



ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Coroner Division

Quarter 4 Comparison Report

Report time frame: Oct. - Dec. 2021

(comparing to: Oct. - Dec. 2020)

Total cases

753

(+0.4% from 750 in 2020)

Q4 Total includes 3 cases pending and 12 cases undetermined

Accident

387

(+18%)

Homicide

17

(+13%)

Suicide

79

(+13%)

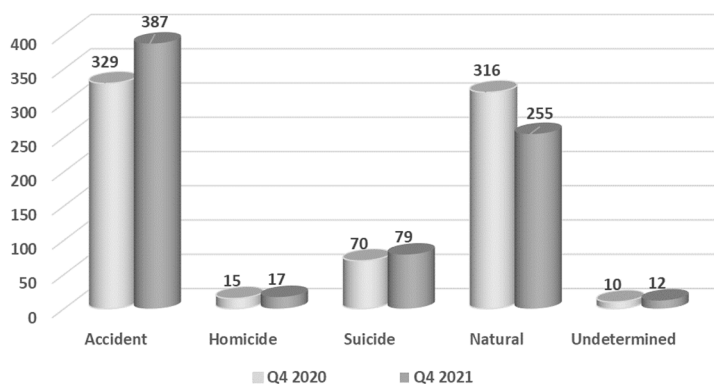
Natural

255

(-19%)

MANNER OF DEATH

Comparing Quarter 4 of 2020 to 2021, accidental deaths have increased by 18%, homicides increased by 13%, suicides were up by 13%, and natural deaths falling under the jurisdiction of the Coroner decreased by -19%.



Accidents

Unintentional prescription and illicit drug related deaths increased in Quarter 4 of 2021 to 61% of all accidental deaths when compared to the Quarter 4 (50%) in 2020. Falls accounted for 15%, while traffic related deaths were at 20%.



Unplanned deaths due to illicit or prescription drugs and/or ethanol toxicity increased by 45% in Quarter 4 of 2021 compared to the same time period in 2020 (168 to 243).

Methamphetamine appeared in 53% of all overdoses cases which was a 4% increase compared to the fourth quarter of 2020.

Fentanyl related deaths showed a 64% increase (118 to 194).



Falls decreased 12% in Quarter 4 of 2021 compared to 2020 (67 to 59) which makes them the second highest of all accidental death cases. Same level falls were most prevalent at 46% of all falls in 2021 and down from 51% in 2020.



Vehicular traffic related deaths decreased by 15% in the 4th quarter in comparison to the 4th quarter of 2020 (69 to 59) with Auto vs. Auto decreasing by 11%.

Pedestrian deaths accounted for 31% of all vehicular deaths in Quarter 4 of 2021 while in Quarter 4 of 2020 they were at 28%. (18 to 19)

Motorcycle related deaths saw a 27% decrease. (11 to 8)

Traffic Deaths

-15%

DECREASE (69 to 59)

31% of the cases involved a pedestrian.

Suicides

In Quarter 4 of 2021 there was a 13% increase in suicides compared to Quarter 4 of 2020.

During this time frame Asphyxia was the leading method at 42%, followed by Gunshot at 27%.

The work of the Coroner Division is largely based on Government Code § 27491, which states that all unnatural deaths including homicides, suicides, accidents, and deaths in custody are under the coroner/medical examiner's jurisdiction to investigate. Also falling under our jurisdiction are infectious diseases reaching epidemic proportions, deaths in state or local institutions, and deaths believed to be natural but that occurred suddenly and unexpectedly where the decedent had not seen their health care provider in the last 20 days of life. Note: All deaths that fall under § 27491 are also subject to whether the facts indicate the death occurred under natural circumstances and the physician of record has sufficient knowledge to reasonably state the cause of death occurred under natural circumstance. Therefore, not every death that falls under one of these categories will be investigated by the Coroner's office. See Govt Code § 27491.

*Due to some cases still under investigation (pending) within the quarter, manner of death counts and associated insights will adjust as those cases are closed.