



**REGIONAL MEDICAL
EXAMINER'S OFFICE**

2024 Annual Report

Washoe County
Regional Medical
Examiner's Office



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Chief's Report

History and Current Status

The history of the Medical Examiner's Office can be described in two eras: pre-2007 and post-2007. Prior to 2007, the office was the Washoe County Coroner Office (WCCO) and was managed by a layperson coroner. Pathologists were retained on a contract basis to perform autopsies, and frequently also actively practiced hospital pathology at the same time. Effective July 1, 2007, the Board of County Commissioners approved county code changes that established a Medical Examiner system in Washoe County, and the office became known as the Washoe County Medical Examiner-Coroner Office. A forensic pathologist was appointed as the Chief Medical Examiner and Coroner and employed a second forensic pathologist as a full-time Assistant Medical Examiner; numerous part-time locum tenens pathologists from across the country were added over time to handle the increasing regional caseload. A Deputy Chief Medical Examiner was recruited in 2015 due to both caseload and the need for succession planning. Dr. Ellen Clark was the first Chief Medical Examiner of the office and retired at the end of 2016 after many years of dedicated service.

The office relocated in January 2017 from 10 Kirman Avenue to the current site: 990 East 9th Street, a modern, state-of-the-art facility, newly constructed in 2016. The agency rebranded at this time as the Washoe County Regional Medical Examiner's Office (WCRMEO).

Dr. Laura Knight, a board-certified forensic pathologist, previously Deputy Chief Medical Examiner from 2015-2016, became Chief Medical Examiner and Coroner in January 2017 and remains in that position. Three Assistant Medical Examiners completed the physician staff of the office up until April 2023, when a Deputy Chief Medical Examiner was recruited. Dr. Clare Bryce, a board-certified forensic pathologist and neuropathologist, serves as Deputy Chief Medical Examiner. All five forensic pathologists employed by the WCRMEO are board-certified by the American Board of Pathology in Forensic Pathology.

Total deaths reported to WCRMEO in 2024 were 5,765, down slightly from 5,907 in 2023. This includes Washoe County deaths and all outside referral counties. In 2024, WCRMEO pathologists performed 858 autopsies; 268 medical external examinations; and 826 consultations (medical records review and death certificate completion) (a record high, up 5% from the prior year, which was the previous record). Annual number of autopsies has increased over the years, up 45% this year compared to 2015, though slightly decreased from 2023. Much of the increase has been fueled by drug-related deaths, which reached an unfortunate all-time high in our region in 2023, but saw a 21% reduction in Washoe County in 2024.

The WCRMEO continued to receive grant funding in 2024 from the CDC (through the state of Nevada) for data entry into the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) and for toxicology testing and related expenses from the SUDORS grant. Data entry through these programs is utilized for state and national level death prevention efforts.

Finally in 2024, the office continued to successfully leverage new technological advances in forensic genetic genealogy (FGG) to identify individuals whose remains were in such poor

condition due to decomposition that they could not be identified when found. Some such cases date back to the late 1970s to early 1980s. Prioritizing homicide (or suspected homicide) cold cases first, the office sent numerous cold cases for FGG analysis to date. The identity of the deceased may allow additional investigative leads in the investigation of who may have been involved in her death. More importantly, we are able to restore the dignity of being laid to rest with one's name and provide some closure to surviving family members.

Continuing Excellence and Future Goals

Future goals and priorities of the office include national accreditation by the National Association of Medical Examiners (anticipated for mid-2025); continuing partnerships with organ and tissue donation organizations; mass fatality preparedness; and enhanced academic partnership with the University. We will continue to be the regional referral center for high quality autopsies, providing services on a contract basis to 18 additional counties in Nevada and Northern California, and the regional center for excellence in medicolegal death investigation. We will continue to conduct high quality mass fatality training exercises, and training conferences on medicolegal death investigation for surrounding county coroners and law enforcement as capacity allows. We will enhance the education of medical students, through cooperation with the University of Nevada-Reno School of Medicine, hopefully recruiting future forensic pathologists to the field to combat what has become a dire workforce shortage. Finally, and most importantly, we will strive to continue to serve the citizens of Washoe County with diligence, respect, and compassion, at a time when many of them are having the worst day of their lives, having lost a loved one.

Final Words

This report represents the 9th annual statistical and informational report of the Washoe County Regional Medical Examiner's Office. It is my sincere hope that other regional agencies, community leaders, law enforcement, county coroners, and citizens may find it interesting and useful, and that it may inform regional policy. Additionally, I hope this data may be of use in prevention efforts, as many of the deaths that come to the attention of the Medical Examiner/Coroner are ultimately preventable.

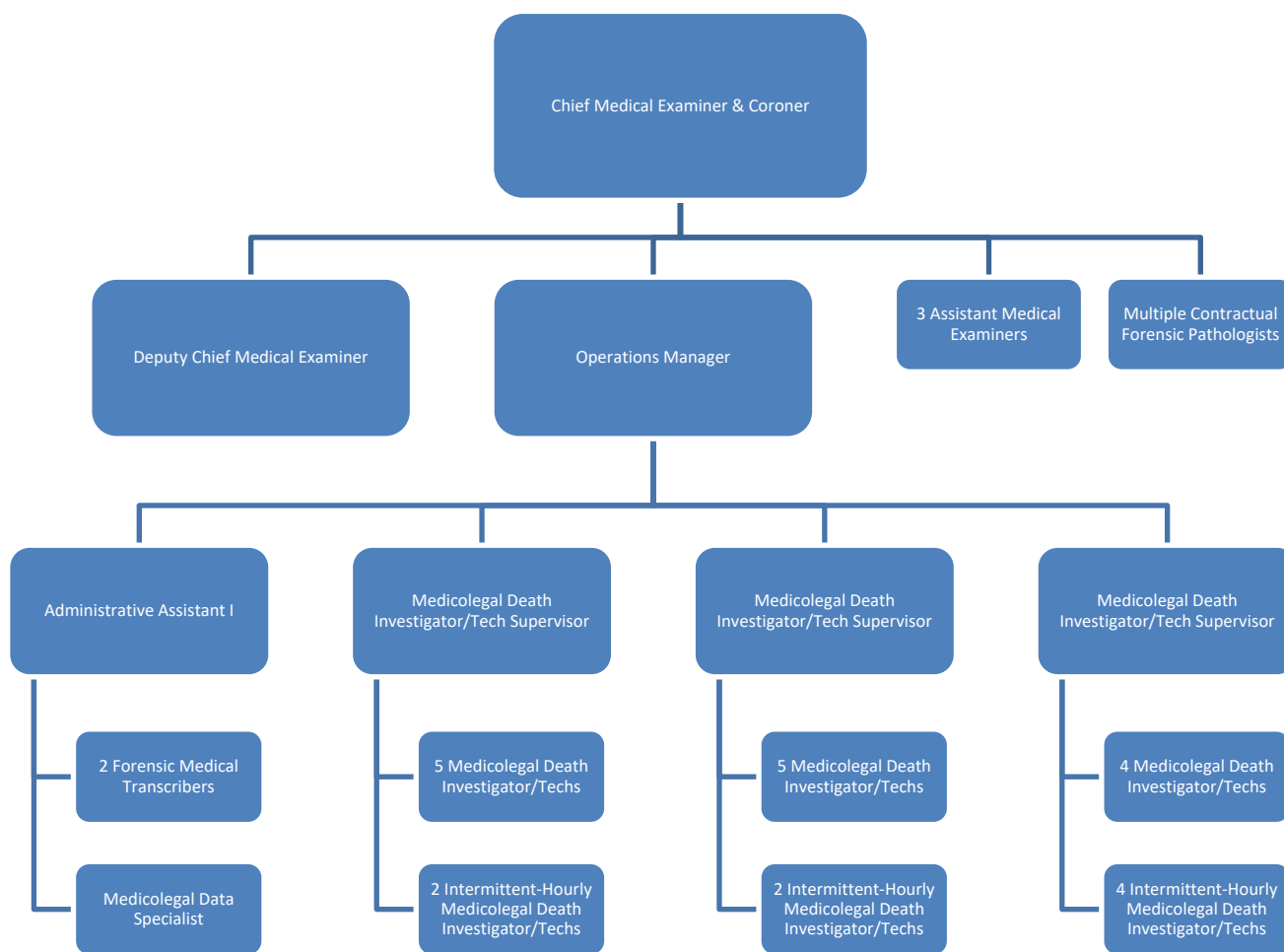
Yours in service,



Dr. Laura D. Knight, MD
Chief Medical Examiner & Coroner,
Washoe County Regional Medical
Examiner's Office
Associate Professor, Departments of
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Nevada – Reno School of Medicine

Introduction

Organizational Chart



Mission Statement

The mission of the Washoe County Regional Medical Examiner's Office (WCRMEO) is to investigate unexpected and unexplained deaths in order to identify and report on the cause and manner of death. We apply scientific investigative techniques and medical procedures, with integrity and compassion, to serve families and public agencies impacted by sudden unexpected death.

Statutory Authority

The WCRMEO is primarily governed by Chapter 259, 440, and 451 of the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and Chapter 35 of the Washoe County Code (WCC). NRS 259 requires that each county have a coroner and WCC 35 creates the Medical Examiner system to fulfill coroner duties.

Description

The Medical Examiner investigates sudden or unexpected deaths, traumatic deaths, and suspicious deaths. Certain categories of sudden death, by law, must be reported to and investigated by this office. All suspicious and many apparent natural death scenes in Washoe County are attended and evaluated by trained Medicolegal Death Investigators employed by the Medical Examiner's Office. Many reported deaths are ultimately determined to be due to natural causes, but a significant number of reported cases are found to be due to accidents, homicidal trauma, and suicides. Of the deaths reported to and falling within the office's jurisdiction in 2024 (not including deaths referred from outside counties on a contractual basis), 52% required autopsy or other medical examination and an additional 48% required detailed review of medical history and circumstances of death. Board-certified forensic pathologists (medical doctors specializing in forensic pathology) conduct these autopsy and medical examinations.

Responsibilities of the office include:

- Determining the cause and manner of death for jurisdictional cases
- Electronic certification of death certificates in all cases of unnatural death and in many cases of natural death
- Conducting investigations of death scenes
- Identifying, collecting and processing evidence in order to ensure scientific integrity and usefulness
- Recognizing unsuspected homicidal violence
- Recognizing and reporting communicable and dangerous diseases, poisonings, and consumer product safety concerns
- Positively identifying the dead
- Notifying the decedent's next of kin and providing proper assistance to grieving families
- Ensuring integrity of the personal property of decedents
- Providing expert legal testimony in criminal and civil matters
- Preparing for and responding to mass disasters
- Assisting in providing for burial of indigent citizens in accordance with law

Community and Academic Involvement

The WCRMEO is very active in the community. In 2024, WCRMEO staff made many presentations in the community including the Nevada Law Enforcement Academy, Nevada Department of Public Safety, high school students, and lectures to medical students at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). The office also hosts a two-day educational conference on death scene investigation for law enforcement/coroner agencies in the region. Dr. Knight also was an invited speaker on forensic pathology to the Phi Delta Epsilon medical fraternity undergraduate chapter at the University of Nevada-Reno in March 2024, discussing interesting cases and careers in the field with pre-medical undergraduate students.

Pathologists in the office have a letter of appointment to teach at the University of Nevada, Reno with a rank of Assistant or Associate Professor. WCRMEO hosted educational rotations in-office for dozens of UNR medical students, as well as law enforcement officers, and other students in related fields.

In 2024, two scientific abstracts from the WCRMEO were presented at a national scientific conference, the National Association of Medical Examiners, with principal authors or co-authors from the office. One presentation was made by a senior investigator in the office, Kelli Oxborrow, on an unusual death from penetrating cranial trauma and the importance of investigating the primary scene of the injury to determine the etiology of the trauma; this presentation was awarded the “Best Affiliate Platform Presentation” award at the conference. The other presentation, a poster, represented a collaboration between the Chief Medical Examiner and a UNR medical student, studying an unusual maternal death from necrotizing fasciitis following Cesarean section and the possible public health implications. Both presentations were followed by publication of scientific manuscripts in the *American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology*, which were released in 2025. The WCRMEO had a total of at least five peer-reviewed publications in the *American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology* in 2024, including a case report of fatal vertebral artery dissection following self-induced cervical spinal manipulation. These publications represent collaborations of WCRMEO staff with other UNR faculty and students.

Dr. Laura Knight also was the lead author on a forensic textbook chapter titled “Blunt Force Injuries and Death” in *Forensic and Legal Medicine, Clinical and Pathological Aspects*, published in 2024 by CRC Press.

WCRMEO Staff regularly participate in fatality review committees and other prevention efforts in our state, including the NV State Committee to Review Suicide Fatalities (of which Dr. Knight is the Chairperson), NV State Maternal Mortality Review Committee, Washoe County Child Fatality Review Team, regional Substance Abuse Task Force, CDC NV Advanced Review Team for the Sudden Death in the Young project, and hospital-based peer review committees such as Trauma Mortality Review and Pediatric Mortality Review. Dr. Knight also served as Chair of the State Disaster Identification Coordination Committee through the end of 2024. The WCRMEO continued to receive grant funding in 2024 from the CDC (through the state) for data entry into the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) and for toxicology testing and related expenses from the Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) grant. Data entry through these programs is utilized for state and national level death prevention efforts.

Awards and Honors

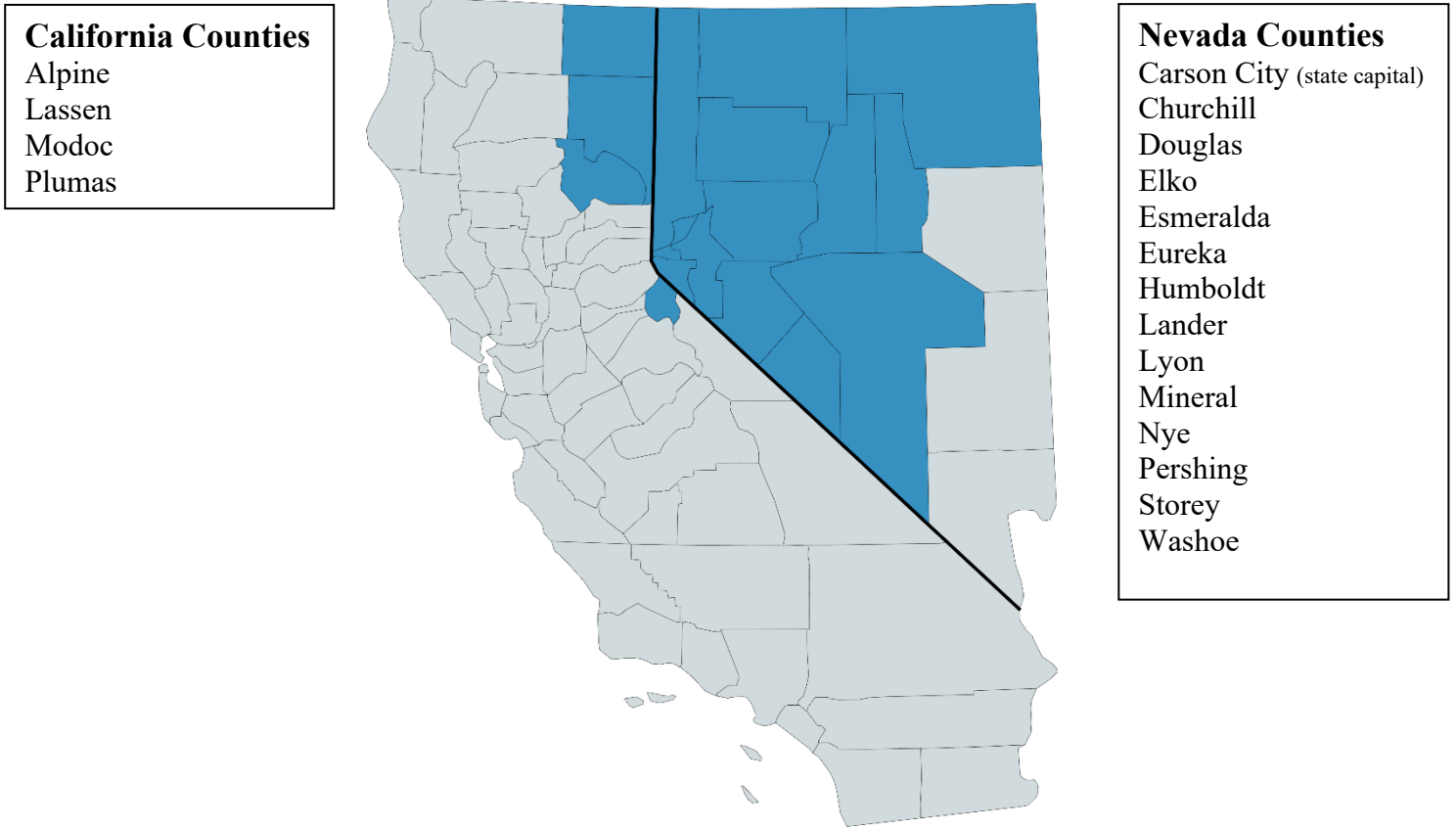
In 2024, the Washoe County Regional Medical Examiner's Office received the following awards:

- Hope Strength Life Award from Nevada Donor Network (NDN)
- The Platinum Level Partner Award from Nevada Donor Network and the US Health Resources and Services Administration

Dr. Knight wishes to acknowledge her gratitude for the critical role of the staff of the WCRMEO in earning these recognitions.

Jurisdiction and Service Area

The WCRMEO's primary jurisdiction is Washoe County. However, the office currently provides services through interlocal agreements to 13 additional Nevada counties (including the state capital), as well as 4-6 California counties, which vary slightly in number from year to year.



WCRMEO 2024 service area highlighted in blue

Examination Types and Descriptions

Autopsy	A full postmortem examination encompassing detailed examination of the exterior and interior of the body, including dissection of internal organs and structures, to determine cause of death. Specimens for additional studies, such as toxicology testing, are obtained during the autopsy.
Limited Autopsy-Head Only	An autopsy examination limited to the external examination of the entire body and internal examination of only the head. Used in select trauma or suspected trauma cases only. Toxicology specimens can be obtained during a limited autopsy.
External Examination	An examination of the exterior of the body that documents identifying features, stigmata of disease, and findings of injury, without accompanying internal dissection. Toxicology specimens such as blood can be obtained during an external examination.
Consultation	Death investigated by the WCRMEO in which no physical examination is performed because the decedent has well-documented medical condition(s) and no primary care physician, or trauma with prolonged hospitalization, determined to be the cause of death. A Medical Examiner reviews medical records and circumstances of death and completes the death certificate.
Jurisdiction Terminated	Natural death from known natural disease that is reported to the WCRMEO but does not fall within its jurisdiction

Manner of Death Types and Descriptions

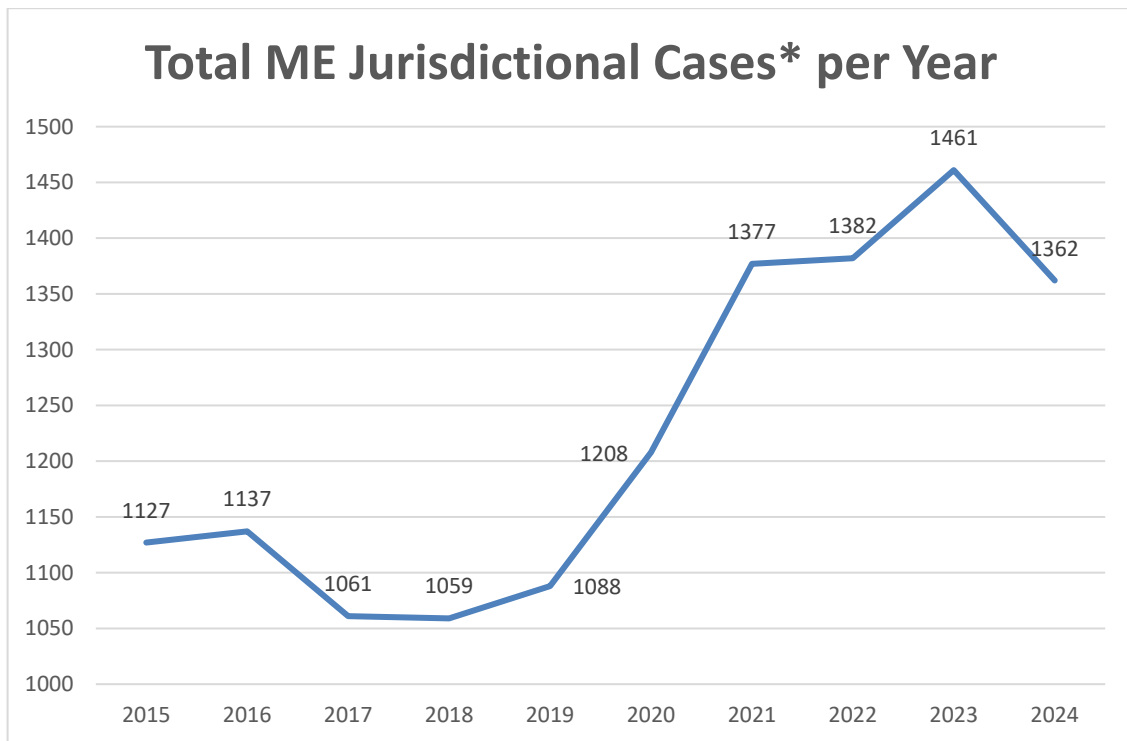
Natural	Death caused by a natural disease or medical condition
Suicide	Death caused by a purposeful self-action with the intent of ending one's own life
Homicide	Death at the hands of another
Accident	Death caused by an unintentional action or external factor
Undetermined	Death in which the cause of death may or may not be known, but the circumstances in which the death came about are unknown or cannot be determined

General Statistics

In 2024, 98% of all deaths occurring in Washoe County were reported to the WCRMEO

Total Cases Reported by Type

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	'23-'24 Percent Change
Autopsies	565	657	740	784	805	816	933	901	939	797	-15%
Consultations	655	641	534	527	463	578	704	695	783	826	5%
External Exams	316	279	265	269	314	396	403	367	323	268	-17%
Head-Only Autopsy	27	54	42	48	48	48	67	73	80	61	-24%
Jurisdiction Terminated	2255	2622	3103	3368	3450	4071	4214	4170	3782	3813	1%
Total Cases Reported	3819	4253	4684	4996	5080	5909	6321	6206	5907	5765	-2%



*Total Medical Examiner Jurisdictional Cases comprises all autopsies, limited (head-only) autopsies, External examinations, and consultations completed by the WCRMEO. Washoe County cases only.

State of Residence for All Reported Cases

Alabama	1	Louisiana	0	Ohio	0
Alaska	1	Maine	0	Oklahoma	1
Arizona	9	Maryland	0	Oregon	15
Arkansas	1	Massachusetts	1	Pennsylvania	1
California	405	Michigan	1	Rhode Island	0
Colorado	2	Minnesota	0	South Carolina	1
Connecticut	1	Mississippi	0	South Dakota	0
Delaware	0	Missouri	1	Tennessee	0
Florida	4	Montana	1	Texas	4
Georgia	1	Nebraska	1	Utah	3
Hawaii	2	Nevada	5153	Vermont	0
Idaho	6	New Hampshire	0	Virginia	0
Illinois	3	New Jersey	1	Washington	9
Indiana	1	New Mexico	0	West Virginia	0
Iowa	1	New York	0	Wisconsin	1
Kansas	1	North Carolina	0	Wyoming	1
Kentucky	2	North Dakota	0	Unknown/Other	129

Total Examination Cases* by Manner of Death

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	'23-'24 Percent Change
Natural	288	326	431	483	511	540	615	458	409	352	-14%
Accident	237	263	358	352	369	421	483	559	584	447	-23%
Suicide	137	170	165	165	191	180	210	204	227	199	-12%
Homicide	34	38	46	42	42	60	49	55	57	69	21%
Undetermined	41	27	43	58	52	58	46	65	65	59	-9%

*Total Examination Cases comprises all autopsies, limited (head-only) autopsies, and external examinations completed by the WCRMEO. Includes Washoe County and contractual cases.

Total Examination Cases* by Sex

	2024	Percentage
Male	832	74%
Female	292	26%
Unknown	2	<1%

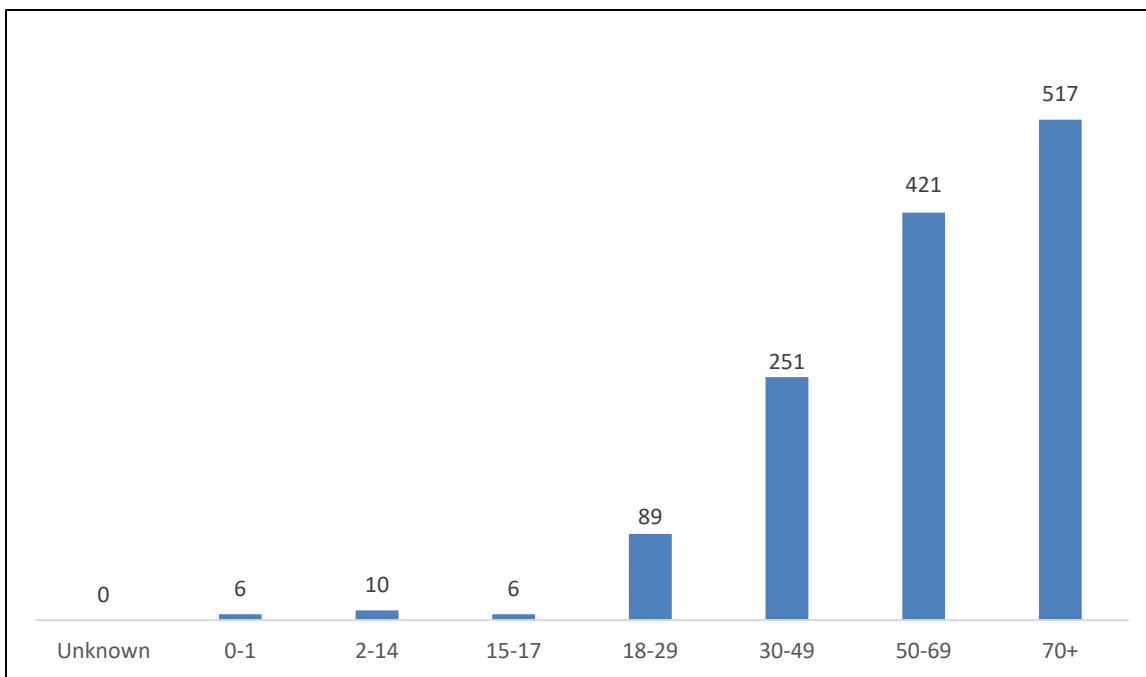
*Total Examination Cases comprises all autopsies, limited (head-only) autopsies, and external examinations completed by the WCRMEO. Includes Washoe County and contractual cases.

Total Examination Cases* by Race

	2024
White	969
Hispanic/Latinx/South American	149
Black/African American	56
Asian/Pacific Islander	37
American Indian/Native American	30
Other/Unknown	47

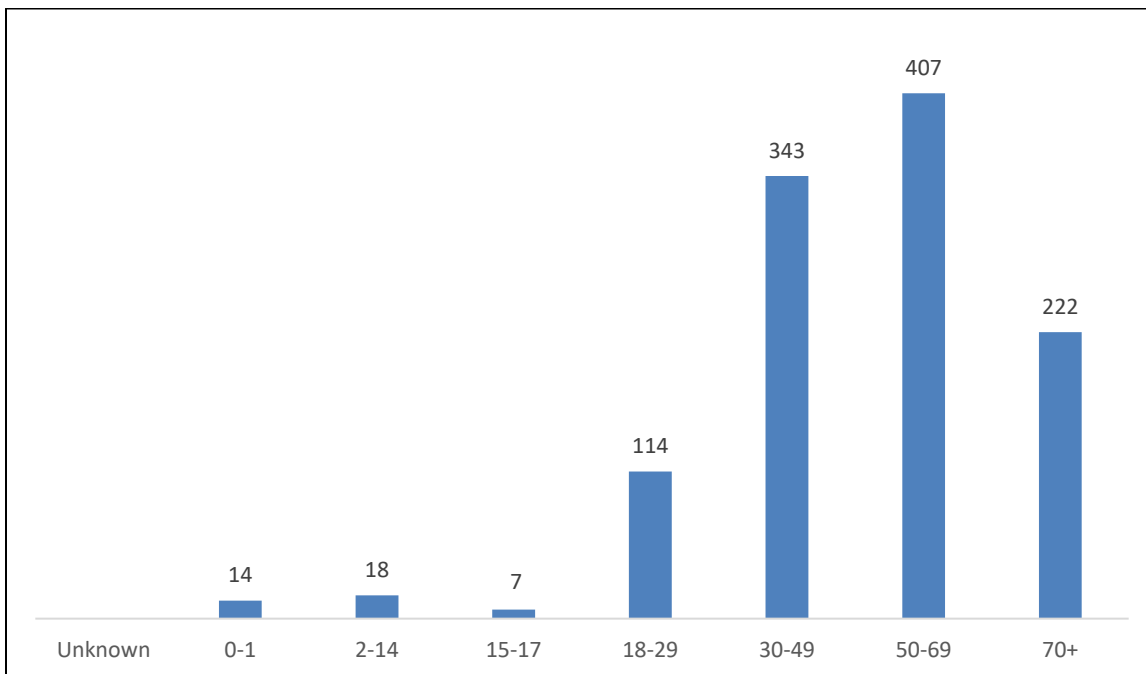
*Total Examination Cases comprises all autopsies, limited (head-only) autopsies, and external examinations completed by the WCRMEO. Race information is reported by next of kin. Multiple races may be reported for a single decedent. Includes Washoe County and contractual cases.

Total ME Jurisdictional Cases* by Age



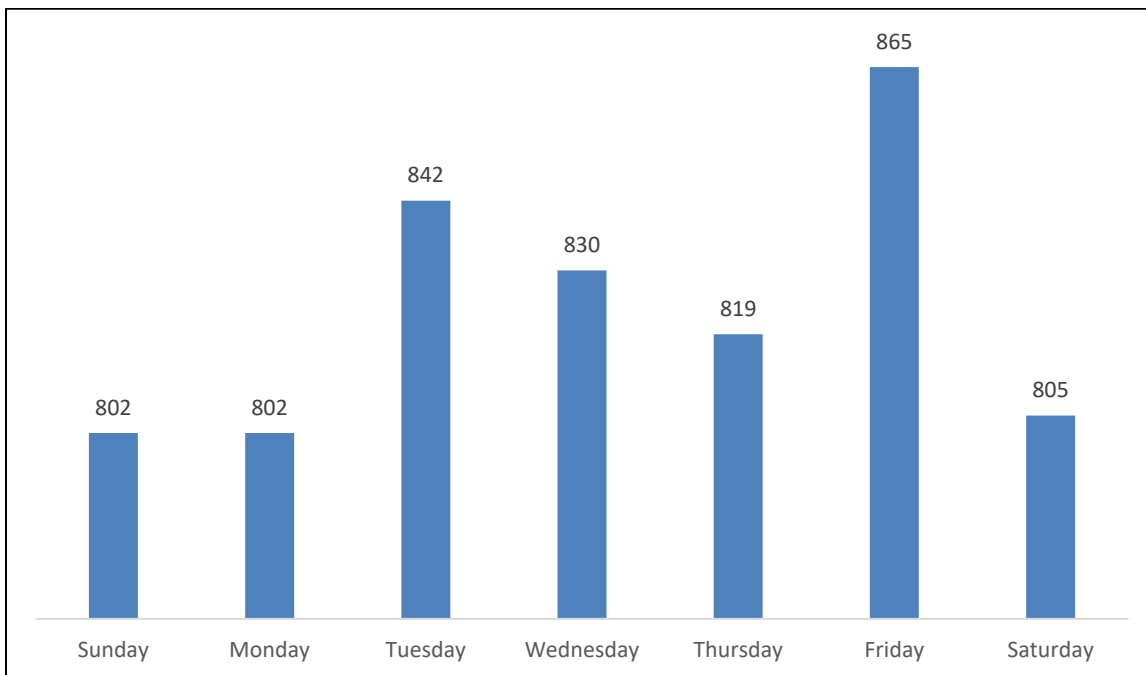
*Total Medical Examiner Jurisdictional Cases comprises all autopsies, limited (head-only) autopsies, External examinations, and consultations completed by the WCRMEO. Washoe County cases only.

Total Examination Cases* by Age

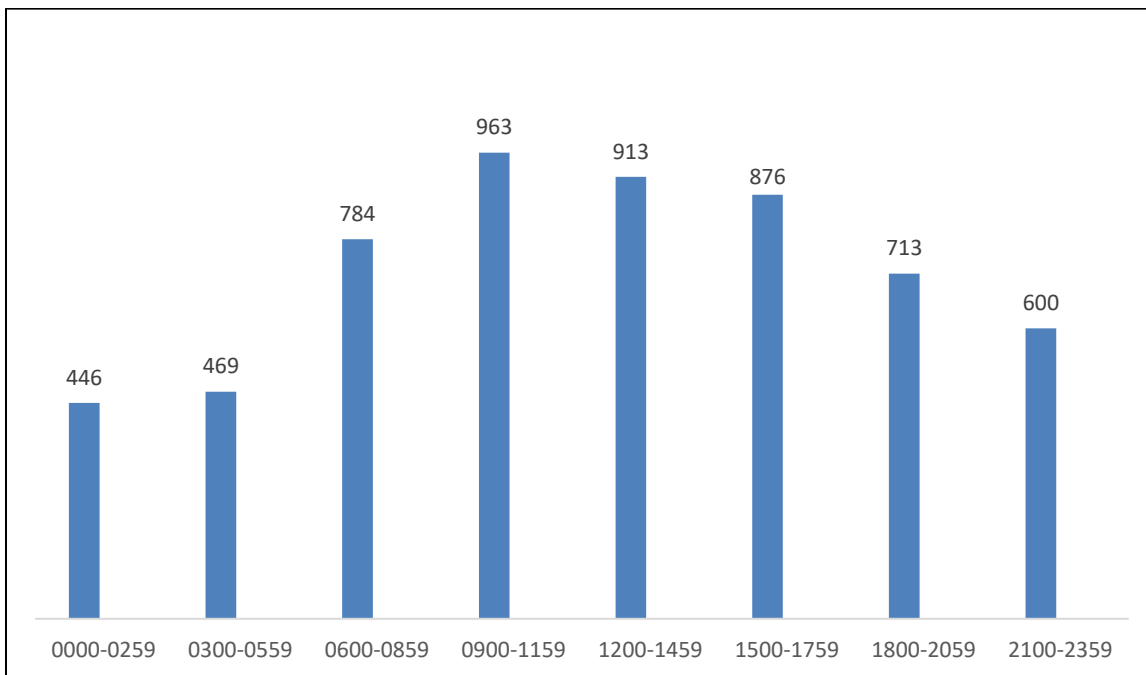


*Total Examination Cases comprises all autopsies, limited (head-only) autopsies, and external examinations completed by the WCRMEO. Includes Washoe County and contractual cases.

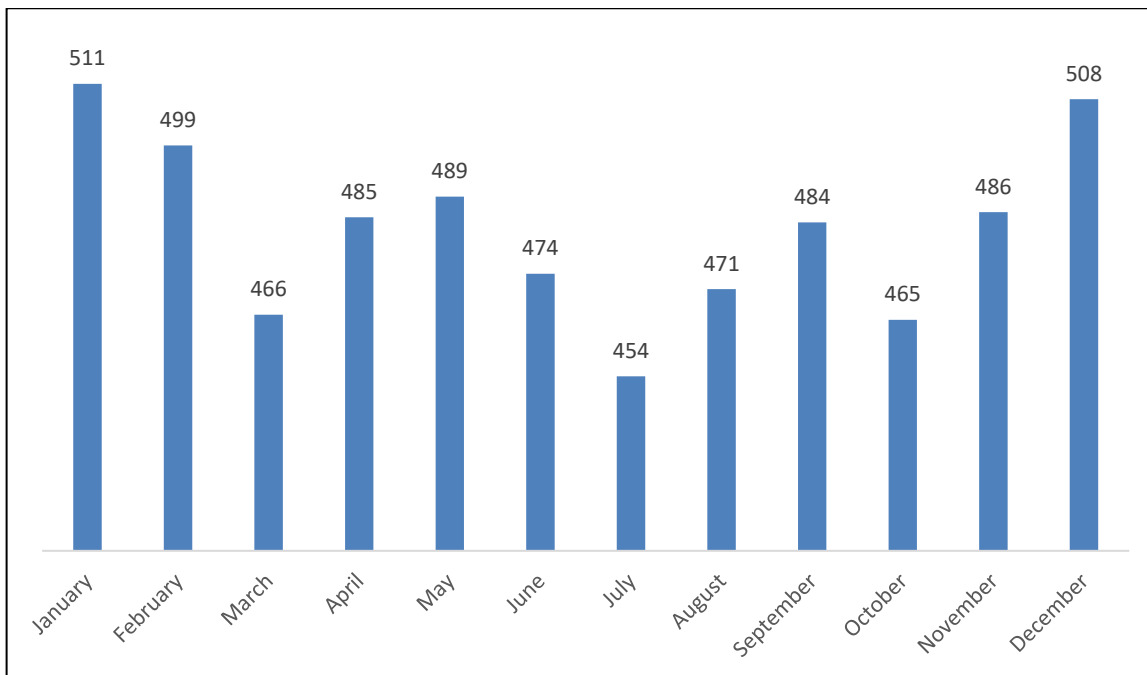
Total Reported Deaths by Day of the Week



Total Reported Deaths by Time of Death



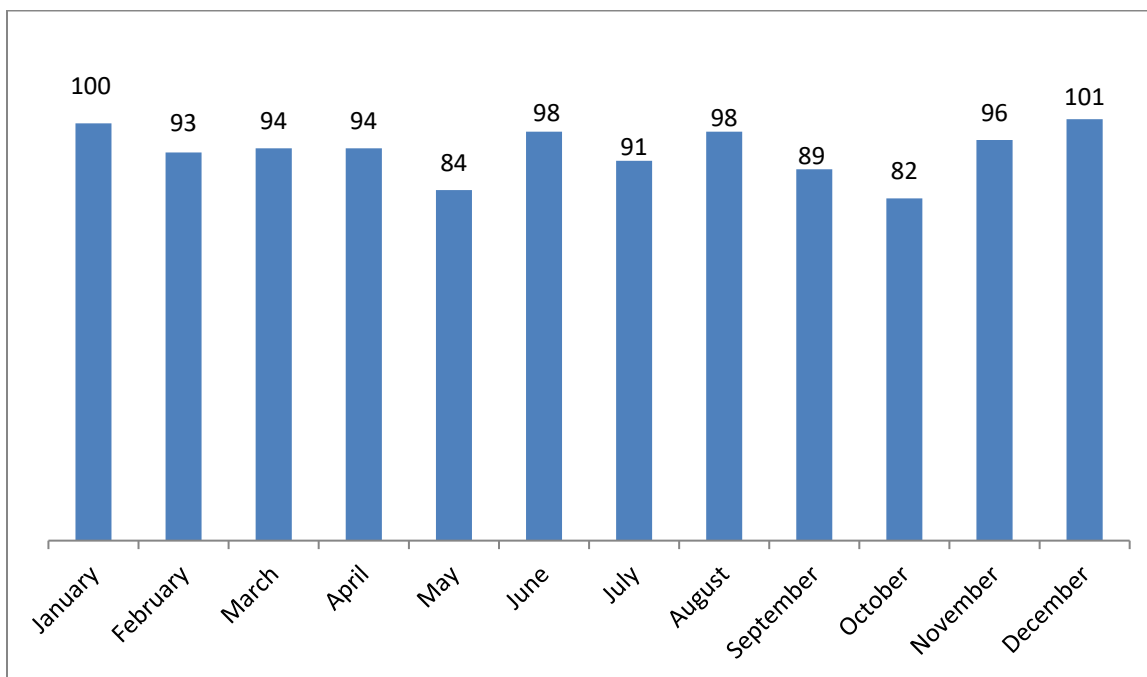
Total Reported Deaths by Month



Scene Responses by Month

1,120 total scene responses in 2024

Recent decreasing trend though still significantly higher than 5 years ago. 1,246 responses in 2023, 1,260 responses in 2022, 1,214 in 2021, 1,094 in 2020, and 948 in 2019



Specific Causes & Types of Death

Major Causes of Death, for Each Manner of Death

For All* Autopsy/External Examination and Consultation Cases Performed at WCRMEO

NATURAL

Cause of Death	Number	Percent
Cardiac (Atherosclerotic and/or Hypertensive Cardiovascular Disease, Congestive Heart Failure, Coronary Artery Disease, Cardiomyopathy, Myocardial Infarction)	612	70%
Complications of Chronic Alcoholism	69	8%
Pulmonary Related Complications	64	7%
Other	51	6%
Cerebral/Dementia	34	4%
Cancer	25	3%
Complications of Diabetes and/or Ketoacidosis	18	2%
Total	873	100%

*It is important to note that the vast majority of COVID-19 deaths occurred in hospitals under the attendance of community physicians. Those deaths did not fall under Medical Examiner jurisdiction and are not included in this data.

ACCIDENT

Cause of Death	Number	Percent
Drug/Alcohol intoxication	286	38%
Complications of blunt force injuries, fractures, & falls	263	35%
Others	83	11%
Cardiac (Atherosclerotic and/or Hypertensive Cardiovascular Disease, Congestive Heart Failure, Bacterial Endocarditis, Cardiomyopathy, Myocardial Infarction)	55	7%
Drowning	22	3%
Asphyxia, various types	19	3%
Hypothermia / Hyperthermia	16	2%
Total	744	100%

SUICIDE

Cause of Death	Number	Percent
Gunshot wound	126	62%
Hanging / Asphyxia	50	25%
Drug Intoxication	21	10%
Sharp Force Injuries	3	1%
Blunt Force Injuries (Intentional)	2	1%
Carbon Monoxide / Smoke Inhalation	2	1%
Total	204	100%

HOMICIDE

Cause of Death	Number	Percent
Gunshot Wound(s)	46	67%
Sharp Force Injuries	15	22%
Blunt Force Injuries	6	9%
Strangulation	1	1%
Homicidal Violence	1	1%
Total	69	100%

UNDETERMINED

Cause of Death	Number	Percent
Traumatic Injuries (Unexplained)	17	27%
Undetermined Cause	17	27%
Drug Intoxication	12	19%
Unexplained Sudden Child Death	11	18%
Other	5	8%
Total	62	100%

*Includes Washoe County and outside counties covered by interlocal agreement

WASHOE COUNTY HOMICIDES BY INCIDENT LOCATION*

Injury Location	Number
Reno	32
Sparks	8
Sun Valley	1

* Cases included are only those where injury and death occurred in Washoe County. If an injury occurred outside of Washoe County but they were transported to a hospital within the county and died, they would not be counted in this section

HOMICIDES BY COUNTY

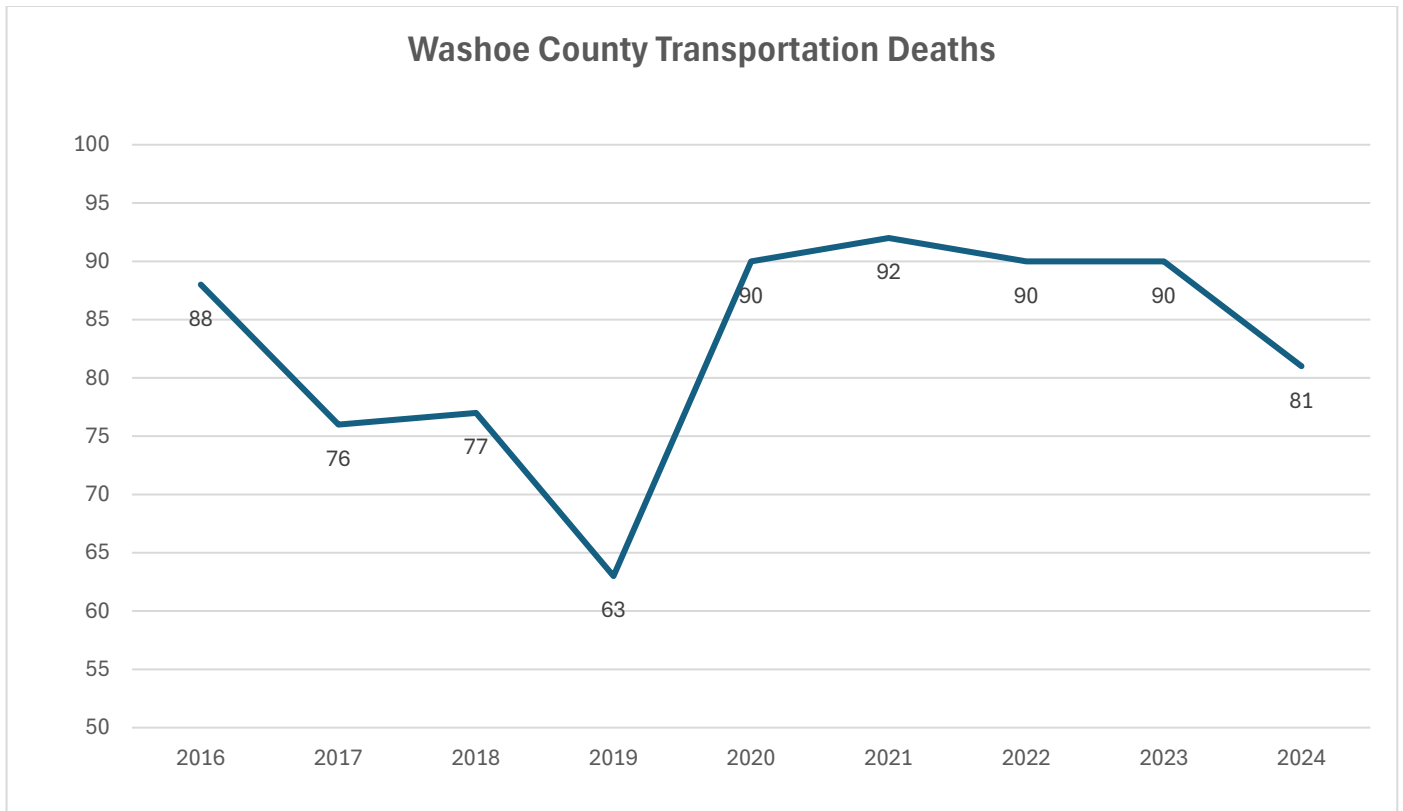
Cases for counties other than Washoe are only included if the case was referred to WCRMEO by that county's coroner

County of Death	Total
Washoe*	47
Lassen	6
Elko	4
Douglas	3
Churchill	2
Humboldt	2
Carson City	1
Esmeralda	1
Lyon	1
Pershing	1
Plumas	1
Eureka	0
Lander	0
Modoc	0
Storey	0

*Includes those who were injured in another county but died in a Washoe County hospital

Washoe County Transportation Deaths

In 2024, Washoe County had 81 transportation-related deaths, the lowest amount since 2019.



Transportation Deaths, By Sex

Gender	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Percent Change '23 to '24
Male	66	54	58	41	71	63	68	64	65	2%
Female	22	22	19	22	19	29	22	26	16	-38%

Transportation Deaths, By Age

Age	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Percentage of Change '23 to '24
0-17	3	7	2	2	5	4	6	1	3	200%
18-29	20	12	17	13	24	17	21	15	21	40%
30-49	23	14	13	10	20	27	26	28	12	-57%
50-69	32	22	21	22	26	26	18	29	17	-41%
70+	10	21	24	16	15	18	19	17	28	65%

Transportation Deaths, By Role

Role	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Percentage of Change '23 to '24
Driver/ Operator	49	47	44	35	59	47	57	43	45	5%
Pedestrian	23	15	18	16	21	24	23	33	20	-39%
Passenger	12	10	14	10	9	17	9	11	12	9%
Cyclist	1	4	1	2	1	2	1	3	4	33%

Washoe County Drug Intoxication Deaths

A significant abatement of drug-related deaths was observed in 2024, with a 21% decrease since the 2023 peak. A significant reduction in fentanyl deaths appears to be the largest factor in the decrease, with a smaller reduction in methamphetamine-associated deaths. Methamphetamine remains the most prevalent drug in these deaths.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Drug Deaths (Washoe County)	125	145	109	133	110	173	169	203	239	276	315	358	283
Major Categories*													
Illicit Drugs Only	36	54	41	53	38	78	73	86	114	125	189	215	176
Illicit Drugs and Ethanol Combined						1	5	14	13	14	18	33	19
Illicit Drugs & Over-the-Counter Drugs Combined, with or without ethanol						2	1	8	9	10	9	7	6
Prescription Drugs Only						34	31	27	23	33	23	18	21
Prescription Drugs and Ethanol Combined						11	10	8	7	9	10	7	8
Prescription & Over-the-Counter Drugs Combined						8	4	8	10	4	7	6	4
Over-the-Counter Drugs Only, or Over-the-Counter Drugs and Ethanol Combined						6	3	5	5	3	3	3	4
Illicit and Prescription Drugs Combined	8	17	2	11	19	22	22	18	20	31	29	29	26
Prescription Drugs, Illicit Drugs, & Ethanol Combined						2	4	4	9	6	13	17	9
Prescription Drugs, Over-the-Counter Drugs, & Ethanol Combined						1	0	3	0	4	1	2	1
Huffing volatiles/intoxicants, with or without other drugs						1	1	11	1	1	0	1	2
Illicit Drugs, Prescription Drugs, Over-the Counter Drugs, & Ethanol Combined								0	2	1	0	2	0
Illicit Drugs, Prescription Drugs, and Over the-Counter Drugs Combined								3	7	5	6	10	2
Unable to Determine Specific Drugs Involved						2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Ethanol only (acute ethanol intoxication), or ethanol & toxic alcohol									3	1	1	0	1
Long Term Effects of Chronic Drug Abuse Without Acute Intoxication						5	16	15	18	18	3	7	4
Sodium nitrate/nitrite toxicity										2	3	1	0
Illicit-involved Deaths, By Drug*													
Methamphetamine (Without Heroin)	25	50	26	43	46	69	82	90	105	123	158	221	180
Heroin (Without Methamphetamine)	11	9	12	13	16	13	10	17	7	8	2	3	0
Methamphetamine and Heroin	3	4	3	8	9	16	13	15	23	27	15	8	0
Fentanyl (Alone)					0	2	2	3	9	18	21	19	10
Fentanyl (Alone or With Others)					7	19	14	25	56	79	144	183	123
Fentanyl and Methamphetamine					3	9	1	8	13	29	70	105	72
Fentanyl and Heroin					0	5	0	1	2	9	10	5	0
Cocaine (Alone or With Others)	5	11	4	3	4	5	8	10	15	20	27	40	34
Nitazenes								0	0	0	1	0	0
Mitragynine (Alone or With Others)								12	14	11	6	9	7

*Not inclusive of all intoxication deaths.

Note: In this reporting, illicit, prescription, and over-the-counter drug death data was stratified in more detail beginning in 2017.

Drug Intoxication Deaths, By Age

Age	Number	Percentage
0-17	3	1%
18-29	25	9%
30-49	110	39%
50-69	122	43%
70+	23	8%

Drug Intoxication Deaths, By Sex

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	202	71%
Female	81	29%

Methamphetamine-related Deaths, By Age

Age	Number	Percentage
0-17	0	0%
18-29	12	7%
30-49	66	37%
50-69	90	50%
70+	12	7%

Methamphetamine-related Deaths, By Sex

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	133	74%
Female	47	26%

Heroin Intoxication Deaths, By Age

Age	Number	Percentage
0-17	0	0%
18-29	0	0%
30-49	0	0%
50-69	0	0%
70+	0	0%

Heroin Intoxication Deaths, By Sex

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	0	0%
Female	0	0%

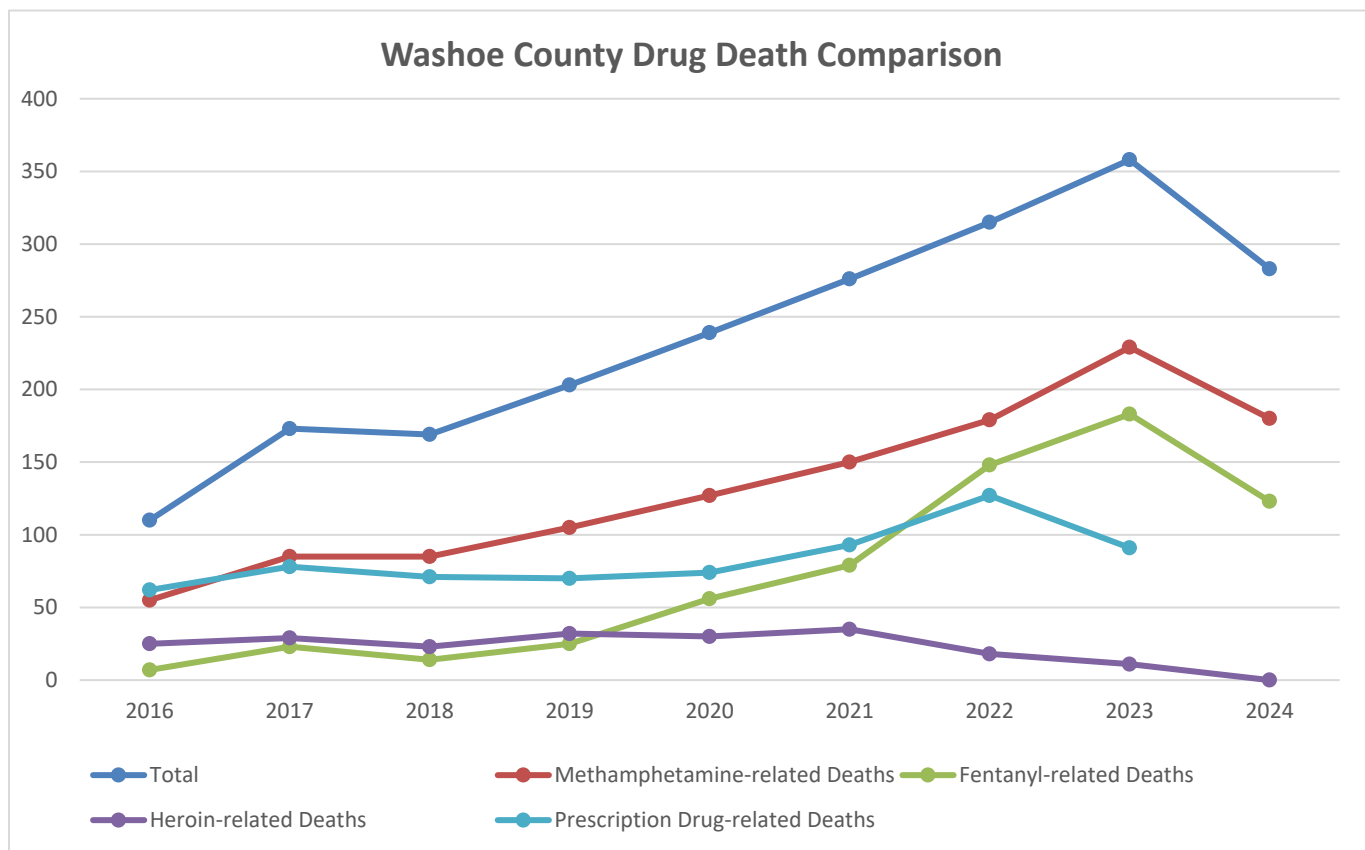
Fentanyl Intoxication Deaths, By Age

Age	Number	Percentage
0-17	2	2%
18-29	17	14%
30-49	64	52%
50-69	34	28%
70+	6	5%

Fentanyl Intoxication Deaths, By Sex

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	99	80%
Female	24	20%

Washoe County Drug Death Comparison

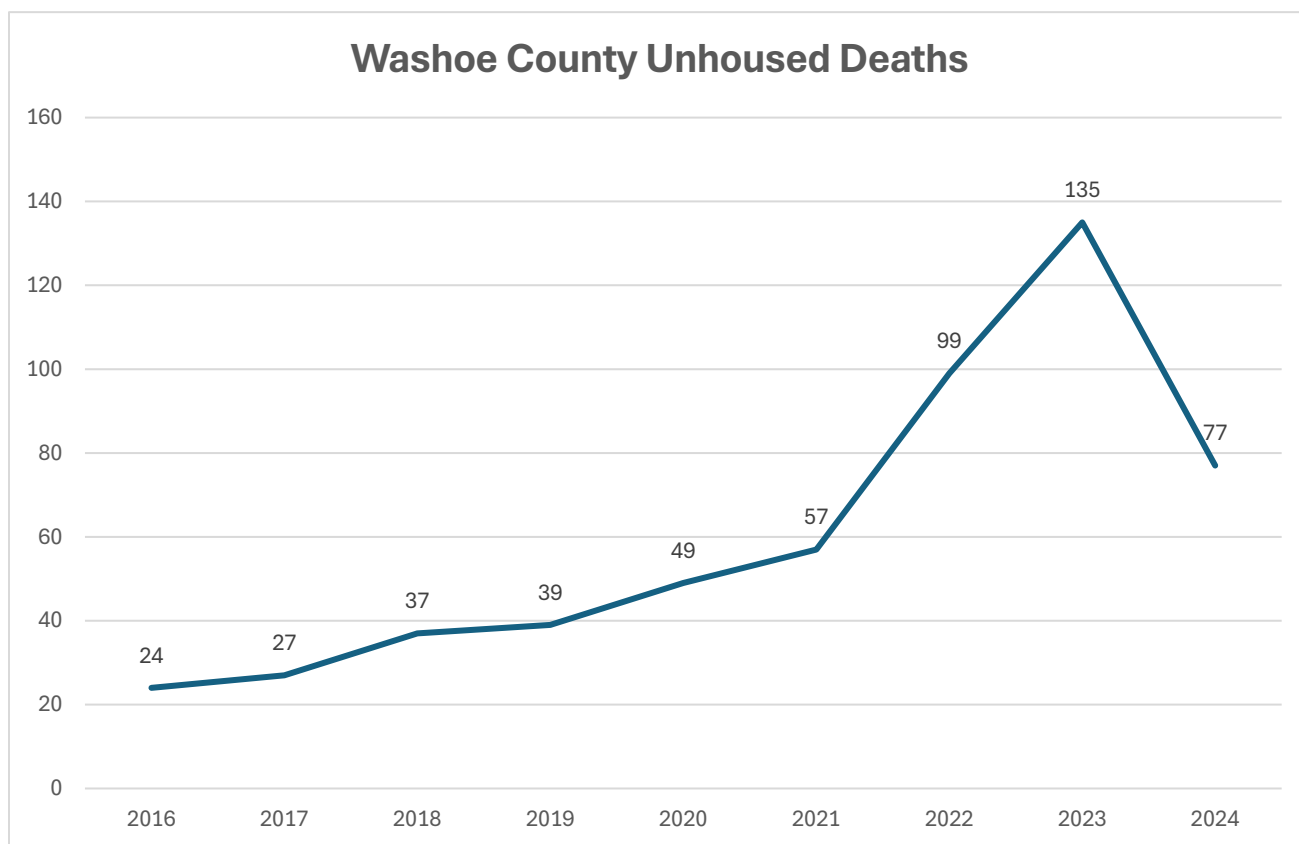


Type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Percentage of Change '23 to '24
Total Deaths	110	173	169	203	239	276	315	358	283	-21%
Methamphetamine-related Deaths	55	85	85	105	127	150	179	229	180	-21%
Fentanyl-related Deaths	7	23	14	25	56	79	148	183	123	-33%
Heroin-related Deaths	25	29	23	32	30	35	18	11	0	-100%

Vulnerable Populations & Other Special Categories

Washoe County Unhoused Person Deaths

Deaths of unhoused individuals (persons with no fixed address or living quarters) reported to the WCRMEO are specifically tracked in the WCRMEO case database. There were 77 deaths in 2024, which is a significant decrease from a record high of 135 deaths in 2023. Most of these deaths were accidental in nature (most often from drug toxicity, as also seen in the general population), distantly followed by natural disease.



Washoe County Unhoused Deaths, By Sex

Gender	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Male	23	23	32	27	38	40	83	102	63
Female	1	4	5	12	11	17	16	33	14

Washoe County Unhoused Deaths, By Age

Age	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
0-17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18-29	1	2	1	3	3	3	11	19	9
30-49	6	7	11	14	12	26	36	54	32
50-69	14	14	23	17	26	24	44	52	32
70+	3	4	2	5	8	3	8	10	4

Washoe County Unhoused Deaths, By Manner of Death

Manner	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Accident	11	12	22	19	27	36	67	93	50
Natural	9	9	7	10	15	11	24	21	15
Homicide	0	2	3	2	0	2	2	9	6
Suicide	2	2	2	4	5	4	3	8	4
Undetermined	2	2	3	4	2	4	3	4	2

Washoe County Unhoused Person Deaths, by Manner of Death, Cause of Death

ACCIDENT

Cause of Death	Number	Percent
Drug-related deaths	38	76%
Environmental Exposure	4	8%
Pedestrian vs Automobile	4	8%
Drowning	2	4%
Pedestrian vs Motorcycle	1	2%
Pedestrian vs Train	1	2%

NATURAL

Cause of Death	Number	Percent
Cardiovascular Disease	7	47%
Complications of Chronic Alcoholism	5	33%
Pneumonia	3	20%

HOMICIDE

Cause of Death	Number	Percent
Multiple Gunshot Wounds	3	50%
Sharp Force Injuries	3	50%

SUICIDE

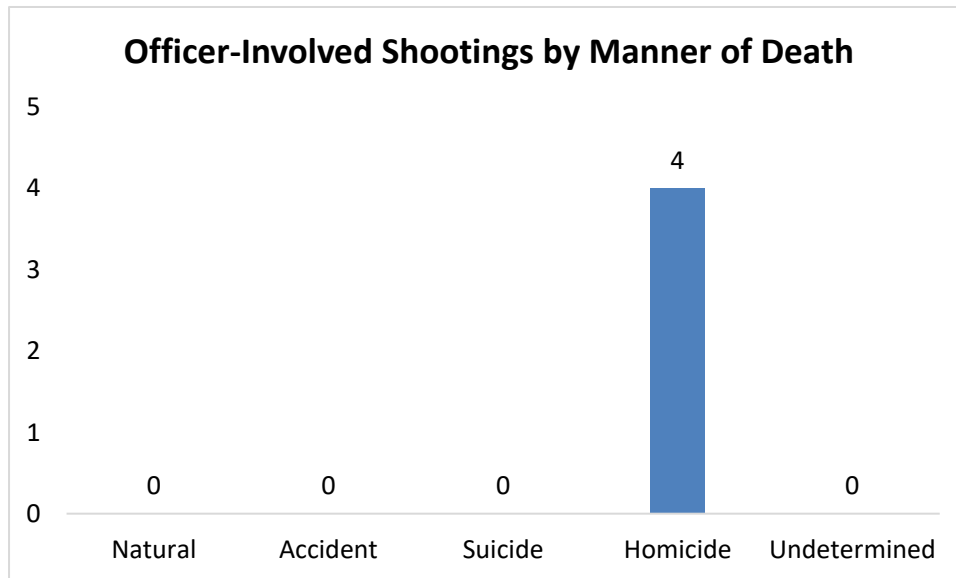
Cause of Death	Number	Percent
Hanging/Neck Compression	3	75%
Gunshot Wound of the Head	1	25%

UNDETERMINED

Cause of Death	Number	Percent
Drug Intoxication	2	100%

Law Enforcement-Involved Deaths in Washoe County

Type of Death	Number
In-Custody/Detained Deaths (jail or hospital) *	7
Officer-Involved Shootings**	4



*It is important to note that while all these deaths occurred within Washoe County, some may be inmates transferred to hospitals in Washoe County from jails/prisons outside the county.

**This includes lethal shootings by any federal, state, or local law enforcement organization that occurred in Washoe County.

Washoe County In-Custody/Detained Deaths, by Manner of Death

Manner	Number
Natural	4
Homicide	1
Suicide	2
Accident	0
Undetermined	0

Washoe County Pediatric Deaths

A total of 22 individuals aged 17 and under died under circumstances within WCRMEO jurisdiction in Washoe County in 2024.

Washoe County Pediatric Deaths, by Age

Age	Number	Percent
0	6	27%
1	0	0%
2	2	9%
3	0	0%
4	1	5%
5	1	5%
6	0	0%
7	1	5%
8	0	0%
9	0	0%
10	1	5%
11	2	9%
12	2	9%
13	0	0%
14	0	0%
15	0	0%
16	1	5%
17	5	23%

Washoe County Pediatric Deaths, by Sex

Sex	Number	Percent
Male	15	68%
Female	7	32%

Washoe County Pediatric Deaths, by Manner of Death

Manner	Number	Percent
Accident	9	41%
Undetermined	6	27%
Suicide	4	18%
Homicide	2	9%
Natural	1	5%

Washoe County Pediatric Causes of Death

Manner	Cause of Death	Number
Accident	Blunt Force Injuries	4
	Drug Intoxication	2
	Choking	1
	Drowning	1
	Pneumonia	1
Undetermined	Undetermined	6
Suicide	Hanging	2
	Gunshot Wound	2
Homicide	Gunshot Wounds	2
Natural	Pneumonia	1

Washoe County Infant Deaths

Infants are defined as birth to one year of age. A total of 6 infants died under circumstances within WCRMEO jurisdiction in Washoe County in 2024. Please note, the cases reported below are included in the “Pediatric Deaths” section above.

Washoe County Infant Deaths, by Sex

Sex	Number	Percent
Male	4	67%
Female	2	33%

Washoe County Infant Deaths, by Exam Type

Exam	Number	Percent
Autopsies	6	100%
Consultations	0	0%
External Exams	0	0%
Head-Only Autopsy	0	0%
Total Cases	6	100%

Washoe County Infant Deaths, by Manner of Death

Exam	Number	Percent
Undetermined	5	83%
Accident	1	17%
Homicide	0	0%
Natural	0	0%
Suicide	0	0%

Washoe County Infant Causes of Death

Manner	Cause of Death	Number
Accident	Choking	1
Undetermined	Undetermined	5

Washoe County Senior Deaths

In 2024, there were 677 deaths at 65 years of age and older that met the criteria for Medical Examiner jurisdiction. Deaths in seniors present special challenges, such as the need to rule out neglect or abuse, and the propensity for ultimately lethal injury from simple falls.

Senior Deaths, By Sex

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	433	64%
Female	244	36%

Senior Deaths, By Manner of Death

Manner	Number	Percent
Natural	353	52%
Accident	266	39%
Suicide	46	7%
Undetermined	8	1%
Homicide	4	<1%

Causes of Death

Manner	Cause	Number
Natural	Cardiovascular related	279
	Pulmonary related	36
	Cancer	9
	Other	31
Accident	Fall related	168
	Drug Related	35
	Motor vehicle related	32
	Other	31
Suicide	Gunshot Wound	34
	Hanging	5
	Drug Related	4
	Asphyxia	1
	Carbon Monoxide Toxicity	1
Undetermined	Sharp Force Injuries	1
	Drug Related	3
	Drowning	2
	Gunshot Wound	1
Homicide	Undetermined	2
	Gunshot Wound of the Head	2
	Asphyxia	1
	Blunt Force Injuries	1

Other Statistics of Interest⁺

- In 2024, 93% of autopsy/examination reports were finalized within 60 days; 98% were finalized within 90 days.
- 42 organ, 227 tissue, and 278 ocular donations were performed on Medical Examiner cases in 2024, with the full cooperation of the WCRMEO.
- There were 164 unclaimed or abandoned decedents reported to the WCRMEO in 2024.
- There was 1 death in Washoe County in which a decedent remained unidentified after thorough investigation in 2024.
- 1,599 bodies were transported to and stored at the Medical Examiner’s Office in 2024.
- A total of 1,953 bodies were transported on the order of the WCRMEO in 2024.
- Toxicology testing was performed on 1,163 cases in 2024.
- The WCRMEO participated in 0 exhumations in 2024.

⁺ Many required by the National Association of Medical Examiners to be reported for accreditation purposes.