

COUNTY OF SPOKANE, STATE OF WASHINGTON



**MEDICAL EXAMINER
2005 ANNUAL REPORT**

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2005 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 2005. 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 2005 a total of 144 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 \$215,331.13 in 2005.

OUTSIDE COUNTY AUTOPSIES

2005	144
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 Eileen Egeland, Analyst Programmer of the Spokane County Information Systems Department, for her assistance and support in the development of this statistical report.

Introduction

The Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office has been in existence for seven 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 an additional Coverdell Grant from the State of Washington, allowing for the updating of equipment and services. 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 2005

In 2005, there were 4126 deaths in Spokane County (based on the latest census of 432000, this represents 1% of the population). Of these deaths, 3251 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 550 (17%) of these reported deaths. These reporting figures and autopsy percentages are similar to other Medical Examiner jurisdictions nationally.

There were 2681 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 is important as our population ages, considering trends in elderly abuse. This progressive Spokane County Medical Examiner Policy has been adopted recently by other Medical Examiner systems around the nation.

Forensic Unit

The office often partners with this group in the collection and preservation of evidence.

Chaplaincy Program

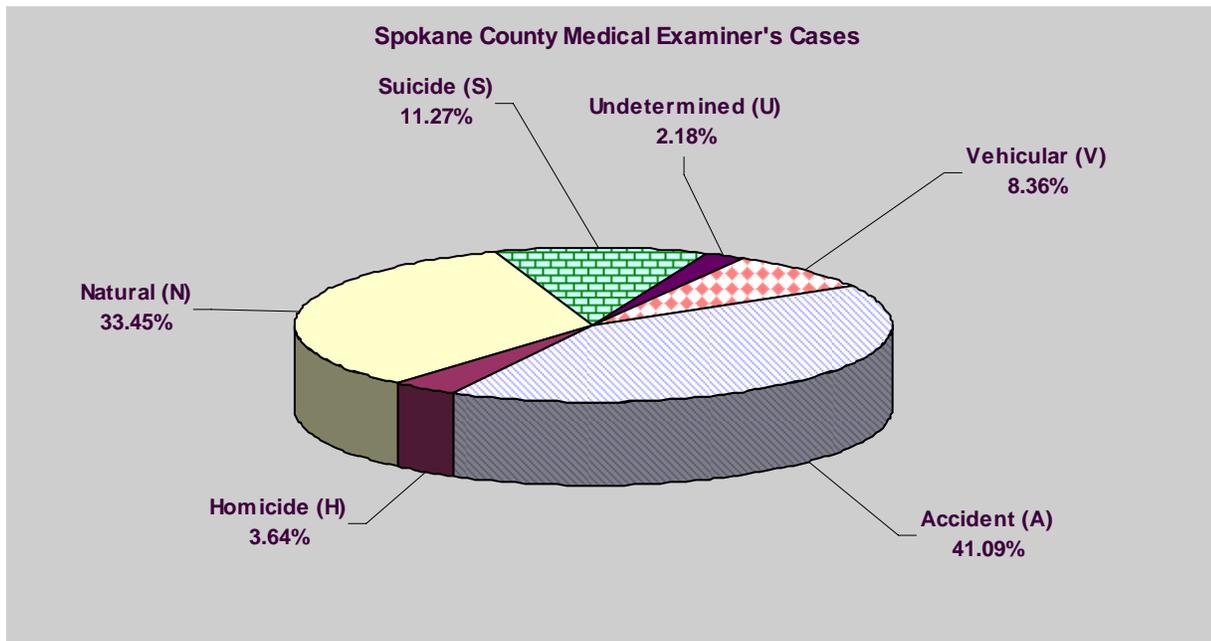
The Medical Examiner, according to State law, is responsible for identifying decedents and for locating and notifying next-of-kin. The Medical Examiner's Office is fortunate to have the assistance of the Chaplains from the Spokane Police Department and Spokane County Sheriff's Office in locating and 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 2005

Cases By Manner Of Death	Number Of Deaths	Percent Of Total
Accident (A)	226	41.09%
Homicide (H)	20	3.64%
Natural (N)	184	33.45%
Suicide (S)	62	11.27%
Undetermined (U)	12	2.18%
Vehicular (V)	46	8.36%

Total Spokane County Population	432,000
Total Deaths in Spokane County	4,126
Total Deaths Reported to the Medical Examiner 2005	3,251
Total Non-Jurisdictional Cases	2,681
Total Spokane County Medical Examiner Cases	550
Total Spokane County Autopsies Performed	426

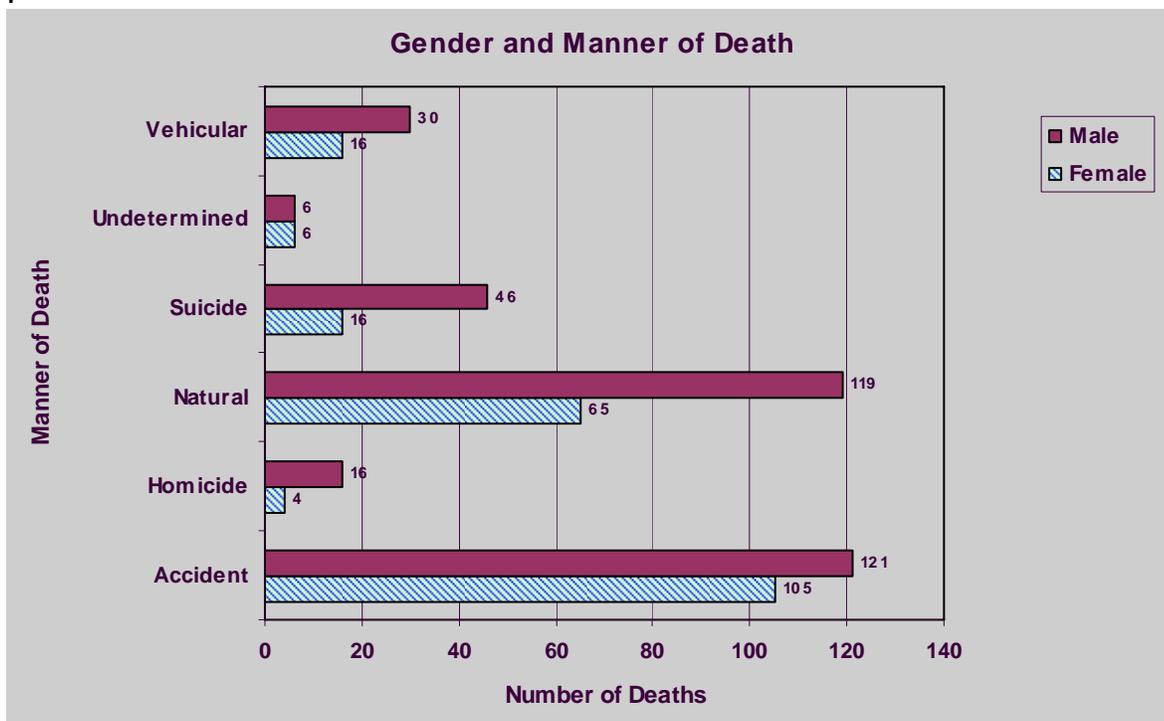


In addition to the 426 Spokane County autopsies, the Chief Medical Examiner and Deputy Medical Examiner performed 144 autopsies for neighboring referral counties.

Total Cases by Gender and Manner of Death

Gender and Manner Of Death

Sex	A	H	N	S	U	V	Total	Percent
Female	105	4	65	16	6	16	212	38.55%
Male	121	16	119	46	6	30	338	61.45%
Total	226	20	184	62	12	46	550	



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, and is present from infancy until old age.

Total Cases by Race and Manner of Death

Race and Manner of Death

Race	A	H	N	S	U	V	Total
Asian	1	1	2	0	0	0	4
Black	2	1	2	0	0	0	5
Caucasian	219	15	170	59	12	40	515
Hispanic	2	1	3	1	0	3	10
Native American	2	1	4	2	0	3	12
Other	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Unknown	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	226	20	184	62	12	46	550

Total Cases by Age Group and Manner of Death

Age and Manner of Death

Age Group (Years)		A	H	N	S	U	V
0 to 9	30	3	3	13	0	3	8
10 to 19	22	5	5	0	5	2	5
20 to 29	41	19	4	4	11	0	3
30 to 39	33	11	2	11	6	0	3
40 to 49	107	47	2	29	16	3	10
50 to 59	108	30	3	53	15	1	6
60 to 69	49	15	0	24	4	2	4
70 to 79	48	20	0	24	1	0	3
80 to 89	76	48	1	19	4	1	3
90 to 99	35	27	0	7	0	0	1
100 to 109	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	550	226	20	184	62	12	46

Total Cases by Age Group and Gender

Gender and Age Group				
Age Group (Years)		Female	Male	Unknown
0 to 9	30	14	16	0
10 to 19	22	5	17	0
20 to 29	41	13	28	0
30 to 39	33	14	19	0
40 to 49	107	33	74	0
50 to 59	108	27	81	0
60 to 69	49	22	27	0
70 to 79	48	22	26	0
80 to 89	76	38	38	0
90 to 99	35	23	12	0
100 to 109	1	1	0	0
Total	550	212	338	0

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

During the Medical Examiner's Office existence (1999 to present), the number of cases coming under the jurisdiction of the system has ranged from the 550s to the 630s. Autopsy numbers per year, for Spokane County, have consistently been near 400. This autopsy number is in keeping with the experiences of Medical Examiner systems around the country. A reliable estimate for such systems is that one autopsy per 1,000 population is performed by the local Medical Examiner Office per year. In the case of Spokane County this has been a valid estimate of caseload as our county population remains around 432,000.

As the figures and graph on page 9 depict, deaths certified as natural have declined in each of the Medical Examiner years except 2002. During the same 6 years, deaths certified as "accident" have increased each year. The reasons for this are multiple. First the office has worked to educate hospitals and nursing homes about the importance of reporting deaths related to falls in the elderly, as these are "accidents." The numbers of deaths attributable to falls have trended upward over the last six years. Secondly, the office is probably more selective about restricting autopsies to cases of natural disease that are truly unexpected. Finally, accidental deaths due to drugs (overdose) have increased each year. For the first time, in this 2005 Annual Report, overdose deaths have been divided into those due to medications and those due to illicit drugs. This division is not perfect, as many overdose deaths involve both illicit drugs and medications, in those cases the death is categorized as "illicit drug caused". This division was made to better track Spokane County in comparison to national trends that indicate fatalities due to prescription medications are increasing.

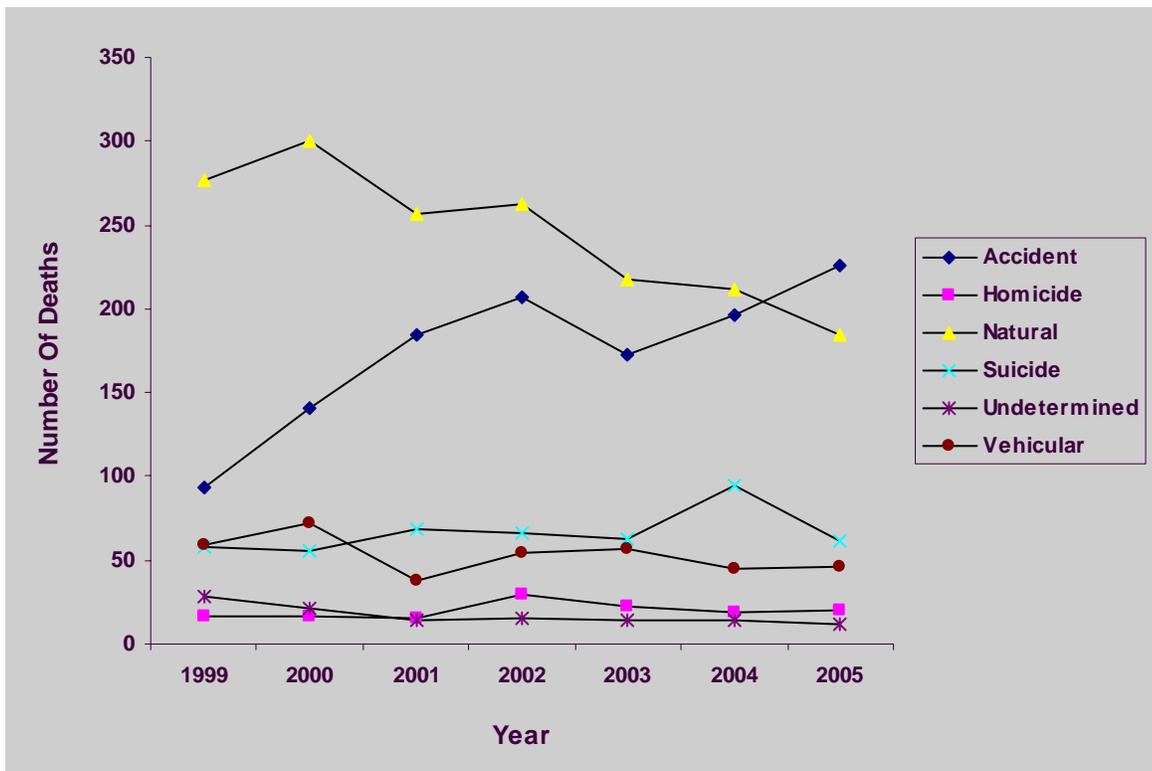
On page 17 a graph illustrates the distribution of accidental deaths through the months of the year. This shows a peak in the summer months. Though the reasons for this are not clear based on this analysis, the peak may be related to the corresponding peak in outdoor activities.

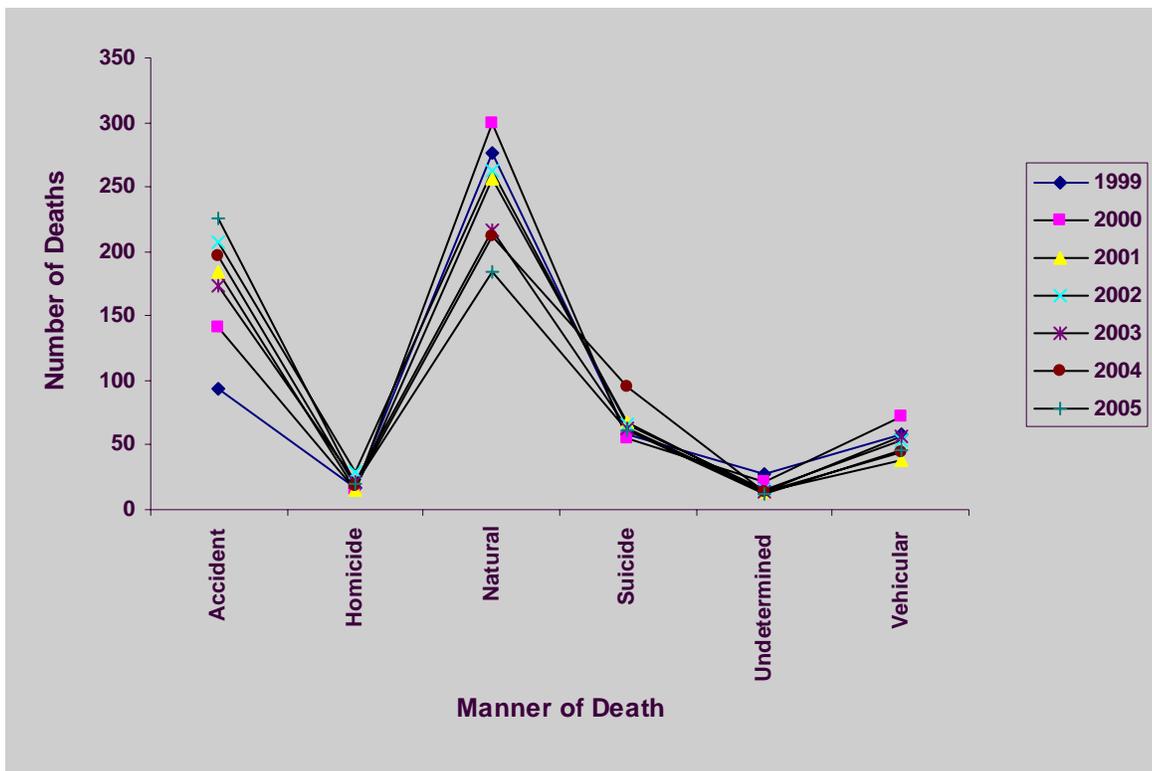
In 2004 suicide deaths increased dramatically, from 63 in 2003 to 95 in 2004. The majority of this increase occurred as firearm deaths. In 2005 suicides declined to 62, more in keeping with typical historical numbers. The reason for the marked one year increase in suicide deaths is not explained on the basis of any other Medical Examiner data.

Manner Of Deaths Comparison

Comparison of Manners of Death 1999 - 2005

Manner of Death	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Accident	93	141	184	207	173	196	226
Homicide	17	16	15	29	22	19	20
Natural	277	300	256	262	217	212	184
Suicide	58	55	68	66	63	95	62
Undetermined	28	21	14	15	14	14	12
Vehicular	59	72	38	54	57	45	46
Total	532	605	575	633	546	581	550





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 1999 - 2005

Manner of Death	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Accident	17.48%	23.31%	32.00%	32.70%	31.68%	33.73%	41.09%
Homicide	3.20%	2.64%	2.61%	4.58%	4.03%	3.27%	3.64%
Natural	52.07%	49.59%	44.52%	41.39%	39.74%	36.49%	33.45%
Suicide	10.90%	9.09%	11.83%	10.43%	11.54%	16.35%	11.27%
Undetermined	5.26%	3.47%	2.43%	2.37%	2.56%	2.41%	2.18%
Vehicular	11.09%	11.90%	6.61%	8.53%	10.44%	7.75%	8.36%

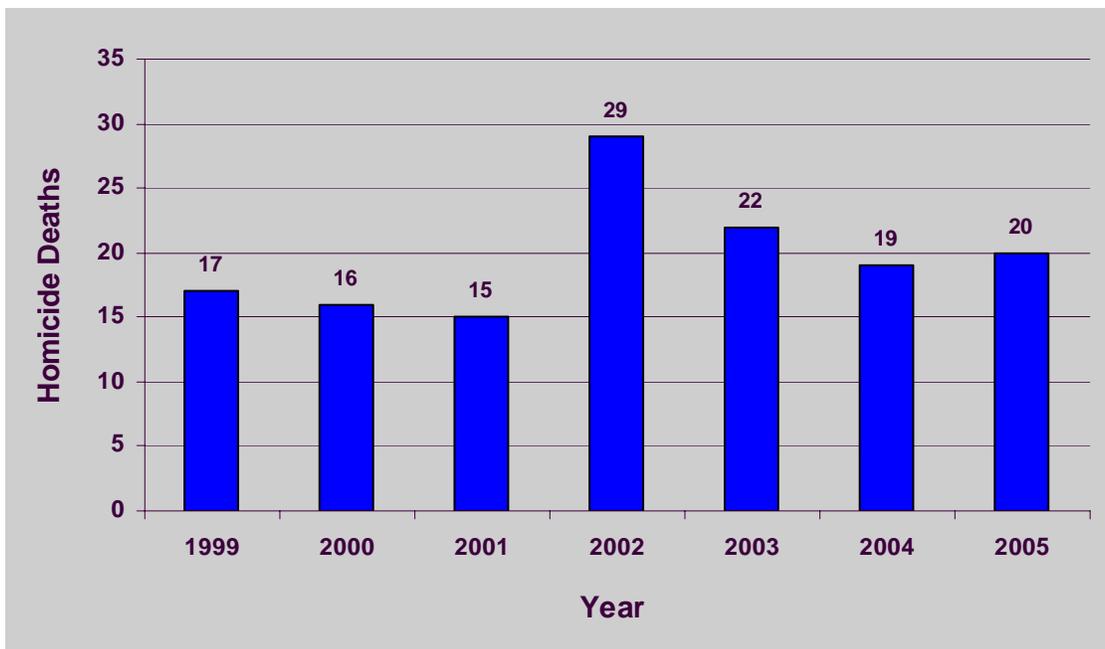
Ideally, a Medical Examiner System strives to keep the percentage of “undetermined” manner of death cases to less than five percent. This requires thorough investigation and autopsy. In the Spokane County Medical Examiner Office, every “undetermined” manner case is reviewed as part of the office Quality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

Homicidal Methods Comparison

Comparison of Homicidal Methods 1999 - 2005

Method Used	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Asphyxia	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
Blunt Impact	3	0	1	6	0	3	2
Child Abuse	1	2	1	2	3	1	2
Firearms	6	9	7	16	7	7	7
Homicidal Violence	2	3	2	1	5	3	4
Other	2	0	0	2	1	2	2
Stabbing	2	2	3	2	4	2	3
Strangulation	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	17	16	15	29	22	19	20

Homicides 1999 - 2005

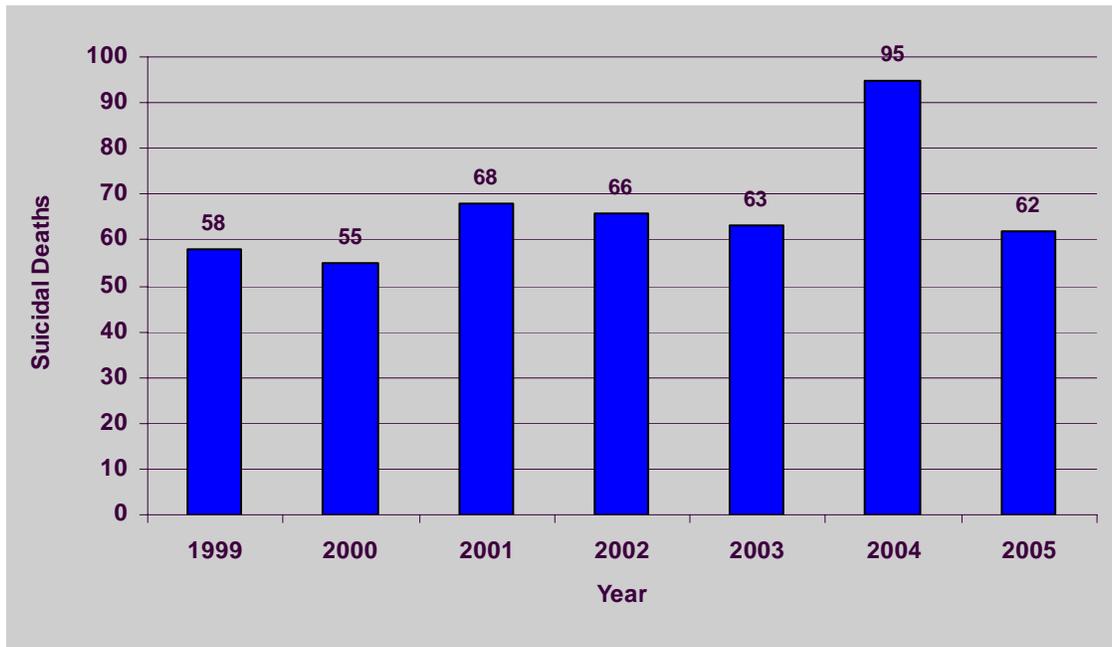


Suicidal Methods Comparison

Comparison of Suicidal Methods 1999 - 2005

Method Used	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Carbon Monoxide	4	6	4	3	4	3	5
Drowning	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Drugs/Poisons	10	3	12	9	16	24	20
Firearms	29	33	37	41	24	50	21
Hanging	9	10	12	9	10	15	14
Jumping	2	1	1	0	6	0	0
Other	0	1	0	2	1	2	0
Plastic Bag	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
Stab/incised wound	2	1	1	1	0	0	2
Total	58	55	68	66	63	95	62

Suicides 1999 - 2005

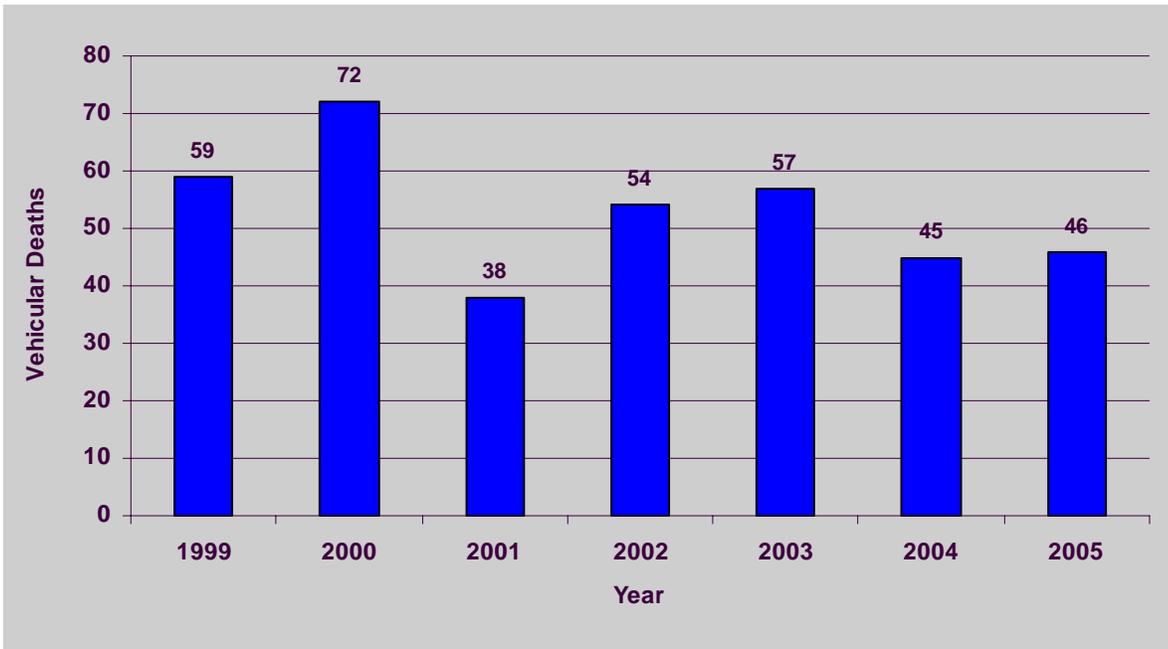


Vehicular Deaths Comparison

Comparison of Vehicular Deaths 1999 - 2005

Vehicle Circumstances	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Automobile Driver	28	37	20	26	23	20	17
Automobile Passenger	18	16	8	13	12	7	15
Bicyclist	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Motorcycle Driver	3	3	0	4	11	10	5
Motorcycle Passenger	0	2	0	0	2	3	0
Other	1	2	2	2	1	0	0
Pedestrian	7	10	7	9	6	4	5
Unknown	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Total	59	72	38	54	57	45	46

Vehicular Deaths 1999 - 2005

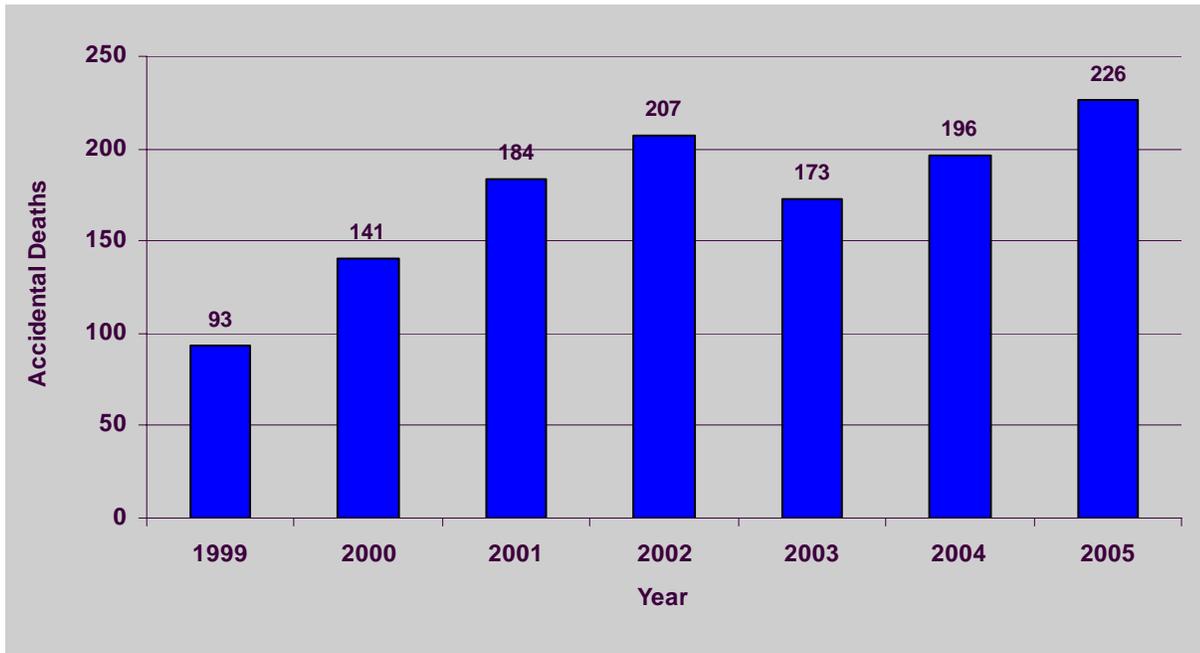


Accidental Deaths Comparison

Comparison of Accidental Deaths 1999 - 2005

Accident Circumstances	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Aircraft	0	0	3	0	1	1	0
Alcohol Abuse	0	0	1	2	2	1	2
Anaphylaxis	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Asphyxiation	6	4	5	9	3	4	7
Aspiration	3	1	4	0	0	0	3
Bicycle Fall	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Boating	1	2	0	1	0	0	0
Choking	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
Dog Bite	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Drowning	4	6	5	13	7	7	4
Illicit Drugs	15	30	45	49	56	70	48
Prescribed Drugs	5	0	0	0	0	0	35
Electrocution	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Fall	43	80	98	114	85	93	102
Farm	2	0	0	0	1	0	0
Fire/burns	1	3	2	4	0	3	3
Firearms	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hyperthermia	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Hypothermia	0	4	1	2	3	2	5
Industrial Accident	2	1	3	3	3	2	3
Motorcycle Driver (race track)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Other	5	9	7	6	7	6	13
Struck by Object	2	0	1	0	1	1	0
Surgical Procedure	3	0	1	2	1	1	1
Therapy Complication	0	0	0	2	1	1	0
Total	93	141	184	207	173	196	226

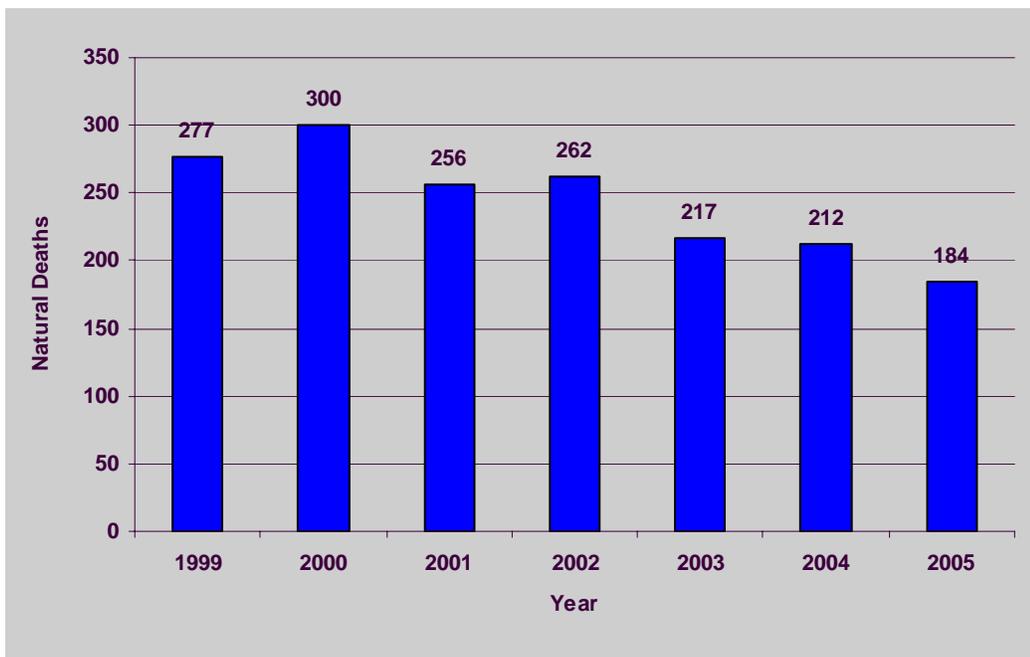
After a marked increase in drowning in 2002, drowning declined in 2003 and 2004. An increasing trend in the drug/medication category of accidental death continues.



Accidental Deaths 1999 - 2005

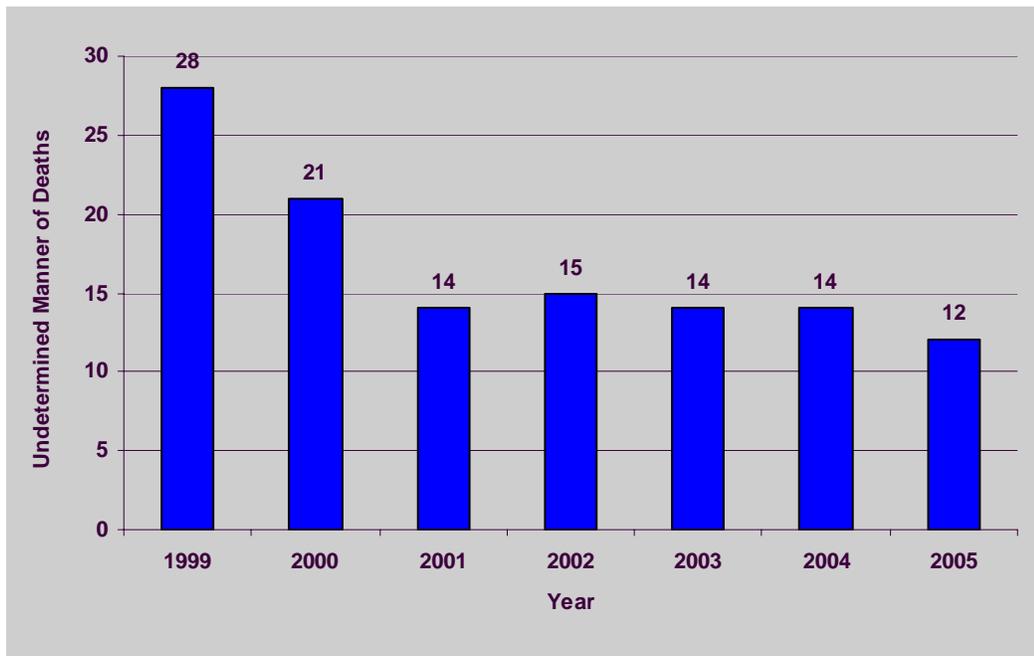
Natural Deaths Comparison

Natural Deaths 1999 - 2005



Undetermined Deaths Comparison

Deaths of Undetermined Manner 1999 - 2005

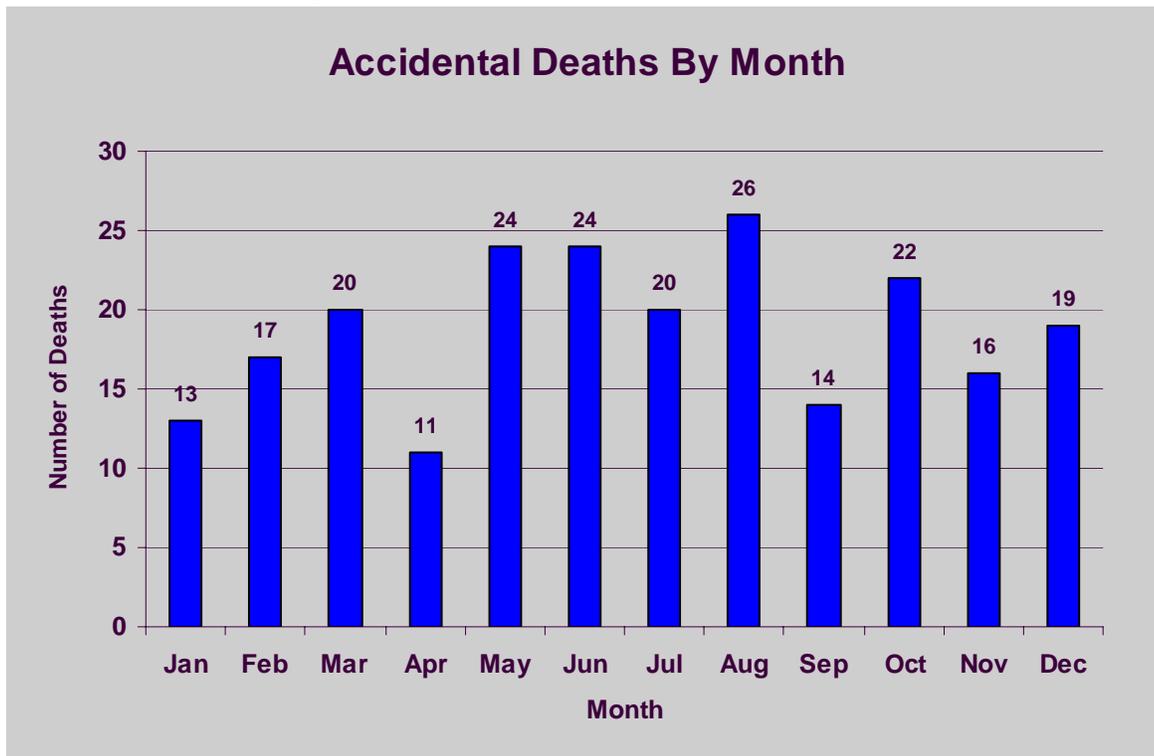


Medical Examiner Systems strive to use the undetermined manner of death category in less than five percent of cases. In 2005, the undetermined classification was used in 2.4% of Spokane Medical Examiner cases.

Section 4: Manner of Death

ACCIDENT

Accidental Deaths by Month



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

Accident Mode by Gender

Accident Mode	Female	Male	Total
Alcohol Abuse	0	2	2
Asphyxiation	3	4	7
Aspiration	0	3	3
Drowning	1	3	4
Illicit Drugs	15	33	48
Prescribed Drugs	21	14	35
Fall	60	42	102
Fire/burns	1	2	3
Hypothermia	2	3	5
Industrial Accident	0	3	3
Other	2	11	13
Surgical Procedure	0	1	1
Total	105	121	226

Accident Mode by Gender and Age Group

Accident Mode, Gender and Age Group

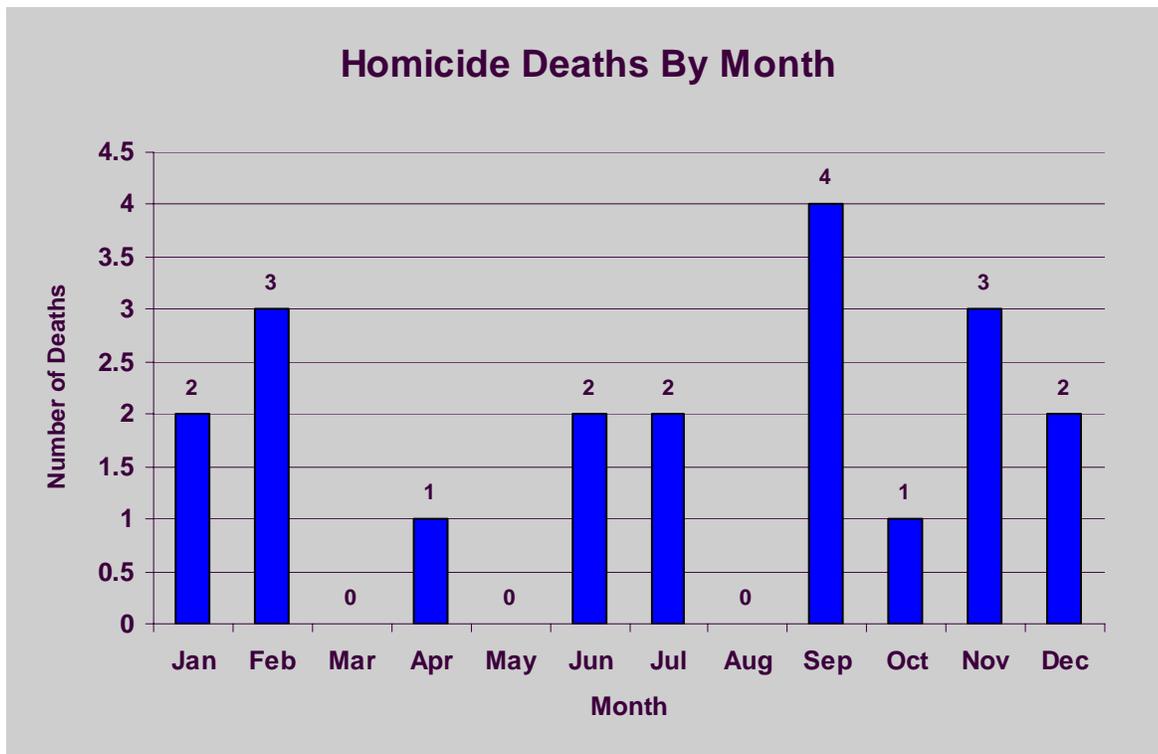
Accident Mode	Sex	<1	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	>=100	Total
Alcohol Abuse	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Alcohol Abuse Total														2
Asphyxiation	F	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Asphyxiation	M	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Asphyxiation Total														7
Aspiration	M	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Aspiration Total														3
Drowning	F	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Drowning	M	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Drowning Total														4
Illicit Drugs	F	0	0	0	1	4	6	2	2	0	0	0	0	15
Illicit Drugs	M	0	0	1	5	2	16	9	0	0	0	0	0	33
Illicit Drugs Total														48
Prescribed Drugs	F	0	0	0	5	3	8	3	0	1	1	0	0	21
Prescribed Drugs	M	0	0	1	2	1	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	14
Prescribed Drugs Total														35
Fall	F	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	7	11	21	17	1	60
Fall	M	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	1	7	19	8	0	42
Fall Total														102
Fire/burns	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Fire/burns	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Fire/burns Total														3
Hypothermia	F	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Hypothermia	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
Hypothermia Total														5
Industrial Accident	M	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Industrial Accident Total														3
Other	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Other	M	0	0	3	1	0	1	1	3	0	2	0	0	11
Other Total														13
Surgical Procedure	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Surgical Procedure Total														1
Total Accidents		3	0	5	19	11	47	30	15	20	48	27	1	226

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

HOMICIDE

In 2005 the recorded 20 homicides represents an increase by 1 from the previous year. Firearms accounted for single largest implements/mode of death. Firearms also contributed the largest number of deaths by suicide. The most frequent age group of homicide victims in 2005 was 10-19 years.

Homicide Deaths by Month

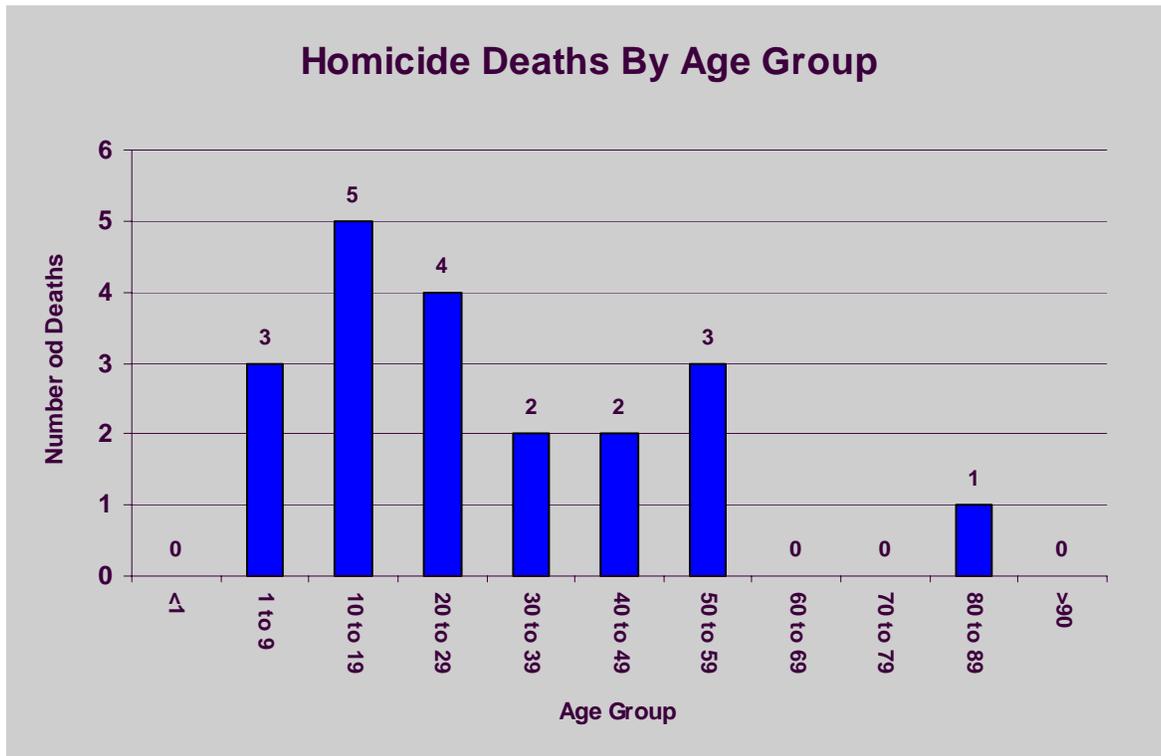


Homicide Deaths by Method, Gender, and Age Group

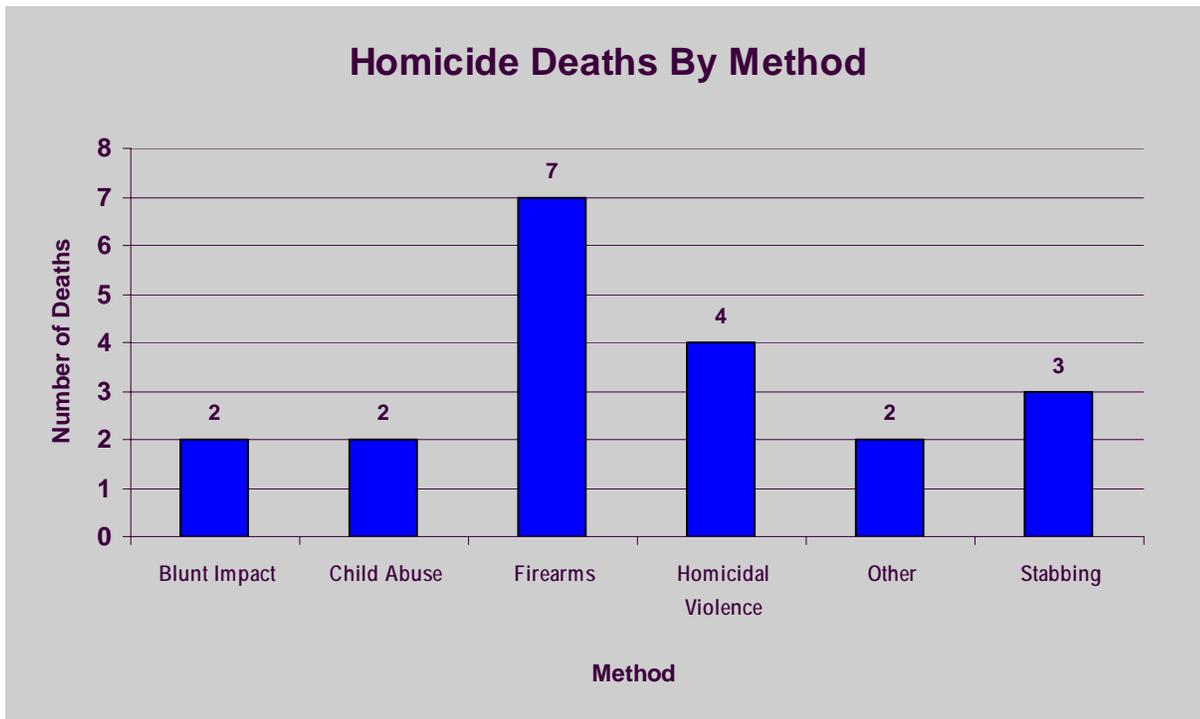
Homicide Mode, Gender and Age Group

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	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Blunt Impact	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Blunt Impact Total														2
Child Abuse	M	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Child Abuse Total														2
Firearms	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Firearms	M	0	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Firearms Total														7
Homicidal Violence	M	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Homicidal Violence Total														4
Other	M	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Other Total														2
Stabbing	F	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Stabbing	M	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Stabbing Total														3
Total Homicides		0	3	5	4	2	2	3	0	0	1	0	0	20

Homicide Deaths by Age Group



Homicide Deaths by Method

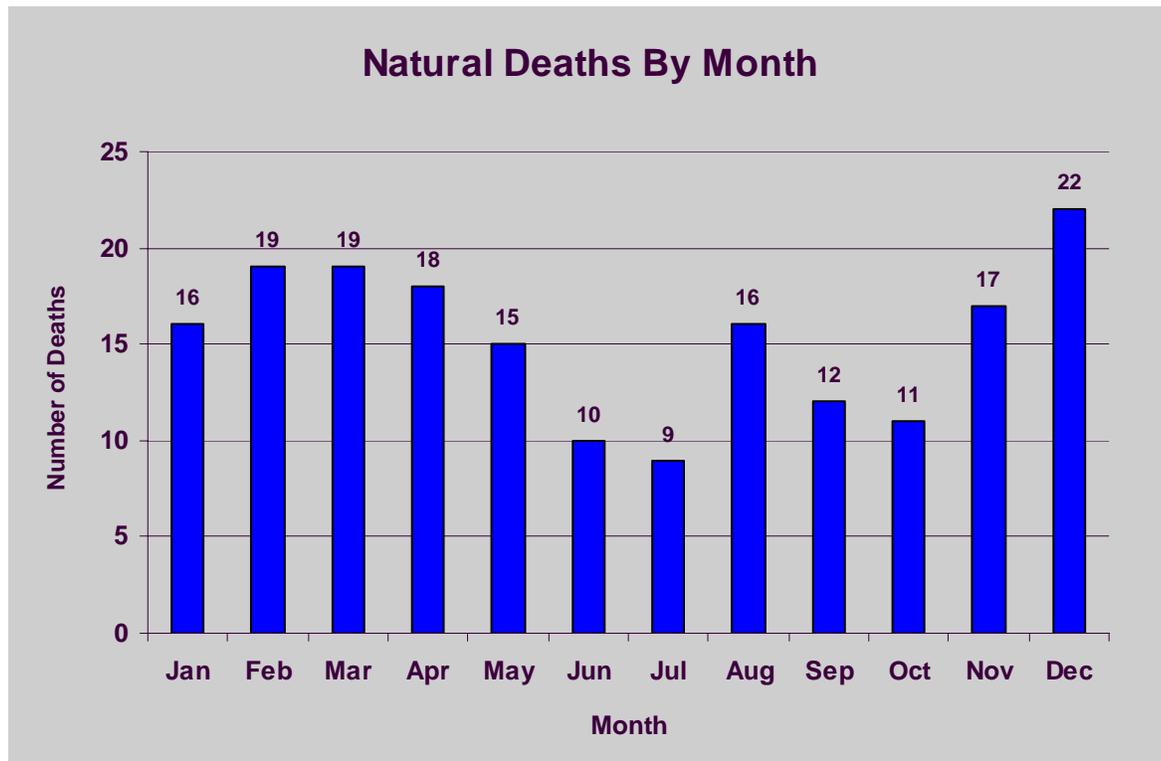


This graph is subject to limitations based on the small total number of decedents represented in the graph.

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

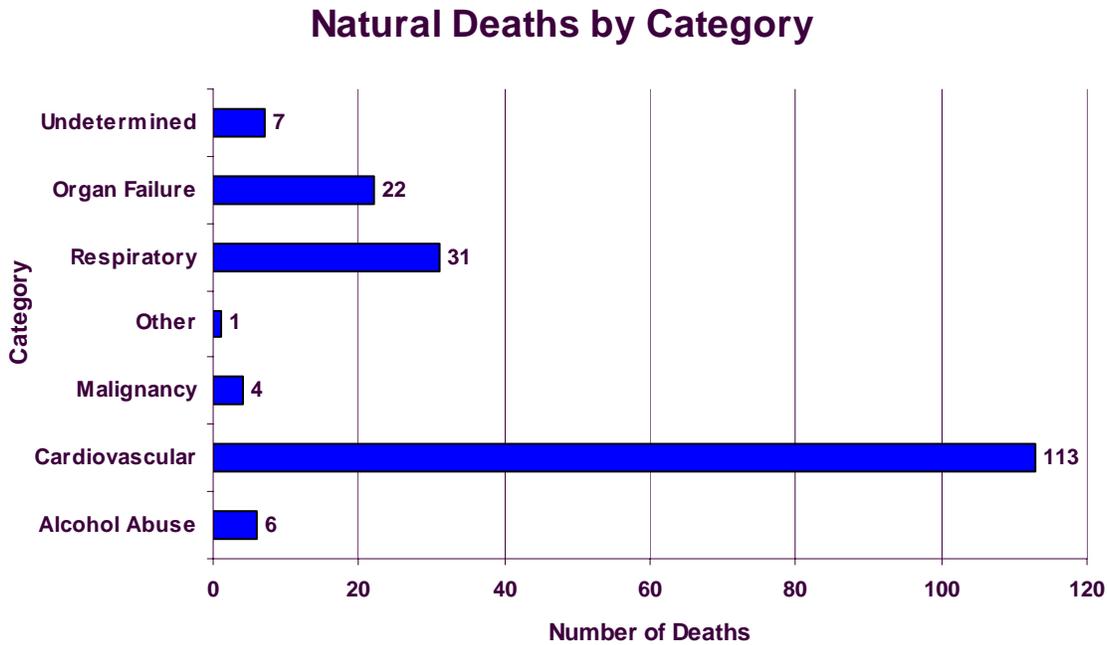
(Total # of Natural Deaths including those not examined by full autopsy.)

	AA	C	M	O	R	OF	U	TOTAL
Acute Myocardial Infarct		1						1
Addisons Disease					1			1
Anoxic Encephalopathy		2						2
Arrhythmia		3						3
Asthma						3		3
Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease		76						76
Cardiac Dysrhythmia		5						5
Cardiac Tamponade		2						2
Cardiomyopathy		10						10
Cerebral Hemorrhage					2			2
Chronic Alcoholism	2							2
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease						6		6
Cirrhosis of the Liver	2							2
Congenital Abnormality					1			1
Congestive heart failure		1						1
Coronary Thrombosis		2						2
Diabetes Mellitus					2			2
Dissecting Aneurysm		1						1
End Stage Liver Disease					1			1
Gastro Intestinal Bleed	2							2
Gastrointestinal Bleed					2			2
Hypertensive heart disease		5						5
Lung Cancer			1					1
Myocardial Infarction		4						4
Other		1	3	1	13	2		20
Peritonitis					1			1
Pneumonia						7		7
Pulmonary embolism						4		4
SIDS					7			7
Subarachnoid Hemorrhage					1			1
undetermined							7	7
Total	6	113	4	1	31	22	7	184

Natural Deaths by Category

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	Unknown	Total
Alcohol Abuse	3	3	0	6
Cardiovascular	33	80	0	113
Malignancy	1	3	0	4
Organ Failure	1	0	0	1
Other	15	16	0	31
Respiratory	10	12	0	22
Undetermined	2	5	0	7
Total	65	119	0	184

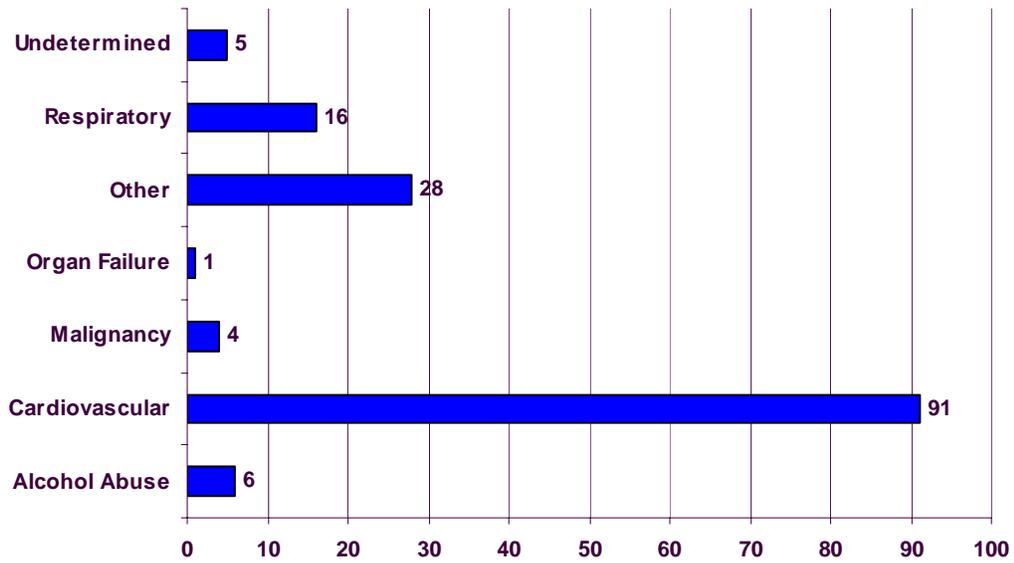
Natural Deaths by Gender and Age Group

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	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Alcohol Abuse	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Alcohol Abuse Total														6
Cardiovascular	F	0	0	0	0	3	5	6	4	5	7	3	0	33
Cardiovascular	M	0	0	0	0	4	8	31	15	14	7	1	0	80
Cardiovascular Total														113
Malignancy	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Malignancy	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
Malignancy Total														4
Organ Failure	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Organ Failure Total														1
Other	F	6	1	0	1	3	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	15
Other	M	6	0	0	1	0	4	4	0	1	0	0	0	16
Other Total														31
Respiratory	F	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	1	0	1	0	10
Respiratory	M	0	0	0	1	0	3	4	1	0	2	1	0	12
Respiratory Total														22
Undetermined	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Undetermined	M	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	5
Undetermined Total														7
Total		12	1	0	4	11	29	53	24	24	19	7	0	184

Natural Deaths Autopsied

Natural Deaths Autopsied

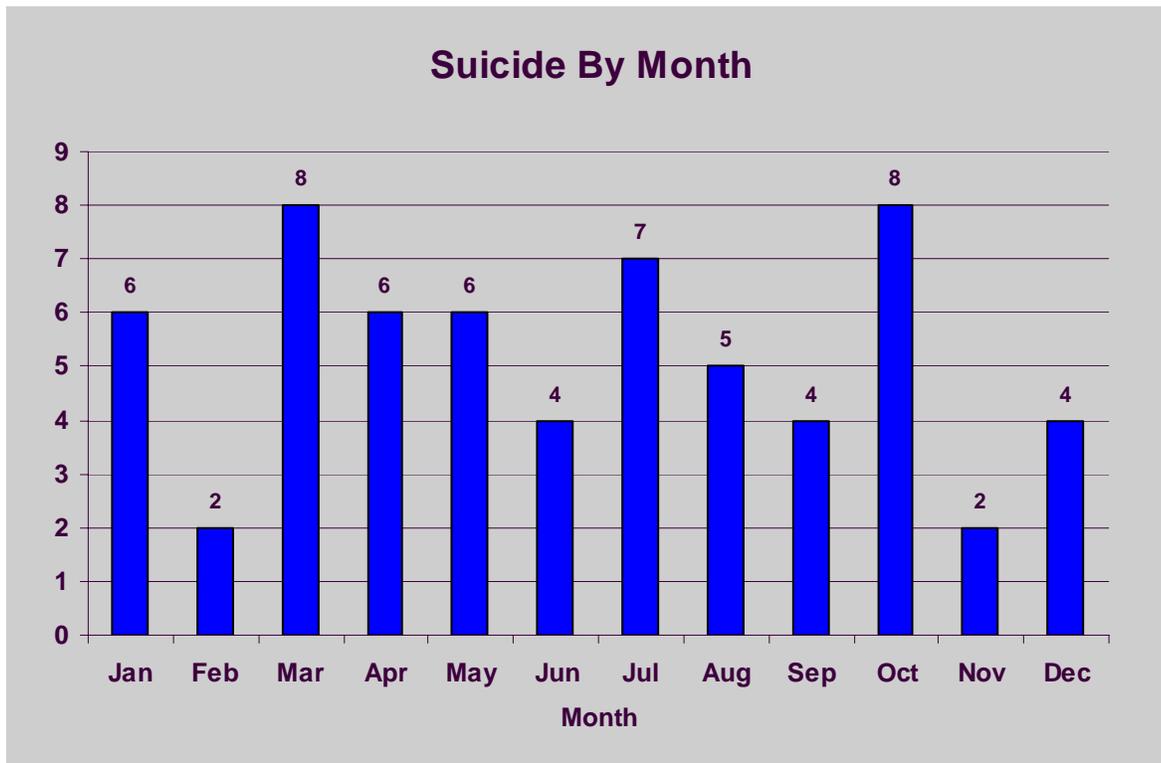


SUICIDE

Suicides are those deaths caused by intentional, self-inflicted injuries. In Spokane County there were (62) suicides in 2005, down (33) from 2004.

The highest number (66%) of all suicides fell within the 30-69 age groups. However, looking at suicides in persons (50) years and older, in 2005 this age group represented 39% (24/62) of all suicides occurring in Spokane County. Nationally, elderly suicide has some correlation with depression resulting from declining health.

Suicide Deaths 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	M	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Carbon Monoxide Total														5
Drugs/Poisons	F	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	2	0	2	0	0	10
Drugs/Poisons	M	0	0	0	1	2	2	4	0	0	1	0	0	10
Drugs/Poisons Total														20
Firearms	F	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Firearms	M	0	0	3	3	0	5	6	0	1	1	0	0	19
Firearms Total														21
Hanging	F	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Hanging	M	0	0	1	5	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Hanging Total														14
Stab/incised wound	M	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Stab/incised wound Total														2
Total		0	0	5	11	6	16	15	4	1	4	0	0	62

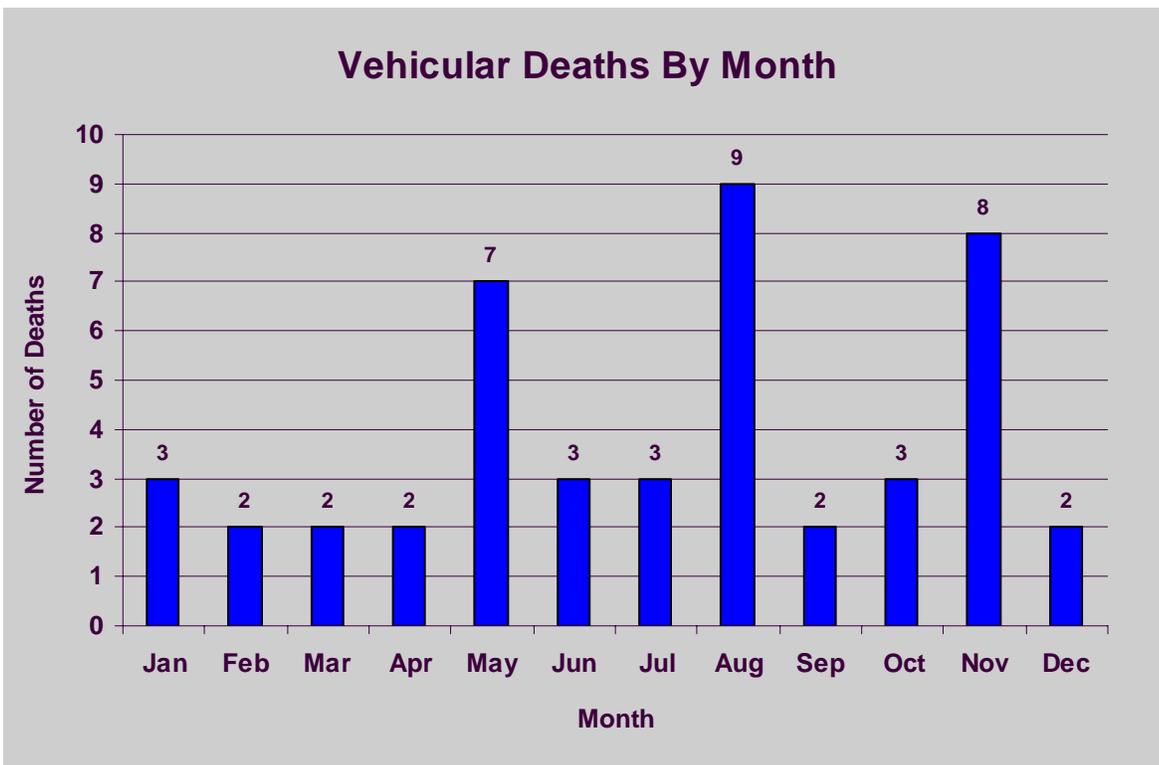
Nationally males are more likely than females to commit suicide by firearm.

VEHICULAR

During the calendar year of 2005, the Medical Examiner’s Office participated in the investigation of (46) deaths categorized as vehicular accidents. This represents more than a 2% increase over 2004, but this increase may not be statistically significant. The number of deaths where the victim was the driver was (17) and (15) deaths occurred in passengers.

Statistics regarding traffic fatalities and the use of restraints showed that (12) victims were restrained, (6) were unrestrained and in (14) 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	0	1	0	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	7
Automobile Driver	M	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	0	2	0	1	0	10
Automobile Driver Total														17
Automobile Passenger	F	0	2	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	7
Automobile Passenger	M	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	8
Automobile Passenger Total														15
Bicyclist	F	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bicyclist	M	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Bicyclist Total														3
Motorcycle Driver	M	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	5
Motorcycle Driver Total														5
Pedestrian	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Pedestrian	M	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	4
Pedestrian Total														5
Unknown	M	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unknown Total														1
Grand Total		2	6	5	3	3	10	6	4	3	3	1	0	46

Traffic Fatalities and Use of Restraint

Traffic Fatalities and Use of Restraint

Circumstances	Restrained	Unrestrained	Unknown	Total
Automobile Driver	7	4	6	17
Automobile Passenger	5	2	8	15
Total	12	6	14	32

UNDETERMINED

Deaths are certified as “undetermined” manner 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 (12) undetermined manner deaths in Spokane County in 2005.

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 2005

Number	Cause of Death	Month	Sex	Age	Race
1	dehydration; undetermined cause	Jan	M	7	Caucasian
2	sudden unexplained infant death	May	F	3 mo	Caucasian
3	lac brain & fxs skull; blunt impact head	Jun	M	16	Caucasian
4	undetermined after comp autopsy	Jul	F	4 mo	Caucasian
5	cerebral edema; blunt force impact head	Aug	M	48	Caucasian
6	transection cervical spinal cord; blunt imp head	Aug	F	62	Caucasian
7	undetermined after complete autopsy	Aug	F	53	Caucasian
8	undetermined after complete autopsy	Sep	M	18	Caucasian
9	hypoxic encephalopathy; dental ex sedation	Oct	F	89	Caucasian
10	undetermined	Nov	F	63	Caucasian
11	acute intox drugs	Nov	M	48	Caucasian
12	lobar pneumonia; remote blunt impact head	Nov	M	45	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

MEDICAL EXAMINERS OFFICE

