitions are listed to provide a better understanding of the data contained in this report:

- *California Penal Codes*  
Sexual assault in California is defined as any sexual activity against the consent of the victim by means of force, threat of force, violence, duress, or where the victim is incapable of giving consent or is unconscious of the nature of the act. This includes various penal codes in addition to rape.
    - 220 PC Attempted Rape: attempted unwanted vaginal intercourse.
    - 261/262 PC Rape: unwanted vaginal intercourse
    - 286 PC Sodomy: unwanted anal intercourse
    - 287/288 PC Oral Copulation: unwanted oral intercourse
    - 289 PC Penetration with a foreign object: Unwanted penetration of the vagina or anus with a foreign object.
  
  - *FBI Uniform Crime Report (UCR)*  
Beginning in 2013 The Department of Justice changed the definition of rape changed to, "Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without consent of the victim." Previously, the UCR data was only composed of only PC
-

261, now the UCR data has been expanded to include California Penal Code Sections: 220, 261/262, 286, 287/288, & 289. The revised definition expands rape to include both male and female victims and offenders and reflects the various forms of sexual penetration understood to be rape, especially nonconsenting acts of sodomy, and sexual assaults with objects.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023 COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

- Issued CPVAW Newsletter 2023
- Partnered with Santa Cruz City Schools to provide self-defense classes
- Revamped and updated CPVAW website
- Reinstated drug testing kits
- Brought back drug testing coasters
- Increased branding awareness by giving out t-shirts, tote bags, and stickers at community events
- Increased community-based organization partnerships by collaborating on the following programs and events: MOAB, Dyke Trans March, Pride Parade, Monarch Services, MENtors for Change, Coaching for Boys into Men
- Held Men Speak-Out event on April 26, 2023



## Statistical Data for the City of Santa Cruz:

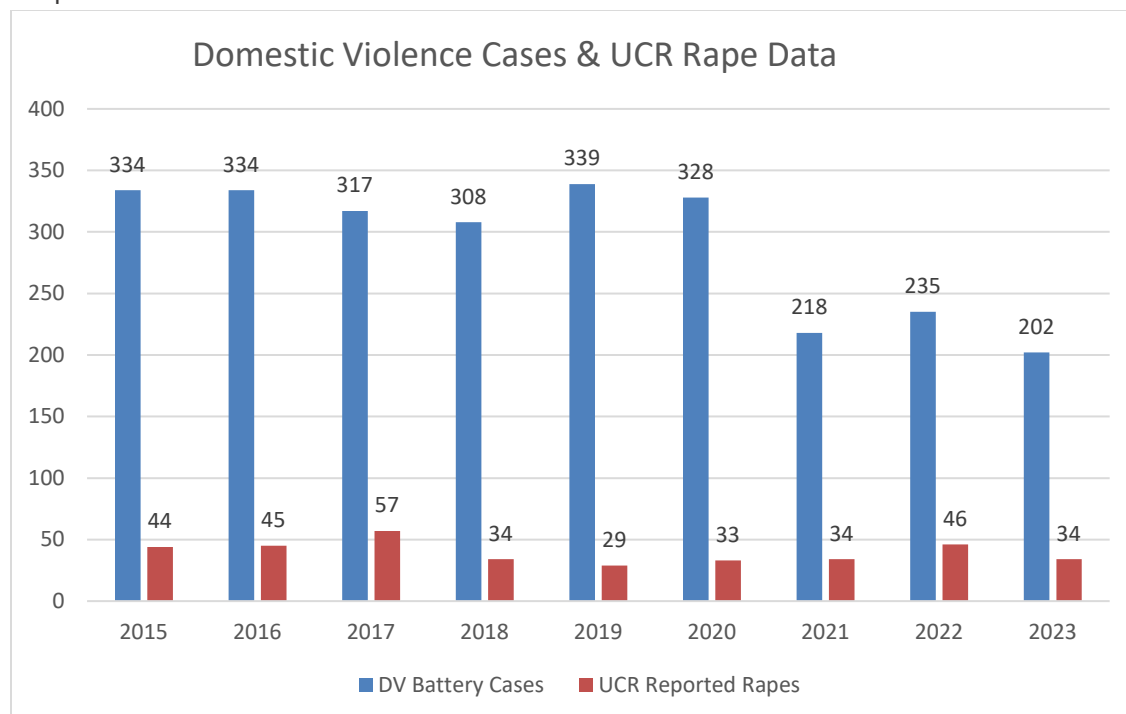
The City of Santa Cruz has utilized different data points over the years with regards to reporting rape statistics. There are two sources of data that have been used by CPVAW: The Uniform Crime Reporting program from the US Department of Justice – Federal Bureau of Investigation (UCR) and the California Penal Code, various Sections relating to sexual assaults and domestic violence.

CPVAW also collects data on Domestic Violence trends in the City. According to CA Penal Code Section 13700- 13702, domestic violence means abuse committed against an adult or a minor who is a spouse, former spouse, cohabitant, former cohabitant, or person with whom the suspect has had a child or is having or has had a dating or engagement relationship. Data utilized is CA PC 273.5 and 243(e)(1) Sexual Battery.

The chart below includes both Domestic Violence (DV) cases and Rape cases as defined by the UCR over the past nine years. A review of this data shows a significant drop in Domestic Violence cases from 2020 to 2021 of 34%, and an all time low of 202 cases in 2023.

Analyzing the UCR data, there has been a notable decrease in “Rape” since the peak 2017 of 57 cases. There has been a 26% decrease from 2022 to 2023.

Graph A.



Footnotes:

\*2021 & 2023 data source: SCPD. DOJ has not yet published the data for those years.

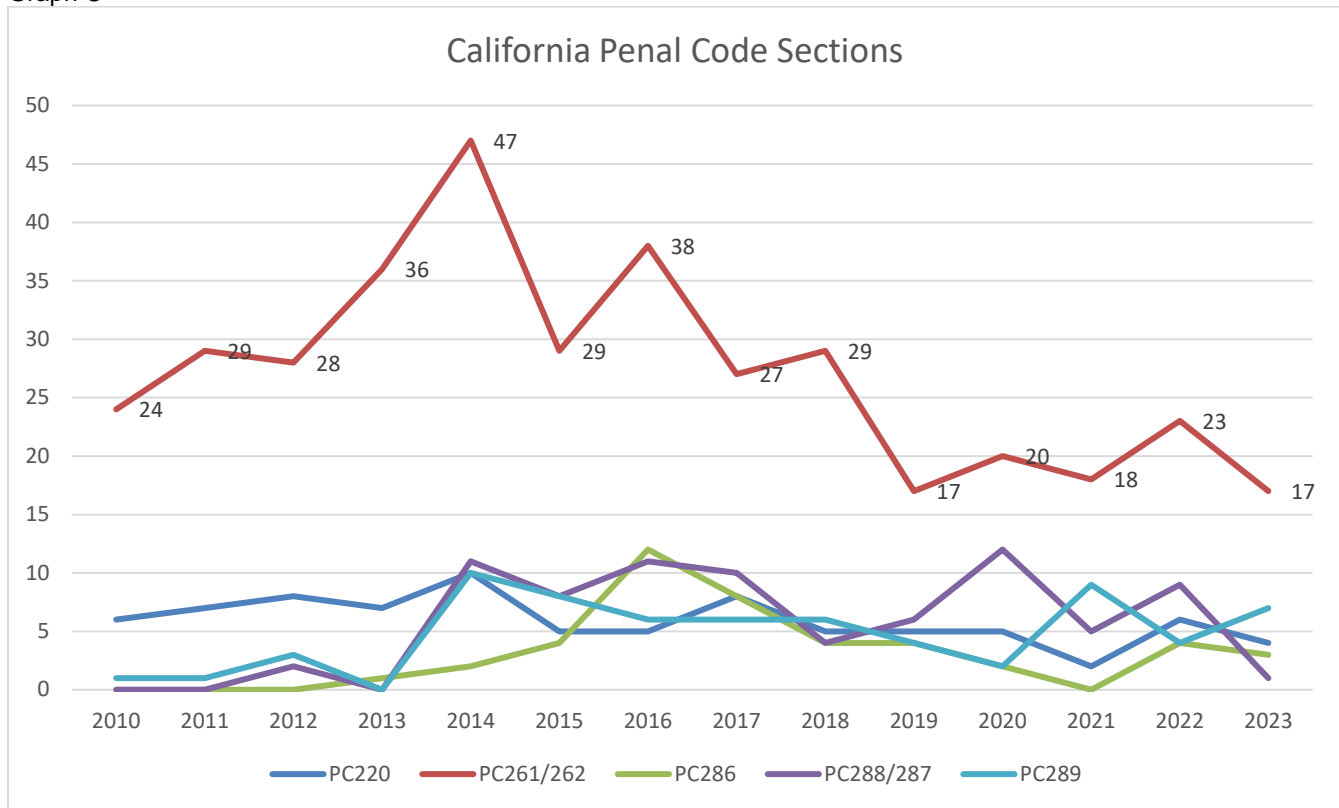
\*2022 data source: SCPD. The SCPD reviewed previous data and has revised the data based on some cases having multiple violations, missing data points. The result was an increase in cases.

## Department of Justice UCR Data & California Penal Code Sections:

The UCR data is a summary composed of five different California Penal Code Sections. To understand the data, staff looked at each penal code section separately over the past 14 years. Of note, a reported crime may include multiple offenses within one case. This can make it difficult to interpret the data. This graph shows that within the UCR data, PC261/262 “Rape” has the highest crime rate. There is a notable decline from the peak in 2014 of 47 to 17 in 2023.

There has been a decline from 2022-2023 in each of the separate penal codes with the exception of PC289 which increased from 4 to 7.

Graph C



Source: SCPD

- **California Penal Codes**

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\*PC262 Spousal Rape was repealed 2021, now under PC261

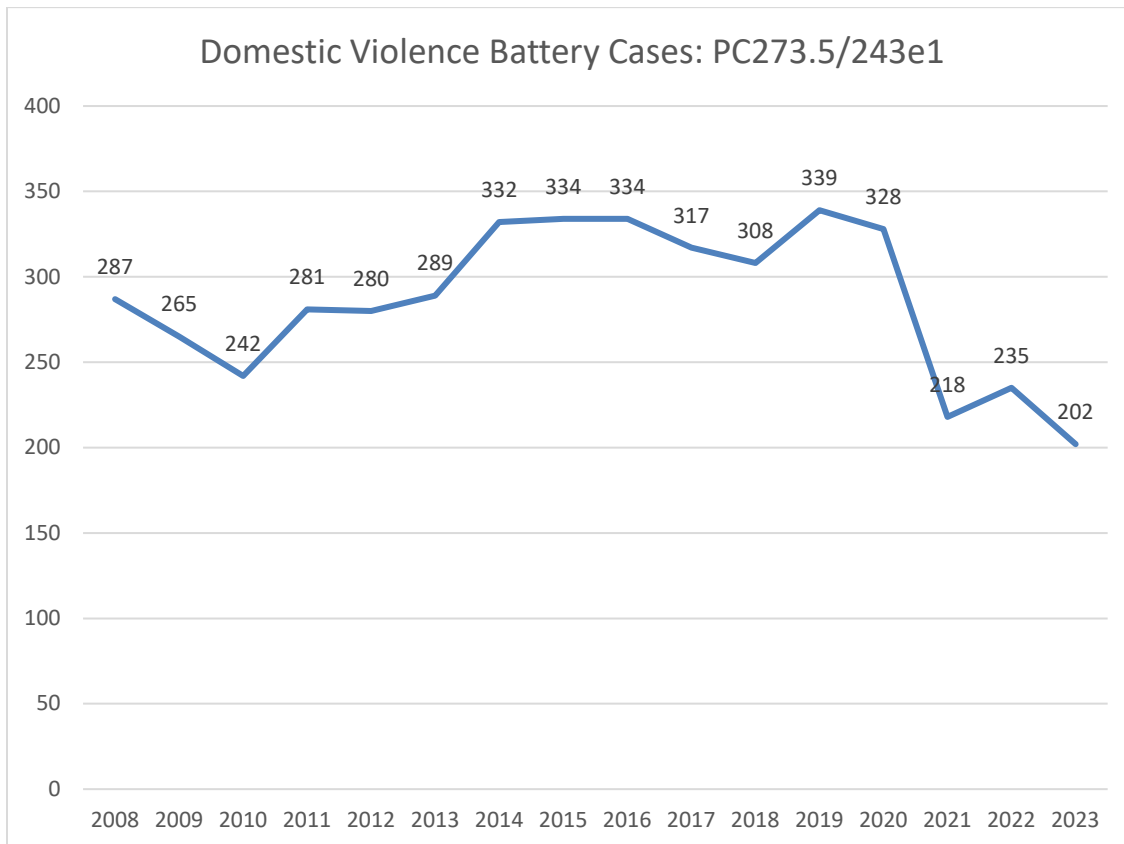
\*PC288 Oral Copulation – in 2019 became 287

## City of Santa Cruz Domestic Violence Trends: 2003-2023

According to CA Penal Code Section 13700-13702, domestic violence means abuse committed against an adult or a minor who is a spouse, former spouse, cohabitant, former cohabitant, or person with whom the suspect has had a child or is having or has had a dating or engagement relationship. CA Penal Code Section 243.4 and 273.5 are used to identify these cases.

A 16 year look at the number of Domestic Violence (DV) cases shows a high point in 2019, then a decline in 2020, then a significant drop in 2021 and again in 2023

Graph D



Source: SCPD, previous CPVAW Annual Reports.

“One in four homicides in the United States is related to domestic violence...”

Improving Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence by Identifying and preventing Gender Violence. Department of Justice. *2019 Homicide trends in the United States: Intimate homicide*. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.



*“Rape is the most under-reported crime; 63% of sexual assaults are not reported to police”*  
National Sexual Violence Resource Center, Info & Stats for Journalists: Statistics About Sexual Violence

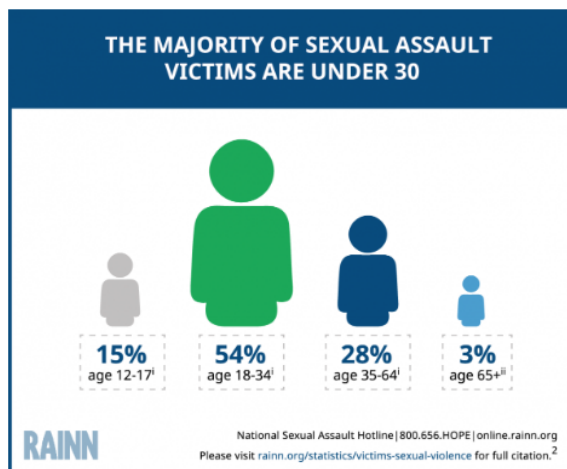
### Who are the perpetrators?

The majority of perpetrators are someone known to the victim. Approximately eight out of 10 sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim, such as in the case of intimate partner sexual violence or acquaintance rape.

RAINN (*Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network*)

While CPVAW does not receive data with regards to age, gender or other statistical details of victims in the City of Santa Cruz, a literature search of victims of sexual assault reveals the following staggering data points:

### Younger People Are at the Highest Risk of Sexual Violence



- Ages 12-34 are the highest risk years for rape and sexual assault.
- Those age 65 and older are 92% less likely than 12-24 year-olds to be a victim of rape or sexual assault, and 83% less likely than 25-49 year olds.

According to a recent study (1) “Adolescents are at higher risk of sexual assault than any other age group...”, “...Teenagers who have been sexually assaulted are at risk of mental health conditions and poor school performance, research found. The increased risk lasted for more than a year.”

- (1) Clarke, V., Goddard, A., Wellings, K. *et al.* Medium-term health and social outcomes in adolescents following sexual assault: a prospective mixed-methods cohort study. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol* **58**, 1777–1793 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-021-02127-4>

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Recommendations**

The Commission for Prevention of Violence Against Women and the Santa Cruz Police Department share the common goal of keeping women safe in our community. The Commission and the Police Department make the following recommendations:

- The Commission and the Police Department collaborate on their efforts to improve the safety of women in the City of Santa Cruz.
- The Commission and the Police Department assess their programming, outreach efforts, collaboration with other community partners to better meet the needs of the women in the community.
- The Commission continues to work on their established goals.
  - Goal 1: Increase CPVAW's Visibility & Impact while strengthening CPVAW's Partnerships
  - Goal 2: Strengthen CPVAW's Processes
- The Police Department continue its commitment to providing the highest level of professional training on sexual assault response to victims and assault investigations to all of its police officers.

### **SANTA CRUZ COUNTY RESOURCES**

- Law Enforcement – 911
- Santa Cruz Police Department Victim Advocate:  
(831) 420-5827
- Monarch Services  
24-hour Bilingual Crisis Help Line  
1 (888) 900-4232

#### **Santa Cruz Office**

550 Water Street Suite J3  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 425-4030

- Walnut Avenue Family & Women's Center  
24-hour Domestic Violence Helpline  
1(866) 269-2559
  - National Domestic Violence Hotline  
1 (800) 799-7233
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