



TRAVIS COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER ANNUAL REPORT 2025



www.traviscountytexas.gov/medical-examiner

7723 Springdale Road
Austin, Texas 78724
Tel: (512) 854-9599

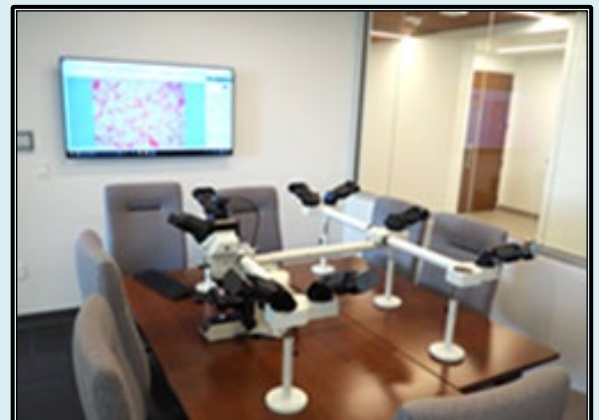
TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| ABOUT OUR OFFICE | 3 |
| Introduction | 3 |
| Accreditation | 4 |
| Staffing | 5 |
| ABOUT OUR WORK | 6 |
| Case Jurisdiction | 6 |
| Reportable Deaths | 7 |
| Case Designation | 8 |
| ABOUT OUR CASES | 9 |
| Deaths Reported | 9 |
| Demographics | 10 |
| Scene Investigations | 11 |
| Exam Types | 12 |
| Manner of Death | 13 |
| Homicides | 15 |
| Suicides | 16 |
| Accidents | 17 |
| Natural Deaths | 22 |
| Child Fatalities | 25 |
| Drug Toxicity Deaths | 28 |
| Transient Deaths | 33 |
| In-Custody Deaths | 34 |
| Unidentified Decedents | 35 |
| Community Involvement | 36 |

ABOUT OUR OFFICE

Introduction

The Travis County Medical Examiner's Office (TCME) provides medicolegal death investigations for Travis County, Texas, and 49 surrounding counties. Travis County is part of the Austin-Round Rock metropolitan area and covers 989 square miles of land and 33 square miles of water. The county seat is Austin, which is also the capital of Texas. In 2025, the population of Travis County was approximately 1,379,674. In January of 2018, TCME moved into a new state-of-the-art facility located at 7723 Springdale Road. The two-story building has an open design that enhances natural lighting and has a computed tomography scanner, enabling advanced imaging technology. Effective July 1, 2016, with institutional sponsorship from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, TCME obtained accreditation for a one-year forensic pathology fellowship training program from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). TCME is one of 51 medical examiner's offices in the country accredited to provide the final year of subspecialty training needed to become a forensic pathologist.



Accreditation

Our office first became accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) in 2009 and has continued to maintain accreditation since that time. In addition to scheduled accreditation visits, NAME also requires that a yearly self-assessment be submitted to the accrediting authority of the organization.



For more information on NAME, click the following links:

<https://www.thename.org/>

<https://www.thename.org/inspection-accreditation>

The Travis County Medical Examiner's Toxicology Laboratory first achieved accreditation by the American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT) in 2005 and has maintained accreditation since. In 2024, our Toxicology Laboratory was accredited by the ANSI National Accreditation Board for ISO/IEC 17025:2017.

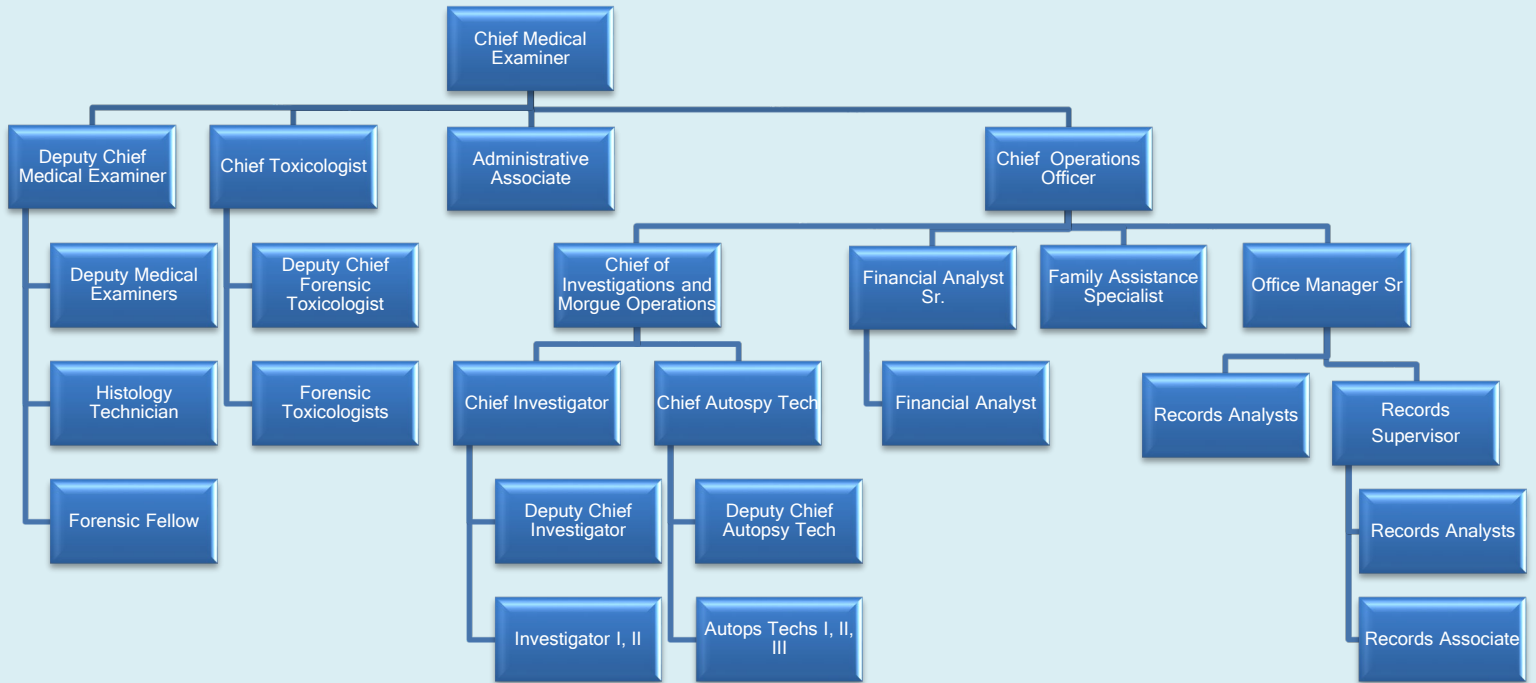


For more information on toxicology accreditation, click on the following links:

<https://www.abft.org/>

[ANSI National Accreditation Board | ANAB](#)

OFFICE STAFFING



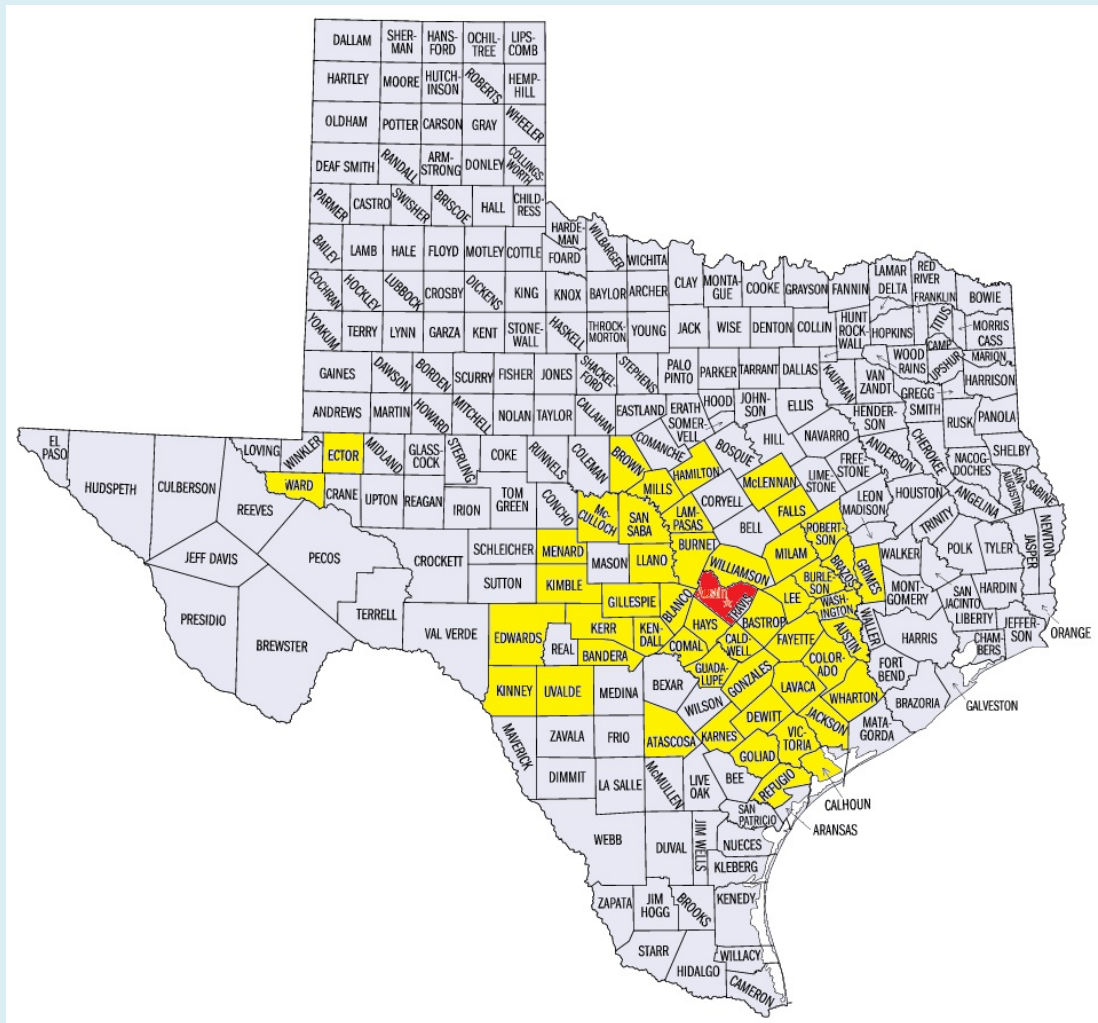
In 2025, TCME was staffed by 61 employees and was composed of the following departments: Pathology, Investigations, Morgue, Toxicology, and Administration.

- There were ten forensic pathologist positions at TCME, including the Chief Medical Examiner, the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, and eight Deputy Medical Examiners. There was one forensic fellow and a histology technician.
- There were fifteen positions in the Investigations Department, including the Chief Investigator and the Deputy Chief Investigator.
- In the Morgue Department, there were twelve employees, including the Chief Autopsy Technician, a Deputy Chief Autopsy Technician, and ten Autopsy Technicians.
- In the Toxicology Department, both the Chief Toxicologist and the Deputy Chief Toxicologist hold Ph.D. degrees. There were five Forensic Toxicologists.
- The Chief Operations Officer oversees Investigations, Morgue, and Administration. The Administration Department includes Office Support, Finance, Human Resources and Record Management. There were fourteen employees in the Administration Department.

ABOUT OUR WORK

Case Jurisdiction

The Travis County Medical Examiner's Office is responsible for the investigation and certification of cause and manner of death of all sudden, unexpected, violent, suspicious, or unnatural deaths that occur in Travis County. The cause of death is a disease, injury, drug toxicity, or combination of factors that causes a physiologic derangement severe enough to result in death. The manner of death refers to the circumstances surrounding how the death came about and is divided into five categories: natural, accident, suicide, homicide, and undetermined. TCME provides medical examiner services to 49 Texas counties at the written request of the local authorities.



Red -Travis County

Yellow -Counties served by TCME through Interlocal Agreements

Reportable Deaths

Pursuant to the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 49.25, TCME has jurisdiction over the following deaths that occur within the boundaries of Travis County:

- When a person dies while in prison or in jail;
- When any person is killed; or from any cause dies an unnatural death, except under sentence of the law; or dies in the absence of one or more good witnesses;
- When the body or a body part of a person is found, the cause or circumstances of death are unknown, and:
 - The person is identified; or
 - The person is unidentified;
- When the circumstances of the death of any person are such as to lead to suspicion that he/she came to his/her death by unlawful means;
- When any person commits suicide, or the circumstances of his death are such as to lead to suspicion that he/she committed suicide.
- When a person dies within twenty-four hours after admission to a hospital;
- When a person dies without having been attended by a duly licensed and practicing physician, and the local health officer or registrar required to report the cause of death under Section 193.005, Health and Safety Code, does not know the person's likely cause of death;
- When the person is a child who is younger than six years of age and the death is reported under Chapter 264, Family Code, and;
- When a person dies who has been attended immediately preceding his death by a duly licensed and practicing physician, and the physician is not able to certify with reasonable certainty the cause of death as required by Section 193.004, Health and Safety Code.

Process

Local deaths (those that occur within the boundaries of Travis County) that fall under TCME's jurisdiction and require a postmortem examination are transported to TCME by a contract body transport company. In certain cases, a TCME investigator may attend the death scene in person and perform a preliminary examination of the body. An investigator usually attends all homicides, suicides, accidental deaths, and select natural deaths. An investigator is on staff and available 24 hours/day, 365 days/year. TCME investigators do not physically perform scene investigations on cases that are reported to them from outside of the physical boundaries of Travis County. In these cases, the pertinent investigative information is collected over the telephone. On cases referred from outside of Travis County, an autopsy must be ordered by the referring Justice of the Peace and the body is transported to and from TCME by a funeral home or mortuary company at the request of the referring Justice of the Peace.

Not all bodies brought to TCME for examination are autopsied. The Medical Examiner may choose to either perform a complete autopsy or to perform an external examination only.

Partial autopsies are not performed at TCME. In all autopsies and external examinations that do not consist of skeletal remains, blood and vitreous fluid specimens are collected. Toxicological analysis is performed on the vast majority of cases that are autopsied and on only select external examination cases.

Body Transport

Travis County contracts with a company to provide transport services to our office on deaths that occur within the boundaries of Travis County. In 2025, 1593 bodies in Travis County were transported using our contracted provider. Some cases, such as skeletal remains, are transported by death investigators. Out-of-county cases are transported by funeral homes retained by the referring Justice of the Peace or family.

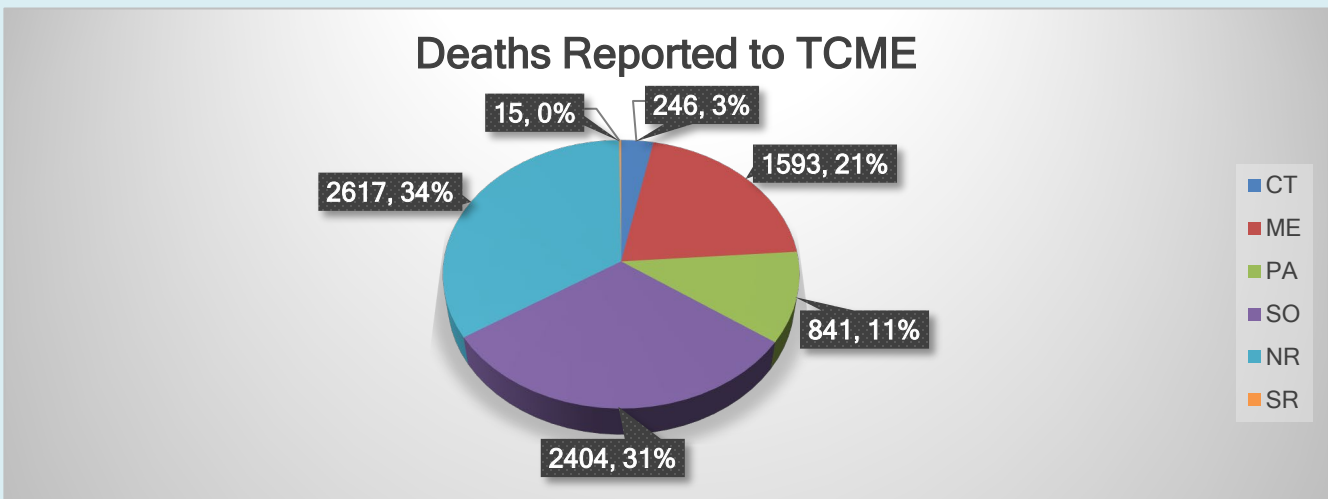
Case Designation

Investigative reports are generated on all cases that fall under the jurisdiction of TCME. All deaths that occur within the boundaries of Travis County that are brought to TCME for examination (whether they are autopsied or not) are given the designation of 'ME' before the case number. All cases referred to TCME from outside Travis County are given the designation of 'PA' before the case number. If TCME delegates death certification to a treating physician on a case, it is given the designation of 'SO' before the case number. If a case is reported to our office that does not fall within our jurisdiction, it is given the designation of 'NR.' Occasionally, a death occurring within the boundaries of Travis County is not reported to TCME when it should have been. The body may have already been buried or cremated. If the death can be adequately certified by review of the decedent's medical records and other investigation without physically viewing and examining the body, the case is given the designation of 'CT' before the case number. All cases are collectively numbered sequentially beginning January 1 of each year. If the case consists of nonhuman remains (animal remains), it is given the designation of 'SR' before the case number.

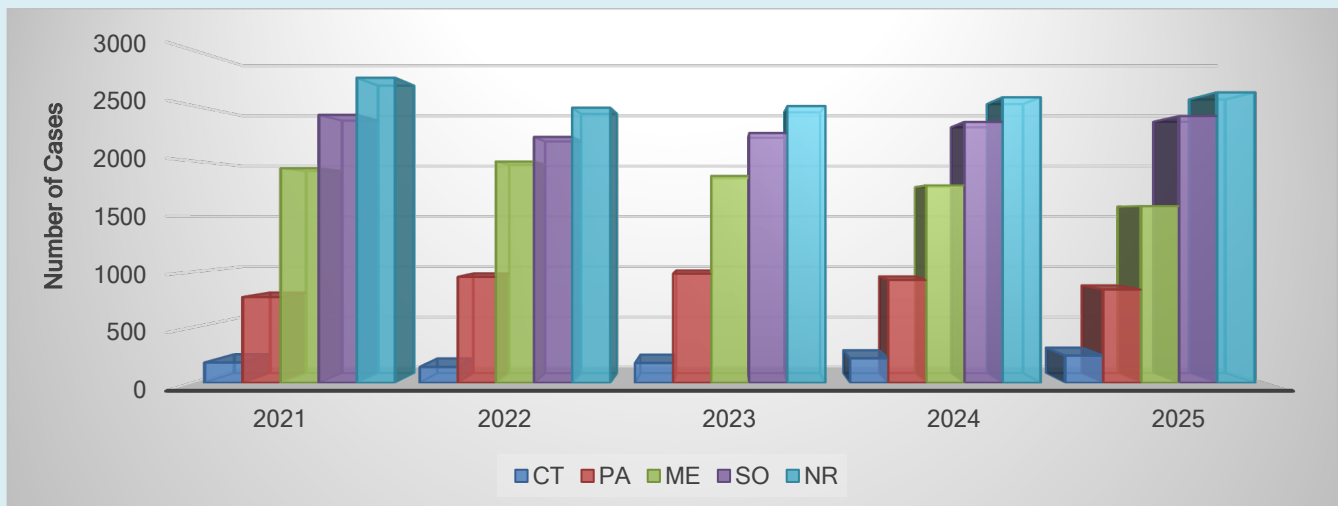
ABOUT OUR CASES

Deaths Reported in 2025

In 2025, 7716 cases were reported to TCME. Every referral requires a preliminary screening by TCME investigative staff to determine if it falls under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner. Of those cases, 1593 were Travis County deaths that fell under the Medical Examiner jurisdiction and the bodies were physically examined at TCME (ME cases). 246 cases were Travis County deaths that fell under the Medical Examiner jurisdiction, but for various reasons, the bodies were not physically examined at TCME (CT cases). 2404 cases were Travis County deaths that fell under the Medical Examiner jurisdiction and were reported to TCME, but certification of the death was delegated to the decedent’s treating physician (SO cases). TCME received reports of death on 2617 cases in Travis County that did not fall within its jurisdiction (NR cases). TCME received a total of 841 cases from outside of Travis County for examination (PA cases), and a total referral of 15 cases that proved to be nonhuman skeletal remains (SR cases). TCME does not perform hospital (family consented) autopsies. There were no exhumations.

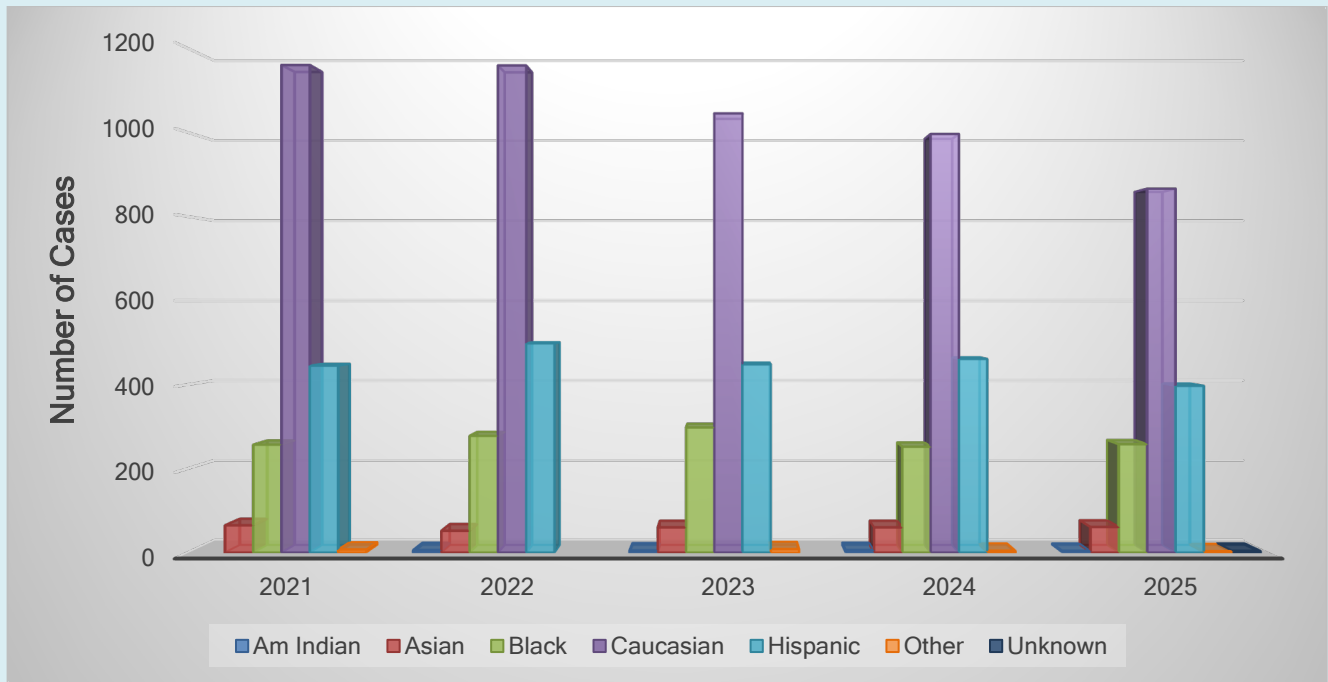


Deaths Reported: 2021-2025

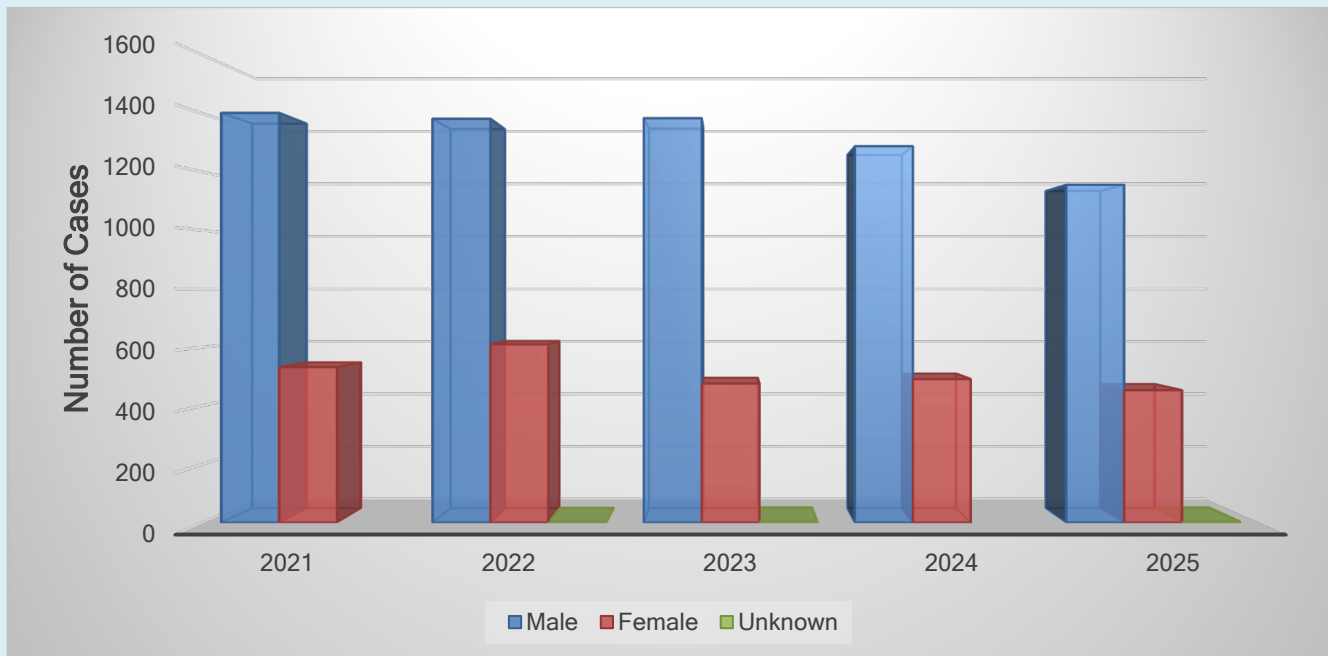


Demographic Information in Travis County (Cases Examined)

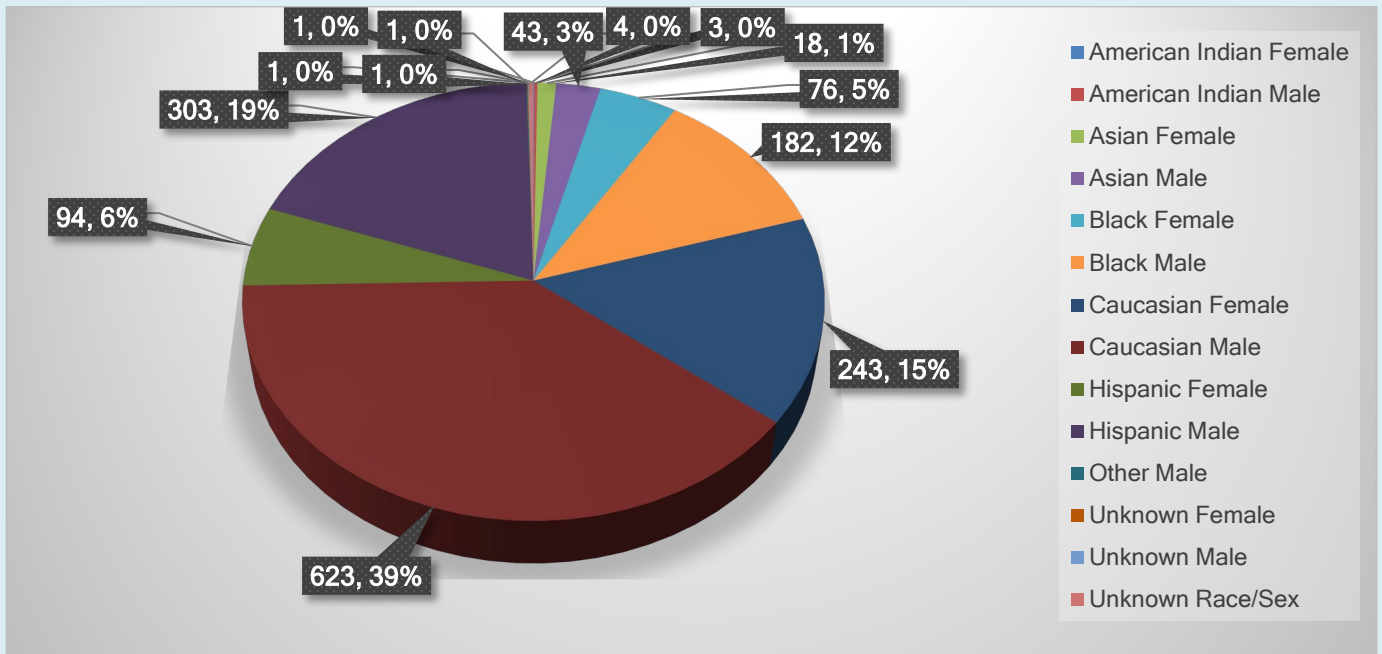
Decedent Race Trends: 2021-2025



Decedent Sex Trends: 2021-2025



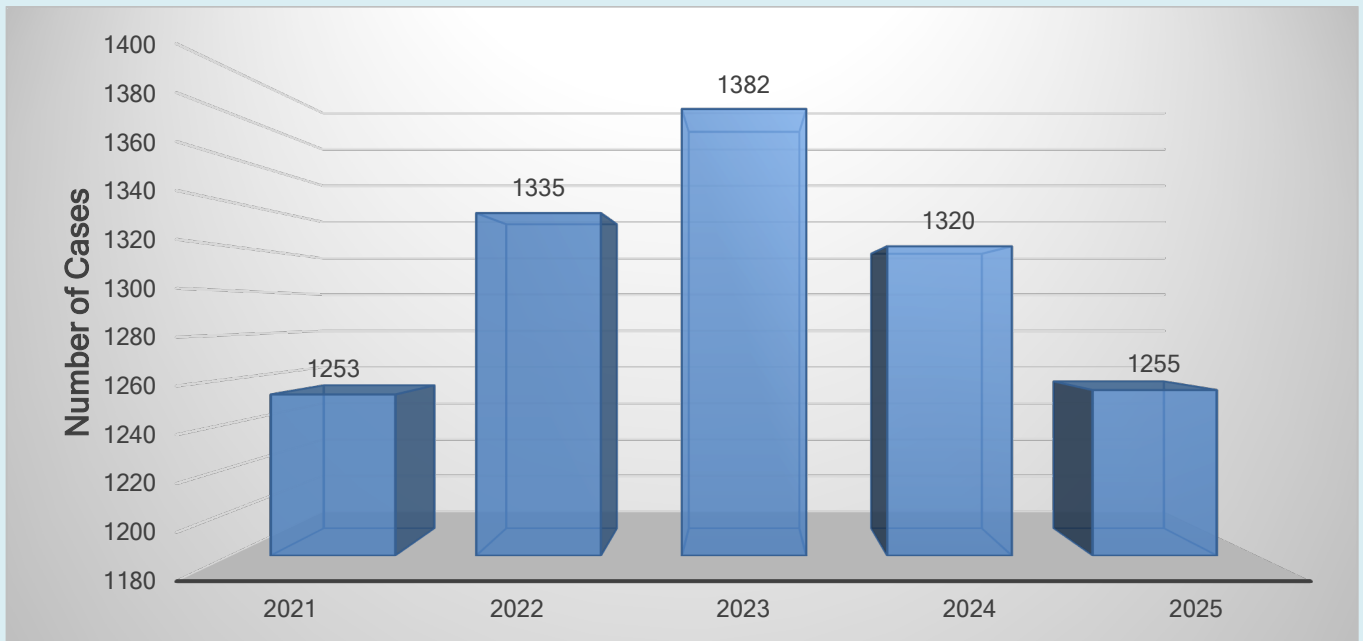
Breakdown by Decedent Race and Sex in Travis County – 2025



Scene Investigations – 2025

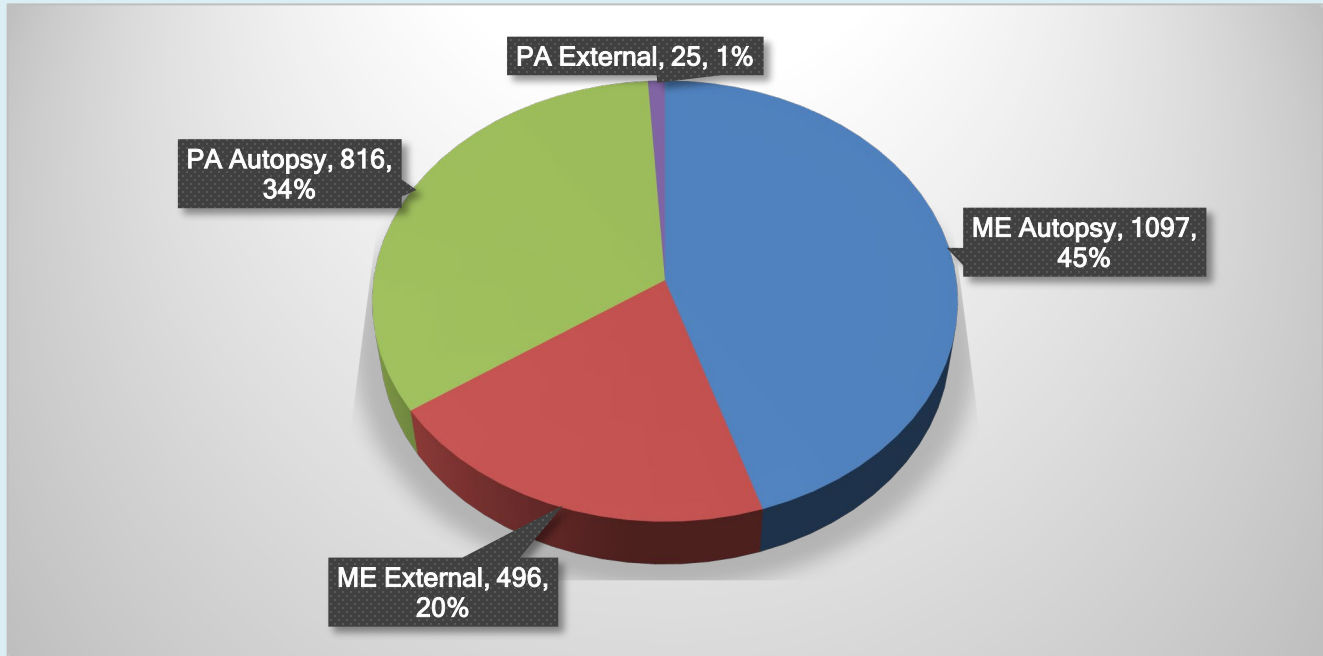
Scene investigation is an important component of a proper medicolegal death investigation. TCME forensic investigators attended 1255 death scenes in Travis County in 2025. TCME investigators do not typically attend death scenes that are located outside of Travis County boundaries or when a decedent dies in a medical facility, such as a hospital. Types of scenes investigated include all suspected homicides, suicides, accidental deaths and select cases suspected to have died of natural disease.

Trends in Numbers of Scene Investigations: 2021-2025

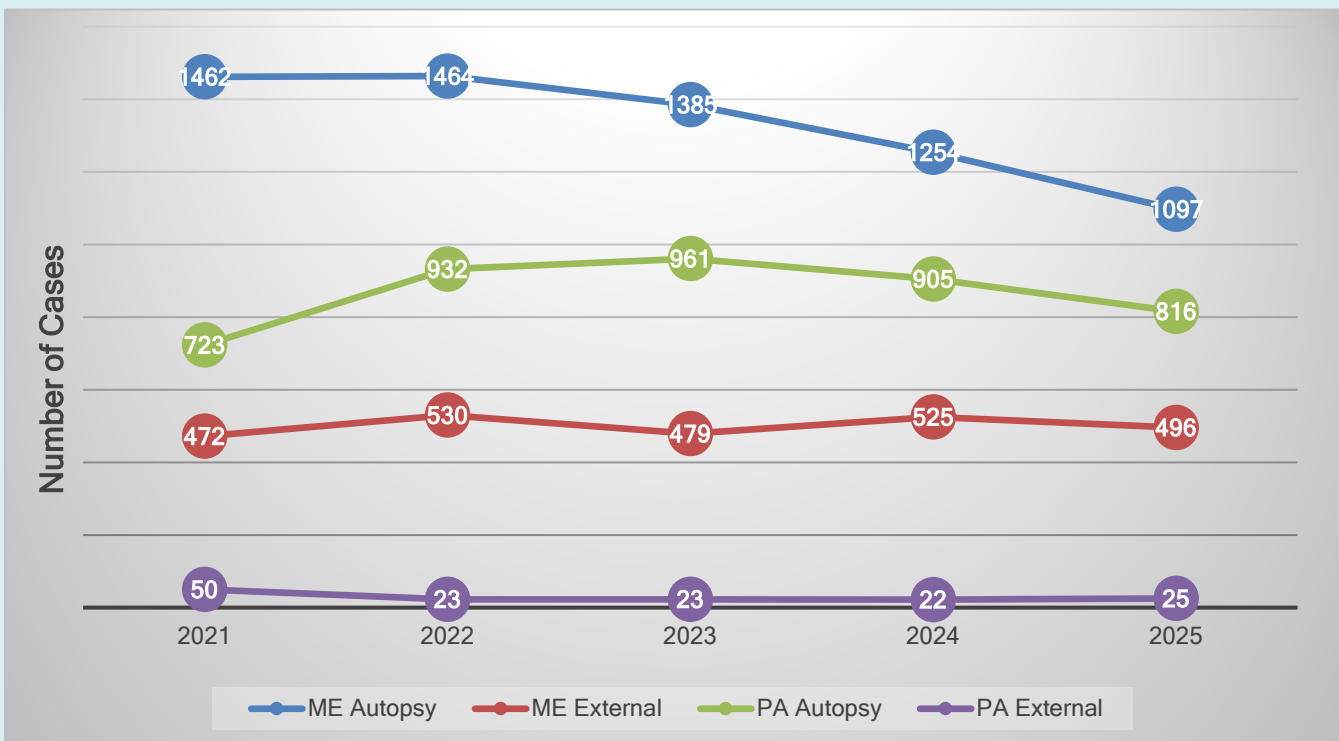


Exam Types in 2025

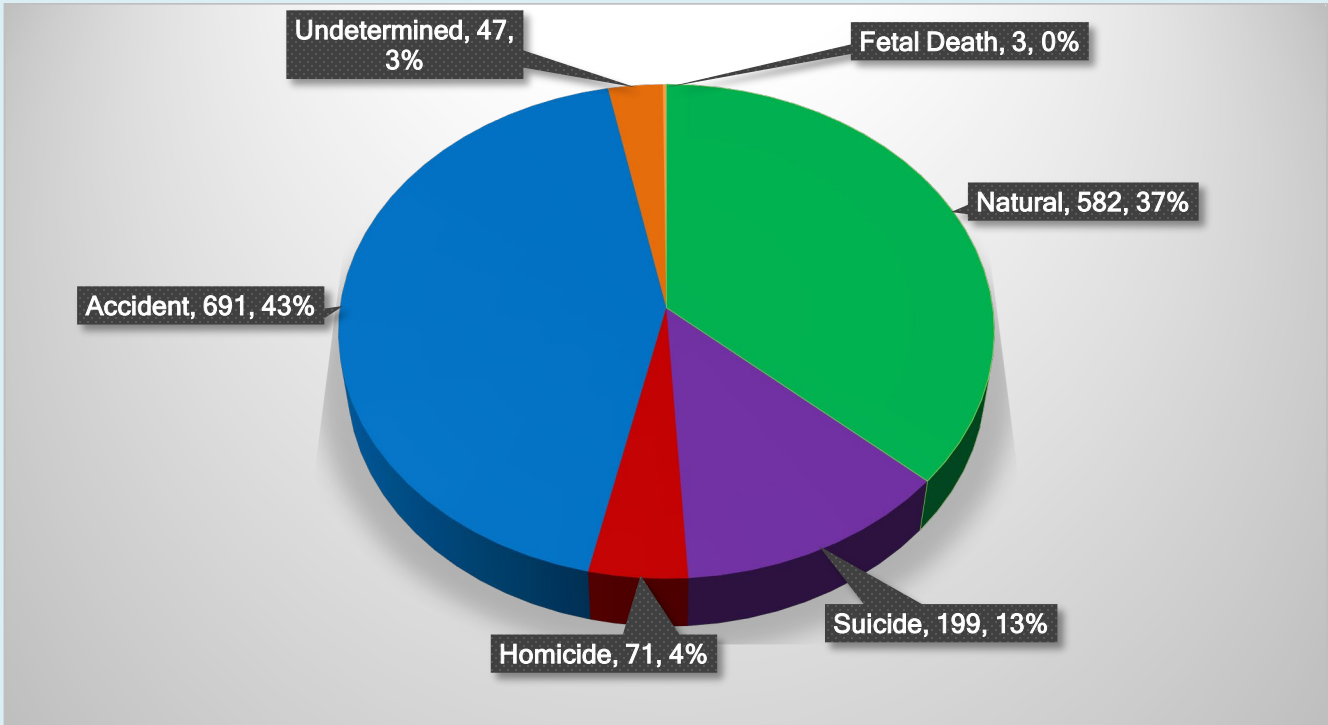
The autopsy numbers represent complete autopsies. Partial autopsies are not performed at our office. Bodies that come to our office based on jurisdiction that are not autopsied (but are visually examined) are called external examinations.



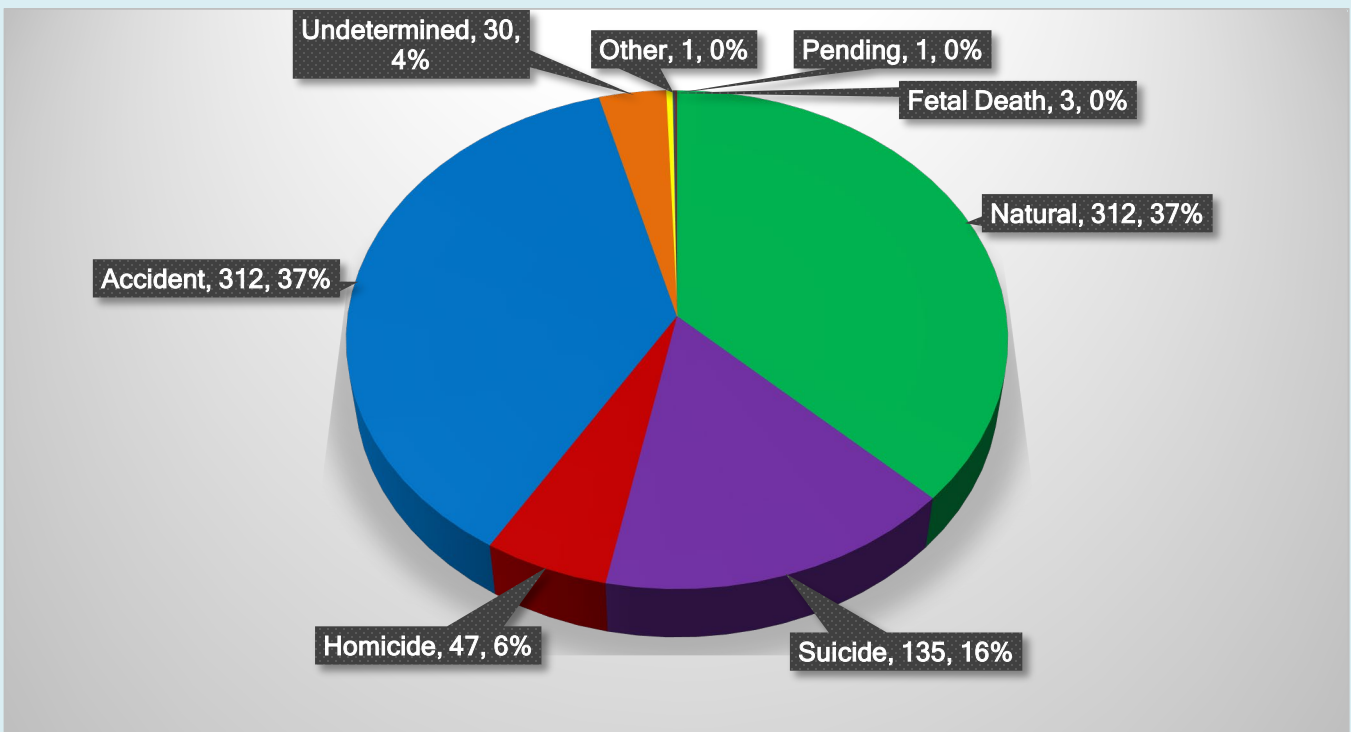
Autopsy and External Examination Trends: 2021-2025



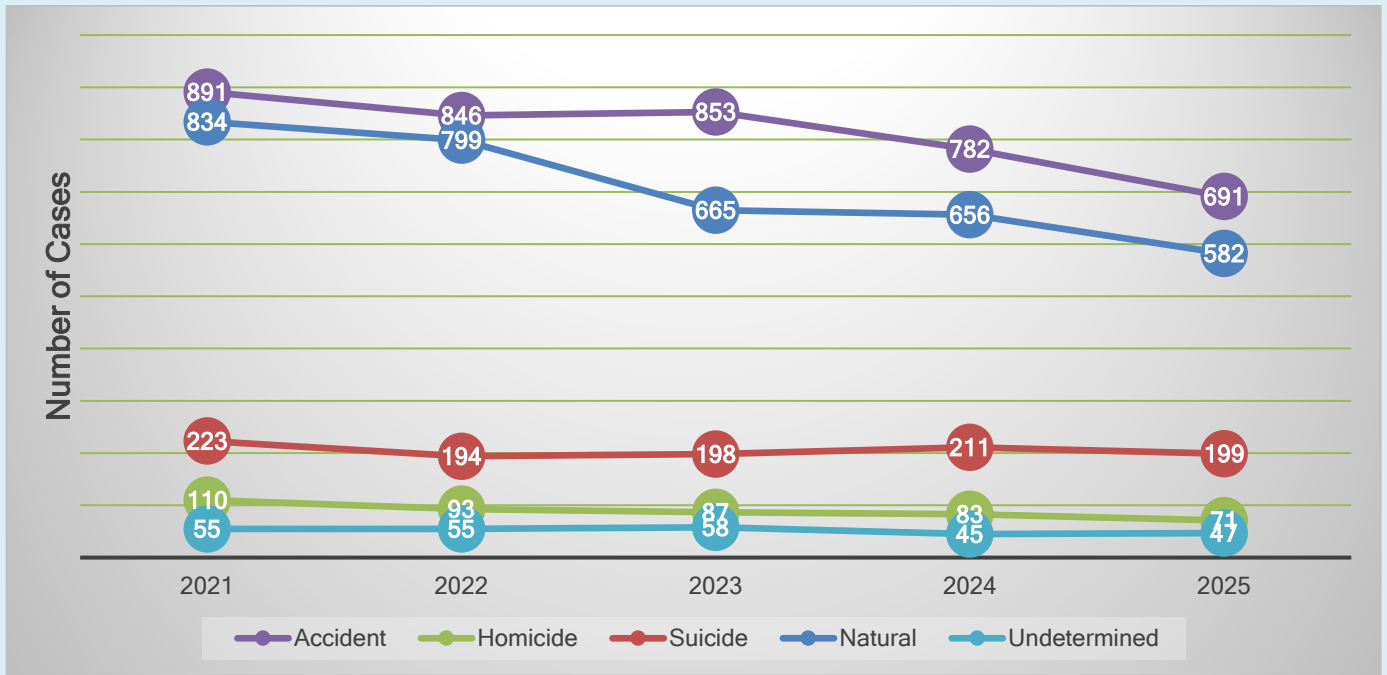
Manner of Death in Cases Examined in Travis County Cases – 2025



Manner of Death in Out-of-County Cases – 2025

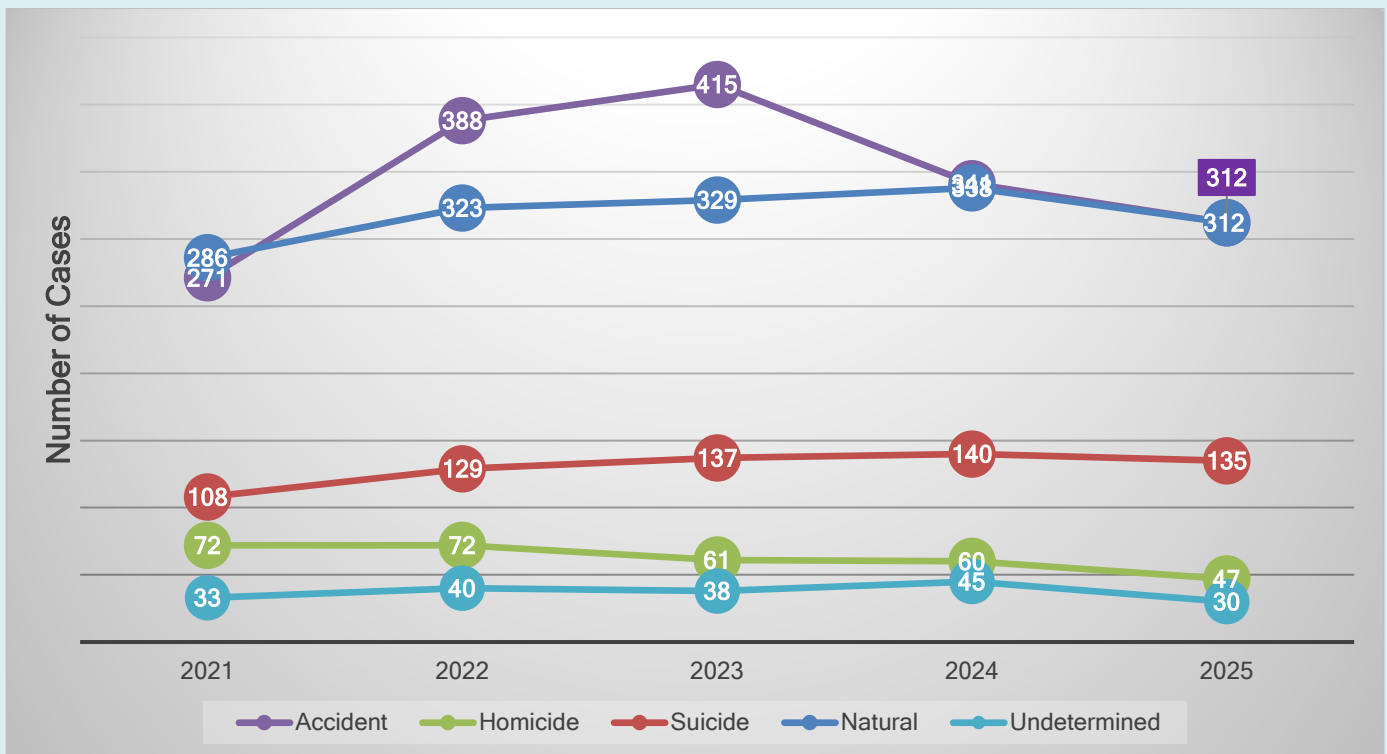


Trends in Manner of Death in Travis County Cases: 2021-2025



*Three fetal deaths

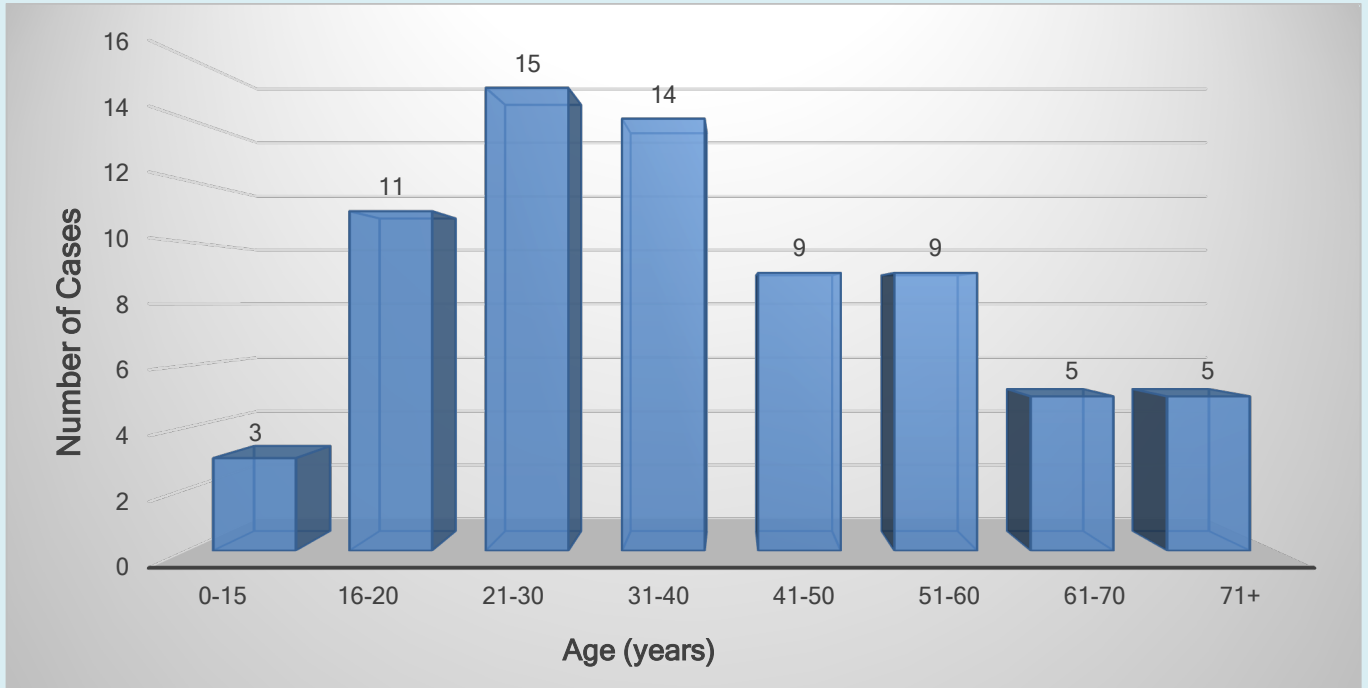
Trends in Manner of Death in Out-of-County Cases: 2021-2025



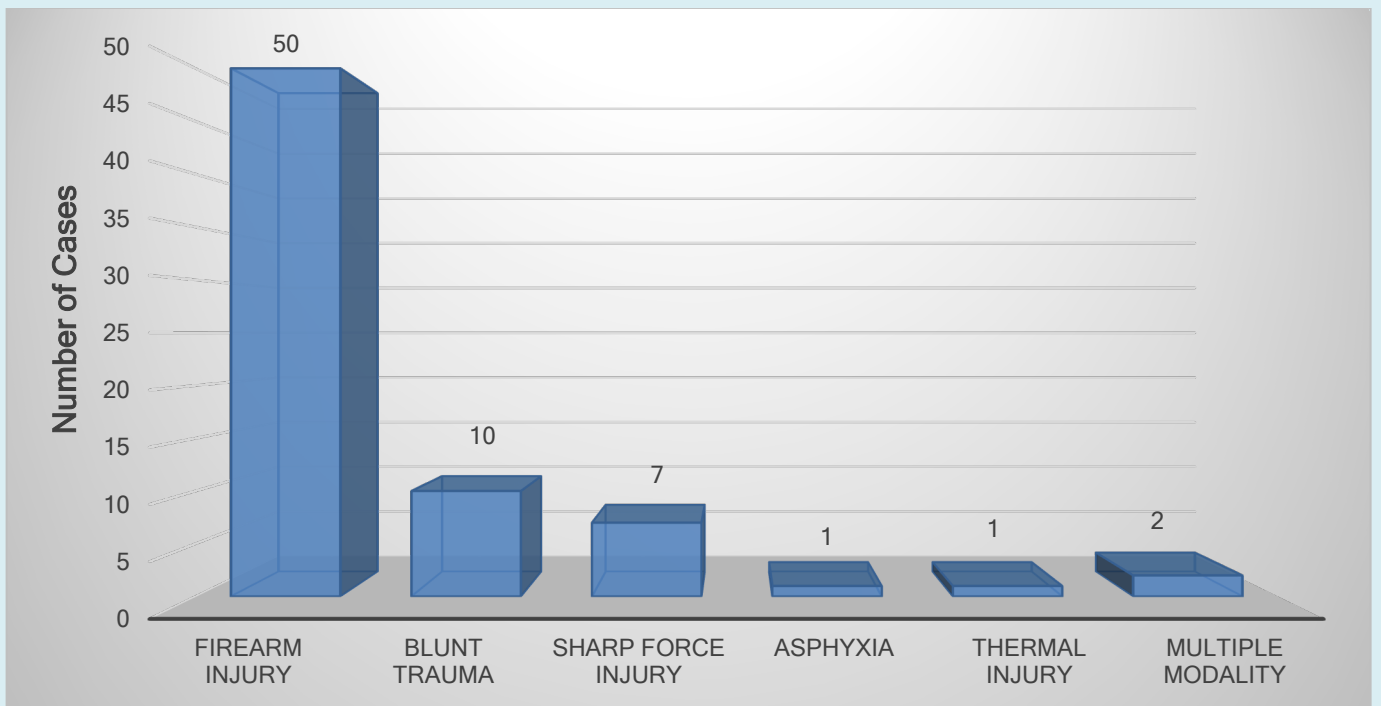
*Two fetal deaths **One other

Homicides in Travis County – 2025

By Age

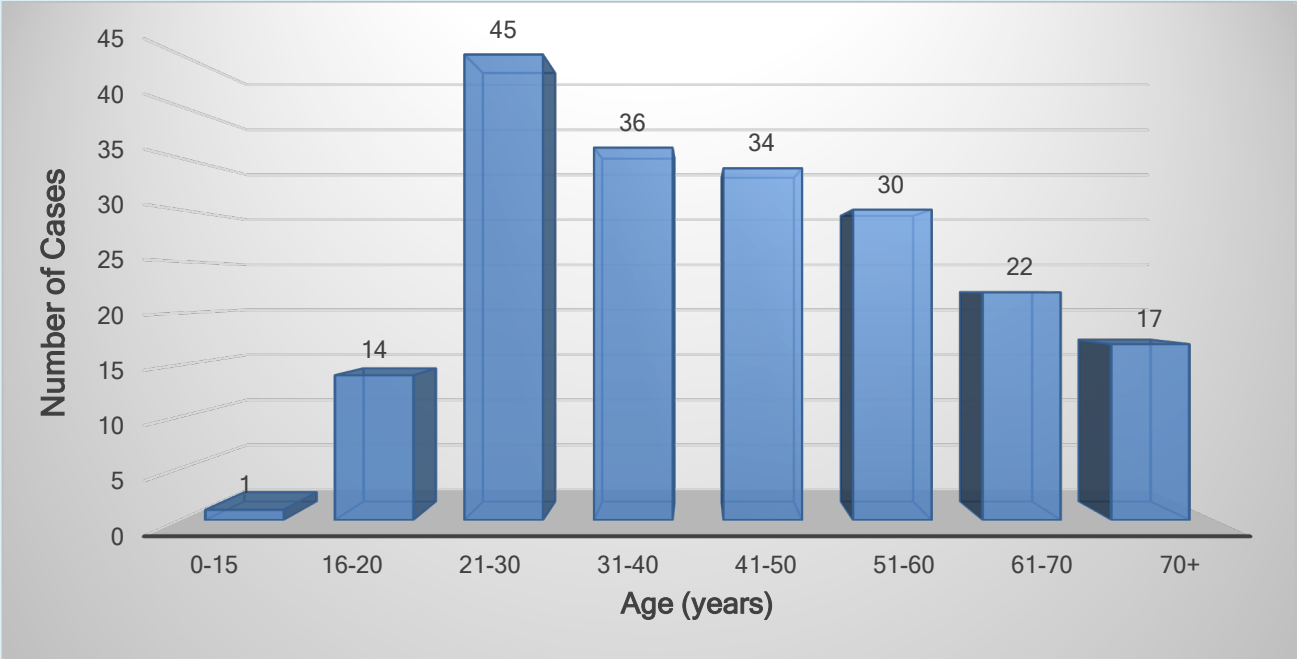


By Injury Type

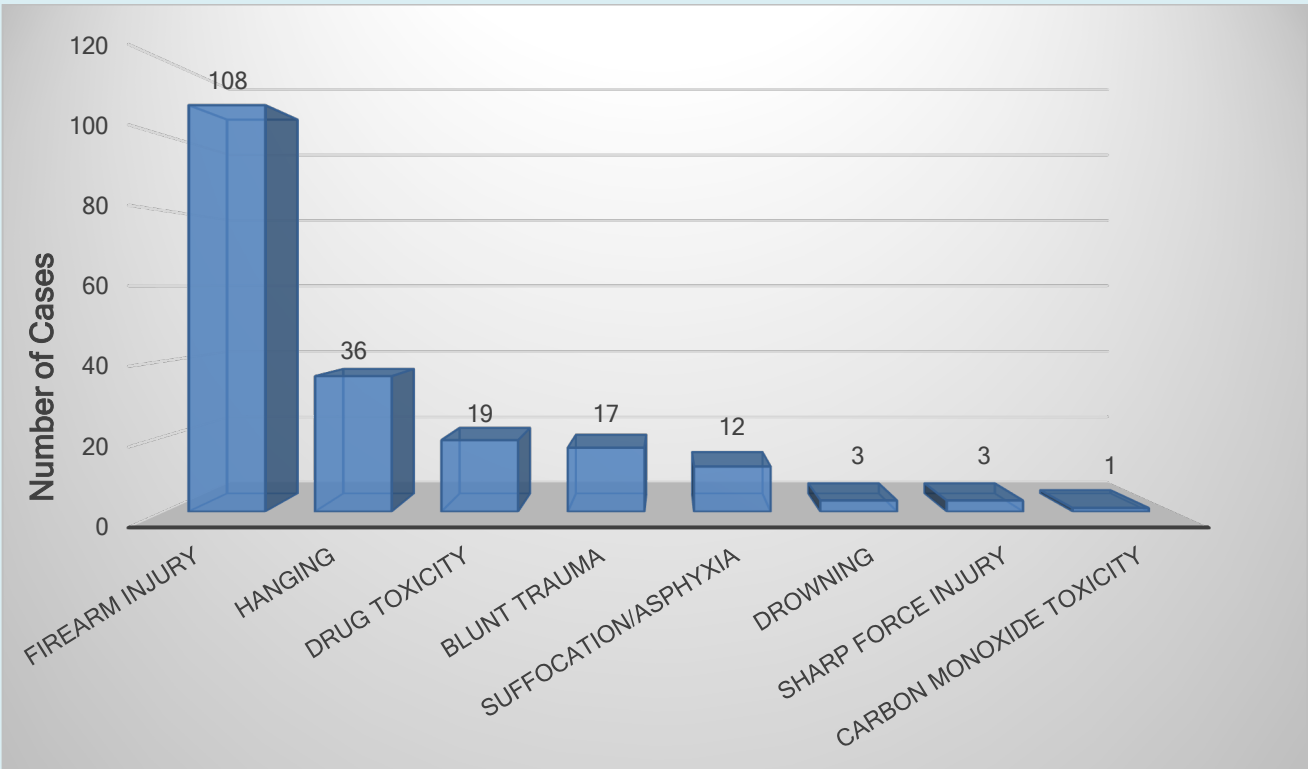


Suicides in Travis County – 2025

By Age

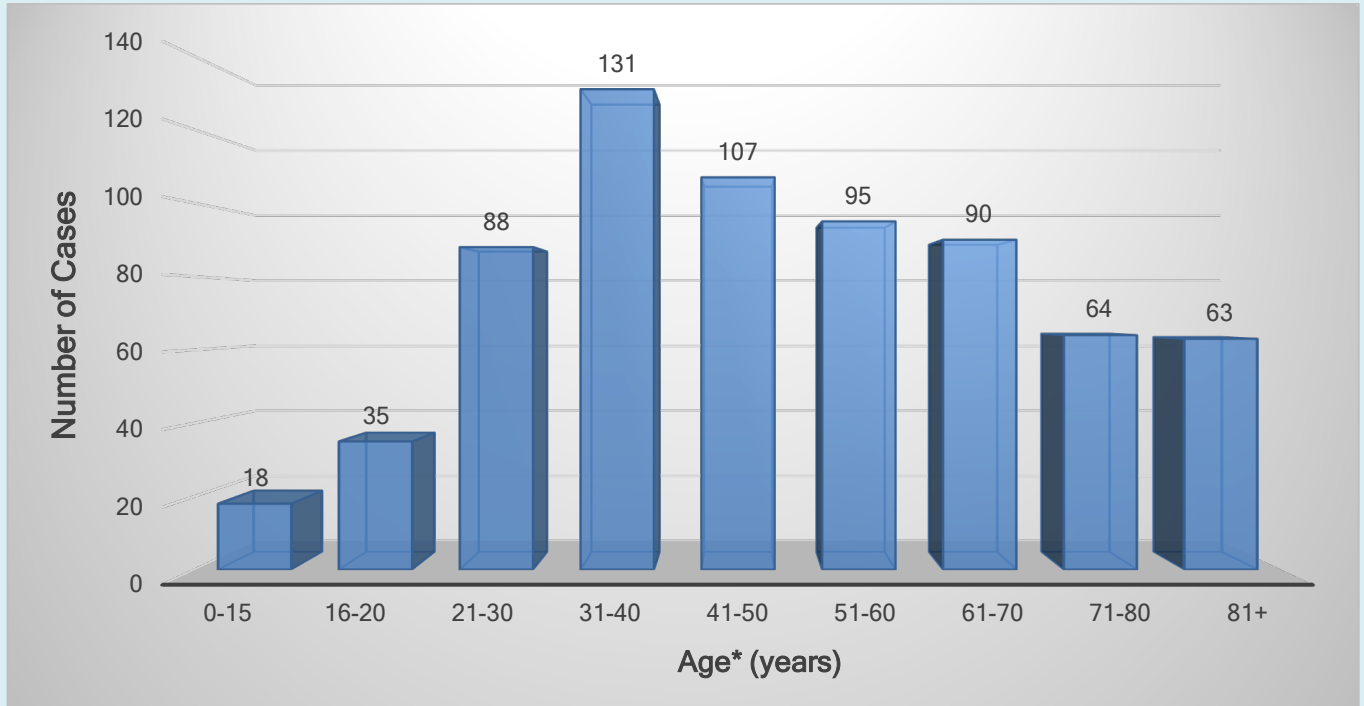


By Injury Type



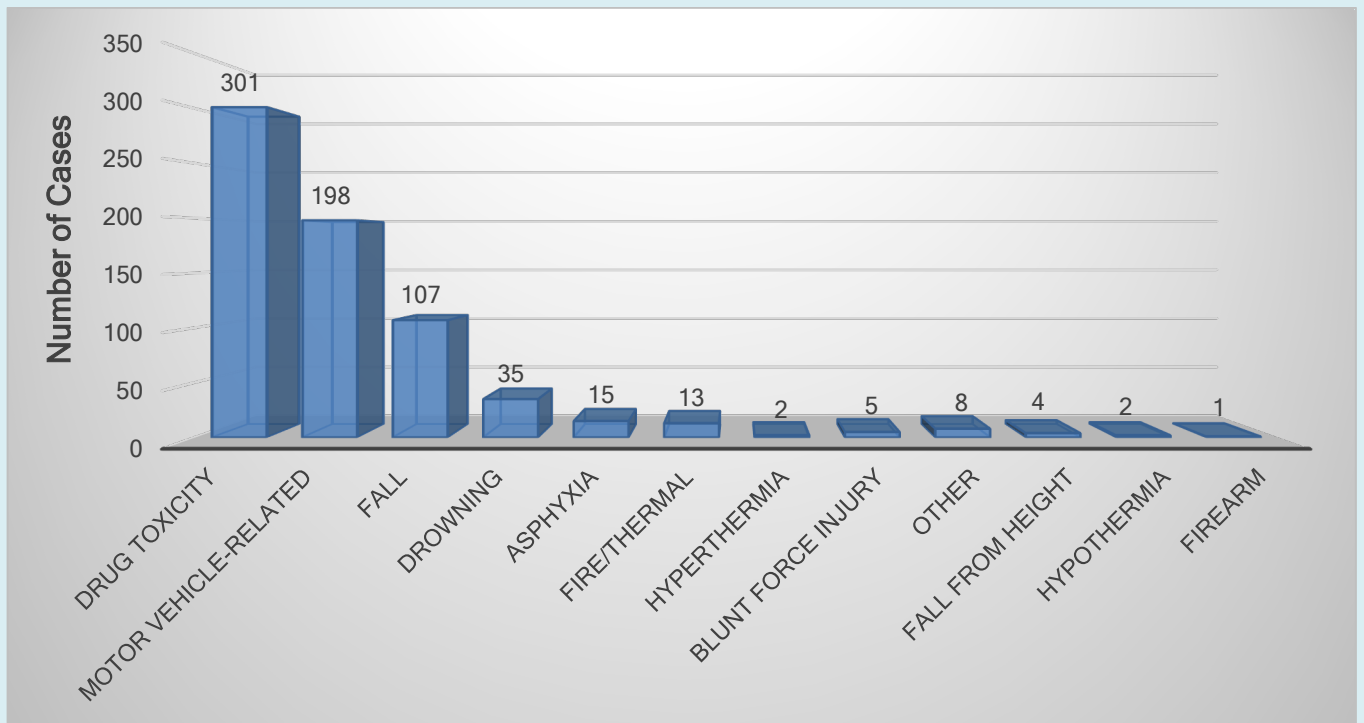
Accidental Deaths Examined in Travis County – 2025

By Age

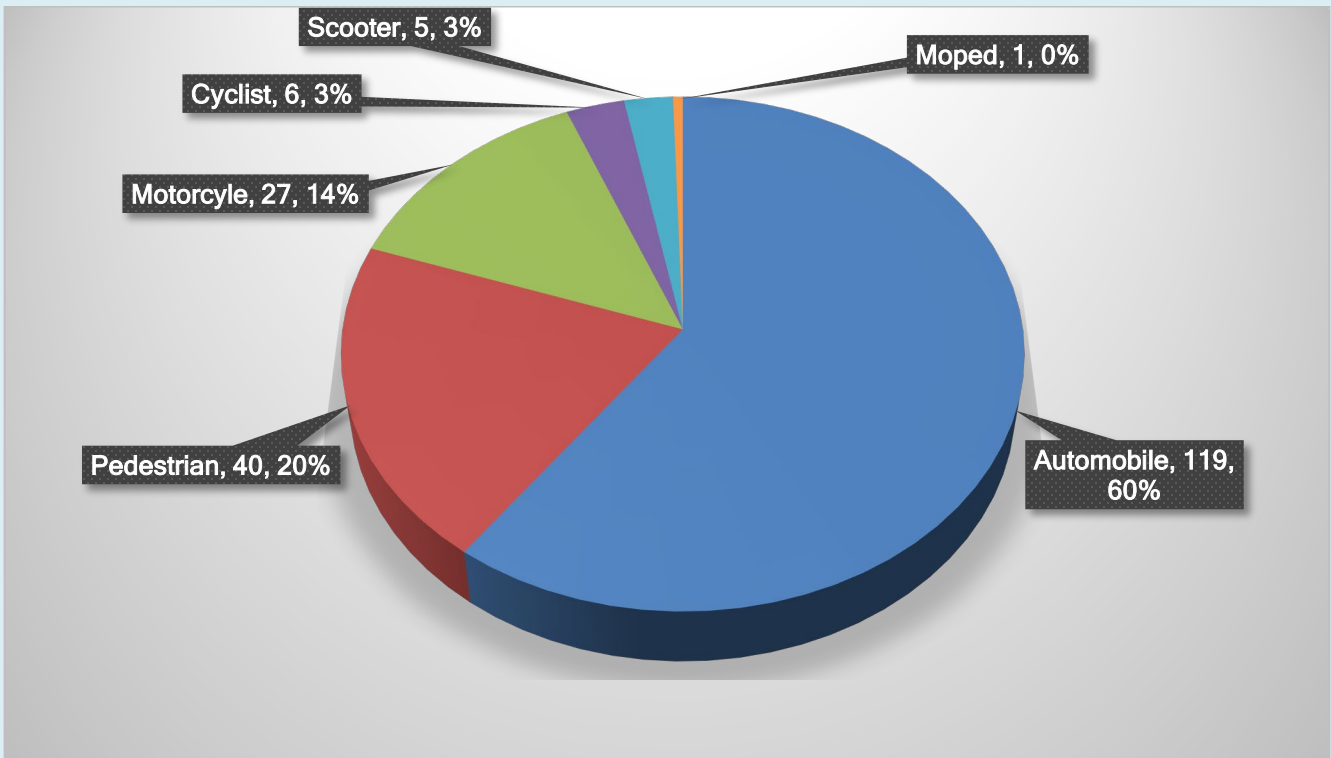


*One unidentified

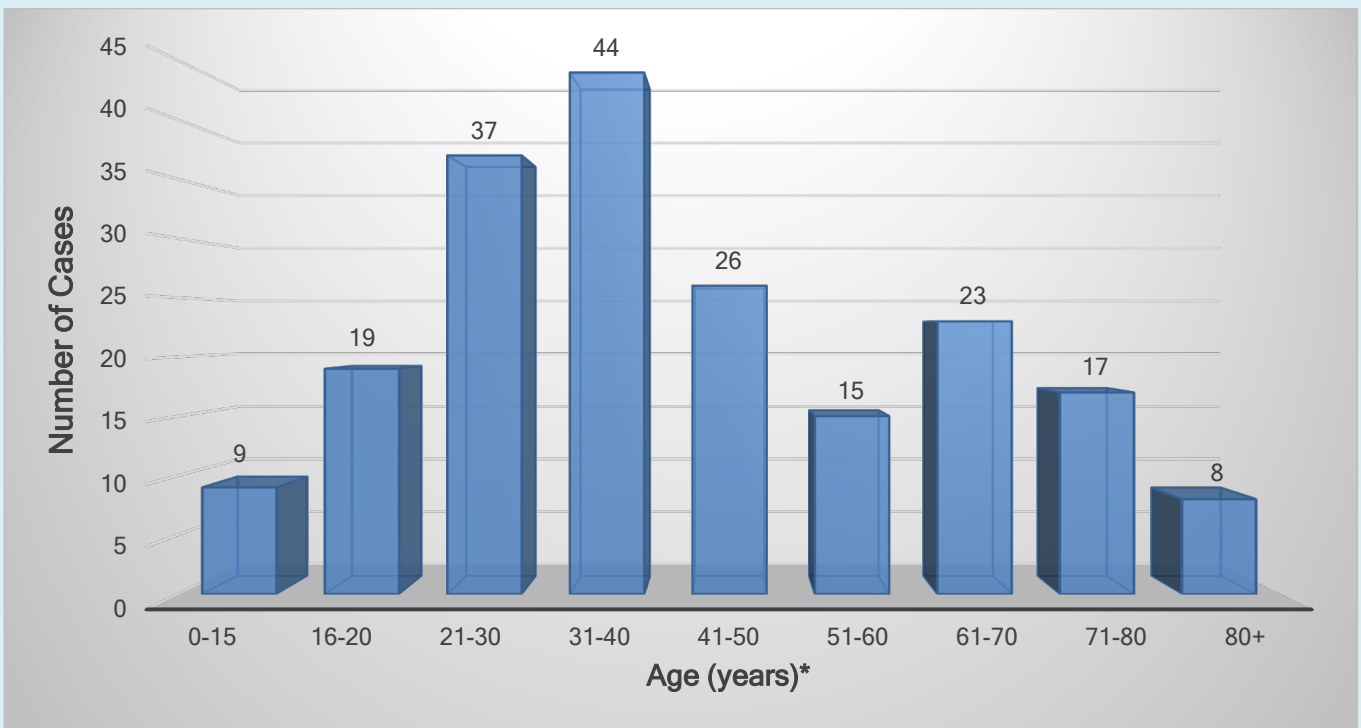
By Injury Type



Motor Vehicle-Related Fatalities in Travis County – 2025



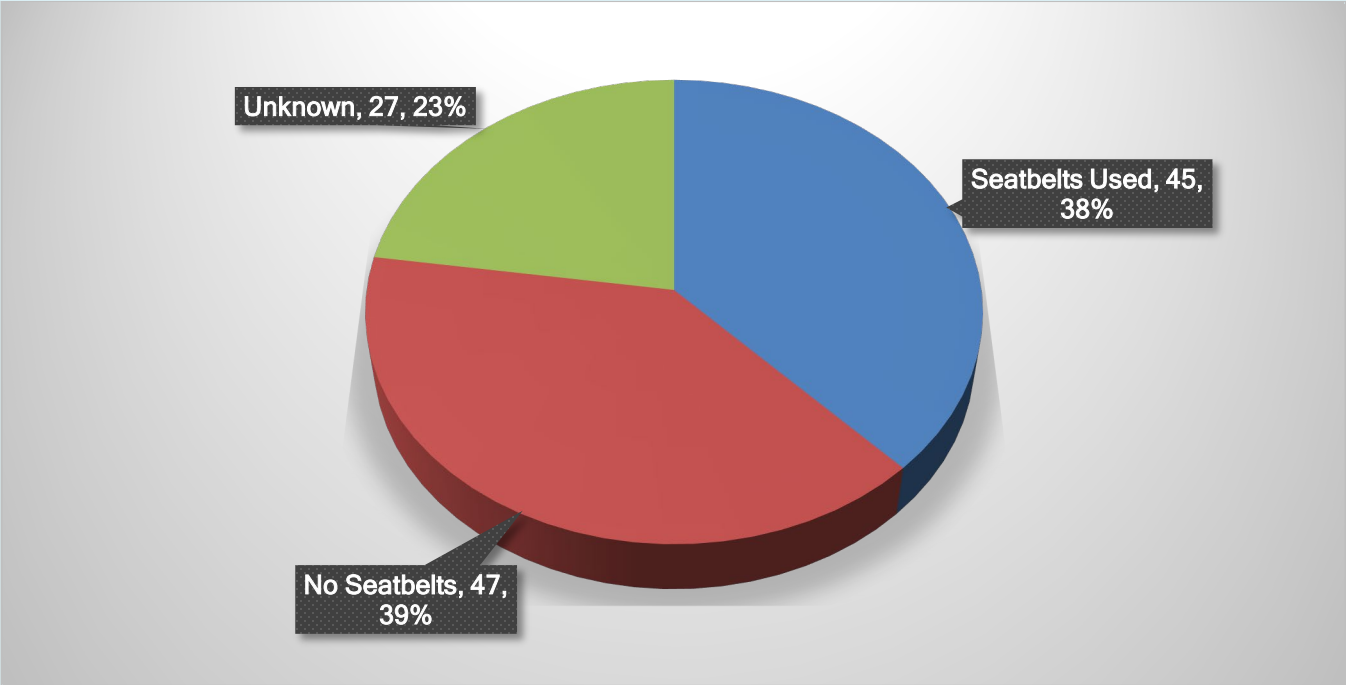
By Age



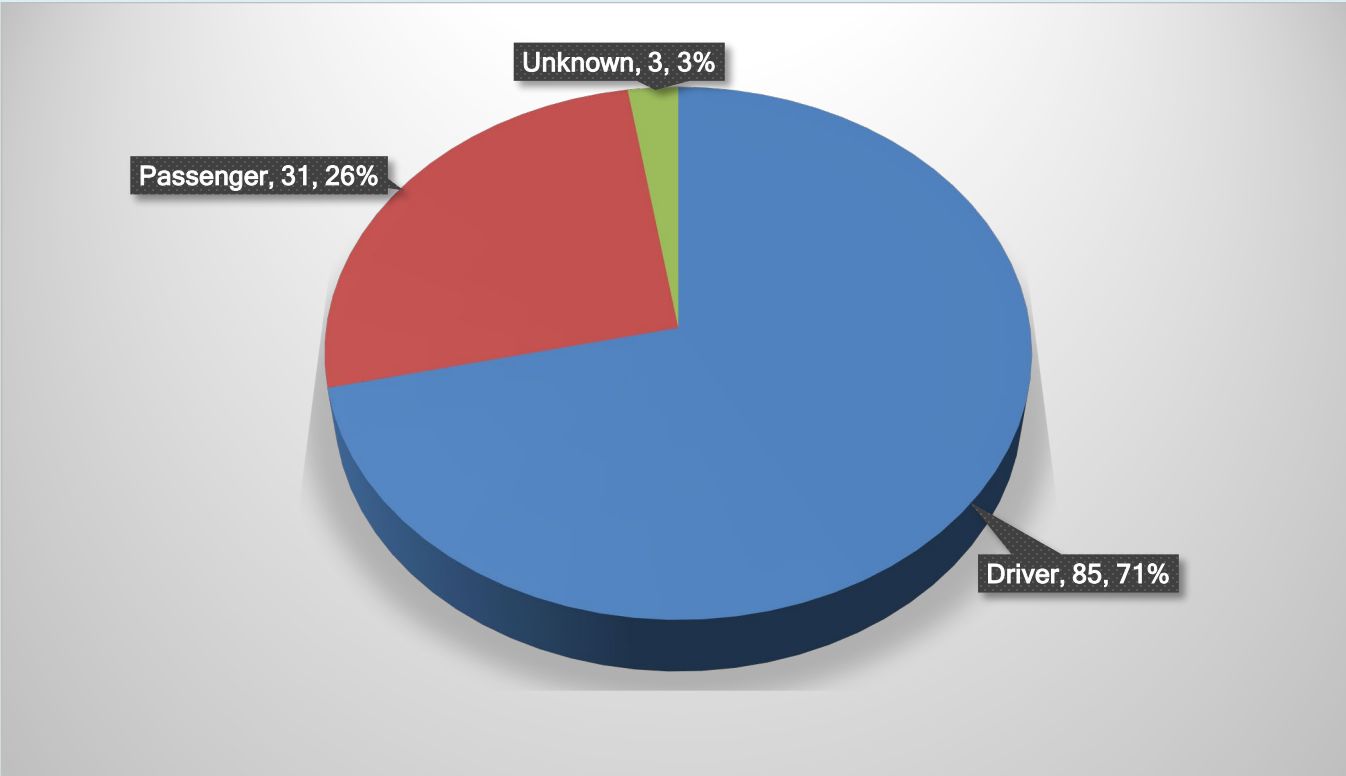
*One unidentified

Automobile Fatalities in Travis County – 2025

By Seatbelt Use

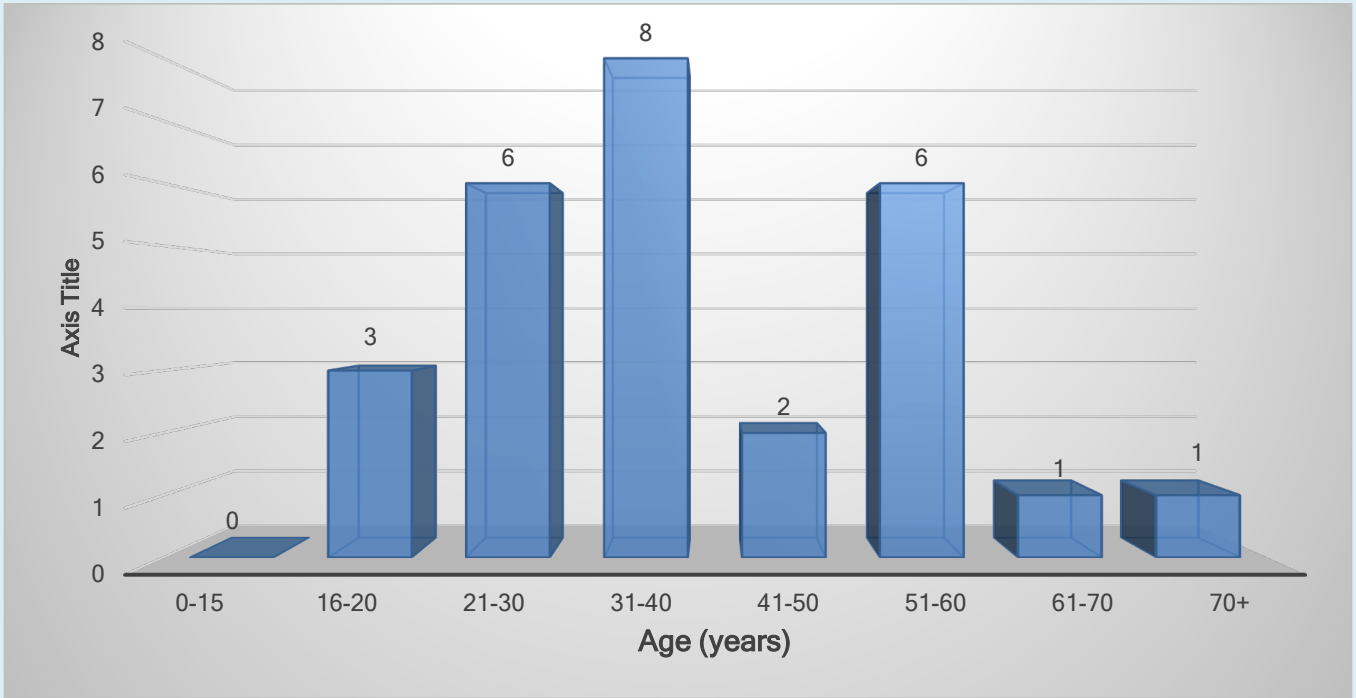


By Decedent's Location in Vehicle

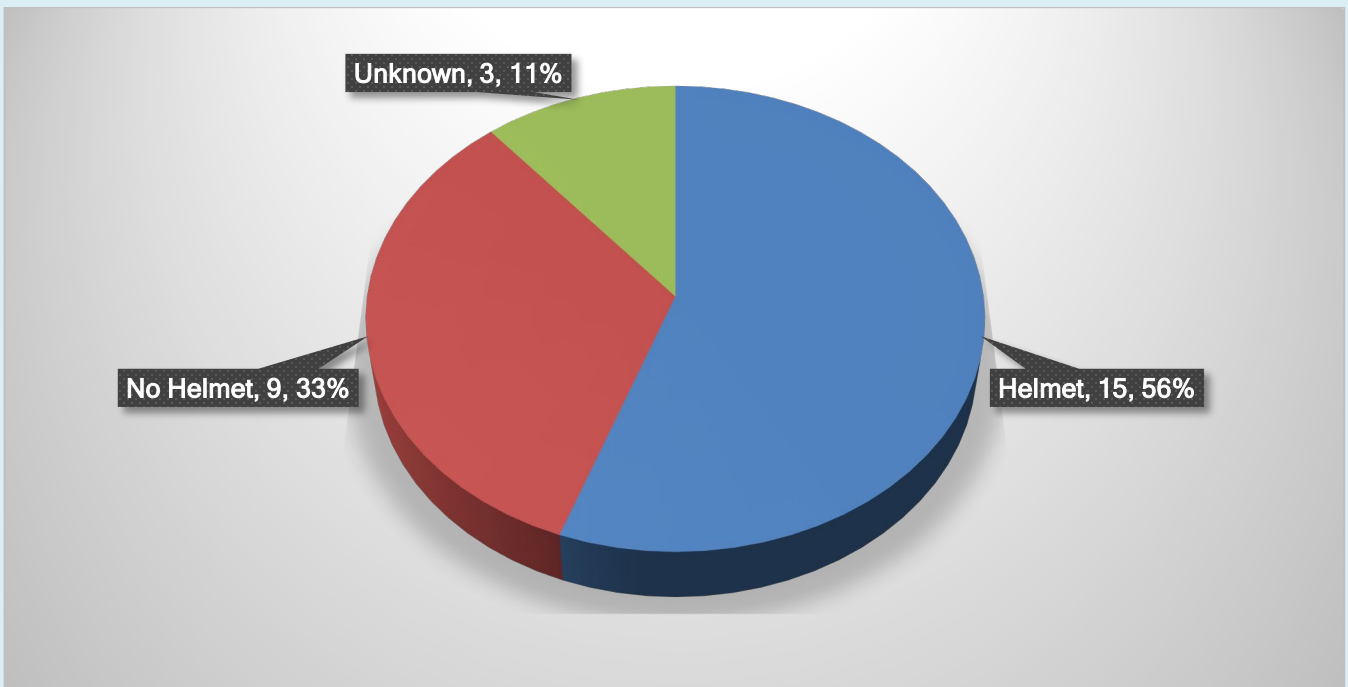


Motorcycle Fatalities in Travis County – 2025

By Age

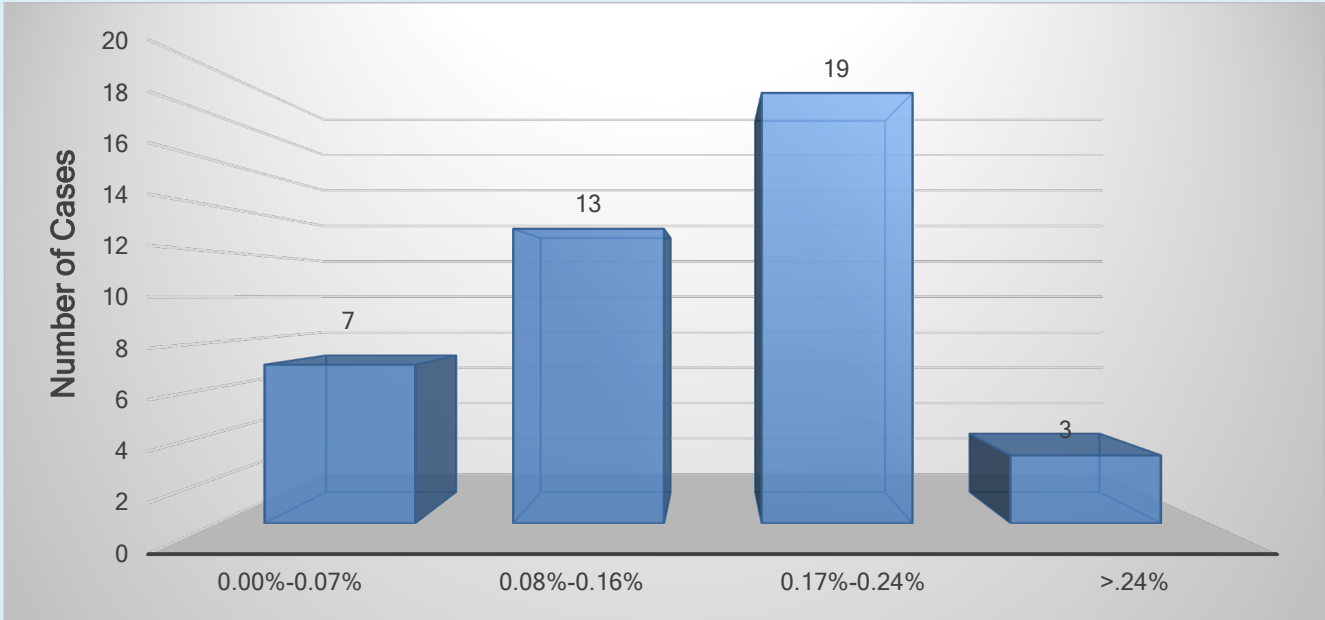


By Helmet Status

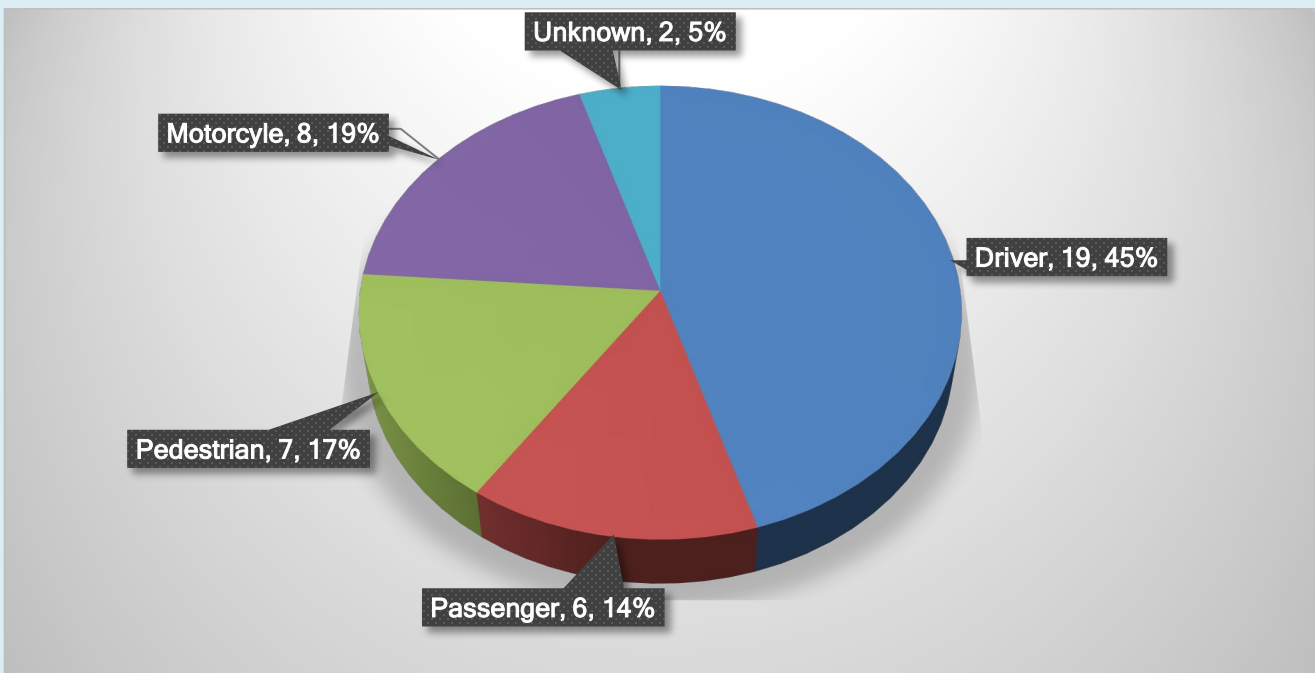


Alcohol was detected in 42 out of 200 (21%) motor vehicle-related fatalities that occurred within the boundaries of Travis County in 2025.

Blood Alcohol Concentrations in Decedents in which Alcohol is Detected in Motor Vehicle-Related Fatalities in Travis County – 2025



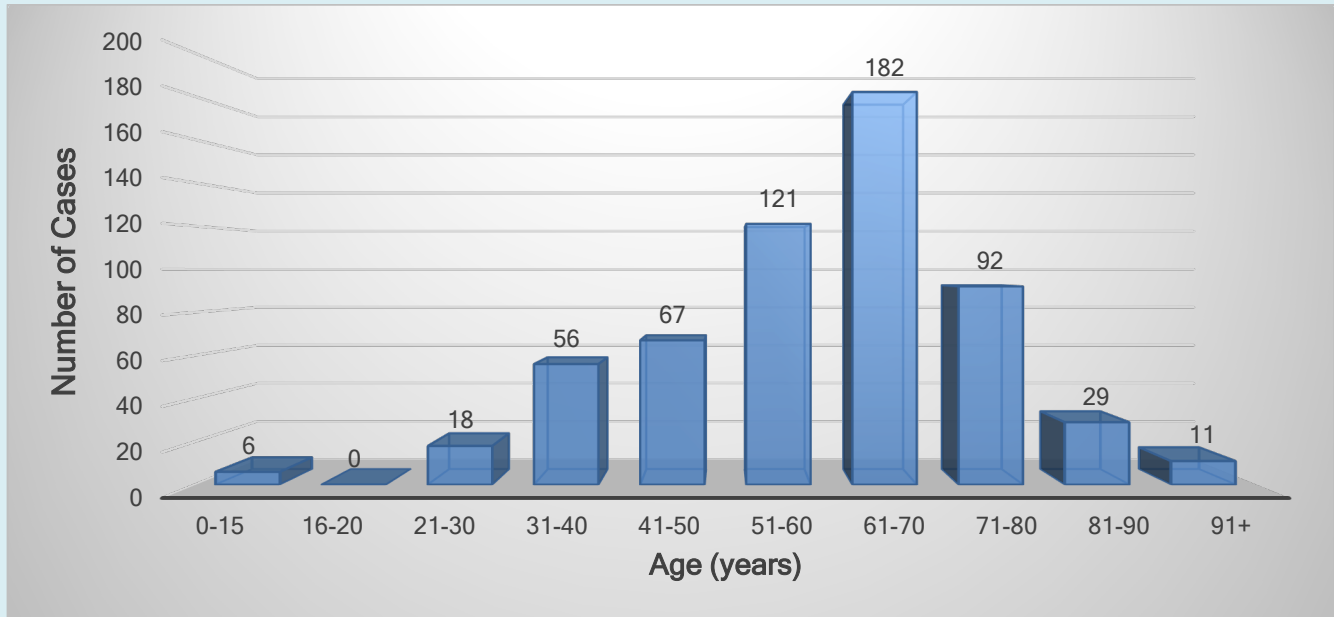
Role of Decedent in Travis County Motor Vehicle Fatalities in Which Alcohol was Detected in Decedent



Natural Deaths in Travis County – 2025

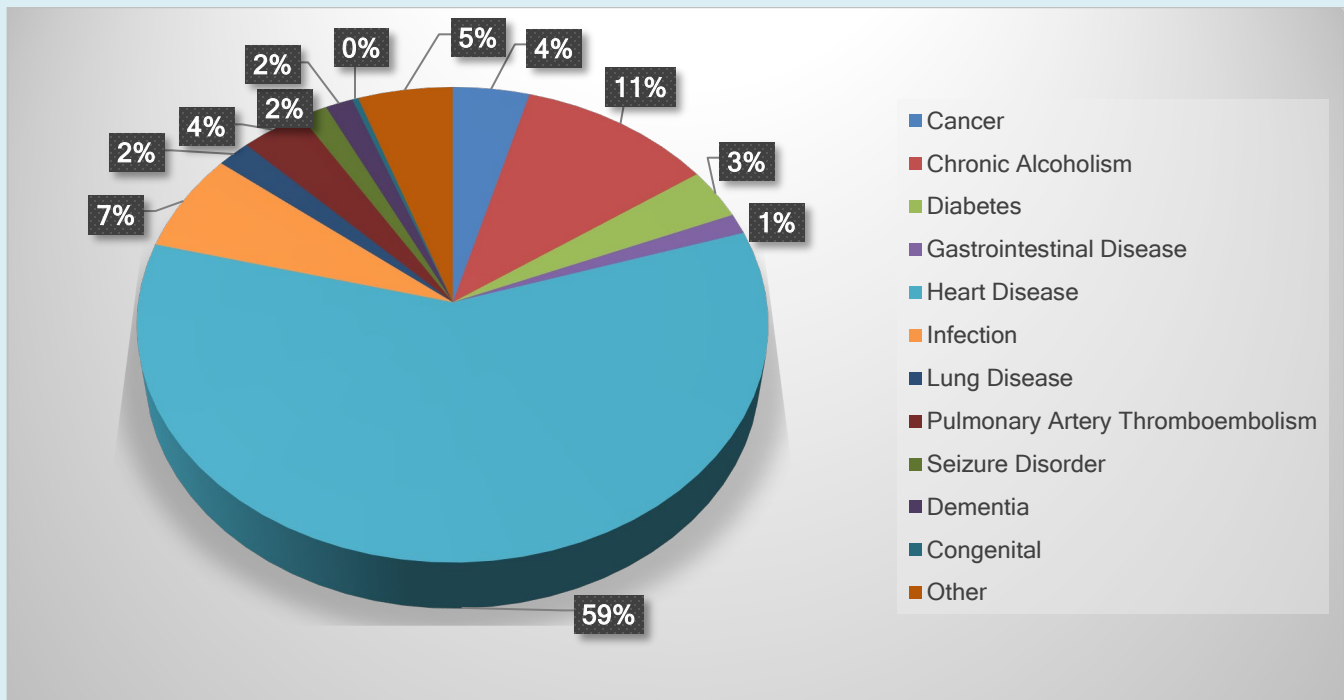
In 2025, 36% of deaths examined at the Travis County Medical Examiner's office were due to natural disease.

By Age



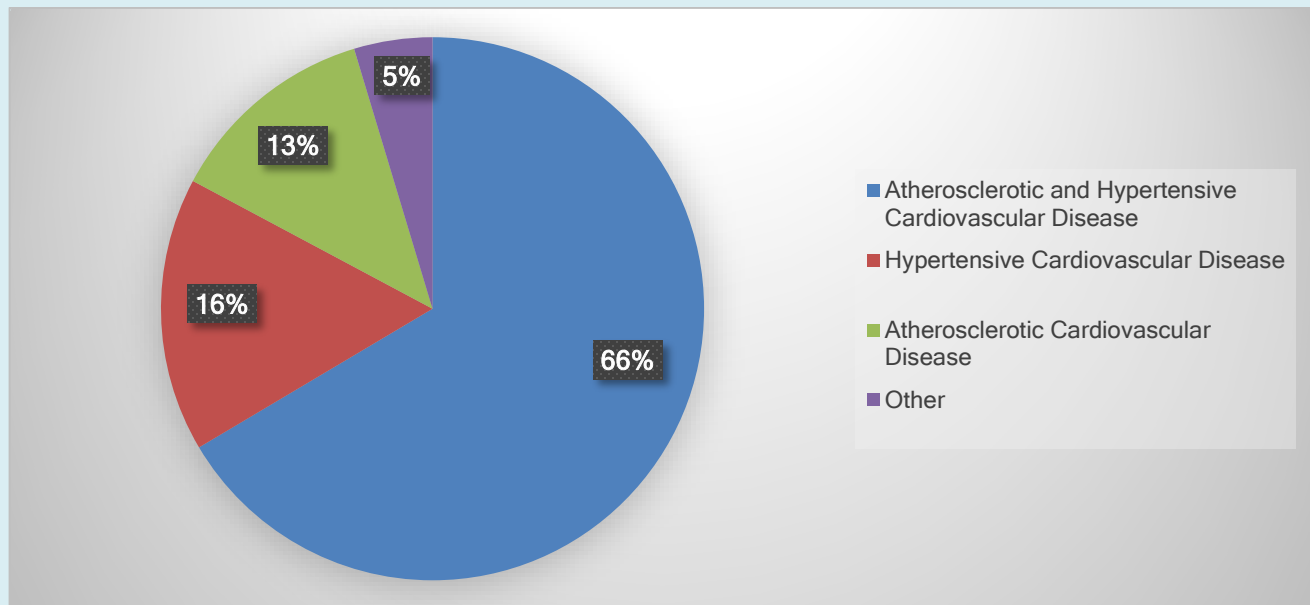
By Disease Process

The greatest percentage of the deaths from natural disease was due to heart disease.



Heart disease is generally subdivided into atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, hypertensive cardiovascular disease, and both atherosclerotic and hypertensive cardiovascular disease. Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease is a term used to describe hardening and narrowing of the arteries by atherosclerotic plaque. Hypertensive cardiovascular disease refers to enlargement of the heart that occurs because of hypertension (high blood pressure). Atherosclerotic and hypertensive cardiovascular disease refers to a situation in which both disease processes are present.

Heart Disease by Type



Resources for Cardiovascular Health

- High blood pressure (hypertension) - www.mayoclinic.com/health/high-blood-pressure/DS00100
- American Heart Association - <https://www.heart.org/>
- Cardiovascular Disease - [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cardiovascular-diseases-\(cvds\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cardiovascular-diseases-(cvds))

Ways to Improve Cardiovascular Health

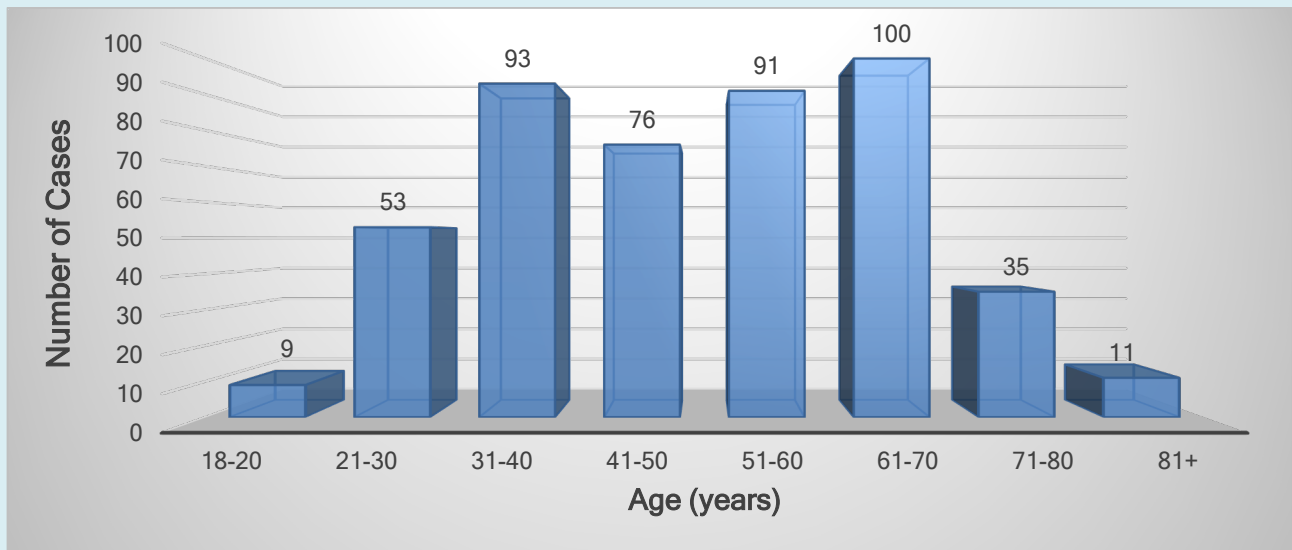
- Don't smoke or use tobacco
- Get moving: Aim for at least 30 to 60 minutes of activity daily
- Eat a heart-healthy diet
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get good quality sleep
- Manage stress
- Get regular health screenings



Obesity

Of the 1593 deaths of Travis County residents, 468 (29%) adults 18 years and older that were examined at TCME were obese. Obesity is defined as body mass index >30 kg/m².

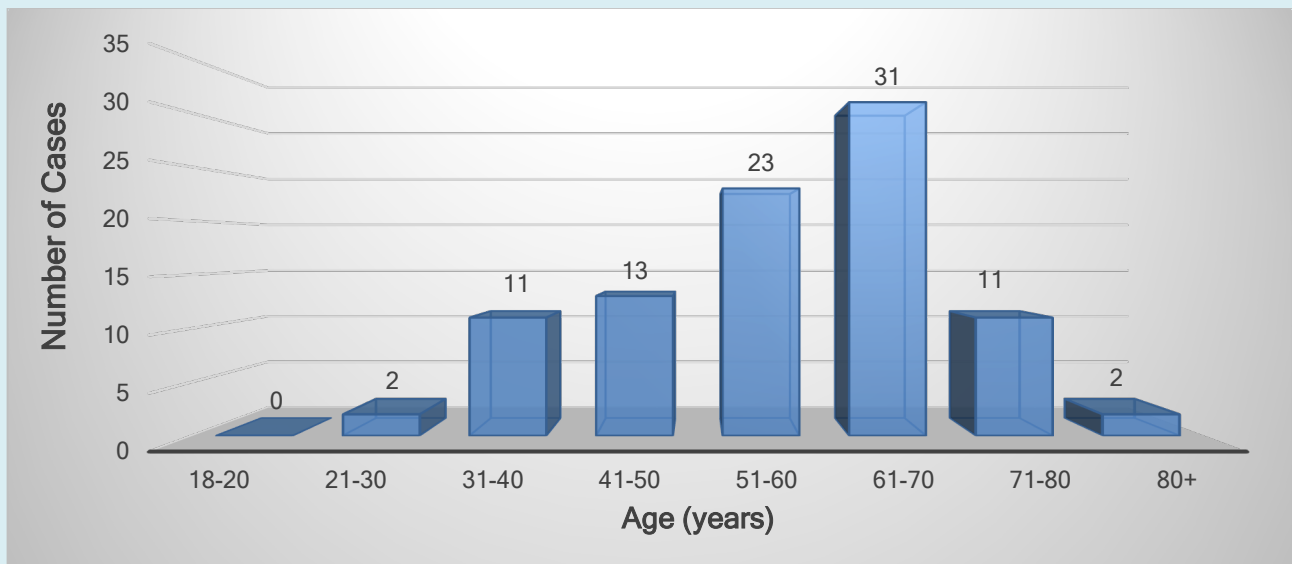
Age of Decedents Determined to be Obese in Travis County – 2025



Deaths Related to Obesity - 2025

Of the 582 (15%) natural deaths of Travis County residents, 93 (16%) adults 18 years and older that were examined at TCME had obesity-related deaths.

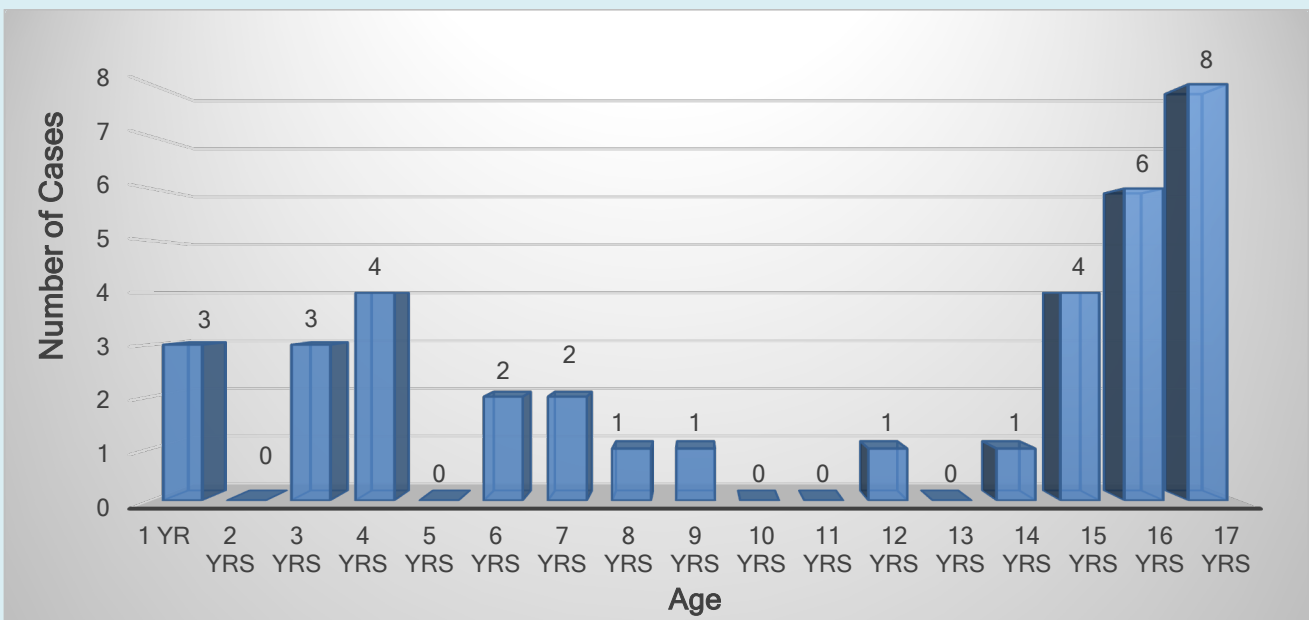
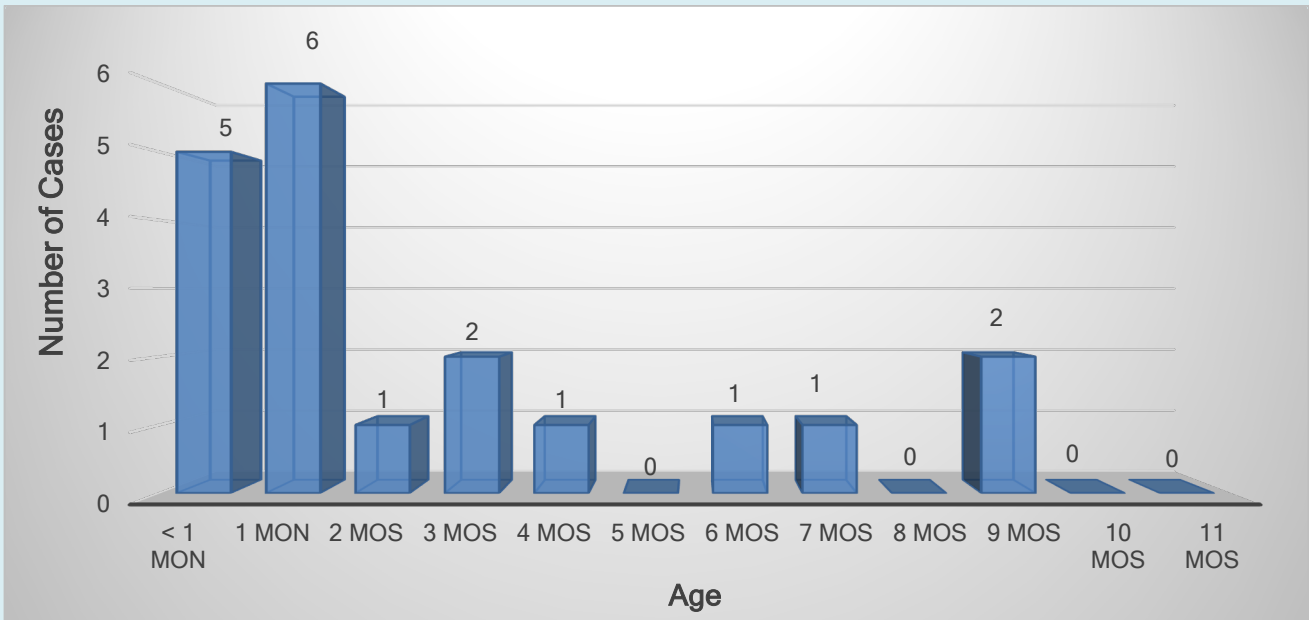
By Age



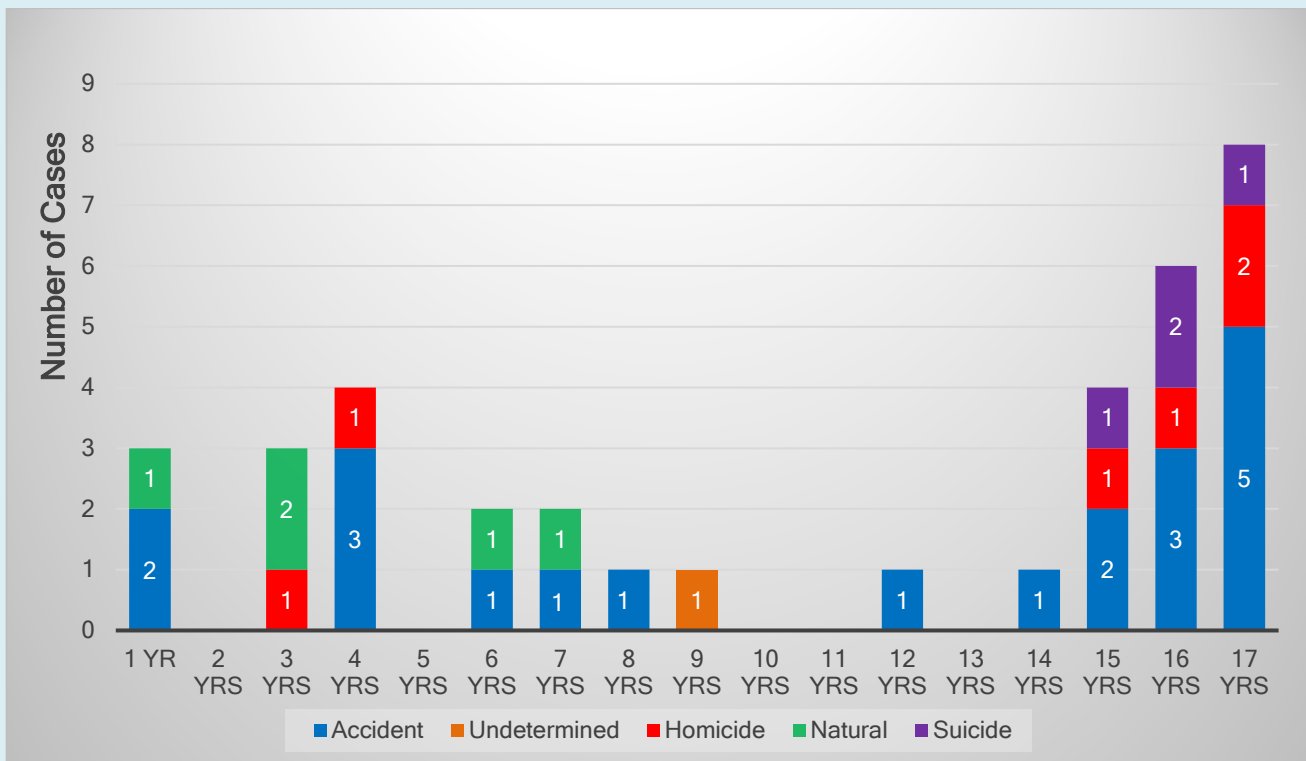
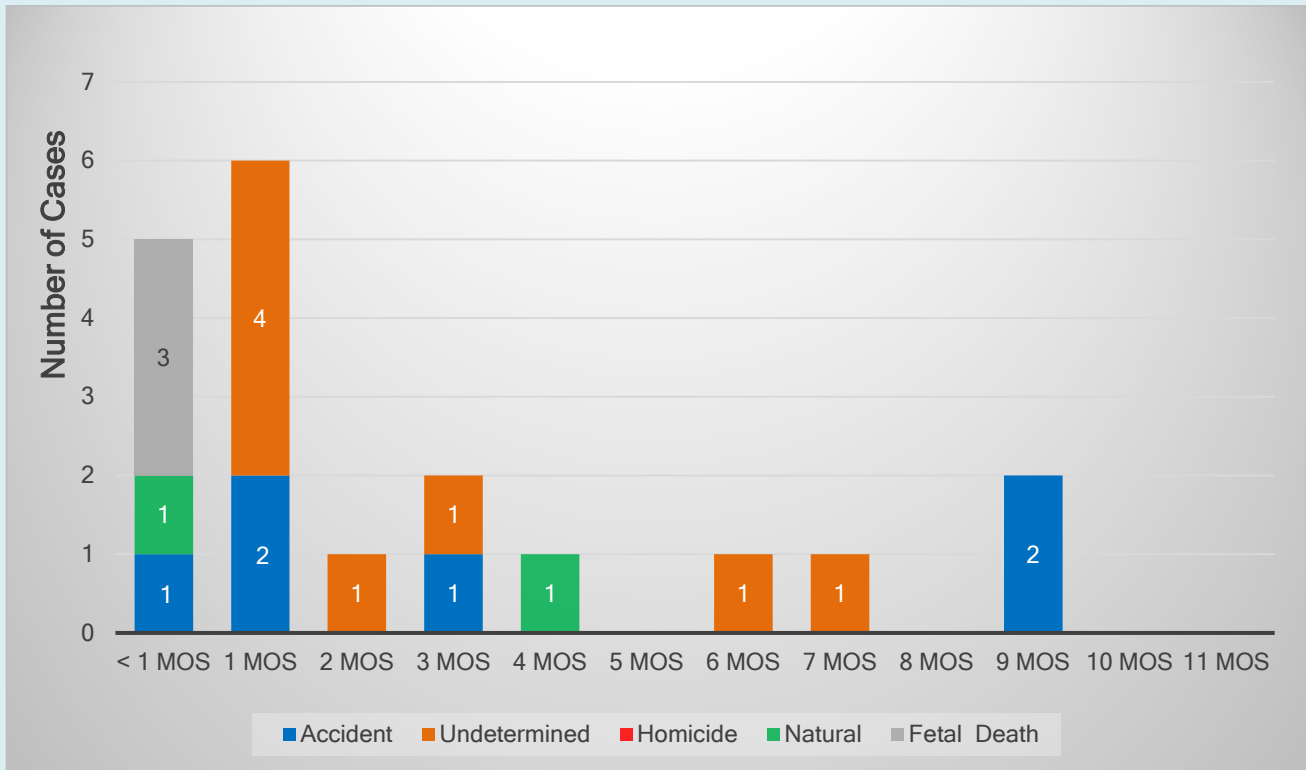
Child Fatalities in Travis County – 2025

In 2025, 55 child fatalities (less than 18 years of age) in Travis County were reported to TCME.

By Age

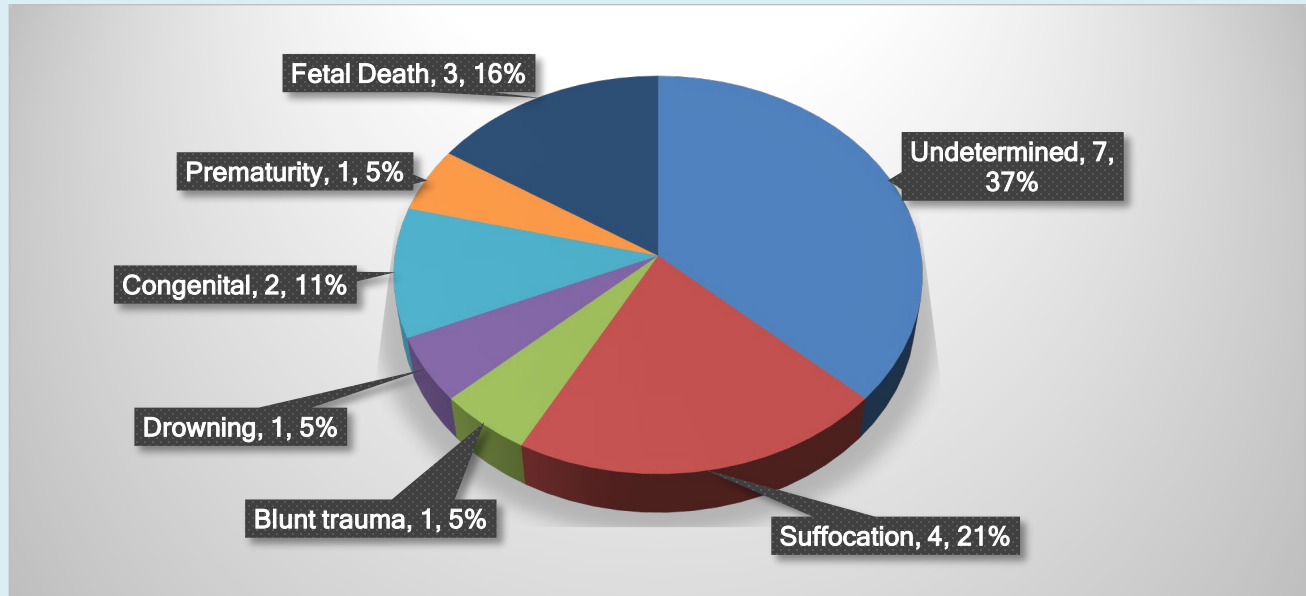


Manner of Death in Death of Child Fatalities in Travis County – 2025



Infant Deaths (<1 Year of Age) – Travis County – 2025

Cause of Death



Infant deaths are often undetermined due to the nature of the circumstances of the death. In some cases, asphyxial deaths are considered because the circumstances identify potential unsafe sleeping conditions such as bed sharing in adult beds with other individuals and/or the use of unsafe/adult-type bedding materials.

IS YOUR BABY SLEEPING SAFELY?

Follow these simple guidelines to ensure Safer Sleep:

- No Pillow
- No Blanket
- No Bumper Pads
- No Stuffed Toys

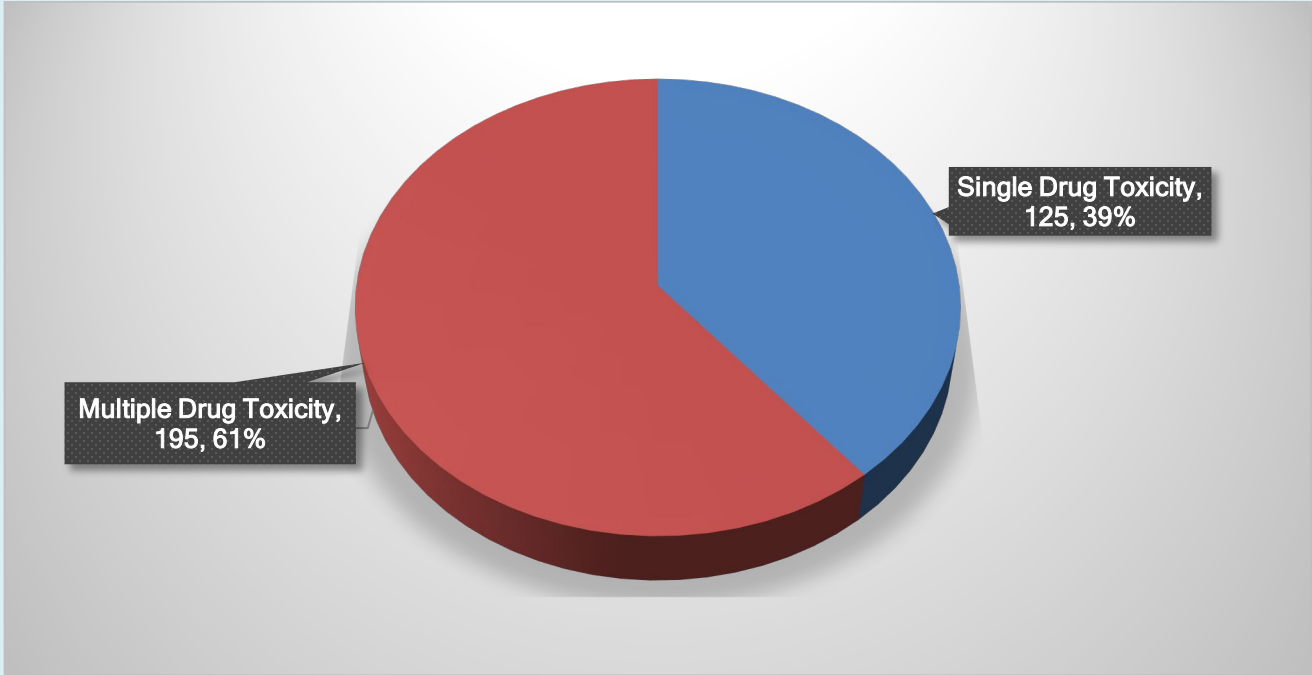
Infants can easily suffocate and die in soft bedding material. Because of this, infants should not be placed to sleep on adult beds, couches, futons, waterbeds, etc.

Infants should sleep alone because they may be rolled over upon (overlaid) by a bedsharing adult or sibling. If on a couch, an infant may slip into the space between the person lying on the couch and the backrest of the couch and become wedged, preventing them from breathing adequately. They may get their face wedged between two cushions or into a soft cushion. Cribs should not contain pillows, thick blankets or comforters, plush materials, stuffed toys, or anything else that a baby could suffocate on. Bumper pads should not be used because an infant can wedge their face between the bumper pad and the mattress.

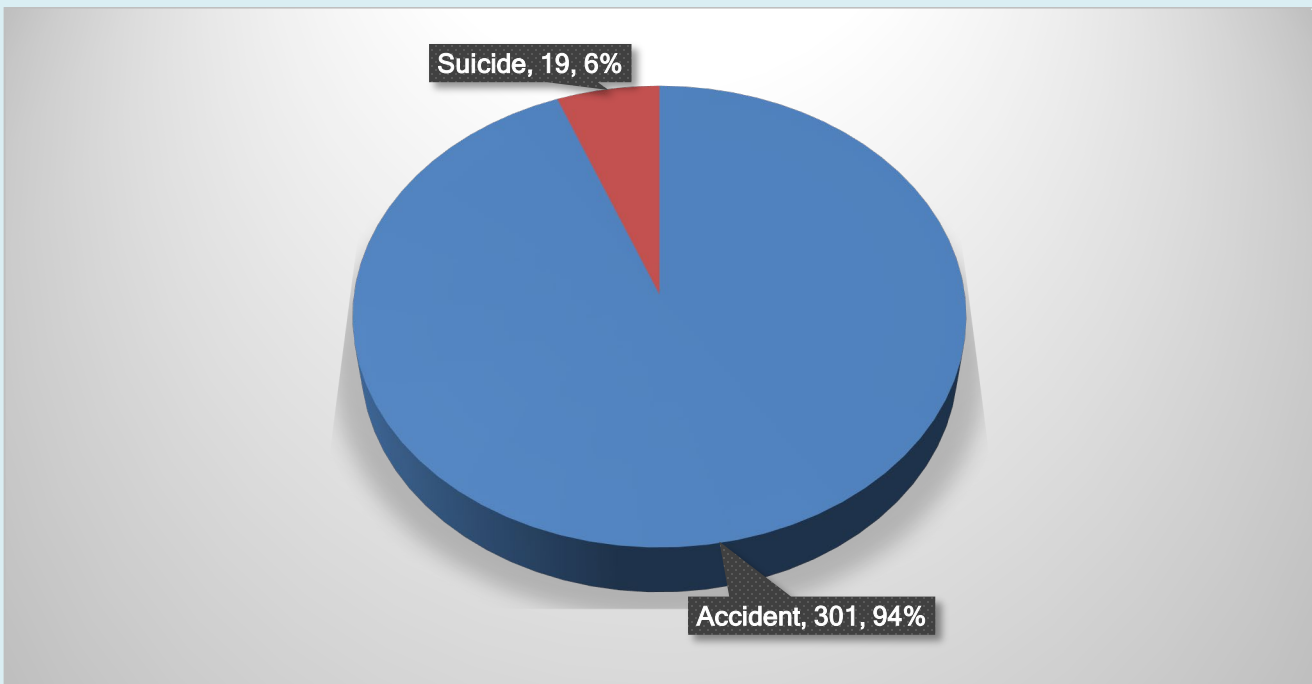
Infants should always be placed to sleep alone, on their back, in a safety-approved crib, with a tight-fitting sheet on a firm mattress, without any extra pillows, stuffed animals, or other potentially hazardous items. Infants should sleep in the same room as adults, but in their own safe crib.

Drug-Related Deaths in Travis County – 2025 – Includes Suicides

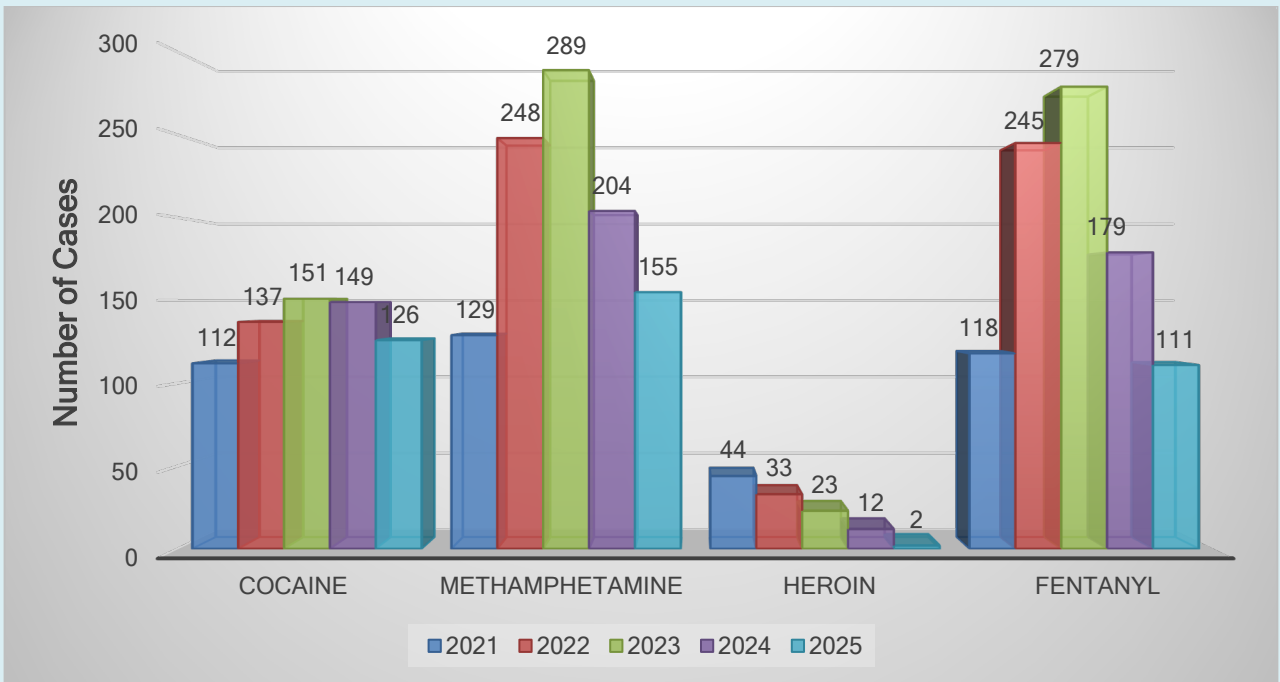
By Number of Drugs



By Manner of Death

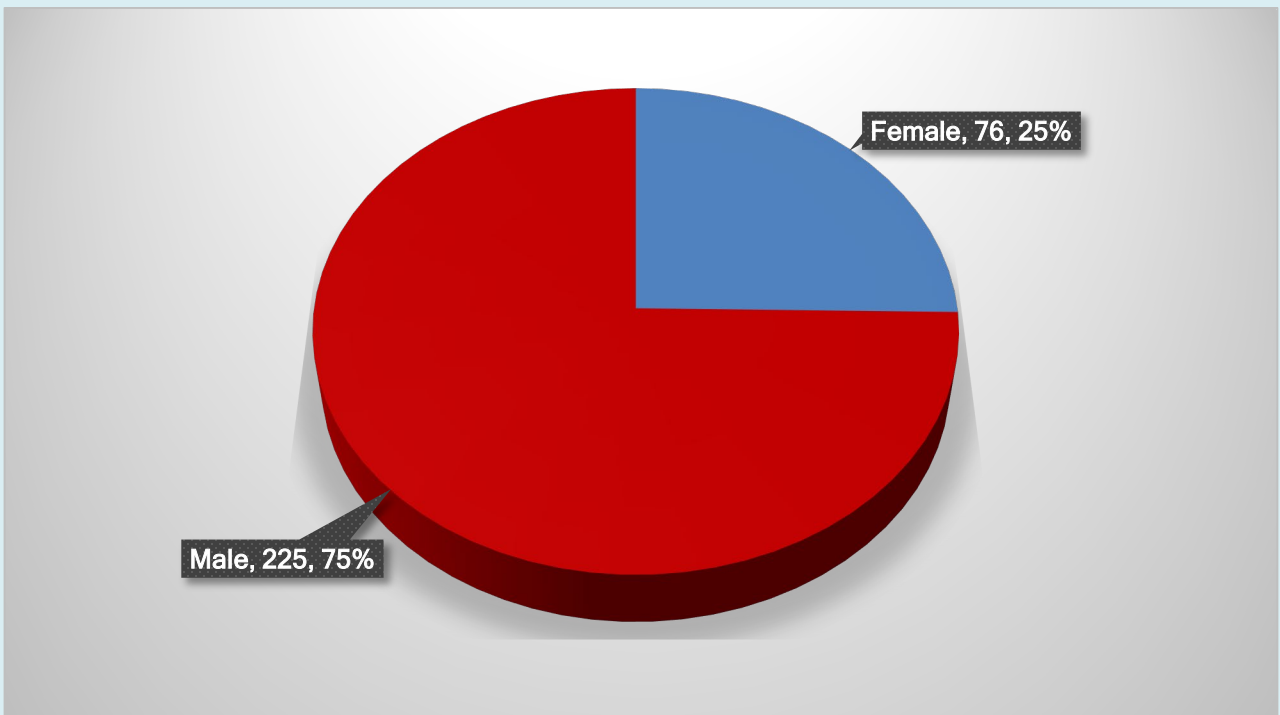


Accidental Drug Deaths by Illicit Drug Detected* in Travis County 2021-2025

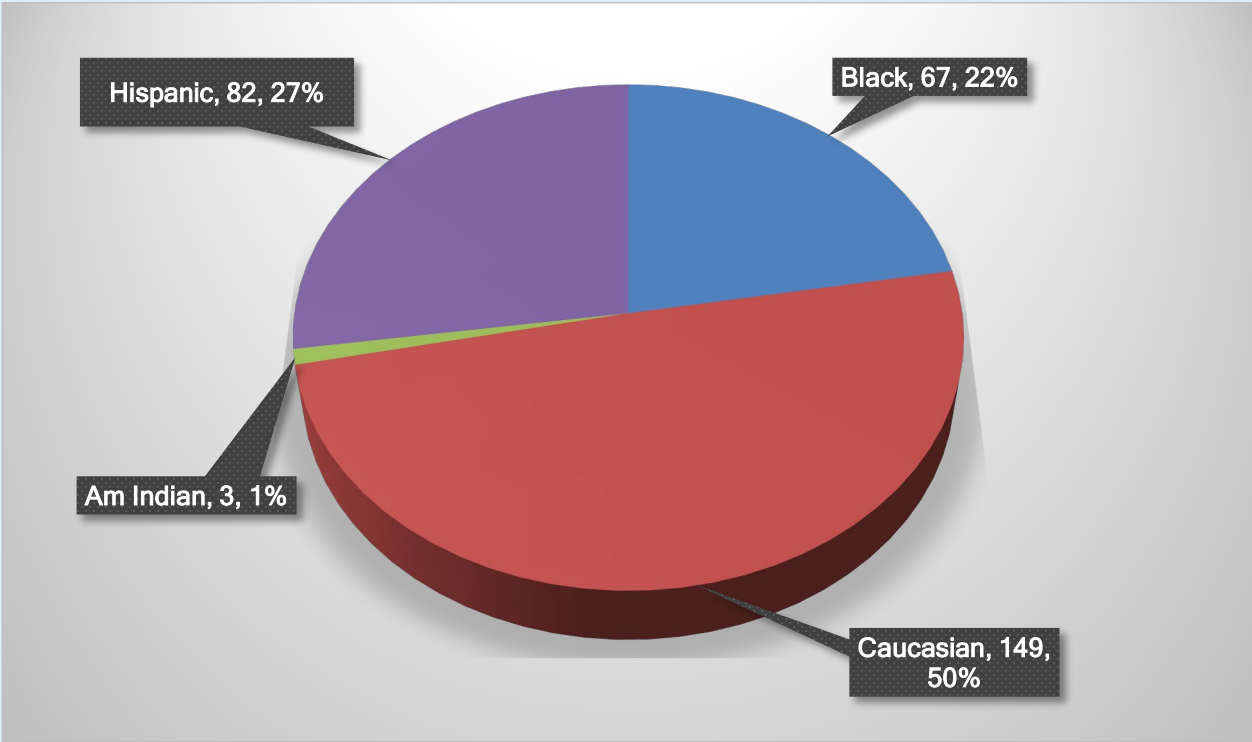


*These numbers represent the number of cases in which each drug was detected. Because most deaths involve multiple drugs, the numbers do not necessarily reflect individual cases.

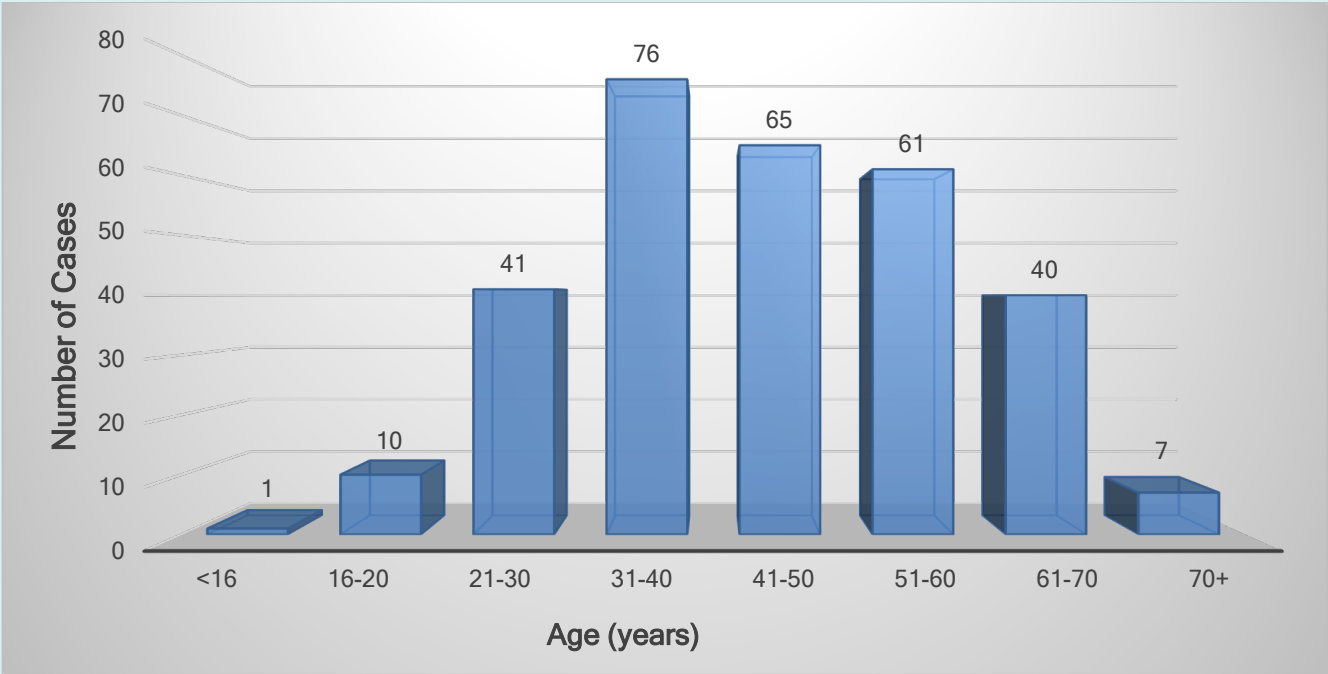
Accidental Drug Deaths by Decedent Sex in Travis County – 2025



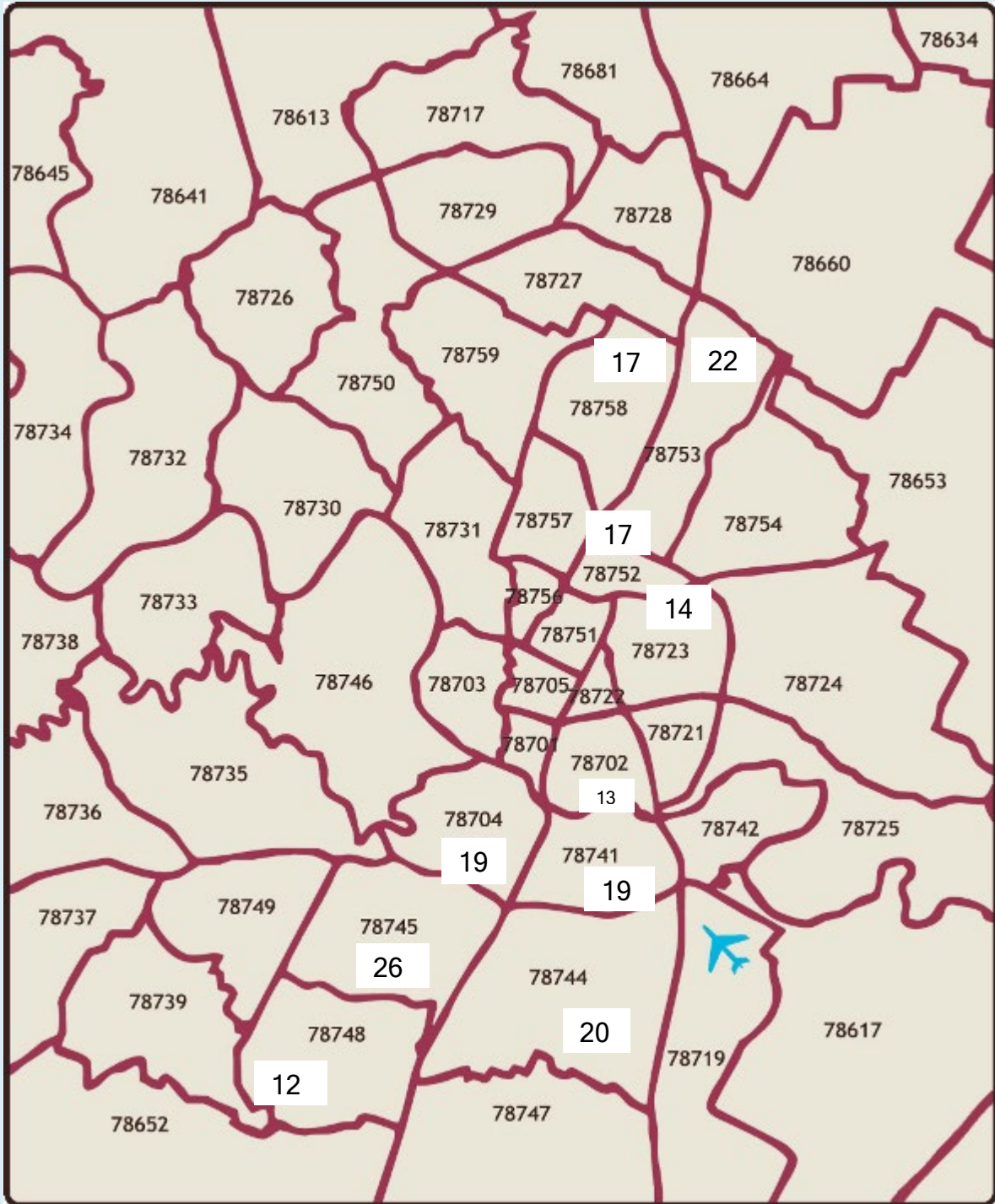
Accidental Drug Deaths by Decedent Race in Travis County – 2025



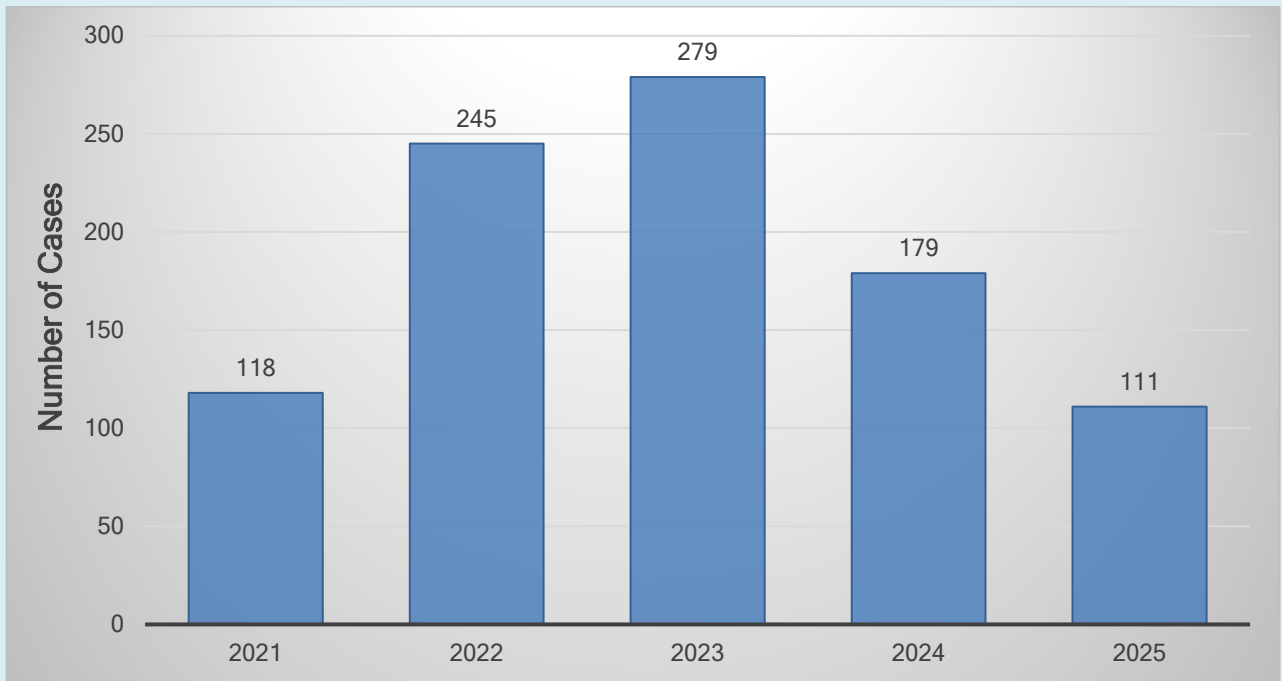
Accidental Drug Deaths by Age in Travis County – 2025



Accidental Drug Deaths - Zip Codes with > 10 deaths in 2025 (location of incident)

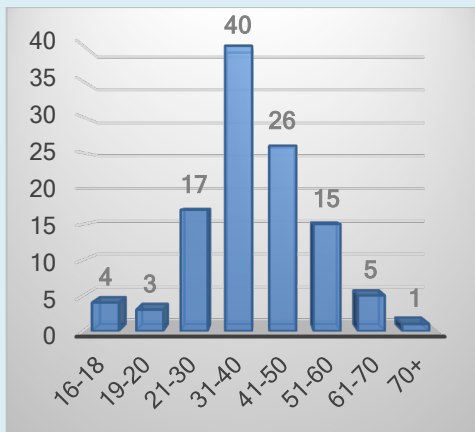


Accidental Drug Deaths in Travis County: Fentanyl Detected – 2021-2025

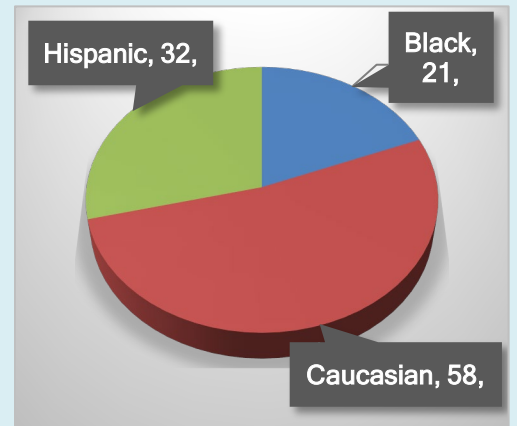


Accidental Drug Deaths in Travis County: Fentanyl Detected – 2025

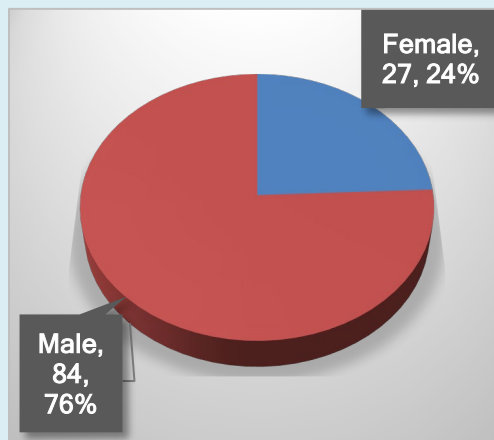
By Age



By Race



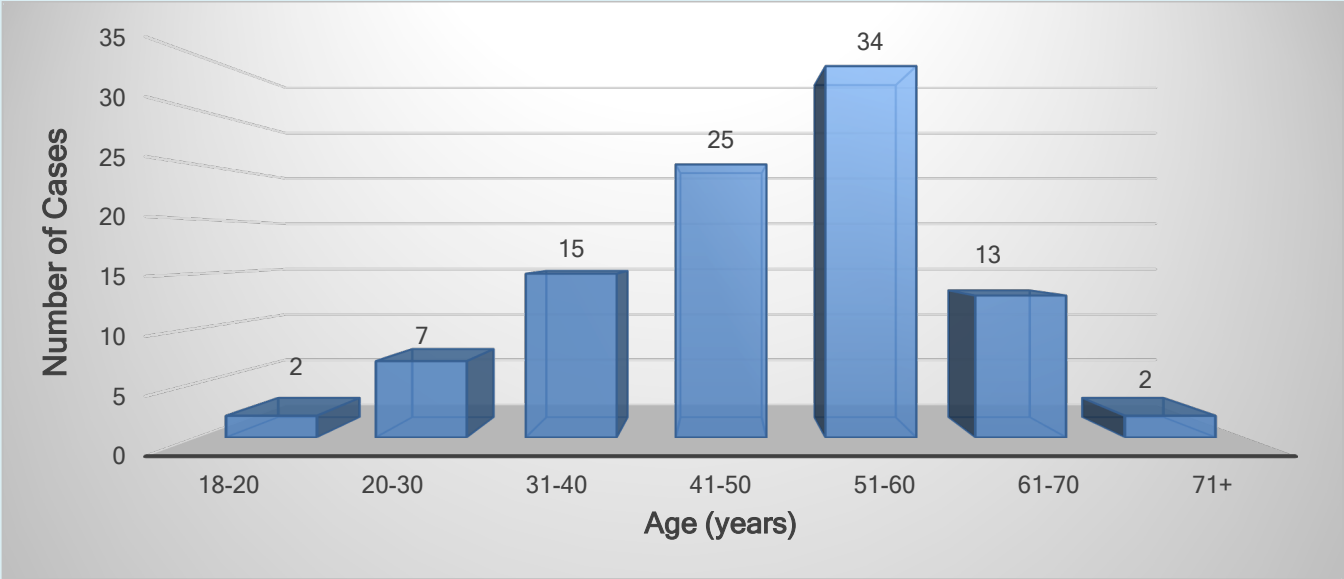
By Sex



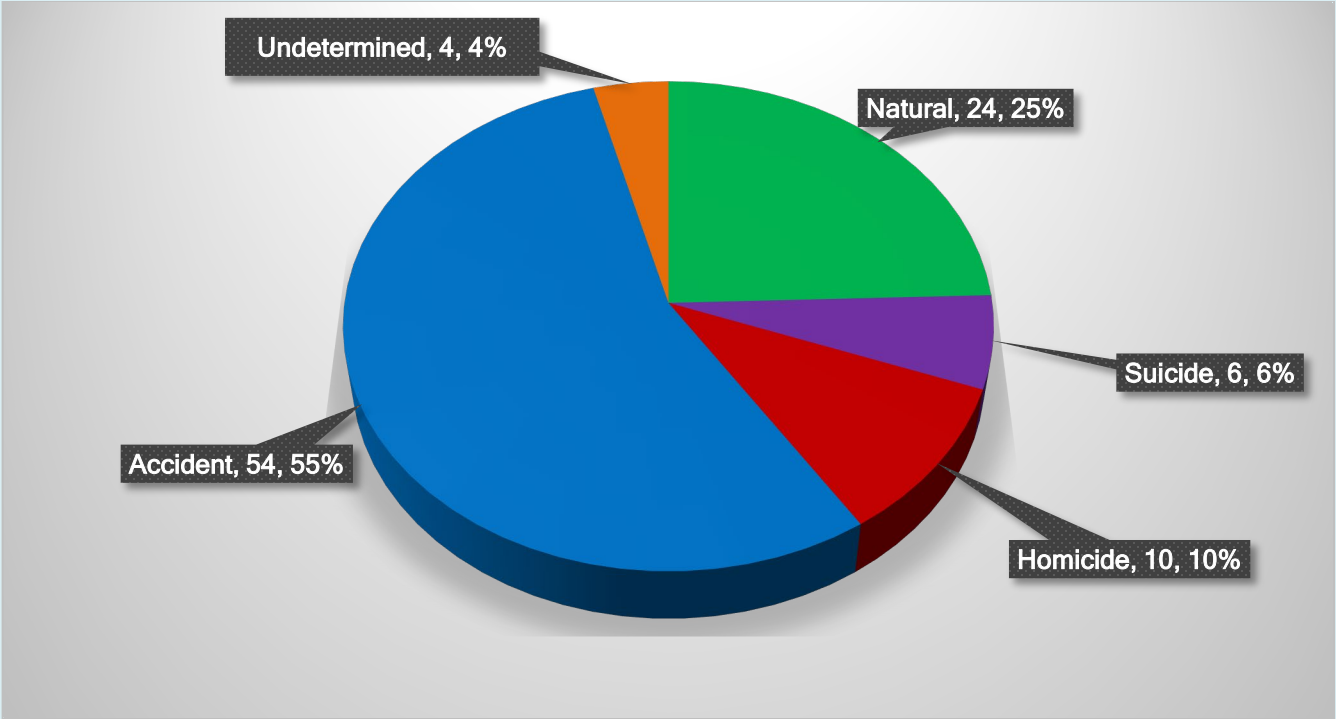
Transient Deaths in Travis County – 2025

Our office receives requests for information regarding the unhoused in Travis County. Insight into the manner of deaths for the unhoused might help address the situations that are faced and facilitate measures to protect this population.

By Age



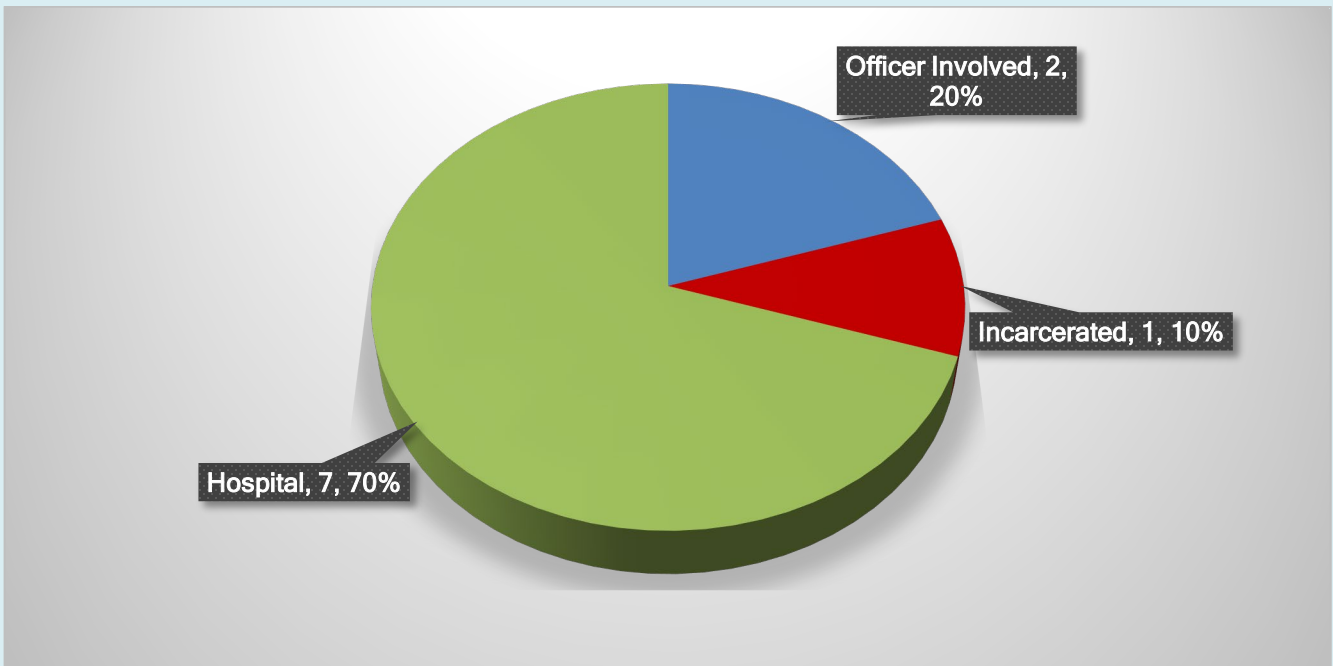
By Manner of Death



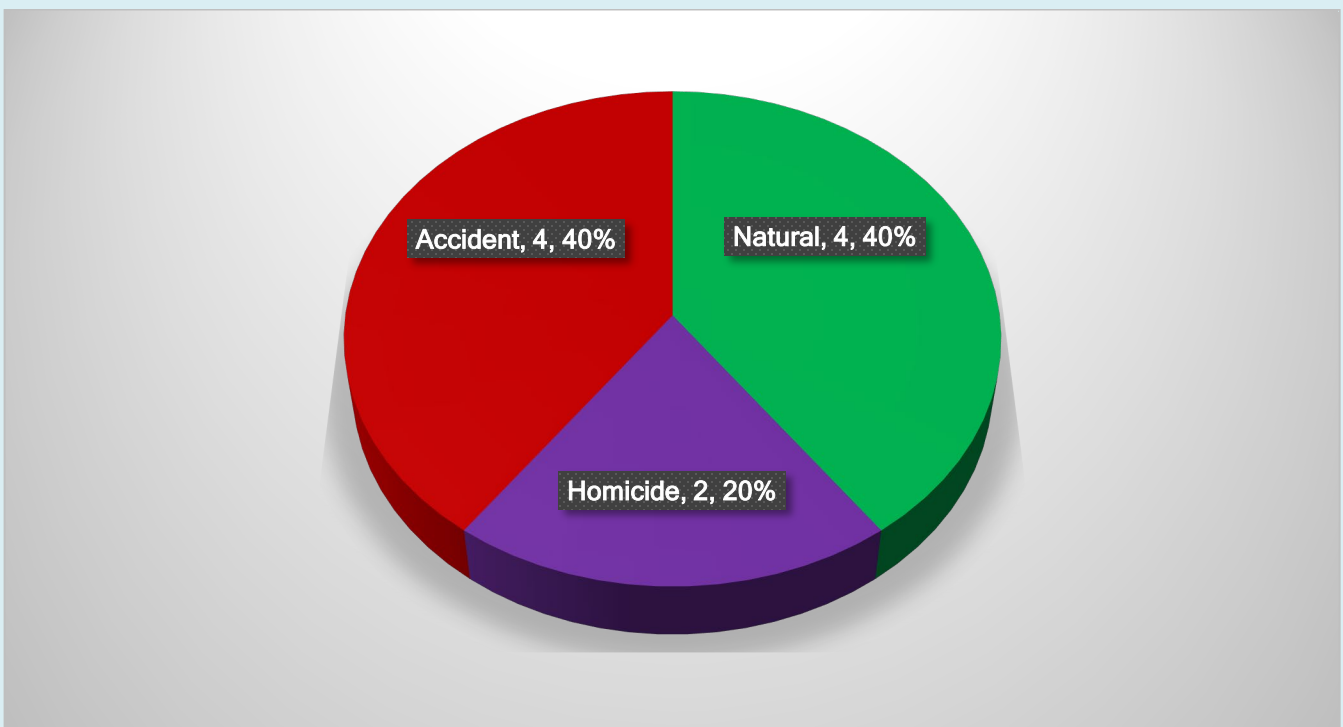
In-Custody Deaths in Travis County – 2025

A death in custody is a death of a person during initial contact with authorities, during the process of arrest, transport to a facility, or during incarceration. It also includes deaths in hospitals for a person who is in the custody of law enforcement. Deaths in custody fall within the medical examiner's jurisdiction.

By Types



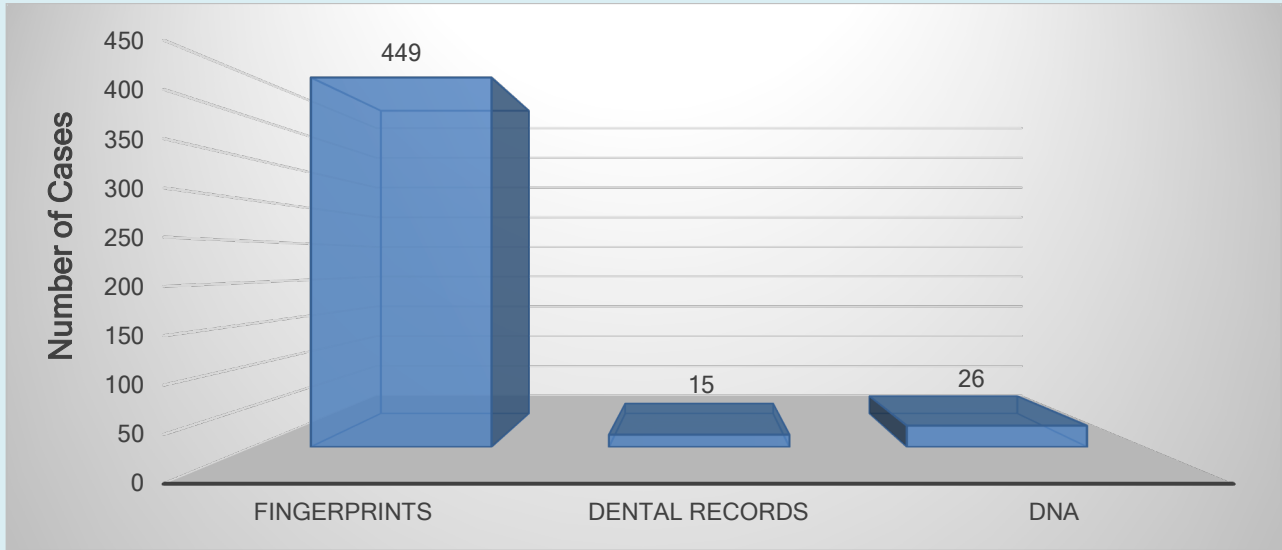
By Manner of Death



Unidentified Bodies in Travis County - 2025

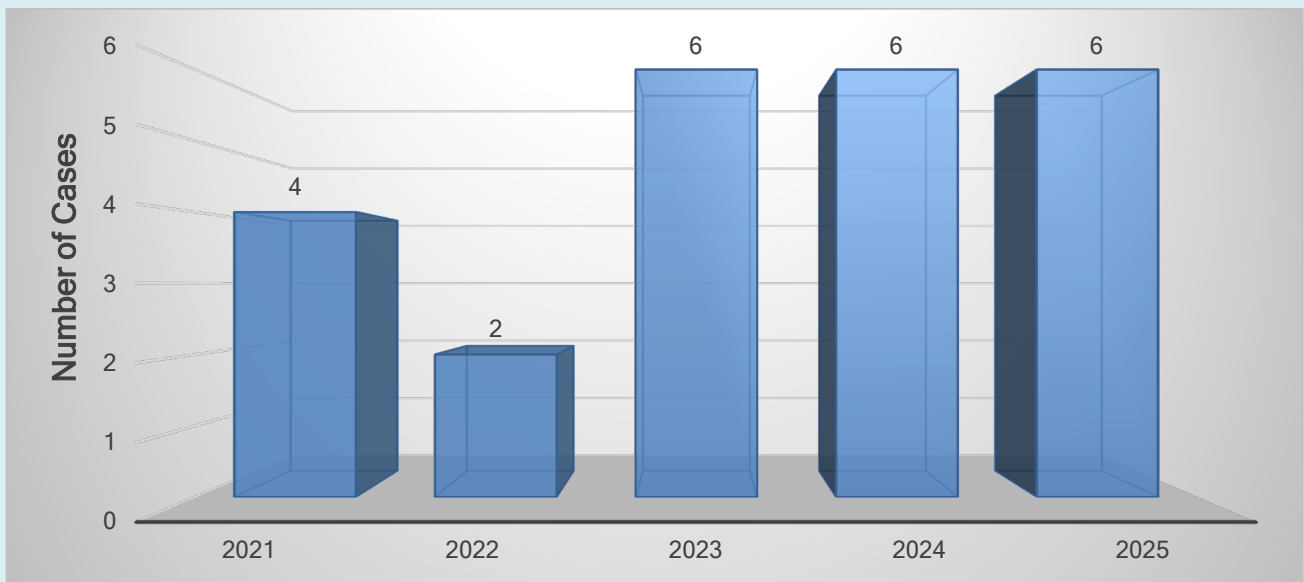
Occasionally, people who die have no identification on their person, and their identity is either unknown or uncertain. TCME and law enforcement agencies work together using various techniques to scientifically identify these decedents. In 2025, 490 decedents examined at TCME were scientifically identified.

Methods of Scientific Identification



Unidentified Bodies in Travis County: 2021-2025

Despite best attempts at identifying unidentified individuals, a body may remain unidentified. These cases most often are skeletal remains, where only bones are available for identification, ranging from a single bone fragment to an entire skeleton.



Community Involvement

TCME interacts with the local community in a variety of ways. Such activities over the past few years included a variety of educational endeavors, including lectures at high schools and colleges. We have lectured on infant safety for teen mothers and on unsafe sleep environments. In addition, we have given presentations to area hospitals, hospice agencies, and nursing homes on proper reporting of medical examiner cases. We have also provided lectures on proper death certification to justices of the peace, physicians and administration groups. We provide training to law enforcement agencies on death investigations. Some of our most important community interactions happen when physicians and hospitals receive postmortem reports and gain insight on a disease or injury process. Over the past few years, TCME hosted interns from the St. Edwards University Forensic Science program, the University of Texas, and Texas State University. We also provide training in forensic pathology for various regional medical students and pathology residents. Our office will generally accommodate requests for tours of the facility.