

## One in four instances of insults, threats or physical violence takes place while victims are doing their job

When individuals over 16 years of age, responding to the “Living environment and security” surveys from 2007 to 2016, claimed to have been the victim of insults, threats or physical violence (excluding robbery and outside the household), on at least one occasion over the previous two years, they described the most recent assault suffered in detail. It has been calculated that 24% of them indicate that the offence took place “while they were doing their job”.

This proportion varies considerably depending on their line of business: in particular, it is more than 50% for individuals whose job involves working regularly with others, such as teachers, drivers, health workers or “the police, military and similar occupations”.

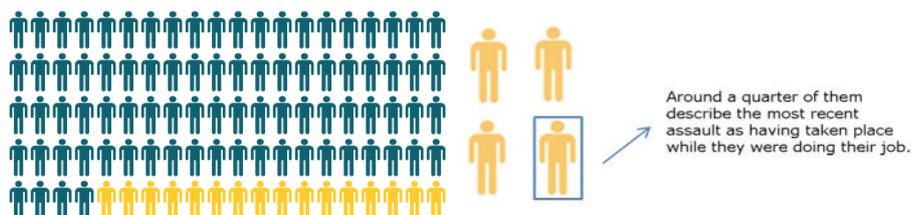
Usually, in almost 7 out of 10 cases, when the most recent offence took place while on-duty, it concerned insults. Threats are less common – claimed in around a quarter of the offences described – and physical violence even less so, accounting for 6% of cases. For some lines of business, such as tradespeople and similar occupations, the proportion of threats is slightly higher (34%). For the police, military and similar occupations, physical violence accounts for a greater share (13%).

Even though, in the same way as for victims outside the professional setting, they report subsequent damage and disruption in their everyday life, victims whose most recent assault occurred while they were doing their job nevertheless seem to be less psychologically scarred by it. One possible hypothesis would be that the victim sees a clear dividing line between their professional status and their own person.

During the “Living environment and security” surveys, a distinction is made between assaults targeting natural persons according to their motive, whether or not they entail theft, what the link is with the perpetrator, and whether or not the latter lives in the same housing as the respondent. This leads to a victimisation category defined as follows: personal assault excluding theft and outside the household. This can include insults, threats or physical violence.

On average over a two-year period, 16% of individuals over 16 years of age responding to the surveys from 2007 to 2016 claimed to have suffered at least one of these personal assaults excluding theft and outside the household. It has been estimated that 24% of these victims indicate that the most recent assault took place while they were doing their job **[1]**.

**1** Proportion of individuals over 16 years of age claiming to have been the victim of personal assault, excluding theft and outside the household, on at least one occasion, and the proportion of those having claimed that the most recent assault took place while they were doing their job.



Key: 16% of respondents over 16 years of age claim to have been the victim of insults, threats or physical violence, excluding theft and outside the household, on at least one occasion over the previous two years. Around a quarter of them describe the most recent assault as having taken place while they were doing their job.

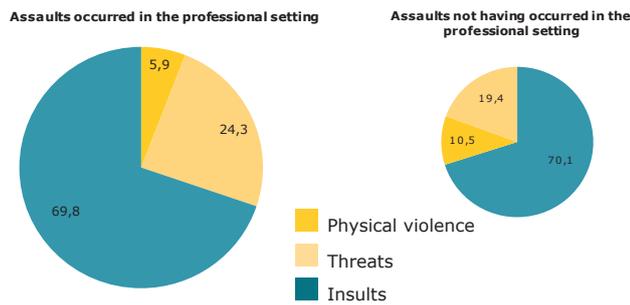
Source: 2007-2016 “Living environment and security” surveys, Insee-ONDRP-SSM-SI.

Scope: Over 16-year-old, Mainland France.

These personal assaults suffered while doing one’s job concern insults for almost 70% of victims over 16 years of age. For a little under a quarter of them, they concern threats. The proportion of physical violence is not more than 6% **[2]**.

For the other types of assault described, which did not take place while doing one’s job, the share of insults does not vary. It is once again in the region of 70%. In this case, the share of physical violence is slightly higher, at just over 10%, while the proportion of threats remains below 20%.

**2 Form taken by the most recent assault, suffered over the past two years by individuals over 16 years of age, according to whether or not it occurred in the professional setting**



Key: 69.8% of individuals over 16 years of age having claimed, with respect to the most recent offence suffered over the past two years, that it took place while they were doing their job, were the victim of insults in this instance, 24.3% of threats and 5.9% of physical violence.

Source: 2007-2016 "Living environment and security" surveys, Insee-ONDRP-SSM-SI. Scope: Over 16-year-old, Mainland France.

**Professionals in some lines of business are more at-risk than others**

The proportion of personal assaults suffered while doing one's job depends on the line of business. It is not possible to know the exact occupation of the victim<sup>1</sup> and, as such, the phenomenon will be observed through the prism of the socioprofessional category<sup>2</sup>.

Among the victims having claimed a direct personal assault over the past two years, 14 socioprofessional categories can be

distinguished by the fact that the individuals making it up claim more often than the average that the assault took place while doing their job [3].

Accordingly, for a majority or more of the police, military and similar occupations, drivers, tradespeople and similar occupations, infant and primary school teachers and similar occupations, the most recent assault described took place while in the professional setting [3]. The victimisation rates<sup>3</sup> are also higher for these categories compared with the rate observed for all socioprofessional categories, which is in the region of 4%<sup>4</sup>.

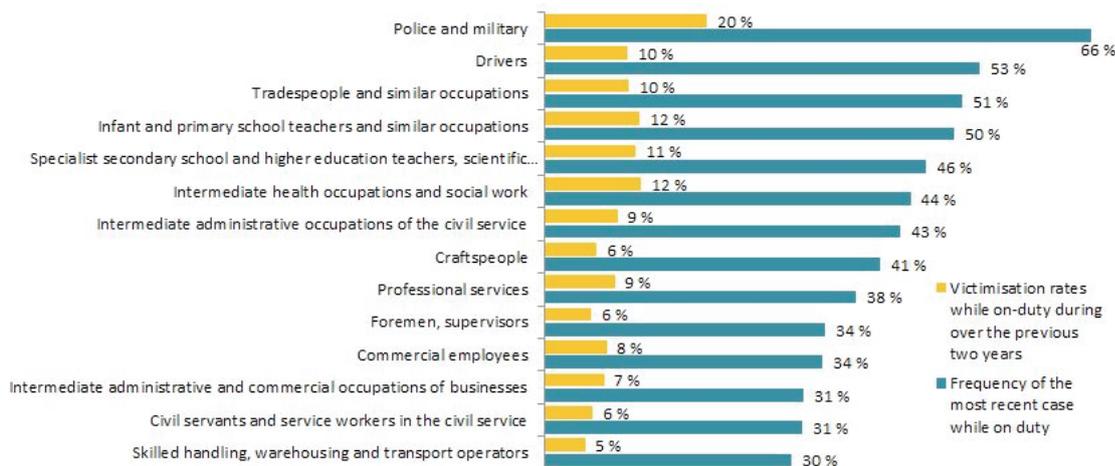
The type of offence suffered varies little: across all of the categories, insults are the most common. Their proportion can exceed 75% in some instances, among drivers for example. For other occupations, it can be less than 65%.

This is the case for tradespeople: the proportion of threats for this occupation rises to 34%, so 10 points more than the average level. For the police, military and similar occupations, the same trend is observed for physical violence, which represents more than 13% of assaults suffered while on-duty, compared with less than 6% for all victims taken together.

**Details about perpetrator profiles**

The frequency of the assault thus differs according to the victims' socioprofessional category: the line of business can bring individuals into regular contact with the public, but the way their work is organised can also lead to strained relationships between colleagues or associates<sup>5</sup>. Although the survey does not paint a clearly detailed picture of the perpetrators, it does tell us whether the perpetrator(s) of the most recent assault suffered is (are) known to the victim.

**3 Proportion of personal assaults while doing one's job according to line of business and victimisation rate over a two-year period**



Key: 66% of the police and military claiming to have suffered an assault over the previous two years state that the most recent case took place while on-duty. In all, 20% of the police and military claim to have been a victim of violence, threats or insults on at least one occasion over the past two years.

Source: 2007-2016 "Living environment and security" surveys, Insee-ONDRP-SSM-SI. Scope: Over 16-year-old, Mainland France.

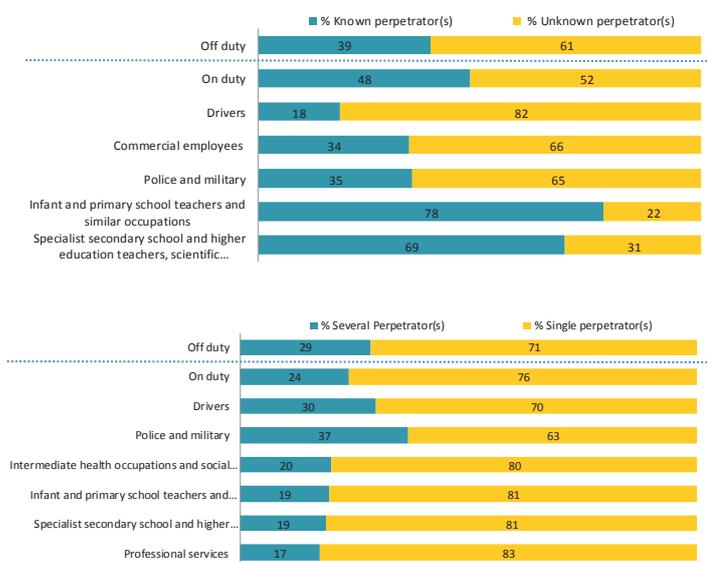
(1) This variable is not provided in the data files for processing the survey.  
 (2) The intermediate socioprofessional category (CS42) defined by Insee is the most precise nomenclature we have available.  
 (3) Proportion of individuals claiming to have been a victim, in relation to all of the respondents.  
 (4) Given that it is not possible to determine whether the individual is employed at the time of the assault, but only at the time of the survey, the rate calculated gives no more than a rough guideline. To calculate a precise rate, it would have been necessary to be able to consider the number of victims in the professional setting in relation to the number of people in employment during the same period.  
 (5) The Dares-Insee surveys on psychosocial risks more particularly address these risks associated with the organisation of work and certain forms of violence that can subsequently arise. Also see Loriot M., (2013), La violence au travail, Les Cahiers français : documents d'actualité, La Documentation Française, 2013, pp.27-32 and Catherine Cavalin (2012), Violences au travail : que mesure-t-on dans les enquêtes, 4 pages du CEE.

During the most recent assault described, whether it took place while on or off duty, victims report that in the vast majority of cases it was committed by a single perpetrator (77% and 69% respectively). The proportion of multiple perpetrators is thus a little lower for victims whose most recent assault took place while doing their job. For the latter, the proportion of known perpetrators (51%) is almost identical to that of unknown perpetrators (49%), when, for victims outside the professional setting, the perpetrator(s) are usually unknown (60%).

Disparities can be observed among those occupations that more often report assaults while on-duty: accordingly, the proportion of multiple perpetrators reported during the most recent assault is higher among the police and military than among drivers (37% and 30% respectively). The proportions of unknown perpetrators are also higher for these two categories (65% and 82% respectively). The “commercial employees” category also has a high proportion (66%).

By contrast, two socioprofessional categories stand out because of the high proportion of known perpetrators: infant and primary school teachers and similar occupations, and specialist secondary school and higher education teachers, scientific occupations (78% and 69% respectively) [4].

#### 4 Type of perpetrators of the most recent assault occurring while on and off duty



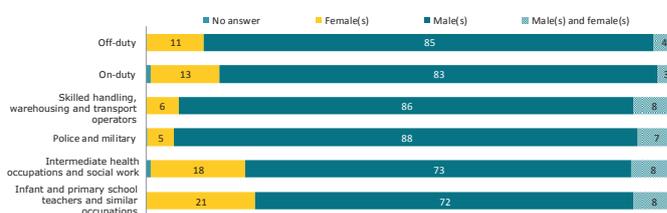
Key: 39% of victims having suffered the most recent assault while off-duty claim not to have known the perpetrator(s); moreover, 29% report several perpetrators  
 Source: 2007-2016 “Living environment and security” surveys, Insee-ONDRP-SSM-SI  
 Scope: Over 16-year-old, Mainland France

There are no significant differences in the gender of perpetrators, depending on whether the most recent assault took place while on or off duty. Perpetrators are usually described as being male, all the more so for acts of violence or threats than for insults (83%, 81% and 76% respectively). That said, among those occupations most exposed to assaults while on-duty, slightly more perpetrators are women in certain socioprofessional categories

- this is the case for infant and primary school teachers and similar occupations (21%) and intermediate health occupations and social work (18%). Other types of occupation report male perpetrators more often: this is the case for the police and military (88%) and drivers (86%).

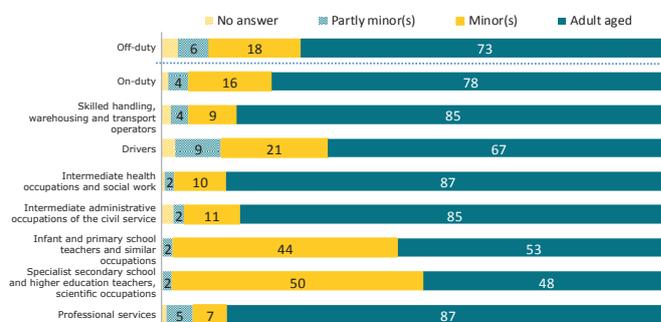
The perpetrators of the most recent assault while on-duty are mainly described as being of adult age, although the proportion of minors is higher than for victims outside the professional setting<sup>6</sup>. Certain occupations, by definition, bring practitioners more into contact with minors (particularly teachers or the educational occupations in the broad sense), while others deal much less with children, thereby resulting in a very high proportion of perpetrators described as being of adult age [5] [6].

#### 5 Gender of perpetrators during the most recent assault reported by victims



Key: 11% of victims having suffered the most recent assault while off-duty report that the perpetrator(s) was (were) female.  
 Source: 2007-2016 “Living environment and security” surveys, Insee-ONDRP-SSM-SI  
 Scope: Over 16-year-old, Mainland France.

#### 6 Victims’ perception of the age of perpetrators during the most recent assault



Key: 18% of victims having suffered the most recent assault while off-duty report that all perpetrators were minors.  
 Source: 2007-2016 “Living environment and security” surveys, Insee-ONDRP-SSM-SI  
 Scope: Over 16-year-old, Mainland France.

In the questions that follow, the victims are able to specify whether or not they<sup>7</sup> went to a police station or gendarmerie unit to report the offence. When considering an identical type of assault as regards the most recent case, there are no significant differences in reporting to the authorities between individuals who were a victim while on or off duty. Such reporting will depend on the severity of the offence, and thus occur slightly more often for violence than a threat or insult (39%, 21% and 5% respectively). What is more, among those victims who did report the crime, there are

(6) Throughout the text, the expressions “professional setting”, “on-duty” and “while doing one’s job” are all synonyms.  
 (7) This can be the victim or someone in his/her household.

no significant differences between the individuals who formally lodged a complaint or simply gave a statement when the most recent assault involved violence (84% of victims who go to the police will choose to formally lodge a complaint once there). For threats, the number of victims deciding to give a simple statement is almost identical to the number of victims deciding to formally lodge a complaint (52% and 48% respectively).

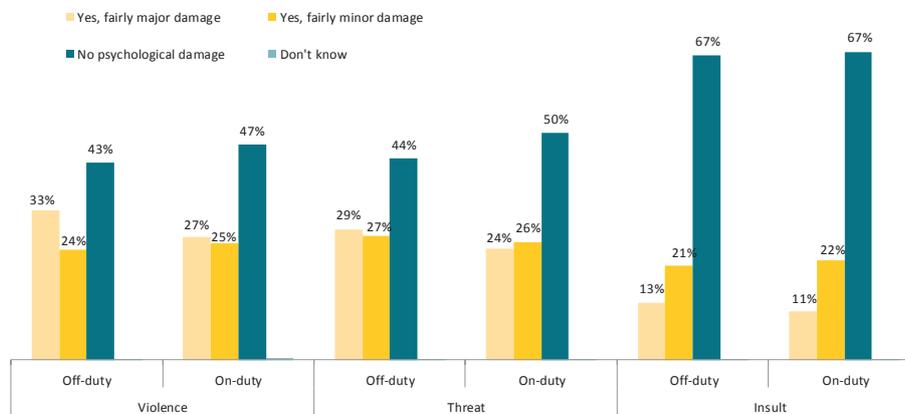
## The impact of assaults suffered

On a final note, as mentioned above, a minority of victims go to the police for an insult, but once there, they are less likely to decide not to lodge a formal complaint or give a simple statement when the assault took place in a professional setting (12% decide not to, versus 20% for victims while off-duty).

When the most recent assault suffered took place while they were doing their job, fewer victims cite fairly major psychological damage [7]. Accordingly, the majority of victims of violence while on-duty claim, in a similar way to the others, to have been psychologically affected, but to a lesser degree.

Lastly, victims having suffered an act of violence or threat (while on or off duty, with no significant difference), report that this has led to disruptions in their day-to-day lives, and particularly professional lives, for a good third of them (36% for an act of violence and 34% for threats, whether or not the assault took place in or outside the professional setting). When the most recent assault suffered was an insult, the victims for whom this took place while doing their job more often claim such an impact, however (20% vs 16%).

### 7 Psychological damage associated with the most recent assault suffered



Key: 33% of victims having suffered the most recent assault while off-duty claim to have suffered fairly major psychological damage.

Source: 2007-2016 "Living environment and security" surveys, Insee-ONDRP-SSM-SI.

Scope: Over 16-year-old, Mainland France.

## Methodological overview

✓ The scope of the Living environment and security survey concerns individuals aged 14 years and over in Mainland France. It is possible to know whether the respondent practises a professional activity at the time of the survey, but not during the two years preceding it. For this study on the professional setting, the scope was deliberately restricted to respondents who were over 16 years of age at the time of the survey (apprenticeships being authorised from 15 years of age) in order to get as close as possible to the scope of individuals of working age at the time the offences in N-1 or N-2 were described in the survey.

✓ The Nomenclature of Occupations and Socioprofessional Categories - PCS is used to code the census and surveys that Insee carries out among households. At the most detailed level, an entry in the PCS nomenclature corresponds to an occupation. To process the survey, the PCS is available at an intermediate aggregate level (42 entries) and does not make it possible to specify by occupation. Certain categories can, for all that, be distinguished and, as such, so can their specific features.

✓ So-called "significant" differences are at the 5% mark.