



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

Report time frame: Jan - Jun 2019

(comparing to: Jan - Jun 2018)

Total cases
1,673
(+5% from 1,597 in 2018)
Note: Total includes 7 cases still under investigation*

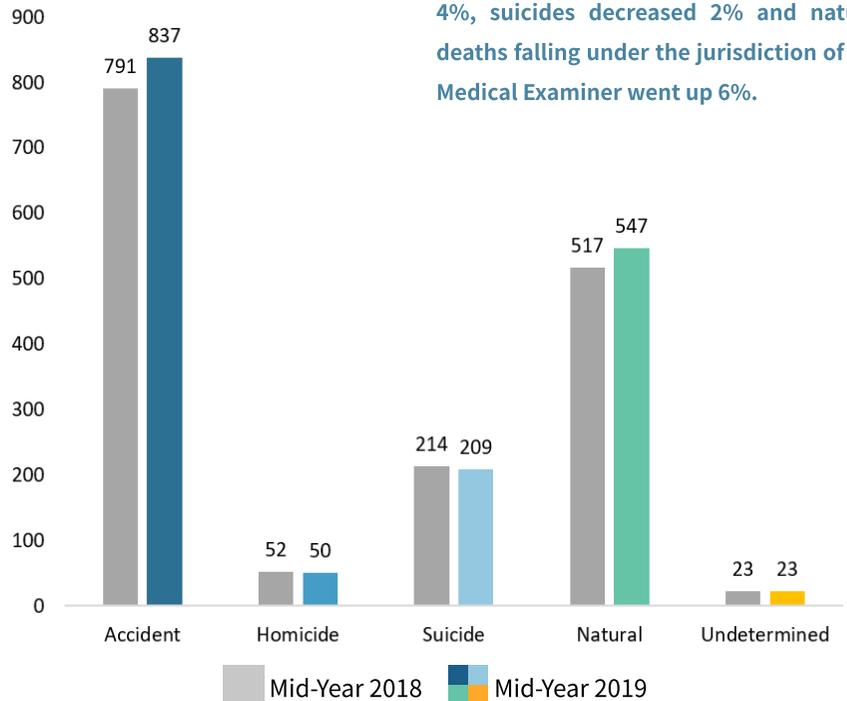
Accident
837
(+6%)

Homicide
50
(-4%)

Suicide
209
(-2%)

Natural
547
(+6%)

MANNER OF DEATH



Comparing cases through Quarter 2 of 2018 to 2019, accidental deaths have increased 6%, homicides were down by 4%, suicides decreased 2% and natural deaths falling under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner went up 6%.

Accidents

Unintentional Drug, Medication, and Alcohol related deaths remained high, representing 38% of all accidental deaths through Quarter 2 of 2019; Falls accounted for 33% and Motor Vehicle related accidental deaths were at 18%.

- Unintentional deaths due to drug, medication, and/or alcohol toxicity increased by 7% (298 to 319)
- The average age was 46, the youngest was 16, and oldest was 77; 80% were male
- Methamphetamine was a causative factor in 62% of all unintentional overdose cases and saw a 24% increase (154 to 191)
- Deaths where Fentanyl was a causative factor increased by 68% (41 to 69)

Note: Counts listed for Methamphetamine and Fentanyl include deaths where the drug either alone or with other drugs, medication and/or alcohol was a causative factor in death; these counts are not mutually exclusive and may include cases where both Fentanyl and Methamphetamine were a causative factor in death

- Falls increased 12.5% (248 to 279), remaining a significant cause of accidental deaths, representing 33% of all such cases
- Blunt Head Trauma, including subdural hematoma, remains the leading cause of fall-related deaths, accounting for 48% (133) of these cases
- Deaths resulting from a Spinal Fracture climbed 77% (13 to 23)

- Motor Vehicle related deaths saw an overall decrease of 4% (145 to 151)
- Fatalities involving Auto vs Auto accidents increased 26% (27 to 34)
- Motor Vehicle cases resulting in pedestrian death saw a 15% decline (52 to 44)
- Motorcycle related deaths, including both solo and those involving another motor vehicle, saw a 28% increase (18 to 23)

Homicides

4%
DECREASE

In 56% of cases the method was a firearm

Suicides

- There was a 2% decrease in suicides compared to 2018
- During this time period, firearms continued to be the leading method of suicide, accounting for 39% of all such cases, followed by Asphyxia at 30%
- There were 11 Coronado Bridge deaths through Q2 of 2019 compared to 9 in 2018

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.

*Due to some cases still under investigation during this report time frame, manner of death counts and associated insights may adjust slightly as those cases are closed.