

COUNTY OF SPOKANE, STATE OF WASHINGTON



**MEDICAL EXAMINER
2004 ANNUAL REPORT**

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2004 ANNUAL REPORT

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Section 1: Overview

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 2004. This summarized report presents data in a variety of formats with the objective of providing useful information to diverse groups in the community.

Referral Caseload: Currently the Spokane County Medical Examiner’s Office performs autopsies for 12 “outside” counties in Eastern Washington and the Idaho panhandle. In 2004 a total of 163 autopsies were performed for the referral counties. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement. The surrounding counties can take advantage of forensic expertise and an excellent accredited forensic pathology facility. Spokane County receives payment from outside counties for these services, revenues for autopsies totaled \$161,707.47 in 2004.

OUTSIDE COUNTY AUTOPSIES

2004	168
2003	151
2002	145
2001	163
2000	132
1999	139

Acknowledgment...

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

Introduction

The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office has been in existence for six full years. In April of 2004, the office received full accreditation from the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME). Roughly 50 Medical Examiner/Coroner Offices in the United States are accredited. The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office also received a prestigious Coverdell Grant from the federal government, allowing for the updating of equipment. Our Web site is www.spokanecounty.org/medexaminer and was launched for the benefit of our internal and external clients.

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 bodies 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.

Spokane County Medical Examiner Cases in 2004

In 2004, there were 4124 deaths in Spokane County (based on the latest census of 428600, this represents 1% of the population). Of these deaths, 3244 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 581 (18%) of these reported deaths. These reporting figures and autopsy percentages are similar to other Medical Examiner jurisdictions nationally.

There were 2663 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. This progressive Spokane County Medical Examiner Policy has been adopted recently by other Medical Examiner systems around the nation.

Chaplaincy Program

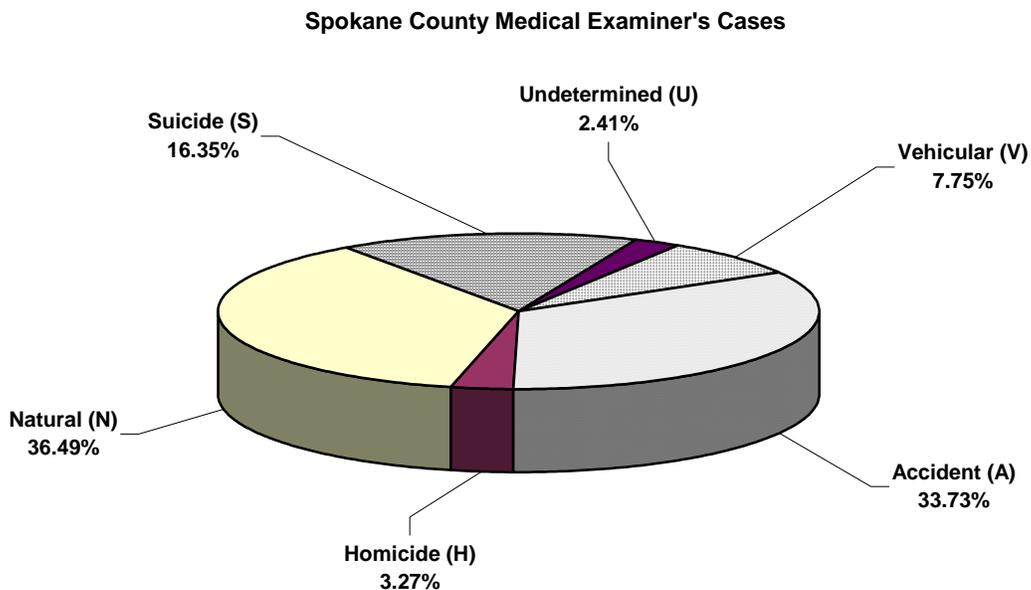
The Medical Examiner, according to State law, is responsible for identifying decedents and for locating and notifying next-of-kin. The Medical Examiner's Office is fortunate to have the assistance of the Chaplains from the Spokane Police Department and Spokane County Sheriff's Office in locating and notifying 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.

Section 2: Total Cases

Total Cases for 2004

Cases By Manner Of Death	Number Of Deaths	Percent Of Total
Accident (A)	196	33.73%
Homicide (H)	19	3.27%
Natural (N)	212	36.49%
Suicide (S)	95	16.35%
Undetermined (U)	14	2.41%
Vehicular (V)	45	7.75%

Total Spokane County Population	428,600
Total Deaths in Spokane County	4,124
Total Deaths Reported to the Medical Examiner 2004	3,244
Total Non-Jurisdictional Cases	2,663
Total Spokane County Medical Examiner Cases	581
Total Spokane County Autopsies Performed	436



In addition to the 437 Spokane County autopsies, the Chief Medical Examiner and Deputy Medical Examiner performed 168 autopsies for neighboring referral counties.

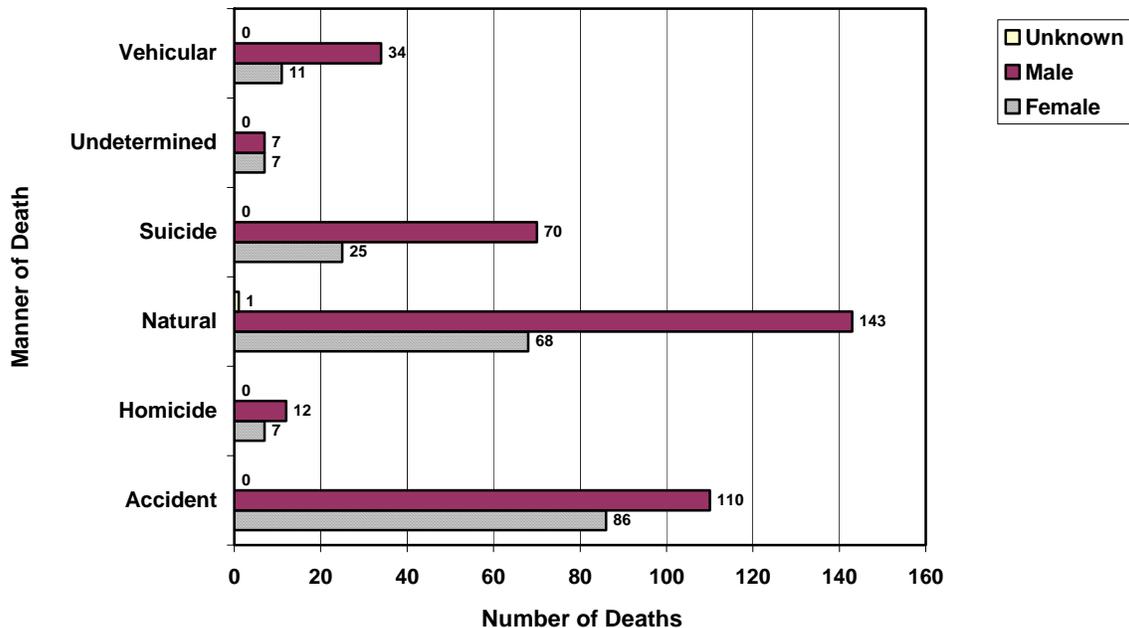
Total Cases by Gender and Manner of Death

Gender and Manner Of Death

Sex	A	H	N	S	U	V	Total	Percent
Female	86	7	68	25	7	11	204	35.11%
Male	110	12	143	70	7	34	376	64.72%
Unknown	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.17%
Total	196	19	212	95	14	45	581	

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

Gender and Manner of Death



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.

Total Cases by Race and Manner of Death

Race and Manner of Death

Race	A	H	N	S	U	V	Total
Asian	1	0	1	2	0	0	4
Black	5	1	6	1	0	1	14
Caucasian	180	13	196	90	14	37	530
Hispanic	0	2	1	0	0	5	8
Native American	7	3	5	1	0	2	18
Other	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Unknown	3	0	3	0	0	0	6
Total	196	19	212	95	14	45	581

Total Cases by Age Group and Manner of Death

Age and Manner of Death

Age Group (Years)	Age	A	H	N	S	U	V
0 to 9	17	2	2	12	0	1	0
10 to 19	24	6	4	3	6	0	5
20 to 29	43	10	8	3	10	2	10
30 to 39	54	15	0	10	19	6	4
40 to 49	97	36	4	29	19	0	9
50 to 59	112	25	0	58	18	3	8
60 to 69	69	15	0	38	12	1	3
70 to 79	52	17	0	26	7	0	2
80 to 89	74	42	1	23	4	1	3
90 to 99	38	27	0	10	0	0	1
100 to 109	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	581	196	19	212	95	14	45

In this Medical Examiner case group natural deaths exceed non-natural manners combined (accident, vehicular, homicides, and suicides combined) only in the 50 to 59, 60 to 69, and 70 to 79 age groups.

Total Cases by Age Group and Gender

Gender and Age Group

Age Group (Years)	Age	Female	Male	Unknown
0 to 9	17	5	11	1
10 to 19	24	8	16	0
20 to 29	43	11	32	0
30 to 39	54	22	32	0
40 to 49	97	34	63	0
50 to 59	112	22	90	0
60 to 69	69	18	51	0
70 to 79	52	19	33	0
80 to 89	74	42	32	0
90 to 99	38	22	16	0
100 to 109	1	1	0	0
Total	581	204	376	1

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. Hip fracture deaths come under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner because they are accidents.

Section 3: 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 (Page 9), 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 identified more deaths that were a result of medications and drugs, as compared to the Coroner system. These medication/drug deaths were probably identified in the Medical Examiner system because more autopsies are performed on a yearly basis since the Medical Examiner's Office began. 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.

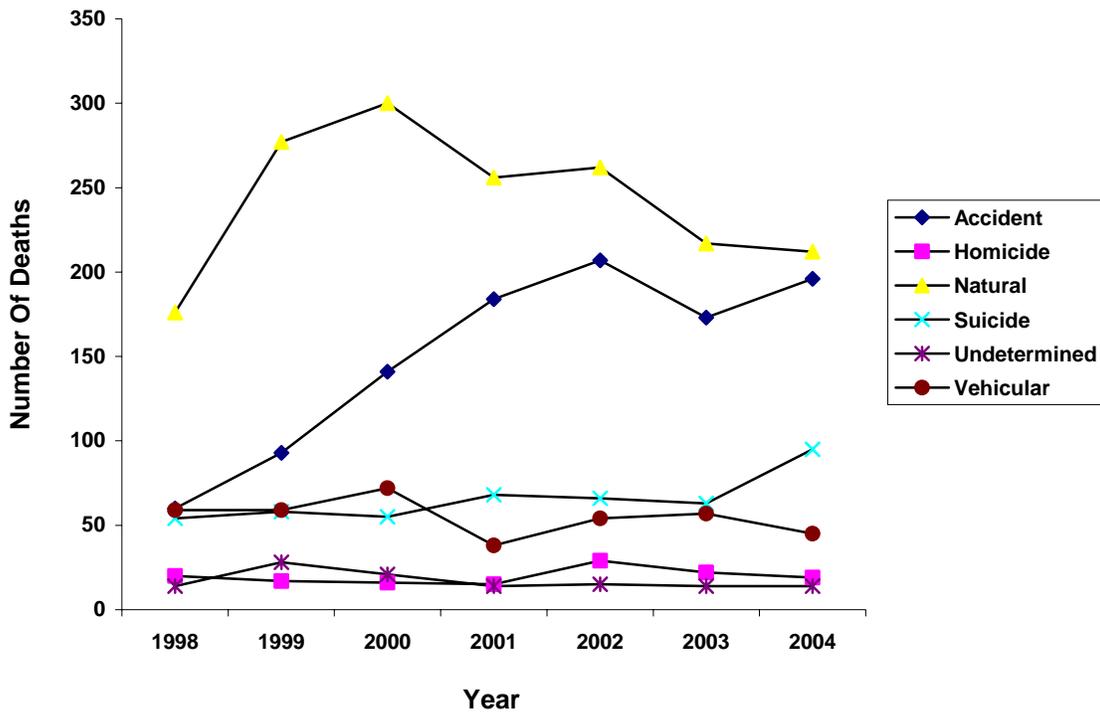
Suicides were significantly increased in 2004 (a total of 95) as compared to 2003 (a total of 63). The number of suicides in 2004 is in fact significantly greater than in any previous year of the Medical Examiner system, or Coroner system. The increased number in suicide deaths occurred in suicides by hanging, firearms, and medications.

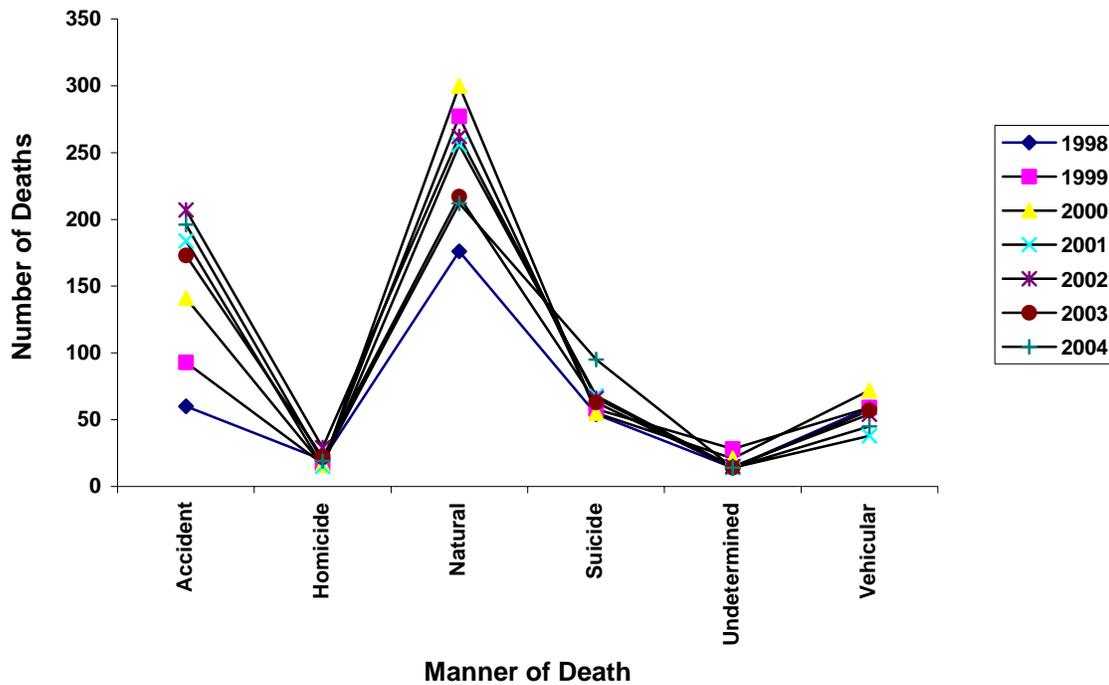
During the Medical Examiner years (1999-2004), the cases selected as coming under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner system has ranged from a low in 1999 of 532 to a high in 2002 of 633, with the number of autopsies performed consistently near 400.

Manner Of Deaths Comparison

Comparison of Manners of Death 1998 - 2004

Manner of Death	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Accident	60	93	141	184	207	173	196
Homicide	20	17	16	15	29	22	19
Natural	176	277	300	256	262	217	212
Suicide	54	58	55	68	66	63	95
Undetermined	14	28	21	14	15	14	14
Vehicular	59	59	72	38	54	57	45
Total	383	532	605	575	633	546	581





With few exceptions, the proportions in the manners of death have remained similar over time.

Comparison of Manners of Death as Percentage of Total Annual Medical Examiner's Cases 1998 - 2004

Manner of Death	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Accident	15.67%	17.48%	23.31%	32.00%	32.70%	31.68%	33.73%
Homicide	5.22%	3.20%	2.64%	2.61%	4.58%	4.03%	3.27%
Natural	45.95%	52.07%	49.59%	44.52%	41.39%	39.74%	36.49%
Suicide	14.10%	10.90%	9.09%	11.83%	10.43%	11.54%	16.35%
Undetermined	3.66%	5.26%	3.47%	2.43%	2.37%	2.56%	2.41%
Vehicular	15.40%	11.09%	11.90%	6.61%	8.53%	10.44%	7.75%

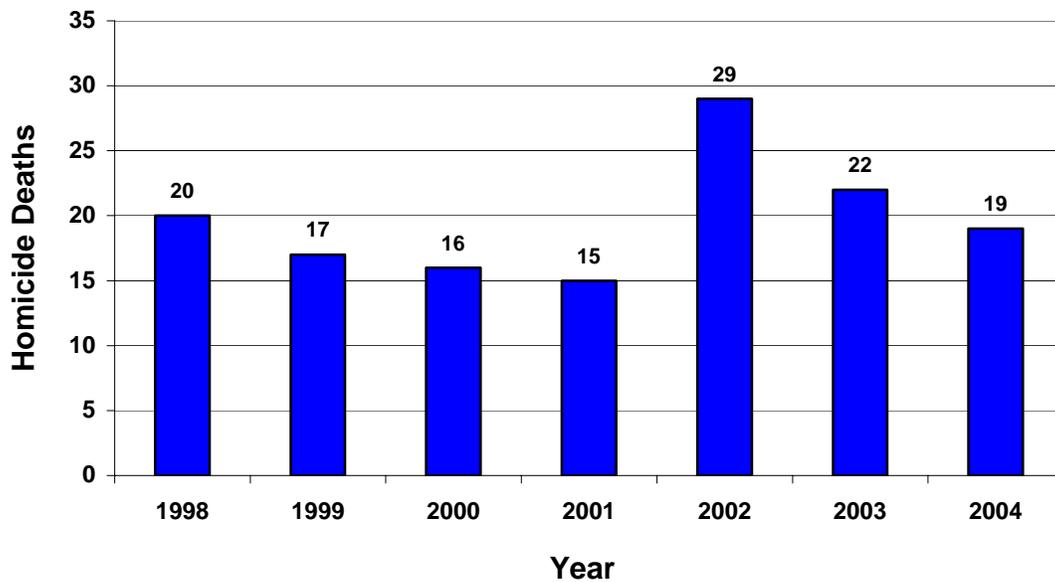
Ideally, a Medical Examiner System strives to keep the percentage of “undetermined” manner of death cases to less than five percent. This requires thorough investigation and autopsy. In the Spokane County Medical Examiner Office, every “undetermined” manner case is reviewed as part of the office Quality Improvement Program.

Homicidal Methods Comparison

Comparison of Homicidal Methods 1998 - 2004

Method Used	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Asphyxia	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Blunt Impact	1	3	0	1	6	0	3
Child Abuse	1	1	2	1	2	3	1
Firearms	8	6	9	7	16	7	7
Homicidal Violence	2	2	3	2	1	5	3
Other	0	2	0	0	2	1	2
Stabbing	7	2	2	3	2	4	2
Strangulation	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Unknown	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	20	17	16	15	29	22	19

Homicides 1998 - 2004

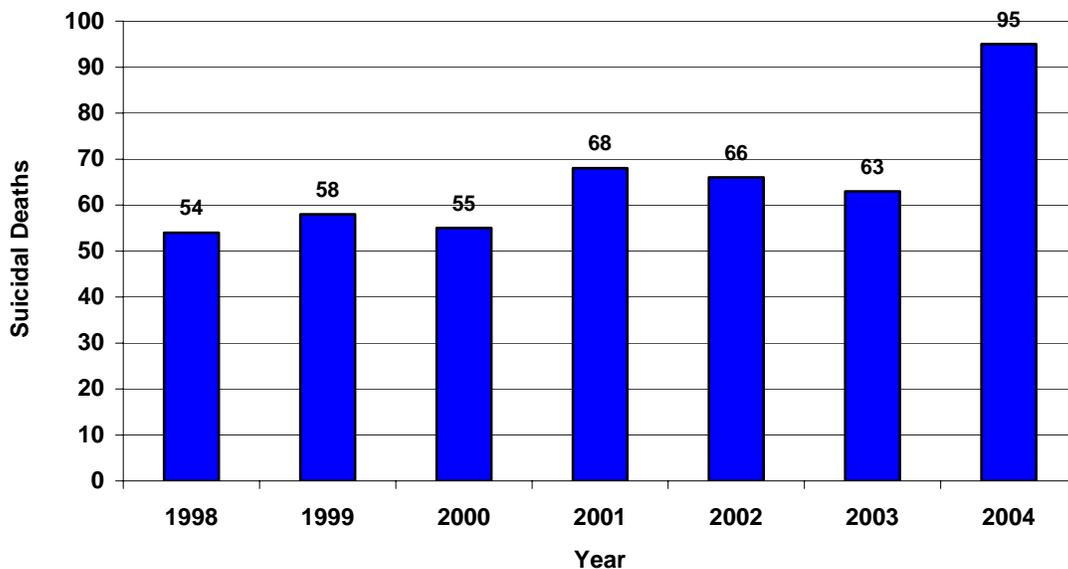


Suicidal Methods Comparison

Comparison of Suicidal Methods 1998 - 2004

Method Used	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Carbon Monoxide	5	4	6	4	3	4	3
Drowning	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Drugs/Poisons	3	10	3	12	9	16	24
Firearms	29	29	33	37	41	24	50
Hanging	10	9	10	12	9	10	15
Jumping	4	2	1	1	0	6	0
Other	0	0	1	0	2	1	2
Plastic Bag	1	2	0	0	1	1	0
Stab/incised wound	2	2	1	1	1	0	0
Total	54	58	55	68	66	63	95

Suicides 1998 - 2004

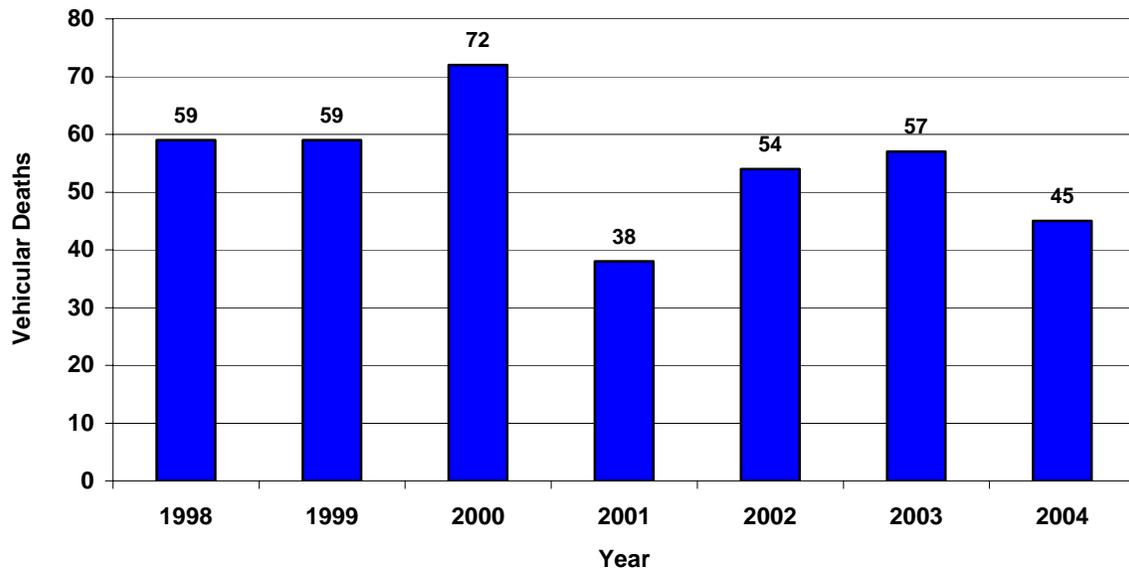


Vehicular Deaths Comparison

Comparison of Vehicular Deaths 1998 - 2004

Vehicle Circumstances	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Automobile Driver	32	28	37	20	26	23	20
Automobile Passenger	15	18	16	8	13	12	7
Bicyclist	1	1	1	0	0	2	0
Motorcycle Driver	2	3	3	0	4	11	10
Motorcycle Passenger	0	0	2	0	0	2	3
Other	4	1	2	2	2	1	0
Pedestrian	3	7	10	7	9	6	4
Unknown	2	1	1	1	0	0	1
Total	59	59	72	38	54	57	45

Vehicular Deaths 1998 - 2004



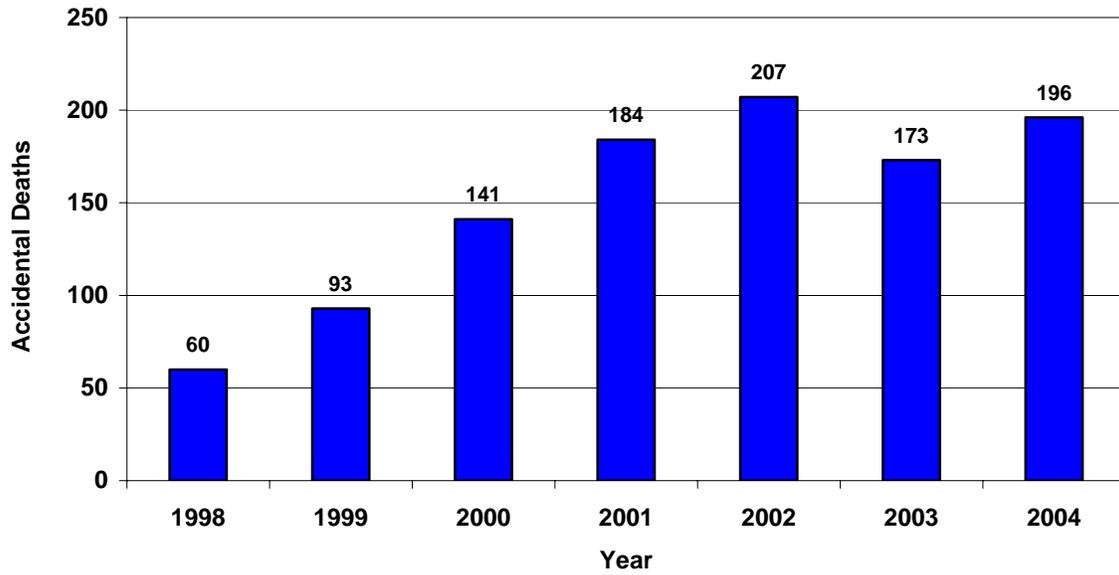
Accidental Deaths Comparison

Comparison of Accidental Deaths 1998 - 2004

Accident Circumstances	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Aircraft	1	0	0	3	0	1	1
Alcohol Abuse	0	0	0	1	2	2	1
Anaphylaxis	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Asphyxiation	2	6	4	5	9	3	4
Aspiration	0	3	1	4	0	0	0
Bicycle Fall	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Boating	0	1	2	0	1	0	0
Choking	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Dog Bite	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Drowning	7	4	6	5	13	7	7
Drugs	1	15	30	45	49	56	70
Electrocution	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
Fall	31	43	80	98	114	85	93
Farm	1	2	0	0	0	1	0
Fire/burns	4	1	3	2	4	0	3
Firearms	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Hyperthermia	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
Hypothermia	0	0	4	1	2	3	2
Industrial Accident	2	2	1	3	3	3	2
Motorcycle Driver (race track)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Other	7	5	9	7	6	7	6
Prescribed Drugs	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Struck by Object	0	2	0	1	0	1	1
Surgical Procedure	0	3	0	1	2	1	1
Therapy Complication	0	0	0	0	2	1	1
Total	60	93	141	184	207	173	196

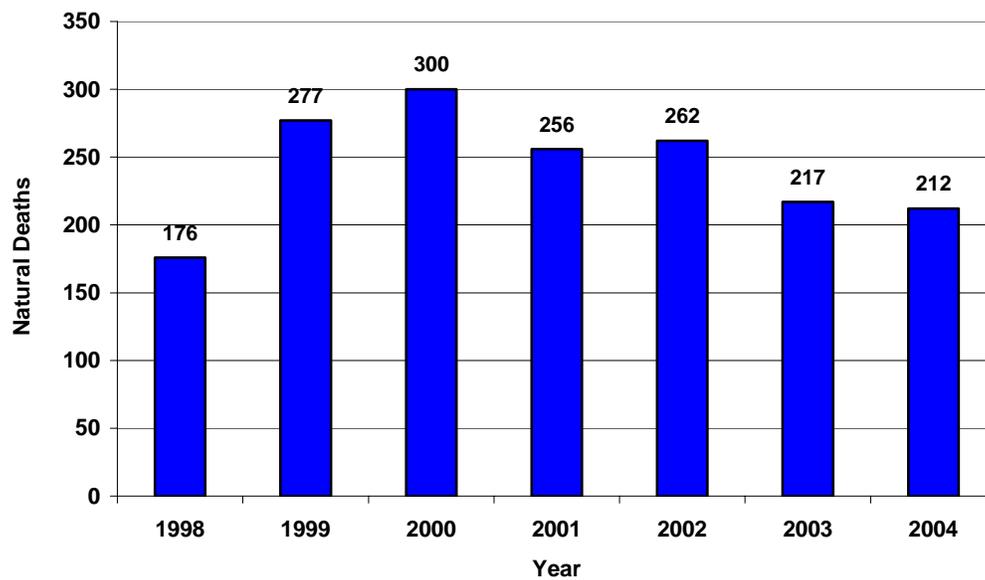
After a marked increase in drowning in 2002, drowning declined in 2003 and 2004. An increasing trend in the drug/medication category of accidental death continues.

Accidental Deaths 1998 - 2004



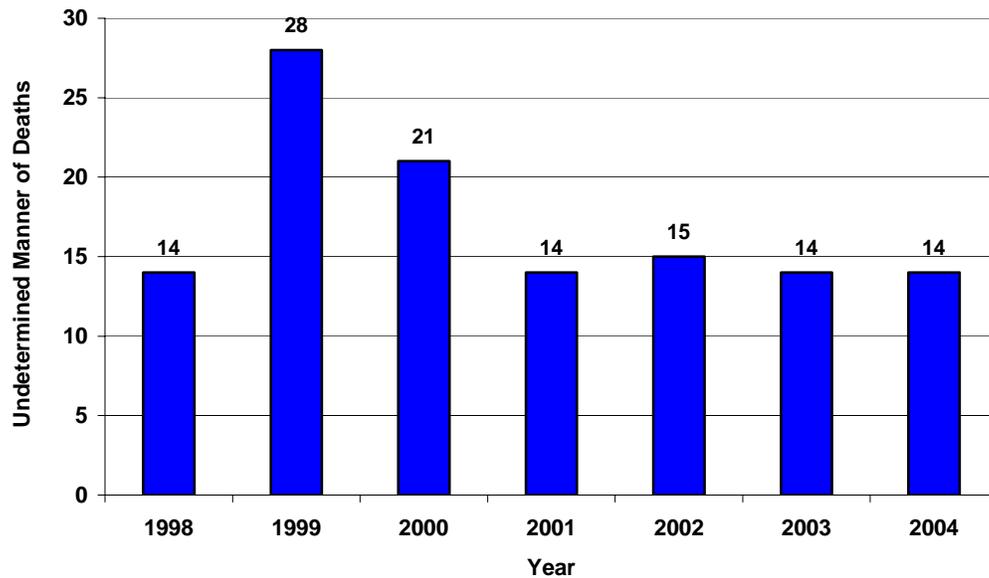
Natural Deaths Comparison

Natural Deaths 1998 - 2004



Undetermined Deaths Comparison

Deaths of Undetermined Manner 1998 - 2004



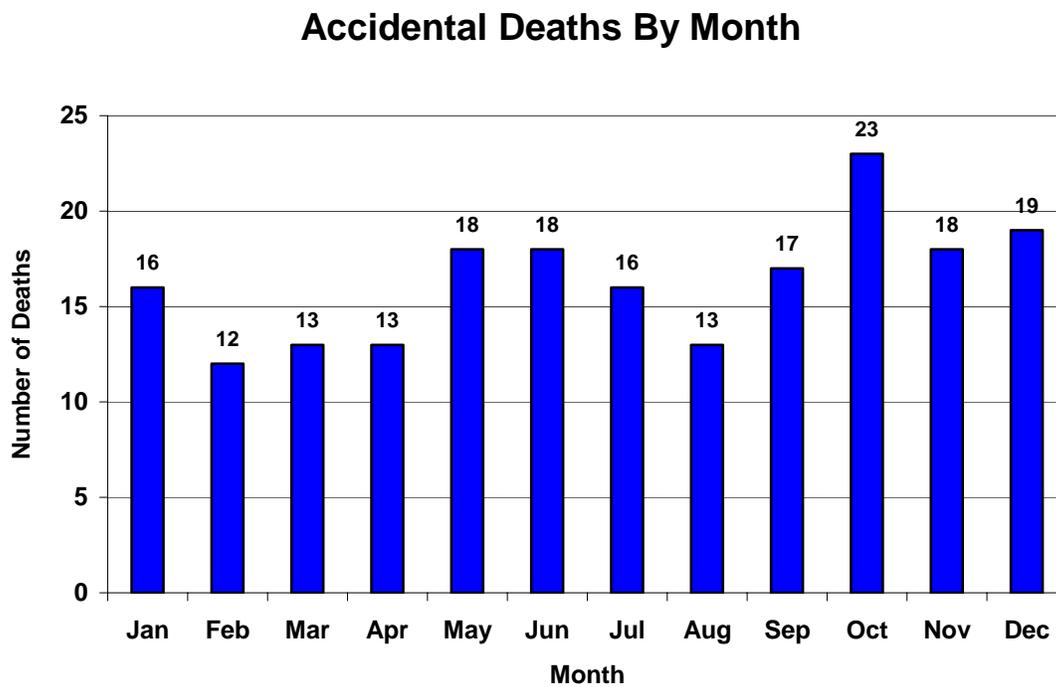
Medical Examiner Systems strive to use the undetermined manner of death category in less than five percent of cases. In 2004, the undetermined classification was used in 2.4% of Spokane Medical Examiner cases.

Section 4: Manner of Death

ACCIDENT

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

Accidental Deaths by Month



*Accident Mode by Gender***Accident Mode By Gender**

Accident Mode	Female	Male	Total
Aircraft	0	1	1
Alcohol Abuse	0	1	1
Asphyxiation	2	2	4
Choking	0	2	2
Dog Bite	0	1	1
Drowning	1	6	7
Drugs	27	43	70
Electrocution	0	1	1
Fall	50	43	93
Fire/burns	2	1	3
Hypothermia	1	1	2
Industrial Accident	0	2	2
Other	3	3	6
Struck by Object	0	1	1
Surgical Procedure	0	1	1
Total	86	110	196

Accident Mode by Gender and Age Group

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	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Aircraft Total														1
Alcohol Abuse	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Alcohol Abuse Total														1
Asphyxiation	F	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Asphyxiation	M	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Asphyxiation Total														4
Choking	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Choking Total														2
Dog Bite	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Dog Bite Total														1
Drowning	F	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Drowning	M	0	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	6
Drowning Total														7
Drugs	F	0	0	2	3	5	10	5	2	0	0	0	0	27
Drugs	M	0	0	2	4	8	17	12	0	0	0	0	0	43
Drugs Total														70
Electrocution	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Electrocution Total														1
Fall	F	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	10	19	14	1	50
Fall	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	4	21	11	0	43
Fall Total														93
Fire/burns	F	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Fire/burns	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Fire/burns Total														3
Hypothermia	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hypothermia	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hypothermia Total														2
Industrial Accident	M	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Industrial Accident Total														2
Other	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
Other	M	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Other Total														6
Struck by Object	M	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Struck by Object Total														1
Surgical Procedure	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Surgical Procedure Total														1

Falls that result in mortality are significantly correlated with increasing age.

HOMICIDE

In 2004 the recorded 19 homicides represents a decrease by 3 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 2004 was 20-29 years.

Homicide Deaths by Month



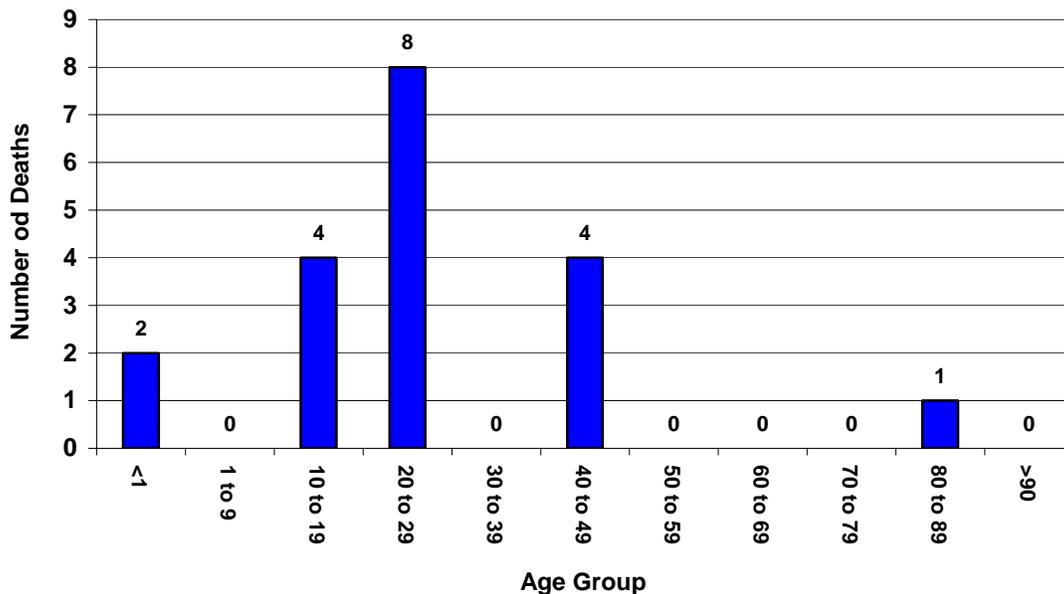
Homicide Deaths by Method, Gender, and Age Group

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
Blunt Impact	F	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Blunt Impact	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Blunt Impact Total														3
Child Abuse	M	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Child Abuse Total														1
Firearms	F	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Firearms	M	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Firearms Total														7
Homicidal Violence	F	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Homicidal Violence	M	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Homicidal Violence Total														3
Other	F	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Other Total														2
Stabbing	M	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Stabbing Total														2
Strangulation	M	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Strangulation Total														1

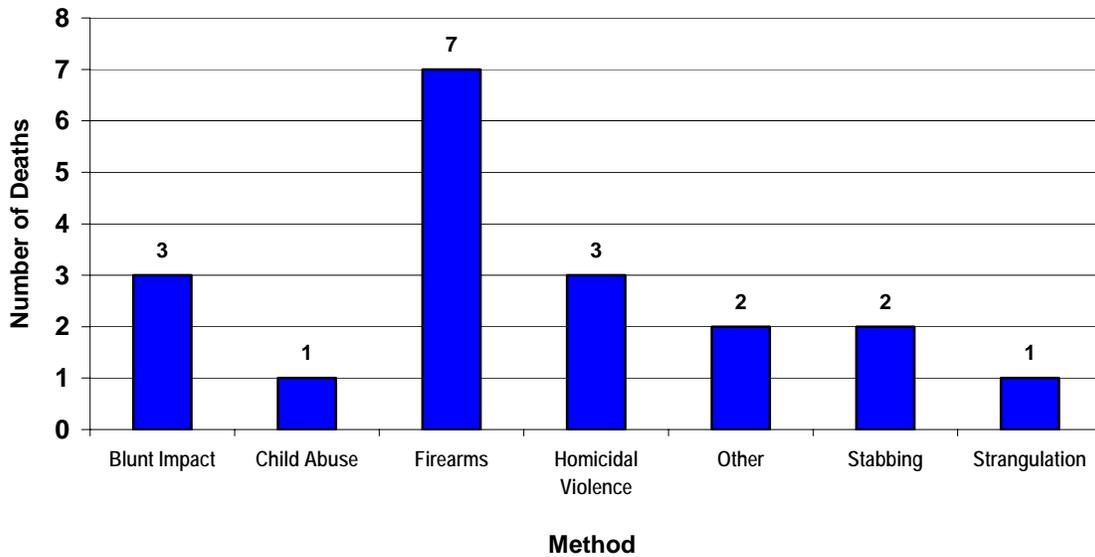
Homicide Deaths by Age Group

Homicide Deaths By Age Group



Homicide Deaths by Method

Homicide Deaths By Method

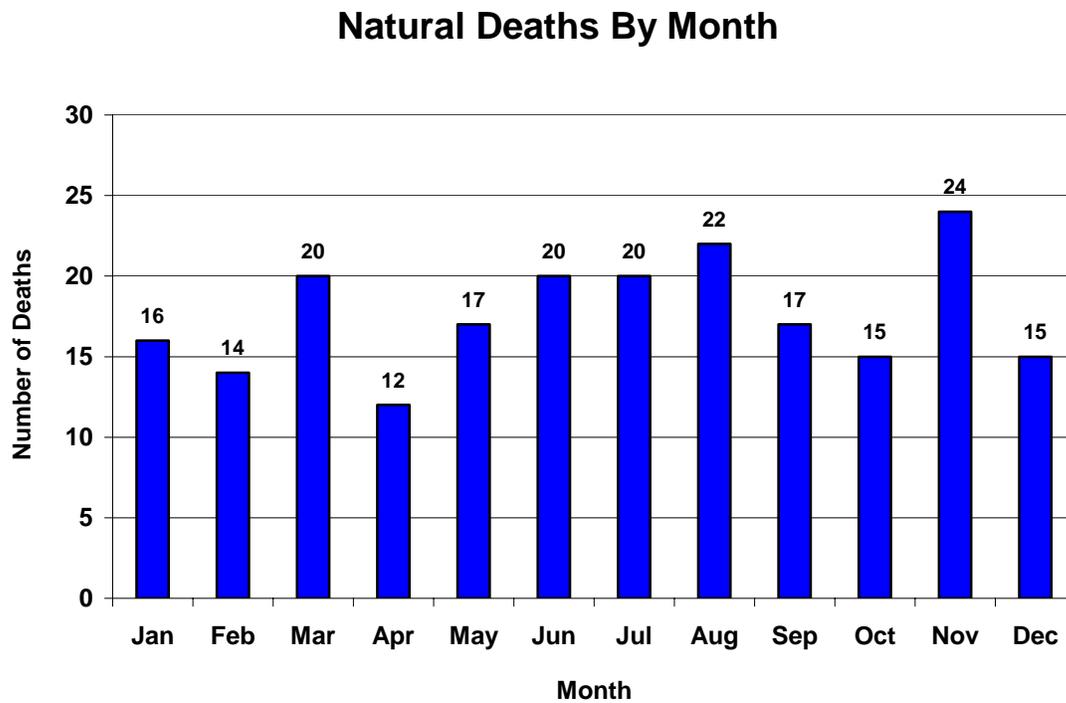


This graph is subject to limitations based on the small total number of decedents represented in the graph.

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

Natural Deaths by Disease Process

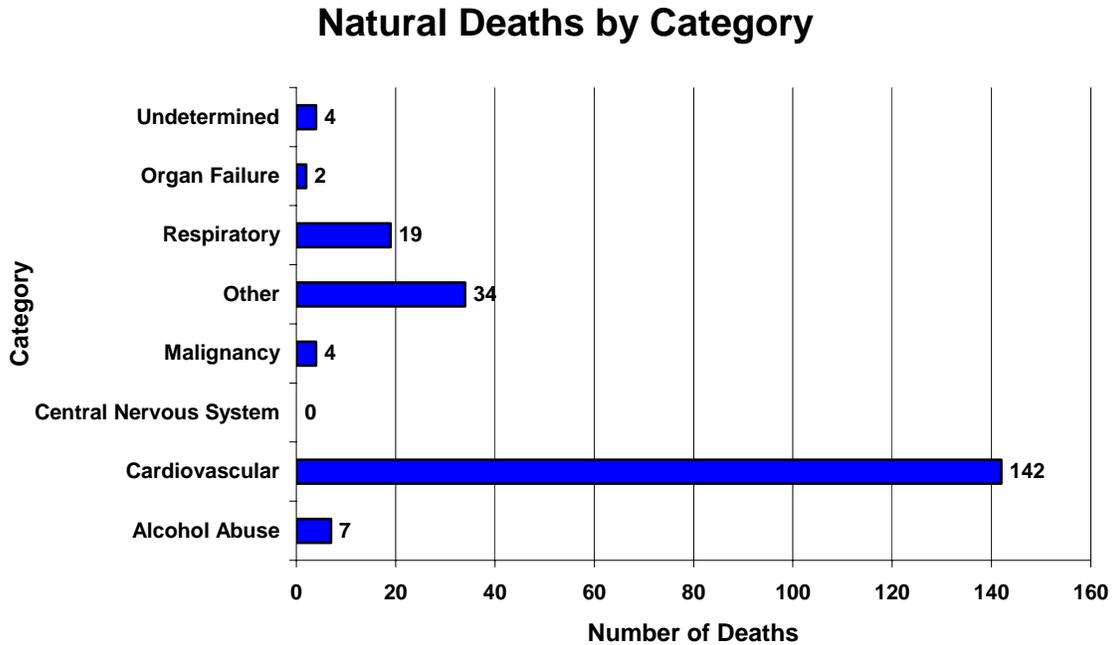
AA= Alcohol Abuse O= Other
 C= Cardiovascular R= Respiratory
 CNV= Central Nervous System S= Seizure Disorder
 M= Malignancy U= Undetermined
 OF= Organ Failure

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

	AA	C	CNV	M	O	R	OF	U	TOTAL
Arrhythmia		4							4
Asthma						2			2
Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease		95							95
Breast Cancer				1					1
Cardiac Dysrhythmia		4							4
Cardiac Tamponade		1							1
Cardiomyopathy		13							13
Cerebral Hemorrhage					1				1
Cerebrovascular Accident (CVA)		1							1
Chronic Alcoholism	4								4
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease						4			4
Cirrhosis of the Liver	1								1
Congestive heart failure		4							4
Diabetes Mellitus					6				6
Dissecting Aneurysm		1							1
Emphysema						1			1
End Stage Liver Disease					1				1
End Stage Renal Disease							1		1
Gastro Intestinal Bleed	2								2
Gastrointestinal Bleed					2				2
Hemopericardium		2							2
Hypertensive heart disease		8							8
Lung Cancer				2					2
Myocardial Infarction		4							4
Other		2		1	12		1		16
Pancreatitis					1				1
Pericarditis		2							2
Peritonitis					1				1
Phlebothrombosis						1			1
Pneumonia						4			4
Pulmonary embolism						7			7
Ruptured Berry Aneurysm		1							1
Seizure Disorder					2				2
SIDS					7				7
Subarachnoid Hemorrhage					1				1
undetermined								4	4
Total	7	142		4	34	19	2	4	212

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



The numbers of cardiovascular deaths reflect the fact that the first symptom of significant heart disease is often a fatal heart attack.

Natural Deaths by Disease Process and Gender

Disease Process By Gender

Disease Process	Female	Male	Total
Alcohol Abuse	4	3	7
Cardiovascular	37	105	142
Malignancy	2	2	4
Organ Failure	2	0	2
Other	12	21	34
Respiratory	8	11	19
Undetermined	3	1	4
Total	68	143	212

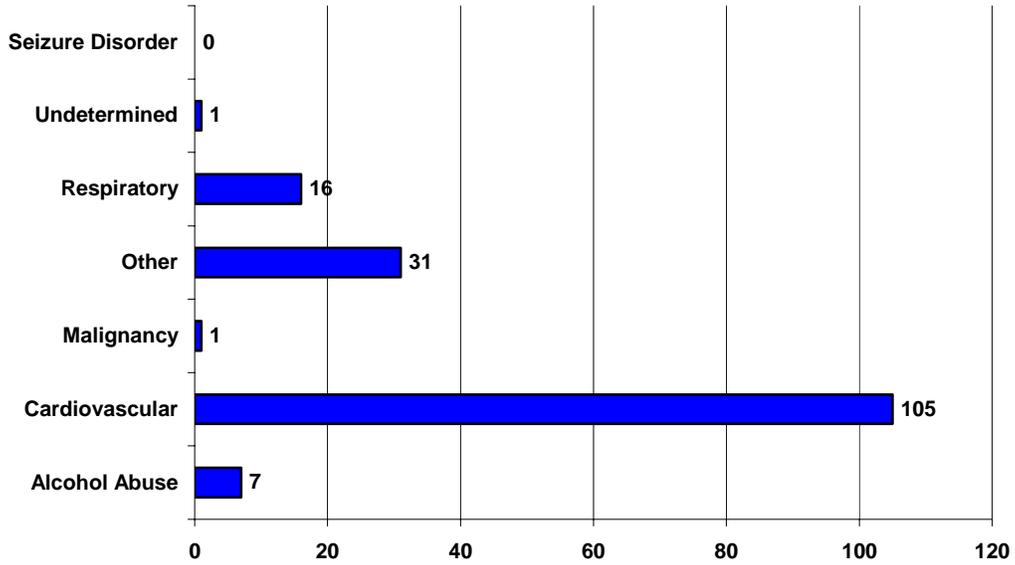
Natural Deaths by Gender and Age Group

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	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	4
Alcohol Abuse	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Alcohol Abuse Total														7
Cardiovascular	F	0	0	0	0	3	5	2	5	9	8	5	0	37
Cardiovascular	M	0	0	2	1	4	10	36	28	16	6	2	0	105
Cardiovascular Total														142
Malignancy	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Malignancy	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Malignancy Total														4
Organ Failure	F	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Organ Failure Total														2
Other	F	3	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	3	1	0	12
Other	M	7	0	1	1	2	4	3	2	0	0	1	0	21
Other	U	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other Total														34
Respiratory	F	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	0	0	1	0	0	8
Respiratory	M	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	1	0	0	1	0	11
Respiratory Total														19
Undetermined	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Undetermined	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Undetermined Total														4
Total		11	1	3	3	10	29	58	38	26	23	10	0	212

Natural Deaths Autopsied

Natural Deaths Autopsied



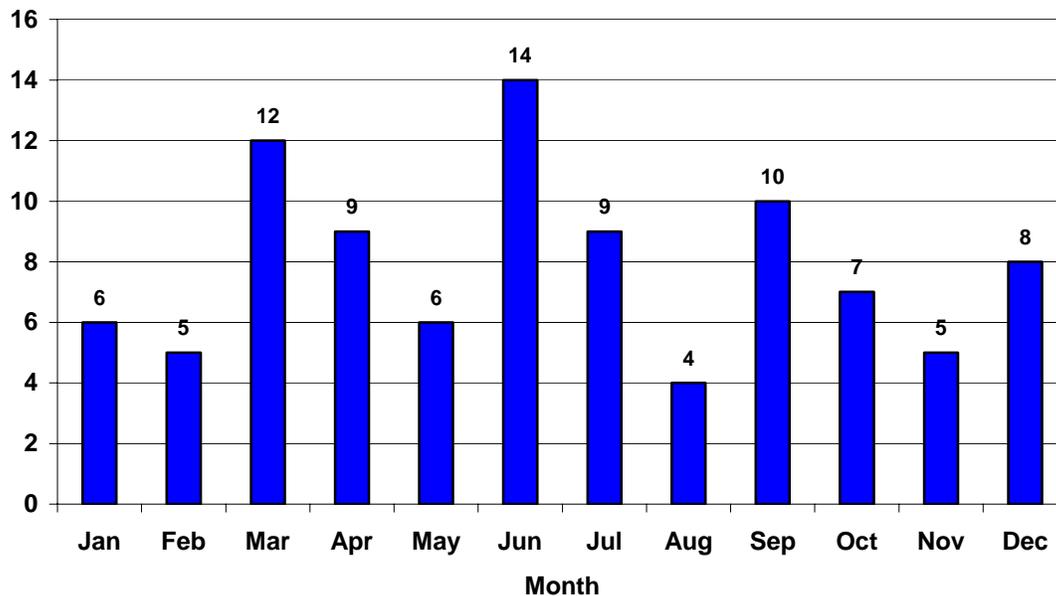
SUICIDE

Suicides are those deaths caused by intentional, self-inflicted injuries. In Spokane County there were (95) suicides in 2004, up (32) from 2003.

The highest concentration (72%) of all suicides fell within the 30-69 age group. However, looking at suicides in persons (50) years and older, in 2004 this age group represented 43% (41/95) of all suicides occurring in Spokane County.

Suicide Deaths by Month

Suicide By Month



Suicide Method by Gender and Age Group

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	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Carbon Monoxide	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Carbon Monoxide Total														
														3
Drowning	M	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Drowning Total														
														1
Drugs/Poisons	F	0	0	0	0	5	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	14
Drugs/Poisons	M	0	0	0	1	0	5	3	1	0	0	0	0	10
Drugs/Poisons Total														
														24
Firearms	F	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	7
Firearms	M	0	0	5	4	6	2	8	9	6	3	0	0	43
Firearms Total														
														50
Hanging	F	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Hanging	M	0	0	0	3	4	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	12
Hanging Total														
														15
Other	M	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Other Total														
														2
Total		0	0	6	10	19	19	18	12	7	4	0	0	95

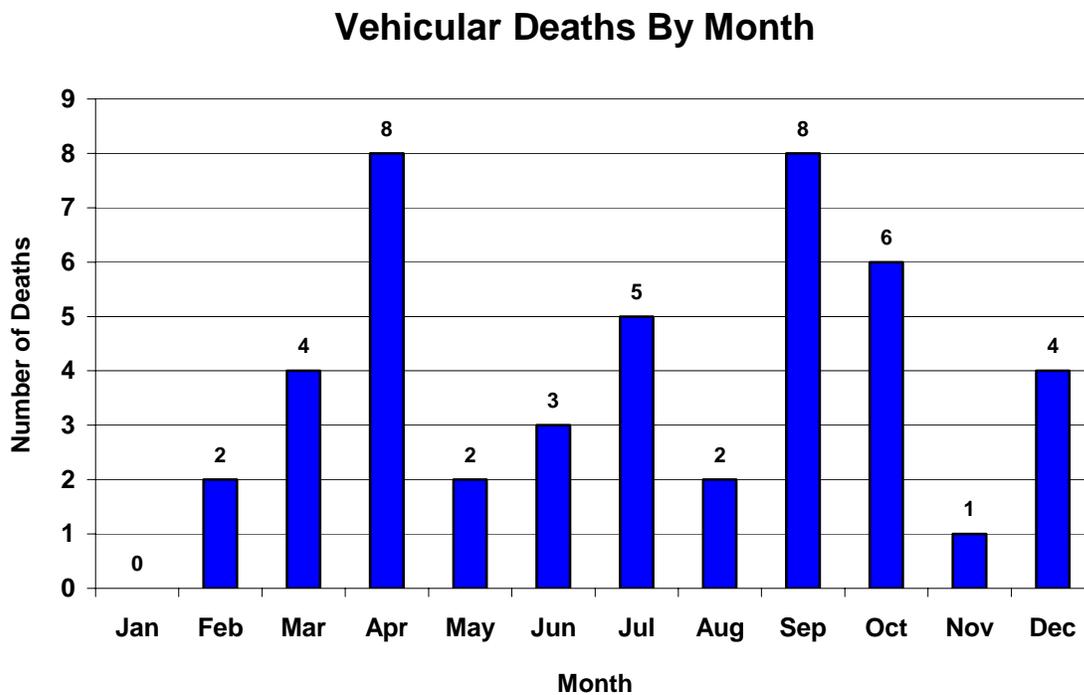
Suicides in the very elderly are nationally statistically correlated with recently declining health.

VEHICULAR

During the calendar year of 2004, the Medical Examiner’s Office participated in the investigation of (45) deaths categorized as vehicular. This represents more than a 21% decrease over 2003. The number of deaths where the victim was the driver is (20) and (7) deaths occurred in passengers.

Statistics regarding traffic fatalities and the use of restraints showed that (15) victims were restrained, (9) were unrestrained and in (3) of these fatalities, it was not known if restraints were used or not.

Vehicular Deaths by Month



Vehicular Deaths by Method, Gender, and Age Group

Vehicular Method Gender and Age Group

Vehicular 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	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
Automobile Driver	M	0	0	1	6	1	2	2	0	1	2	0	0	15
Automobile Driver Total														20
Automobile Passenger	F	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Automobile Passenger	M	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Automobile Passenger Total														7
Motorcycle Driver	M	0	0	1	2	1	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	10
Motorcycle Driver Total														10
Motorcycle Passenger	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Motorcycle Passenger	M	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Motorcycle Passenger Total														3
Pedestrian	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Pedestrian	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Pedestrian Total														4
Unknown	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unknown Total														1
Total		0	0	5	10	4	9	8	3	2	3	1	0	45

Traffic Fatalities and Use of Restraint

Traffic Fatalities and Use of Restraint

Circumstances	Restrained	Unrestrained	Unknown	Total
Automobile Driver	10	8	2	20
Automobile Passenger	5	1	1	7
Total	15	9	3	27

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 2004.

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.

Undetermined Deaths**Manner-Undetermined Deaths 2004**

Number	Cause of Death	Month	Sex	Age	Race
1	acute intox meds	Jan	F	26	Caucasian
2	acute intox drugs	Feb	M	33	Caucasian
3	cerebellar & left occipital infarcts	Feb	F	39	Caucasian
4	combined drug & ethanol intox	Mar	M	36	Caucasian
5	olanzapine intox	Apr	F	39	Caucasian
6	acute intox meds	Apr	F	36	Caucasian
7	undetermined	May	M	2 Weeks	Caucasian
8	fxs base & vault skull/ blt imp head	May	F	26	Caucasian
9	acute intox meds	Jul	M	52	Caucasian
10	undetermined	Aug	M	50	Caucasian
11	oxycodone intox	Sep	M	68	Caucasian
12	acute intox drugs	Oct	F	84	Caucasian
13	undetermined	Oct	F	56	Caucasian
14	undetermined	Nov	M	36	Caucasian

Glossary of Terms

Blood Alcohol Level	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.
Drug	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.
Drug Caused Death	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
Jurisdiction	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. Also included are people who are transferred to Spokane area hospitals from surrounding Counties/States, who then expire in Spokane.
Manner	A statistical classification of the way in which the cause of death came about (accident, homicide, suicide, natural, or undetermined).
Manner: Accident	Death other than natural, where there is no evidence of intent, i.e., unintentional. In this report, vehicle accidents are identified separately.
Manner: Homicide	Death resulting from intentional harm of one person by another, including actions of grossly reckless behavior.
Manner: Natural	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.
Manner: Suicide	Death as a result of a purposeful action, with intent (explicit or implicit) to end one's life.
Manner: Traffic	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.

Manner: Undetermined	Manner assigned when there is insufficient evidence or information to assign a specific manner, or when two plausible manners are equally likely.
Opiate	A broad class of drug including morphine, heroin, and synthetic medicine such as methadone.
Poison	Any substance, either taken internally or applied externally, that is injurious to health or dangerous to life, and with no medical benefit.
Perinatal/Fetal Death	Category of deaths that occur within the uterus (fetal) or shortly before, during, or shortly after birth (perinatal).
Race	The racial categories used in this report are: Caucasian, Black, Native American, Asian, Hispanic, and Other.

Organizational Chart

Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office

