



OAKLAND COUNTY COURTHOUSE • PONTIAC, MICHIGAN

**Oakland County
Medical Examiner's Office
Annual Report 2022**



All ways, MOVING FORWARD

To the Oakland County Board of Commissioners and to the citizens of Oakland County:

In accordance with Public Act 181 of 1953, commonly referred to as the Medical Examiners Act, the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office is charged with determining the cause and manner of death in any violent, sudden, unexpected, suspicious, or otherwise unexplained death, including all jail deaths and deaths in police custody in Oakland County.

The Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office is fully accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners. The accreditation signifies that the office is performing at a high level and provides reasonable assurances that the office well serves its jurisdiction.

I hope you find this report informative. It is my pleasure to present to you the 2022 Annual Report for the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office.

Respectfully submitted,



Ljubisa J. Dragovic, M.D., FCAP, FAAFS, FNAME
Chief Forensic Pathologist/Medical Examiner

“Show me the manner in which a nation or a community cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land and their loyalty to high ideals”

Gladstone

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INTRODUCTION

This report includes statistical data from the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office (OCMEO) for the years 2018 to 2022. The total number of cases reported in 2022 (8,832) increased 0.75% while the number of autopsies and inspections (1,018) decreased 1% compared to 2021. The Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office experienced a 17% increase in the number of homicides reported in 2021, this trend continued in 2022 with an 8% increase in reported homicides. The number of suicide cases increased 5.40%. The number of unclaimed decedents was unchanged from 2021.

Every reported case requires preliminary screening by OCMEO investigators to determine if the case falls under OCMEO jurisdiction. Cases that are released occur when the circumstances of the death are known, there is well documented medical history, and the primary care physician is willing and able to sign the death certificate. In 2022, this represented 6,798 cases. Cases that are accepted use one of two approaches to complete the death certificate. The first approach is a medical examiner certification case. The decedent is not transported to the OCMEO and the medical examiner reviews medical records and other pertinent reports to complete the death certificate. In 2022 there were 1,014 medical examiner certifications. The second approach is when the medical examiner orders the decedent into the OCMEO for a physical examination. The physical examination can include a full autopsy, a partial autopsy (cranial only), or an inspection (external examination only). In 2022, this represented 993 cases. In addition to the 993 medical examiner cases, the OCMEO completed 25 private autopsies, for a total of 1,018.

All cremations that occurred in Oakland County require the approval of the OCMEO. The number of requests for cremation permits for 2022 was 8333.

The Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office hosts several multi-jurisdictional meetings to discuss specific types of cases where deaths may have been preventable. A prime example is the child death review meeting held monthly. Any death involving a child under the age of 18 is reviewed by the forensic pathologists, prosecutor's office, law enforcement, protective services, forensic psychiatrists, area pediatricians, State Department of Public Health, a Consumer Product Safety Commission representative, and any other appropriate specialty depending on the circumstances of the case. The Child Death Review Team reviewed 43 cases in 2022. Similar teams review deaths resulting from domestic violence.

The Medical Examiner's Office continues to partner with educational as well as government organizations for instruction and training. Presentations on cause and manner of death and tours are conducted for: basic police academies, advanced police crime scene training, detective schools, auxiliary and reserve police academies, and more. Along with hosting several medical students in 2022, the Medical Examiner's Office continued the partnership with Wayne State University and the Detroit Medical Center. Each year several pathology residents will spend about a month here during the final stages of their training before becoming board-certified pathologists.

OAKLAND COUNTY STAFF 2022

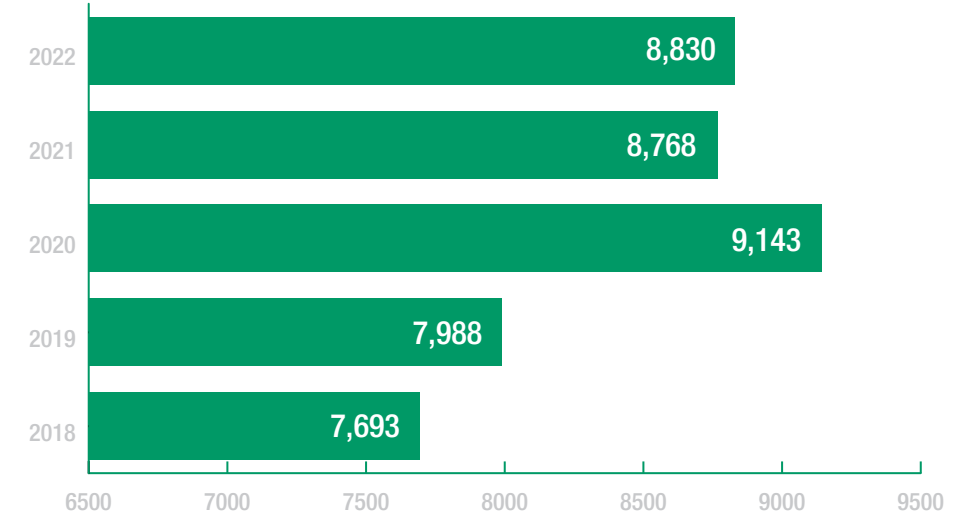
Chief Medical Examiner	Ljubisa Dragovic, M.D.
Deputy Chief Medical Examiner	Kanubhai Virani, M.D.
Deputy Forensic Pathologists	Bernardino Pacris, M.D. Shauna Bryan, M.D. Patrick Cho, M.D.
Administrator	Casimir Miarka
Chief Medical Examiner Investigator	Mark Giroux
Medical Examiner Investigators	Marline Rodgers Raymond Jankowski Keith Batchelor Mitch Brown Jeffery Collins David St. Germaine Timothy Wood Kurtis Dudek
Autopsy Attendant Supervisor	Christina Grammatico
Autopsy Attendants	Daniel Jamieson April Leder Melissa Ohlrich Jennifer Dolce
Forensic Toxicologist	Li Wang, PhD Denice Teem
Histologist	Karen Darnell-Goldsworthy
Lead Medical Examiner Office Assistant	Dana Kneip
Medical Examiner Assistants	Brittani Crisp Ann Spencer

GENERAL STATISTICS 2022

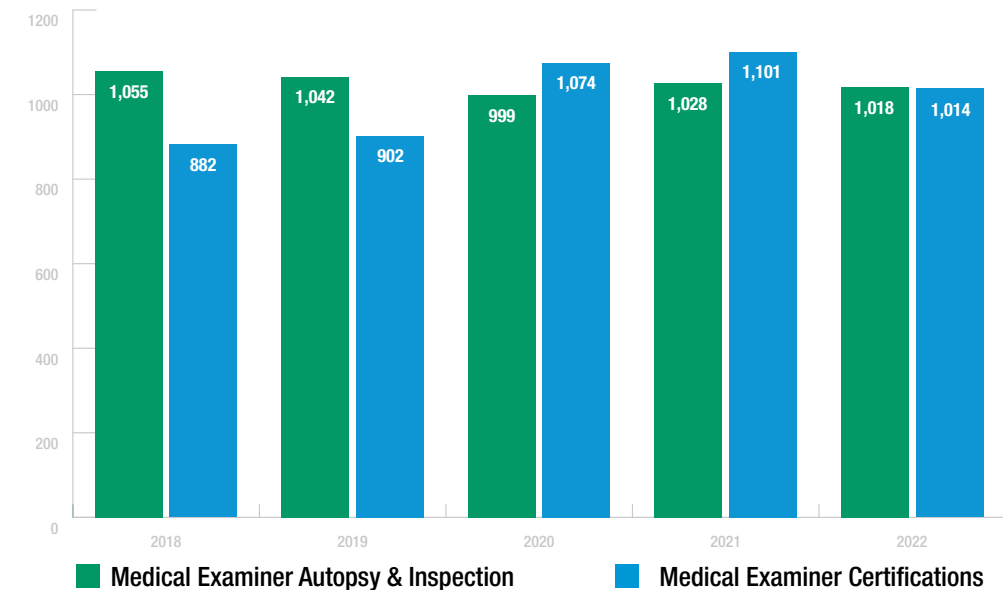
Total number of cases reported	8,830
Cases Accepted	2,129
Scenes Investigated	679
OAKLAND COUNTY CASES	2,007
ME Certifications (<i>Death Certificate Only</i>)	1,007
Examinations	
Full Autopsy	767
External Only	211
Partial Autopsy	15
Misc. Bones	7
NON-COUNTY CASES	25
Examinations	
Full Autopsy	22
Partial Autopsy	2
External Only	1
TOTAL CASES	2,032
Medical Examiner Certification (<i>Death Certificate Only</i>)	1,014
Examinations	
Full Autopsy	789
Partial Autopsy	17
External Only	212
MISC INFORMATION	
Unidentified Bodies (after case completion)	0
Exhumations	0
Bodies Transported to Morgue	1,039
Toxicology Cases	700
Cremation Permits Approved	8,333
Microscopic Slides Created	2,814

FIVE-YEAR TREND

TOTAL CASES REPORTED

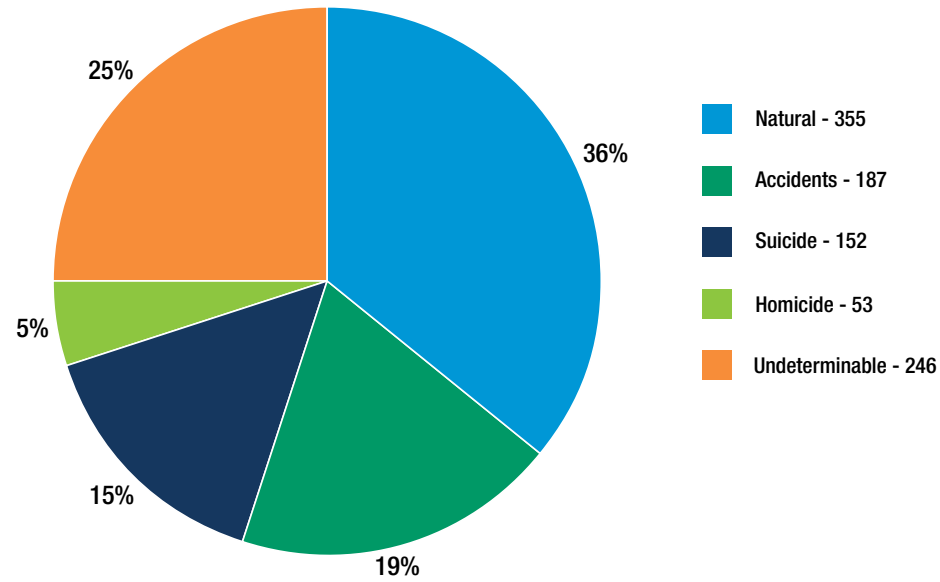


MEDICAL EXAMINER CASES 2018 - 2022



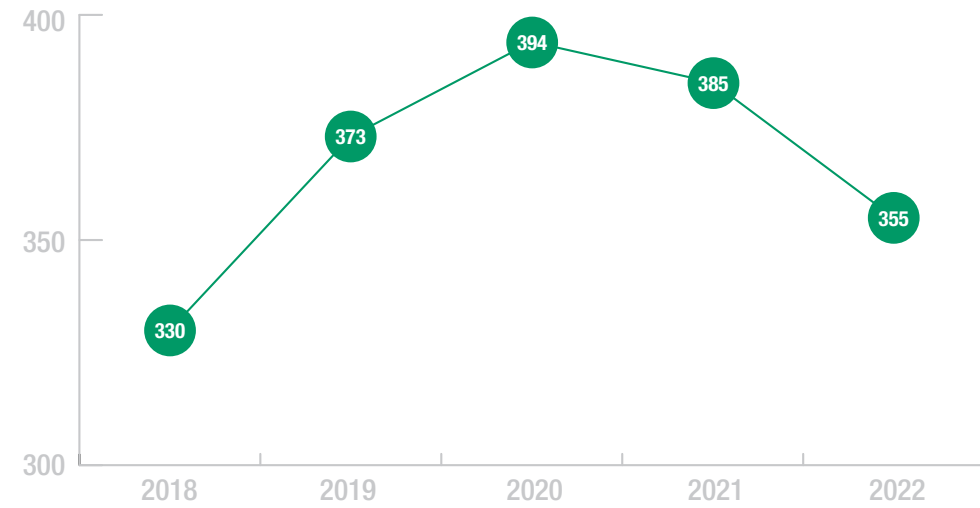
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Private Autopsy	19	32	30	22	21
Other County	82	59	4	4	4

MEDICAL EXAMINER CASES BY MANNER



NATURAL

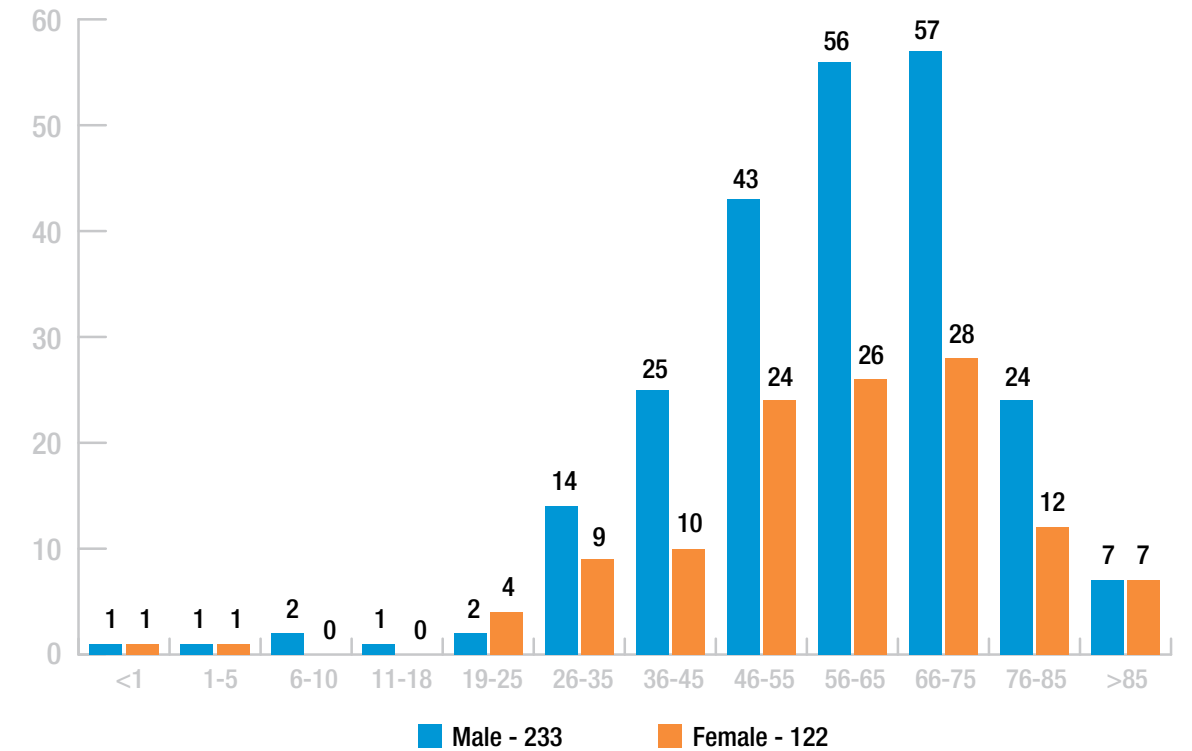
NATURAL 2018 - 2022



2022 MEDICAL EXAMINER CASES			
Manner	Full Autopsy	Partial Autopsy	Inspection
Natural	203	6	146
Accident	172	2	13
Suicide	117	7	28
Homicide	53	0	0
Undeterminable	222	0	24
Private	19	2	0
Other County	3	0	1

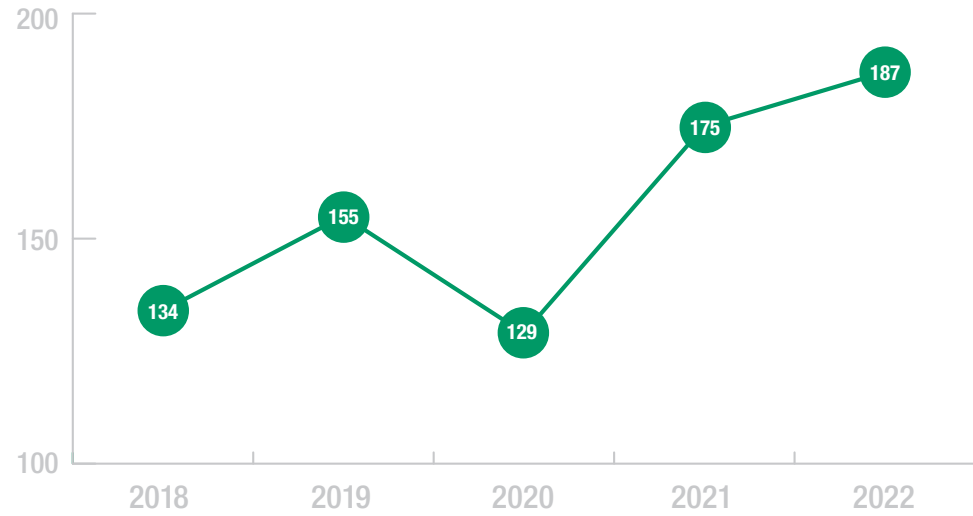
2022 EXAM CASES - AGE AND GENDER											
	NATURAL		ACCIDENT		SUICIDE		HOMICIDE		UNDETERMINABLE		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
<1	1	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	9
1-5	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
6-10	2	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	8
11-18	1	0	3	0	6	1	1	0	1	0	13
19-25	2	4	14	4	13	5	7	2	6	8	65
26-35	14	9	19	7	19	7	11	1	45	20	152
36-45	25	10	10	4	22	1	5	1	42	14	134
46-55	43	24	13	7	18	7	11	1	29	14	167
56-65	56	26	18	7	18	7	4	2	40	9	187
66-75	57	28	26	17	9	6	0	3	14	2	162
76-85	24	12	11	7	6	1	1	0	0	1	63
>85	7	7	2	6	6	6	0	0	0	0	28
Total	233	122	124	63	117	35	41	12	178	68	993

2022 NATURAL BY AGE AND GENDER

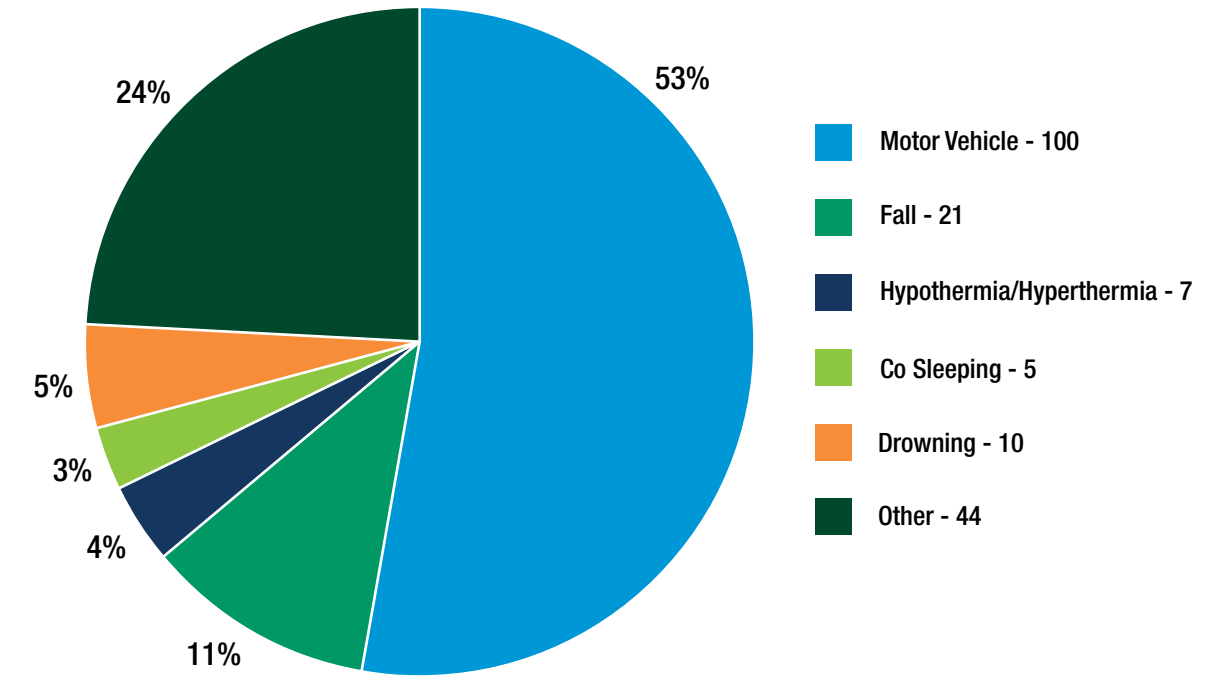


ACCIDENTS

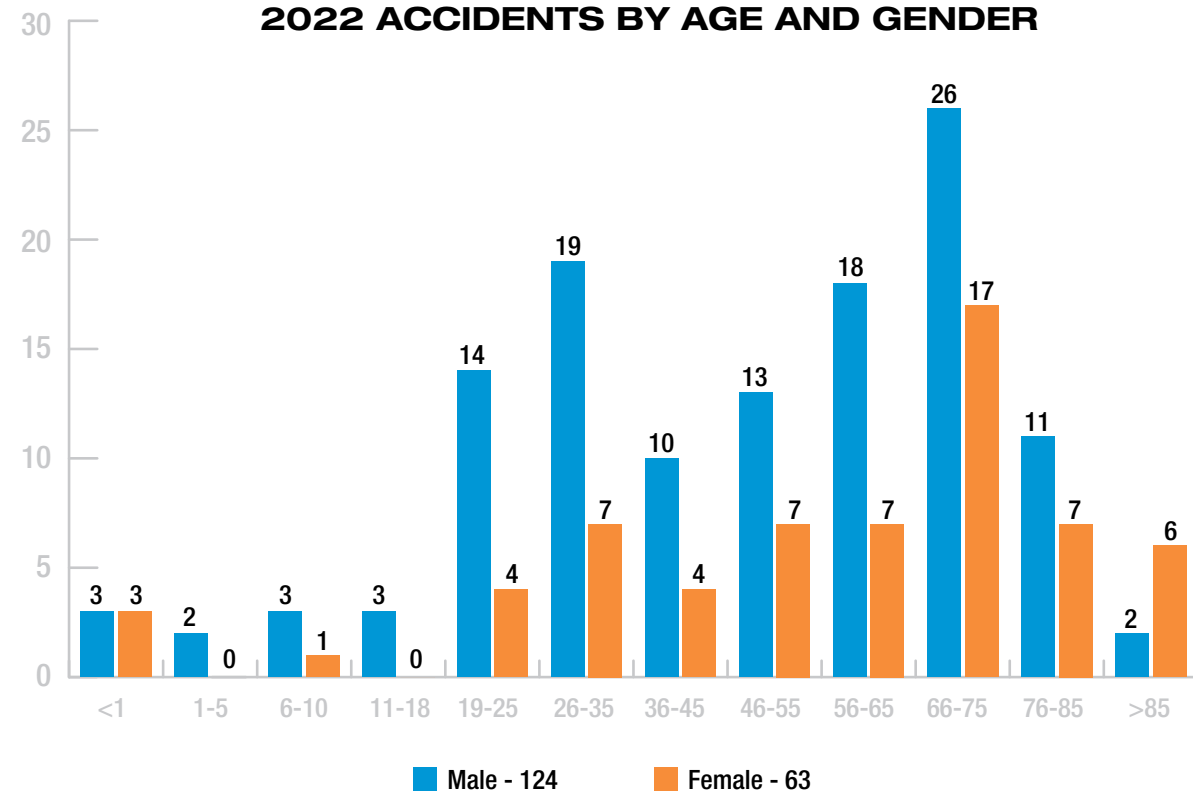
ACCIDENTS 2018 - 2022



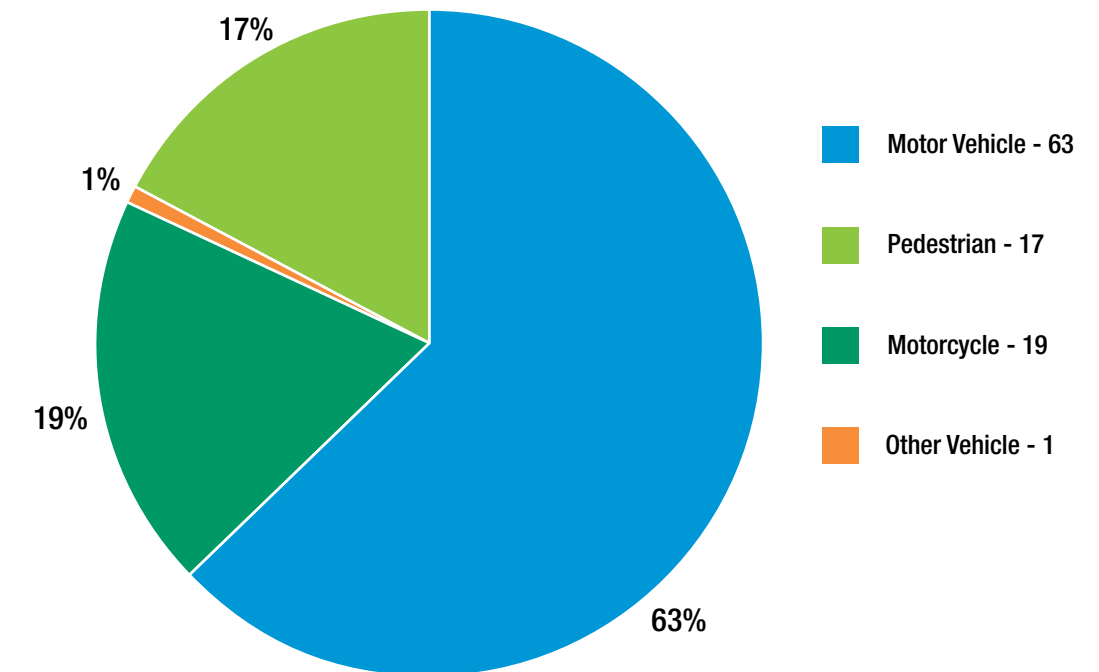
METHOD BY ACCIDENT



2022 ACCIDENTS BY AGE AND GENDER

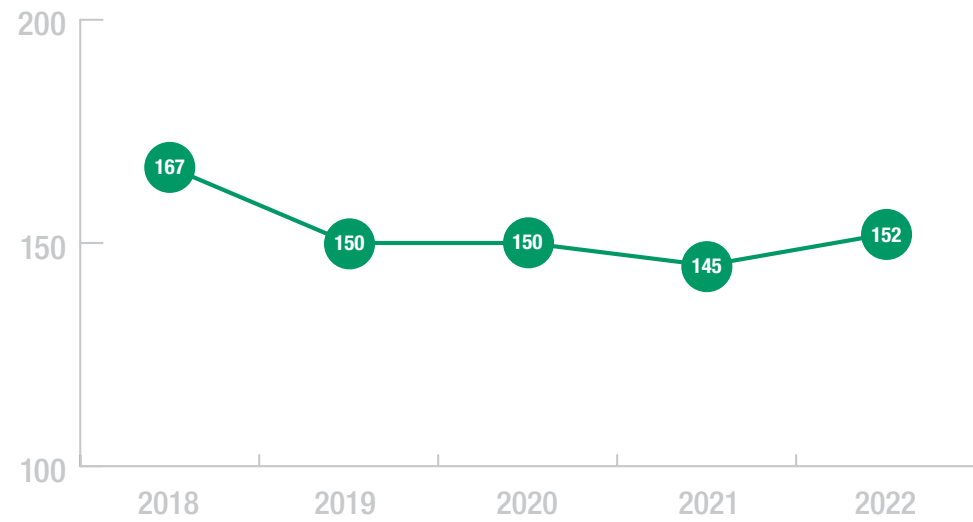


MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS BY TYPE

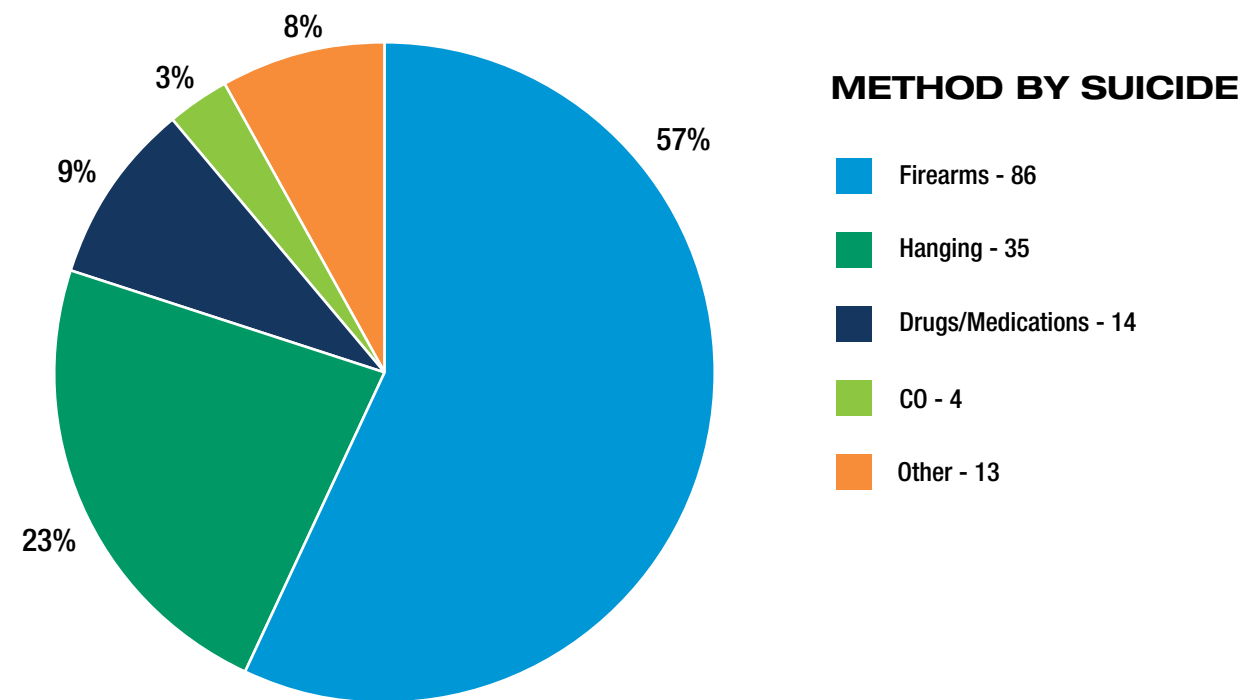
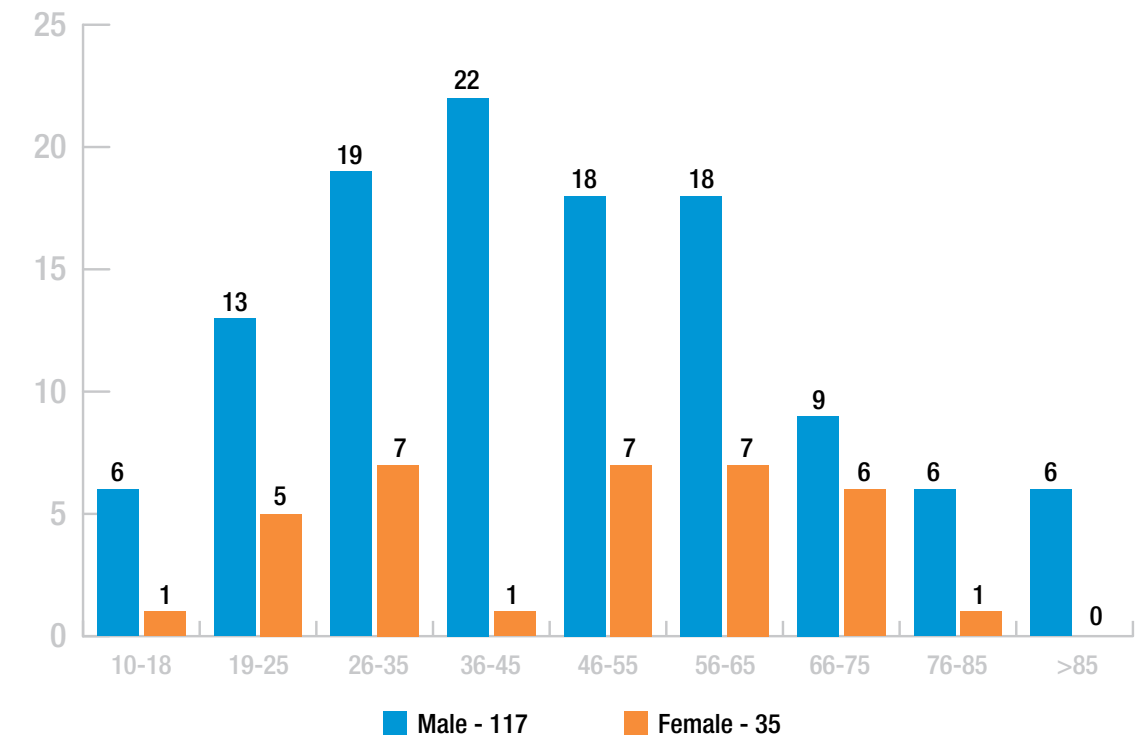


SUICIDES

SUICIDES 2018 - 2022



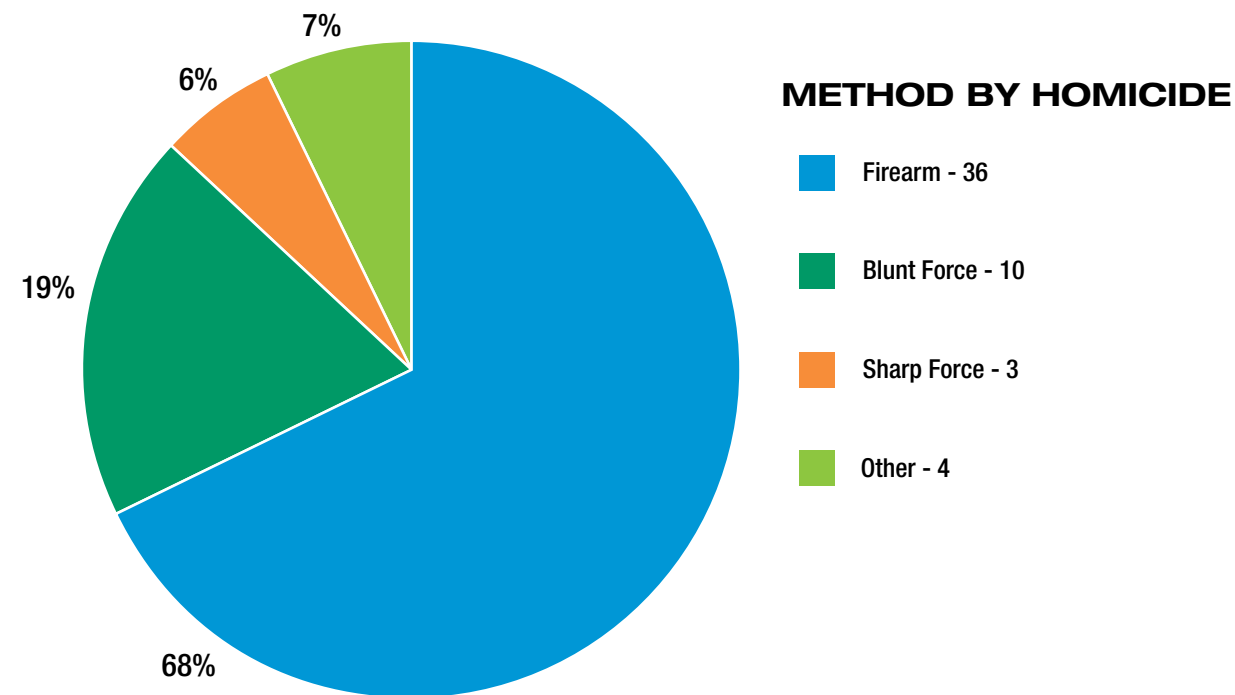
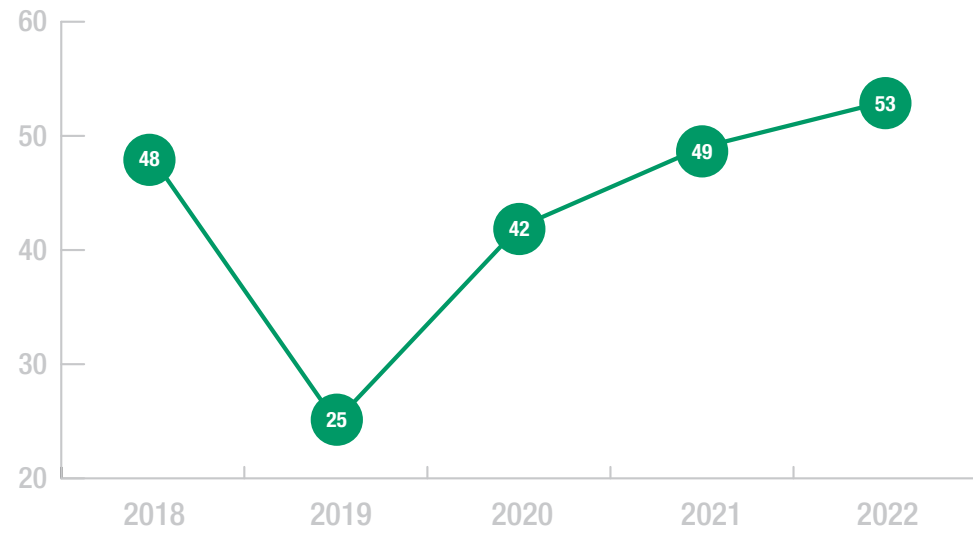
2022 SUICIDES BY AGE AND GENDER



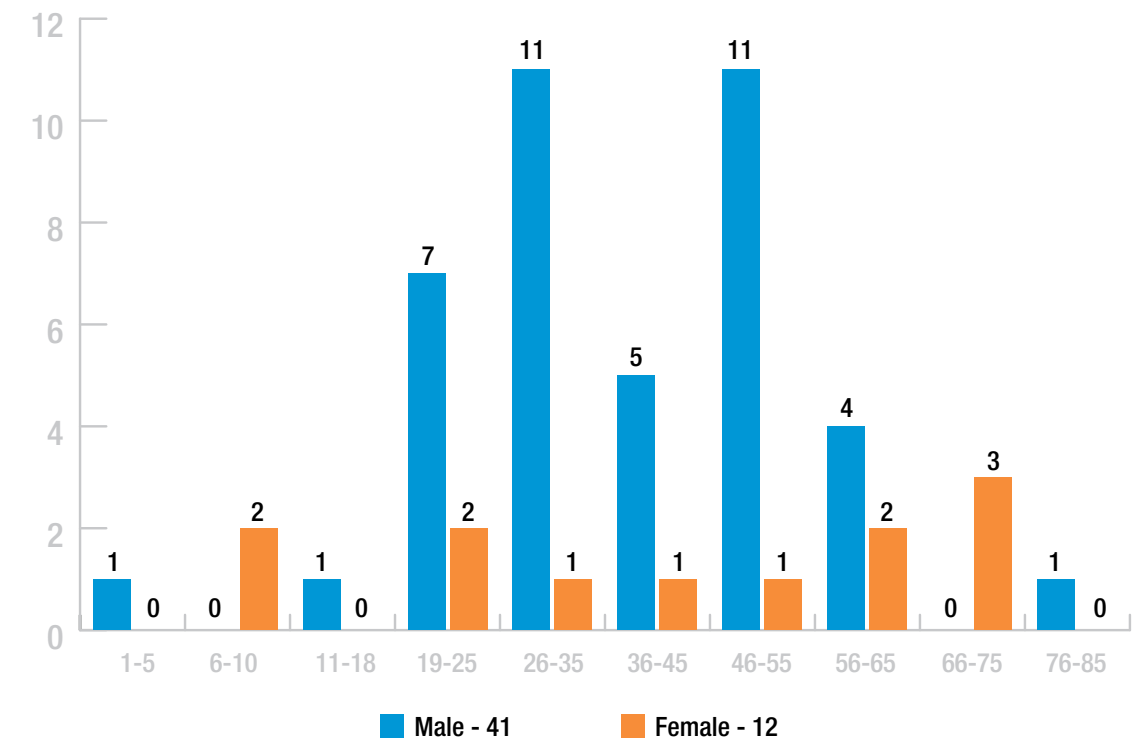
HOMICIDE

There was an 8% increase in homicides from 2021 to 2022. 77% of the homicide victims are male. In 68% of the homicides, the method used was firearm.

HOMICIDES 2018 - 2022

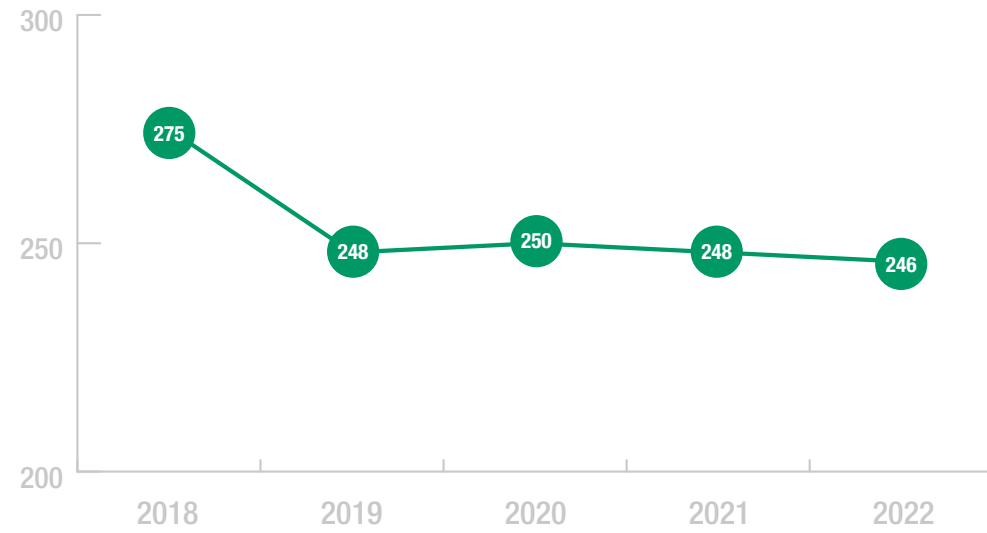


2022 HOMICIDE BY AGE AND GENDER

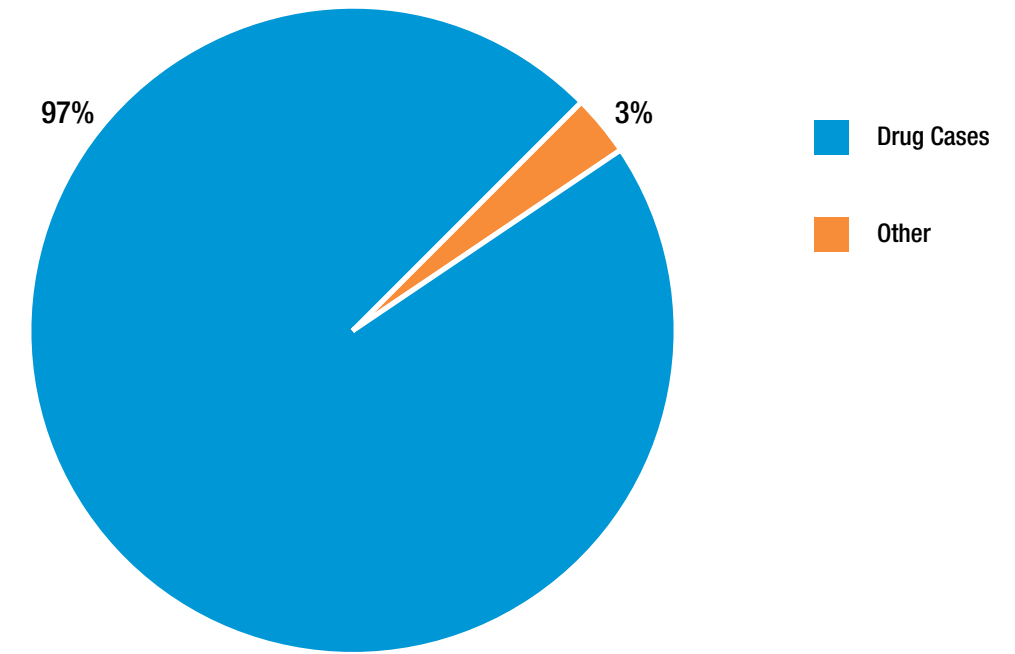


UNDETERMINABLE

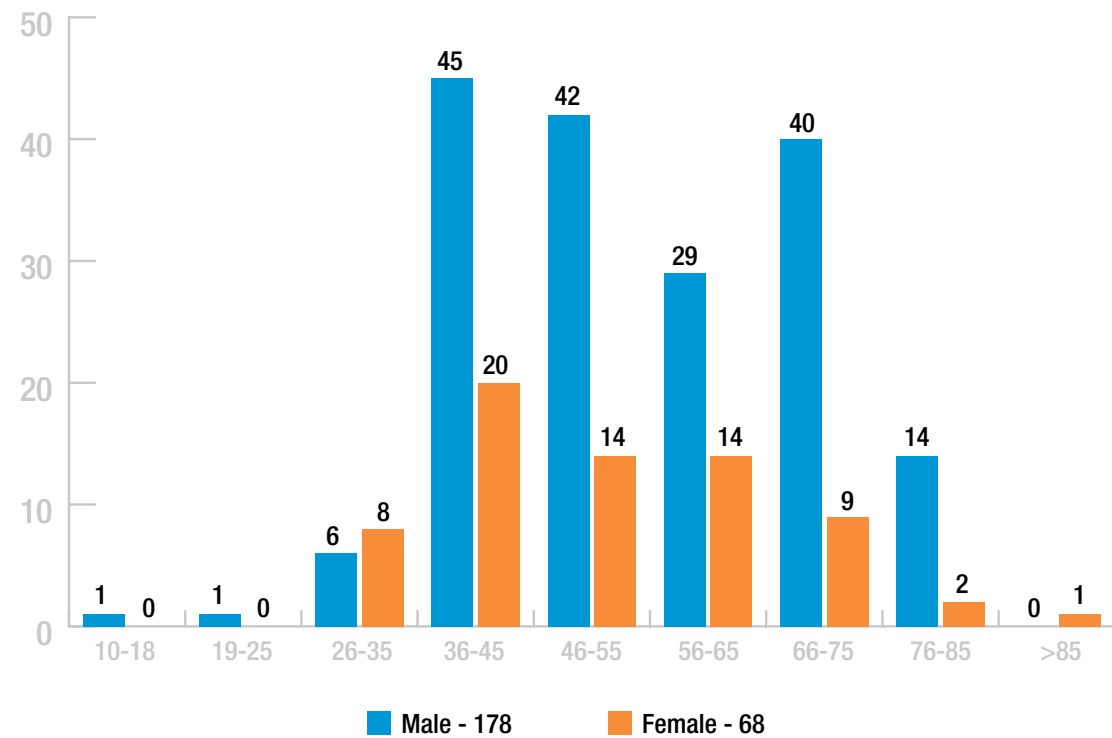
UNDETERMINABLE 2018 - 2022



UNDETERMINABLE BY TYPE

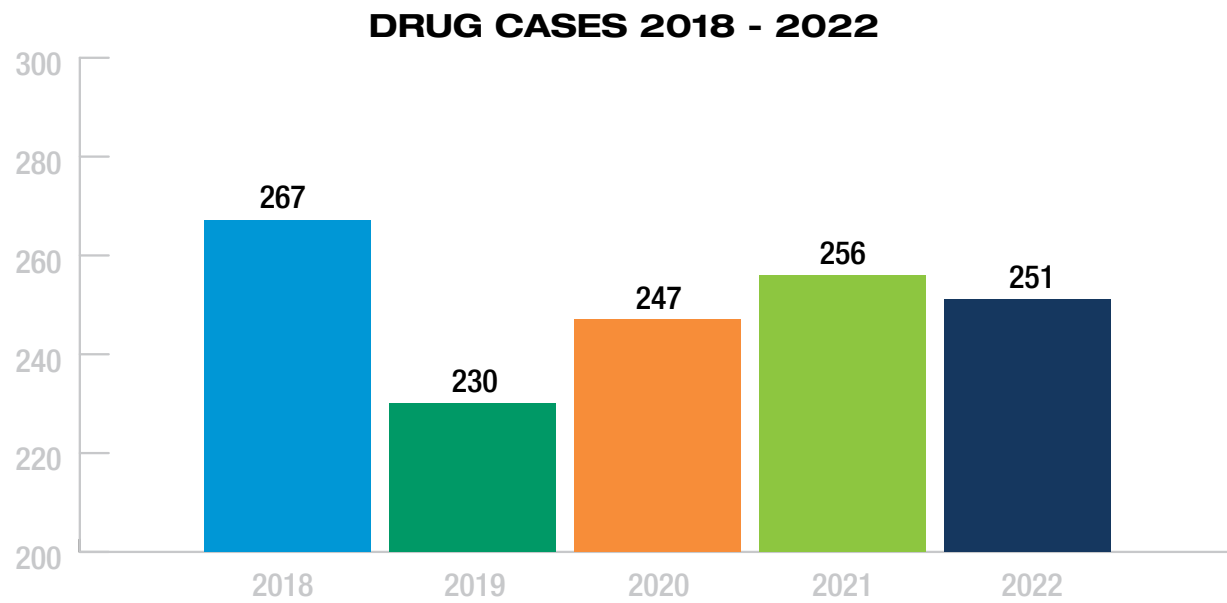


2022 UNDETERMINABLE BY AGE AND GENDER

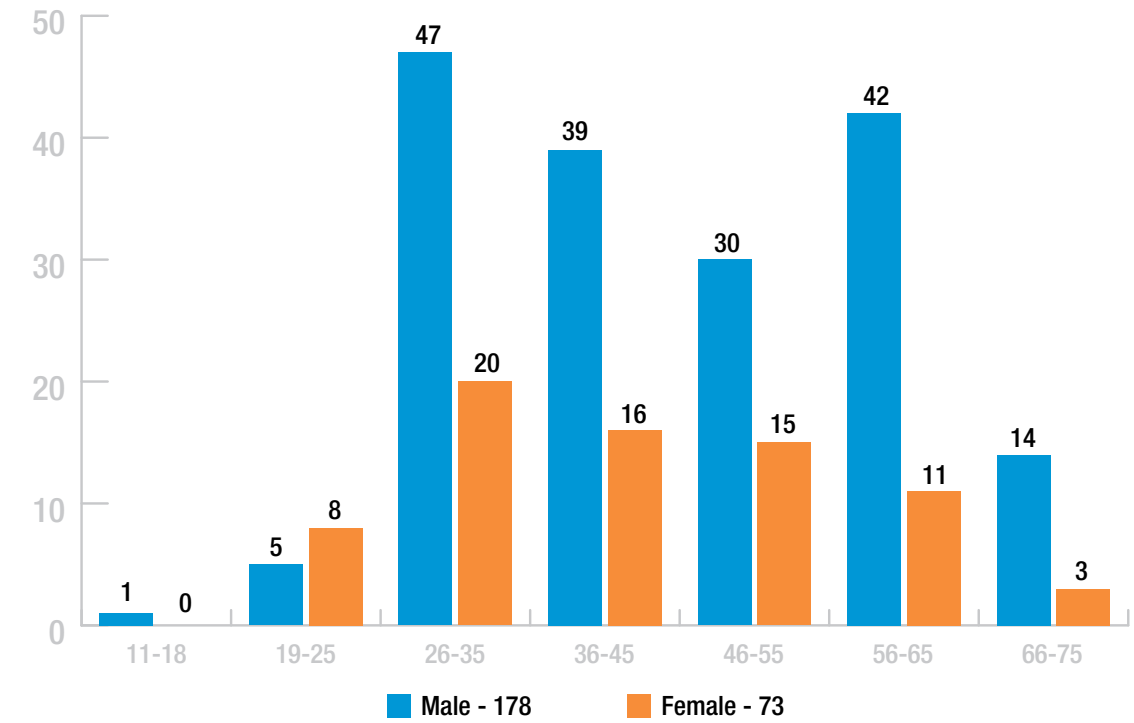


DRUG CASES (EXAM CASES ONLY)

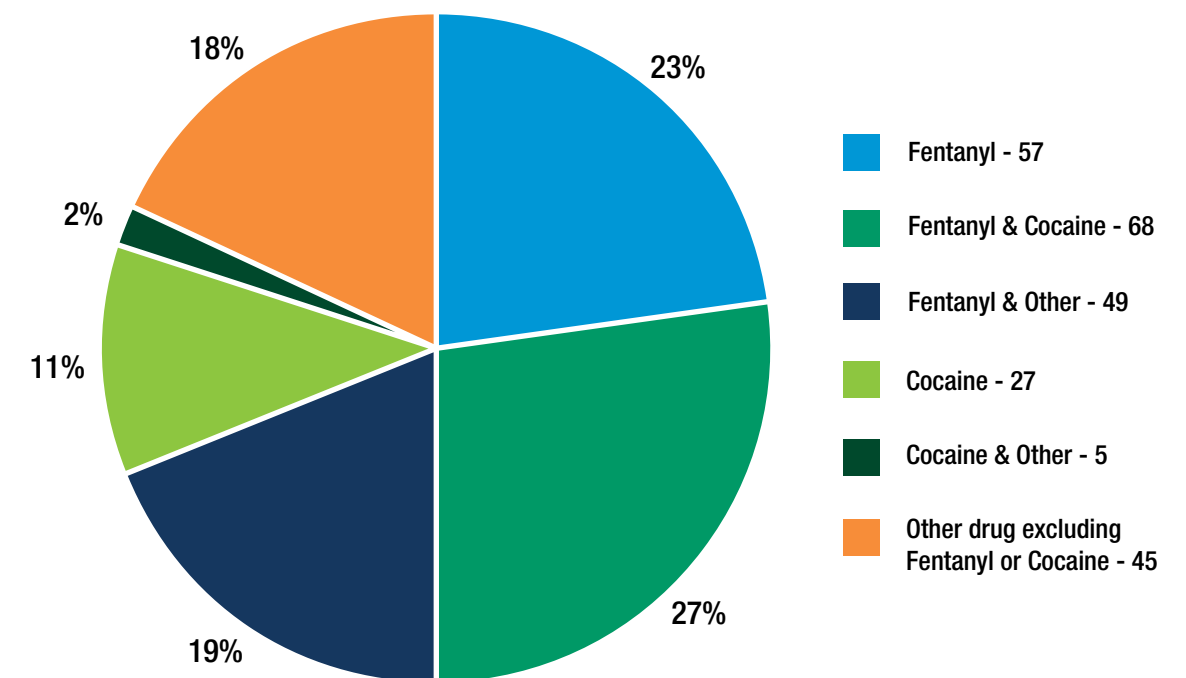
The following charts represent the number of cases when the manner of death was classified as Undeterminable and Drug Abuse, Drug Intoxication, or Medication Intoxication was listed as a primary cause of death. There was an increase of 2.54% from 2020 to 2021. In 73.6% of the drug related cases, fentanyl intoxication was listed in the primary cause of death.



2022 DRUG DEATH BY AGE AND GENDER

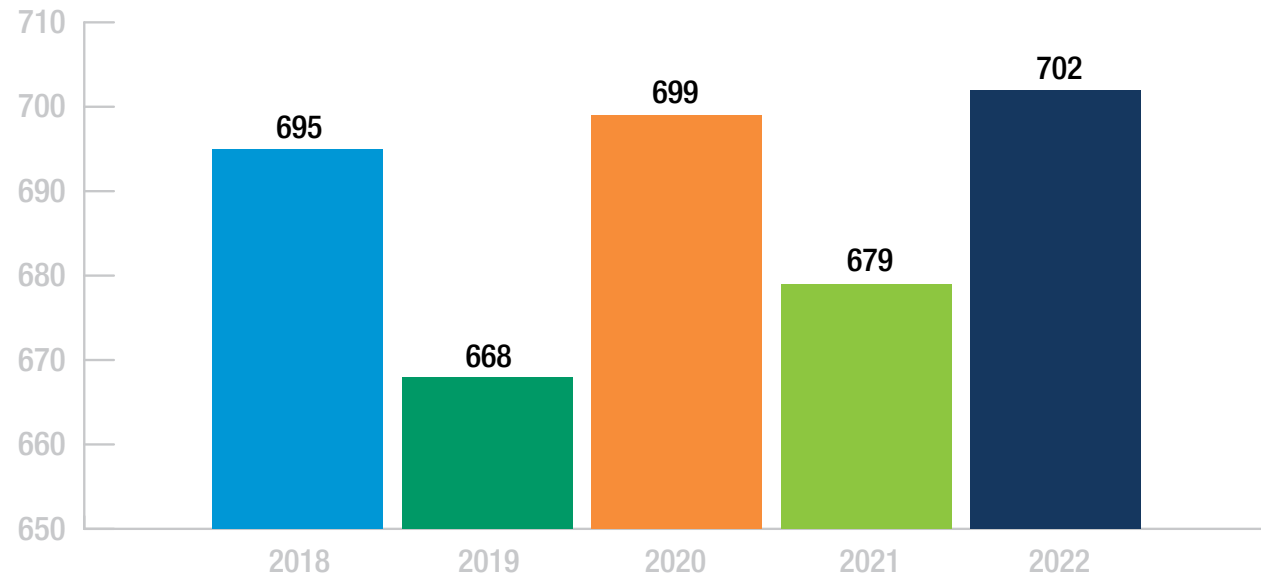


DRUG DEATHS BY FIRST DRUG OF MENTION



MISC. INFORMATION

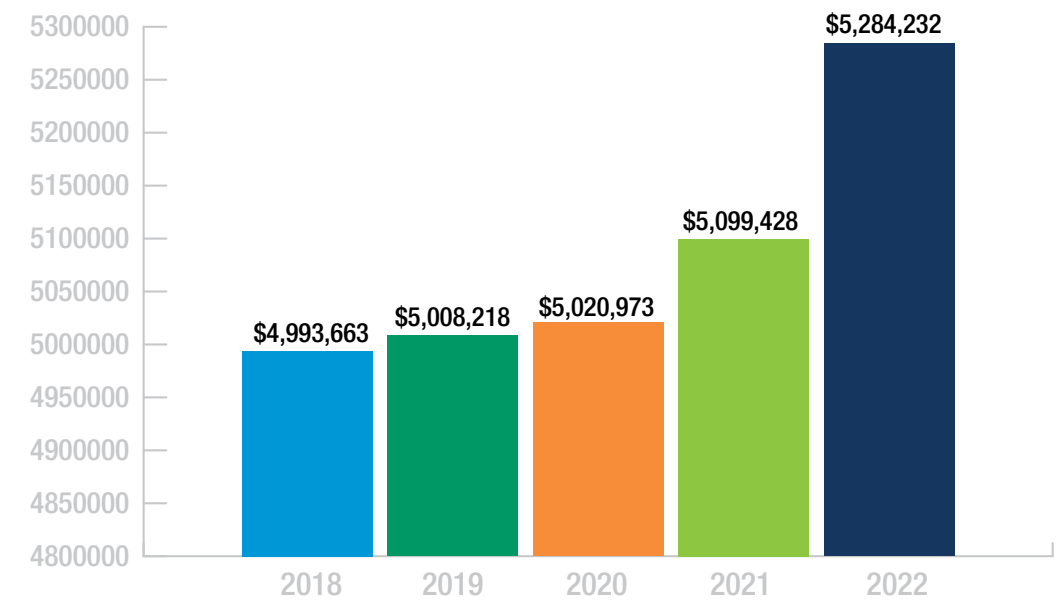
DEATH SCENES INVESTIGATED 2018 - 2022



PERSONNEL



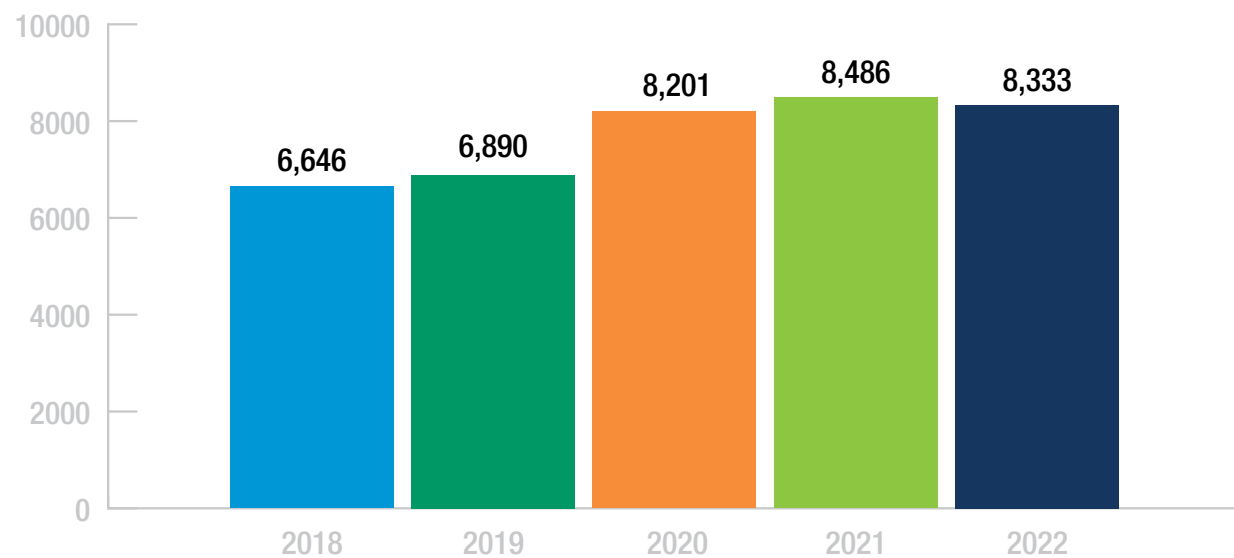
ANNUAL BUDGET 2018 - 2022



CREMATION AUTHORIZATION

Pursuant to Michigan Compiled Laws § 333.2848(3), if final disposition is by cremation, the medical examiner of the county in which death occurred shall sign the authorization for final disposition. The Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office reviews each cremation permit and respective death certificate before authorizing cremation. Cremation permit requests remained steady for 2017-2019. Cremation permit requests increased 21% since 2019.

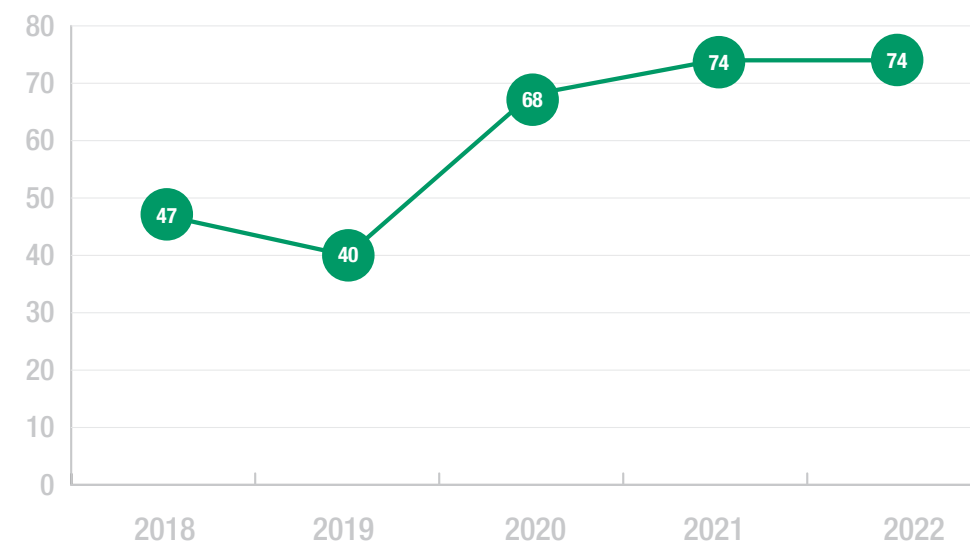
CREMATIONS BY YEAR



UNCLAIMED BODIES

The Estates and Protected Individuals Code, Public Act 386 of 1998, MCL 700.3206 establishes the rights and powers to make decisions about funeral arrangements and handling, disposition, or disinterment of a decedent's body. When there is no next of kin or the next of kin refuses to handle the arrangements, the Medical Examiner's Office applies for state assistance through the Department of Health and Human Services to fund the cremation of the decedent. Since 2019, there has been a significant increase in the number of cases handled by the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office.

UNCLAIMED BODIES





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