

ISP Increases East St. Louis Homicide Clearance Rate In 2023

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EAST ST. LOUIS – In 2023, the Illinois State Police (ISP) Division of Criminal Investigation Zone 6 Public Safety Enforcement Group (PSEG) increased the clearance rate for homicide cases in East St. Louis by 29% over 2022. ISP made arrests, had charges filed, and turned cases over to the courts in 67% of its homicide cases in East St. Louis last year, compared to 44% in both 2022 and 2021. PSEG also worked with the Division of Patrol Troop 8 and the South Special Operations Group (SOG) to seize almost 500 guns and almost 200 pounds of illegal drugs from Metro East streets.

“The work our PSEG agents are doing in East St. Louis increased the homicide clearance rate in 2023 to a level never seen before,” **said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly.** “In the Metro East area alone, ISP agents and officers made hundreds of arrests resulting in thousands of criminal charges in 2023. ISP remains committed to making Metro East communities safer.”

In 2023, ISP established SOGs, including one in southern Illinois, consisting of officers focused on reducing violent crime, combatting gun and illegal drug trafficking, and reducing crashes on Illinois highways. The SOGs consists of Statewide Anti-Violence Enforcement (SAVE) units, Highway Interdiction Teams (HIT), and Fatal 4 Teams.

During 2023, South SOG conducted four multi-day patrol operations in St. Clair and Madison counties targeting known high crime areas, organized violent offenders, and structured criminal groups in Metro East communities. More than 140 ISP officers from around the state participated in the four, multi-day operations. ISP Air Operations, the Firearms Investigations Unit, and the Metropolitan Enforcement Group of Southwestern Illinois provided additional support during the operational periods. The four operations were conducted June 26-29, August 3-5, October 2-5, and December 7-9, 2023. The 14 days of increased ISP efforts resulted in more than 200 arrests and 370 criminal charges.

Operation Results

Arrests	225
Felony Charges	229
Criminal Charges	370
Firearm Related Charges	160
Firearms Seized	96
Stolen Vehicles Recovered	11

Illegal Cannabis/ Controlled Substances Seized	27.5 pounds
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ISP’s use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) cameras increased the success of those operations. In 2023, ISP installed 78 ALPR cameras in St. Clair County and plans to add additional cameras this year in the Metro East, including Madison County. These ALPRs are also increasingly valuable for PSEG investigations.

ISP and the East St. Louis Police Department formed PSEG in October 2022 and began working all reported violent crime cases together to boost resources and ensure professionalism and integrity in investigations, with an overall goal of crime reduction. Since its creation in October 2020, PSEG has opened more than 1,066 violent crime cases.

The number of homicides and non-fatal shootings generally have been trending down over the past five years in East St. Louis. In 2023, ISP reported fewer non-fatal shooting incidents, 67 incidents compared to 77 in 2022, although the total number of victims remained the same. The number of homicide incidents decreased to 23 in 2023, compared to 24 in 2022. However, two more people were killed last year compared to the previous year. Part of the reason is the use of switches, a small attachment added to a gun so instead of firing one round per trigger pull, the device allows the gun to continue firing at a high rate as long as the trigger is pressed. The result is multiple people in the vicinity being shot who may not have been the intended target.

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PSEG also partners with community organizations to assist those impacted by violent crime in the Metro East. During 2023, PSEG agents referred 110 youths impacted by violent crime to the District 189 WrapAround Wellness Center. The WrapAround Wellness Center provides trauma services to children of East St. Louis who have witnessed or been victimized by violent crime. Additionally, in 2023, PSEG agents referred more than 200 adults and family members who were victims of violent crime to the Treatment Alternative for Safe Communities – Community Emergency Response Team. The Community LifeLine Family Resource Center is another partner PSEG utilizes to provide trauma services to victims of violent crime and their families.

Along with assisting those impacted by violent crime, PSEG also works to build strong community relationships. Last year, PSEG was involved in more than 250 community engagements. ISP sponsored a team of middle school boys from the East St. Louis area for the Metro East Baseball League, and invited kids from the Metro East area to participate in the annual Field Day at Frank Holten State Park. During the 2023 holiday season, ISP raised more than \$3,000 to purchase gifts for children. PSEG continues to impact the community by being present and approachable at multiple community events and mentoring youth. ISP agents coach baseball and basketball teams in East St. Louis and regularly go to community centers in housing developments to talk with and listen to the youth.

The PSEG model is being studied nation-wide. ISP has seen an overwhelmingly positive response from the community and statistics show this model is reducing violent crime.