
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 62% (7,810/12,648¹) of the deaths that occurred in 2004 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 76% (5,947/7,810) 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% (1,863/12,648) of deaths that occurred in King County in 2004².

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 2004 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 / 1995 - 2004

MANNER OF DEATH	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Accident (Other)	353	418	435	422	404	441	417	472	485	542
Accident (Traffic)	182	205	216	199	200	203	220	203	179	192
Homicide	100	88	97	90	89	73	74	93	93	76
Natural	589	558	518	530	511	522	619	661	770	765
Suicide	218	238	187	202	221	178	185	200	217	229
Undetermined	61	51	37	63	44	90	63	55	71	59
Totals	1,503	1,558	1,490	1,506	1,469	1,507	1,578	1,684	1,815	1,863

Table 2-2 Comparison of Manners of Death as Percentage of Total Annual Medical Examiner Cases / KCME / 1995 - 2004

MANNER OF DEATH	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Accident (Other)	23.5	26.8	29.2	28.0	27.5	29.3	26.5	28.0	26.8	29.1
Accident (Traffic)	12.1	13.2	14.5	13.2	13.6	13.5	13.9	12.1	9.9	10.3
Homicide	6.6	5.6	6.5	6.0	6.1	4.8	4.7	5.5	5.1	4.1
Natural	39.2	35.8	35.2	35.2	34.8	34.6	39.2	39.3	42.4	41.0
Suicide	14.5	15.3	12.6	13.4	15.0	11.8	11.7	11.9	11.9	12.3
Undetermined	4.1	3.3	2.5	4.2	3.0	6.0	4.0	3.2	3.9	3.2
Totals	1,503	1,558	1,490	1,506	1,469	1,507	1,578	1,684	1,815	1,863

Graph 2-1 Comparison of Manners of Death / King County Medical Examiner / 1995 - 2004

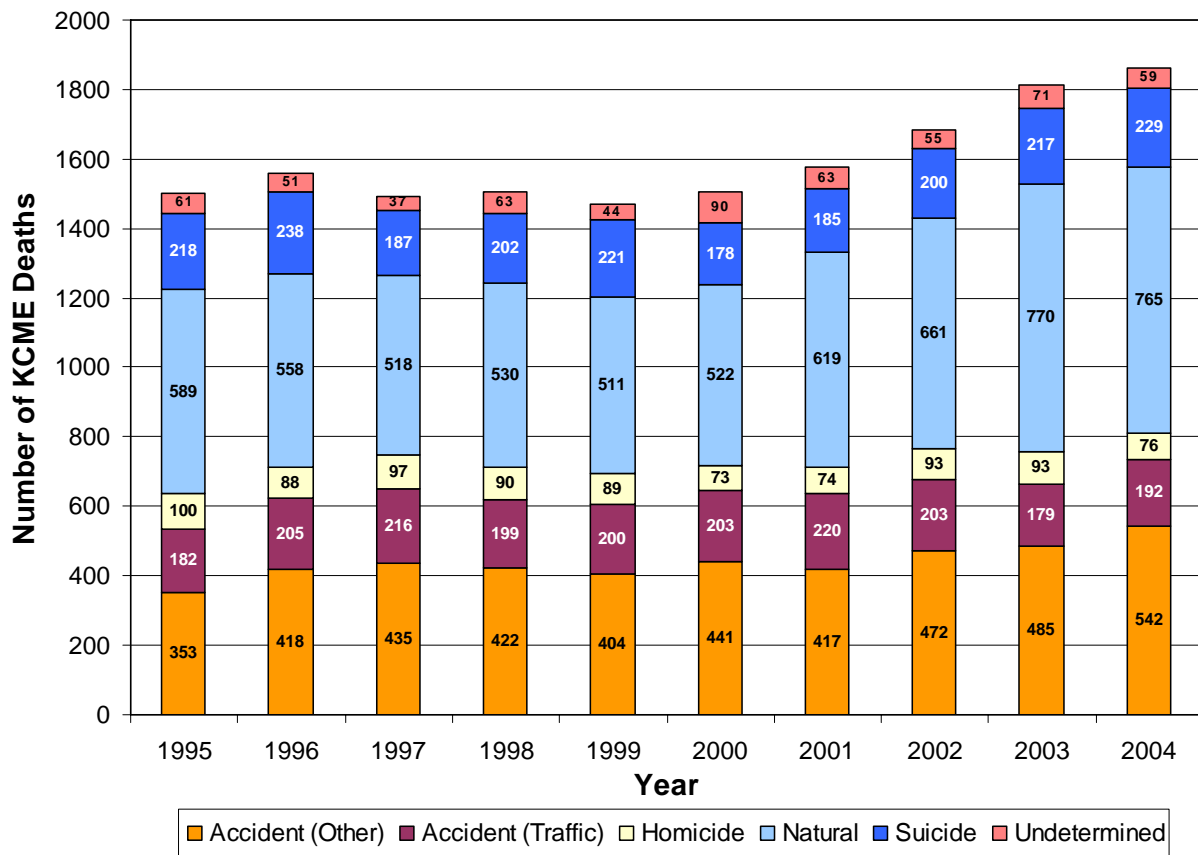


Table 2-3 Ten-Year Perspective of Homicidal Methods / KCME / 1995 - 2004

METHOD USED	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Blunt Impact (#)	12	11	16	10	9	12	14	14	14	10
Blunt Impact (%)	12%	13%	16%	11%	10%	16%	19%	15%	15%	13%
Firearms (#)	58	51	52	55	52	39	43	53	52	46
Firearms (%)	58%	58%	54%	61%	58%	53%	58%	58%	56%	61%
Homicidal Violence (#)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3
Homicidal Violence (%)	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	4%
Stabbing (#)	16	15	14	15	19	16	8	17	16	10
Stabbing (%)	16%	17%	14%	16%	21%	22%	11%	19%	17%	13%
Strangulation (#)	4	3	6	5	3	2	3	3	5	1
Strangulation (%)	4%	3%	6%	6%	3%	3%	4%	3%	6%	1%
Other (#)	9	8	9	5	6	4	6	4	3	6
Other (%)	9%	10%	9%	6%	7%	6%	8%	5%	3%	8%
Totals	100	88	97	90	89	73	74	93	93	76

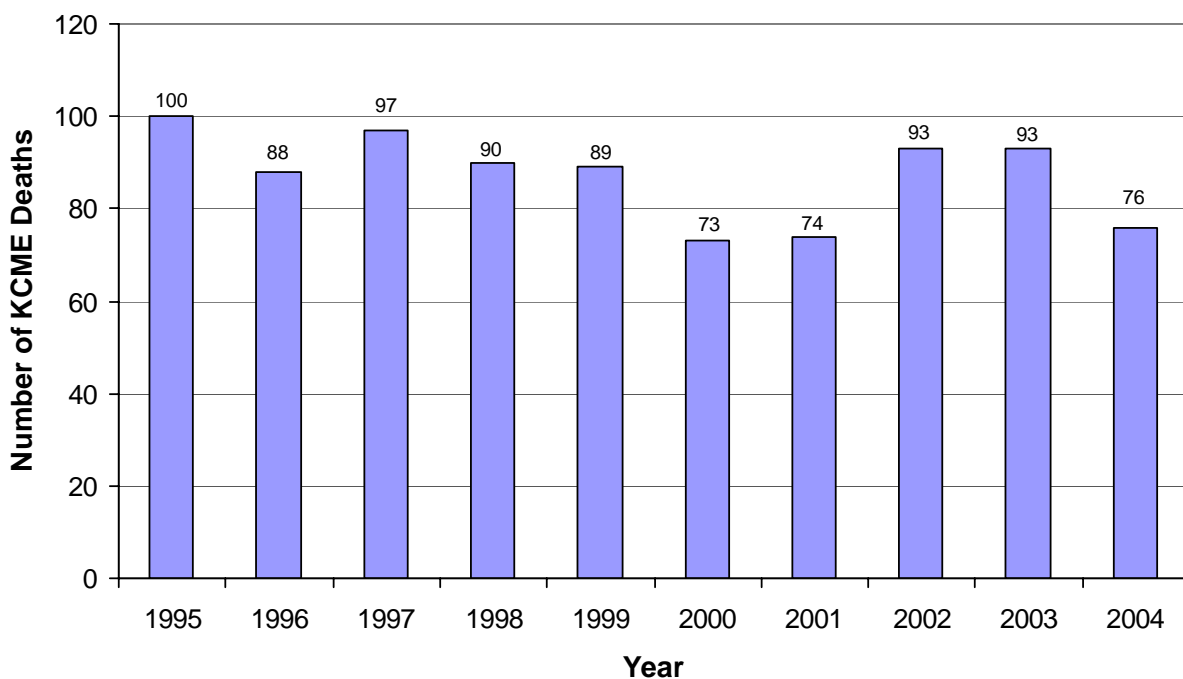
Graph 2-2 Homicide Deaths / King County Medical Examiner / 1995 - 2004

Table 2-4 Ten Year Perspective of Suicidal Injury Modes / KCME / 1995 - 2004

INJURY MODE	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Asphyxia / Plastic Bag	7	8	3	6	2	6	9	5	8	7
Burns / Fire / Heat	3	1	0	1	3	1	1	2	1	1
Carbon Monoxide	15	16	14	14	11	5	9	17	12	8
Drowning	1	1	4	3	2	0	1	2	4	5
Drugs / Poisons	22	37	23	29	35	31	21	23	35	41
Firearms	107	112	99	95	106	87	85	98	101	95
Hanging	39	40	28	37	39	31	38	32	36	44
Incised Wounds / Stabbing	6	3	6	3	7	7	9	4	6	8
Jumped	15	17	10	9	15	8	11	14	11	15
Other	3	3	0	5	1	2	1	3	3	5
Totals	218	238	187	202	221	178	185	200	217	229

Graph 2-3 Suicide Deaths / King County Medical Examiner / 1995 – 2004

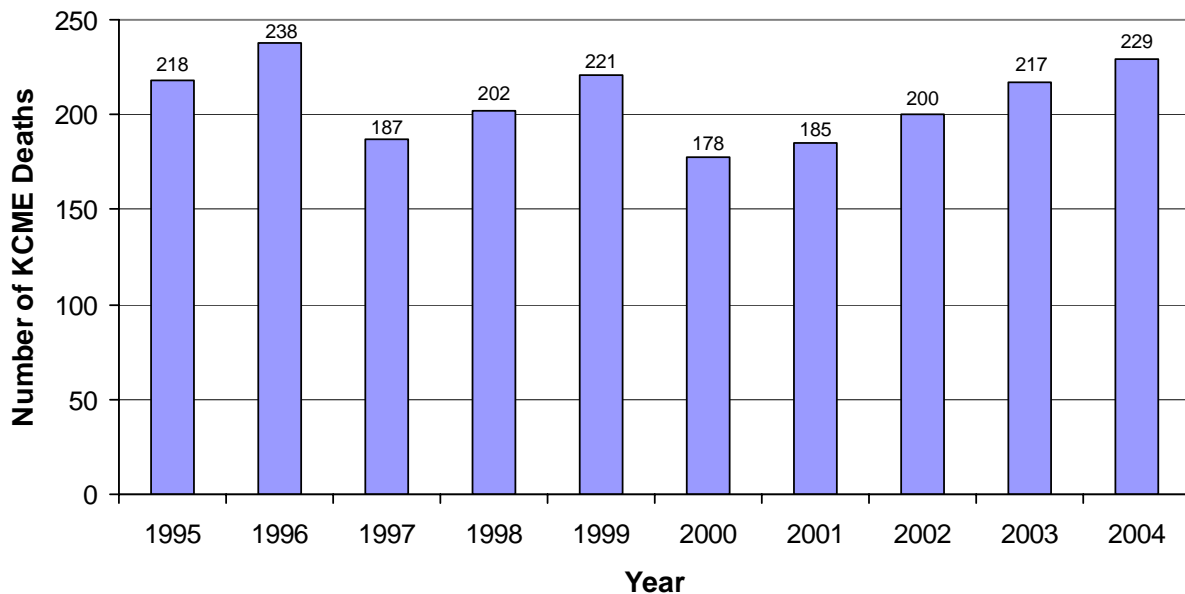


Table 2-5 Traffic Fatality Circumstances / KCME / 1995 - 2004

CIRCUMSTANCES	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Vehicle Driver	80	102	88	85	97	90	93	99	75	78
Vehicle Passenger	39	39	58	47	47	52	56	46	36	54
Vehicle (Undetermined)	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	2	1
Bicyclist	7	4	9	6	6	8	7	3	3	5
Motorcycle Driver	10	13	14	18	17	9	21	17	21	23
Motorcycle Passenger	1	2	2	2	1	4	0	0	3	0
Pedestrian	45	42	39	40	32	32	40	34	38	30
Other	0	3	6	1	0	6	1	3	1	1
Totals	182	205	216	199	200	203	220	203	179	192

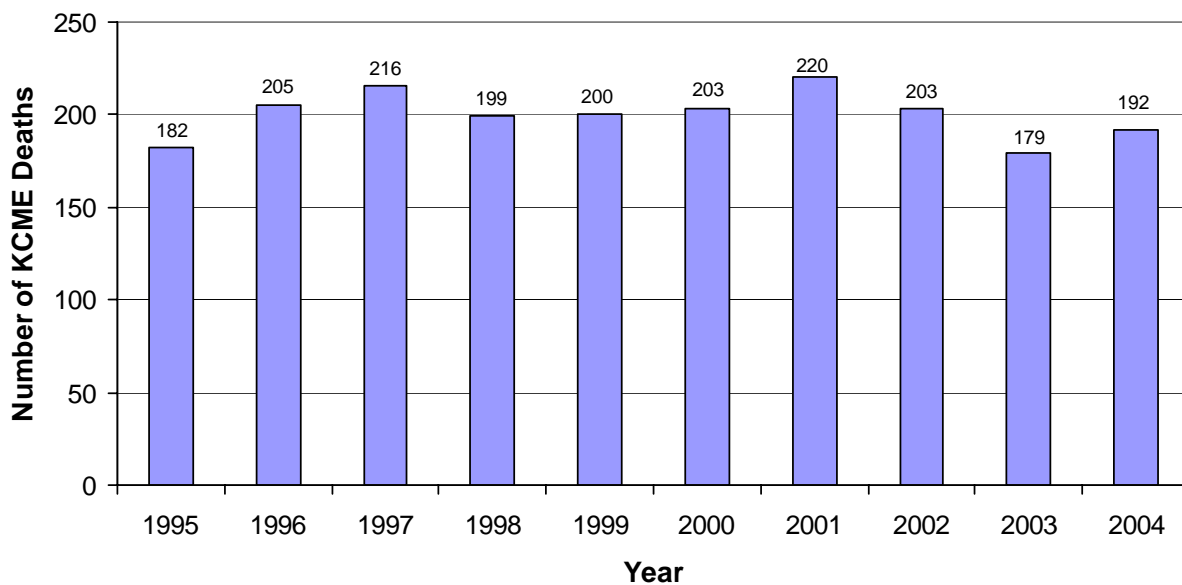
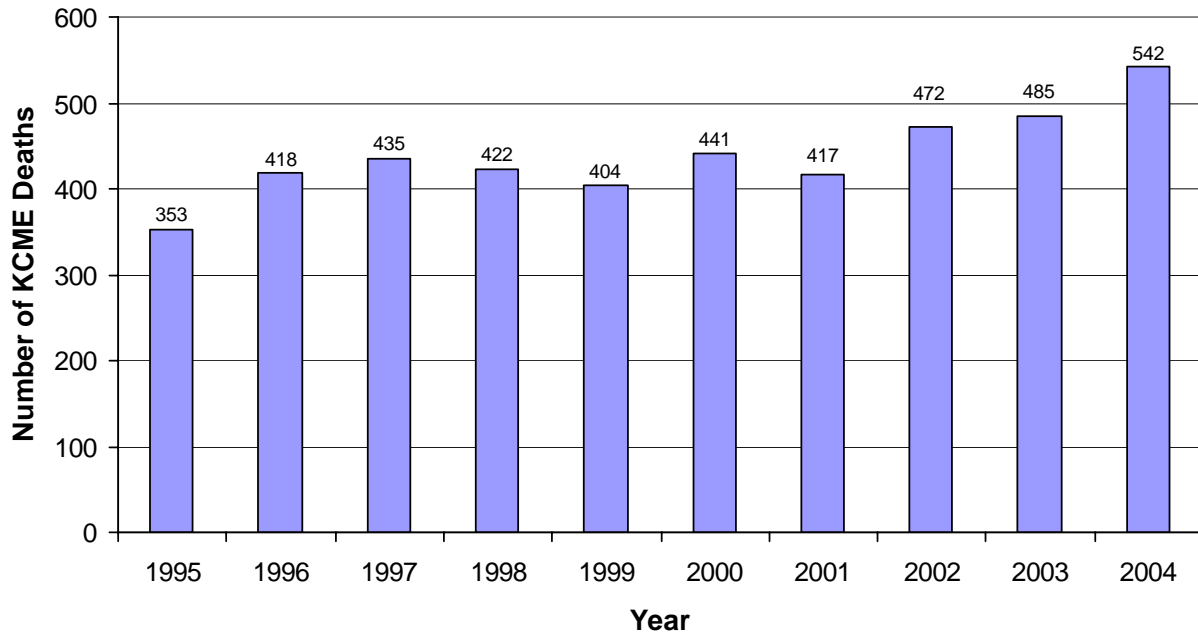
Graph 2-4 Traffic Fatalities / King County Medical Examiner / 1995 – 2004

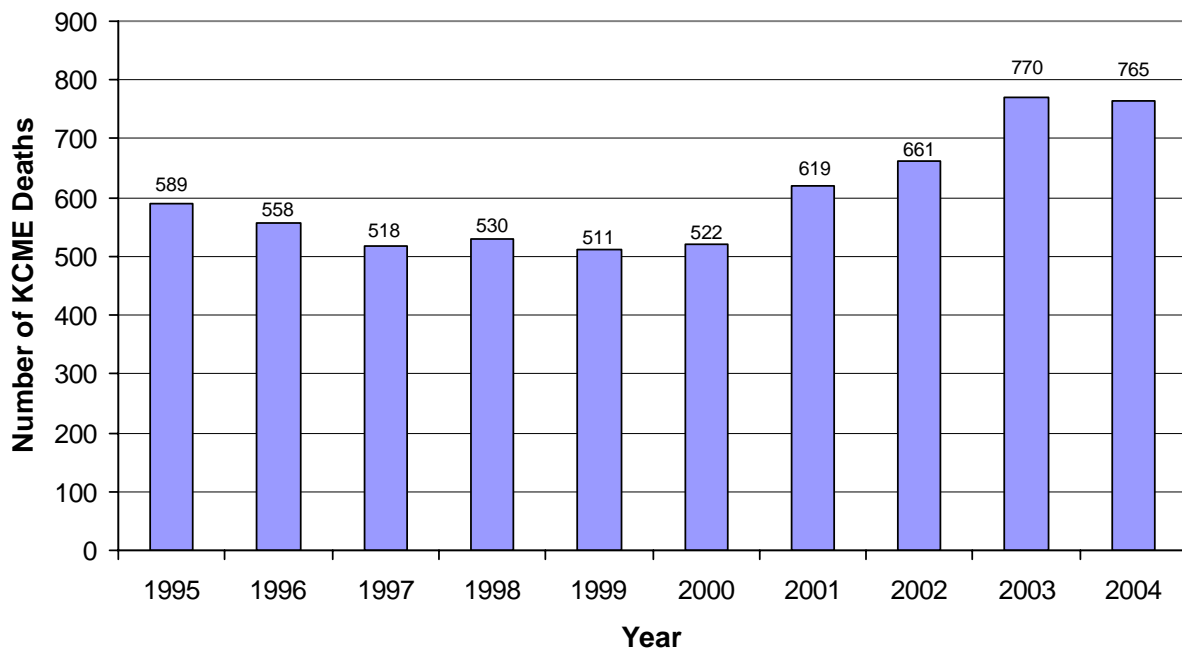
Table 2-6 Ten Year Perspective of Non-Traffic Accidental Death Circumstances / KCME / 1995 - 2004

CIRCUMSTANCES	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Aircraft	8	2	3	1	3	3	1	0	0	2
Asphyxia	7	8	2	11	7	7	10	7	4	2
Aspiration	3	3	5	4	1	7	5	5	9	8
Blunt Force / Crushing	9	4	3	8	0	11	7	12	9	8
Burns / Fire	26	13	25	25	25	23	29	22	19	24
Carbon Monoxide	0	5	2	0	0	1	5	0	1	3
Complication of Therapy	8	3	10	10	11	16	17	24	22	18
Drowning	22	28	34	24	23	23	35	32	27	17
Drugs / Poisons	144	165	156	179	164	177	122	173	160	211
Electrocution	1	2	0	1	0	3	1	2	0	2
Explosion	1	2	2	2	2	0	1	0	0	4
Fall	100	135	165	138	147	149	157	171	207	213
Firearms	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hanging	2	2	1	0	0	4	0	1	0	2
Hypothermia	1	6	3	5	0	0	8	6	2	2
Struck by Object	3	8	7	6	6	2	5	2	8	7
Struck by Train	3	5	1	1	0	4	3	2	0	3
Vehicular Non-Traffic	4	5	7	3	8	6	6	8	14	10
Other	10	22	8	5	7	5	5	5	2	5
Totals	353	418	435	422	404	441	417	472	482	542

Graph 2-5 Accidental Deaths / King County Medical Examiner / 1995 – 2004



Graph 2-6 Natural Deaths / King County Medical Examiner / 1995 – 2004



Graph 2-7 Deaths of Undetermined Manner / King County Medical Examiner / 1995 – 2004

