

National Park Service

Mortality Data Dictionary



Death rate - number of deaths per 100,000 people

Environmental - a death associated with an environmental cause including heat, cold, altitude, lightning, and rock fall.

Illegal Activity - An act committed in violation of the law. Examples include illegally crossing the United States border and theft.

Intentional Death - resulting from purposeful harmful actions upon oneself (suicide) or others (homicide) or due to legal intervention.

Legal Intervention - injuries inflicted by the police or other law-enforcing agents, including military on duty, in the course of arresting or attempting to arrest lawbreakers, suppressing disturbances, maintaining order, and other legal actions. Excludes injuries caused by civil insurrections.

Medical Death - resulting from natural or medical related causes, when sedentary or during physical activity¹, and are not due to suicide, homicide, or unintentional causes (e.g. seizure, heart attack).

Medical - during physical activity - a medical death while the victim was engaged in physical activity (e.g. hiking, boating).

Medical - not associated with physical activity - a medical death while the victim was not engaged in physical activity (e.g. sleeping, eating, driving).

Medical - unknown - a medical death where it is unknown whether the victim was participating in a physical activity at the time of the incident.

Motor Vehicle Passenger - Passenger of a motor vehicle² including car, bus, and motorcycle.

Other (Activity) - an activity for which a specific code does not exist in the Visitor Injury Data System (VIDS). Examples include sitting in a non-moving motor vehicle, spending time in a hotel/lodge room, and watching television.

Other (Cause of Death) - Cause of death that does not fall under one of the 9 historical categories³ developed by the NPS Public Risk Management Program. Causes include blunt force trauma, asphyxiation, decompression sickness, horseback riding accident, and electrocution.

Poisoning - unintentional

Passenger - Passenger in a motor vehicle (e.g. car, motorcycle).

¹ The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines physical activity as “any bodily movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscle that increases energy expenditure above a basal level”.

² Code of Federal Regulations Title 36 defines motor vehicle as “every vehicle that is self-propelled and every vehicle that is propelled by electric power, but not operated on rails or upon water, except a snowmobile and a motorized wheelchair”

³ Categories: Drowning, Motor vehicle crash, Falls/slips, Environmental, Poisoning, Wildlife, Transportation and, Undetermined

Transportation (e.g. bicycle, boat) - transportation related cause of death including boat accident, plane crash, jet ski accident, and bicycle only crash.

Undetermined (Age) - age of the person could not be determined due to insufficient information in the incident report.

Undetermined Death - manner of death classified by coroner as “Undetermined” or could not be determined due to:

- Insufficient information in the incident report
- Record being restricted
- Data captured by an outside agency (e.g. local law enforcement agency)

Undetermined (Sex) - sex of the person could not be determined due to insufficient information in the incident report.

Unintentional Death - Any harmful acts that occur without the intention of hurting oneself or others which result in damage to the body from acute exposure to kinetic, thermal, electrical or chemical energy or from the absence of such essentials as heat or oxygen (e.g. drownings, motor vehicle crash, falls, poisoning, hypothermia, thermal burns).

Vessel Related⁴ - watercraft activity including boating, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, sailing, and surfing.

⁴ Code of Federal Regulations Title 36 defines vessel as “ watercraft, including, but not limited to, powerboats, cruisers, houseboats, sailboats, rowboats, canoes, kayaks,

personal watercraft, and any other such equipment capable of navigation on water or ice, whether in motion or at rest”.