
DEATHS DUE TO FIREARMS: 2004

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 2004, there were 144 firearm deaths investigated by the Medical Examiner. In 2003 there were 155 firearm deaths; in 2002 there were 153; and in both 2001 and 2000, there were 128 firearm deaths. Of the 144 firearm deaths in 2004, 46 (32%) were homicides and 95 (66%) were suicides. There was one accidental firearm death in both 2004 and 2003; there were none in 2002, 2001, and 2000. In 2004, there were two firearm related deaths that were classified as undetermined. This compares to one in 2003, two in 2002, none in 2001, and two in 2000.

In 2004, gunshot wounds were the leading cause of death for homicides and suicides. Gunshot deaths comprised 61% (46/76) of homicides, compared to 56% (52/93) in 2003, 58% in both 2002 (53/92) and 2001 (43/74), and 53% (39/73) in 2000. In 2004, suicides by firearms represented 42% (95/229) of suicide deaths compared to 47% (101/217) in 2003, 49% in 2002 (98/200), 46% (85/183) in 2001, and 49% (87/178) in 2000.

In 2004, of the 46 gunshot homicide victims, 17% (8/46) were 19 years old and younger - a substantial increase from 2003. It is estimated that a disproportionate number of gunshot homicides were black (28%, 13/46) compared to the percentage of blacks in the general population. (See discussions on pages 5 and 41.) Of the 13 black gunshot homicide victims, 39% (5/13) were males between 20 and 29 years of age. In comparison, 50% (23/46) of the homicide gunshot victims were white. Of the 23 white homicide victims, 30% (7/23) were males between 20 and 29 years old.

Firearms were also the most common mode of committing suicide (42%, 95/229) in 2004. Of the 95 gunshot suicide victims, 92% (87/95) were white and 87% (83/95) were males. Four of the gunshot suicide victims were 19 years old and under (4%, 4/95). Thirty (32%, 30/95) of the gunshot suicide victims were between the ages of 20 and 39 years of age, 37 (39%, 37/95) were between 40 and 59 years, and 24 (25%, 24/95) were 60 years and older.

Table 10-1 Firearm Deaths / Manner / Age / Sex / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

AGE GROUP / SEX	MANNER OF DEATH				SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	A	H	S	U		
<13 years	0	1	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	0	0	1	
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	1	6	4	0		11
<i>Male</i>	1	6	3	0	10	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	1	0	1	
20-29 years	0	16	15	0		31
<i>Male</i>	0	15	12	0	27	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	3	0	4	
30-39 years	0	11	15	2		28
<i>Male</i>	0	9	13	2	24	
<i>Female</i>	0	2	2	0	4	
40-49 years	0	7	18	0		25
<i>Male</i>	0	6	16	0	22	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	2	0	3	
50-59 years	0	2	19	0		21
<i>Male</i>	0	2	17	0	19	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	2	0	2	
60-69 years	0	1	5	0		6
<i>Male</i>	0	1	5	0	6	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
70-79 years	0	0	10	0		10
<i>Male</i>	0	0	8	0	8	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	2	0	2	
80-89 years	0	1	7	0		8
<i>Male</i>	0	0	7	0	7	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	0	0	1	
90+	0	0	2	0		2
<i>Male</i>	0	0	2	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
Totals	1	46	95	2		144
Percent	0.7%	31.9%	66.0%	1.4%		100%

Graph 10-1 Firearm Deaths / Manner / Age Group / King County Medical Examiner / 2004

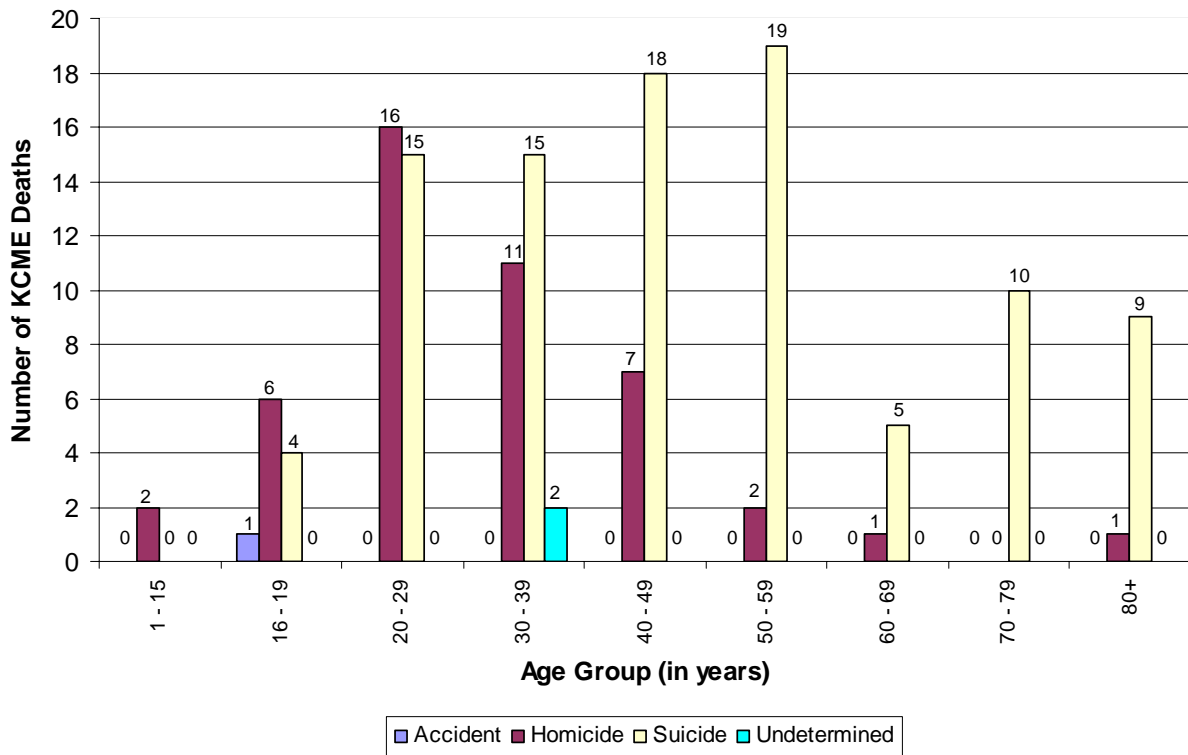


Table 10-2 Firearm Deaths / Manner / Race / Sex / KCME / 2004

RACE / SEX	MANNER OF DEATH				SUB-TOTAL	
	A	H	S	U	TOTAL	TOTAL
Asian	0	8	4	0		12
<i>Male</i>	0	8	4	0	12	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
Black	0	13	2	1		16
<i>Male</i>	0	13	2	1	16	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
Native American	0	1	3	0		4
<i>Male</i>	0	0	2	0	2	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	1	0	2	
White	1	23	86	1		111
<i>Male</i>	1	18	75	1	95	
<i>Female</i>	0	5	11	0	16	
Other	0	1	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	
Totals	1	46	95	2		144