
Manner: UNDETERMINED

The King County Medical Examiner's Office certifies a manner of death as Undetermined when available information regarding the circumstances of death is insufficient to classify the death into one of the specific manners of natural or unnatural death (Accident, Homicide, or Suicide). In some cases, serious doubt existed as to whether an injury occurred with intent or as a result of an accident. Information concerning the circumstances may be lacking due to the absence of background information or witnesses, or because of a lengthy delay between death and discovery of the body. Moreover, it may be difficult to assess street drug or medication overdose deaths as showing enough features to reasonably determine the manner of death. If an extensive investigation and autopsy cannot clarify the circumstances, the death is classified Undetermined.

The King County Medical Examiner's Office certified 41 deaths with manner undetermined, accounting for two percent (41/1,945) of the deaths investigated for the calendar year 2005. Drugs and poisons caused 12 or 29%, of the 41 deaths of undetermined manner (this figure includes 11 drug deaths and one carbon monoxide death). For a more detailed review of drug-caused deaths in 2005, see the discussion in the section on Drugs and Poisons on pages 83 and 84.

The 41 deaths that were classified as Undetermined for 2005 include nine fetal deaths, which, in accordance with the Washington State Department of Health - Center for Health Statistics Fetal Death Certification Guidelines, are not assigned a manner of death. Fetal death certificates must be issued for every fetus of 20 weeks or more gestation. The Medical Examiner assumed jurisdiction over nine fetal deaths in 2005, including seven that were related to maternal drug use. These deaths are included in drug-related deaths in the Drugs and Poisons chapter on pages 82 and 83.

Graph 8-1 Undetermined Manner of Death / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

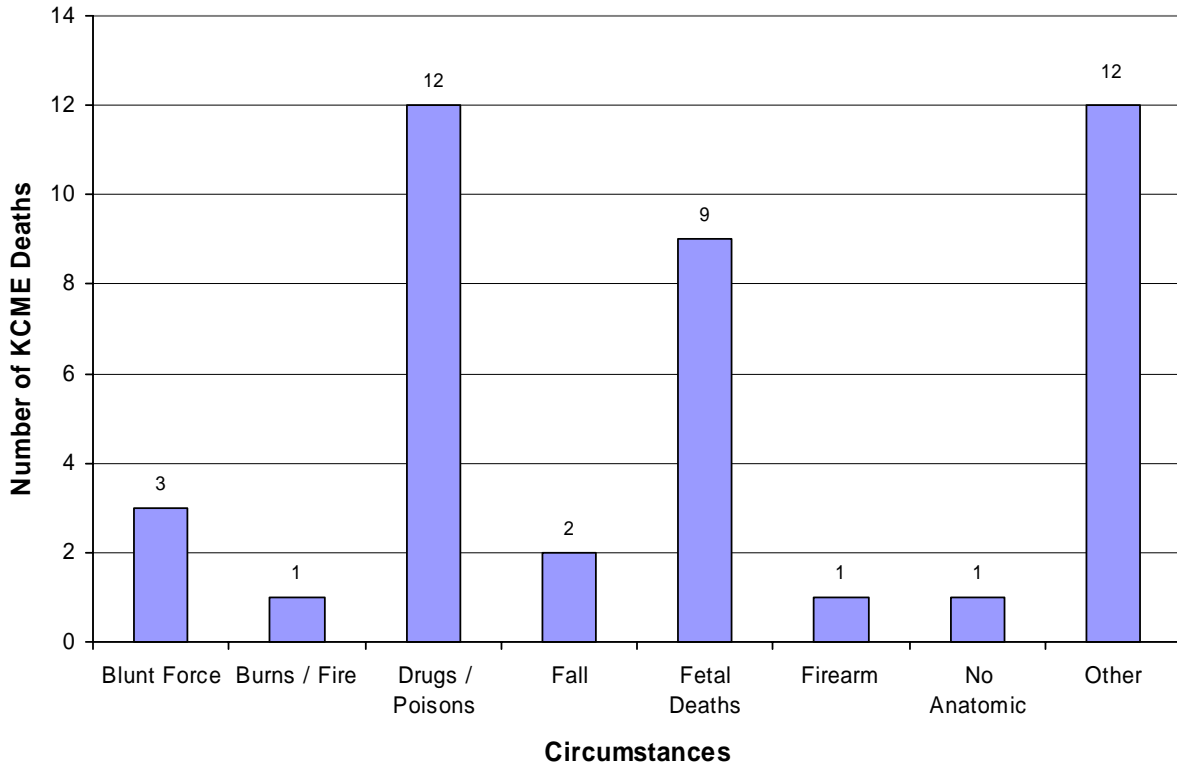
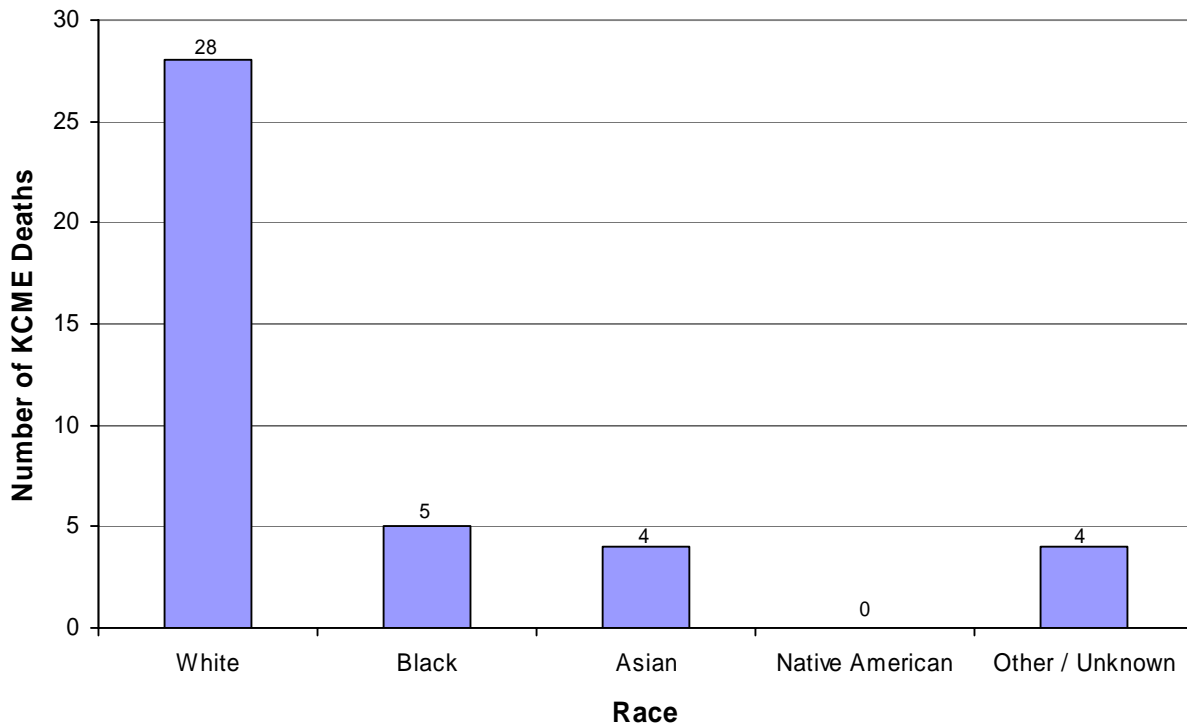


Table 8-1 Undetermined Manner of Death / Race / Sex / KCME / 2005

CIRCUMSTANCES / SEX	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHER / UNK		
Blunt Force	2	0	1	0	0		3
<i>Male</i>	2	0	1	0	0	3	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Burns / Fire	0	0	1	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Drugs / Poisons	10	1	0	0	1		12
<i>Male</i>	5	0	0	0	0	5	
<i>Female</i>	5	1	0	0	1	7	
Fall	2	0	0	0	0		2
<i>Male</i>	2	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fetal Deaths	3	3	0	0	3		9
<i>Male</i>	2	2	0	0	0	4	
<i>Female</i>	1	1	0	0	2	4	
<i>Unknown</i>	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Firearms	1	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
No Anatomic or Toxicologic Cause of Death	1	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Other	9	1	2	0	0		12
<i>Male</i>	7	1	1	0	0	9	
<i>Female</i>	2	0	1	0	0	3	
Totals	28	5	4	0	4		41
Percent	68%	12%	10%	0%	10%		100%

Graph 8-2 Undetermined Manner / Race / King County Medical Examiner / 2005



Graph 8-3 Undetermined Manner / Age Group / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

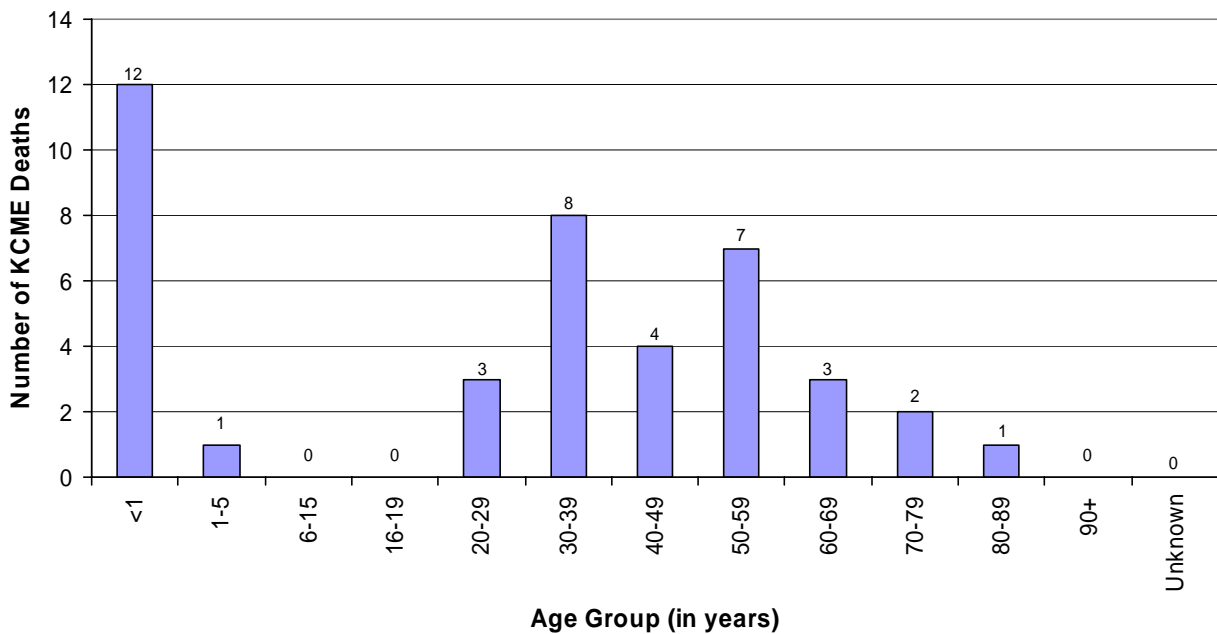


Table 8-2 Undetermined Circumstances / Age / Sex / KCME / 2005

INJURY METHOD / SEX	AGE GROUP (YEARS)												SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	<1	1 to 5	6 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +		
Blunt Force	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0		3
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Burns / Fire	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Drugs / Poisons	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	5	1	0	0	0		12
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	5	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	0	0	0	7	
Fall	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0		2
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fetal Deaths	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		9
<i>Male</i>	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
<i>Female</i>	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
<i>Unknown</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Firearms	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
No anatomic or toxicological cause of death	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Other	2	1	0	0	1	4	1	1	1	0	1	0		12
<i>Male</i>	1	1	0	0	0	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	9	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	
Totals	12	1	0	0	3	8	4	7	3	2	1	0		41
Percent	29.3	2.4	0	0	7.3	19.5	9.8	17.1	7.3	4.9	2.4	0		100%

Table 8-3 Undetermined Manner / Sex / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

INJURY METHOD	SEX		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
Blunt Force	3	0	3
Burns / Fire	0	1	1
Drugs / Poisons	5	7	12
Fall	2	0	2
Fetal Deaths	4	4	8 ¹
Firearms	1	0	1
No Anatomic or Toxicologic Cause of Death	0	1	1
Other	9	3	12
Totals	24	16	40²
Percent	60%	40%	100%

Table 8-4 Undetermined Manner / Blood Alcohol / King County Medical Examiner / 2005

METHOD	TESTED		NOT	TOTAL
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	TESTED	
Blunt Force	1	1	1	3
Burns / Fire	0	1	0	1
Drugs / Poisons	6	5	1	12
Fall	1	0	1	2
Fetal Deaths	0	5	4	9
Firearms	1	0	0	1
No Anatomic or Toxicologic Cause of Death	0	1	0	1
Other	2	6	4	12
Totals	11	19	11	41
Percent	27%	46%	27%	100%

¹ Does not include one fetal death of undetermined sex.² Does not include one fetal death of undetermined sex.