

Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons by the Office of the Boulder County Coroner



2025 Annual Drug Report

January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025



The Office of the Boulder County Coroner

2025 Annual Drug Report

This annual drug report provides a comprehensive overview of drug-related findings observed in death investigations conducted during 2025. The data presented highlights trends in substance use, identifies emerging drug threats, and helps inform public health and public safety efforts within Boulder County.

By analyzing toxicology results, manner of death classifications, and substance combinations, this report aims to support evidence based decision making and promote cross-agency collaboration in addressing substance related harms within our jurisdiction.

According to the Colorado Department of Health and Environment Bureau of Vital Statistics 2,529 deaths in Boulder County from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025.

Of these 2,529 deaths, 2,257 were reported to the Office of the Boulder County Coroner (BCCO). The BCCO certified 330 of these deaths.

Of the 315 deaths certified by the BCCO, toxicology testing was performed on 196 individuals. Toxicology results determined that one or more of the drugs outlined below were present at the time of death in 150 decedents. The BCCO assessed whether the drug(s) identified were the cause of death or were present at the time of death without direct causal significance.

It is important to note that each death is a single case, while each time a drug is detected represents an occurrence. The vast majority of the 150 decedents with positive toxicology findings had more than one drug occurrence.

77 deaths were the result of at least 1 drug.





Boulder County GIS
 2045 13th St, Boulder CO 80302
 (303) 441-3958

Boulder County Municipalities

Municipalities

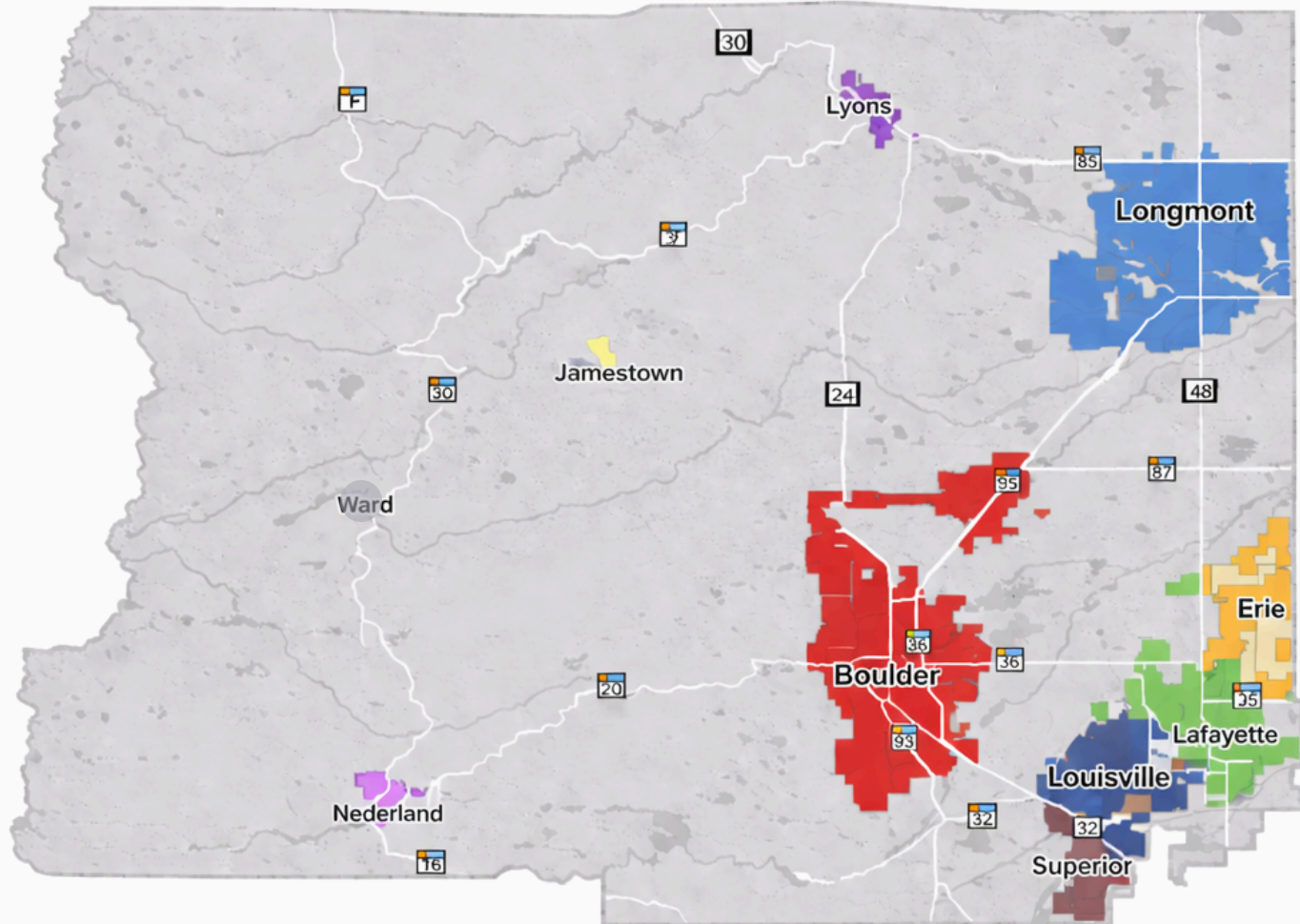
- Boulder
- Erie
- Jamestown
- Lafayette
- Longmont
- Louisville
- Lyons
- Nederland
- Superior
- Ward



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 Miles

5/23/2022

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For purposes of this report, a drug is classified as a cause of death only when, following a comprehensive review of investigative findings, autopsy examination, and toxicology results, a board certified forensic pathologist determines that the substance directly contributed to the death. In some cases, multiple substances may be identified as contributing factors and listed together as causes of death.

Toxicology testing may also identify substances that were present in the decedent's system at the time of death but were not determined by the forensic pathologist to have contributed to the fatal outcome.

These findings are reported as drug occurrences (presence) and should not be interpreted as drug-related deaths.

Accordingly, the number of times a drug is identified in toxicology results may exceed the number of deaths in which that drug was determined to be causative. This distinction is important for accurate interpretation of mortality trends and substance-related death data presented in this report.

Drugs Currently Monitored

<u>ALCOHOL</u>	<u>ANTI-DEPRESSANT</u>	<u>BENZODIAZEPINE</u>	<u>INHALANT</u>	<u>OPIOID</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>STIMULANT</u>
Ethanol	Aripiprazole	Alprazolam	Halogenated	Buprenorphine	Acetaminophen	Amphetamine
	Amitriptyline	Bromazolam	Helium	Codeine	Dextromethorphan	Cocaine
	Bupropion	Clonazepam	Nitrous Oxide	Fentanyl	Diphenhydramine	Methamphetamine
	Duloxetine	Diazepam		Heroin	Gabapentin	
	Fluoxetine	Midazolam		Hydrocodone	Ketamine	
	Mirtazapine	Nordiazepam		Hydromorphone	Mitragynine	
	Olanzapine	Oxazepam		Methadone	THC/Cannabinoids	
	Quetiapine	Temazepam		Morphine		
	Risperidone			Nitazines		
	Sertraline			Oxycodone		
	Trazadone			Oxymorphone		
	Venlafaxine			Tramadol		

*The list of currently monitored drugs is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect emerging trends.

Summary of Drug Occurrences in Decedents

Drugs Present in Body	Cause	Present	Total Occurrences
<u>ANTI-DEPRESSANTS</u>			
Aripiprazole	1	2	3
Amitriptyline	2	2	4
Bupropion	3	1	4
Duloxetine	0	1	1
Fluoxetine	0	3	3
Mirtazapine	0	0	0
Olanzapine	0	0	0
Quetiapine	1	1	2
Risperidone	0	0	0
Sertraline	2	4	6
Trazadone	3	1	4
Venlafaxine	1	1	2
<u>BENZODIAZEPINES</u>			
Alprazolam	2	1	3
Bromazolam	1	0	1
Clonazepam	1	2	3
Diazepam	0	4	4
Midazolam	0	0	0
Oxazepam	0	0	0
Temazepam	0	0	0
<u>ETHANOL</u>			
Alcohol	8	9	17
<u>INHALANTS</u>			
Halogenated Inhalants	0	0	0
Helium	0	0	0
Nitrous Oxide	0	0	0

Summary of Drug Occurrences in Decedents

(continued)

Drugs Present in Body	Cause	Present	Total Occurrences
OPIOIDS			
Buprenorphine	1	0	1
Codeine	2	0	2
Fentanyl	33	2	35
Heroin	2	0	2
Hydrocodone	0	0	0
Methadone	1	1	2
Morphine	4	2	6
Nitazines	0	0	0
Oxycodone	3	2	5
Oxymorphone	0	2	2
Tramadol	1	1	2
STIMULANTS			
Amphetamine	4	1	5
Cocaine	9	0	9
Methamphetamine	33	3	36
OTHER			
Acetaminophen	1	1	2
Diphenhydramine	1	1	2
Dextromethorphan	0	0	0
Gabapentin	5	3	8
Ketamine	1	2	3
Mitragynine (Kratom)	4	1	5
THC/Cannabinoids	0	24	24



The Office of the Boulder County Coroner

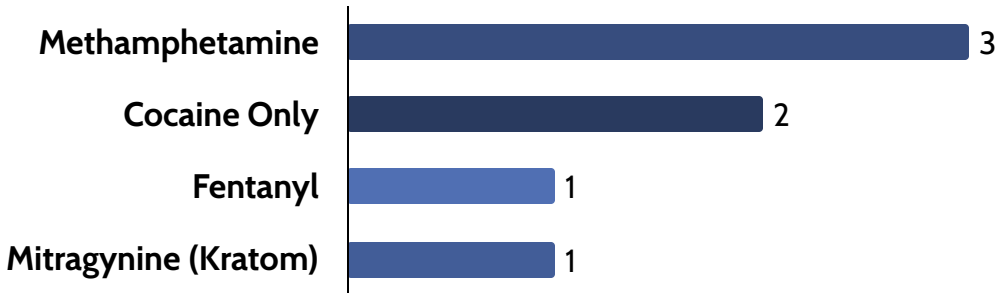
Drug Deaths

↑ 30.5%

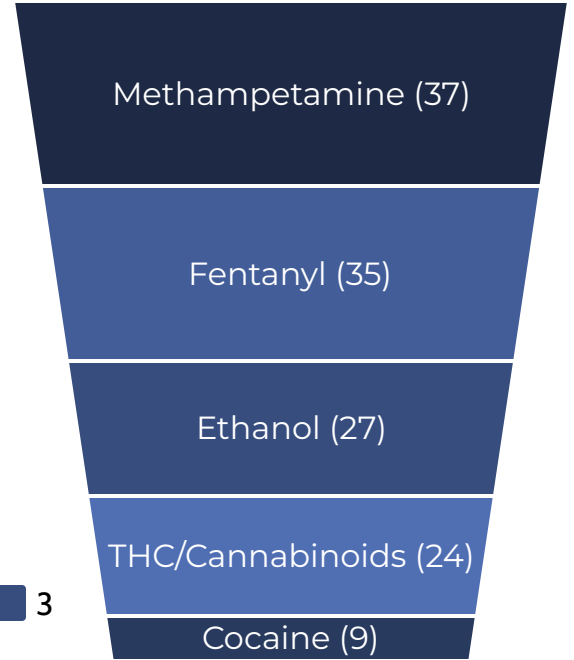
77 decedents deaths were the result of at least 1 drug.

In 2025, there were 77 drug-related deaths, compared to 59 in 2024.

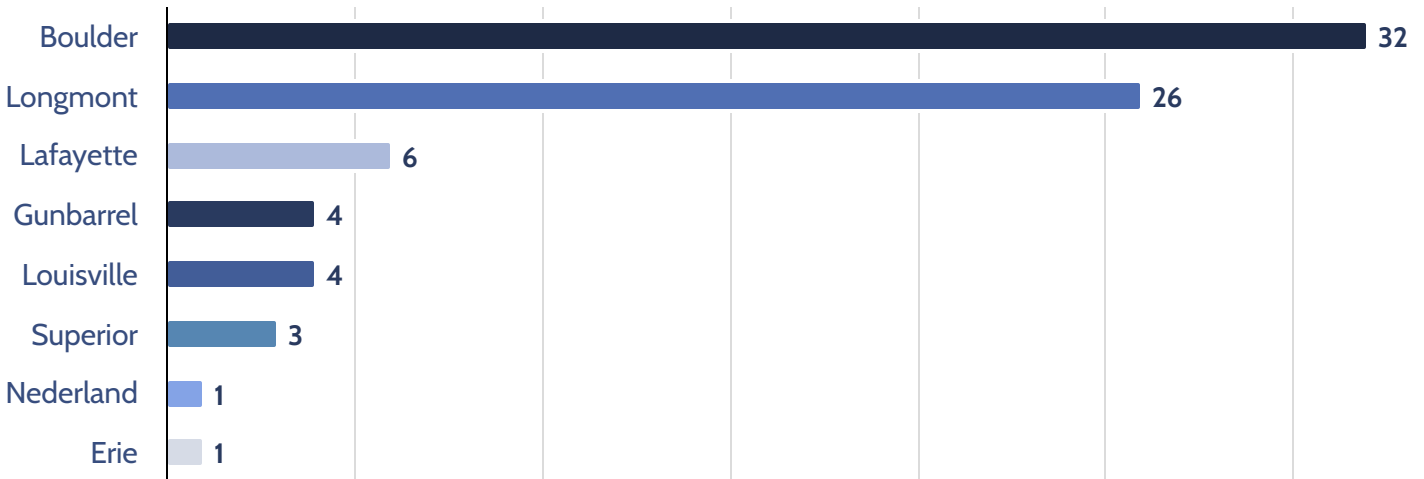
Single Drug Cause of Death



Most Common Drug Occurrences



Drug Deaths by City





The Office of the Boulder County Coroner

Drug Death Key Findings

Drug Deaths

73%
Accident

14%
Suicide

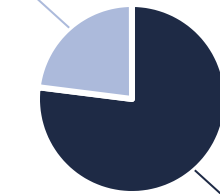


The average age of all drug deaths was:

47

The majority of drug deaths occurred between the ages of 40-59

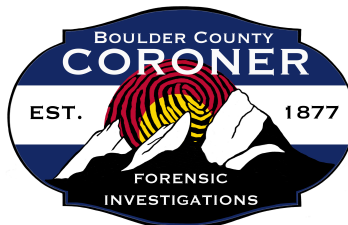
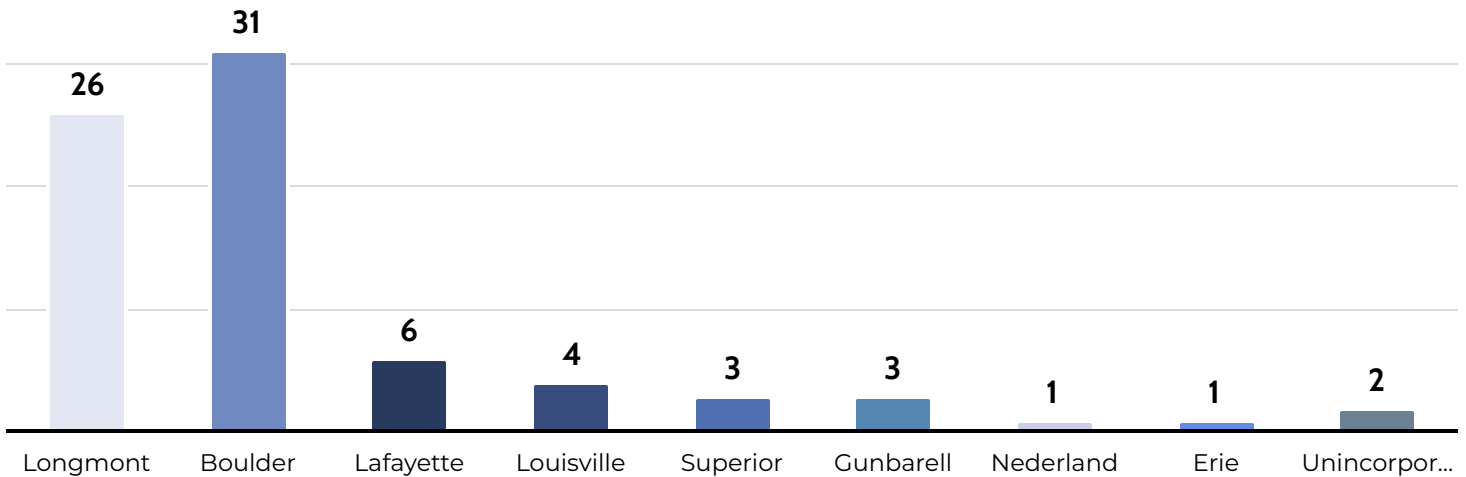
Female: 23%



Male: 77%

● Male ● Female

Drug Occurrences by Location



FENTANYL

Fentanyl was found in 35 toxicology tests performed on behalf of the BCCO. In 33 of the occurrences Fentanyl was identified to be the cause of death; in 2 incidents Fentanyl was merely present at the time of death.

2024-2025 Fentanyl Trends



Fentanyl Presence in Overall Drug Death

Up 42.9%



Fentanyl Related Death

Up 13.8%

2024-29
2025-33

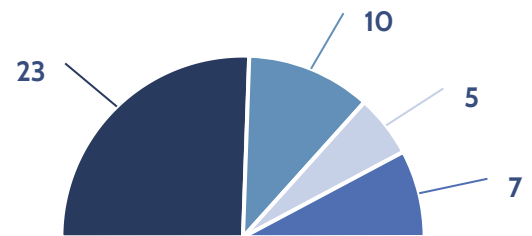
Polysubstance with Methamphetamine



Up 35.3%

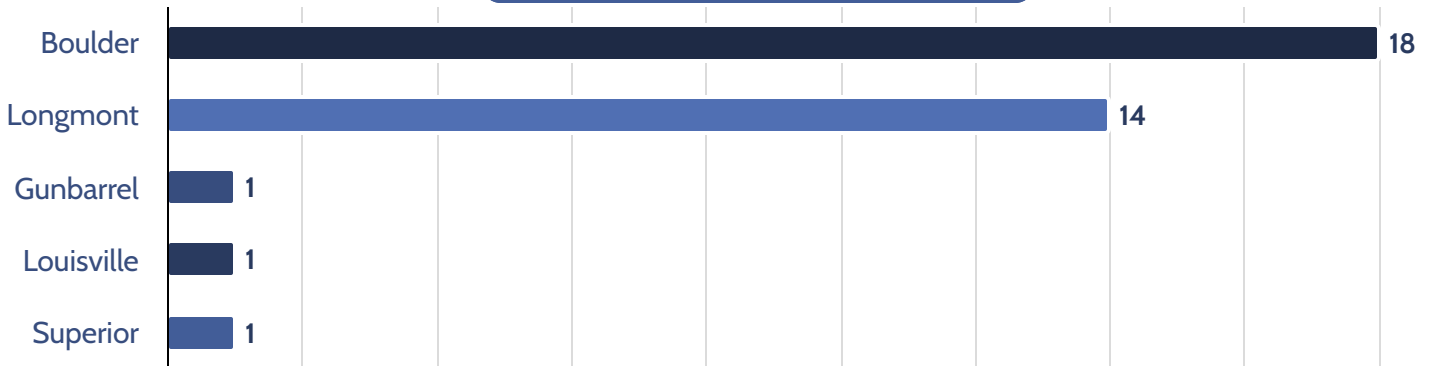
2024-17
2025-23

Drugs Commonly Present With Fentanyl

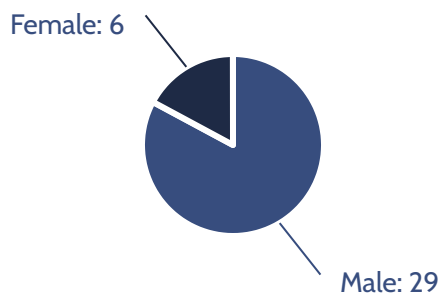


- Methamphetamine
- Marijuana
- Cocaine
- Alcohol

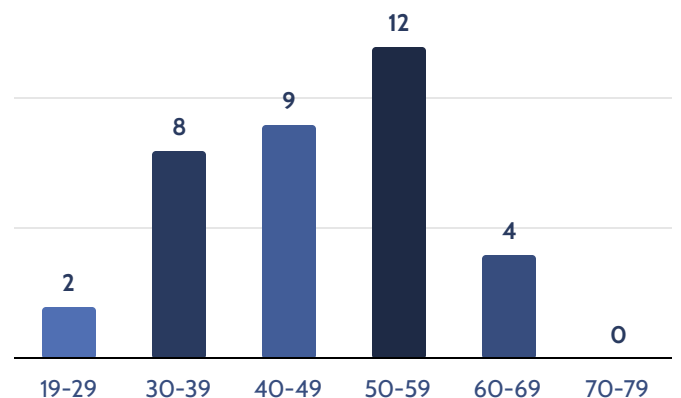
Fentanyl By Location



Fentanyl Death by Gender



Fentanyl Death by Age



METHAMPHETAMINE

In 2025, methamphetamine was found in 36 toxicology tests performed on behalf of the BCCO. In 33 of the occurrences Methamphetamine was identified to be the cause of death; in 3 incidents Methamphetamine was merely present at the time of death.

2024-2025 Methamphetamine Trends

Methamphetamine Presence
in Overall Drug Death



Up 36%

Methamphetamine Related Death



Up 5.8%

2024-34
2025-36

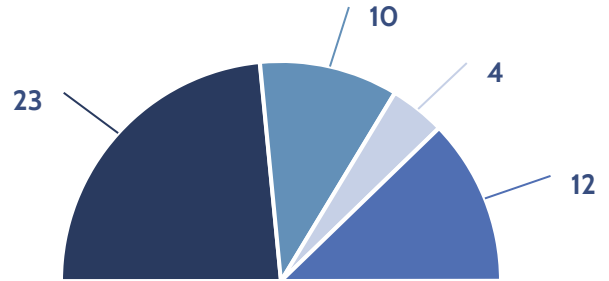
Polysubstance with Fentanyl



Up 35.3%

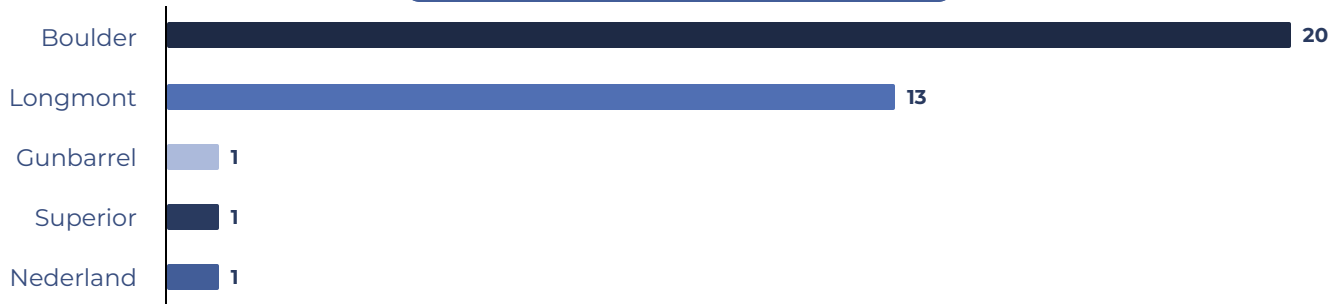
2024-17
2025-23

Drugs Commonly Present With Methamphetamine

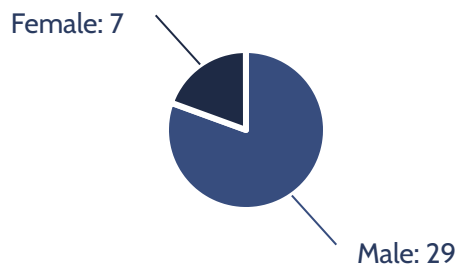


Fentanyl Marijuana
Cocaine Alcohol

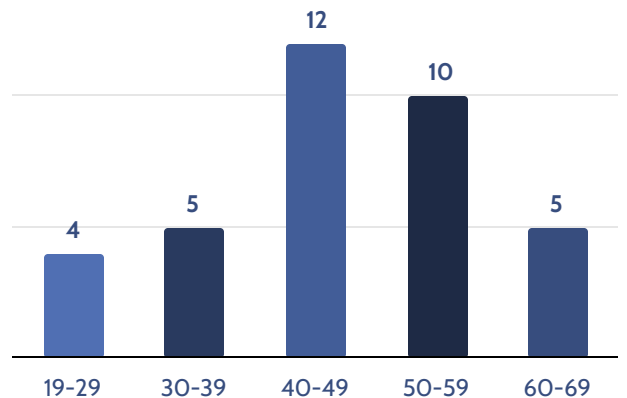
Methamphetamine by Location



Methamphetamine Death by Gender



Methamphetamine Death by Age



2024 vs 2025

Annual Comparison of Fentanyl and Methamphetamine Data

2024	Occurrence	Cause	Present
Methamphetamine	34	29	5
Fentanyl	29	27	2
Methamphetamine + Fentanyl	17	17	0

2025	Occurrence	Cause	Present
Methamphetamine	36	33	3
Fentanyl	35	33	2
Methamphetamine + Fentanyl	23	23	0

Drugs Identified as Cause of Death

20

20 of the currently monitored drugs were identified as playing a casual role in death.

7 additional drugs were identified as playing a casual role in death during the first half of the year:

7

Acetaminophen - analgesic
Ethylene Glycol - a toxic alcohol
Hydroxyzine - antihistamine
Mitragynine - Kratom
Topiramate - anticonvulsant
Zopiclone - sedative
Pseudoindoxyl / 7-Hydroxymitragynine

**A drug is currently added to the monitoring list if it is determined to have played a causal role in three or more deaths within a single reporting year.

ALCOHOL
ALPRAZOLAM
AMITRIPTYLINE
AMPHETAMINE
BUPROPRION
CLONAZEPAM
COCAINE
CODEINE
DIPHENHYDRAMINE
FENTANYL
GABAPENTIN
HEROIN
METHADONE
METHAMPHETAMINE
MORPHINE
SERTRALINE
TRAZADONE

Glossary

Acetaminophen – Acetaminophen is an over-the-counter analgesic with antipyretic properties; however, it has no anti-inflammatory actions. Proprietary names include Tylenol.

Alprazolam – Alprazolam is a low-dose benzodiazepine used for the treatment of anxiety disorders and short-term relief of anxiety associated with depressive symptoms.

Amitriptyline - A prescription medication primarily used to treat depression, but it is also commonly prescribed for other conditions like chronic pain, migraine prevention, and insomnia.

Amphetamine – A group of synthetic psychoactive drugs called central nervous system (CNS) stimulants. The collective group of amphetamines includes amphetamine, dextroamphetamine, and methamphetamine. Methamphetamine is also known as “meth,” “crank,” “speed,” and “tina.” Methamphetamine is metabolized to amphetamine, and thus, occurrences of amphetamine may represent methamphetamine ingestion rather than amphetamine ingestion.

Aripiprazole – Aripiprazole is a novel (atypical) antipsychotic drug that has complex and variable pharmacologic activity at both dopamine and serotonin receptors.

Benzodiazepine – A family of sedative-hypnotic drugs indicated for the treatment of stress, anxiety, seizures, and alcohol withdrawal. Benzodiazepines are often referred to as “minor tranquilizers.” Xanax (alprazolam) and Valium (diazepam) are the most commonly prescribed drugs in this drug class. Many benzodiazepines are interconverted to one another, making occurrences of these drugs difficult to interpret. Exceptions include alprazolam, clonazepam, lorazepam, and midazolam.

Bromazolam – Bromazolam is a benzodiazepine that is used as a novel psychoactive substance. It is reported to have central nervous system (CNS) depressant properties and shares anticonvulsant, muscle relaxant, hypnotic, anxiolytic and sedative effects with other benzodiazepines. It is not marketed for use as a pharmaceutical product in any country.

Bupropion - A prescription medication primarily used to treat depression and to help people quit smoking. It is sold under brand names like Wellbutrin (for depression) and Zyban (for smoking cessation).

Buprenorphine - A semi-synthetic opioid known as Buprenex, Suboxone, and Subutex indicated for the treatment of opioid addiction and moderate to severe pain.

Cannabinoids - A series of compounds found in the marijuana plant, the most psychoactive of which is THC, a strong, illicit hallucinogen. Street names for this drug are often associated with a geographic area from which it came but also include generic names like “ganja,” “MJ,” “ragweed,” “reefer,” and “grass.”

Clonazepam - Clonazepam is an intermediate to long-acting benzodiazepine hypnotic used in the treatment of insomnia and in the prevention and treatment of various seizure disorders.

Cocaine – An illicit stimulant. Powdered cocaine goes by many street names including “C,” “blow,” “snow,” and “nose candy,” while freebase cocaine is mostly commonly known as “crack.”

Codeine - Codeine is a DEA Schedule III narcotic analgesic with central nervous system depressant activity. Hydrocodone is also a reported metabolite of codeine.

Desmethylsertraline – Desmethylsertraline is the principal metabolite of sertraline and has about 10 to 20% of the pharmacologic activity of the parent analyte.

Duloxetine – Duloxetine is an antidepressant drug that is described as a 'balanced' inhibitor of both norepinephrine and serotonin neuronal reuptake.

Diazepam – Diazepam is a benzodiazepine used primarily for its sedative anxiolytic or muscle relaxing effects.

Delta-9 THC – Delta-9 THC is the principle psychoactive ingredient of marijuana (cannabis, hashish).

Delta-9 Carboxy THC - Delta-9 THC is the principle psychoactive ingredient of marijuana/hashish. Delta-9 carboxy THC (THCC) is the inactive metabolite of THC.

Dextromethorphan – Dextromethorphan is the d-isomer of a synthetic codeine analog that has antitussive activity but is without a significant analgesic effect. The drug is frequently found as a constituent of cough and cold medications for adults and children that are available over the counter.

Glossary Continued

Diphenhydramine - Diphenhydramine is an antihistamine with sedative and anti-emetic effects.

Ethanol – Ethyl alcohol is a central nervous system depressant and can cause effects such as impaired judgment, reduced alertness, and impaired muscular coordination. Ethanol can also be a product of decomposition or degradation of biological samples.

Fentanyl – Synthetic opioid analgesic supplied in transdermal patches and is also available for oral, nasal, intravenous, and spinal administration. Fentanyl is also produced illicitly and currently most Fentanyl occurrences represent the ingestion of illicit Fentanyl rather than pharmaceutically manufactured Fentanyl.

Fluoxetine - Fluoxetine is a chemically atypical antidepressant used to help control major depressive disorders.

Gabapentin - An anti-epileptic drug also called an anticonvulsant to treat neuropathic pain (nerve pain) caused by herpes virus.

Halogenated Inhalants – Includes, but is not limited to, halogenated hydrocarbons, especially refrigerants such as difluoroethane, which is a component of “compressed air” electronics cleaners; these and similar halogenated substances are typically used illicitly as inhalants.

Helium – Considered a Noble gas typically used illicitly as inhalants.

Heroin – An illicit narcotic derivative. It is a semi-synthetic product of opium. Heroin also has multiple street names including “H,” “hombre,” and “smack.”

Hydrocodone – A narcotic analgesic (pain killer). Vicodin and Lortab are two common drugs containing hydrocodone.

Hydromorphone – A narcotic analgesic (pain killer) used to treat moderate to severe pain. Marketed under the trade name Dilaudid, it is two to eight times more potent than morphine. Commonly used by abusers as a substitute for heroin.

Ketamine – An animal tranquilizer and a chemical relative of PCP. Street names for this drug include “special K,” “vitamin K,” and “cat valium.”

Methadone – A synthetic narcotic analgesic (pain killer) commonly associated with heroin detoxification and maintenance programs and is also prescribed to treat severe pain. It has been increasingly prescribed in place of oxycodone for pain management. Dolophine is one form of methadone.

Methamphetamine – Methamphetamine is a DEA schedule II stimulant drug capable of causing hallucinations, aggressive behavior, and irrational reactions.

Midazolam – Midazolam is a short acting benzodiazepine (a DEA Schedule IV controlled analyte) with sedative/hypnotic properties and is a strong central nervous system depressant. It is used for preoperative sedation, as a sedative hypnotic and as an agent for the induction of anesthesia.

Mirtazapine – Mirtazapine is used clinically as an antidepressant.

Mitragynine – An alkaloid found in the Kratom plant, which is consumed for its stimulant and analgesic (opioid-like) effects. The leaves of the Kratom plant, either whole or crushed, are smoked, chewed, or prepared as tea. In addition, plant extract containing Mitragynine is available in tablets and capsules.

Morphine – A narcotic analgesic (pain killer) used to treat moderate to severe pain. MS (Morphine Sulfate), Kadian, and MS-Contin are the tablet forms; Roxanol is the liquid form. Heroin is metabolized to morphine, and thus, occurrences of morphine may represent heroin ingestion rather than morphine ingestion.

Nitazenes – A group of illicit synthetic opioids (e.g., isotonitazene, protonitazene, etonitazene).

Nitrous Oxide (N₂O) – Also known as “laughing gas,” is an inhalant (gas) that produces light anesthesia and analgesia. “Whippets” are a common form of nitrous oxide.

Nordiazepam - Nordiazepam is a pharmacologically active metabolite of several benzodiazepines, including diazepam (Valium®) and chlordiazepoxide (Librium®).

Glossary Continued

Olanzapine - Olanzapine is a drug used in the treatment of psychotic disorders (schizophrenia and bipolar mania).

Oxazepam - Oxazepam is a benzodiazepine. It is frequently seen as the metabolite of diazepam and other benzodiazepines; however, it is pharmacologically active and may be given as the primary medication for the short-term relief of symptoms of anxiety and in the management of alcohol withdrawal.

Oxycodone – A narcotic analgesic (pain killer). OxyContin is one form of this drug and goes by the street name “OC.” Percocet, Percodan, Roxicet, Tylox, and Roxicodone also contain oxycodone.

Oxymorphone – A narcotic analgesic (pain killer) that is often prescribed as Opana, Numorphan, and Numorphone.

Quetiapine – Quetiapine is an antipsychotic analyte approved by the FDA for the management of the manifestations of psychotic disorders, including schizophrenia.

Risperidone - Risperidone is an atypically structured antipsychotic agent.

Temazepam - Temazepam is a benzodiazepine hypnotic agent used in the short-term relief of insomnia.

Tramadol – A synthetic narcotic analgesic sold under the trade name Ultram and Ultracet. Indications include the treatment of moderate to severe pain. It is a chemical analogue to codeine. Not currently a scheduled drug.

Trazadone – Trazadone is a structurally atypical antidepressant agent. It is prescribed for the treatment of major depression.

Venlafaxine - Venlafaxine is a non-tricyclic antidepressant agent.

Harm Reduction Resources

Colorado offers free naloxone (Narcan) to reverse opioid overdoses, along with fentanyl test strips and other harm-reduction tools. You're also protected under Colorado's Good Samaritan Law (C.R.S. § 18-1-711) when calling for help during an overdose. Learn how to recognize the signs of an overdose, carry naloxone, and save a life.

Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) – Overdose Prevention

<https://cdphe.colorado.gov/overdose-prevention>

The Works Program – Boulder County Public Health

Boulder County offers The Works Program, a free and anonymous harm reduction initiative delivering lifesaving services like naloxone, fentanyl test strips, safer-use supplies (for injecting, smoking, or snorting), and overdose response training. It also connects people to broader support, including treatment, housing, and recovery services—offering a holistic, stigma-free approach for those using substances and their communities.

<https://bouldercounty.gov/families/disease/the-works-program/>