
TEN YEAR PERSPECTIVE

This section provides a ten-year perspective on deaths that the Medical Examiner investigated and variation in data from year to year.

Approximately 65% (8470/12,937¹) of the deaths that occurred in 2005 in King County were reported to the Medical Examiner. The Medical Examiner's Office, however, did not assume responsibility for certification in all of these deaths. In about 77% (6,525/8,470) of these deaths, the Medical Examiner did not assume jurisdiction and perform an investigation; instead a "No Jurisdiction Assumed" (NJA) number was assigned. In such instances a physician with knowledge and awareness of the decedent's state of health certified the death. These are primarily natural deaths, with a predominance of individuals in nursing homes with a known fatal disease process. Thus, the Medical Examiner assumed jurisdiction in 15% (1,945/12,937) of deaths that occurred in King County in 2005².

The tables on the following pages attempt to give a perspective on the types of deaths that the Medical Examiner investigates. The tables display data by category and year and provide trends over time. More detailed analysis of 2005 data is provided in separate sections for each manner of death (Accident, Homicide, Natural, Suicide, Traffic, and Undetermined).

¹Death certificates filed in King County, (Vital Statistics, Public Health - Seattle & King County, 2005).

²Does not include non-human remains or anthropology/contract cases.

Table 2-1 Comparison of Manners of Death / KCME / 1996 - 2005

MANNER OF DEATH	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Accident (Other)	418	435	422	404	441	417	472	485	542	602
Accident (Traffic)	205	216	199	200	203	220	203	179	192	226
Homicide	88	97	90	89	73	74	93	93	76	80
Natural	558	518	530	511	522	619	661	770	765	763
Suicide	238	187	202	221	178	185	200	217	229	233
Undetermined	51	37	63	44	90	63	55	71	59	41
Totals	1,558	1,490	1,506	1,469	1,507	1,578	1,684	1,815	1,863	1,945

Table 2-2 Comparison of Manners of Death as Percentage of Total Annual Medical Examiner Cases / KCME / 1996 - 2005

MANNER OF DEATH	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Accident (Other)	26.8	29.2	28.0	27.5	29.3	26.5	28.0	26.8	29.1	31.0
Accident (Traffic)	13.2	14.5	13.2	13.6	13.5	13.9	12.1	9.9	10.3	11.6
Homicide	5.6	6.5	6.0	6.1	4.8	4.7	5.5	5.1	4.1	4.1
Natural	35.8	35.2	35.2	34.8	34.6	39.2	39.3	42.4	41.0	39.2
Suicide	15.3	12.6	13.4	15.0	11.8	11.7	11.9	11.9	12.3	12.0
Undetermined	3.3	2.5	4.2	3.0	6.0	4.0	3.2	3.9	3.2	2.1
Totals	1,558	1,490	1,506	1,469	1,507	1,578	1,684	1,815	1,863	1,945

Graph 2-1 Comparison of Manners of Death / King County Medical Examiner / 1996 - 2005

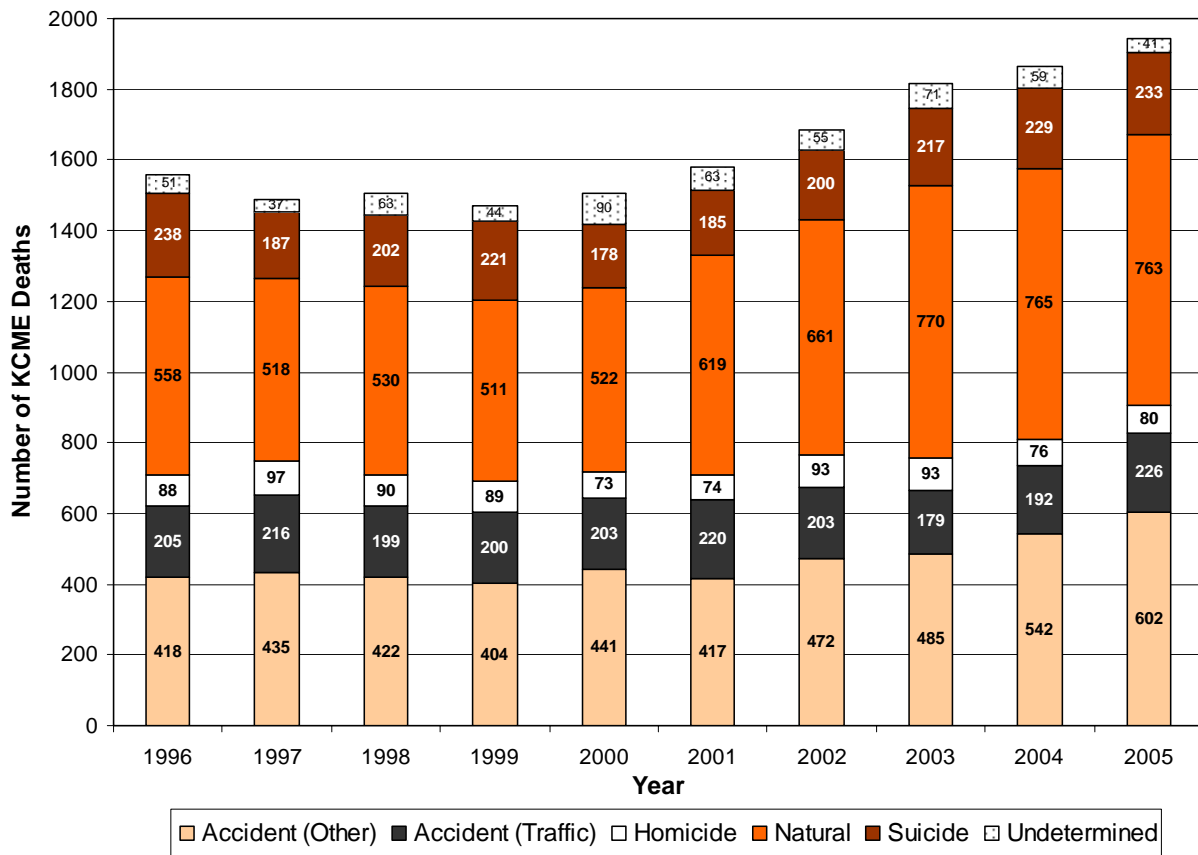


Table 2-3 Ten-Year Perspective of Homicidal Methods / KCME / 1996 - 2005

METHOD USED	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Blunt Force (#)	11	16	10	9	12	14	14	14	10	12
Blunt Force (%)	13%	16%	11%	10%	16%	19%	15%	15%	13%	15%
Firearms (#)	51	52	55	52	39	43	53	52	46	47
Firearms (%)	58%	54%	61%	58%	53%	58%	57%	56%	61%	59%
Hom. Violence (#)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	2
Hom. Violence (%)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	3%	4%	3%
Stabbing (#)	15	14	15	19	16	8	17	16	10	14
Stabbing (%)	17%	14%	16%	21%	22%	11%	18%	17%	13%	17%
Strangulation (#)	3	6	5	3	2	3	3	5	1	4
Strangulation (%)	3%	6%	6%	3%	3%	4%	3%	6%	1%	5%
Other (#)	8	9	5	6	4	6	4	3	6	1
Other (%)	10%	9%	6%	7%	6%	8%	5%	3%	8%	1%
Totals	88	97	90	89	73	74	93	93	76	80

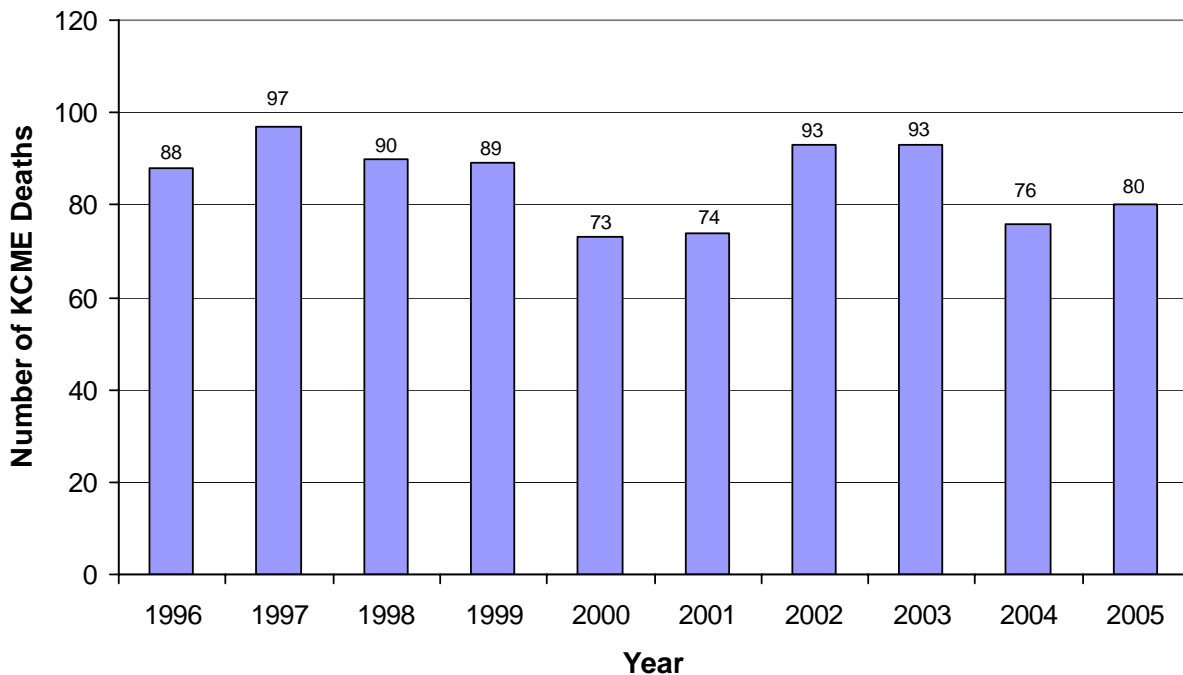
Graph 2-2 Homicide Deaths / King County Medical Examiner / 1996 - 2005

Table 2-4 Ten Year Perspective of Suicidal Injury Modes / KCME / 1996 - 2005

INJURY MODE	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Asphyxia / Plastic Bag	8	3	6	2	6	9	5	8	7	5
Burns / Fire / Heat	1	0	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	3
Carbon Monoxide	16	14	14	11	5	9	17	12	8	13
Drowning	1	4	3	2	0	1	2	4	5	0
Drugs / Poisons	37	23	29	35	31	21	23	35	41	39
Firearms	112	99	95	106	87	85	98	101	95	96
Hanging	40	28	37	39	31	38	32	36	44	42
Incised Wounds / Stabbing	3	6	3	7	7	9	4	6	8	9
Jumped	17	10	9	15	8	11	14	11	15	22
Other	3	0	5	1	2	1	3	3	5	4
Totals	238	187	202	221	178	185	200	217	229	233

Graph 2-3 Suicide Deaths / King County Medical Examiner / 1996 – 2005

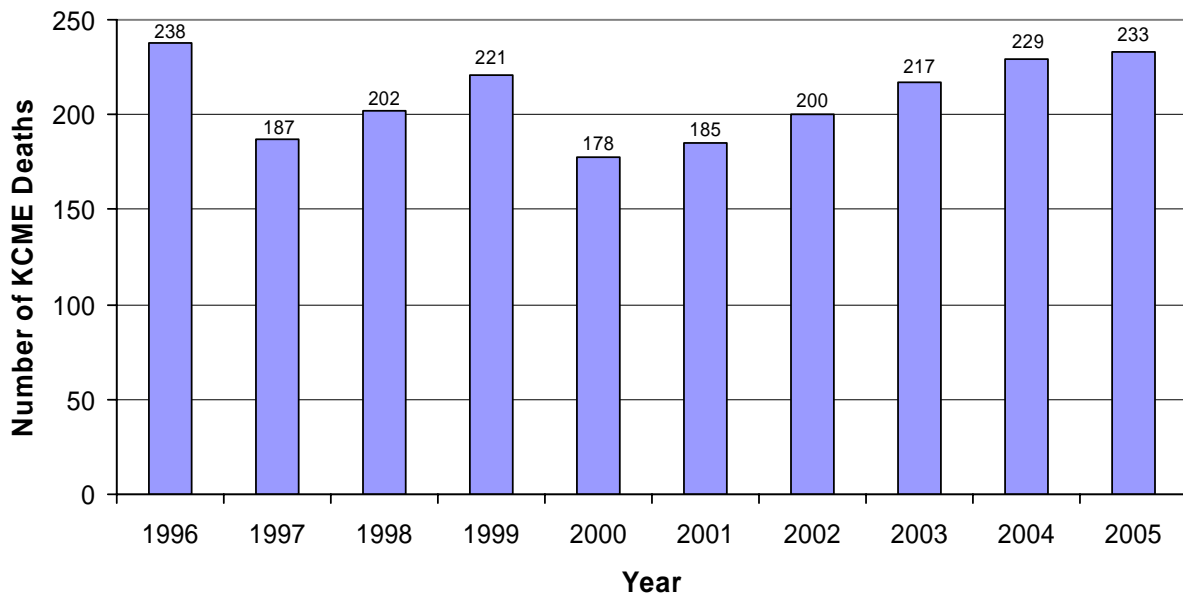


Table 2-5 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / KCME / 1996 - 2005

CIRCUMSTANCES	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Vehicle Driver	102	88	85	97	90	93	99	75	78	99
Vehicle Passenger	39	58	47	47	52	56	46	36	54	47
Vehicle (Undetermined)	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	2	1	1
Bicyclist	4	9	6	6	8	7	3	3	5	6
Motorcycle Driver	13	14	18	17	9	21	17	21	23	33
Motorcycle Passenger	2	2	2	1	4	0	0	3	0	3
Pedestrian	42	39	40	32	32	40	34	38	30	36
Other	3	6	1	0	6	1	3	1	1	1
Totals	205	216	199	200	203	220	203	179	192	226

Graph 2-4 Traffic Fatalities / King County Medical Examiner / 1996 – 2005

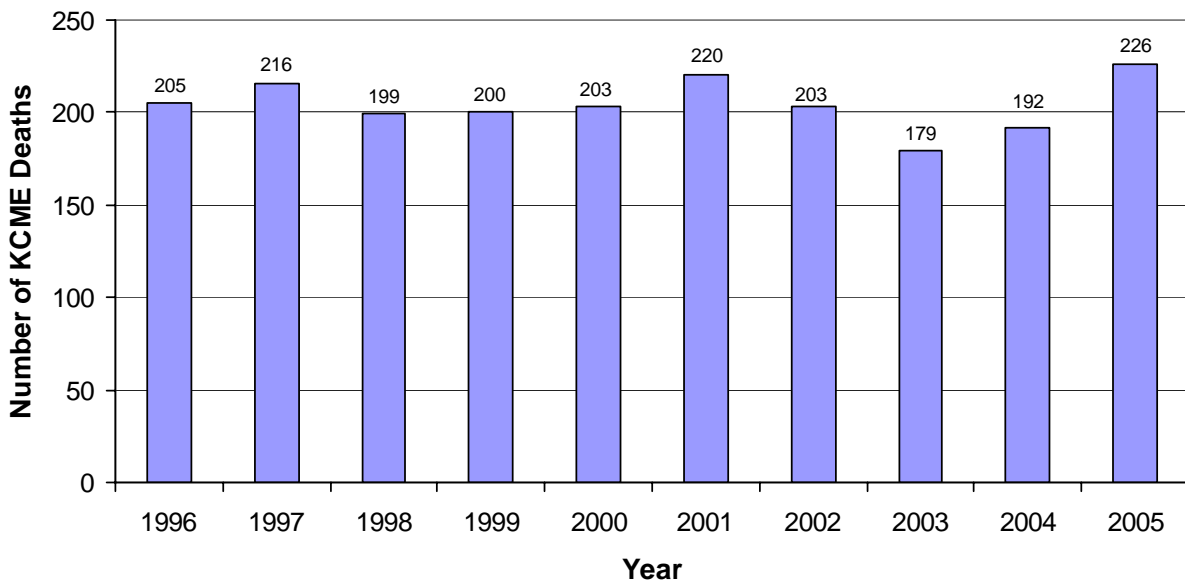
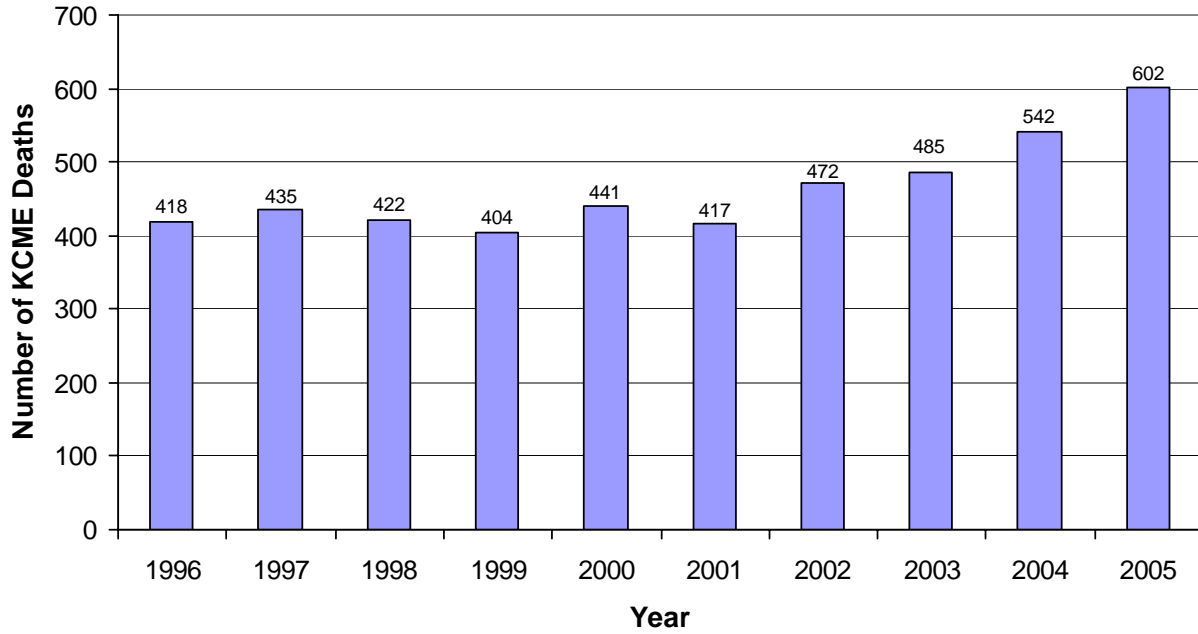


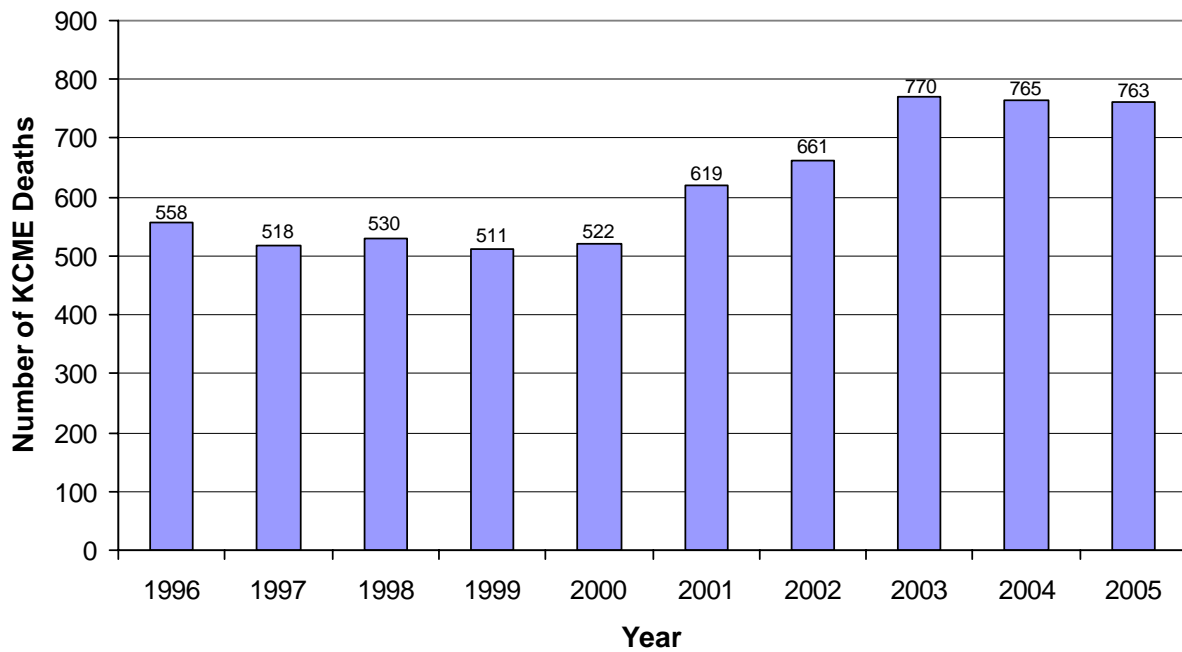
Table 2-6 Ten Year Perspective of Non-Traffic Accidental Death Circumstances / KCME / 1996 - 2005

CIRCUMSTANCES	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Aircraft	2	3	1	3	3	1	0	0	2	3
Asphyxia	8	2	11	7	7	10	7	4	2	9
Aspiration	3	5	4	1	7	5	5	9	8	10
Blunt Force / Crushing	4	3	8	0	11	7	12	9	8	10
Burns / Fire	13	25	25	25	23	29	22	19	24	26
Carbon Monoxide	5	2	0	0	1	5	0	1	3	4
Complication of Therapy	3	10	10	11	16	17	24	22	18	45
Drowning	28	34	24	23	23	35	32	27	17	19
Drugs / Poisons	165	156	179	164	177	122	173	160	211	216
Electrocution	2	0	1	0	3	1	2	0	2	1
Explosion	2	2	2	2	0	1	0	0	4	1
Fall	135	165	138	147	149	157	171	207	213	230
Firearms	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Hanging	2	1	0	0	4	0	1	0	2	2
Hypothermia	6	3	5	0	0	8	6	2	2	4
Struck by Object	8	7	6	6	2	5	2	8	7	1
Struck by Train	5	1	1	0	4	3	2	0	3	1
Vehicular Non-Traffic	5	7	3	8	6	6	8	14	10	8
Other	22	8	5	7	5	5	5	2	5	10
Totals	418	435	422	404	441	417	472	485	542	602

Graph 2-5 Accidental Deaths / King County Medical Examiner / 1996 – 2005



Graph 2-6 Natural Deaths / King County Medical Examiner / 1996 – 2005



Graph 2-7 Deaths of Undetermined Manner / King County Medical Examiner / 1996 – 2005

