



County of San Diego Department of the Medical Examiner Quarter 1 Comparison Report

Report time frame: Jan - Mar 2019

(comparing to: Jan - Mar 2018)

Total cases

878

(+9% from 807 in 2018)

Note: Q1 Total includes 3 cases pending closure and 3 cases still under investigation*

Accident

421

(+3%)

Homicide

24

(-17%)

Suicide

114

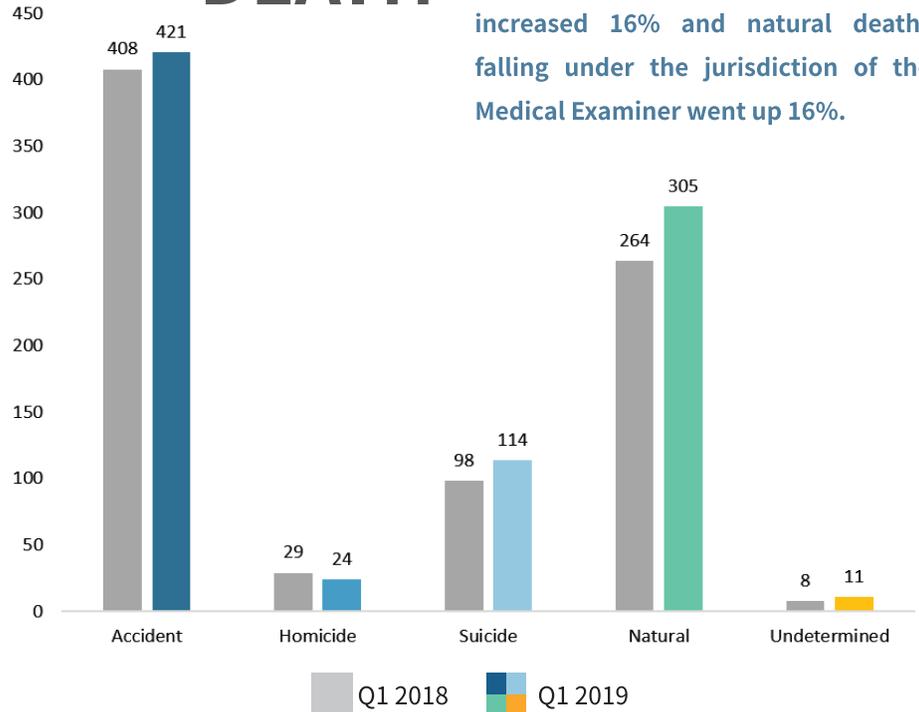
(+16%)

Natural

305

(+16%)

MANNER OF DEATH



Comparing Quarter 1 of 2018 to 2019, accidental deaths have increased 3%, homicides were down by 17%, suicides increased 16% and natural deaths falling under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner went up 16%.

Accidents

Unintentional Drug and Medication related deaths remained high, representing 37% of all accidental deaths in Q1 of 2019; Falls accounted for 33% and Motor Vehicle related accidental deaths were at 18% during the quarter.



- Unintentional deaths due to drug, medication, and/or alcohol toxicity increased by 3% in Q1 of 2019 compared to the same time period in 2018 (153 to 157)
- Methamphetamine was a causative factor in 59% of all overdose cases and saw a 26% increase in Q1 of 2019 compared to 2018
- Deaths where Fentanyl was a causative factor increased by nearly 12% (26 to 29)



- Falls increased 10% in Q1 of 2019 compared to 2018 (127 to 140), remaining a significant cause of accidental deaths, representing 33% of all such cases
- Blunt Head Trauma continues to be the leading cause of Fall-related deaths, accounting for 36% of these cases. Comparing Q1 of 2019 to 2018, there was a 43% increase in Blunt Head Trauma deaths (35 to 50)
- Fall related deaths resulting from Hip/Femur Fracture decreased by 30% (43 to 30)



- Motor Vehicle related deaths saw an overall decrease of 14% (85 to 73)
- Fatalities involving Auto vs Auto accidents increased 10% (20 to 22) and represented the largest share of motor vehicle-related deaths at 30%
- Motor vehicle cases resulting in pedestrian death saw a 42% decline in Q1 2019 compared to 2018 (31 to 18)
- Motorcycle related deaths, including both solo and those involving another motor vehicle, saw a 50% increase (10 to 15)

Homicides

17%
DECREASE

In 54% of cases the method was a firearm

Suicides

- In Quarter 1 of 2019, there was a 16% increase in suicides compared to Quarter 1 of 2018
- During this time period, firearms continued to be the leading method of suicide, accounting for 38% of all such cases, followed by Asphyxia at 30%
- There were 7 Coronado Bridge deaths in Quarter 1 of 2019 compared to 4 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 within the quarter, manner of death counts and associated insights may adjust slightly as those cases are closed.