
DEATHS DUE TO FIREARMS: 2005

The Medical Examiner is responsible for investigating all deaths due to firearms that occur in King County. Medical Examiner data relate primarily to the victim because information regarding the weapon and the shooter is often unknown. The following data are specific to the victims of firearm deaths.

In 2005, the Medical Examiner investigated 146 firearm deaths. In 2004, firearms caused 144 deaths; in 2003 firearms caused 155 deaths; in 2002 firearms caused 153 deaths; and in 2001 firearms caused 128 deaths. Of the 146 firearm deaths in 2005, 47 (32%) were homicides and 96 (66%) were suicides. Firearms caused two accidental deaths in 2005; in both 2004 and 2003 firearms caused one accidental death and in both 2002 and 2001 there were no accidental firearm deaths. In 2005, firearms caused one death that was classified as undetermined. This compares to two in 2004, one in 2003, two in 2002, and none in 2001.

In 2005, gunshot wounds were the leading cause of death for homicides and suicides. Gunshot deaths comprised 59% (47/80) of homicides, compared to 61% (46/76) in 2004, 56% (52/93) in 2003, 58% in both 2002 (53/92) and 2001 (43/74). In 2005, suicides by firearms represented 41% (96/233) of suicide deaths compared to 42% (95/229) in 2004, 47% (101/217) in 2003, 49% in 2002 (98/200), and 46% (85/183) in 2001.

In 2005, of the 47 gunshot homicide victims, 15% (7/47) were 19 years old and younger - a slight decrease from 2004. It is estimated that a disproportionate number of gunshot homicides were black (38%, 18/47) compared to the percentage of blacks in the general population. (See discussions on pages 5 and 41.) Of the 18 black gunshot homicide victims, 37% (10/18) were males between 20 and 29 years of age. In comparison, 53% (25/47) of the homicide gunshot victims were white. Of the 25 white homicide victims, 12% (3/25) were males between 20 and 29 years old.

Firearms were also the most common mode of committing suicide (41%, 96/233) in 2005. Of the 96 gunshot suicide victims, 94% (90/96) were white and 92% (88/96) were males. Four of the gunshot suicide victims were 19 years old and under (4%, 4/96). Twenty-one (22%, 21/96) of the gunshot suicide victims were between the ages of 20 and 39 years of age, 42 (44%, 42/96) were between 40 and 59 years, and 29 (30%, 29/96) were 60 years and older.

Table 10-1 Firearm Deaths / Manner / Age / Sex / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

AGE GROUP / SEX	MANNER OF DEATH				SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	A	H	S	U		
<13 years	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
13-15 years	0	1	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
16-19 years	0	6	4	0		10
<i>Male</i>	0	6	4	0	10	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
20-29 years	0	14	9	1		24
<i>Male</i>	0	14	9	1	24	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
30-39 years	1	9	12	0		22
<i>Male</i>	1	9	12	0	22	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
40-49 years	1	11	20	0		32
<i>Male</i>	1	10	17	0	28	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	3	0	4	
50-59 years	0	4	22	0		26
<i>Male</i>	0	3	19	0	22	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	3	0	4	
60-69 years	0	2	6	0		8
<i>Male</i>	0	2	6	0	8	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
70-79 years	0	0	12	0		12
<i>Male</i>	0	0	10	0	10	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	2	0	2	
80-89 years	0	0	11	0		11
<i>Male</i>	0	0	10	0	10	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	1	0	1	
90+	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
Totals	2	47	96	1		146
Percent	1.4%	32.2%	65.7%	0.7%		100%

Graph 10-1 Firearm Deaths / Manner / Age Group / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

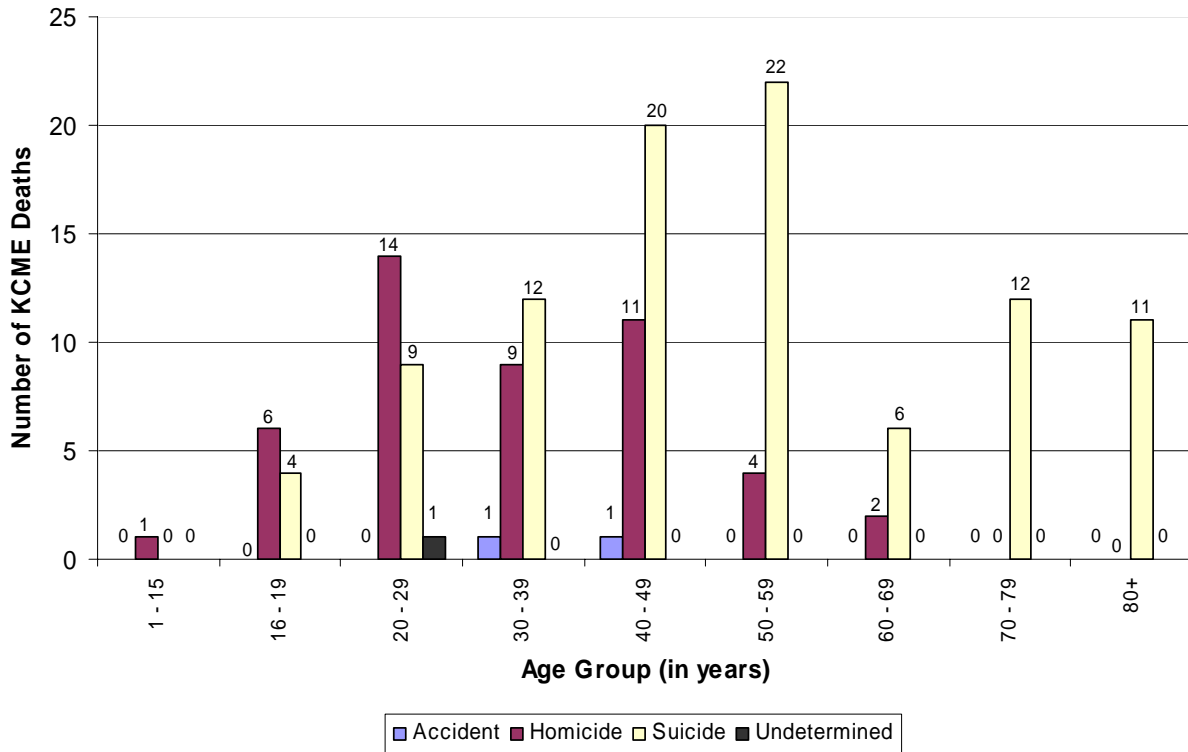


Table 10-2 Firearm Deaths / Manner / Race / Sex / KCME / 2005

RACE / SEX	MANNER OF DEATH				SUB-TOTAL	
	A	H	S	U	TOTAL	TOTAL
Asian	0	4	3	0		7
<i>Male</i>	0	4	3	0	7	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
Black	0	18	2	0		20
<i>Male</i>	0	18	2		20	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
Native American	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
White	2	25	90	1		118
<i>Male</i>	2	23	82	1	108	
<i>Female</i>	0	2	8	0	10	
Other	0	0	1	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	0	1	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
Totals	2	47	96	1		146