

Kitsap County Coroner



2021 Annual Report

Kitsap County Coroner
5010 NW Linden Street
Bremerton, 98312

Last Revised: August 2, 2022

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Message to the Board of Commissioners and Citizens of Kitsap County

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.

In 2008 our office contributed significant input toward the implementation of a web based death investigation report system. After providing assistance to Occupational Research and Assessment, Inc. of Big Rapids, Michigan, the Medicolegal Death Investigation Log or, MDI Log was launched in June of 2008. MDI Log is a comprehensive investigative report/database system that enables the Medical Examiner to review death scene investigation information from a secure Internet site any time of the day. MDI Log enables Medical Examiner Investigators to submit death scene investigation reports via the Internet in an efficient manner. MDI Log has evolved to become a valuable tool for our office and it is now available to medical examiner offices across the country.

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

Medical Examiner Staff

Aaron Davis
Deputy Coroner

Heidi Dombrock
Fiscal Tech

Nathan Edwards
Deputy Coroner

Laura Fulginiti
Forensic Anthropologist

Debra Halsted
Deputy Coroner

Lindsey Harle M.D.
Pathologist

Katie Heidere
Program Manager

Dale Johnson
Deputy Coroner

Eric Kiesel, MD, PhD
Pathologist

Emanuel Lacsina M.D.
Pathologist

Virgil Pentz
Deputy Coroner

Megan Quinn, M.D.
Forensic Pathologist

James Porter
Deputy Coroner

Rebecca Wildes
Deputy Coroner

Jeff Wallis
Coroner

Samantha Sakowski
Autopsy Technician

Jaime Taylor
Deputy Coroner

Types of Deaths Reportable to the Medical Examiner

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW), specifically RCW 68.50.010 delineates which deaths must be reported to the medical examiner. These deaths include sudden and unexpected deaths, accidental deaths, and violent deaths. The medical examiner has the authority under these Acts to order an autopsy at any time it is deemed necessary to determine or confirm the cause and manner of death.

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., all deaths during a surgical procedure, in recovery, anesthesia-related, 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.
- Death of a mother due to an abortion.
- Unexpected infant deaths

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

Kitsap County Medical Examiner Cases

Population	278,064
Cases Reported to Medical Examiner	938
A. Number of deaths certified after postmortem examination	311
1. Number of Medical Examiner Cases with Complete Autopsy	159
2. Number of Medical Examiner Cases with External Examination	135
3. Number of Medical Examiner Cases with Limited Examination	33
B. Number of deaths certified without postmortem examination	443
C. Number of deaths not certified by Medical Examiner's Office after investigation	495

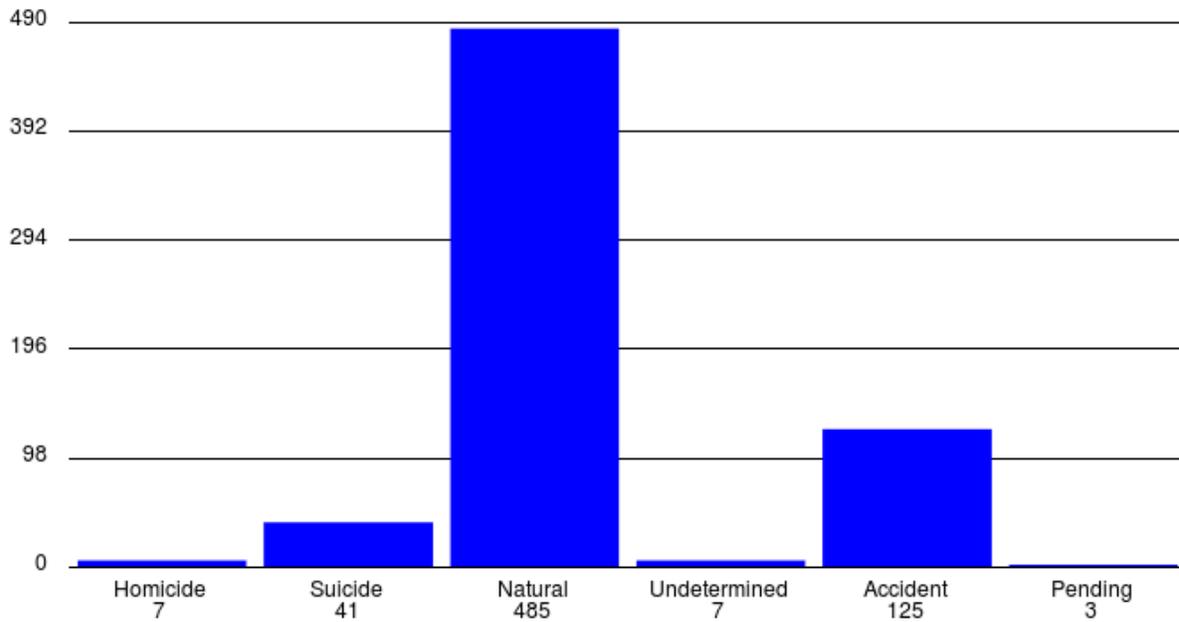
Definitions

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

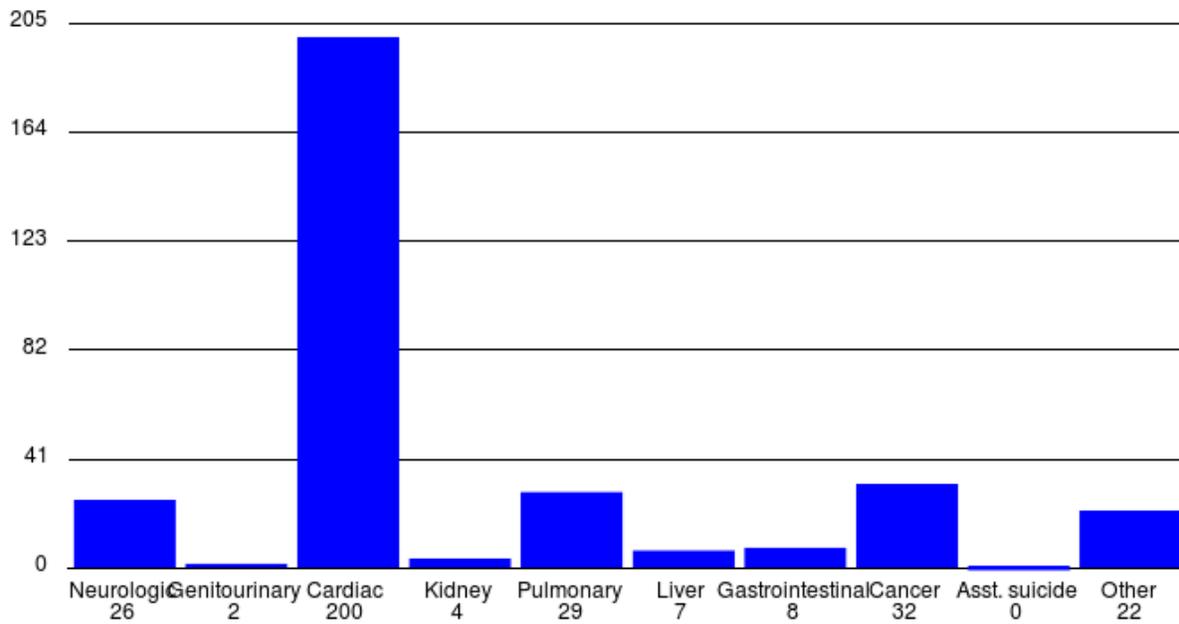
Limited Examination: An examination which is focused on a specific organ or region of the body, i.e., heart. The limited examination also includes an external examination.

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

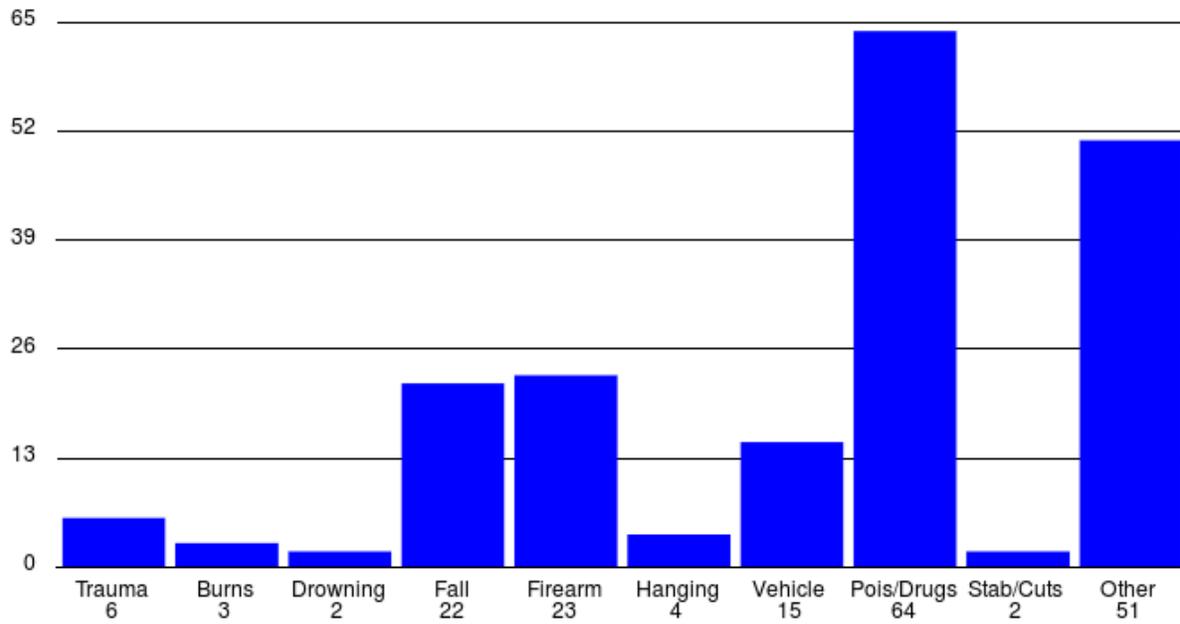
Manner of Death by Postmortem Examination



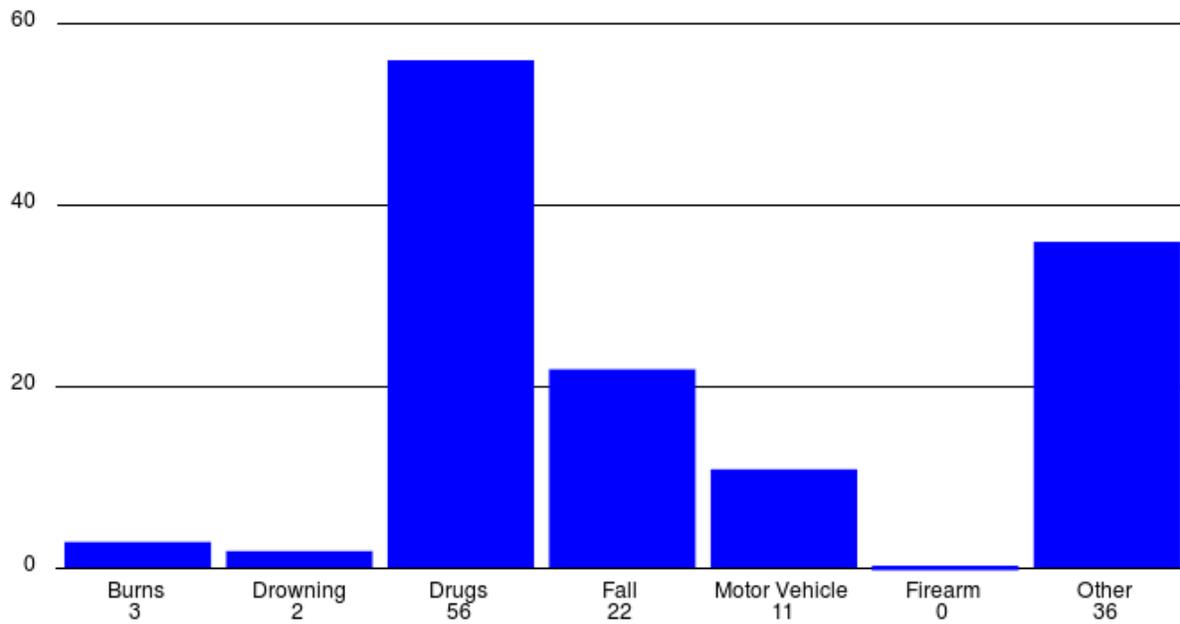
Deaths by Natural Causes



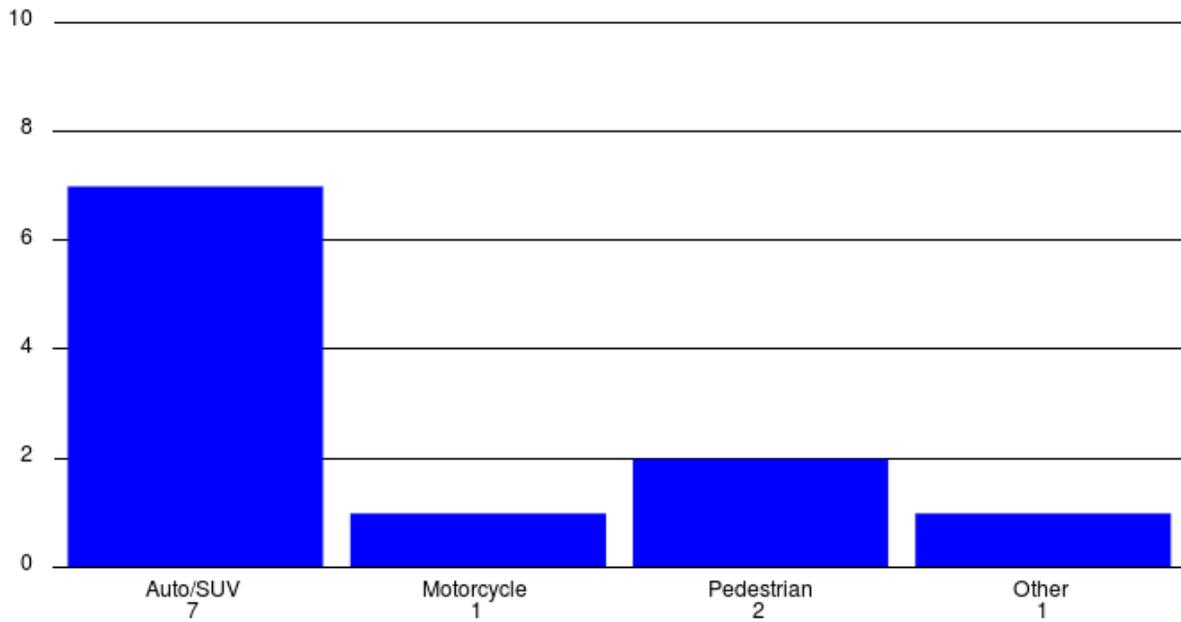
Deaths by Unnatural Causes



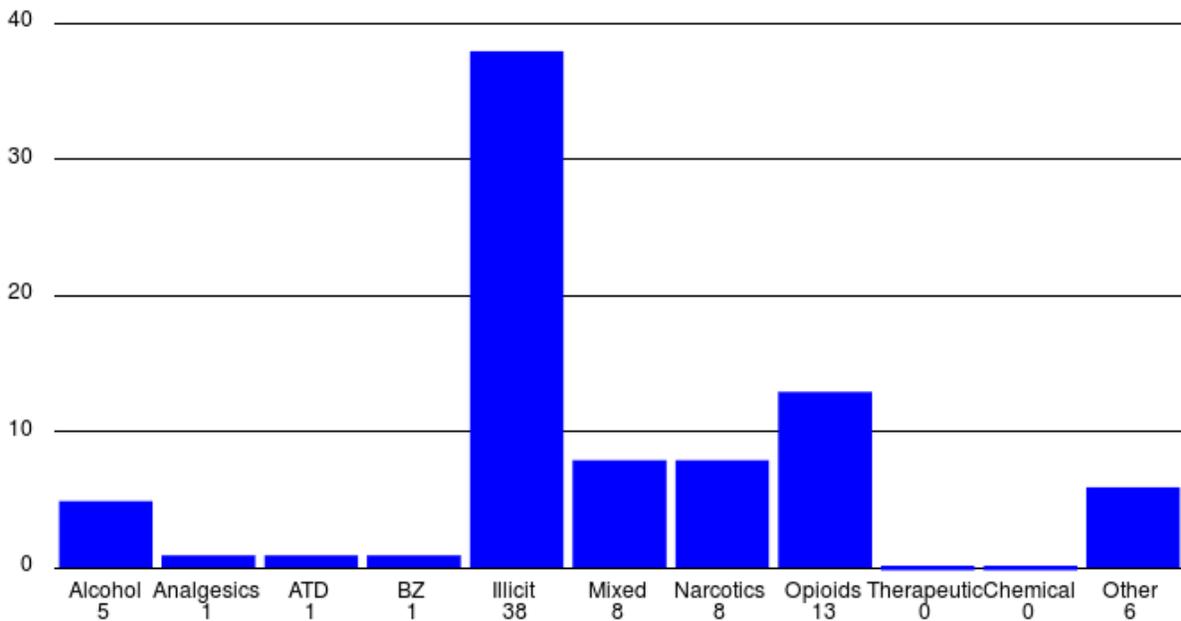
Accidental Deaths by Type



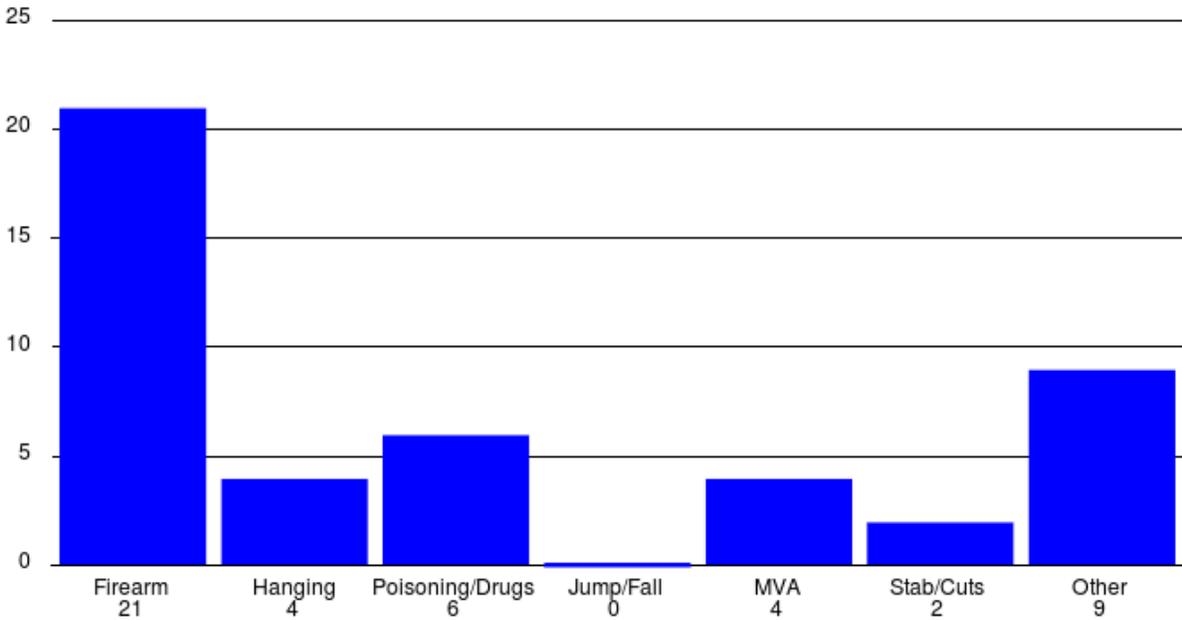
Accidental Deaths - Motor Vehicle Crashes



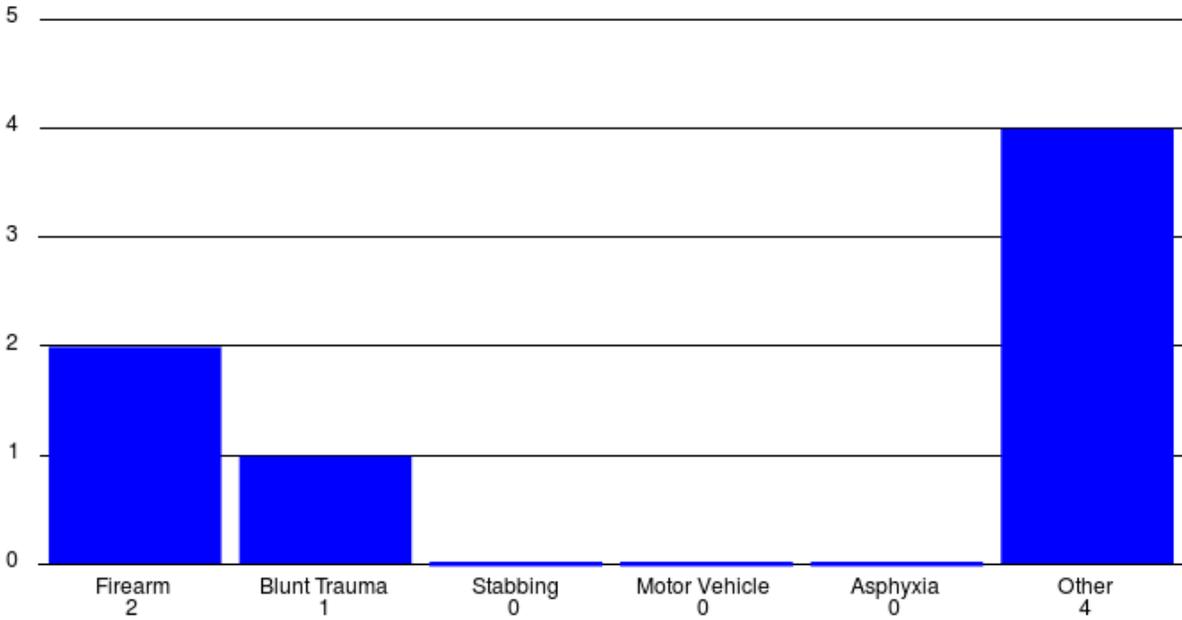
Drugs Contributing to Cause of Death



Suicide by Means



Homicide Deaths



Deaths by Age Group

