

## TIMELY TOPICS: FATAL INJURIES

According to a new report from CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, injuries were the fifth leading cause of death in 2001, accounting for 157,078 (6.5 percent) of the 2,416,425 deaths reported that year.

Other highlights from the report include:

- The death rate for injuries declined in 2001 by 4.4 percent from the 2000 rate.
- Injuries were the leading cause of death for persons under 35 years of age in 2001.
- The homicide rate increased 20 percent between 2000 and 2001 largely due to the September 11, 2001 attacks. Without the deaths of September 11 the homicide rate would have increased by 3.4 percent
- 65 percent of all injury deaths were unintentional, 20 percent were suicides, and 13 percent were homicides.
- The five leading causes of fatal injuries accounted for 78 percent of all injury deaths. Motor-vehicle traffic accidents led with 27 percent. It was followed by firearms (19 percent), poisoning (14 percent), falls (10 percent), and suffocation (8 percent).
- Suicides accounted for 57 percent of all firearms deaths and homicides represented 38 percent. Unintentional firearms injury accounted for 802 deaths or 2.7 percent of the total.
- Head injury was the most commonly mentioned cause of death (32 percent) followed by poisoning and other toxic effects (16 percent).
- 63 percent of all poisoning deaths were unintentional, 23 were suicides, and 13 percent were undetermined. 93 percent of the unintentional poisoning deaths were drug-related.
- Death rates due to injuries were highest in New Mexico (85.9 per 100,000 standard population), Alaska (83.7), and Mississippi (80.6). They were lowest in California (41.4 per 100,000 standard population) and Massachusetts (39.6).
- Death rates due to suicide were highest in New Mexico, Montana, and Nevada (respective rates of 20.2, 19.1, and 18.8 per 100,000 standard population). They were lowest in New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts (rates of 6.8, 6.5, and 6.5 per 100,000 standard population, respectively).

The new report, "*Deaths: Injuries, 2001*," is based on data recorded from more than 96 percent of State death certificates issued in 2001. The full report is available at [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr52/nvsr52\\_21acc.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr52/nvsr52_21acc.pdf).

