

## MISSION STATEMENT

*“A regional forensic medicine center striving for continued excellence in providing scientific, compassionate, and professional services in the investigation of unexpected death.”*

## FOREWORD

Information presented in this annual report has been compiled on deaths that were reported to the Spokane County Medical Examiner’s Office in 2003. This summarized report presents data in a variety of formats with the objective of providing useful information to diverse groups in the community.

## 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**

The year 2003 was the fifth year of the new Medical Examiner Death Investigation system in Spokane County. The office completed a comprehensive policy and procedure manual. Requirements for accreditation by the National Association of the Medical Examiners were completed in preparation for facility inspection in April 2004. Also, a detailed inventory of evidentiary items held in the examination facilities was completed.

## **CRITERIA FOR REPORTABLE DEATHS**

- 1. Persons who die suddenly when in apparent good health and without medical attendance within 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 injury whatsoever, whether the primary cause or contributing cause.**
- 6. Contagious disease, with public health risk.**
- 7. Unclaimed or indigent decedents.**
- 8. Premature and stillborn infants where suspicious circumstances exist.**

## **FUNCTION OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE**

The Medical Examiner's Office serves the living by investigating deaths, usually when the deaths are unexpected. This task begins with careful investigation at the scene of death, supplemented when appropriate, by autopsy examination, toxicology and other testing. The Medical Examiner's Office helps the community by determining the cause and manner of death, recognizing and collecting evidence needed for adjudication, defining public health and product safety risks and providing compassionate services to families including notification of next of kin.

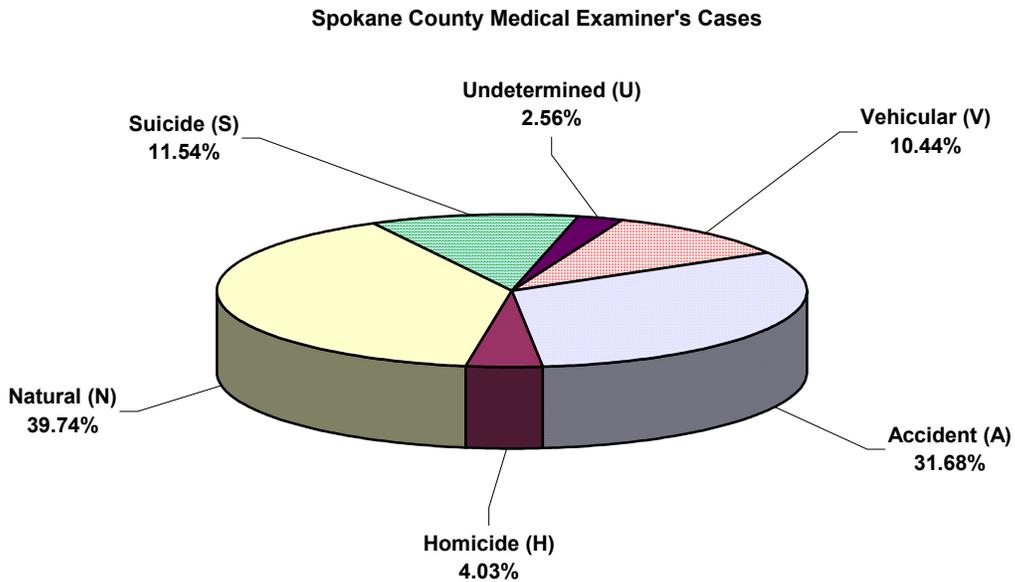
## **MEDICAL EXAMINER CASES IN 2003**

In 2003, there were 4148 deaths in Spokane County (based on the latest census of 425600, this represents 1% of the population). Of these deaths, 3063 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 546 (18%) of these reported deaths. These reporting figures and autopsy percentages are similar to other Medical Examiner jurisdictions nationally.

There were 2517 deaths reported to the Medical Examiner in which jurisdiction was not assumed. The number of deaths reported to the Medical Examiner's Office was significantly greater than recorded during the years as a coroner's system (before January 1, 1999). The number has also steadily increased during the Medical Examiners years (1999 to present), reflecting efforts by the Medical Examiner's Office to educate reporting agencies and encourage appropriate reporting of deaths to the Medical Examiner. All nursing home and adult care facilities deaths are reported to the Medical Examiners Office allowing for appropriate agency analysis.

<b>Cases By Manner Of Death</b>	<b>Number Of Deaths</b>	<b>Percent Of Total</b>
Accident (A)	173	31.68%
Homicide (H)	22	4.03%
Natural (N)	217	39.74%
Suicide (S)	63	11.54%
Undetermined (U)	14	2.56%
Vehicular (V)	57	10.44%

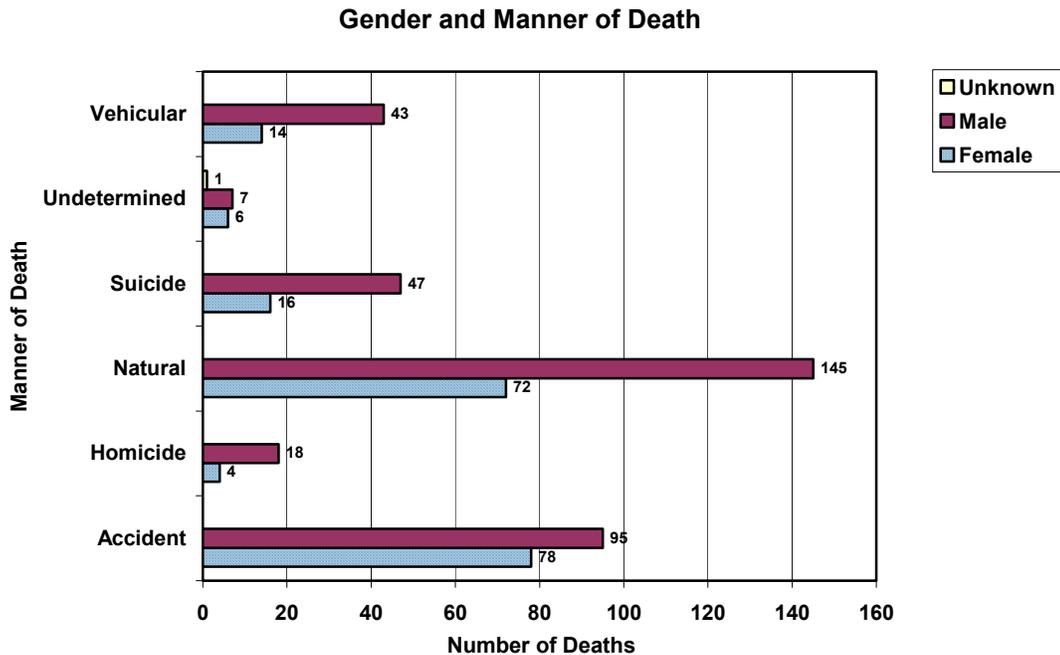
<b>Total Spokane County Population</b>	425,600
<b>Total Deaths in Spokane County</b>	4,148
<b>Total Deaths Reported to the Medical Examiner 2003</b>	3,063
<b>Total Non-Jurisdictional Cases</b>	2,517
<b>Total Spokane County Medical Examiner Cases</b>	546
<b>Total Autopsies Performed</b>	418



### Gender and Manner Of Death

Sex	Total	A	H	N	S	U	V	Percent
Female	190	78	4	72	16	6	14	34.80%
Male	355	95	18	145	47	7	43	65.02%
Unknown	1					1		0.18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>57</b>	

**Note:** The single case of unknown gender represents a skeletal remains case with insufficient material to allow for sex determination.



**Predominance of male gender in all categories of death coming under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiners Office reflects the experience of most death investigation systems.**

### 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	3		1				2
Black	12	4	3	5			
Caucasian	476	145	11	199	60	11	50
Hispanic	14	7	1	1	2	1	2
Native American	13	3	3	4			3
Other	2	1				1	
Unknown	26	13	3	8	1	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>57</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>	26	6	4	8	0	4	4
<b>10 to 19</b>	20	4	3	1	5	1	6
<b>20 to 29</b>	34	12	5	5	6	0	6
<b>30 to 39</b>	43	14	1	10	5	3	10
<b>40 to 49</b>	116	33	4	46	21	3	9
<b>50 to 59</b>	101	17	2	62	12	3	5
<b>60 to 69</b>	51	7	2	32	8	0	2
<b>70 to 79</b>	62	24	1	22	4	0	11
<b>80 to 89</b>	62	34	0	23	2	0	3
<b>90 to 99</b>	31	22	0	8	0	0	1
<b>100 to 109</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>57</b>

**Gender and Age Group**

Age Group (Years)	Total	Female	Male	Unknown
0 to 9	26	9	16	1
10 to 19	20	5	15	0
20 to 29	34	8	26	0
30 to 39	43	15	28	0
40 to 49	116	33	83	0
50 to 59	101	27	74	0
60 to 69	51	11	40	0
70 to 79	62	24	38	0
80 to 89	62	37	25	0
90 to 99	31	21	10	0
100 to 109	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>1</b>

Males exceed females in each age group until ages eighty and above, probably reflecting the susceptibility of the older female to incur hip fracture-related mortality (see accident mode graph page 19).

**CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM**

The Medical Examiner, according to State law, is responsible for identifying decedents and for locating and notifying next-of-kin. The Medical Examiner's Office is fortunate to have the assistance of the Chaplains from the Spokane Police Department and Spokane County Sheriff's Office in notifying and locating family members. The staff of the Medical Examiner's Office recognizes that the Chaplains have considerable experience and professional training to help in this difficult and emotional endeavor.

## MULTI-YEAR COMPARISON

The Medical Examiner's Office replaced the coroner's system on January 1, 1999. As noted in the "Comparison of Manners of Death" table below, the Medical Examiner has assumed jurisdiction twice as often as the coroner. Although comparing the coroner and medical examiner systems through the years reveals similar numbers of homicides, undetermined and vehicular deaths, the medical examiner system has historically assumed jurisdiction in more "accident" and "natural" deaths than the coroner. Part of the increase in the accident category is accounted for by improved reporting to the Medical Examiner system which tends to identify some types of accidents such as fractures in elderly people. The Medical Examiner system also performed significantly increased numbers of autopsies in deaths due to medications and drugs compared to the Coroner system. It is believed that the increased number of natural deaths identified by the Medical Examiner system reflects better scene investigations and a strict adherence to State RCW that requires the Medical Examiner's involvement when death is unexpected, and occurs in a younger age group.

During the Medical Examiner years (1999-2003), the cases selected as coming under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner system has ranged from 532 to 633, with the number of autopsies performed consistently near 400.

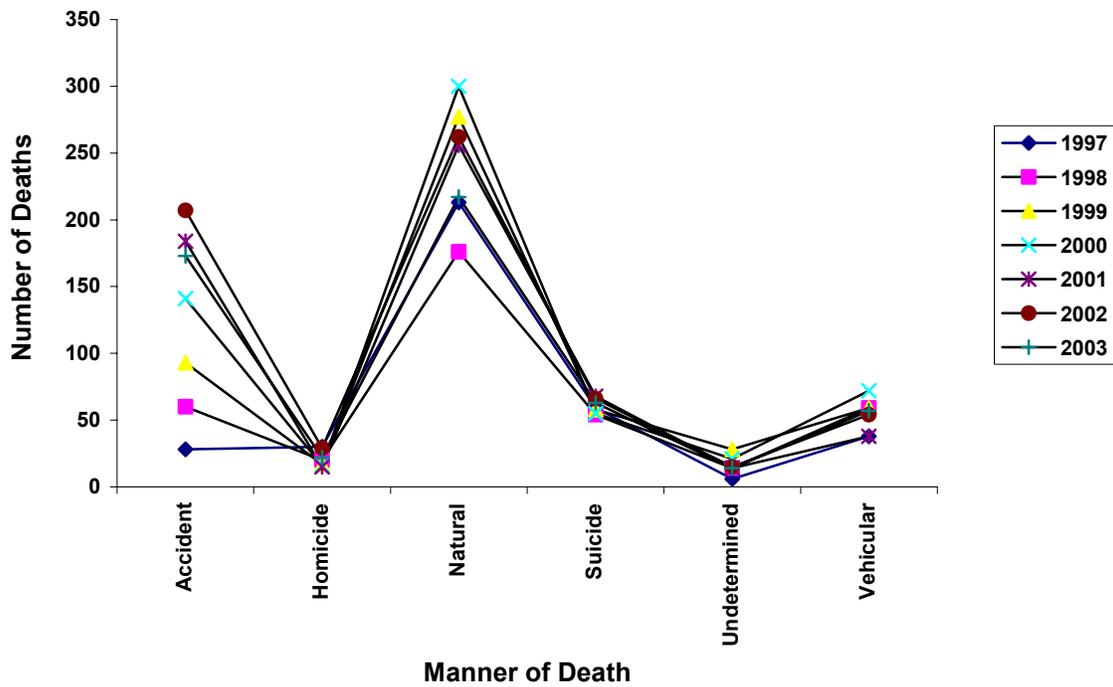
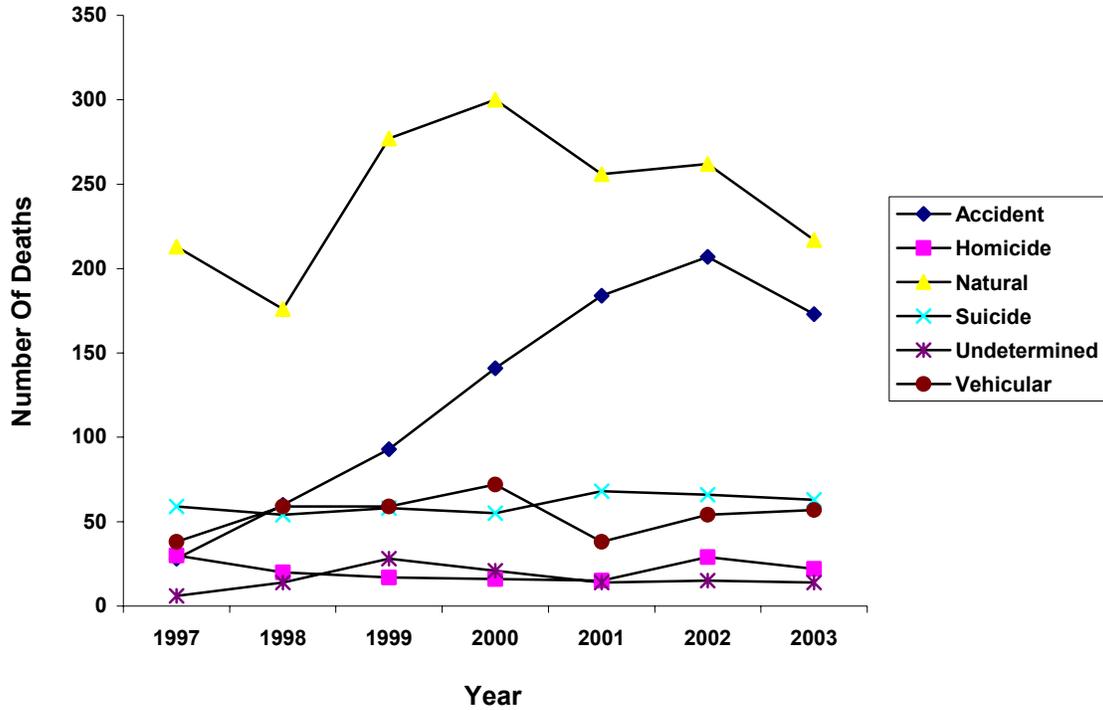
**Comparison of Manners of Death 1997 - 2003**

<b>Manner of Death</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Accident	28	60	93	141	184	207	173
Homicide	30	20	17	16	15	29	22
Natural	213	176	277	300	256	262	217
Suicide	59	54	58	55	68	66	63
Undetermined	6	14	28	21	14	15	14
Vehicular	38	59	59	72	38	54	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>546</b>

**Comparison of Manners of Death as Percentage of Total Annual Medical Examiner's Cases 1997 - 2003**

<b>Manner of Death</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Accident	7.49%	15.67%	17.48%	23.31%	32.00%	32.70%	31.68%
Homicide	8.02%	5.22%	3.20%	2.64%	2.61%	4.58%	4.03%
Natural	56.95%	45.95%	52.07%	49.59%	44.52%	41.39%	39.74%
Suicide	15.78%	14.10%	10.90%	9.09%	11.83%	10.43%	11.54%
Undetermined	1.60%	3.66%	5.26%	3.47%	2.43%	2.37%	2.56%
Vehicular	10.16%	15.40%	11.09%	11.90%	6.61%	8.53%	10.44%

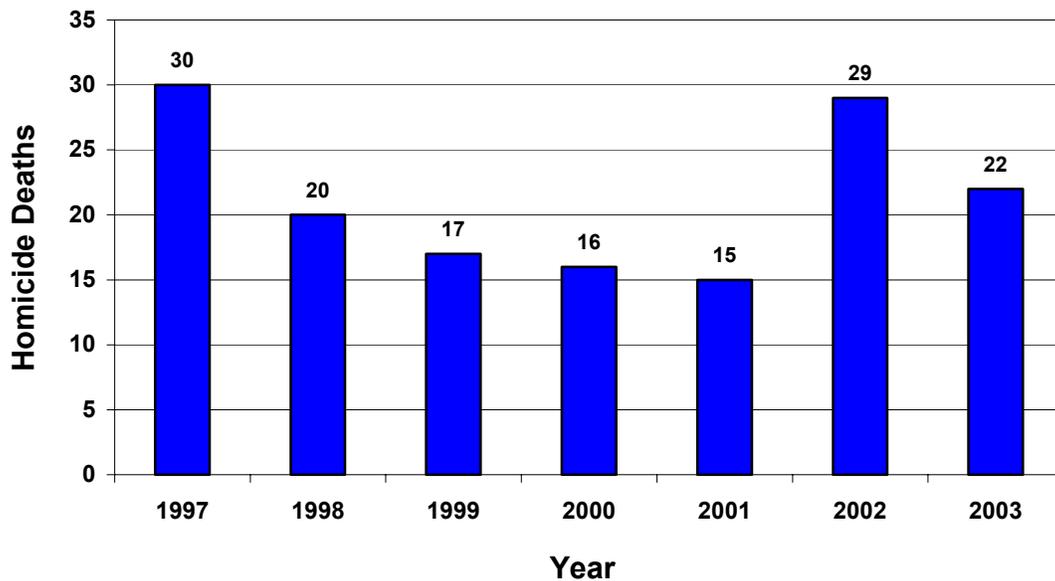
### Comparison of Manners of Death 1997 - 2003



### Comparison of Homicidal Methods 1997 - 2003

Method Used	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Asphyxia	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Blunt Impact	2	1	3	0	1	6	0
Child Abuse	2	1	1	2	1	2	3
Firearms	21	8	6	9	7	16	7
Homicidal Violence	3	2	2	3	2	1	5
Other	0	0	2	0	0	2	1
Stabbing	2	7	2	2	3	2	4
Strangulation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22</b>

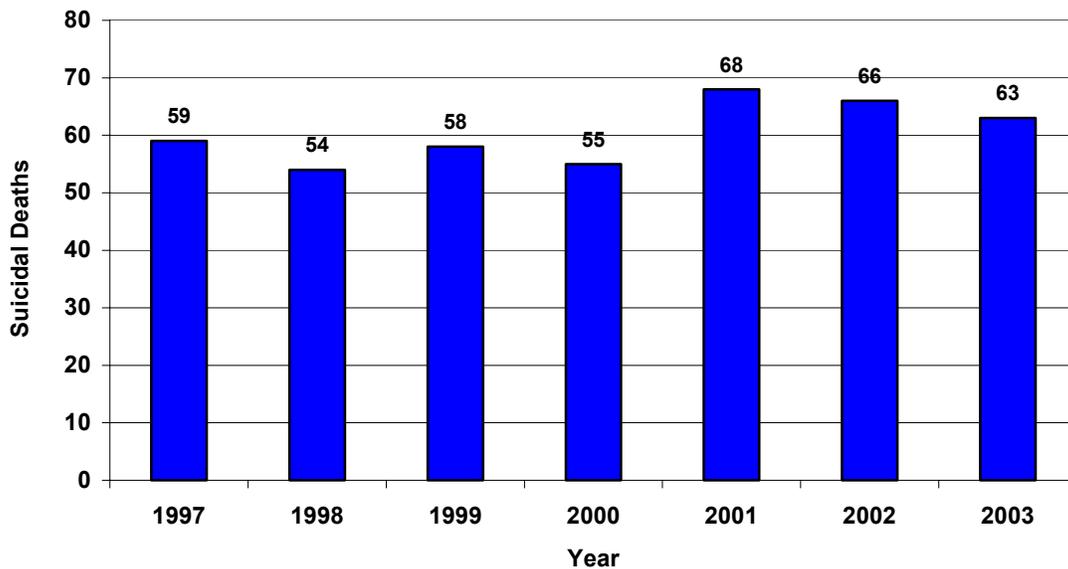
### Homicides 1997 - 2003



### Comparison of Suicidal Methods 1997 - 2003

Method Used	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Carbon Monoxide	8	5	4	6	4	3	4
Drowning	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Drugs/Poisons	6	3	10	3	12	9	16
Firearms	33	29	29	33	37	41	24
Hanging	9	10	9	10	12	9	10
Jumping	0	4	2	1	1	0	6
Other	3	0	0	1	0	2	1
Plastic Bag	0	1	2	0	0	1	1
Stab/incised wound	0	2	2	1	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>63</b>

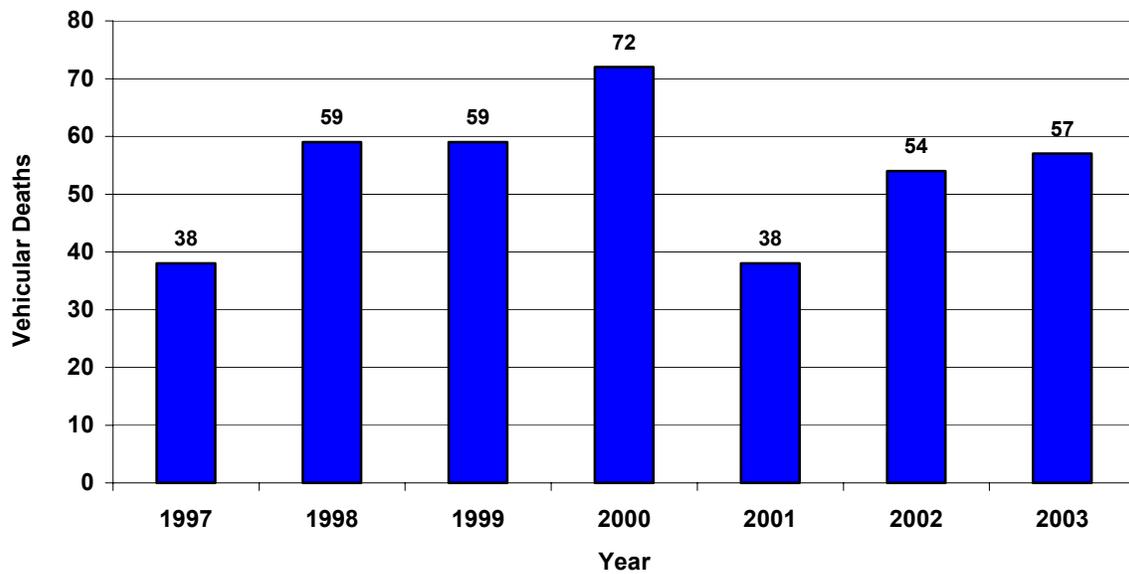
### Suicides 1997 - 2003



### Comparison of Vehicular Deaths 1997 - 2003

Vehicle Circumstances	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Automobile Driver	22	32	28	37	20	26	23
Automobile Passenger	8	15	18	16	8	13	12
Bicyclist	2	1	1	1	0	0	2
Motorcycle Driver	3	2	3	3	0	4	11
Motorcycle Passenger	1	0	0	2	0	0	2
Other	1	4	1	2	2	2	1
Pedestrian	1	3	7	10	7	9	6
Unknown	0	2	1	1	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>57</b>

### Vehicular Deaths 1997 - 2003

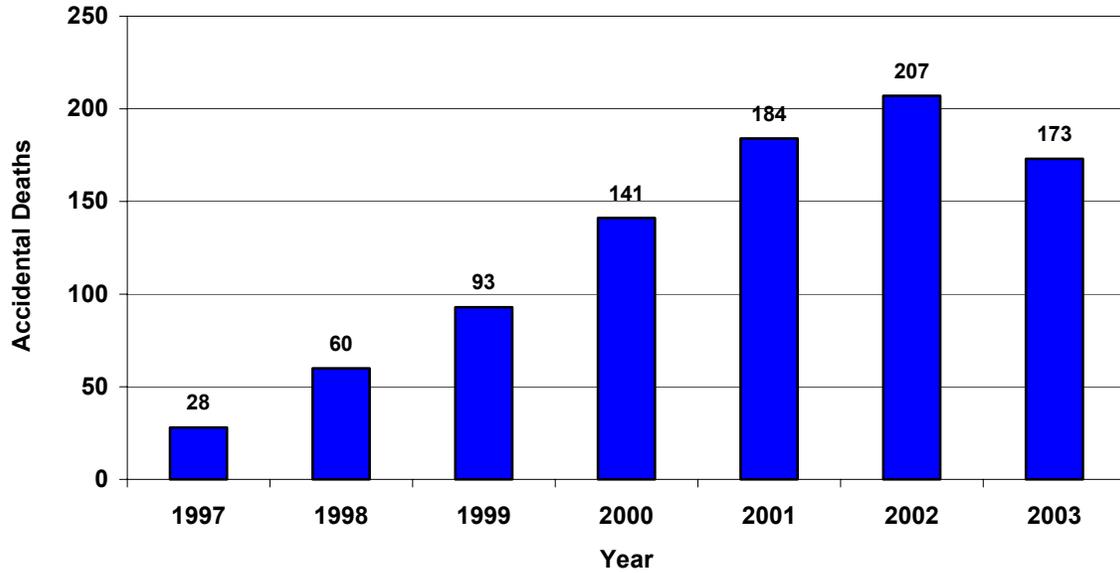


**Comparison of Accidental Deaths 1997 - 2003**

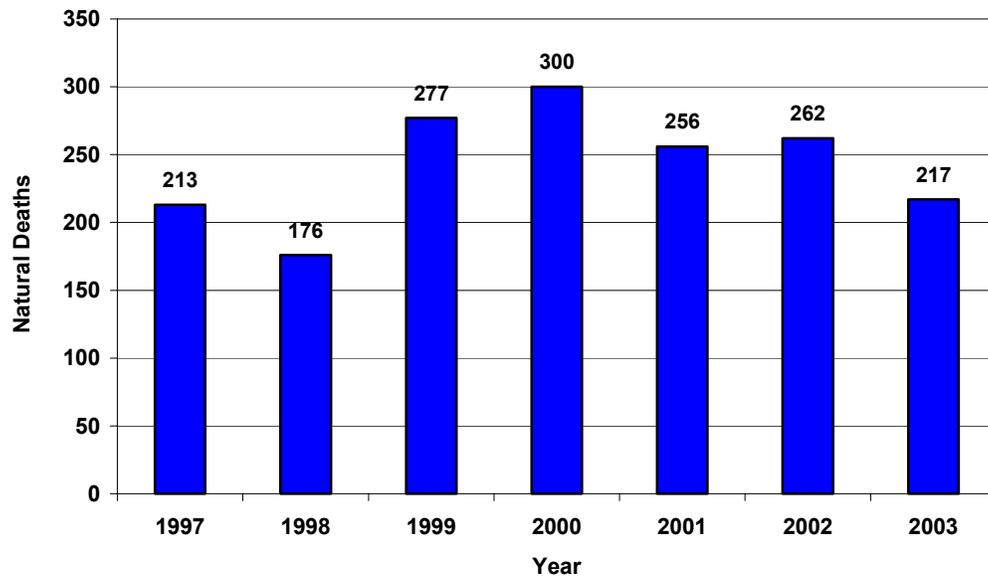
<b>Accident Circumstances</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Aircraft	0	1	0	0	3	0	1
Alcohol Abuse	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
Anaphylaxis	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Asphyxiation	1	2	6	4	5	9	3
Aspiration	0	0	3	1	4	0	0
Bicycle Fall	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Boating	0	0	1	2	0	1	0
Choking	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Dog Bite	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Drowning	4	7	4	6	5	13	7
Drugs	1	1	15	30	45	49	56
Electrocution	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Fall	10	31	43	80	98	114	85
Farm	0	1	2	0	0	0	1
Fire/burns	4	4	1	3	2	4	0
Firearms	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Hyperthermia	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
Hypothermia	0	0	0	4	1	2	3
Industrial Accident	3	2	2	1	3	3	3
Motorcycle Driver (race track)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Other	3	7	5	9	7	6	7
Prescribed Drugs	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Struck by Object	0	0	2	0	1	0	1
Surgical Procedure	0	0	3	0	1	2	1
Therapy Complication	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>173</b>

**After a marked increase in drownings in 2002, drownings declined in 2003. An increasing trend in the drug/medication category of accidental death is noted.**

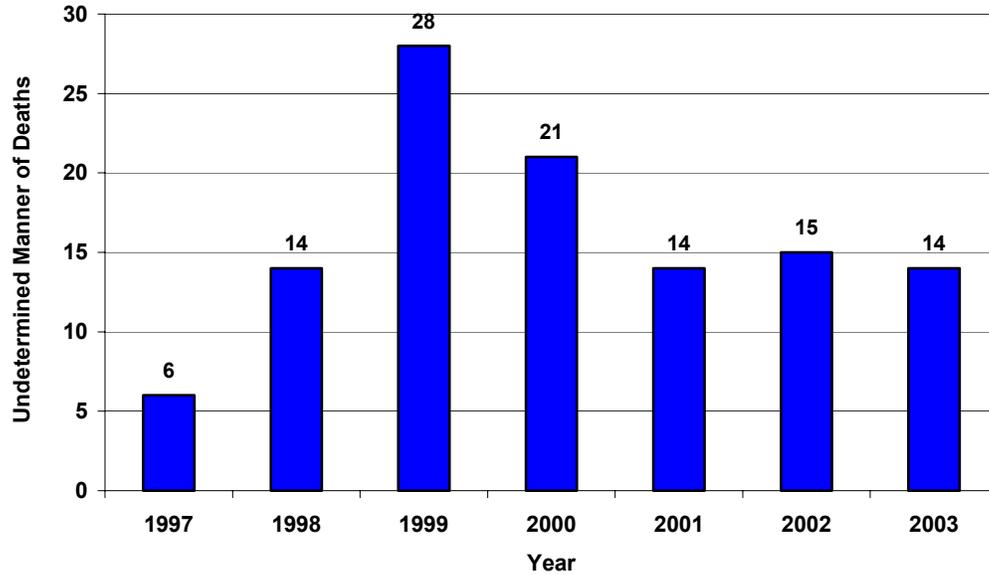
### Accidental Deaths 1997 - 2003



### Natural Deaths 1997 - 2003



### Deaths of Undetermined Manner 1997 - 2003

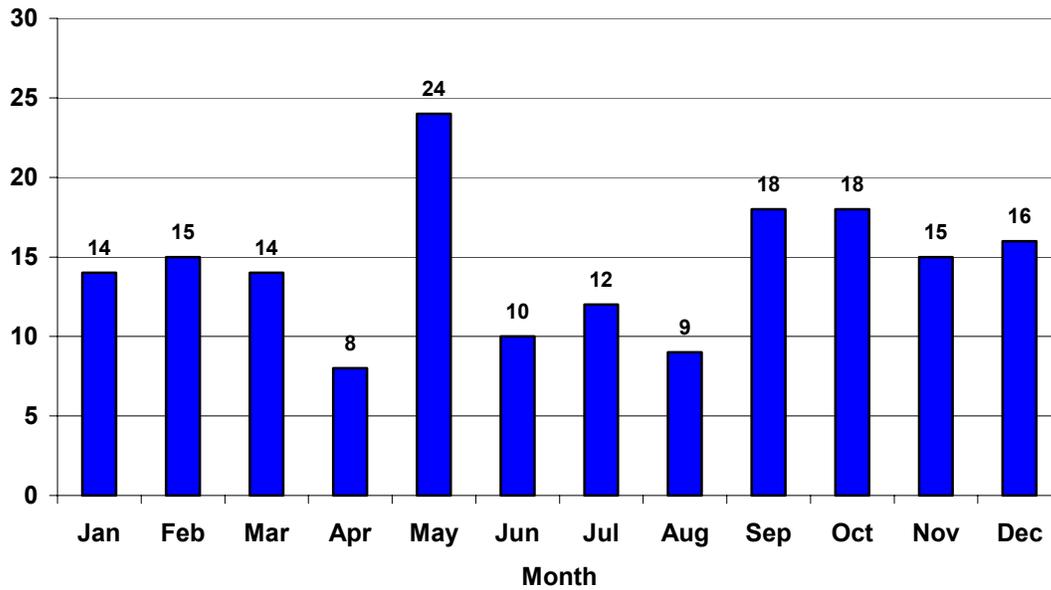


Medical Examiner Systems strive to use the undetermined manner of death category in less than five percent of cases. In 2003, the undetermined classification was used in 2.6% of Spokane Medical Examiner cases.

**MANNER: ACCIDENT**

Traffic-related fatalities are separated from other accidents because some community groups have special needs in examining traffic-related deaths.

**Accidental Deaths By Month**



**Accident Mode By Gender**

<b>Accident Mode</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
Aircraft	1	0	1
Alcohol Abuse	2	0	2
Asphyxiation	3	2	1
Bicycle Fall	1	0	1
Drowning	7	1	6
Drugs	56	26	30
Electrocution	1	0	1
Fall	85	46	39
Farm	1	0	1
Hypothermia	3	0	3
Industrial Accident	3	0	3
Other	7	1	6
Struck by Object	1	0	1
Surgical Procedure	1	1	0
Therapy Complication	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>95</b>

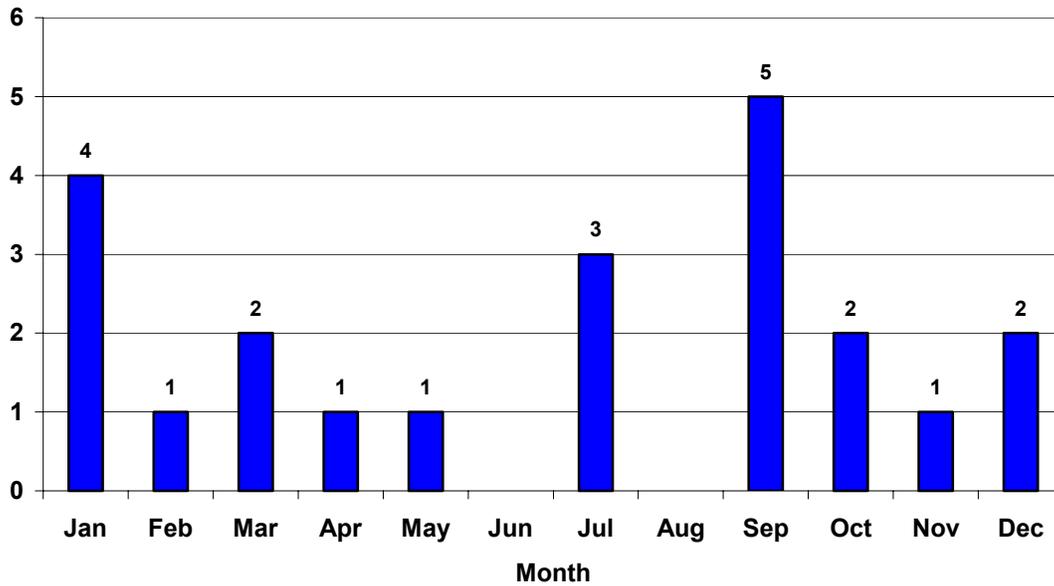
### Accident Mode, Gender and Age Group

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	M	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Aircraft Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Alcohol Abuse	M	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Alcohol Abuse Total</b>														<b>2</b>
Asphyxiation	F	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Asphyxiation	M	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Asphyxiation Total</b>														<b>3</b>
Bicycle Fall	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Bicycle Fall Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Drowning	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Drowning	M	0	1	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
<b>Drowning Total</b>														<b>7</b>
Drugs	F	0	0	1	5	5	11	3	1	0	0	0	0	26
Drugs	M	0	0	0	5	6	15	4	0	0	0	0	0	30
<b>Drugs Total</b>														<b>56</b>
Electrocution	M	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Electrocution Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Fall	F	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	11	18	14	0	46
Fall	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	3	10	12	8	0	39
<b>Fall Total</b>														<b>85</b>
Farm	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Farm Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Hypothermia	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	3
<b>Hypothermia Total</b>														<b>3</b>
Industrial Accident	M	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Industrial Accident Total</b>														<b>3</b>
Other	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Other	M	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	6
<b>Other Total</b>														<b>7</b>
Struck by Object	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Struck by Object Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Surgical Procedure	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Surgical Procedure Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Therapy Complication	F	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Therapy Complication Total</b>														<b>1</b>
<b>Total Accidents</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>173</b>

**MANNER: HOMICIDE**

In 2003 the recorded 22 homicides represents a decrease by 7 from previous year. Firearms accounted for single largest implements/mode of death. Firearms also accounted for the largest number of deaths by suicide. The most frequent age group of homicide victims in 2003 was 20-29 years.

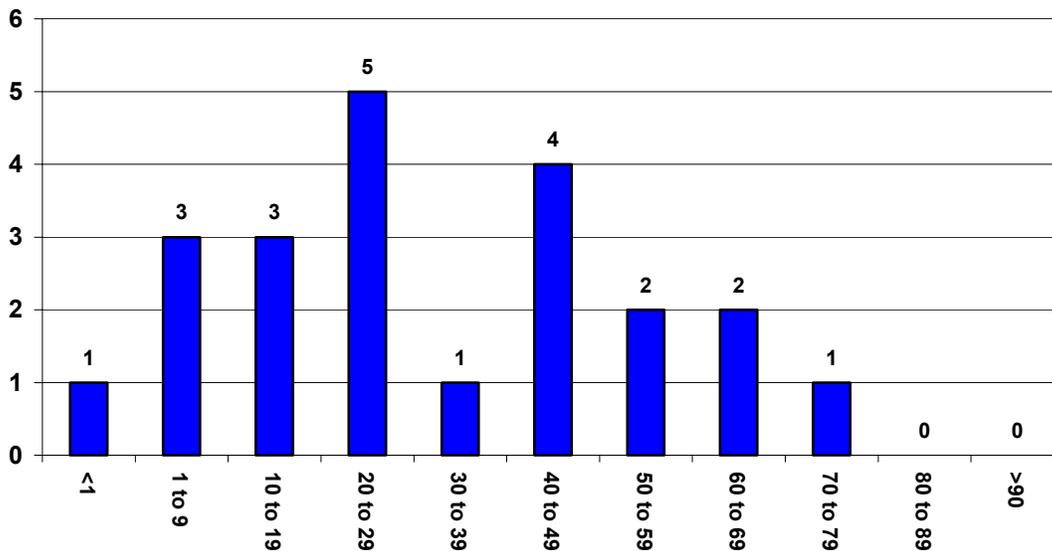
**Homicide Deaths By Month**



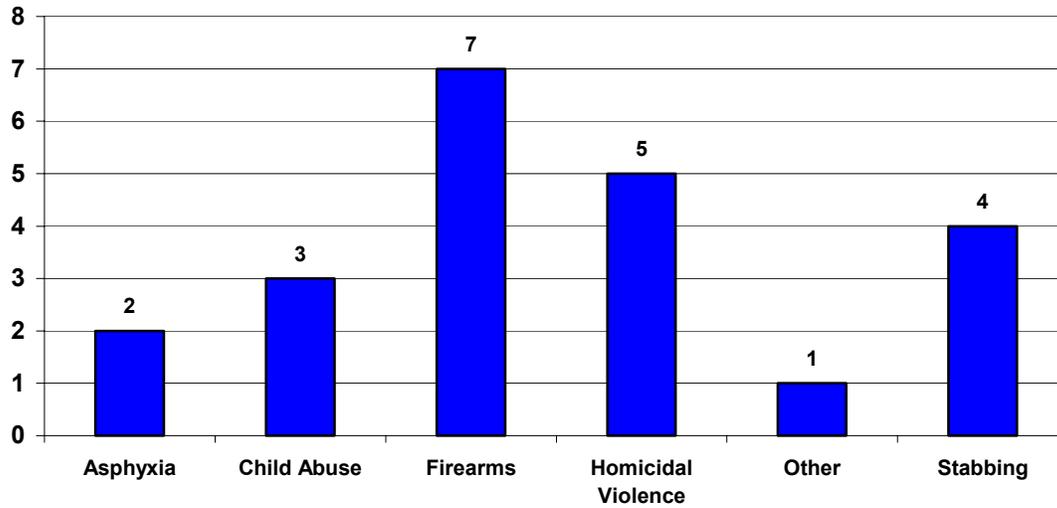
### Homicide Mode, Gender and Age Group

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	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Asphyxia	M	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Asphyxia Total</b>														<b>2</b>
Child Abuse	F	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Child Abuse	M	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Child Abuse Total</b>														<b>3</b>
Firearms	M	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	7
<b>Firearms Total</b>														<b>7</b>
Homicidal Violence	F	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Homicidal Violence	M	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
<b>Homicidal Violence Total</b>														<b>5</b>
Other	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Other Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Stabbing	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Stabbing	M	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Stabbing Total</b>														<b>4</b>
<b>Total Homicides</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>

### Homicide Deaths By Age Group



### Homicide Deaths By Method

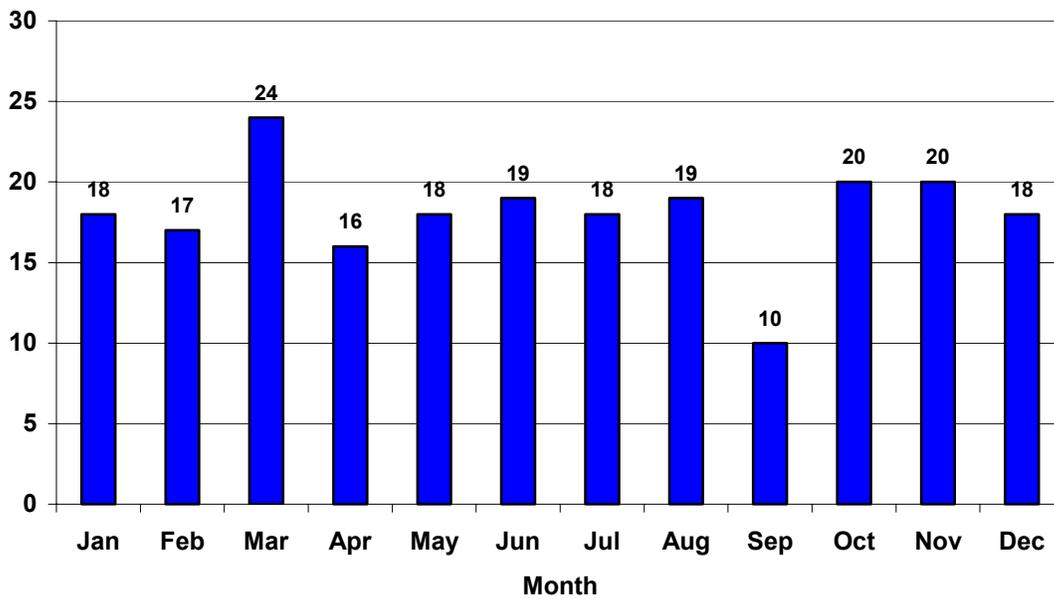


This graph is subject to limitations based on the small total number of decedents represented in the graph.

MANNER: NATURAL

Typically, the Medical Examiner's Office assumes jurisdiction in cases of natural death when the death occurs in a young age group without medical history and is therefore unexpected.

Natural Deaths By Month



### Natural Deaths by Disease Process

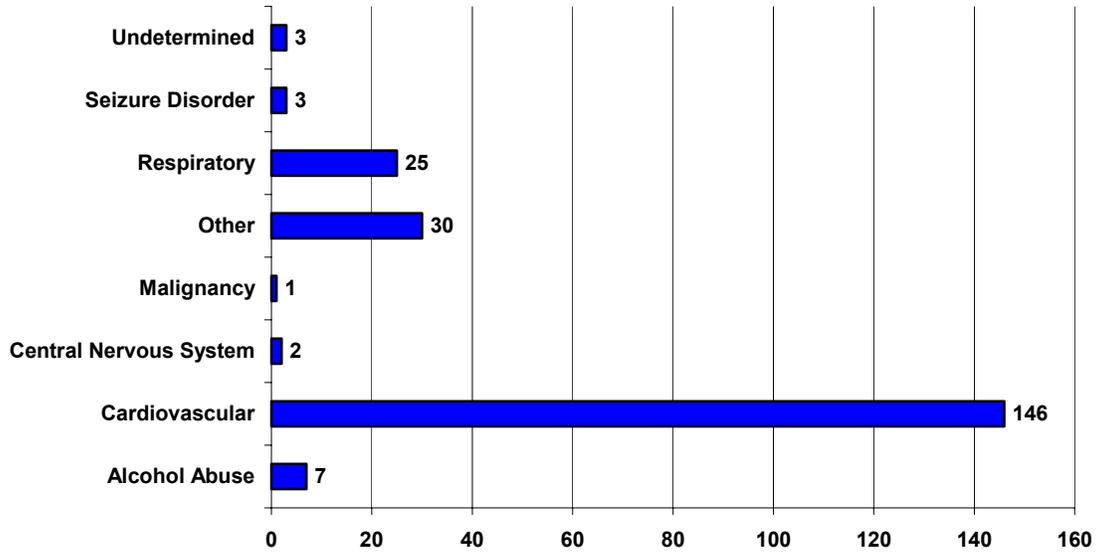
AA= Alcohol Abuse                      O= Other  
 C= Cardiovascular                    R= Respiratory  
 CNV= Central Nervous System       S= Seizure Disorder  
 M= Malignancy                        U= Undetermined  
 OF= Organ Failure

( Total # of Natural Deaths including those not examined by full autopsy. )

	AA	C	CNV	M	O	R	S	U	TOTAL
Arrhythmia		3							3
Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease		103							103
Cardiac Dysrhythmia		3							3
Cardiac Tamponade		2							2
Cardio Pulmonary Arrest		1							1
Cardiomyopathy		10							10
Cerebral Hemorrhage					6				6
Chronic Alcoholism	4								4
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease						4			4
Cirrhosis of the Liver	2								2
Congenital Abnormality					2				2
Congenital Heart Defect		1							1
Congestive heart failure		1							1
Coronary Thrombosis		1							1
Diabetes Mellitus					2				2
Emphysema						2			2
Epilepsy							1		1
From History							2		2
Gastro Intestinal Bleed	1								1
Gastrointestinal Bleed					2				2
Hemopericardium		4							4
Hypertensive heart disease		10							10
Myocardial Infarction		4							4
Necrotizing Fasciitis					1				1
Other		2		1	5				8
Parkinson's Disease			1						1
Peritonitis					1				1
Pneumonia						10			10
Pulmonary embolism						9			9
Septicemia					1				1
SIDS					6				6
Subarachnoid Hemorrhage		1	1		4				6
undetermined								3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>217</b>

The high proportion of deaths related to the cardiovascular system is typical of national statistics defining the categories of natural deaths.

### Natural Deaths by Category



### Disease Process By Gender

Disease Process	Female	Male	Total
Alcohol Abuse	1	6	7
Cardiovascular	44	102	146
Central Nervous System	1	1	2
Malignancy	1	0	1
Other	13	17	30
Respiratory	9	16	25
Seizure Disorder	1	2	3
Undetermined	2	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>217</b>

### Natural Death Gender and Age Group

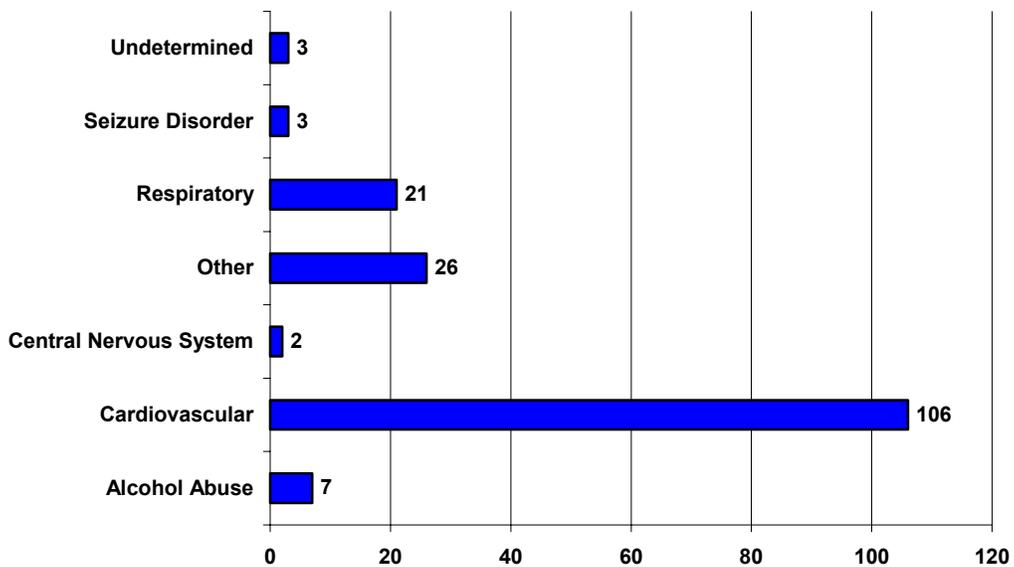
Disease Process	Sex	<1	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	>=100	Total
Alcohol Abuse	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Alcohol Abuse	M	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	6
<b>Alcohol Abuse Total</b>														<b>7</b>
Cardiovascular	F	0	0	0	0	0	9	7	9	4	12	3	0	44
Cardiovascular	M	0	0	0	2	4	24	34	15	15	6	2	0	102
<b>Cardiovascular Total</b>														<b>146</b>
Central Nervous System	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Central Nervous System	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Central Nervous System Total</b>														<b>2</b>
Malignancy	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Malignancy Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Other	F	4	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	1	3	0	13
Other	M	2	2	0	1	2	5	3	1	1	0	0	0	17
<b>Other Total</b>														<b>30</b>
Respiratory	F	0	0	1	0	0	2	4	0	0	2	0	0	9
Respiratory	M	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	6	1	0	0	0	16
<b>Respiratory Total</b>														<b>25</b>
Seizure Disorder	F	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Seizure Disorder	M	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Seizure Disorder Total</b>														<b>3</b>
Undetermined	F	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Undetermined	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Undetermined Total</b>														<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>217</b>

### Disease Process in Autopsied Deaths

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

	AA	C	CNV	O	R	SD	U	TOTAL
Arrhythmia	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease	0	67	0	0	0	0	0	67
Cardiac Dysrhythmia	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Cardiac Tamponade	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cardio Pulmonary Arrest	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cardiomyopathy	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
Cerebral Hemorrhage	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5
Chronic Alcoholism	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Cirrhosis of the Liver	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Congenital Abnormality	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Congenital Heart Defect	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Congestive heart failure	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Coronary Thrombosis	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Diabetes Mellitus	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Emphysema	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Epilepsy	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
From History	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Gastro Intestinal Bleed	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gastrointestinal Bleed	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Hemopericardium	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Hypertensive heart disease	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
Myocardial Infarction	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Necrotizing Fascitis	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Other	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	5
Parkinson's Disease	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Peritonitis	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Pneumonia	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	8
Pulmonary embolism	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	9
Septicemia	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
SIDS	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	6
Subarachnoid Hemorrhage	0	1	1	4	0	0	0	6
undetermined	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>168</b>

### Natural Deaths Autopsied

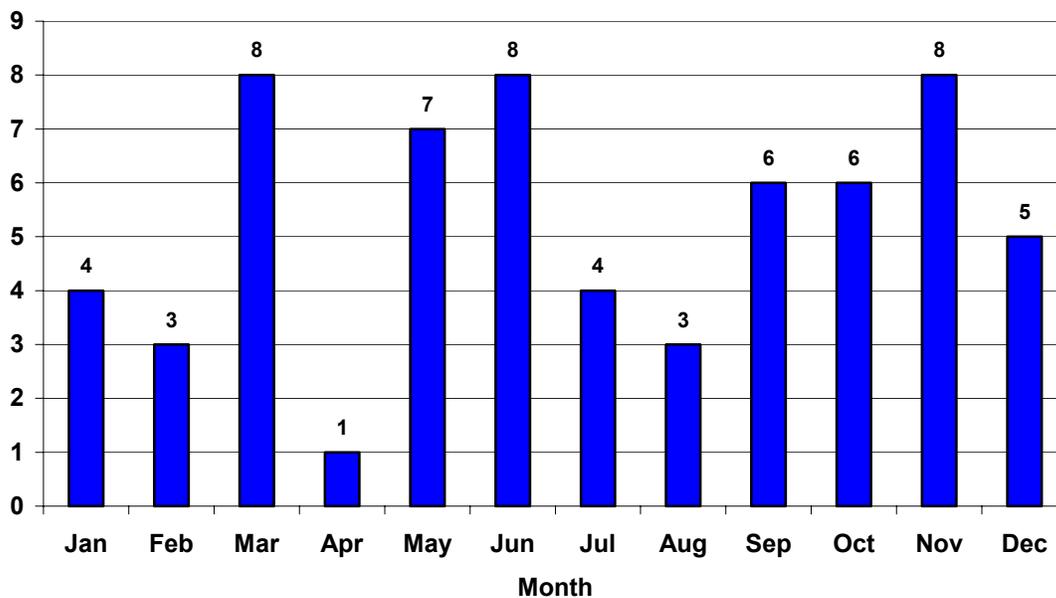


**MANNER: SUICIDE**

Suicides are those deaths caused by intentional, self-inflicted injuries. In Spokane County there were (63) suicides in 2003, down (3) from 2002.

The highest concentration (73%) of all suicides fell within the 30-69 age group. However, looking at suicides in persons (50) years and older, in 2003 this age group represented 41% (26/63) of all suicides occurring in Spokane County.

**Suicide By Month**



### Suicide Method Gender and Age Group

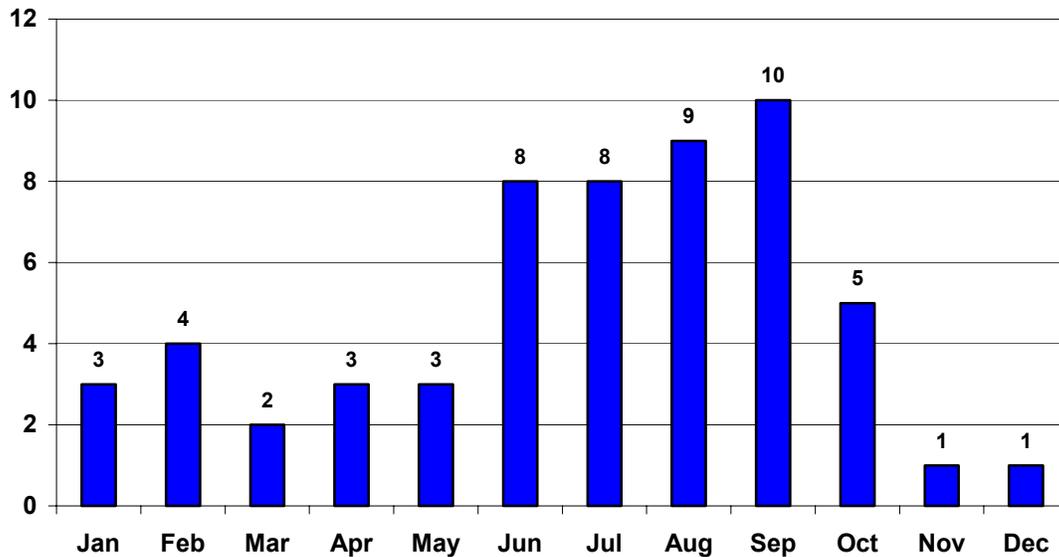
Suicide Method	Sex	<1	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	>=100	Total
Carbon Monoxide	M	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	4
<b>Carbon Monoxide Total</b>														<b>4</b>
Drowning	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Drowning Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Drugs/Poisons	F	0	0	1	0	1	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	10
Drugs/Poisons	M	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
<b>Drugs/Poisons Total</b>														<b>16</b>
Firearms	F	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	4
Firearms	M	0	0	1	1	1	7	2	5	2	1	0	0	20
<b>Firearms Total</b>														<b>24</b>
Hanging	F	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hanging	M	0	0	3	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	9
<b>Hanging Total</b>														<b>10</b>
Jumping	M	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
<b>Jumping Total</b>														<b>6</b>
Other	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Other Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Plastic Bag	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Plastic Bag Total</b>														<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>63</b>

**MANNER: TRAFFIC**

During the calendar year of 2003, the Medical Examiner’s Office participated in the investigation of (57) deaths categorized as vehicular. This represents more than a 6% increase over 2002. The number of deaths where the victim was the driver is (23) and (12) deaths occurred where the decedent was a passenger.

Statistics regarding traffic fatalities and the use of restraints showed that (18) victims were restrained, (9) were unrestrained and in (8) of these fatalities, it was not known if restraints were used or not.

**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	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Automobile Driver	M	0	0	2	4	5	3	0	1	5	1	0	0	21
<b>Automobile Driver Total</b>														<b>23</b>
Automobile Passenger	F	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	8
Automobile Passenger	M	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
<b>Automobile Passenger Total</b>														<b>12</b>
Bicyclist	F	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bicyclist	M	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Bicyclist Total</b>														<b>2</b>
Motorcycle Driver	M	0	0	0	0	2	3	4	1	1	0	0	0	11
<b>Motorcycle Driver Total</b>														<b>11</b>
Motorcycle Passenger	F	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Motorcycle Passenger	M	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Motorcycle Passenger Total</b>														<b>2</b>
Other	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Other Total</b>														<b>1</b>
Pedestrian	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Pedestrian	M	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
<b>Pedestrian Total</b>														<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>57</b>

### Traffic Fatalities and Use of Restraint

Circumstances	Total	Restrained	Unrestrained	Unknown
Automobile Driver	23	12	6	5
Automobile Passenger	12	6	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</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, the death is listed as “undetermined.” Information concerning the circumstances may be lacking because of the absence of background information, or because of a 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 2003.

Although the cause of death was established in many of these cases, the manner still could not be established and often two manner categories were equally plausible.

**Manner-Undetermined Deaths 2003**

Number	Cause of Death	Month	Sex	Age	Race
1	acute intox medications	Jan	M	58	Caucasian
2	blunt force head trauma	Feb	M	53	Caucasian
3	undetermined	Feb	F	0 mo	Unknown
4	undetermined	Apr	F	38	Caucasian
5	gsw head	Apr	M	13	Caucasian
6	combined drug toxicity	May	F	53	Caucasian
7	acute intoxication medications	Jun	F	33	Caucasian
8	undetermined	Jun	M	46	Caucasian
9	undetermined	Jun	F	42	Caucasian
10	intrauterine death/placental insufficiency	Jul	F	0 mo	Hispanic
11	undetermined bones	Sep	UNK	0 mo	Other
12	findings consistent with SIDS	Oct	M	3 mo	Caucasian
13	asphyxia/inhalation carbon monoxide	Nov	M	38	Caucasian
14	combined drug intoxication	Dec	M	48	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 or Medicine: 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 psychiatric drugs or therapeutic drugs for conditions such as asthma or epilepsy
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	The jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner'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 statistical classification of the way in which the cause of death came about.
<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 of one person by another, including actions of grossly reckless behavior.
<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. These are considered accidents, non-traffic related, to conform with other laws pertaining to such deaths.
<b>Manner: Undetermined</b>	Manner assigned when there is insufficient evidence or information to assign a specific manner, or when two plausible manners are equally likely.

<b>Opiate</b>	A broad class of drug including morphine, heroin, and synthetic medicine such as methadone.
<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>Perinatal/Fetal Death</b>	Category of deaths that occur within the uterus (fetal) or shortly before, during, or shortly after birth (perinatal).
<b>Race</b>	The racial categories used in this report are: Caucasian, Black, Native American, Asian, Hispanic, and Other.

# Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office

