

Kitsap County Coroner



2022 Annual Report

Kitsap County Medical Examiner
5010 NW Linden Street
Bremerton, 98312

Last Revised: August 16, 2023

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Message to the Board of Commissioners and Citizens of Kitsap County

As planned and approved by a vote of the citizens of Kitsap County in November of 2022, this will be the final annual report from the Kitsap County Coroner's Office. In anticipation of the conversion from an elected coroner, to a professionally licensed, appointed medical examiner, coupled with the fact that Dr. Lindsey Harle has been on staff for the duration of 2022, the term Coroner will only be used in the header of this report.

The Kitsap County Medical Examiner's Office investigates sudden, violent, unexpected, and suspicious deaths that occur in Kitsap County. The Office of the Medical Examiner certifies death after investigation and postmortem examination and issues the death certificate as required by law. Complete findings of the death investigation are distributed to families and law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

The main duties of the Office of the Medical Examiner are to determine the cause and manner of death and certify deaths that are reported to the medical examiner. The cause of death is the disease process or injury that resulted in death. There are thousands of diseases and injuries that may result in death. The manner of death is a classification in which a determination is made regarding whether the death resulted from natural causes, homicide, suicide, or an accident. On occasion, the manner of death is classified as indeterminate.

Information collected during the investigation helps clarify the circumstances, such as the sequence of events prior to death. Evidence collected during an investigation and/or postmortem examination may help lead to the arrest or successful conviction of a suspect in a homicide case. Because deaths occur around the clock, medical examiner staff members are available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

With the skill and experience of the medical examiner investigators and board-certified forensic pathologists, we believe the quality of death investigations in Kitsap County are among the best in the State. The death scene investigation reports filed by the investigators are very thorough and supply comprehensive information to the medical examiners.

Our medical examiners and investigators also extend their duties to the living by answering questions and addressing concerns regarding deaths within the county. Medical examiner investigators frequently make personal contact with family members of a deceased and assist them by providing appropriate answers regarding the circumstances of the death. Medical examiner investigators are supplied with a pamphlet for distribution to families. The information provides answers to common questions and facts about autopsies and also provides resource information pertaining to grief counseling.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners for their support of the newly formed medical examiner program and the services we provide to the citizens of the Kitsap County.

Medical Examiner Staff

Lindsey Harle M.D.
Chief Medical Examiner

Megan Quinn, M.D.
Forensic Pathologist

Destiny McKeever
MDI

Samantha Sakowski
Autopsy Technician

Nathan Edwards
MDI
Michelle Hagle
Records management

Rebecca Wildes
MDI

Aaron Davis
MDI

Dale Johnson
MDI

Heidi Dombrock
Fiscal Tech

Emanuel Lacsina M.D.
Pathologist

Troy Graunke
MDI

Virgil Pentz
MDI

Debra Halsted
MDI

James Porter
MDI

Kari Hunter
Epidemiologist

Jaime Taylor
MDI

Jeff Wallis
MDI program supervisor

Types of Deaths Reportable to the Medical Examiner

Deaths Reportable to the Medical Examiner:

- Violent death (e.g., strangulation, gunshot, stabbing, poisoning, etc.)
- Accidental deaths (e.g., falls, drowning, motor vehicle collisions, burns, overdose, etc.)
- Death of a prisoner (e.g., deaths in any county or city jail while imprisoned or in custody).
- Suspicious Circumstances (e.g., Unidentified Bodies or events surrounding death)
- Sudden and Unexpected deaths (e.g., unexpected natural death, occupational-related deaths)*
Without medical attendance within 48 hours of death:
- In cases of chronic illness, the attending physician may sign the death certificate if s/he can be reasonably certain of the cause of death.
- Unexpected infant deaths

The medical examiner would generally order an autopsy for any of the reportable deaths listed above.

Kitsap County Medical Examiner Cases

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| Population | 260,131 |
| Cases Reported to Medical Examiner | 694 |
| A. Number of deaths certified after postmortem examination | 215 |
| 1. Number of Medical Examiner Cases with Complete Autopsy | 111 |
| 2. Number of Medical Examiner Cases with External Examination | 105 |
| 3. Number of Medical Examiner Cases with Limited Examination | 31 |
| B. Number of deaths certified without postmortem examination | 312 |
| C. Number of deaths not certified by Medical Examiner's Office after investigation | 382 |

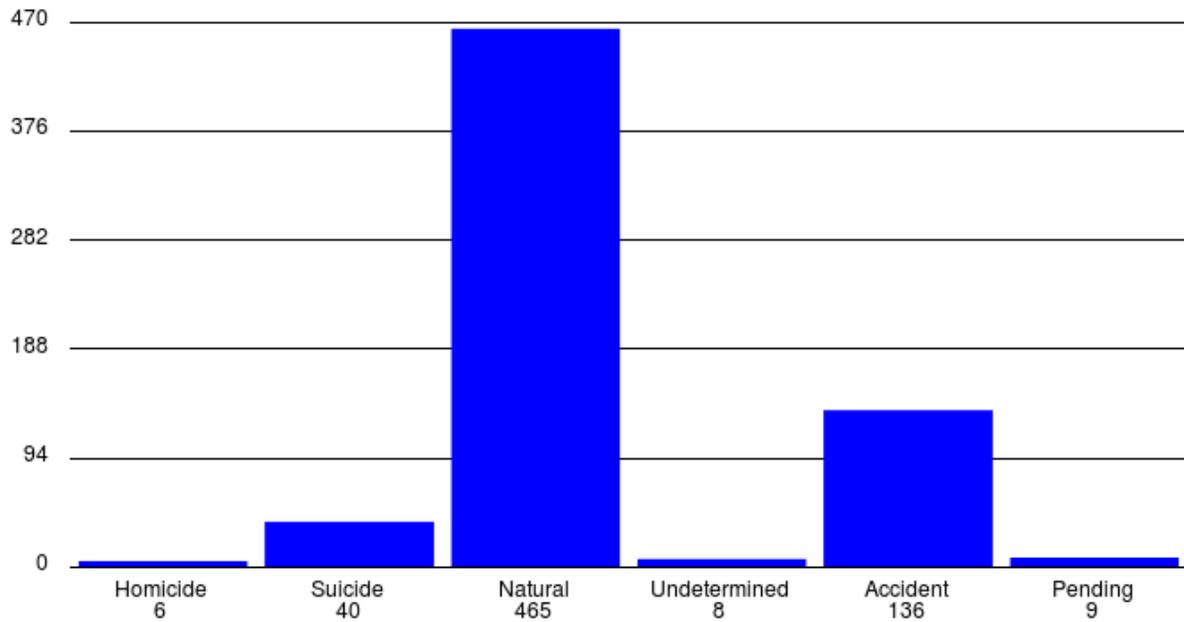
Definitions

Full Autopsy: A complete external and internal examination of a decedent

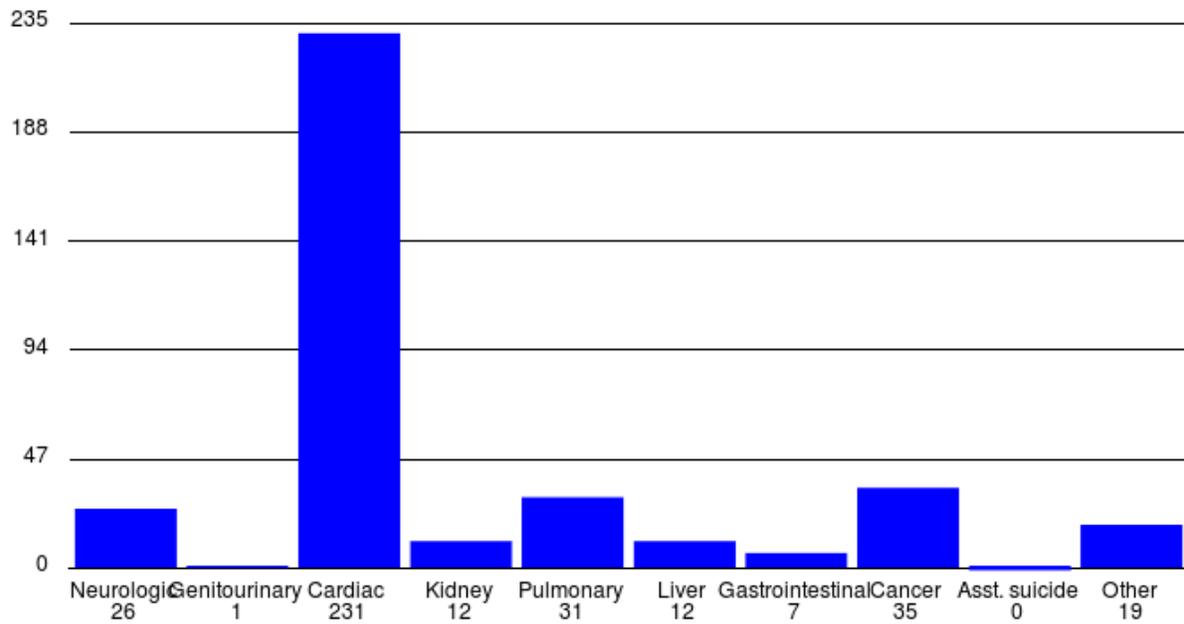
Limited Examination: An examination which is focused on a specific organ or region of the body, i.e., heart. The limited examination also includes an external examination.

External Examination: An examination of the exterior of a decedent.

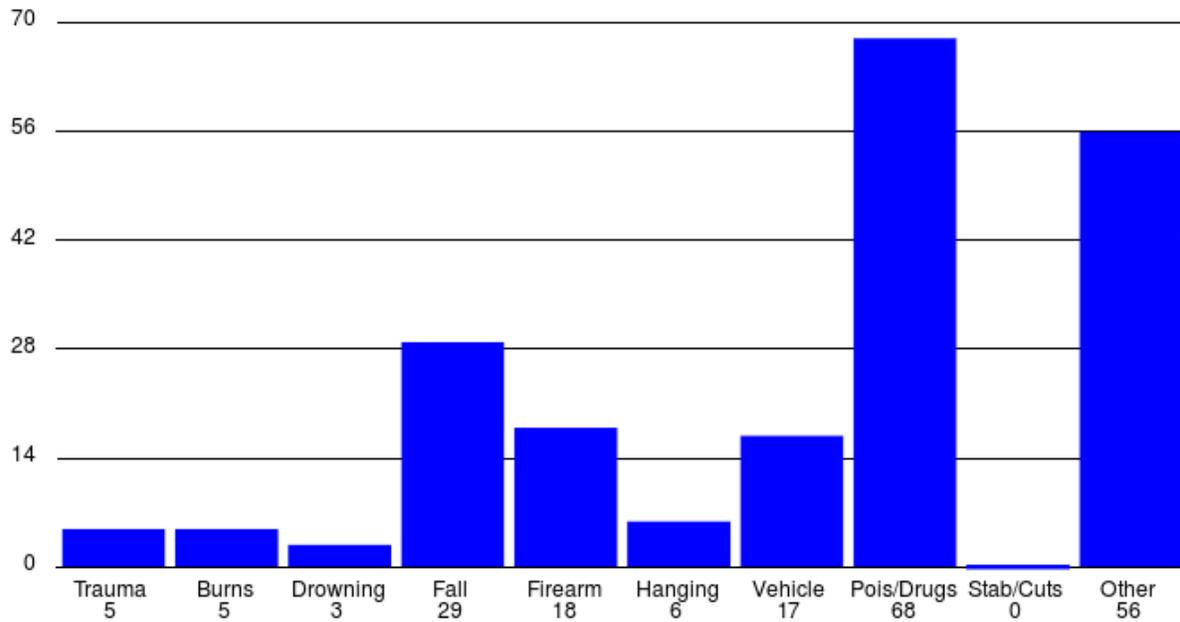
Manner of Death by Postmortem Examination



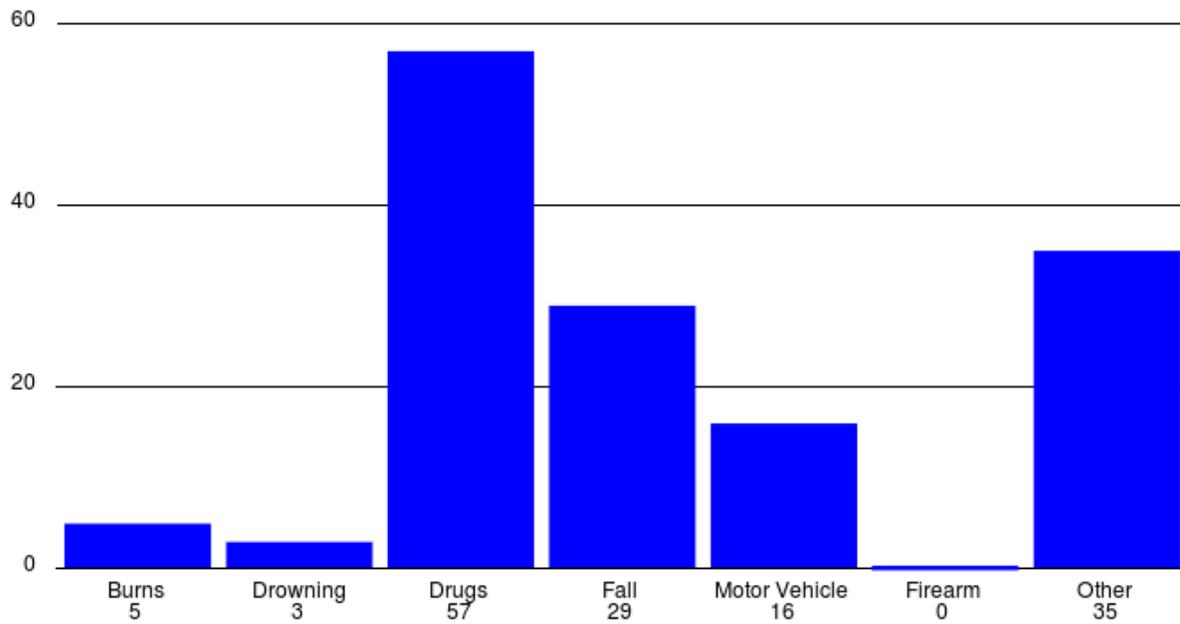
Deaths by Natural Causes



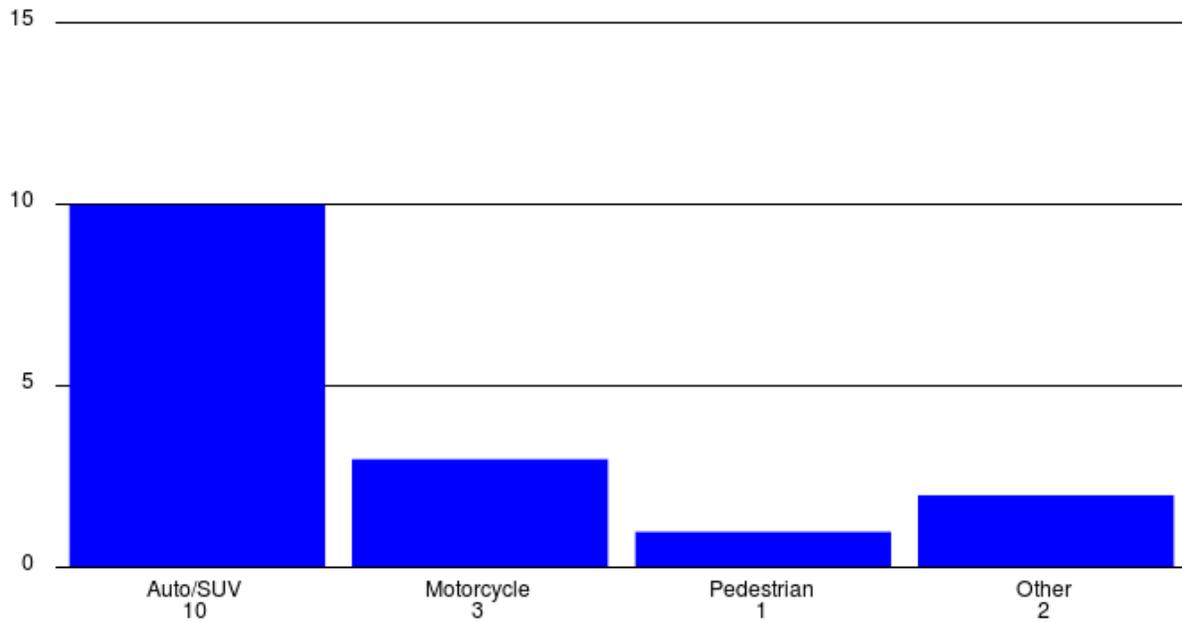
Deaths by Unnatural Causes



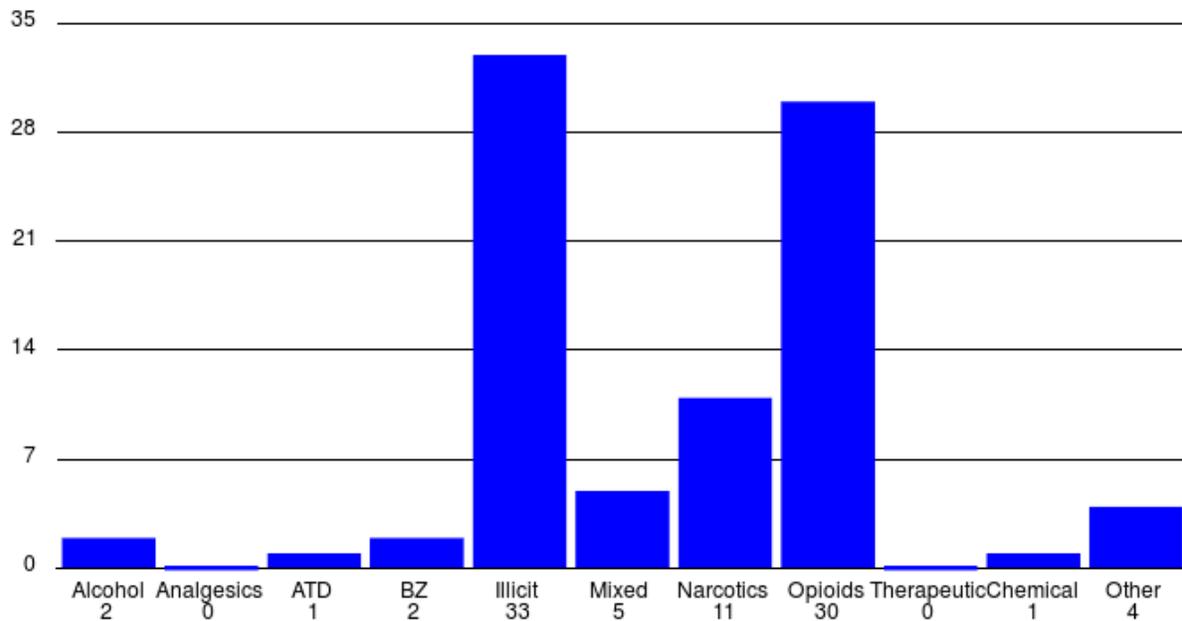
Accidental Deaths by Type



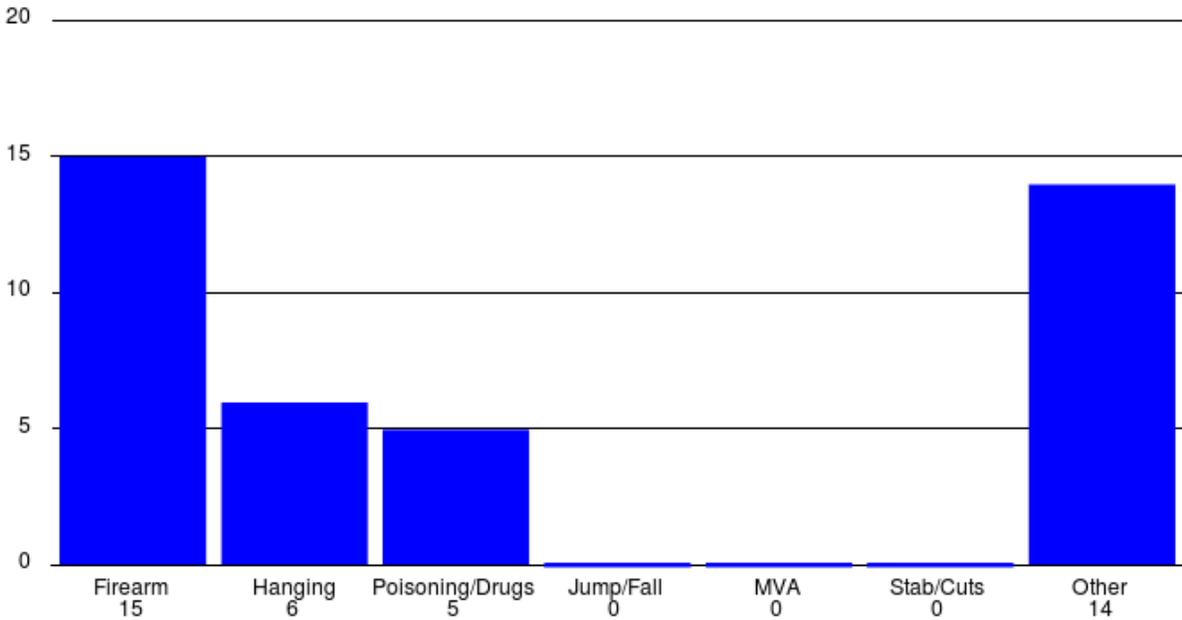
Accidental Deaths - Motor Vehicle Crashes



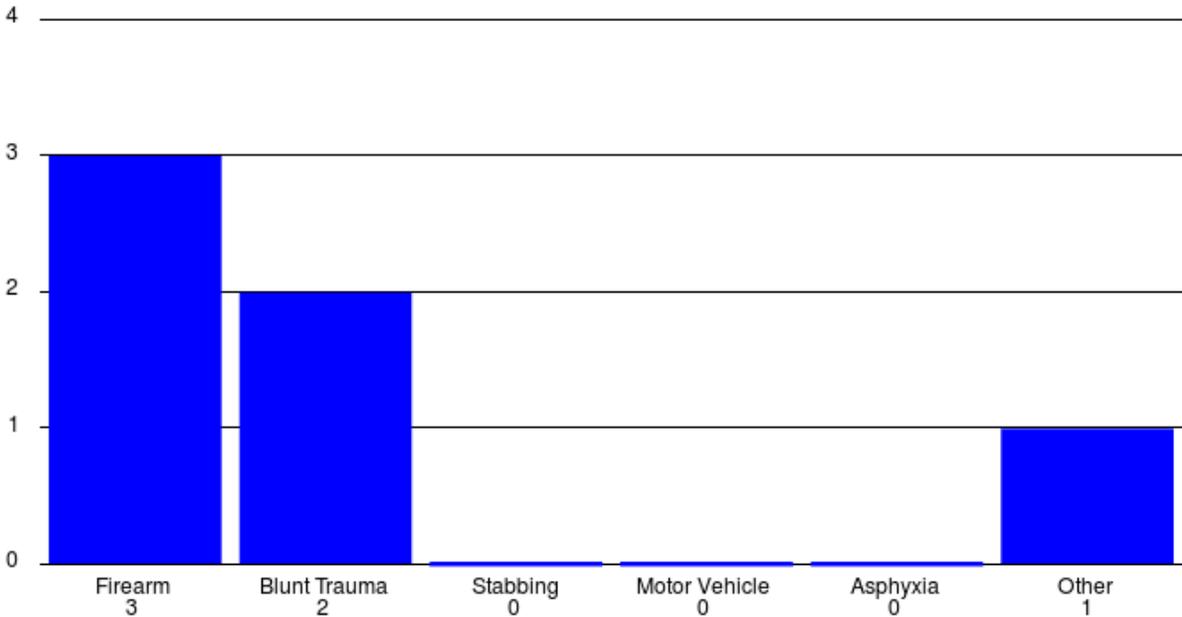
Drugs Contributing to Cause of Death



Suicide by Means



Homicide Deaths



Deaths by Age Group

