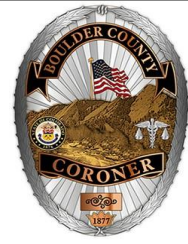


2023



Annual Report

Boulder County Coroner's Office

Introduction

The
Coroner's
Role

Jurisdiction

Data

Summary



Introduction

The Mission

Our mission is to honor and serve those who have gone before us, their families, and the broader community by providing compassionate and independent death investigations based on cutting-edge forensic science.

The Coroner's Role

The Boulder County Coroner's Office (BCCO) is created by the Colorado Constitution and its statutory responsibility is outlined in the Colorado Revised Statutes §30-10-601 through 624. The primary role of the Boulder County Coroner's Office (BCCO) is to conduct thorough and independent

investigations to determine the cause and manner of deaths falling under its jurisdiction within Boulder County. The cause of death refers to the underlying disease or injury that initiates the lethal chain of events however brief or prolonged. The manner of death is a classification of death based on the circumstances surrounding a particular cause of death and how that cause came into play.

Jurisdiction

Deaths reported to the coroner are handled in one of three ways:

Jurisdiction Declined - If the death is due to a natural disease and there is a treating physician, the physician in attendance is required by law to certify the death, therefore, the coroner will decline jurisdiction.

Jurisdiction Accepted - If the death meets the criteria in Colorado Revised Statute §30.10.606(1) the coroner accepts jurisdiction and determines what investigations and examinations they deem necessary to determine the cause and manner of death.

Jurisdiction Transferred - If the death meets the criteria of Colorado Revised Statute §30.10.606(1) however the initiating event causing the death occurred in another county, the coroner may transfer jurisdiction of the death to the originating county.

In 2023, Boulder County had a total of 2,439 deaths. Of these deaths, 2,079 were reported to BCCO. Of the 2,079 deaths, 85 were transferred back to the county where the initiating event occurred, 1,601 were determined to be natural and did not meet coroner jurisdiction requirements.

The BCCO contracted with 2 outside counties to provide autopsy services on 62 deaths.

All Boulder County Deaths	2,439
Reported to the BCCO	2,079
Jurisdiction Declined	1,601
Jurisdiction Accepted by the BCCO	393
Jurisdiction Transferred	85
Non-Boulder County Autopsies	62

Manner of Death Definitions

The deaths identified in this report are organized in five main categories; Natural, Accident, Homicide, Suicide, and Undetermined. Listed below are each of these categories and their definition.

Natural: Deaths determined to be caused by disease attributable to known or unknown cause, non-traumatic, and not a result of act or omission of another.

Accident: Deaths from an unforeseen event, misfortune, loss, act, or omission causing death.

Suicide: Deaths as the result of an intentional, self-inflicted act intended to commit self-harm or cause death to oneself.

Homicide: Deaths caused by the hands of another, other than by accident. The intent to cause death is not required for classification as Homicide and deaths classified as Homicide do not indicate or imply criminal intent was determined.

Undetermined: Death where it's unclear whether the cause was natural, accidental, a result of suicide, or homicide. Despite exhaustive examination, testing, and thorough investigation, determining one specific manner of death may not be more convincing than the others.

Examinations

The BCCO conducts examinations as needed or as required by law to establish the cause and manner of death. It is important to note that not all deaths require an examination to determine cause and manner of death.

Autopsy examination is a highly specialized surgical procedure which includes both an external and internal examination of the body.

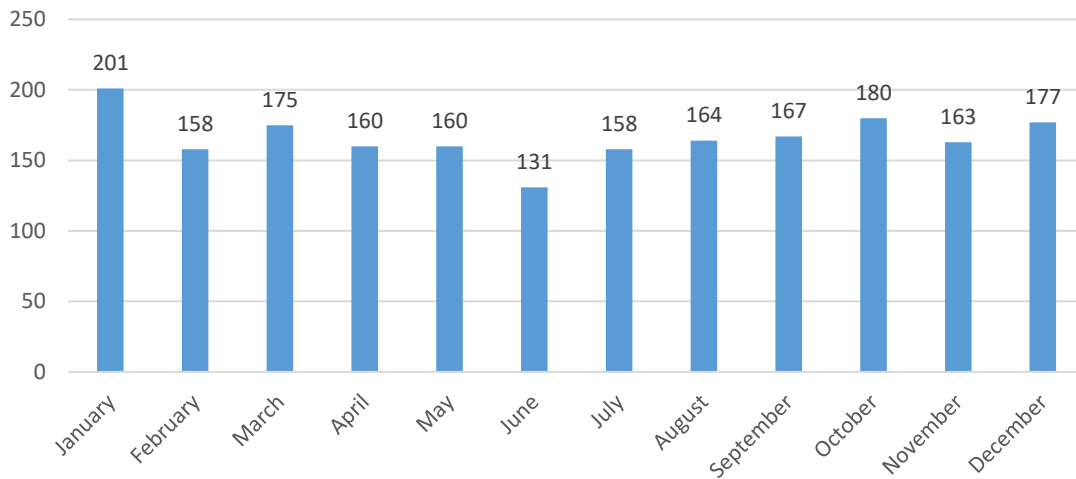
External examination is less invasive and is limited to only the external surfaces of the body.

In 2023, the BCCO conducted 221 autopsies and 49 external examinations. 123 of the 393 accepted jurisdiction cases did not require an examination.

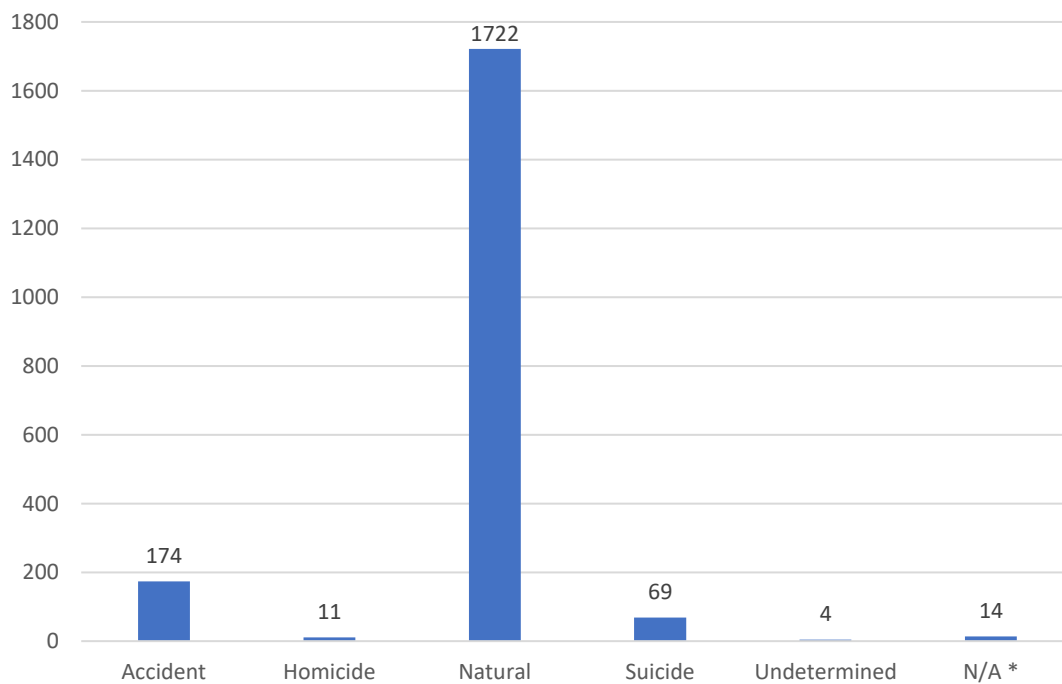
Overall Caseload

In 2023, a total of 2,079 deaths were reported and reviewed by the BCCO to determine jurisdiction. Of the 2,079 deaths, the BCCO performed forensic investigations into 524 deaths. Jurisdiction was accepted in 393 deaths.

Deaths Reported by Month



Number of Deaths by Manner

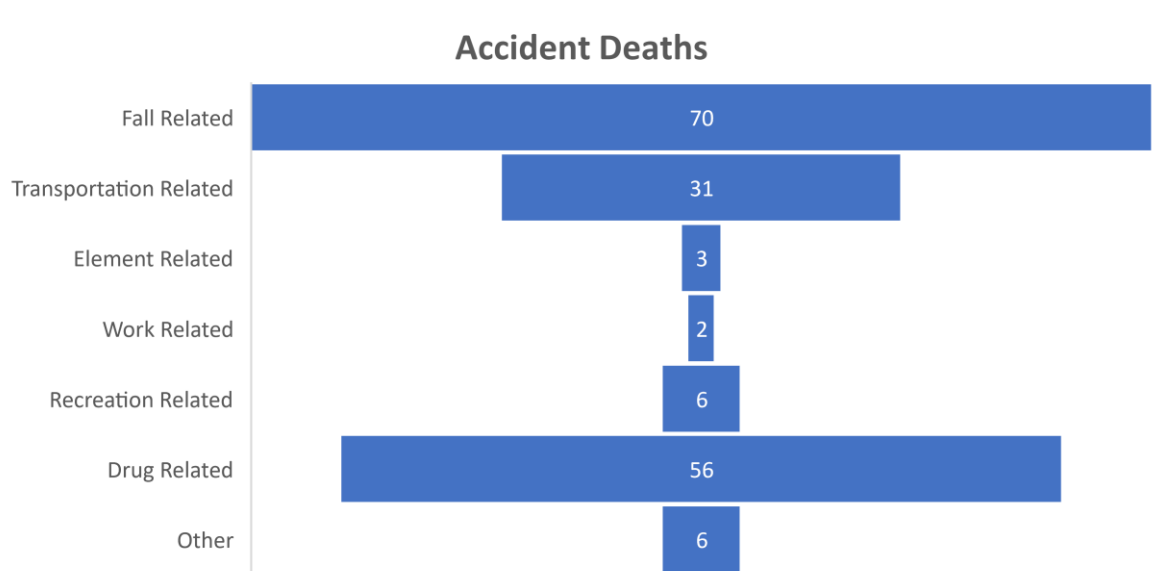


*N/A cases are fetal demise or non-human remains cases.

Accident Deaths

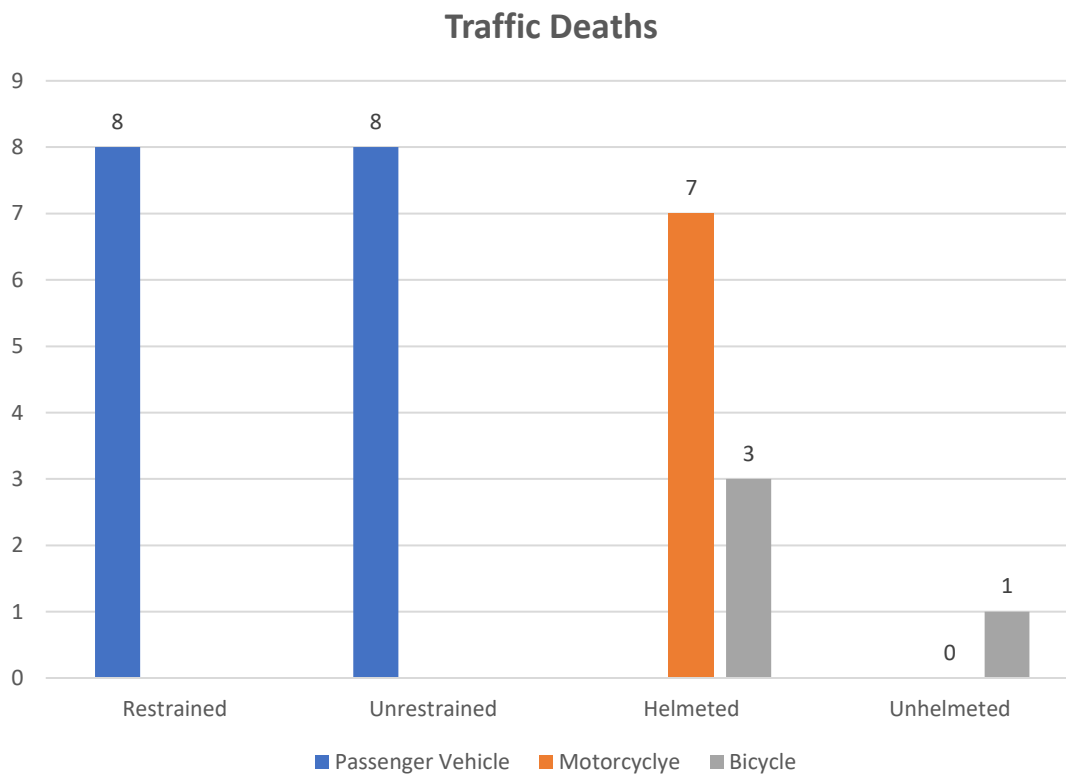
In 2023, the BCCO investigated a total of 174 accidental death cases. The cause(s) of death were as follows:

- 70 Fall related deaths
- 31 Transportation related deaths
- 3 Elemental related deaths (hypothermia)
- 2 Work related deaths
- 6 Recreation related deaths
- 56 Drug related deaths
- 6 Other (choking, asphyxia, home drowning)



Traffic Deaths

- In 2023, there were a total of 31 transportation related deaths.
- 4 of the 31 transportation deaths were pedestrians.
- 16 of the 31 transportation deaths involved passenger vehicles:
 - 14 were reported to be a driver
 - 7 were restrained
 - 2 were reported to be a front seat passenger
 - 1 was restrained
- 7 of the 31 transportation deaths involved motorcycles.
 - 7 were reported to be a driver
 - 7 were wearing helmets
- 4 of the 31 transportation deaths involved bicycles
 - 3 were wearing helmets

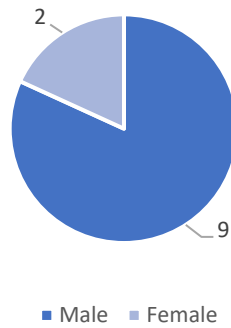


Homicide Deaths

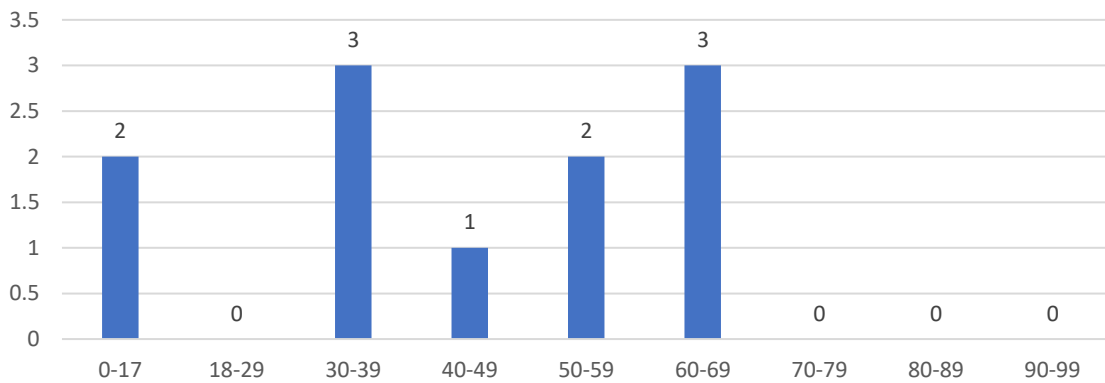
In 2023, the BCCO investigated a total of 11 homicide death cases. Of the cases 9 were male and 2 were female. The cause(s) of death were as follows:

- 6 Gunshot wounds
- 2 Blunt force injuries
- 1 Strangulation
- 2 Sharp force injuries

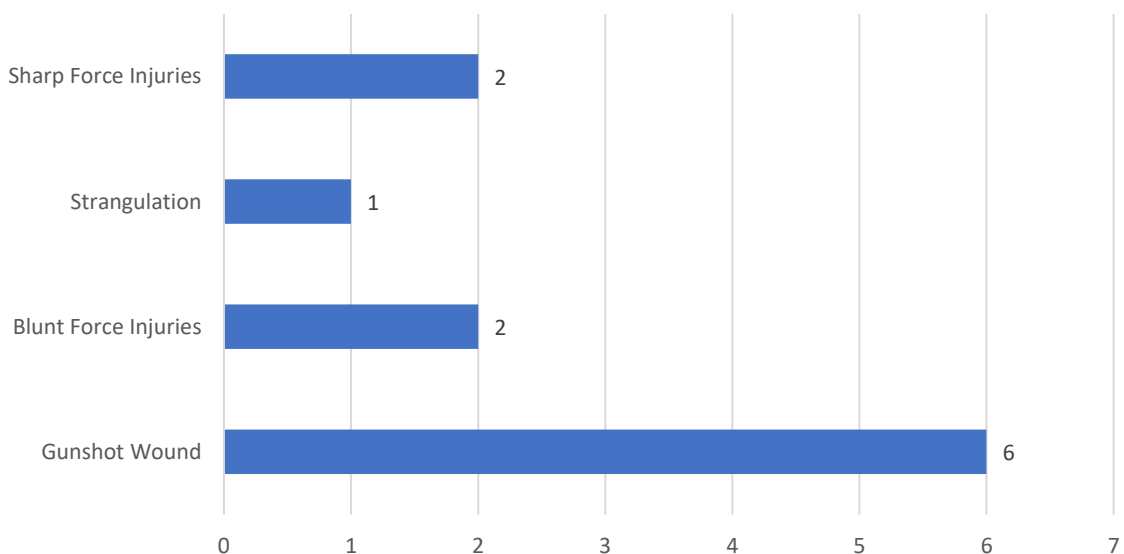
Homicide By Gender



Homicide By Age



Homicide Deaths

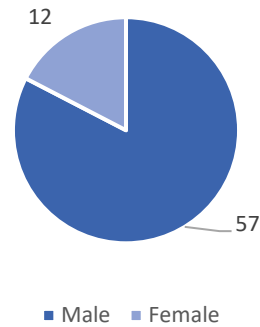


Suicide Deaths

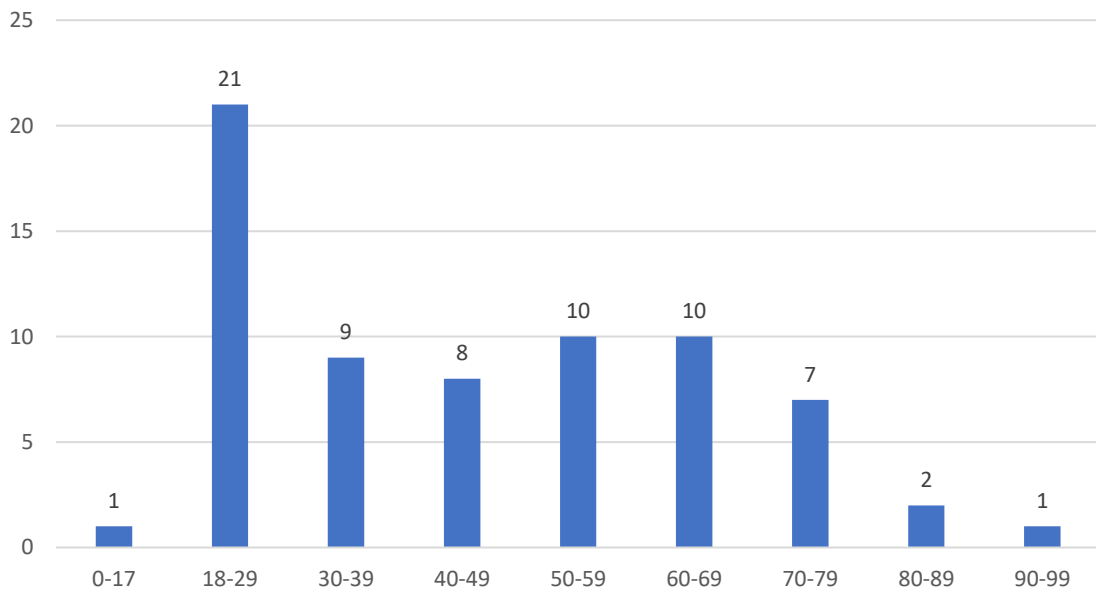
In 2023, the BCCO investigated a total of 69 suicide death cases. Of the cases 57 were male and 12 were female. The causes of death were as follows:

- 28 Gunshot wounds
- 20 Hanging
- 11 Overdose
- 6 Sharp force wounds
- 3 Asphyxiation
- 1 Drowning

Suicide By Gender



Suicide Death by Age



If you or someone you know is in crisis, dial 988 - help is available 24/7.

Drug Deaths

In 2023, the BCCO investigated a total of 68 deaths where the cause of death was a drug intoxication.

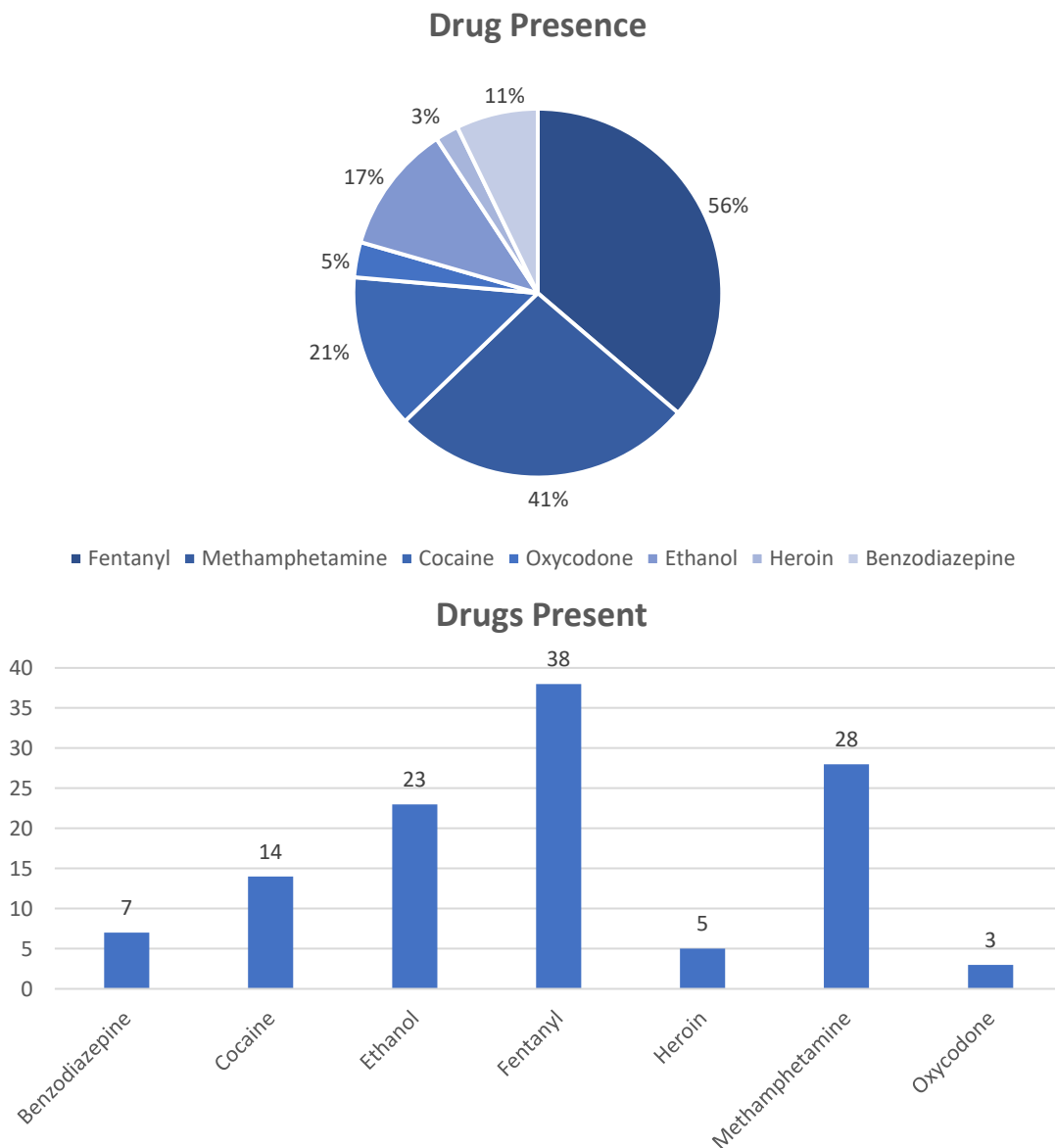
56 of these deaths were classified as accident, 11 were classified as suicide and 1 was classified as undetermined.

The 3 most common drugs found in these deaths were:

Fentanyl - 56% of drug intoxication deaths (38 of 68).

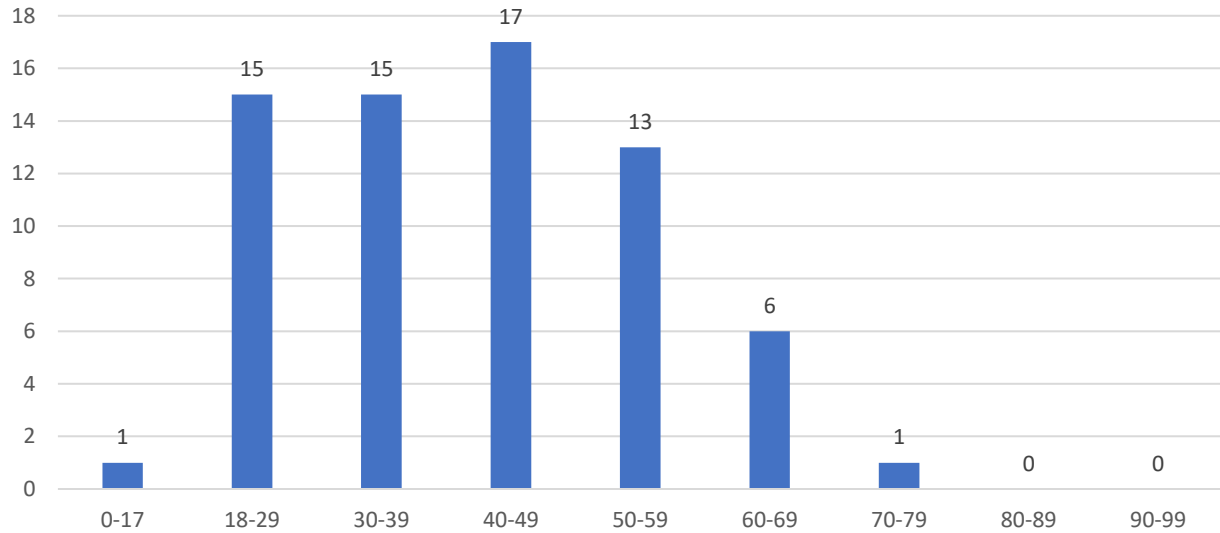
Methamphetamine - 41% of drug intoxication deaths (28 of 68).

Ethanol - 34% of drug intoxication deaths (23 of 68).

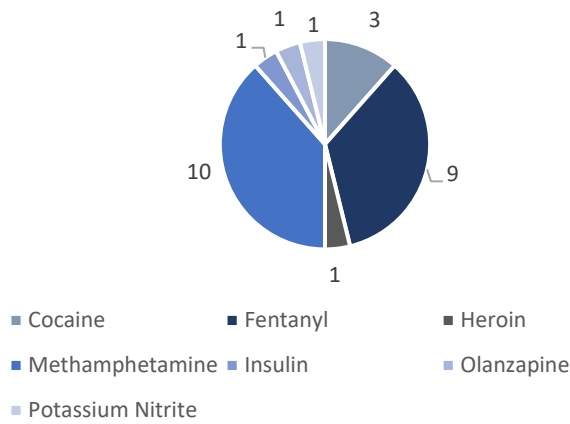


Drug Deaths (continued)

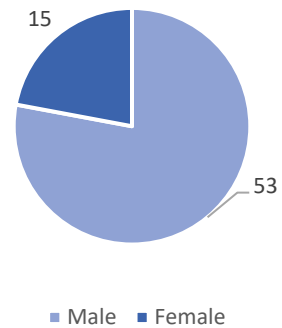
Drug Deaths By Age



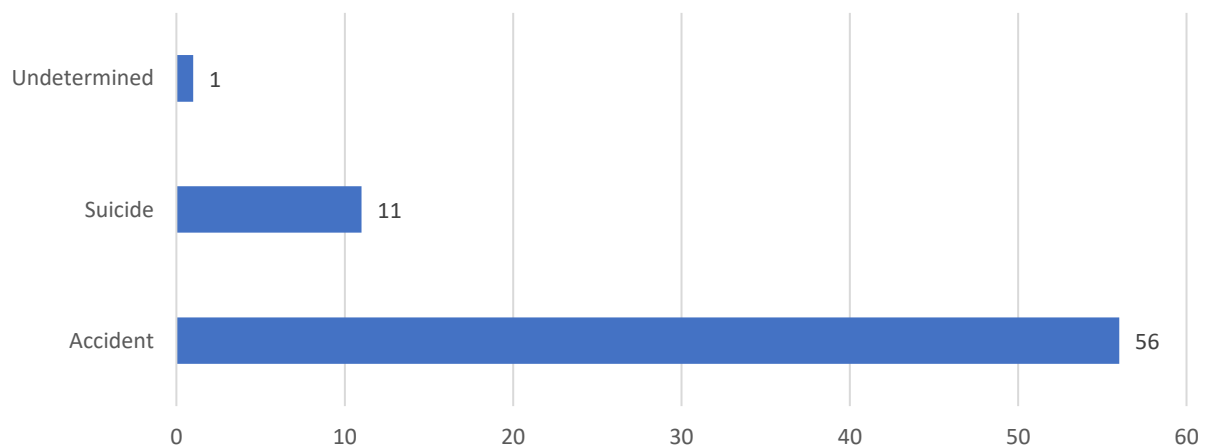
Single Drug Intoxication Occurrence



Drug Deaths By Gender

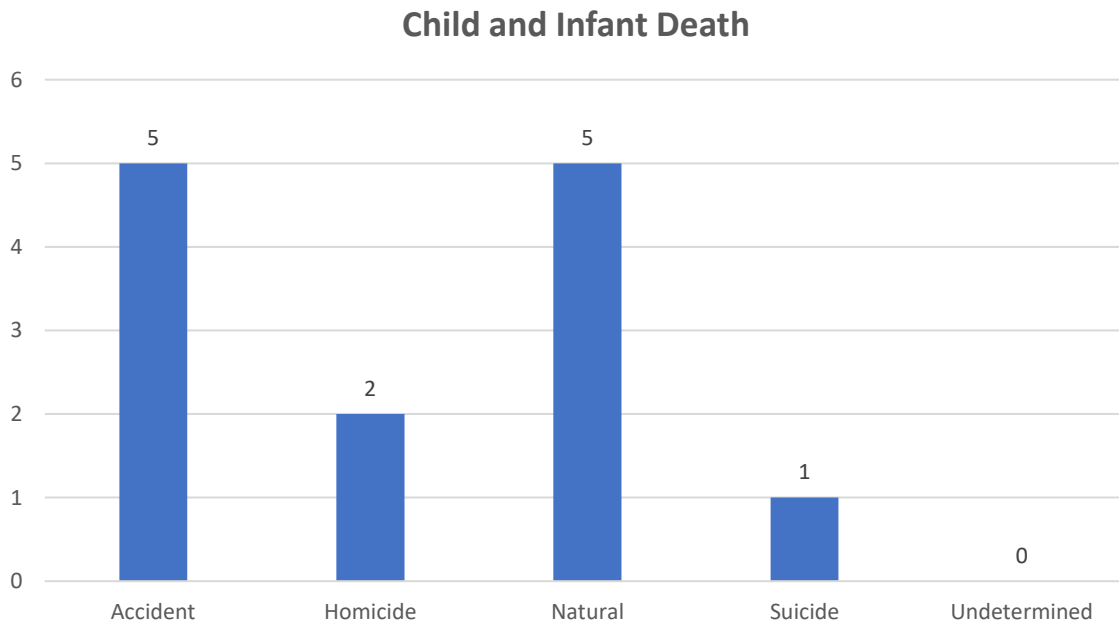


Drug Deaths by Manner



Child and Infant Deaths

In 2023, the BCCO investigated a total of 13 child deaths (up to 17 years of age).



3 of these deaths were infants less than 12 months old. The manner of death for these 3 infants are as follows:

- 1 natural
- 1 homicide
- 1 accident

Family Assistance

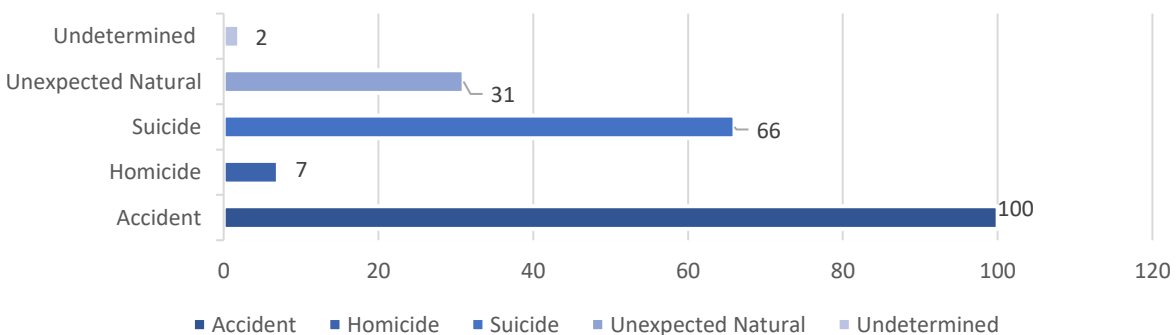
The Family Assistance Unit and Family Assistance Coordinator position was funded in 2022. Now in its second year of inception, the Family Assistance Unit continues to build upon its foundation and successfully reached many goals that continue to propel the unit forward.

The mission of the Family Assistance Division of the Boulder County Coroner's Office is to provide assistance to the families, relatives, and friends of those affected by a sudden or unexpected death. The division offers assistance by explaining the role of the coroner's office and by helping individuals find resources for any identified needs. The core values of the division are serving with care, communication, and dedication for as long as needed.

The Family Assistance Unit provides resources and support to families, relatives, and friends of the deceased within Boulder County whose loved ones passing falls under a suspected accident, suspected suicide, suspected homicide, and unexpected natural deaths.

In 2023, the Family Assistance Unit served a total of 259 individuals, 47% of those individuals accepted resources, and 38% of those individuals requested additional follow-up. There was a total of 206 cases that met criteria for Family Assistance involvement. In 2023 the Family Assistance Unit also managed a total of 13 cases that were referred to HHS or the PA for burial and cremation.

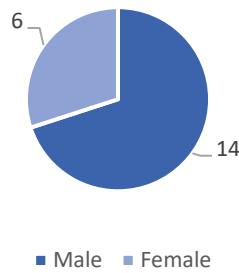
Cases That Met Criteria For Family Assistance



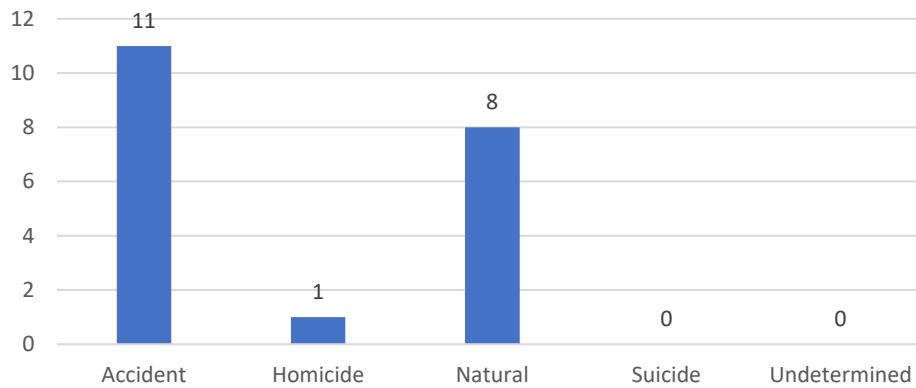
Unhoused Deaths

In 2023, the BCCO investigated a total of 20 unhoused deaths. Of the total, 14 were male and 6 were female.

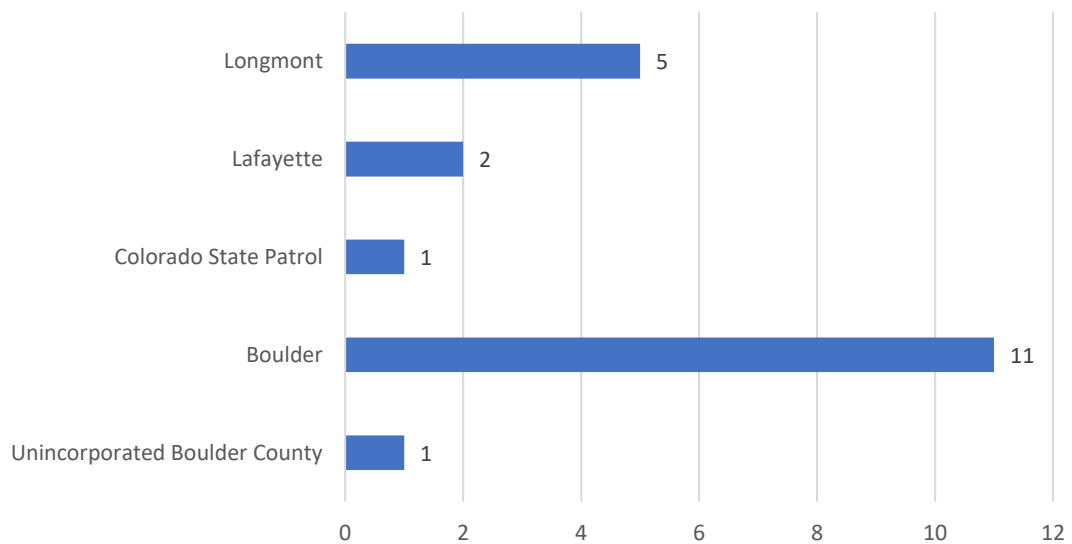
Unhoused By Gender



Unhoused by Manner



Unhoused by Location



Unidentified Decedents

According to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), at any given time up to 100,000 persons may be reported missing in the United States. Federal, state and local medicolegal death investigators are constantly working to provide names to these individuals nationwide. The BCCO currently has 5 active unidentified decedent cases.

Unidentified Black Male

Discovered: October 10, 1993

NamUs Case Number: UP516

Ancestry: African Descent



Approximate Age: 25-35 **Height:** 5'7" **Weight:** 165-175 lbs

Eye Color: Brown **Hair:** Short curly black hair with bi-frontal balding.

Dental: Teeth in excellent repair with no dental work.

Scars/Tattoos: On left eyebrow, obliquely oriented, well-healed 17mm scar.

Clothing: Black socks; Short black sweatpants, brand name "Pro Spirit," overlaying a pair of long white sweatpants, brand name "Jerzees"; a white windbreaker-type shell with a hood and blue trimmed with zippers halfway up front, brand name "Windcrest"; ankle length black hiking-type boots; and a blue mesh baseball cap with a New York Mets logo. Napkin with the logo "Dujour's Casual Café" was also found in his pocket.

Circumstances: A well-nourished male of African descent was found near the base of the second Flatiron in Boulder, CO. Forensic Anthropology and Dentistry suggest he might have been a recent immigrant to America from North Africa. No obvious injury was found. An autopsy did not reveal the cause of death. Some clothing and thick-rimmed red prescription glasses.

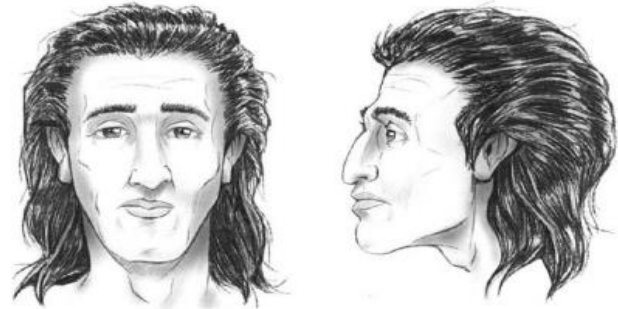
Unidentified Caucasian Male

Discovered: November 21, 1993

NamUs Case Number: UP517

Ancestry: Caucasian

Approximate Age: 25-32 **Height:** 5'



Facial Approximation

Eye Color: Unknown **Hair:** Shoulder-length coarse straight dark blond to light brown hair

Dental: Teeth in extremely poor repair with dental work

Scars/Tattoos: None

Clothing: T-shirt, blue denim jeans, white socks, and white athletic-type shoes

Circumstances: The remains of a mostly skeletonized Caucasian male were found on the North Slope of Gregory Canyon in Boulder County, CO. An autopsy did not reveal a cause of death, but the man may have been suffering from chronic iron deficiency anemia.



Unidentified Caucasian or Mixed-Race Male

Discovered: October 2, 2017

NamUs Case Number: UP17188

Ancestry: Indeterminate

Approximate Age: 30-60 **Height:** Unknown **Weight:** Unknown

Eye Color: Unknown **Hair:** Unknown

Dental: Teeth in fair repair with dental work and antemortem extractions

Scars/Tattoos: Unknown

Clothing: None found with remains

Circumstances: The human skull of a male was found in the area of Mudd Lake in Boulder County, CO. An anthropological examination did not reveal a cause of death. The human mandible of a male was later found in the same general area. The mandible and skull were compared to each other and were found to be from the same decedent.

The interpretation from the anthropological report states the following:
"Biological profile: likely male, indeterminate ancestry, broadly estimated at 30-60 years, indeterminate stature. Healed antemortem fractures are noted (left nasal bone, left maxillary frontal process)."



Unidentified Caucasian Male

Discovered: August 21, 1971

NamUs Case Number: UP61120

Ancestry: Caucasian

Approximate Age: 25 **Height:** 5'11" **Weight:** 175 lbs



Antemortem photo, believed to be the decedent.

Eye Color: Brown **Hair:** Shoulder-length brown/black hair

Dental: Right upper central incisor was chipped

Scars/Tattoos: No identifying marks

Clothing: "Male" brand bell-bottom jeans, blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt, white Keds, gray crew socks with a red stripe on top, "Shapely" 2-button cuff L 16-16 ½

Circumstances: A Caucasian male was found by a hiker on the north rim of Blue Mesa, approximately half a mile north of the shelter house in Bluebell Canyon, in Chautauqua Park, Boulder, CO. It was estimated that the decedent had been dead for three to five days. The cause and manner of death are unknown. He may have been associated with Seabrook, TX. All identification attempts at the time were unsuccessful. He was buried in Green Mountain Cemetery on October 1, 1971.

Unidentified Caucasian Male

No photo available

Discovered: June 6, 1971

NamUs Case Number: UP61119

Ancestry: Caucasian

Approximate Age: 25 **Height:** 5'8" **Weight:** 170-175 lbs

Eye Color: Brown **Hair:** Neck/shoulder-length brown hair. Brown beard and mustache.

Dental: Both upper central incisors were chipped; it is possible this happened postmortem

Scars/Tattoos: ½"-1" circular scar on the left forearm

Clothing: Levi jeans, leather belt, one desert boot

Circumstances: A Caucasian male was found in Boulder Creek, near the 28th Street bridge, in Boulder, CO. It was estimated that the decedent had been dead for two to three days and had accidentally drowned. All identification attempts at the time were unsuccessful. He was buried in Green Mountain Cemetery on July 23, 1971.

Cornea and Eye Tissue Donation

In 2023, the BCCO authorized and facilitated 111 donors for cornea and eye tissue procurement.

49 recipients in 8 states and at least 5 countries can see today through the gift of donation!

In addition, 13 eye tissue referrals were used for research and training to help advance knowledge and skills surrounding cornea transplant.

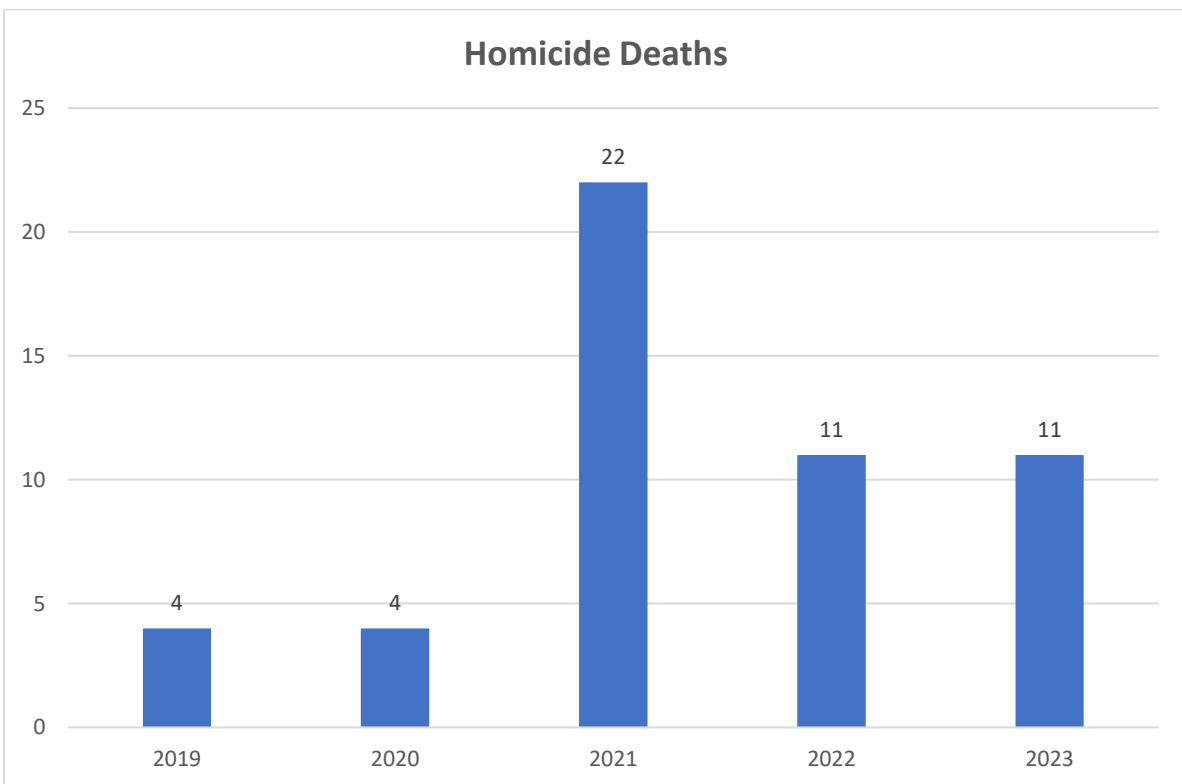
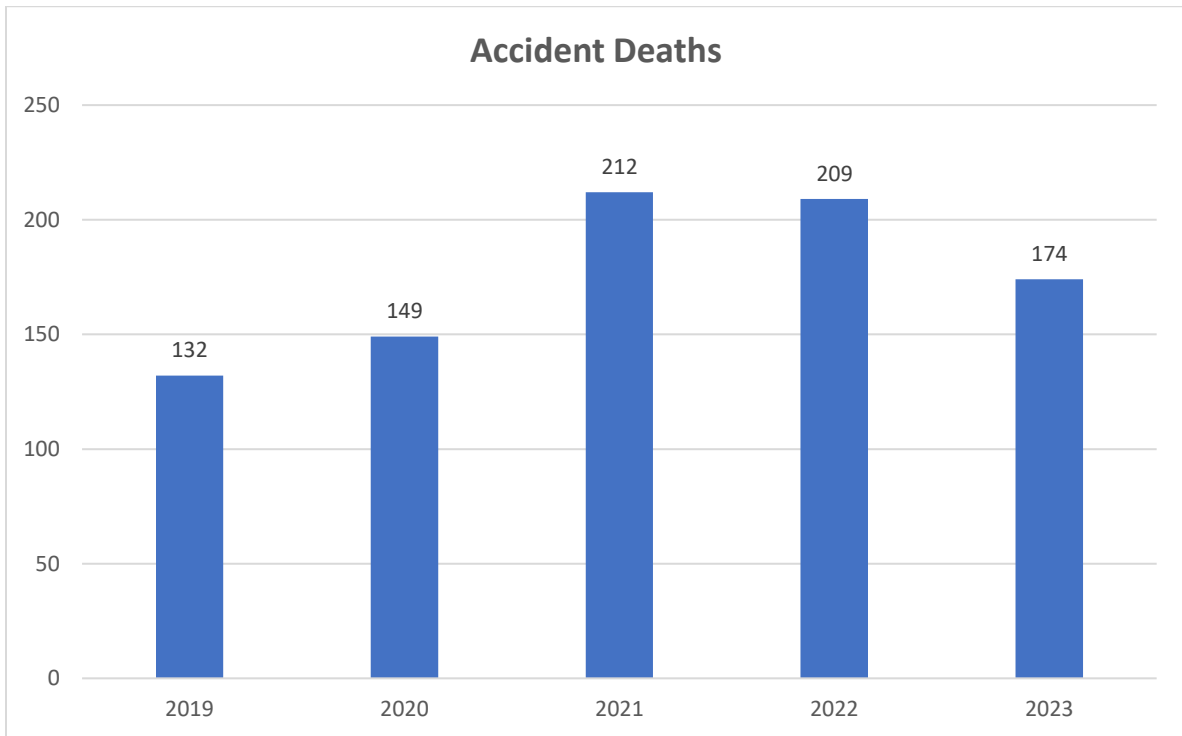
Organ and Tissue Donation

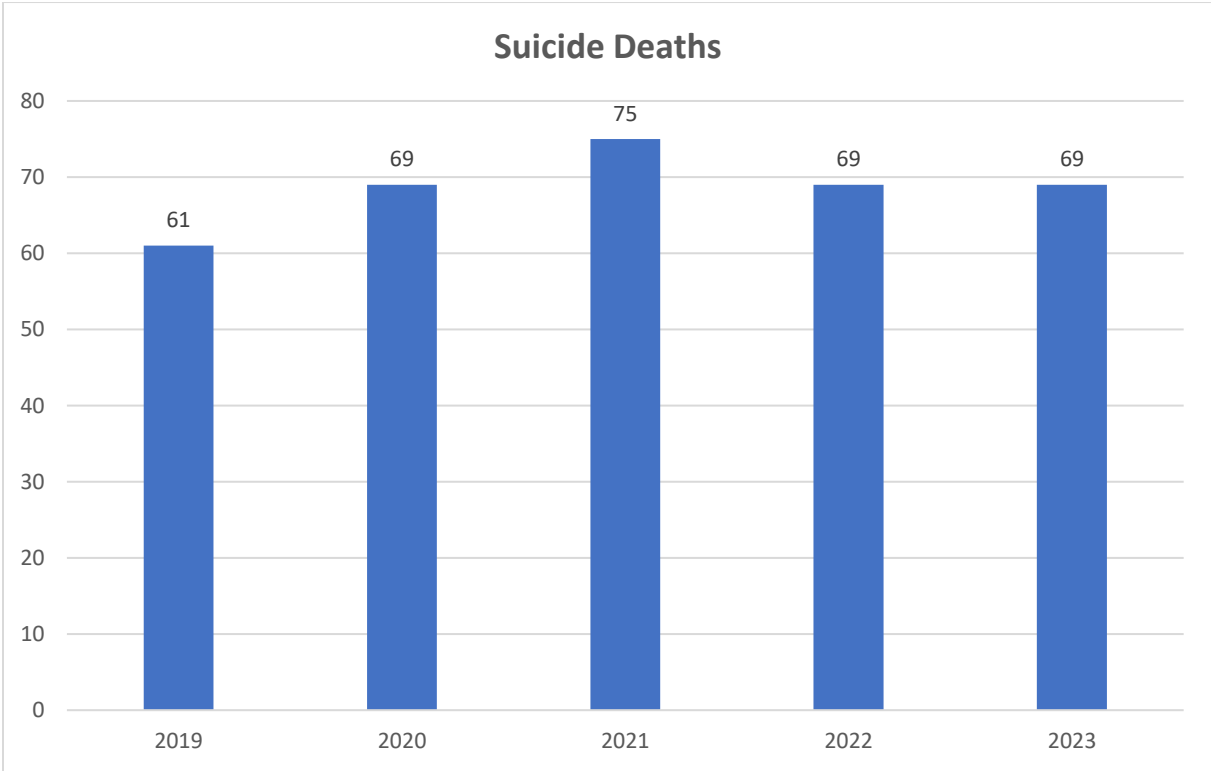
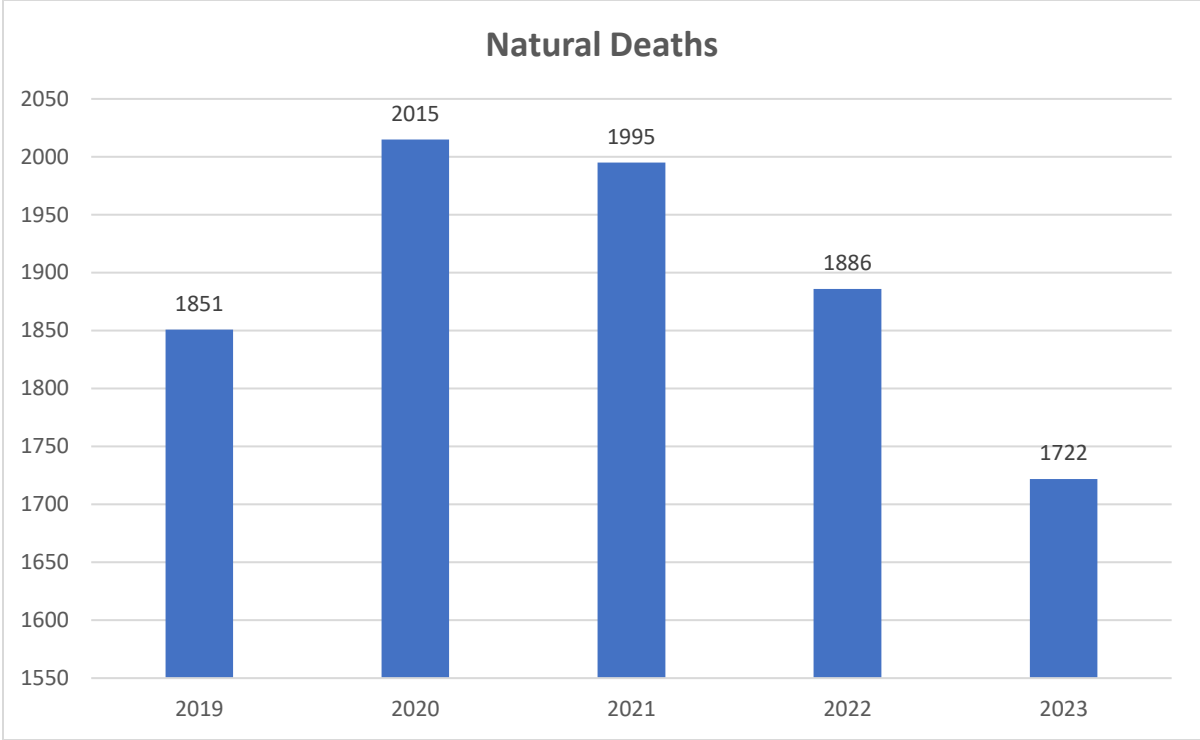
In 2023, the BCCO authorized and facilitated 62 donors for organ and tissue procurement.

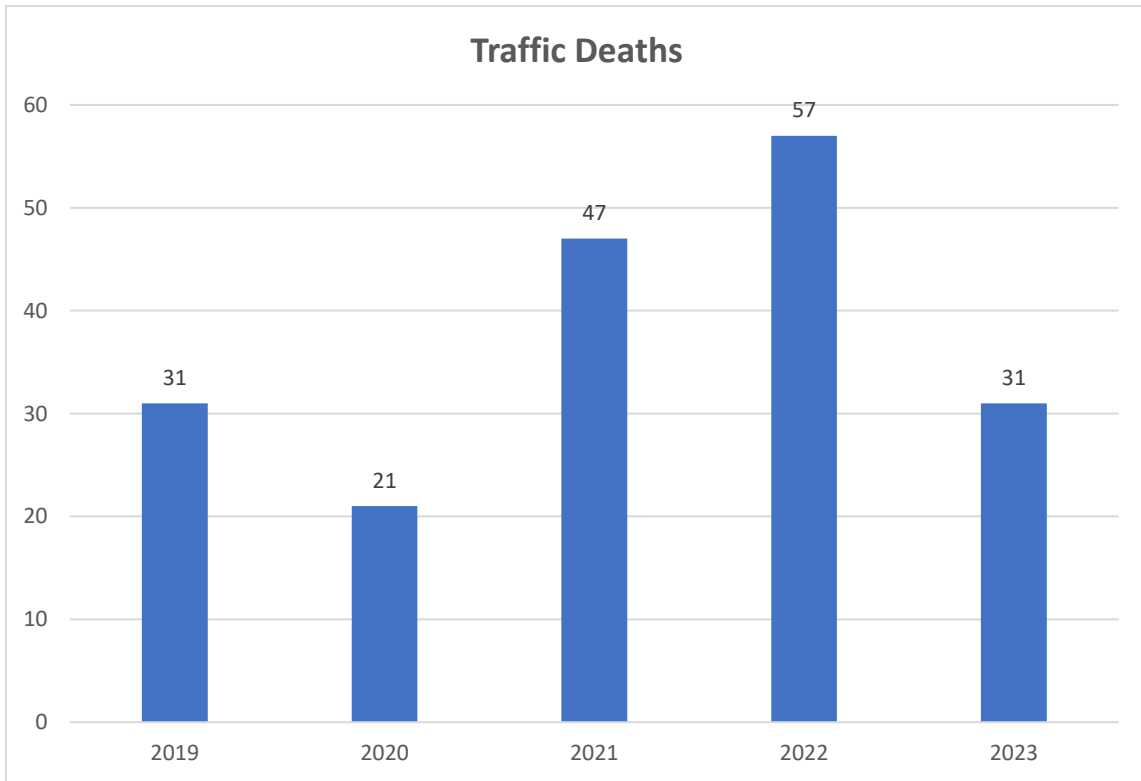
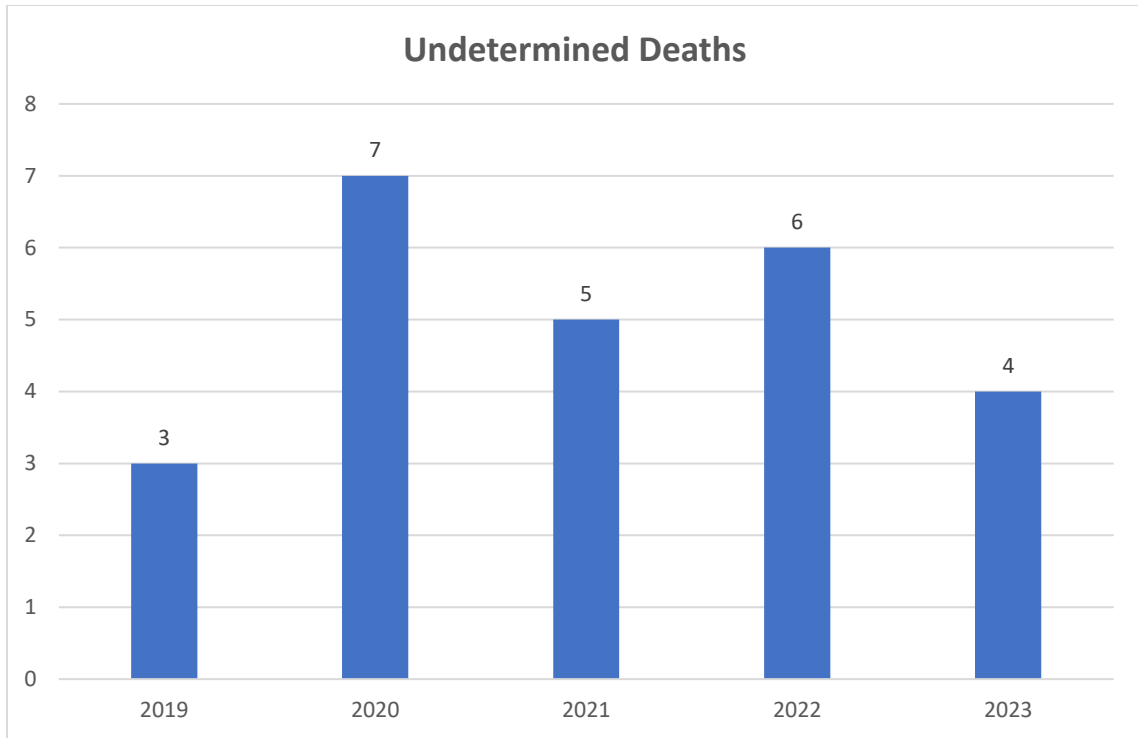
Donor Alliance reported that because of the BCCO's participation, 27 lives were saved through organ donation and approximately 3,825 lives were saved and/or healed from tissue donation.



5 Year Trends







ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Total Deaths Reported	2,263	2,079
Coroner Cases (Jurisdiction Accepted)	399	393
Declined Jurisdiction (Jurisdiction Declined)	1,760	1,601
Transfer Cases (Jurisdiction Transferred)	104	85
Total Forensic Investigations	478	524
Total Scene Responses	431	430
Bodies Transported	315	270
Examinations		
Autopsy Examinations	258	221
External Examinations	57	49
Autopsies for Outside Counties	69	62
No Examination (Jurisdiction Accepted)	84	123
Exhumations	0	0
Deaths by Manner		
Accident	209	174
Homicide	11	11
Natural	1,886	1,722
Suicide	69	69
Undetermined	6	4
Fetal / Non-human Remains	13	14
Gift of Donation		
Organs / Tissue Donations	70	62
Eye Bank / Cornea Recovery	112	111
Unidentified Decedents		
Unidentified	5	5