

**FOREWORD**

The information presented in this Annual Report has been compiled based on deaths that came under the jurisdiction of the Spokane County Medical Examiner during 2001.

This summarized report breaks out the data in a variety of manners in hopes of providing useful information to diverse groups in our community.

The Medical Examiner's Office wishes to emphatically stress the tremendous importance of the investigation. When conducted properly and in a complete and thorough manner, it is the most significant method of determining the cause and manner of death. We hope the data will benefit law enforcement, medical community, health departments, and the many agencies that work so diligently to prevent unnatural and premature death.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT...**

*The Medical Examiner's Office wishes to express, once again, their sincere and deepest appreciation to Bob Roberts, Systems Analyst and Richard Shaw, Senior Computer Programmer of the Spokane County Information Systems Department, for their assistance and support in the development of this statistical report.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

On January 1, 1999, the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office assumed the oversight of medico legal investigation, replacing the previous coroner's system. The directive of the County Commissioners was that the office should perform its duties in a state-of-the-art professional manner, but also with diligent concern for fiscal matters. Their strong support and leadership have been instrumental in the success of this office since its inception.

The Medical Examiner's Office is charged with the investigation of sudden, unexpected, violent, and suspicious deaths. This is achieved through the process of gathering pertinent information including data from friends, relatives, physicians, law enforcement and any other party who was witness to the death or related circumstances. When necessary, the decedent is examined by scientific autopsy including tests for the detection of drug substances and also characterization of potential infectious agents that might otherwise affect the community health. Other tasks of the office include support of police investigation of homicides, interface with the public health agencies for the detection and prevention of contagious disease, identification of factors related to preventable deaths, support of both organ and tissue procurement agencies, to the extent that grieving families may find fulfillment and meaning in the "gift of life" which such activity memorializes. The Medical Examiner's Office also strives to provide timely notification of next-of-kin, in conjunction with pastoral services of the local law enforcement, and provides accurate information related to the cause and manner of death.

The Medical Examiner's Office believes that each death represents the loss of an individual who will be deeply missed not only by immediate family, but also by the larger community, and that the high quality of medico legal investigation serves as a measure of the dignity and quality of life in our community.

## **CRITERIA FOR REPORTABLE DEATHS**

- 1. Persons who die suddenly when in apparent good health and without medical attendance within 24-36 hours preceding death.**
- 2. Circumstances that indicate death was caused in part or entirely by unnatural or unlawful means.**
- 3. Suspicious circumstances.**
- 4. Unknown or obscure causes.**
- 5. Deaths caused by any violence whatsoever, whether the primary cause or any contributory factor in the death.**
- 6. Contagious disease.**
- 7. Unclaimed, indigent decedents.**
- 8. Premature and stillborn infants where suspicious circumstances exist.**
- 9. 'No Jurisdiction Assumed' (NJA) deaths.**

**EXPLANATION OF DATA**

The information presented here was compiled based on deaths that came under the jurisdiction of the Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office from January 1, 1995 through December 31, 2001. The role of alcohol, drugs and firearms in violent deaths is emphasized in the report.

Each manner of death (homicide, accident, suicide, natural) is subdivided into various sub-groupings appropriate to that manner.

The variables displayed in the tables such as race, gender, age, etc., have been selected as those most likely to interest and assist individuals in assembling a profile of death statistics in Spokane County.

Blood alcohol (ethanol) data included here represents the blood level at the time of death. Alcohol is metabolized at a rate of 0.015 to 0.018 grams percent per hour. Thus, if there is a significant survival interval, the blood alcohol at the time of death may not reflect the level at the time of incident.

Data on natural deaths is included. Natural deaths, which are investigated by the Medical Examiner, are those that occur suddenly and unexpectedly with no physician in attendance, where there is no previous history of significant disease associated with sudden death, under suspicious circumstances, home deaths, or deaths occurring within less than 24-36 hours from hospital admittance.

**MEDICAL EXAMINER CASES IN 2001**

In 2001, there were 4136 deaths in Spokane County (based on the latest census of 417939, this represents 1% of the population). Of these deaths, 2889 were reported to the Medical Examiner by medical and law enforcement personnel. Based on analysis of the scene and circumstances of death, and the decedent's medical history, the Medical Examiner assumed jurisdiction in 575 (20%) of these reported deaths.

There were 2314 deaths reported to the Medical Examiner in which jurisdiction was not assumed (80%). The Medical Examiner's Office applies a strict interpretation of the legislative language "persons who die suddenly when in apparent good health and without medical attendance within 24-36 hours preceding death" (RCW 68.50). Jurisdiction is only assumed if both conditions apply and there is no attending outside physician (who has knowledge of the individual's natural disease condition) who is able to reasonably certify the death.

**Category** **Number of Deaths** **Percent of Total**

**Cases By Manner Of Death**

Accident (A)	184	32.00%
Homicide (H)	15	2.61%
Natural (N)	256	44.52%
Suicide (S)	68	11.83%
Undetermined (U)	14	2.43%
Vehicular (V)	38	6.61%

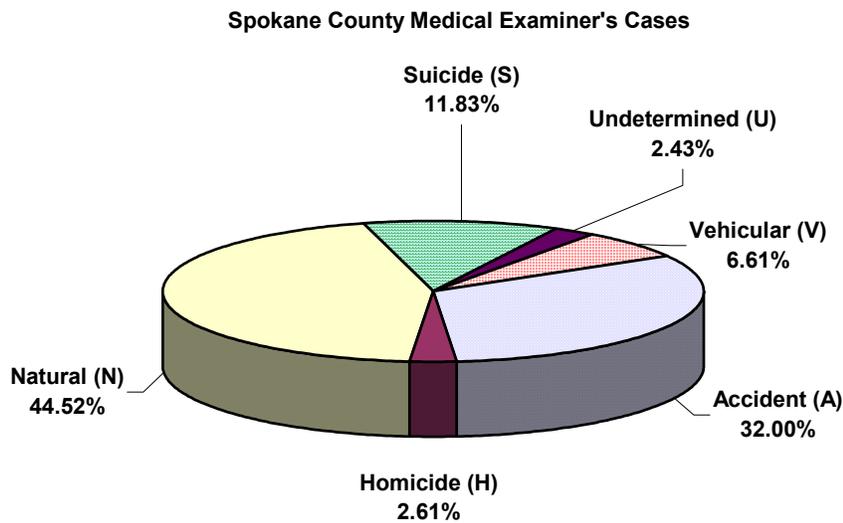
**Total Deaths in Spokane County** 4136

**Total Deaths Reported to Medical Examiner 2001** 2889

**Total Non-jurisdictional Cases** 2314

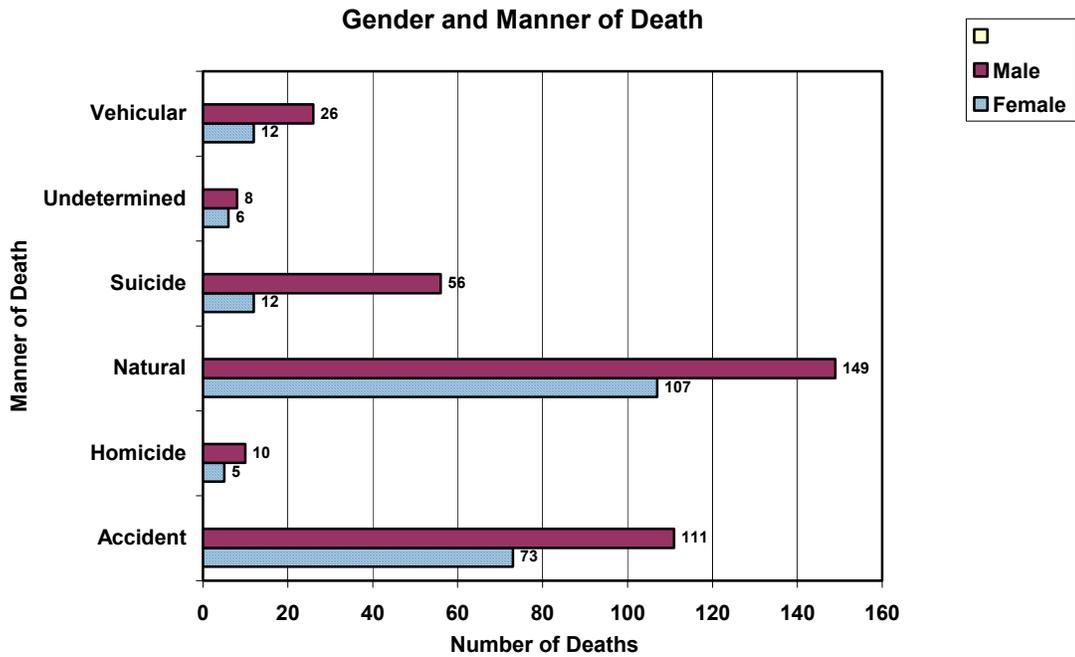
**Total Spokane County Medical Examiner** 575

**Total Autopsies Performed** 393



**Gender and Manner of Death**

Sex	Total	A	H	N	S	U	V	Percent
Female	215	73	5	107	12	6	12	37.39%
Male	360	111	10	149	56	8	26	62.61%
								0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>38</b>	



### Race and Manner of Death

<b>Race</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>V</b>
Asian	7	1		4	2		
Black	12	5	1	5	1		
Caucasian	538	175	12	242	63	13	33
Hispanic	7	1		2	1		3
Native American	10	2	2	2	1	1	2
Other	1			1			
<b>Total</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>38</b>

### Age and Manner of Death

<b>Age Group (Years)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>0 to 9</b>	19	3	3	7	0	4	2
<b>10 to 19</b>	21	4	1	5	1	2	8
<b>20 to 29</b>	32	9	2	3	10	1	7
<b>30 to 39</b>	45	15	6	11	9	0	4
<b>40 to 49</b>	104	36	2	36	24	3	3
<b>50 to 59</b>	71	13	0	45	8	2	3
<b>60 to 69</b>	68	9	0	50	9	0	0
<b>70 to 79</b>	83	24	1	47	4	2	5
<b>80 to 89</b>	98	53	0	36	3	0	6
<b>90 to 99</b>	34	18	0	16	0	0	0
<b>100 to 109</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>38</b>

### Gender and Age Group

Age Group (Years)	Total	Female	Male
0 to 9	19	12	7
10 to 19	21	7	14
20 to 29	32	12	20
30 to 39	45	10	35
40 to 49	104	19	85
50 to 59	71	21	50
60 to 69	68	25	43
70 to 79	83	33	50
80 to 89	98	50	48
90 to 99	34	26	8
100 to 109	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>360</b>

#### CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM

The Code of Washington RCW 68.08.320, gives to the Medical Examiner or Coroner of each county the responsibility to identify, locate and notify relatives of deceased individuals. The Medical Examiner's Office is aware of the reactions and feelings of relatives of the deceased, especially those dying from violent deaths.

The Spokane Police Department and the Spokane County Sheriff's Department assist the Medical Examiner's Office in its notification program. The Chaplain's compassion and expertise working with next of kin has given the "personal touch" which is so much needed in this work. These chaplains provide their professional training and experience in dealing with emotional crisis situations, thereby providing a superior death notification service.

## MULTI-YEAR COMPARISON

Since January 1, 1995, a perspective of deaths investigated by the Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office has been computerized and data from 1995 forward will be provided in all future annual reports.

Approximately 70% (2889/4136) of the certified deaths in Spokane County were reported to the Medical Examiner in 2001. However, responsibility was only assumed in 20% (575) of those reported. In 80% (2314) of these cases, a physician with knowledge and awareness of the deceased's state of health certified the cause of death. Thus, the Medical Examiner assumed jurisdiction in 20% (575) of the deaths occurring in Spokane County in 2001.

The Tables and Charts on the following pages attempt to give a perspective on the types of deaths investigated by the Medical Examiner. The information displays date by category and year. There is no *prominent* trend based on data from the last seven years; however, as data is categorized in years to come, patterns may develop.

More detailed analysis of 2001 data is provided in separate sections for each manner of death.

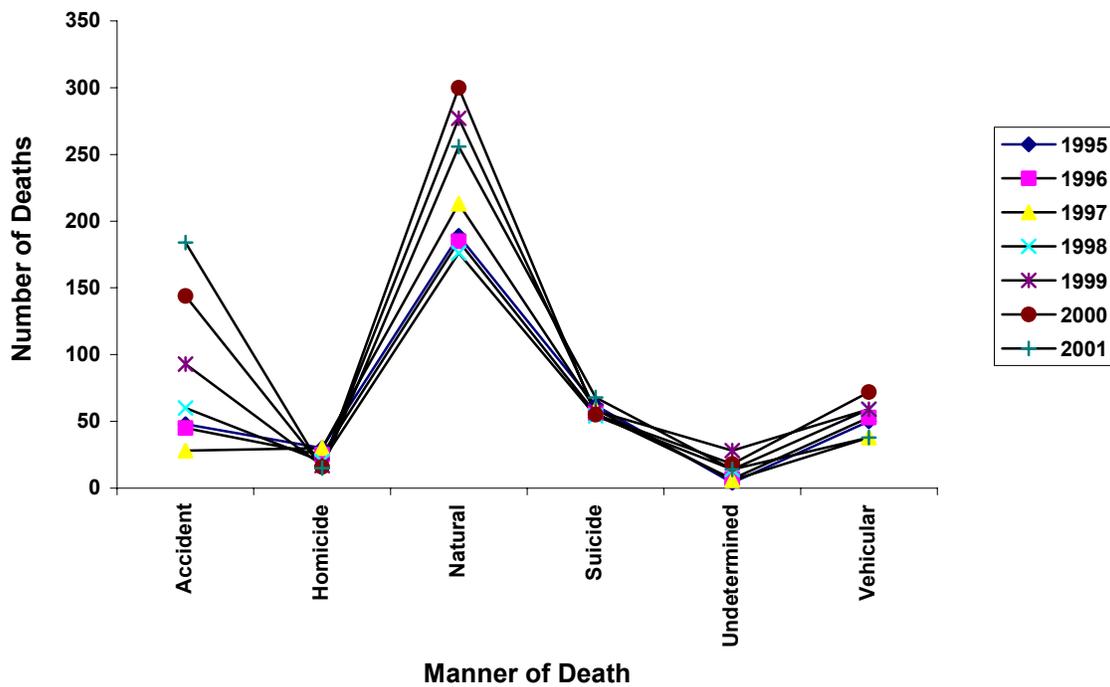
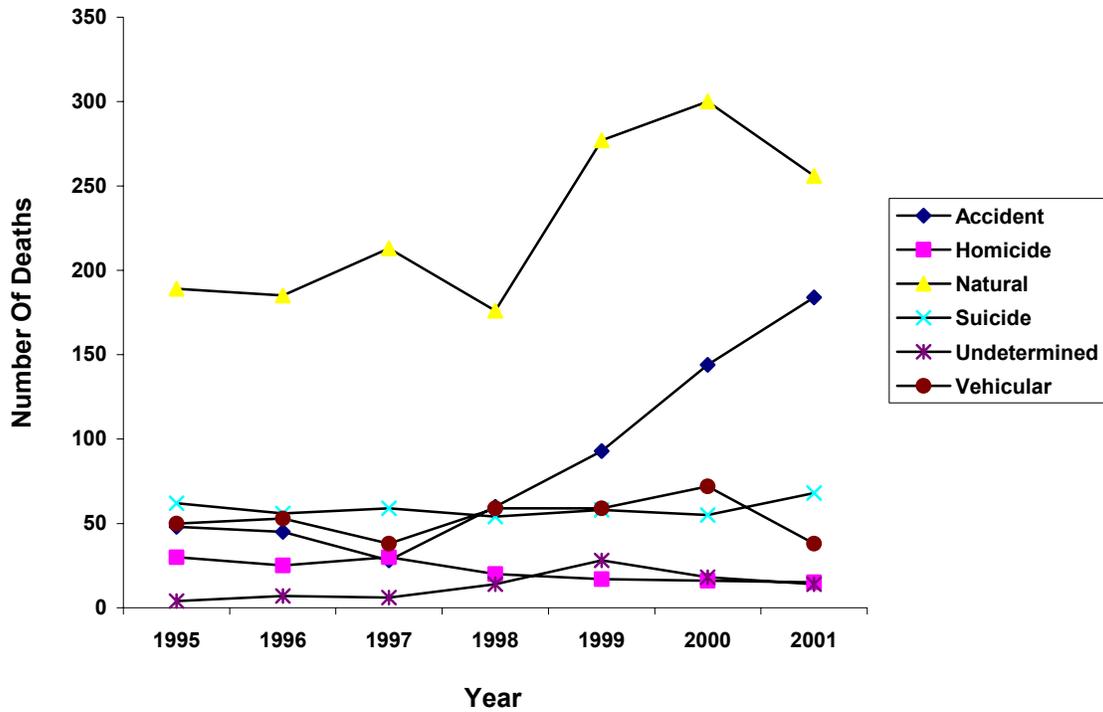
## Comparison of Manners of Death 1995 - 2001

Manner of Death	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Accident	48	45	28	60	93	144	184
Homicide	30	25	30	20	17	16	15
Natural	189	185	213	176	277	300	256
Suicide	62	56	59	54	58	55	68
Undetermined	4	7	6	14	28	18	14
Vehicular	50	53	38	59	59	72	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>575</b>

### Comparison of Manners of Death as Percentage of Total Annual Medical Examiner's Cases 1995 - 2001

<b>Manner of Death</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Accident	12.53%	12.13%	7.49%	15.67%	17.48%	23.80%	32.00%
Homicide	7.83%	6.74%	8.02%	5.22%	3.20%	2.64%	2.61%
Natural	49.35%	49.87%	56.95%	45.95%	52.07%	49.59%	44.52%
Suicide	16.19%	15.09%	15.78%	14.10%	10.90%	9.09%	11.83%
Undetermined	1.04%	1.89%	1.60%	3.66%	5.26%	2.98%	2.43%
Vehicular	13.05%	14.29%	10.16%	15.40%	11.09%	11.90%	6.61%

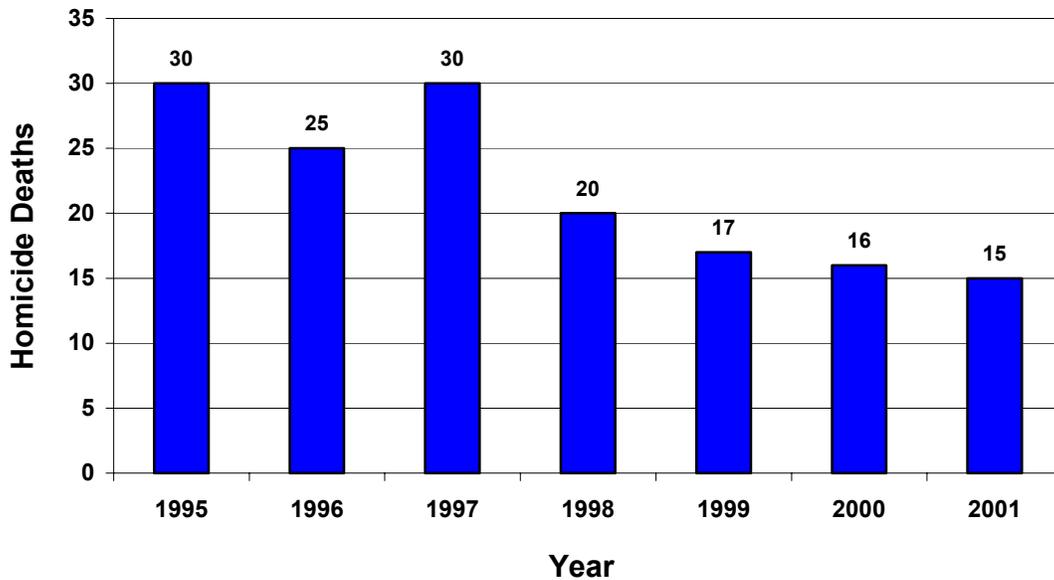
### Comparison of Manners of Death 1995 - 2001



### Comparison of Homicidal Methods 1995 - 2001

Method Used	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Asphyxia	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Blunt Impact	6	3	2	1	3	0	1
Child Abuse	4	0	2	1	1	2	1
Firearms	15	14	21	8	6	9	7
Homicidal Violence	0	1	3	2	2	3	2
Other	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
Stabbing	3	6	2	7	2	2	3
Strangulation	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Undetermined	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

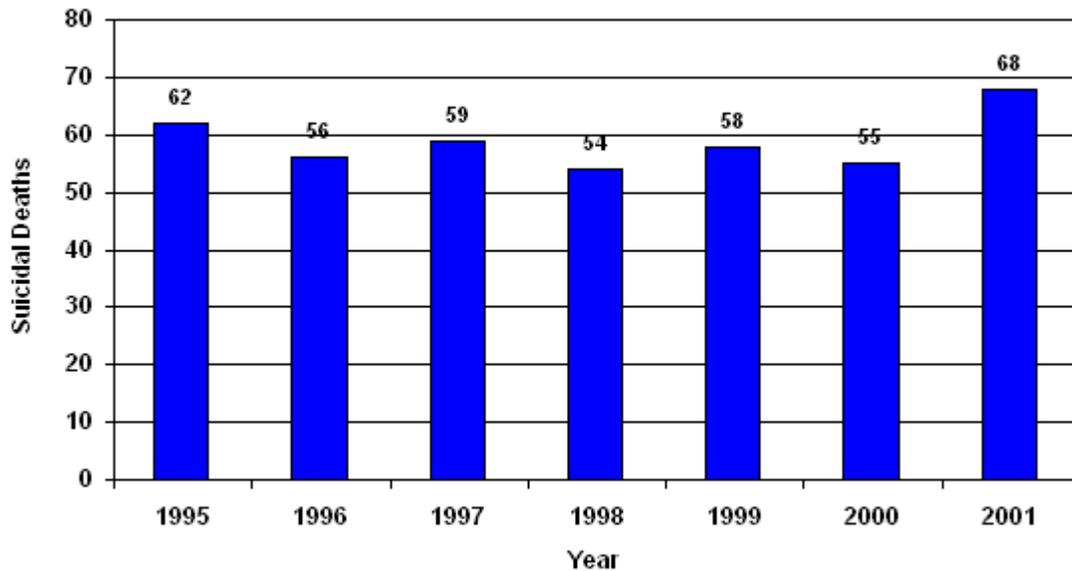
### Homicides 1995 - 2001



### Comparison of Suicidal Methods 1995 - 2001

Method Used	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Carbon Monoxide	9	6	8	5	4	6	4
Drowning	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Drugs/Poisons	8	4	6	3	10	3	12
Firearms	37	34	33	29	29	33	37
Hanging	1	5	9	10	9	10	12
Jumping	6	1	0	4	2	1	1
Other	1	3	3	0	0	1	0
Plastic Bag	0	3	0	1	2	0	0
Stab/incised wound	0	0	0	2	2	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>68</b>

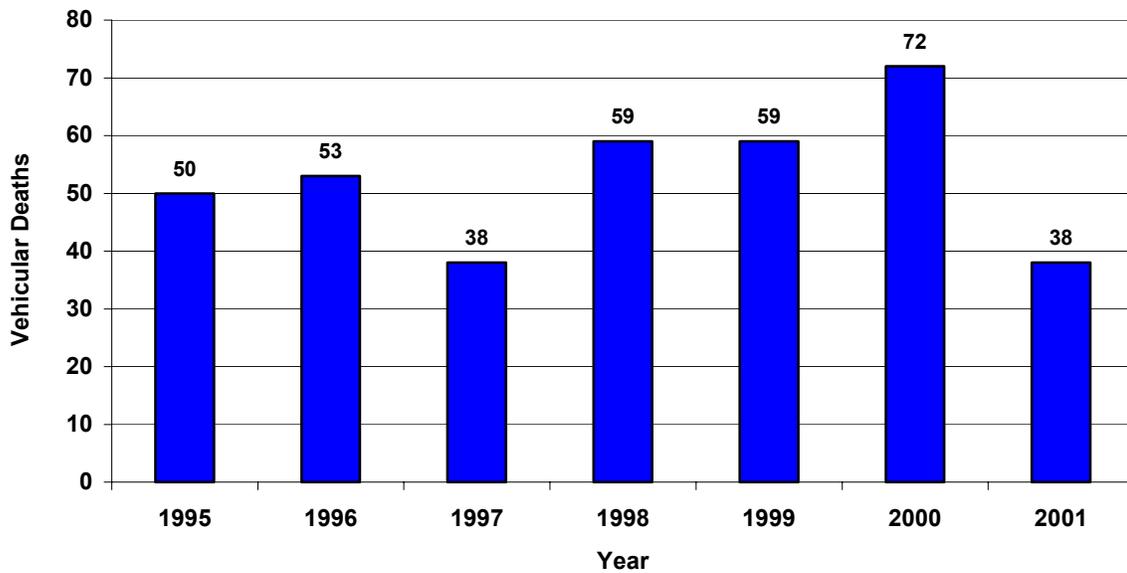
### Suicides 1995 - 2001



### Comparison of Vehicular Deaths 1995 - 2001

Vehicle Circumstances	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Automobile Driver	22	25	22	32	28	37	20
Automobile Passenger	18	17	8	15	18	16	8
Bicyclist	2	1	2	1	1	1	0
Motorcycle Driver	4	2	3	2	3	3	0
Motorcycle Passenger	0	1	1	0	0	2	0
Other	1	3	1	4	1	2	2
Pedestrian	3	4	1	3	7	10	7
Unknown	0	0	0	2	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>38</b>

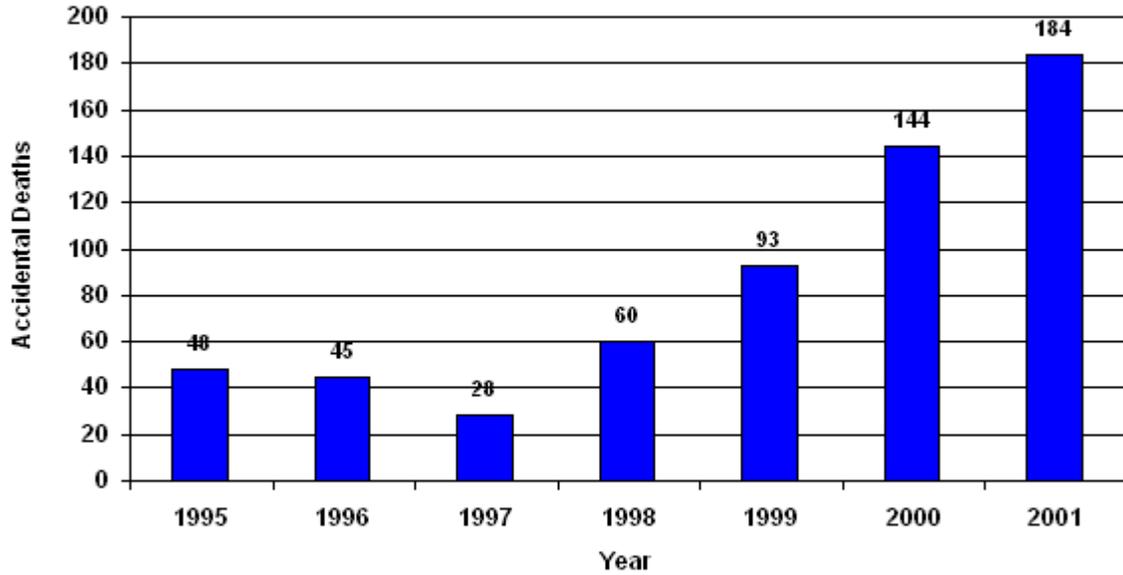
### Vehicular Deaths 1995 - 2001



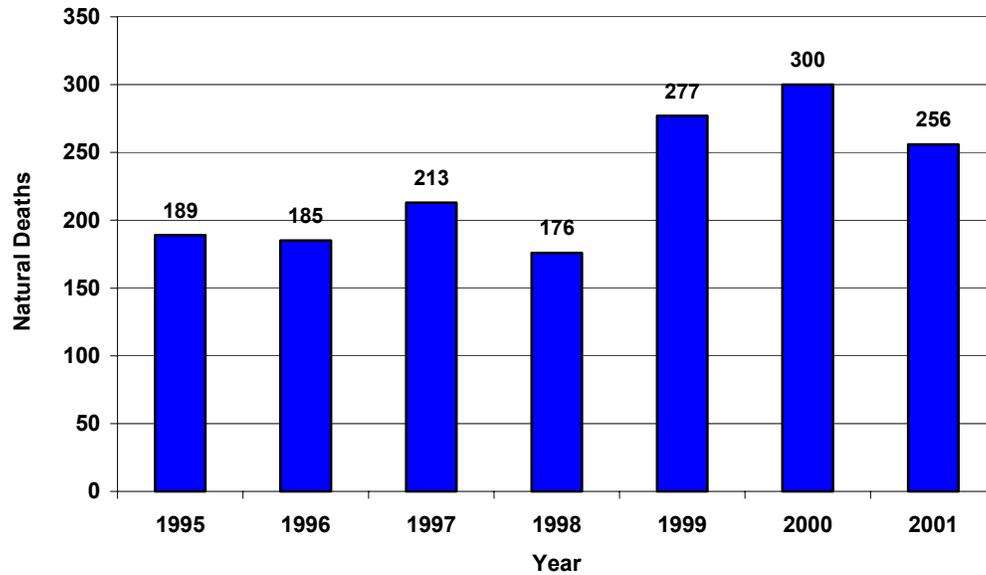
### Comparison of Accidental Deaths 1995 - 2001

Accident Circumstances	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Aircraft	1	5	0	1	0	0	3
Alcohol Abuse	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Anaphylaxis	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Asphyxiation	7	4	1	2	6	4	5
Aspiration	0	1	0	0	3	1	4
Bicycle Fall	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Boating	0	1	0	0	1	2	0
Choking	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Dog Bite	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Drowning	6	5	4	7	4	6	5
Drugs	8	1	1	1	15	30	45
Electrocution	0	2	0	1	0	0	1
Fall	7	7	10	31	43	80	98
Farm	0	2	0	1	2	0	0
Fire/burns	4	5	4	4	1	6	2
Firearms	0	0	2	2	1	0	0
Hyperthermia	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
Hypothermia	3	4	0	0	0	4	1
Industrial Accident	1	4	3	2	2	1	3
Lightening Strike	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Motorcycle Driver (race track)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other	2	2	3	7	5	9	7
Prescribed Drugs	5	1	0	0	5	0	0
Struck by Object	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
Surgical Procedure	1	0	0	0	3	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>184</b>

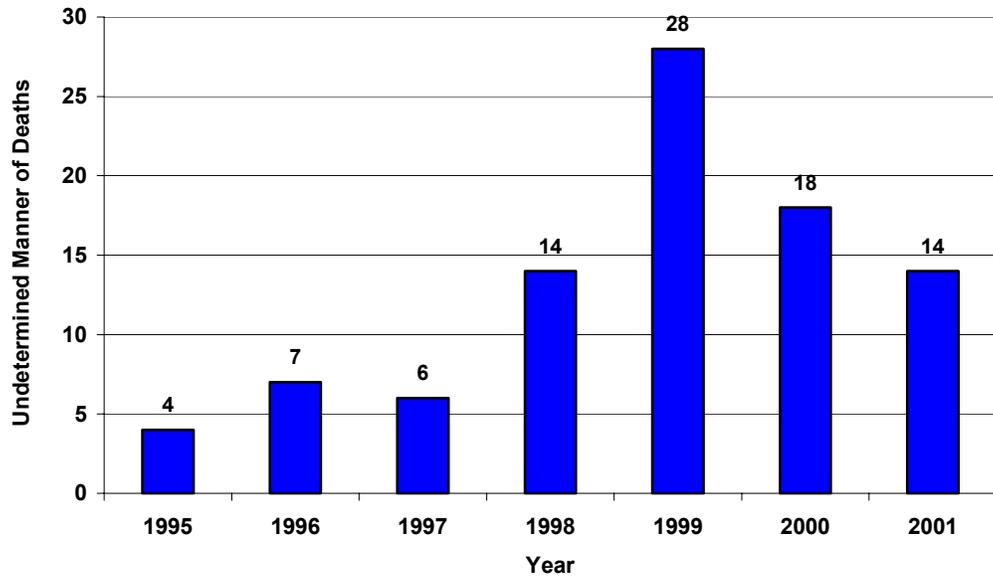
### Accidental Deaths 1995 - 2001



### Natural Deaths 1995 - 2001



### Deaths of Undetermined Manner 1995 - 2001



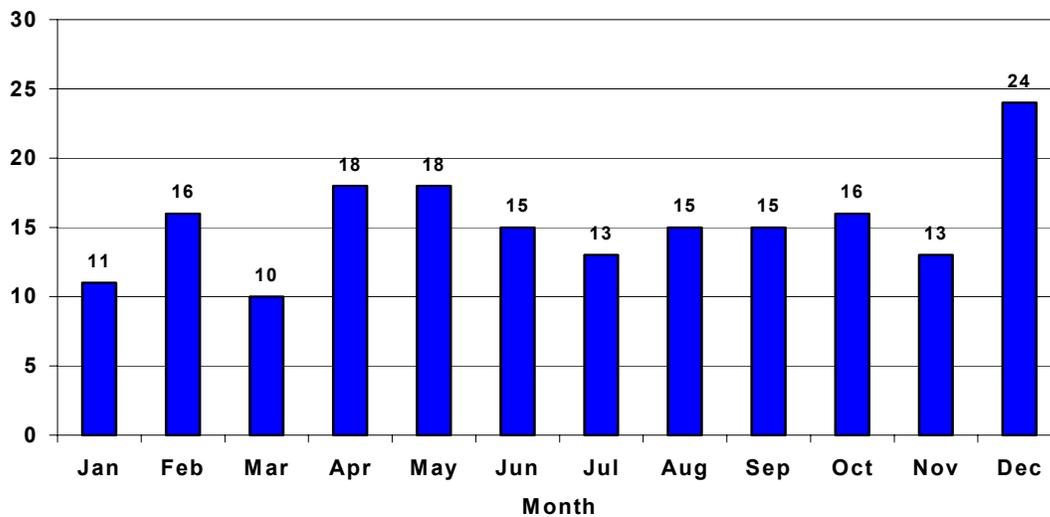
**MANNER: ACCIDENT**

For the purpose of this report, an accident is an unexpected happening or event resulting in injuries which cause death immediately, or initiates a sequence of events which eventually cause death. Traffic-related fatalities are separated from accidents because of their prevalence, as well as social interest.

There were (184) deaths that were certified as accidental death for the calendar year of 2001. The largest percentages of these deaths were Fall, representing 53% of the total accidental deaths. There were (47) males and (51) females.

The second largest group of accidental deaths was people who died from Drugs. This represents 24% of all accidental death. There were (33) males and (12) females.

**Accidental Deaths By Month**



### Accident Mode By Gender

Accident Mode	Total	Female	Male
Aircraft	3	1	2
Alcohol Abuse	1	0	1
Anaphylaxis	1	0	1
Asphyxiation	5	3	2
Aspiration	4	1	3
Bicycle Fall	1	0	1
Choking	1	0	1
Dog Bite	1	1	0
Drowning	5	1	4
Drugs	45	12	33
Electrocution	1	0	1
Fall	98	51	47
Fire/burns	2	0	2
Hyperthermia	2	1	1
Hypothermia	1	0	1
Industrial Accident	3	0	3
Motorcycle Driver (race track)	1	0	1
Other	7	1	6
Struck by Object	1	0	1
Surgical Procedure	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>111</b>

### Accident Mode, Gender and Age Group

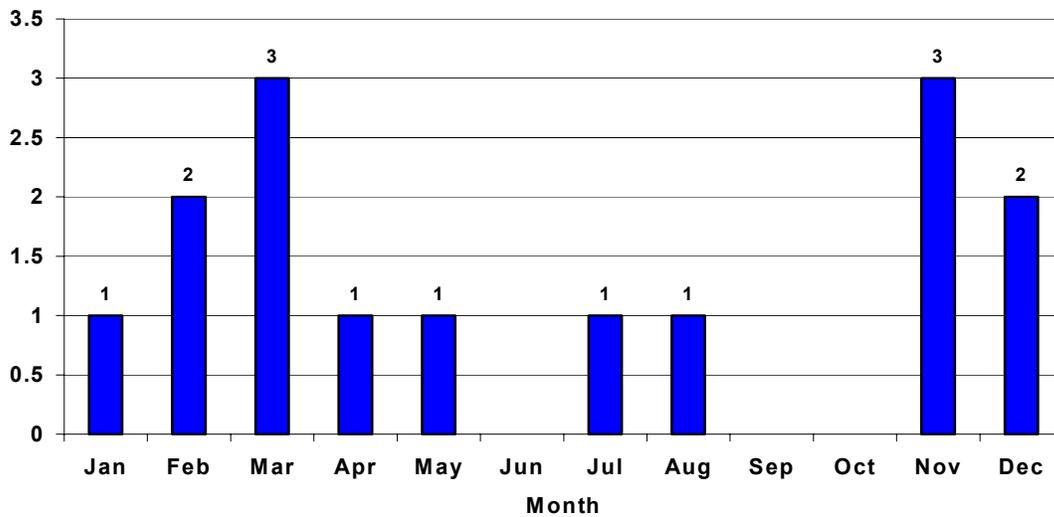
Accident Mode	Sex	<1	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	>=100	Total
Aircraft	F	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Aircraft	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
<b>Aircraft Total</b>														3
Alcohol Abuse	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Alcohol Abuse Total</b>														1
Anaphylaxis	M	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Anaphylaxis Total</b>														1
Asphyxiation	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	3
Asphyxiation	M	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Asphyxiation Total</b>														5
Aspiration	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Aspiration	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
<b>Aspiration Total</b>														4
Bicycle Fall	M	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Bicycle Fall Total</b>														1
Choking	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Choking Total</b>														1
Dog Bite	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Dog Bite Total</b>														1
Drowning	F	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Drowning	M	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
<b>Drowning Total</b>														5
Drugs	F	0	0	0	2	3	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	12
Drugs	M	0	1	2	2	7	16	5	0	0	0	0	0	33
<b>Drugs Total</b>														45
Electrocution	M	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Electrocution Total</b>														1
Fall	F	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	8	25	13	0	51
Fall	M	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	3	11	21	5	0	47
<b>Fall Total</b>														98
Fire/burns	M	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Fire/burns Total</b>														2
Hyperthermia	F	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hyperthermia	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Hyperthermia Total</b>														2
Hypothermia	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Hypothermia Total</b>														1
Industrial Accident	M	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
<b>Industrial Accident Total</b>														3
Motorcycle Driver (race track)	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Motorcycle Driver (race track) Total</b>														1
Other	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Other	M	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	6
<b>Other Total</b>														7
Struck by Object	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Struck by Object Total</b>														1
Surgical Procedure	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Surgical Procedure Total</b>														1
<b>Total Accidents</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>184</b>

MANNER: HOMICIDE

A death is classified as a homicide when the death results from injuries inflicted by another person. There are several types of criminal and non-criminal homicides. A non-criminal homicide may be accidental, justifiable or excusable. Examples of these include: 1) an accident resulting in an unanticipated and unintended death; 2) a police officer kills someone in the performance of his or her duties; and 3) self defense.

The person thus responsible for the injuries may be charged with murder or manslaughter by the prosecuting attorney or the prosecuting attorney may decline to file charges. In 2001, (15) deaths were classified as homicide, down (1) from 2000. The homicides were a result of Asphyxia, Blunt Impact, Child Abuse, Firearms, Homicidal Violence, Stabbing, with Firearms representing the largest number at (7) deaths (47%). The most frequent age group in 2001 of homicide victims was 30-39.

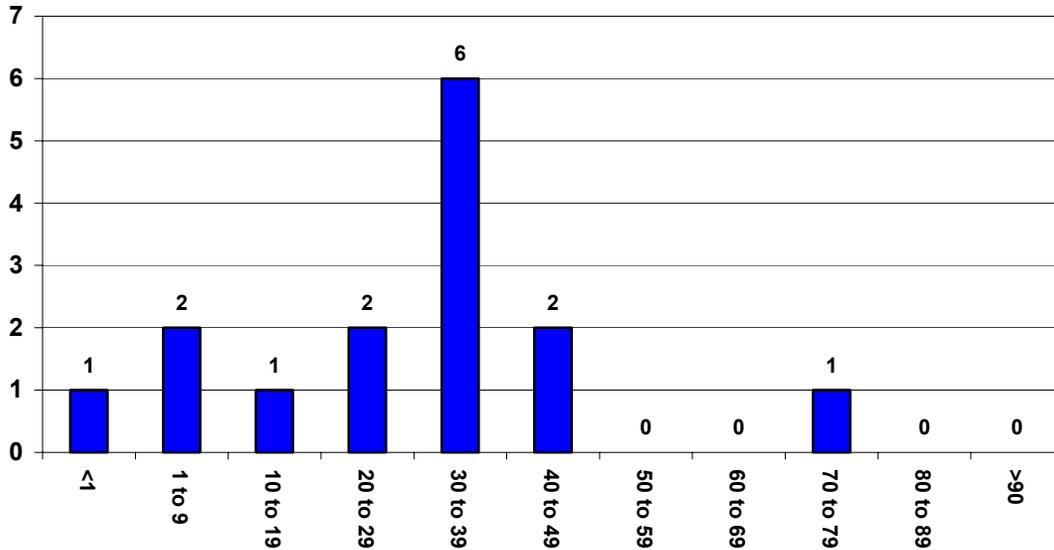
Homicide Deaths By Month



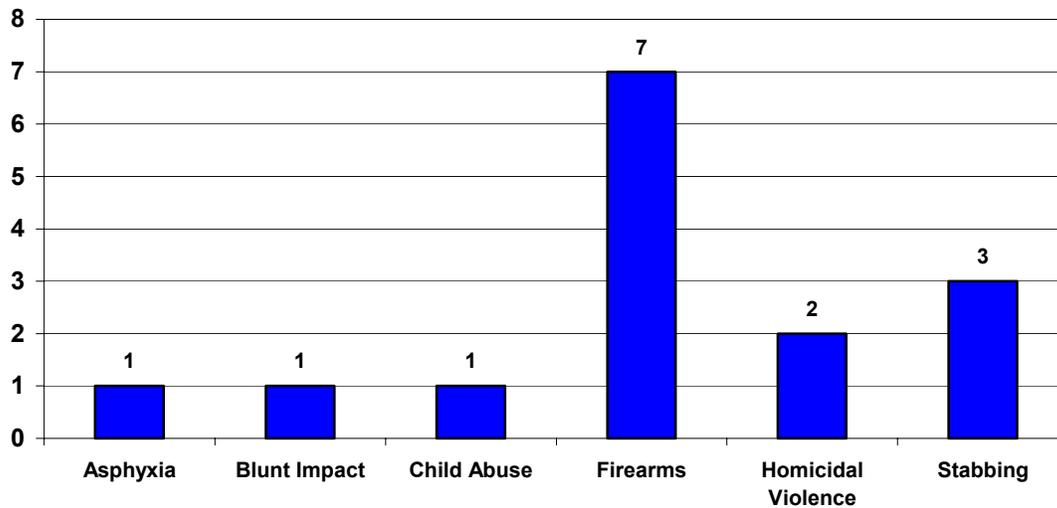
### Accident Mode, Gender and Age Group

Homicide Method	Sex	<1	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	>=100	Total
Asphyxia	F	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Asphyxia Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Blunt Impact	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Blunt Impact Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Child Abuse	F	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Child Abuse Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Firearms	F	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Firearms	M	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
<b>Firearms Total</b>														<b>7</b>
Homicidal Violence	M	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Homicidal Violence Total</b>														<b>2</b>
Stabbing	F	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Stabbing	M	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Stabbing Total</b>														<b>3</b>
<b>Total Homicides</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>

### Homicide Deaths By Age Group



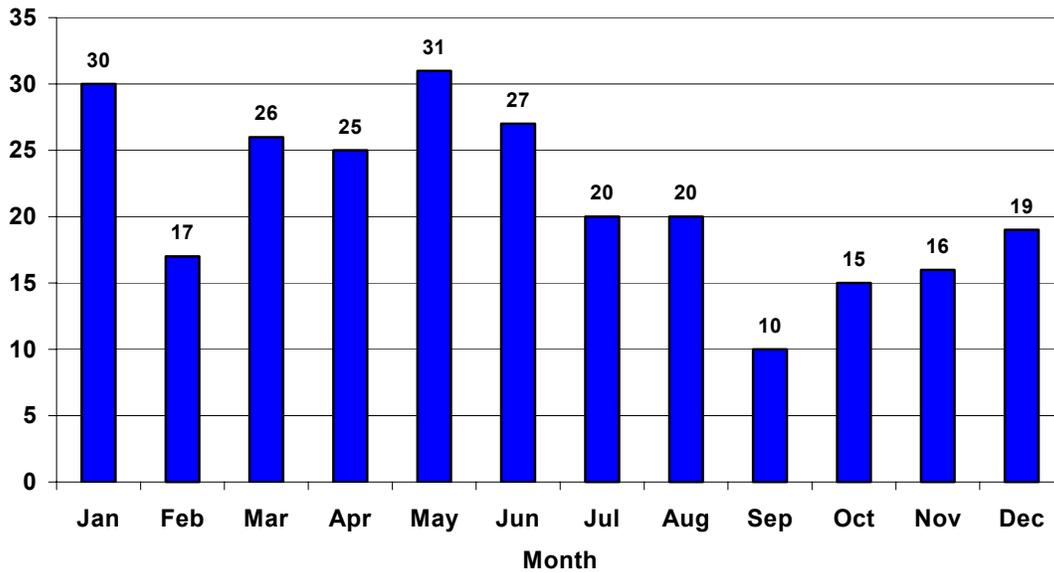
### Homicide Deaths By Method



MANNER: NATURAL

A death that is classified as natural comes under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner because of the sudden and unexpected nature of the death, because there is no physician who has knowledge or awareness of the decedent’s medical history, or when circumstances surrounding death arouse suspicion. In these situations, the Medical Examiner is responsible for certification of death. It should be stressed that the natural deaths that come under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner are not representative of all natural deaths in the general population.

Natural Deaths By Month

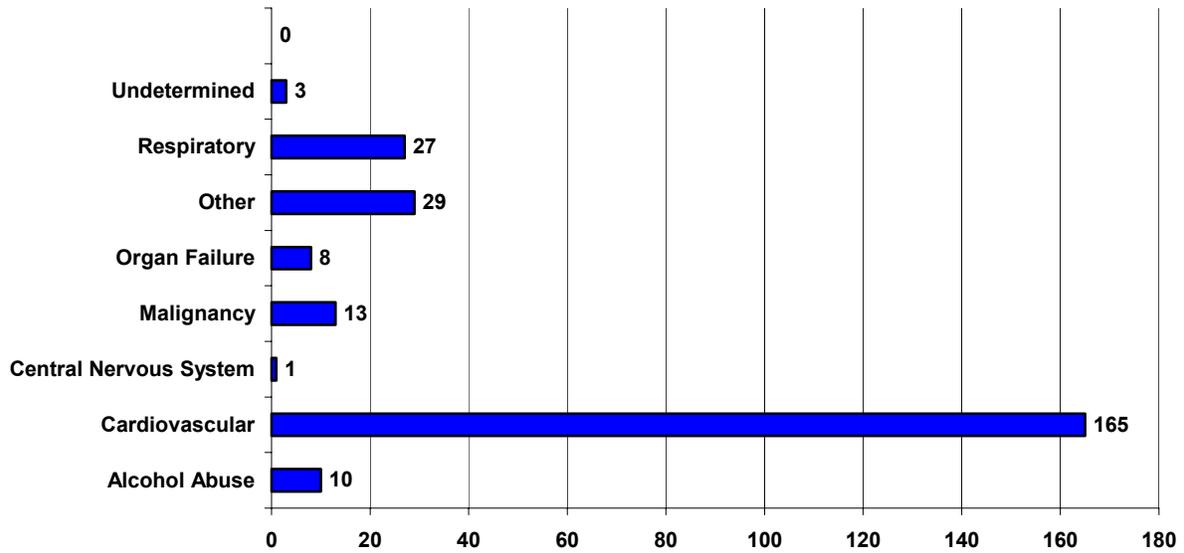


## Natural Deaths by Disease Process

**AA=** Alcohol Abuse                      **O=** Other  
**C=** Cardiovascular                      **R=** Respiratory  
**CNV=** Central Nervous System        **S=** Undetermined  
**M=** Malignancy                         **U=**  
**OF=** Organ Failure

	AA	C	CNV	M	OF	O	R	SD	U	TOTAL
Acute Epiglottitis						1				1
AIDS						1				1
Asthma							3			3
Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease		127								127
Brain Tumor				1						1
Breast Cancer				2						2
Cardiac Dysrhythmia		5								5
Cardiac Tamponade		1								1
Cardio Pulmonary Arrest		1								1
Cardiomegaly		1								1
Cardiomyopathy		10								10
Cerebral Hemorrhage						1				1
Cerebrovascular Accident (CVA)		3								3
Chronic Alcoholism	3									3
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease		2					5			7
Cirrhosis of the Liver	3				6					9
Congenital Abnormality						1				1
Congestive heart failure		1								1
Coronary Thrombosis		5								5
Diabetes					2					2
Diabetes Mellitus						1				1
Emphysema							2			2
Gastro Intestinal Bleed	4									4
Gastrointestinal Bleed						4				4
Hemopericardium		1								1
Hypertensive heart disease		4								4
Hypothyroidism						1				1
Lung Cancer				3						3
Melanoma/Skin Cancer				1						1
Meningitis			1							1
Myocardial Infarction		2								2
Other				5		6				11
Pancreatitis						2				2
Phlebothrombosis							3			3
Pneumonia							11			11
Prostate Cancer				1						1
Pulmonary embolism							3			3
Seizure Disorder						5				5
Septic Shock						1				1
Septicemia						1				1
SIDS						4				4
Subarachnoid Hemorrhage		1								1
undetermined								3		3
Valvular Heart Disease		1								1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>256</b>

### Natural Deaths by Category



### Disease Process By Gender

Disease Process	Female	Male	0	Total
Alcohol Abuse	3	7	0	10
Cardiovascular	62	103	0	165
Central Nervous System	0	1	0	1
Malignancy	6	7	0	13
Organ Failure	2	6	0	8
Other	17	12	0	29
Respiratory	14	13	0	27
Undetermined	3	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>256</b>

### Natural Death Gender and Age Group

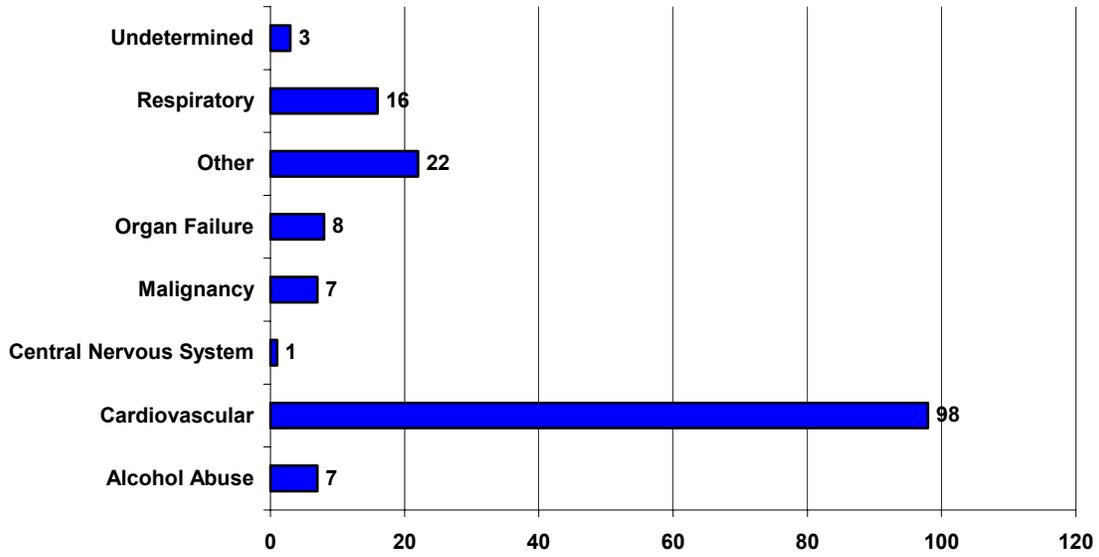
Disease Process	Sex	<1	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	>=100	Total
Alcohol Abuse	F	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Alcohol Abuse	M	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	1	0	0	0	7
<b>Alcohol Abuse Total</b>														<b>10</b>
Cardiovascular	F	0	1	2	0	1	4	8	11	15	11	9	0	62
Cardiovascular	M	0	0	0	0	3	12	22	27	21	15	3	0	103
<b>Cardiovascular Total</b>														<b>165</b>
Central Nervous System	M	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Central Nervous System Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Malignancy	F	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	6
Malignancy	M	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	7
<b>Malignancy Total</b>														<b>13</b>
Organ Failure	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Organ Failure	M	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
<b>Organ Failure Total</b>														<b>8</b>
Other	F	1	0	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	0	17
Other	M	3	0	1	0	3	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	12
<b>Other Total</b>														<b>29</b>
Respiratory	F	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	4	2	3	1	0	14
Respiratory	M	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	0	3	2	0	0	13
<b>Respiratory Total</b>														<b>27</b>
Undetermined	F	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Undetermined Total</b>														<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>255</b>

### Disease Process in Autopsied Deaths

AA= Alcohol Abuse                      O= Organ Failure  
 C= Cardiovascular                    R= Other  
 M= Central Nervous System        S= Respiratory  
 OF= Malignancy                      U= Undetermined

	AA	C	CNV	M	OF	O	R	SD	TOTAL
Acute Epiglottitis	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
AIDS	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Asthma	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease	0	71	0	0	0	0	0	0	71
Brain Tumor	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Breast Cancer	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Cardiac Dysrhythmia	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Cardiac Tamponade	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cardio Pulmonary Arrest	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cardiomyopathy	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Cerebral Hemorrhage	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Cerebrovascular Accident (CVA)	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Chronic Alcoholism	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	3
Cirrhosis of the Liver	2	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	8
Congenital Abnormality	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Coronary Thrombosis	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Diabetes	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Diabetes Mellitus	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Emphysema	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Gastro Intestinal Bleed	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Gastrointestinal Bleed	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hemopericardium	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hypertensive heart disease	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Hypothyroidism	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Lung Cancer	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Meningitis	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Myocardial Infarction	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	5
Pancreatitis	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Phlebothrombosis	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Pneumonia	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
Prostate Cancer	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Pulmonary embolism	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Seizure Disorder	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Septic Shock	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Septicemia	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
SIDS	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
undetermined	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Valvular Heart Disease	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>162</b>

### Natural Deaths Autopsied

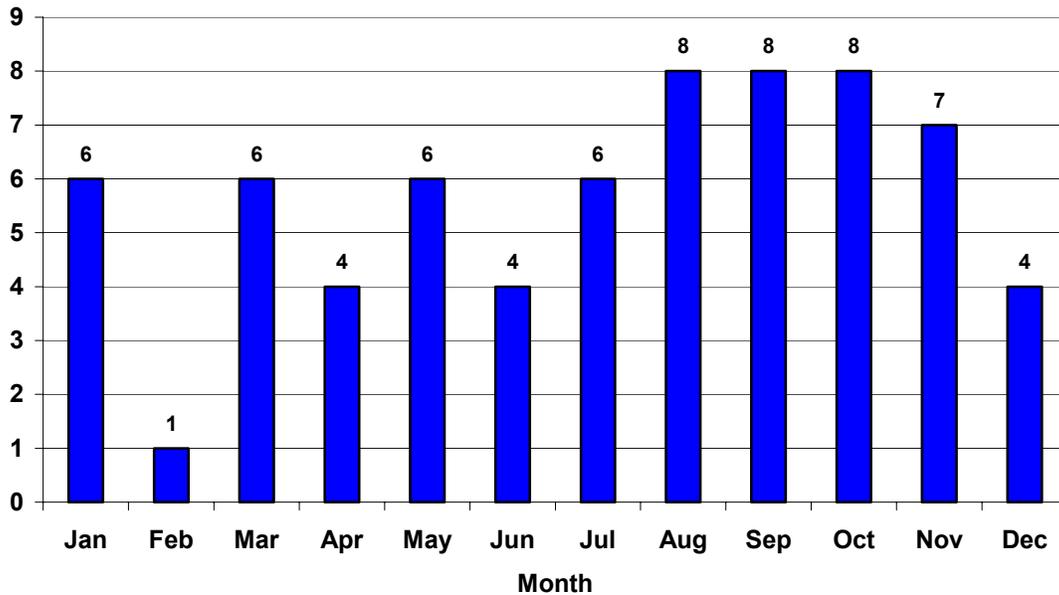


MANNER: SUICIDE

Suicides are those deaths caused by intentional, self-inflicted injuries. In Spokane County there were (68) suicides in 2001, up (13) from 2000.

The highest concentration (74%) of all suicides fell within the 30-60 age group. However, looking at suicides in persons (50) years and older, in 2001 this age group represented 35% (24/68) of all suicides occurring in Spokane County.

Suicide By Month



### Suicide Method Gender and Age Group

Suicide Method	Sex	<1	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	>=100	Total
Carbon Monoxide	F	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Carbon Monoxide	M	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Carbon Monoxide Total</b>														
Drowning	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Drowning Total</b>														
Drugs/Poisons	F	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
Drugs/Poisons	M	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
<b>Drugs/Poisons Total</b>														
Firearms	F	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	4
Firearms	M	0	0	1	6	4	8	2	5	4	3	0	0	33
<b>Firearms Total</b>														
Hanging	M	0	0	0	1	2	6	1	2	0	0	0	0	12
<b>Hanging Total</b>														
Jumping	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Jumping Total</b>														
Stab/incised wound	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Stab/incised wound Total</b>														
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>68</b>

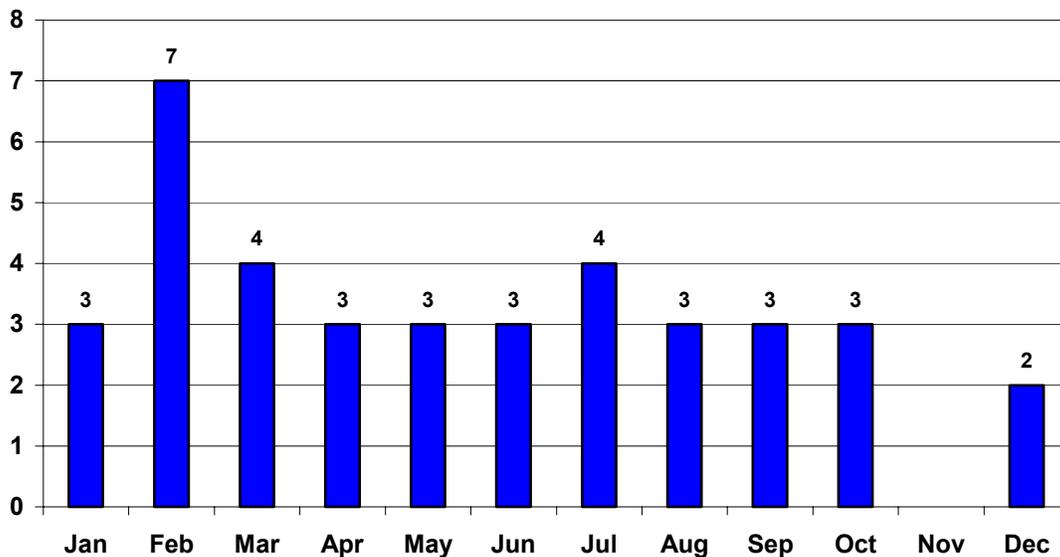
MANNER: TRAFFIC

During the calendar year of 2001, the Medical Examiner’s Office participated in the investigation of (38) deaths categorized as vehicular. This represents more than a 47% decrease over 2000. The number of deaths where the victim was the driver is (20) and (8) deaths occurred where the decedent was a passenger.

Statistics regarding traffic fatalities and the use of restraint showed that (4) victims were restrained, (15) were unrestrained and (9) of these fatalities, it was not known if restraints were used or not.

In many cases someone other than the person who died may have been under the influence of alcohol and directly involved in the accident. Blood alcohol levels are checked on the persons who die, not necessarily everyone involved in an accident.

Vehicular Deaths By Month



### Vehicular Method Gender and Age Group

Suicide Method	Sex	<1	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	≥100	Total
Automobile Driver	F	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Automobile Driver	M	0	0	3	5	2	1	1	0	1	2	0	0	15
<b>Automobile Driver Total</b>														<b>20</b>
Automobile Passenger	F	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	4
Automobile Passenger	M	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
<b>Automobile Passenger Total</b>														<b>8</b>
Other	M	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Other Total</b>														<b>2</b>
Pedestrian	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Pedestrian	M	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	5
<b>Pedestrian Total</b>														<b>7</b>
Unknown	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Unknown Total</b>														<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>

### Traffic Fatalities and Use of Restraint

Circumstances	Total	Restrained	Unknown	Unrestrained
Automobile Driver	20	3	6	11
Automobile Passenger	8	1	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>

## MANNER: UNDETERMINED

Deaths are certified as 'undetermined' when serious doubt exists as to the true manner of death. Rather than to give an inappropriate opinion, it is better to list the death as undetermined. Information concerning the circumstances may be lacking because of the absence of background information of witnesses or because of a lengthy delay between death and discovery of the body. If an extensive investigation and autopsy cannot clarify the circumstances, the death is placed in this category. There were (14) undetermined deaths in Spokane County in 2001.

## Undetermined

Number	Cause of Death	Month	Sex	Age	Race
1	swelling brain w/transtenori herniation	Jan	F	43	Caucasian
2	intoxication methadone&other meds	Feb	M	50	Caucasian
3	asphyxia/suffocation by plastic bag	Mar	M	16	Caucasian
4	asphyxia by plastic bag over head	Mar	F	17	Caucasian
5	asphyxia by inhalation carbon monoxide	Apr	M	71	Caucasian
6	undetermined	Apr	M	0 mo	Caucasian
7	acute intox/comb effects mult drugs	May	M	49	Caucasian
8	undetermined (stillborn)	Jul	F	0 mo	Caucasian
9	necrotizing soft tissue infection chest/sternal fx	Aug	M	72	Caucasian
10	undetermined after complete autopsy	Sep	F	0 mo	Caucasian
11	Undetermined	Nov	F	0 mo	Native American
12	undetermined after complete autopsy	Nov	M	24	Caucasian
13	acute ethanol intox	Dec	F	41	Caucasian
14	acute intox/comb drugs	Dec	M	55	Caucasian

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>Blood Alcohol Level</b>	The concentration of ethanol (alcohol) found in blood following ingestion. Measured in grams per 100 ml of blood or grams %. In the State of Washington, 0.08 grams % is considered the legally intoxicated level while driving.
<b>Drug</b>	Therapeutic drug: A substance, other than food, used in the prevention, diagnosis, alleviation, treatment, or cure of disease. Recreational drug: A drug used non-medically for personal stimulation/depression/euphoria, use or abuse.
<b>Drug Caused Death</b>	Death directly caused by a drug or drugs in combination with each other or with alcohol, including psycholeptic drugs or therapeutic drugs like for asthma or epilepsy
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	The jurisdiction of the Coroner's Office extends to all reportable deaths occurring within the boundaries of Spokane County, whether or not the incident leading to the death (such as an accident) occurred within the county.
<b>Manner</b>	A classification of the way in which the cause of death came about, with special reference to social relationships and personal causation. It is the way in which the cause of death came about, whether by force of natural events, by accidental or suicidal self-infliction or by other external forces, determined by others or from risk factors controlled by others.
<b>Manner: Accident</b>	Death other than natural, where there is no evidence of intent, i.e., unintentional. In this report, vehicle accidents are identified separately.
<b>Manner: Homicide</b>	Death resulting from intentional harm (explicit or implicit) of one person by another, including actions of grossly reckless behavior or lack of control of risk factors.
<b>Manner: Natural</b>	Death caused solely by organic disease. If natural death is hastened by injury (such as a fall), the manner of death will not be considered natural.
<b>Manner: Suicide</b>	Death as a result of a purposeful action, with intent (explicit or implicit) to end one's life.
<b>Manner: Traffic</b>	Unintentional deaths of drivers (automobile, bicycle or motorcycle), passengers, and pedestrians involving motor vehicles on public roadways. Accidents involving motor vehicles on private property (such as driveways) are not included in this category.
<b>Manner: Undetermined</b>	Manner assigned when there is insufficient evidence or information to assign a specific manner.

<b>Opiate</b>	Any preparation or derivative of opium, usually heroin and morphine.
<b>Poison</b>	Any substance, either taken internally or applied externally, that is injurious to health or dangerous to life, and with no medical benefit.
<b>Prenatal/Fetal Death</b>	Category of deaths that occur within the uterus (fetal) or shortly before, during, or shortly after birth (prenatal).
<b>Race</b>	The racial categories used in this report are: White, Black, Native American, Asian, Hispanic, and Other.

# Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office

