



County of San Diego Department of the Medical Examiner 2021 Mid-Year Report

Report time frame: Jan - Jun 2021

Total cases
2,182
(+25% from 1,751 in 2020)
Note: Mid-Year Total includes 7 cases still under investigation*

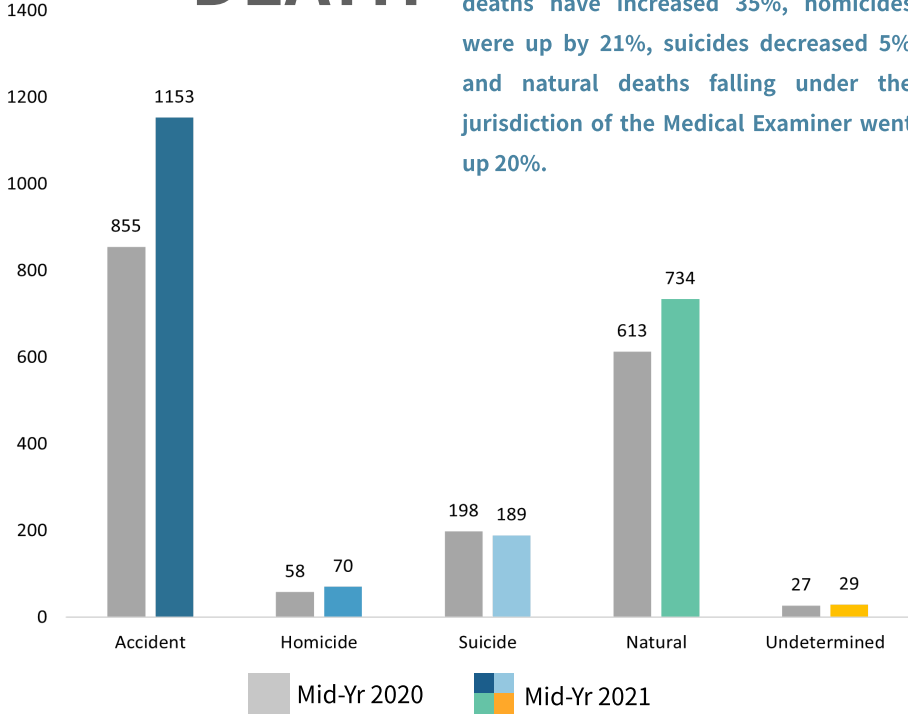
Accident
1,153
(+35%)

Homicide
70
(+21%)

Suicide
189
(-5%)

Natural
734
(+20%)

MANNER OF DEATH

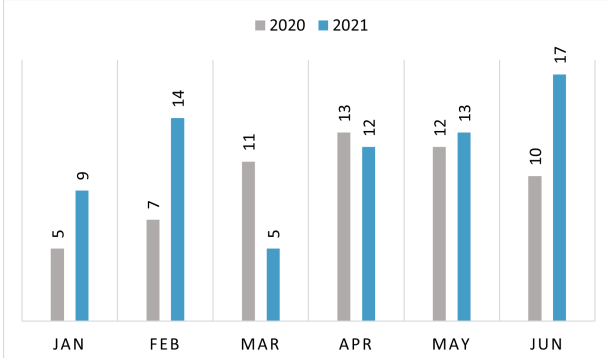


Comparing cases from mid-year 2020 to 2021, there was an overall increase of 25% in Medical Examiner Cases. Accidental deaths have increased 35%, homicides were up by 21%, suicides decreased 5% and natural deaths falling under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner went up 20%.

Homicides

↑ 20% INCREASE
(58 to 70)
mid-year 2020 to 2021

- 84% were male
- Average Age was 40.9
- Rates per 100,000 of Population**: Black: 11.3 (highest rate with 18 homicides); Native American 6.6 (1); Hispanic 1.9 (22); White 1.4 (21); Asian/Pacific Islander: 1.1 (4)
- Firearms continued to be the leading method of death in homicides, representing 59% of all such cases (41 of 70).



Natural Deaths

Only a relatively small number of Natural deaths occurring in the County fall under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner. Those that may be investigated include 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. A majority of these cases are Cardiovascular events which accounted for 62% of Natural deaths falling under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner.

Suicides

↓ 5% DECREASE
(198 to 189)
mid-year 2020 to 2021

Firearms continued to be the leading method of death, representing 36% of all suicide cases (68 of 189)

Coronado Bridge

There were 4 Coronado Bridge suicide deaths compared to 2 at mid-year 2020 (there were 11 at mid-year-2019)

- 76% were male
- Average Age was 49
- Rates per 100,000 of Population**: Biracial/Multiracial: 10.6 (highest rate with 12 suicides); White: 8.5 (130); Black: 4.4 (7); Asian/Pacific Islander: 3.3 (12); Hispanic: 2.3 (26)

COVID-19

Deaths due to COVID-19 are reportable to the Medical Examiner; however, in most cases the decedent's own doctor is able to complete the death certificate and the Medical Examiner is not further involved. In 2020 and through mid-year 2021, there have been 220 deaths that fell under the Medical Examiner's jurisdiction where COVID-19 was determined to be a causative or contributing factor in death.



ACCIDENTS

Unintentional Drug, Medication, and Alcohol Caused Deaths remained high, representing 56% of all accidental deaths as of mid-year 2021



- Unintentional deaths due to drug, medication, and/or alcohol toxicity increased by 67% (389 to 649)
- The average age was 44, the youngest was 17, and oldest was 78; 70% were male
- Methamphetamine was a causative factor in 57% of all unintentional overdose cases and saw a 82% increase (204 to 372)
- Deaths where Fentanyl was a causative factor increased by 149% (156 to 381)

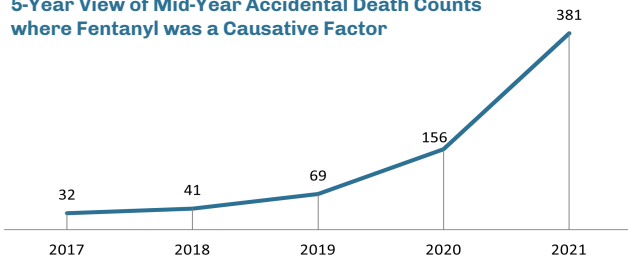
Note: Counts listed for Methamphetamine and Fentanyl include deaths where the drug either alone or with other drugs, medication and/or alcohol was a causative factor in death; these counts are not mutually exclusive and may include cases where both Fentanyl and Methamphetamine were a causative factor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

Accidental Fentanyl-Caused Overdose Deaths

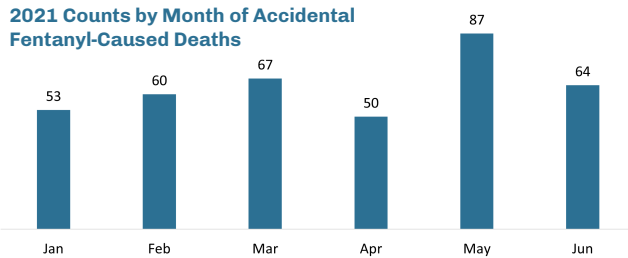
149% increase from Mid-Year 2020

Deaths due to fentanyl, either alone or with another drug, have continued to increase at a rapid rate, more than doubling at the mid-year point for both 2020 and 2021. In the previous decade deaths due to fentanyl often occurred when patients misused prescribed fentanyl. Now, deaths due to prescribed fentanyl are very uncommon, and most deaths result from people using illicitly obtained counterfeit pills made to resemble oxycodone or alprazolam, but instead containing deadly fentanyl.

5-Year View of Mid-Year Accidental Death Counts where Fentanyl was a Causative Factor



2021 Counts by Month of Accidental Fentanyl-Caused Deaths



FENTANYL DEATHS DECEDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- 81% male
- 57% white
- Highest rate: Black, 23.9 per 100,000
- 31 & 35 Most common ages (18 deaths each)
- 49% occurred at home
- 52% had also taken Meth

FALLS

Falls accounted for 21% of all accidental deaths as of Mid-Year 2021

Falls decreased 3% (248 to 240)



- Blunt Head Trauma, including subdural hematoma, remained the leading cause of fall-related deaths, accounting for 47% (112), a slight decrease of 3% compared to mid-year 2020 (115)
- Deaths resulting from Hip/Femur Fracture represented 31% (74) of Fall cases

Motor Vehicle Related Deaths

represented 15% of all accidental deaths as of Mid-Year 2021

Motor Vehicle related deaths saw a mid-year increase of 10% (156 to 172); these include solo vehicle accidents, auto vs auto, pedestrian, motorcycle, and auto vs fixed object.



Pedestrian deaths remained the leading type of Motor Vehicle related death at 30% (51); this was a 16% increase compared to the mid-year 2020 count of 44



Auto vs Auto cases increased 50% (28 to 42)



Motorcycle related deaths, including both solo and those involving another motor vehicle, saw a 50% increase (16 to 24)

5-Year View of Mid-Year Motor Vehicle Related Deaths

