



County of San Diego Department of the Medical Examiner Year-End Comparison Report

Report time frame: Jan - Dec 2018

(comparing to: Jan - Dec 2017)

Total cases
3,232
(+3% from 3,138 in 2017)

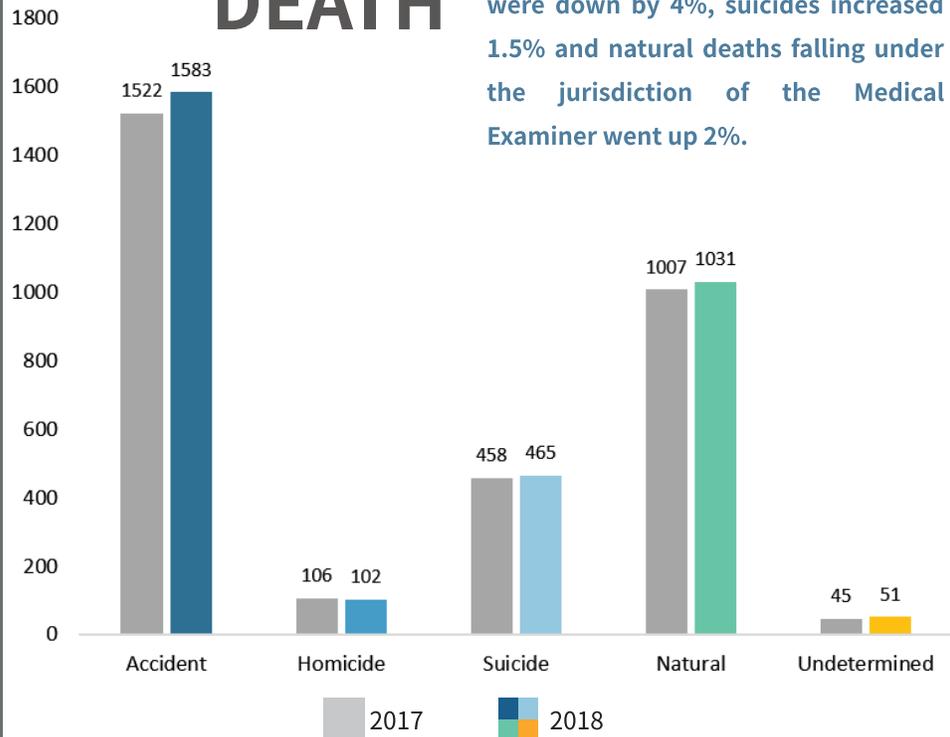
Accident
1,583
(+4%)

Homicide
102
(-4%)

Suicide
465
(+1.5%)

Natural
1,031
(+2%)

MANNER OF DEATH



Comparing 2017 to 2018, accidental deaths have increased 4%, homicides were down by 4%, suicides increased 1.5% and natural deaths falling under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner went up 2%.

Accidents

Unintentional Drug and Medication related deaths remained high, representing 36% of all accidental deaths in 2018; Falls accounted for 31% and Motor Vehicle related accidental deaths were at 20% during the year.



- Unintentional deaths from drug, medication, and/or alcohol toxicity increased by 5% in 2018 compared to 2017
- Methamphetamine was a causative factor in 57% of all overdose cases and saw a 21% increase in 2018 compared to 2017 and deaths where Fentanyl was a causative factor increased by nearly 10% (84 to 92)



- While Falls saw a nearly 4% decline in 2018 compared to 2017, it remained a significant cause of accidental deaths, representing 31% of all such cases
- Blunt Head Trauma continues to be the leading cause of Fall-related deaths, accounting for 33% of these cases



- Motor Vehicle related deaths saw an overall increase of 8% (292 to 316)
- At 34%, pedestrians continue to represent the largest group of accidental motor vehicle-related fatalities
- Motorcycle related deaths, including both solo and those involving another motor vehicle, saw a 38% decline (78 to 48)



- Accidental drownings increased by 51% (39 to 59) in 2018
- Ocean drownings accounted for 32% of cases, followed by bathtubs at 30%
- Bathtub drownings more than doubled (8 to 18) and there were three times as many spa drownings (3 to 10)

Homicides

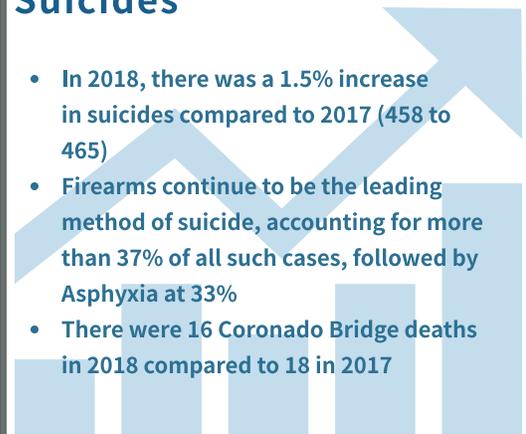
4%

DECREASE

In 60% of cases the method was a firearm

Suicides

- In 2018, there was a 1.5% increase in suicides compared to 2017 (458 to 465)
- Firearms continue to be the leading method of suicide, accounting for more than 37% of all such cases, followed by Asphyxia at 33%
- There were 16 Coronado Bridge deaths in 2018 compared to 18 in 2017



The work of the Department of the Medical Examiner is largely based on Government Code § 27491, which states that all unnatural deaths including homicides, suicides, accidents, and deaths in custody are under the coroner/medical examiner's jurisdiction to investigate. Also falling under our jurisdiction are infectious diseases reaching epidemic proportions, deaths in state or local institutions, and deaths believed to be natural but that occurred suddenly and unexpectedly where the decedent had not seen their health care provider in the last 20 days of life. Note: All deaths that fall under § 27491 are also subject to whether the facts indicate the death occurred under natural circumstances and the physician of record has sufficient knowledge to reasonably state the cause of death occurred under natural circumstance. Therefore, not every death that falls under one of these categories will be investigated by the Medical Examiner's office. See Govt. Code § 27491.