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REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

TO: Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
FROM: Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Maine DHHS
DATE: February 2023
RE: Report pursuant to 22 MRS, Ch. 256-A §1425

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Pursuant to 22 MRS §1425, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) at the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) submits this second annual report representing the available data for firearm-related deaths and hospitalizations occurring in Maine from January 2021 through December 2021 as provided to Maine CDC by its partners, including Maine Health Data Organization (MHDO), the Office of the Medical Examiner and the Maine Department of Public Safety (DPS). Additional sources of data specific to incidents involving the use of a firearm and information beyond the scope of this legislative report mandate have been identified and these include, but are not limited to: Maine’s Violent Death Reporting System, Maine’s Domestic Violence and Homicide Review Panel and National Electronic Injury Surveillance System-All Injury Program (NEISS-AIP).

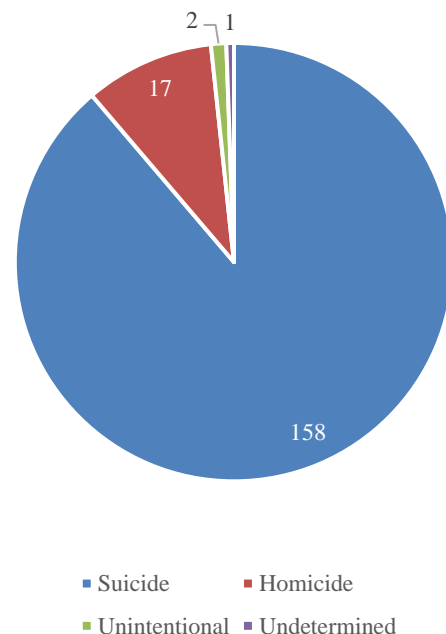
FIREARM FATALITIES: OVERALL

In Maine in 2021, there were 178 deaths by firearms. Of these deaths, 2 were unintentional, 17 were homicides, 158 were suicides. There was one death where the manner could not be determined.

Firearm Fatalities by Category				
	2020		2021	
Suicide	132	85.7%	158	88.7%
Homicide	19	12.3%	17	9.6%
Unintentional	3	1.9%	2	1.1%
Undetermined	0	0%	1	.6%
Total	154		178	

Categories are determined by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

Firearm Fatalities 2021



UNINTENTIONAL FIREARM FATALITIES

Unintentional firearm fatality is a case of a person’s death caused by a firearm discharging unintentionally.

Unintentional Deaths by Firearm by Age Group		
Age Group	2020	2021
<15	0	2
15-24	1	0
25-34	1	0
35-44	0	0
45-54	0	0
55-64	1	0
65+	0	0
Total	3	2

Source: Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Maine Office of Data, Research and Vital Statistics, Death certificate data

HOMICIDE

In 2021, there were 17 firearm-related homicides in Maine. Of these deaths, more than 1 in 3 were domestic violence (DV) homicides. According to Maine’s Domestic Violence Homicide Review Panel, about 40% of domestic violence homicide perpetrators use a firearm to kill their victim.

Homicides by Firearm by Age Group				
Age Group	2020		2021	
	Total	DV (subset)	Total	DV (subset)
<15	0	0	0	2
15-24	4	1	1	0
25-34	5	1	7	0
35-44	3	1	2	0
45-54	1	0	6	0
55-64	5	3	1	0
65+	1	1	0	0
Total	19	7	17	6

Notes: Firearm homicide data were run from the death records filed and registered with Data, Research, and Vital Statistics, and compared with the Maine State Police Report on homicides, found on their website [2021 Annual Homicides | Maine State Police](#). The Office of Chief Medical Examiner provided input on records not found on the State Police website.

The following ICD 10 codes were used to identify firearm deaths: W32, W33, W34, X72, X73, X74, X94, X95, Y22, Y23, Y24, Y35, and U014

Source: Maine Vital Records, Maine CDC, Department of Health and Human Services, Maine State Police, Department of Public Safety, and the Office of Chief Medical Examiner, Maine Attorney General's Office.

Beginning January 2022, DPS will implement a revised data collection form to require law enforcement agencies to submit additional data elements for firearm-related incidents occurring January 1, 2022 and after.

SUICIDE

Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among those ages 15-54 years old in Maine¹. In 2021, 277 Mainers died by suicide. Of these deaths, 56% (n=158) used a firearm. Men are more likely to die by suicide using a firearm than women. Most suicide deaths that involved a firearm occurred among individuals older than 25 years of age.

Number of Suicides by Firearm		
Age Group	2020	2021
<25	13	14
25-44	33	56
45-64	44	52
65+	42	36
2021 Total	132	158

Notes: Suicide related deaths are defined as deaths of Maine residents for which the underlying cause of death was coded as ICD-10 U03 X60-X84 or Y87.0.

Data Source: Maine death certificates, Maine CDC Data, Research and Vital Statistics

FIREARM-RELATED HOSPITALIZATIONS

In 2021, there were 54 firearm-related injuries that resulted in hospitalization in Maine, an increase from 39 in 2020. Of these, 48 (89%) were among men; 17 (31%) were among those aged 25-34 years. Most firearm-related injury hospitalizations were due to accidental discharge of a firearm, followed by assault by firearm.

Non-fatal Firearm-related Hospital Discharges by Firearm-related Cause		
Cause of Injury	2020	2021
Accidental discharge or malfunction of firearm	15	24
Intentional self-harm by firearm	8	10
Assault by firearm	14	17
Terrorism involving firearms	0	0
Firearm discharge of undetermined intent	1	0
Legal intervention involving firearm discharge	1	3
Total	39	54

Notes: Data include Maine Non-Federal/Non Psychiatric Acute Care Hospital Discharges with Principal Diagnosis of injury and firearm-related secondary diagnosis or injury cause code

Data Source: Maine Health Data Organization Hospital Inpatient Database 2021

RELATED RESOURCES

The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention publishes data on causes of nonfatal injury via Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Nonfatal, providing data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System-All Injury Program (NEISS-AIP)². The NEISS-AIP data provides information about types of nonfatal injuries in U.S. hospital emergency departments, how common they are, who they affect, and what causes them.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centers for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) (2021). Available at: www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars

² <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/data/non-fatal/home>