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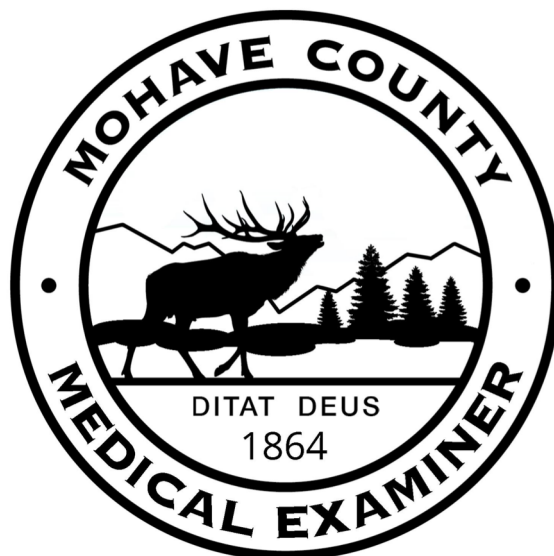
MOHAVE COUNTY  
MEDICAL EXAMINER

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2024

Annual Report



Mohave County Medical Examiner's Office  
5059 S. Lakewood Road, Bldg. C.  
Fort Mohave, AZ 86426  
Phone: (928) 505-5888 | Fax: (928) 505-5889  
Email: [admin@mohaveme.com](mailto:admin@mohaveme.com)  
<https://mohaveme.com/>

Chief Medical Examiner: Archiaus Mosley, M.D.

The Mohave County Medical Examiner's Office  
operates 24 hours a day/7 days per week.

Our Office Hours are:  
Monday-Friday: 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.,  
with the exception of major holidays.

# From MCMEEO Admin:

The Mohave County Medical Examiner's Office investigates sudden, violent, unexpected, and suspicious deaths that occur in Mohave County. The Office of the Medical Examiner certifies death after investigation and postmortem examination and issues the death certificate as required by law. Complete findings of the death investigation are distributed to families and law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

The main duties of the Office of the Medical Examiner are to determine the cause and manner of death, and certify deaths that are reported to the medical examiner. The cause of death is the disease process or injury that resulted in death. There are thousands of diseases and injuries that may result in death. The manner of death is a classification in which a determination is made regarding whether the death resulted from natural causes, homicide, suicide, or an accident. On occasion, the manner of death is classified as indeterminate.

Information collected during the investigation helps clarify the circumstances, such as the sequence of events prior to death. Evidence collected during an investigation and/or postmortem examination may help lead to the arrest or successful conviction of a suspect in a homicide case. Because deaths occur around the clock, medical examiner staff members are available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

With the skill and experience of the medical examiner investigators and board-certified forensic pathologists, we believe in the quality of death investigations in Mohave County.. The death scene investigation reports filed by the investigators are thorough and supply comprehensive information to the medical examiners.

Our medical examiners and investigators also extend their duties to the living by answering questions and addressing concerns regarding deaths within the county. Medical examiner investigators frequently make personal contact with family members of a deceased and assist them by providing appropriate answers regarding the circumstances of the death.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Mohave County Board of Supervisors for their support of the medical examiner program and the services we provide to the citizens of the Mohave County.

# 2024 MCMEO Summary

## **2024: A Story of Resilience**

If there's one word that could define 2024 for our office, it would be *uncertainty*. From the first months of the year until its close, questions about the future hung over us like a heavy cloud. Rising operational costs, a tightening budget, staffing shortages, and the looming possibility of major changes made every day feel like we were standing on shifting ground.

The uncertainty was not just abstract – it had real, daily impacts. Hiring freezes meant that when valued team members left, we couldn't replace them quickly. Those who stayed took on heavier caseloads, stretched thinner with each passing month. Staff meetings often became spaces not only to share updates, but also to voice concerns, frustrations, and the very real fear about what might happen to the office, to our jobs, and to the families we serve.

In the middle of all this, we moved. After years in Lake Havasu, we packed up our desks and relocated to Fort Mohave – a move that would ultimately give us more space and a more central location within the county.

There were days when the pressure was palpable. The weight of doing more with less, the fear of what tomorrow might bring – it could have broken us. But it didn't. Instead, it revealed something powerful: our commitment. Even in the face of instability, our staff showed up, day after day, for the families who rely on us. They adapted. They encouraged one another. They didn't let the uncertainty define their work.

Toward the end of the year, glimmers of hope began to appear. Two new full-time investigators joined the team, bringing fresh energy and a sense of rebuilding. The move to Fort Mohave became an opportunity for a fresh start in a new space.

2024 was, without question, one of the hardest years this office has faced. Yet it was also a year that proved the strength, heart, and resilience of this team. Through every challenge, we remembered why we are here – and we remained committed to serving the families who count on us.

# Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) and the Medical Examiner

Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statute (ARS) § 11-593, the Office of the Medical Examiner provides death investigation and postmortem examination services for deaths that occur within the geographical boundaries of Mohave County and are considered to be sudden, violent, suspicious, unexplained, or unattended. The Medical Examiner has the authority to order an autopsy at any time it is deemed necessary to determine or confirm the cause and manner of death. Not all deaths reported to Mohave County Medical Examiner's Office fall under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner. Some of the deaths reported are certified by the decedent's primary care physician. In order to be considered a Mohave County Medical Examiner's Office case, the death must have occurred within the borders of Mohave County or within a county or region in which the Mohave County Medical Examiner's Office has authority pursuant to a intergovernmental agreement.

11-593. Reporting of certain deaths; failure to report; violation; classification A. Any person having knowledge of the occurrence of the death of a human being including a fetal death that is required to be reported pursuant to subsection B, of this section shall promptly notify the nearest peace officer of all information in the person's possession regarding the death and the circumstances surrounding it. B. Reporting is required in the following circumstances:

1. Death when not under the current care of a health care provider as defined pursuant to section 36-301.
2. Death resulting from violence.
3. Unexpected or unexplained death.
4. Death of a person in a custodial agency as defined in section 13-4401.
5. Unexpected or unexplained death of an infant or child.
6. Death occurring in a suspicious, unusual, or unnatural manner, including death from an accident believed to be related to the deceased person's occupation or employment.

# Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) and the Medical Examiner

7. Death occurring as a result of anesthetic or surgical procedures.

8. Death suspected to be caused by a previously unreported or undiagnosed disease that constitutes a threat to public safety.

9. Death involving unidentified bodies. 36-861. Medical examiner; release of information A. The county medical examiner or individual legally delegated that authority shall release the name, contact, information, and available medical and social history of a decedent whose body is under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner to:

1. The designated procurement organization, hospital, accredited medical school, dental school, college, or university of an anatomical gift executed pursuant to section 36-844.

2. Any procurement organization under procedures adopted by the medical examiner for coordination of the procurement of anatomical gifts.

B. If the decedent's body or part is medically suitable for transplantation, therapy, research, or education, the medical examiner, or individual legally delegated to that authority, shall release postmortem examination results to a procurement organization. The procurement organization may make a subsequent disclosure of the postmortem examination results or other information received from the medical examiner only if relevant to transplantation or therapy.

# Medical Examiner Staff

## **Forensic Pathologists:**

- Archiaus Mosley, M.D- Chief Medical Examiner
- John Hu, M.D., PHD- Forensic Pathologist (PT)
- Caroline Cross, M.D- Forensic Pathologist (PT)

## **Administration:**

- John Hassett- Director of Operations
- Veronica Dennis- Investigations Supervisor
- Susan Plourde- Forensic Operations Manager/ Office Manager

## **Investigations:**

- Dolores Wilson
- Elizabeth Donovan (PT)
- Mia Kolczynski
- Oscar Lizarraga

# Medical Examiner Cases

## Definition

- **Definitions:**

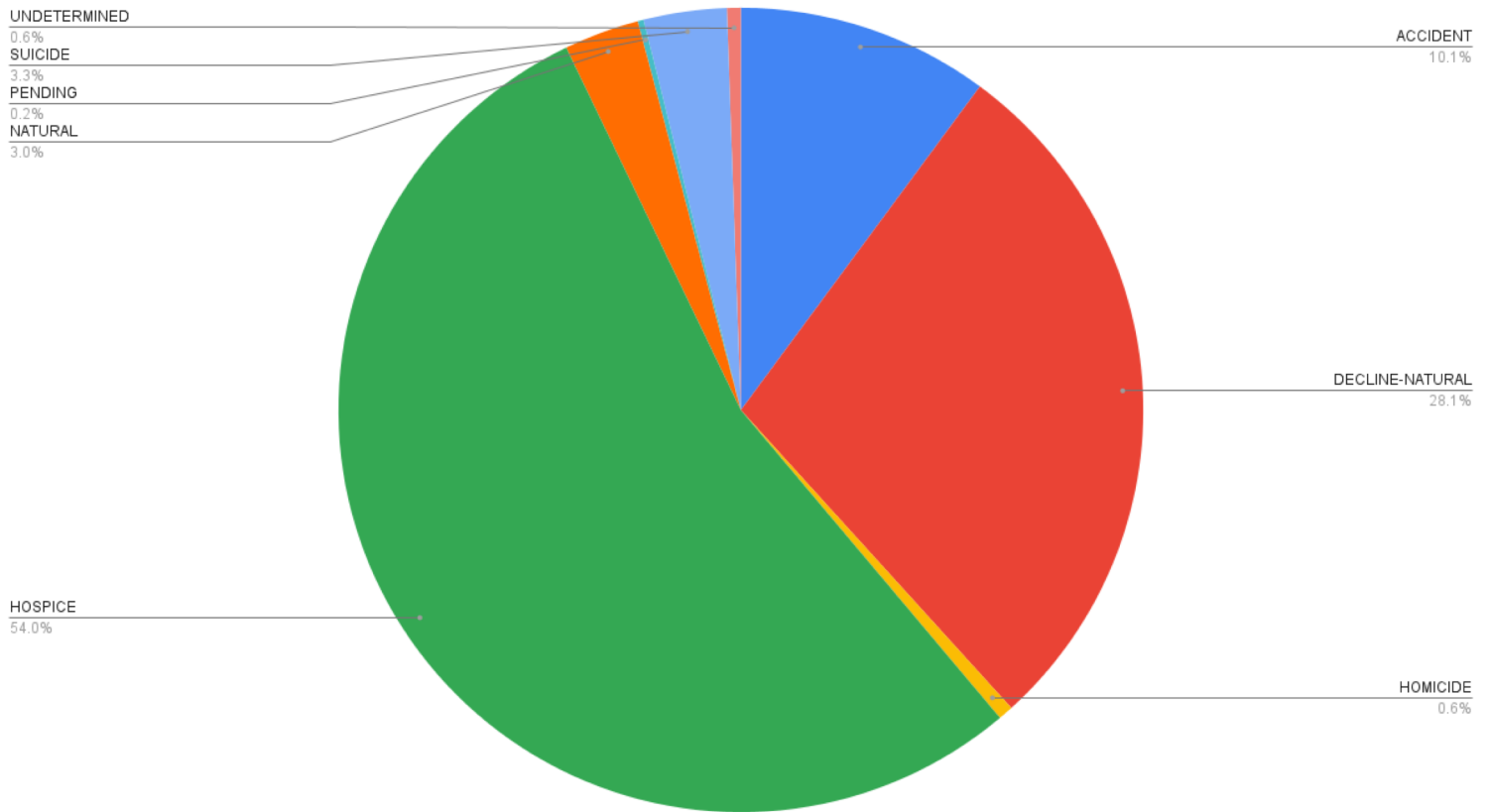
- **Declined Jurisdiction:** refers to cases that are reported to the Medical Examiner's Office but jurisdiction is not invoked as the circumstances of death do not meet MCMEO criteria subsequent to Arizona Revised Statute (ARS) § 11-593.
- **Invoked Jurisdiction:** refers to cases that are reported to the Medical Examiner's Office and jurisdiction is invoked in accordance with Arizona Revised Statute (ARS) § 11-593.
- **Examinations:** postmortem examinations to include: external examinations, limited examinations, and full examinations conducted by the Medical Examiner.
  - **Full Autopsy:** a complete external and internal examination of a decedent.
  - **Limited Examination:** an examination in which dissection of the body is limited to a specific organ or region of the body, i.e., heart. The limited examination also includes an external examination.
  - **External Examination:** an examination of the exterior of a decedent. Deaths certified without postmortem examination: death certificates that are certified by MCMEO following a medical records review without a postmortem examination.
- **BNA (Body Not Admitted)-** In cases where examination of the body is unnecessary, the Medical Examiner will formulate conclusions based on a review of the records.
- **Death Certificate Case:** refers to cases that meet the Arizona Revised Statute (ARS) § 11-593 and thus; MCMEO jurisdiction is invoked, however; a postmortem examination is not required in effort to certify the death.



# 2024 Cases

<b>Total Cases</b>	2,519
<b>Hospice Notifications</b>	1,360
<b>ME Investigations</b>	1,159
<b>Declines- Natural</b>	711
<b>Natural</b>	75
<b>Accident</b>	255
<b>Suicide</b>	83
<b>Homicide</b>	15
<b>Undetermined</b>	14
<b>Pending</b>	6

## 2024 Case Overview



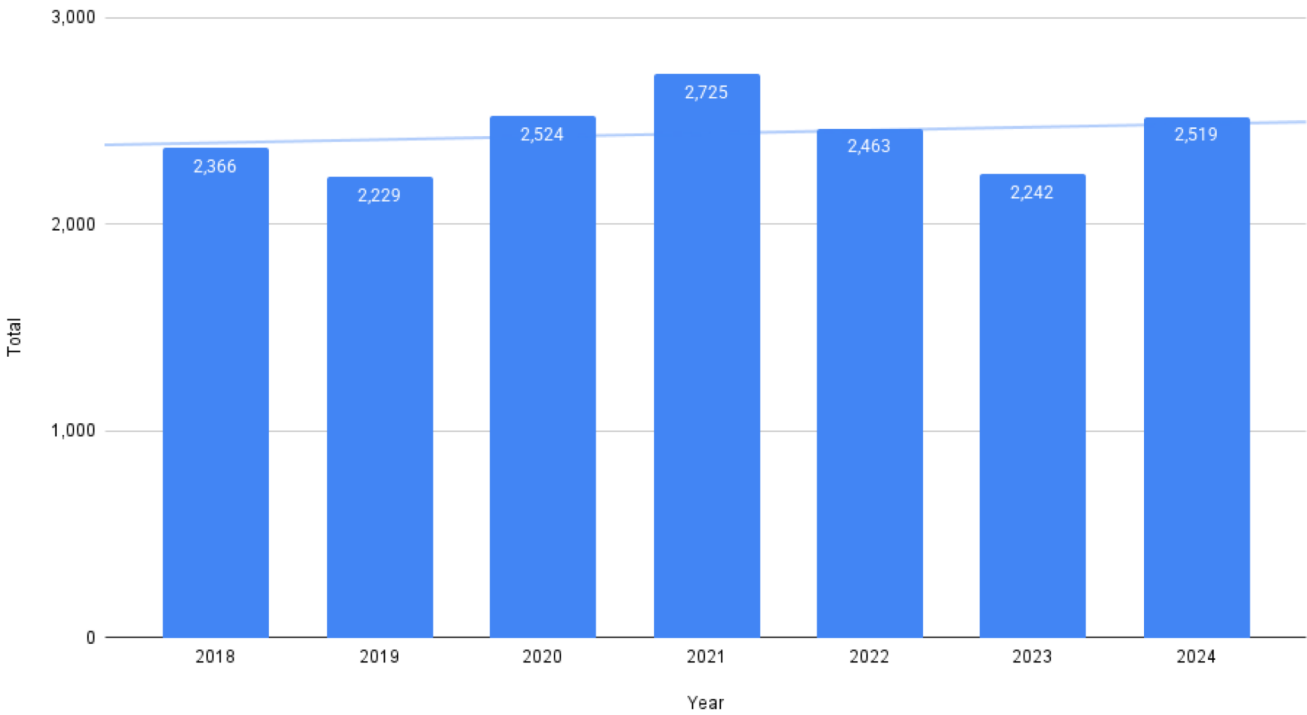
In 2024 out of 2,519 cases:

- 54% of cases were Hospice Notifications
- 28.1 % of cases were Decline- Naturals
- 10.1% of Cases were Accidental Deaths
- 3.3% of Cases were Suicide Deaths
- 3% of Cases were Natural Deaths
- Less than 1% were Homicide Deaths
- Less than 1% were Pending Deaths
- Less than 1% were Undetermined Deaths

# Cases Year over Year

Year	Total
2018	2,366
2019	2,229
2020	2,524
2021	2,725
2022	2,463
2023	2,242
2024	2,519

Cases Year over Year



# Autopsies 2024

External- 109

Full Post - 104

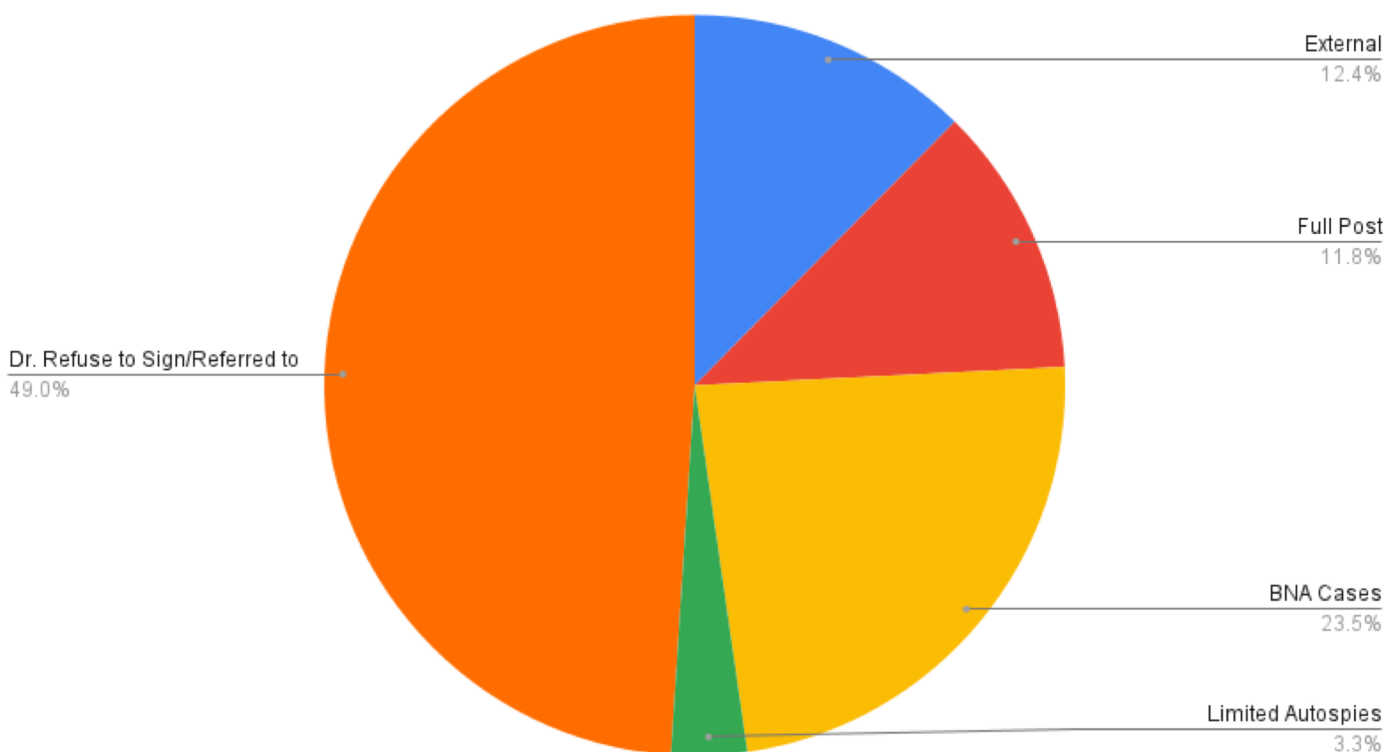
BNA Cases -207

Limited: Head Only- 28 | Chest Only- 1

Death Certificate Related:

Dr. Refuse to Sign/Referred to ME to sign: 431

2024 ME Autopsies/DC Signature Cases



# 2024 Cities of Passing

1. Beaver Dam-6

2. Bullhead City-592

3. Cane Beds-1

4. Chloride-10

5. Colorado City-6

6. Dolan Springs-45

7. Fort Mohave-144

8. Golden Valley-162

9. Kingman-771

10. Lake Havasu City-579

11. Littlefield-25

12. Meadview-24

13. Mohave Valley-79
14. Oatman- 2

15. Parker- 1

16.. Peach Springs-12

17. .Scenic-5

18.. Topock-24

19. Truxton-1

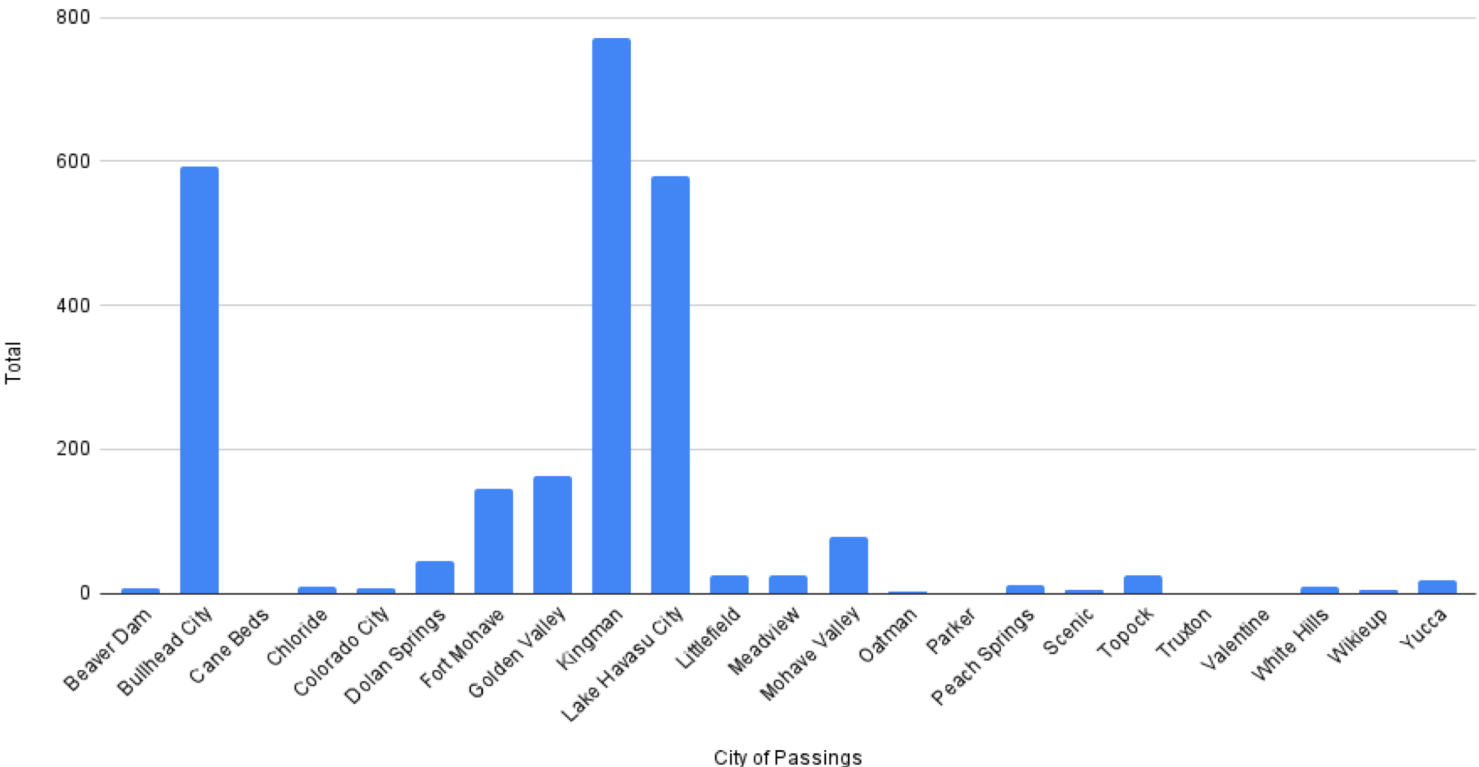
20. Valentine- 1

21. White Hills-8

22. Wikieup-4

26. Yucca-17

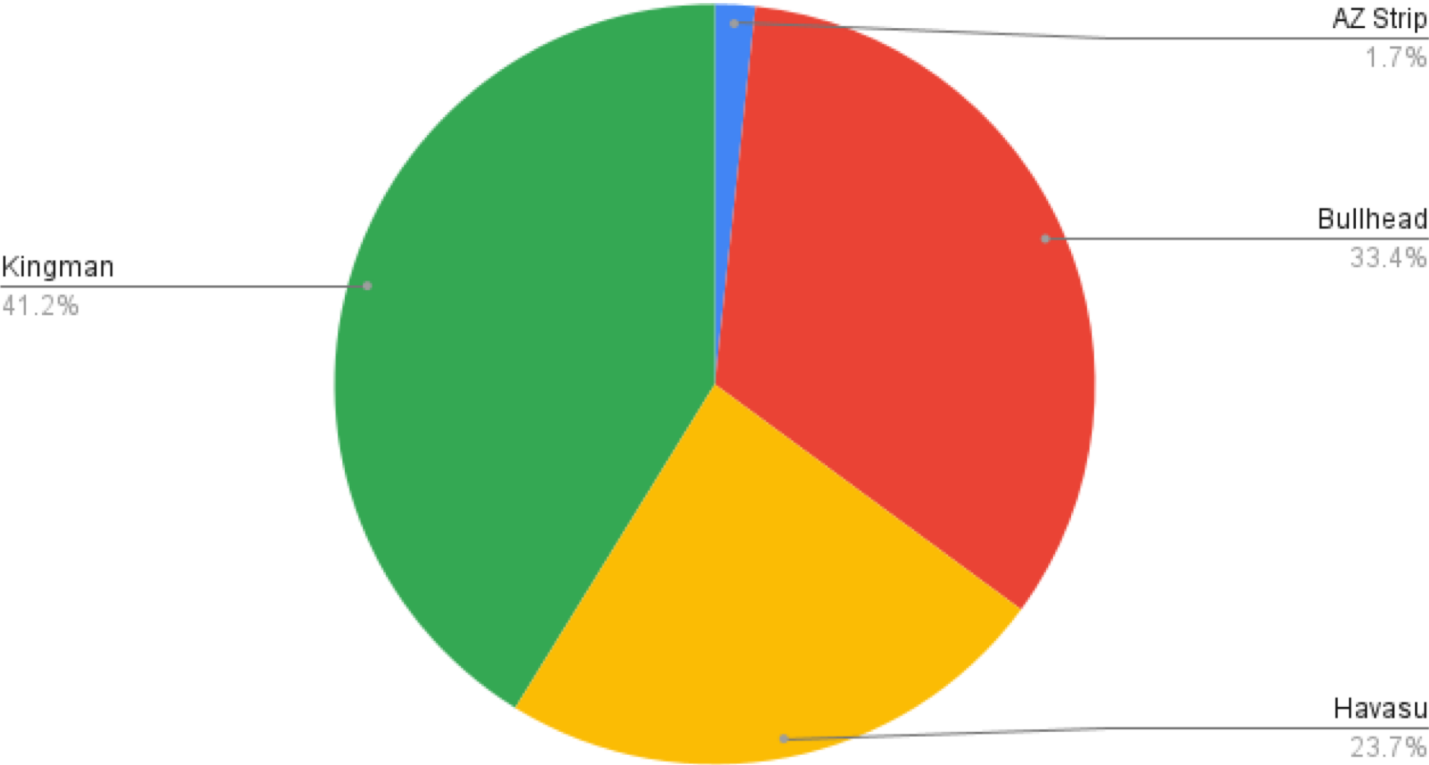
2024 Cities of Passing



# 2024 Passing by Region

Bullhead	841
Kingman	1,038
Lake Havasu	597
AZ Strip	43

2024 Passings by Region



# 2024 – Pending Cases

- Pending Cases Remaining- 6
  - Doe Cases- 5
  - Pending Histology -1

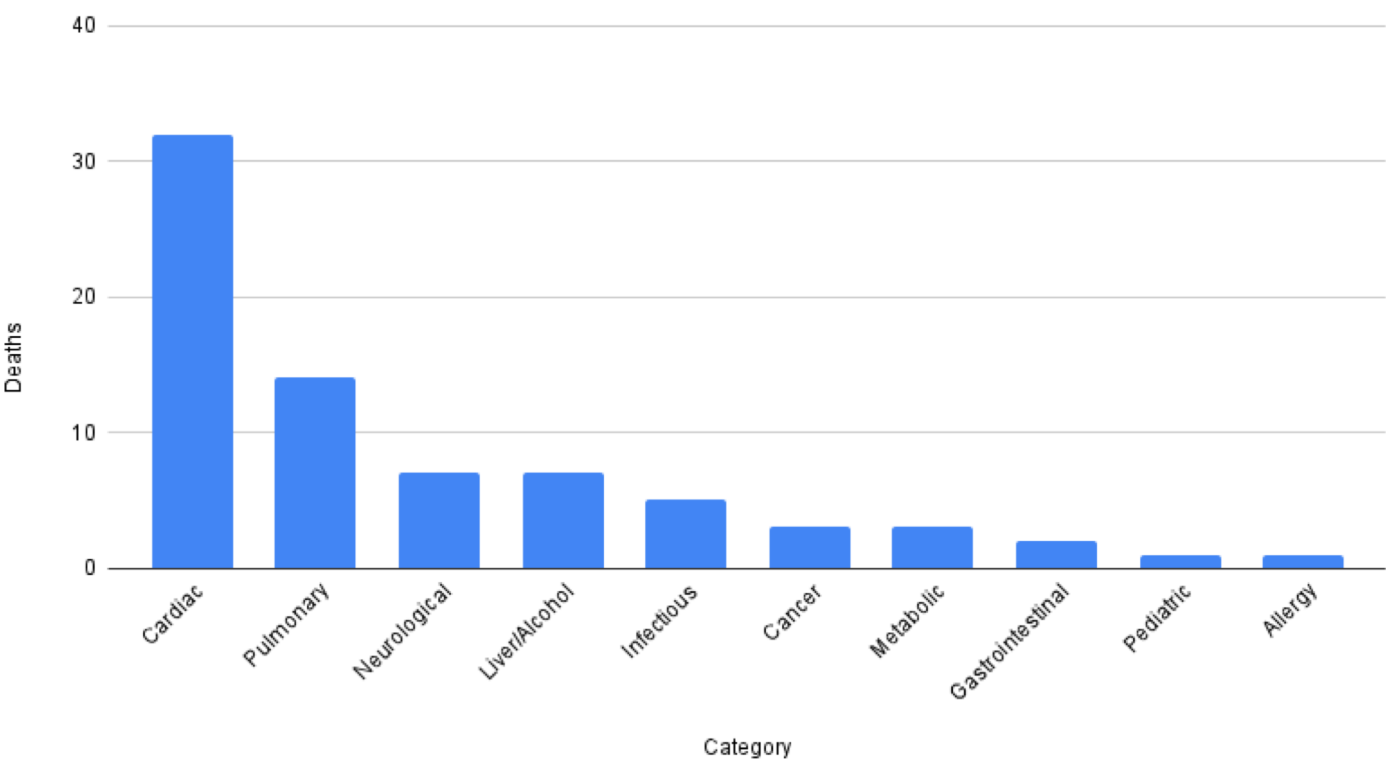
# 2024 - Natural

Total Natural Cases 2024- 75

Natural Cases by Cause:

- Cardiac- 32
- Pulmonary- 14
- Neurological- 7
- Cancer- 3
- Liver/Alcohol- 7
- Infectious: 5
- Metabolic- 3
- Gastrointestinal- 2
- Pediatric- 1
- Allergy - 1

2024 Natural Cases



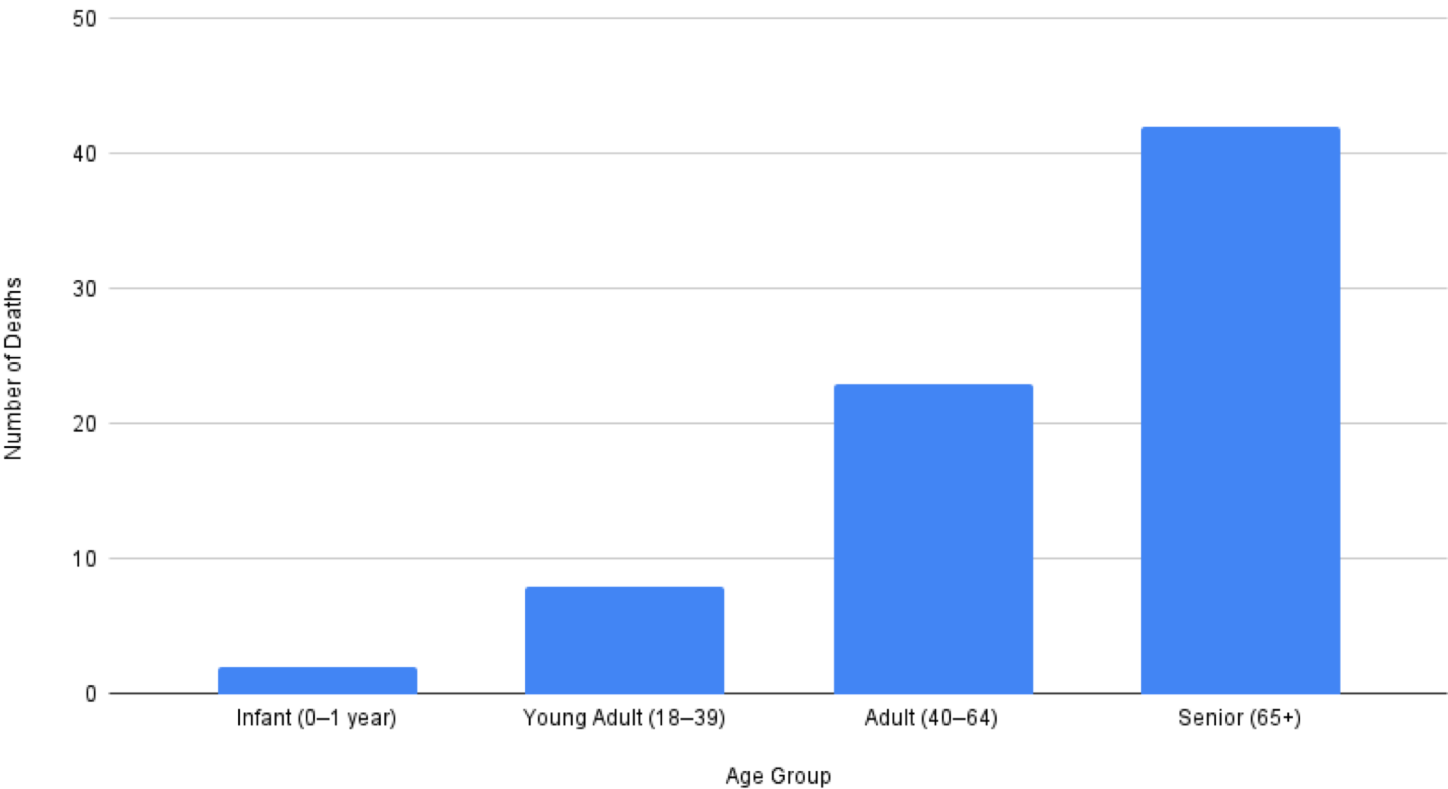


# 2024 - Natural Cases by Age Group

Age Groups:

Infant ( 0-1 year)	2
Young Adult (18-39)	8
Adult (40-64)	23
Senior (65+)	42

2024 Natural Cases by Age Group

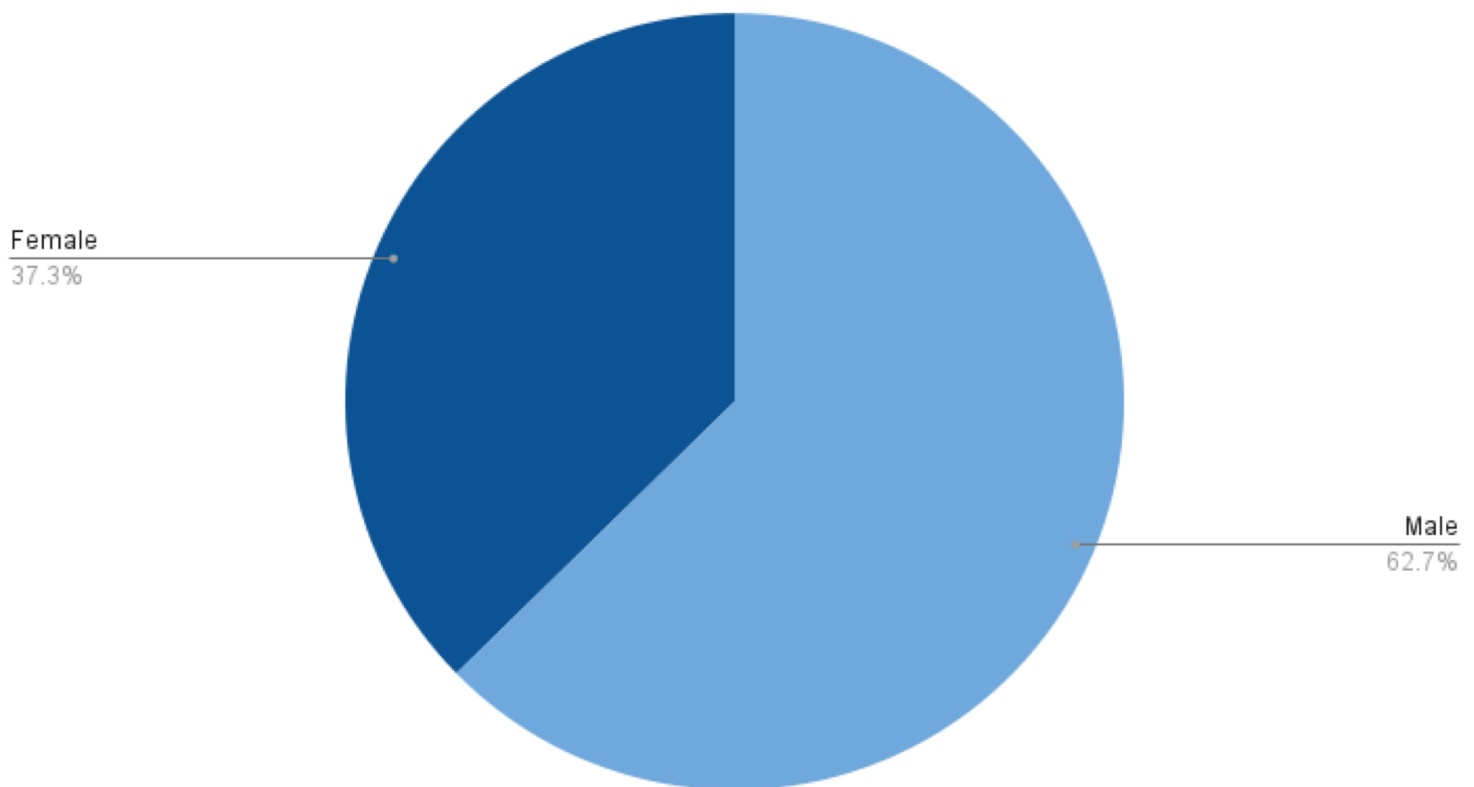


# 2024 - Natural Cases by Gender

Sex Groups:

Male	47
Female	28

2024 Natural Cases by Gender

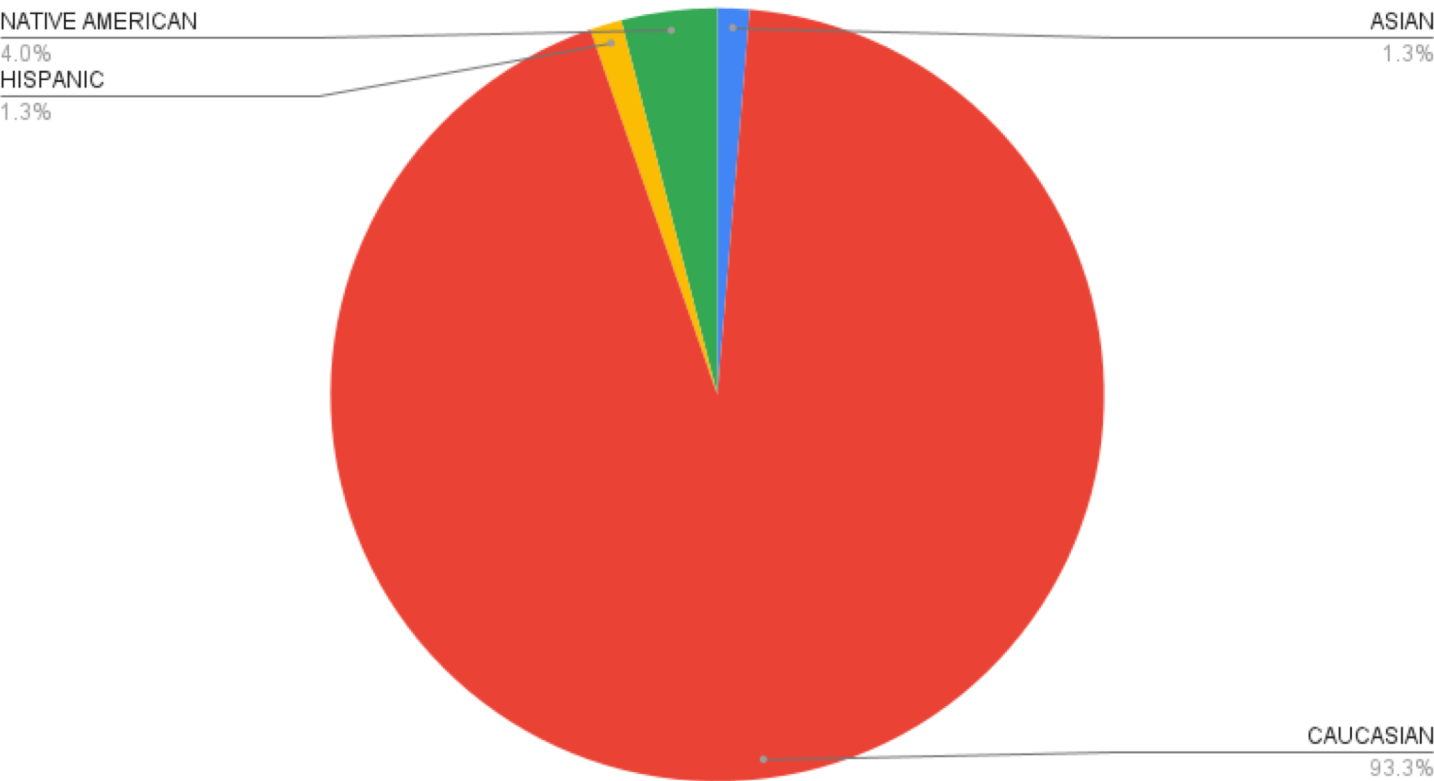


# 2024 - Natural

Race Groups:

Caucasian	70
Hispanic	1
Native American	3
Asian	1

2024 Natural Cases by Race



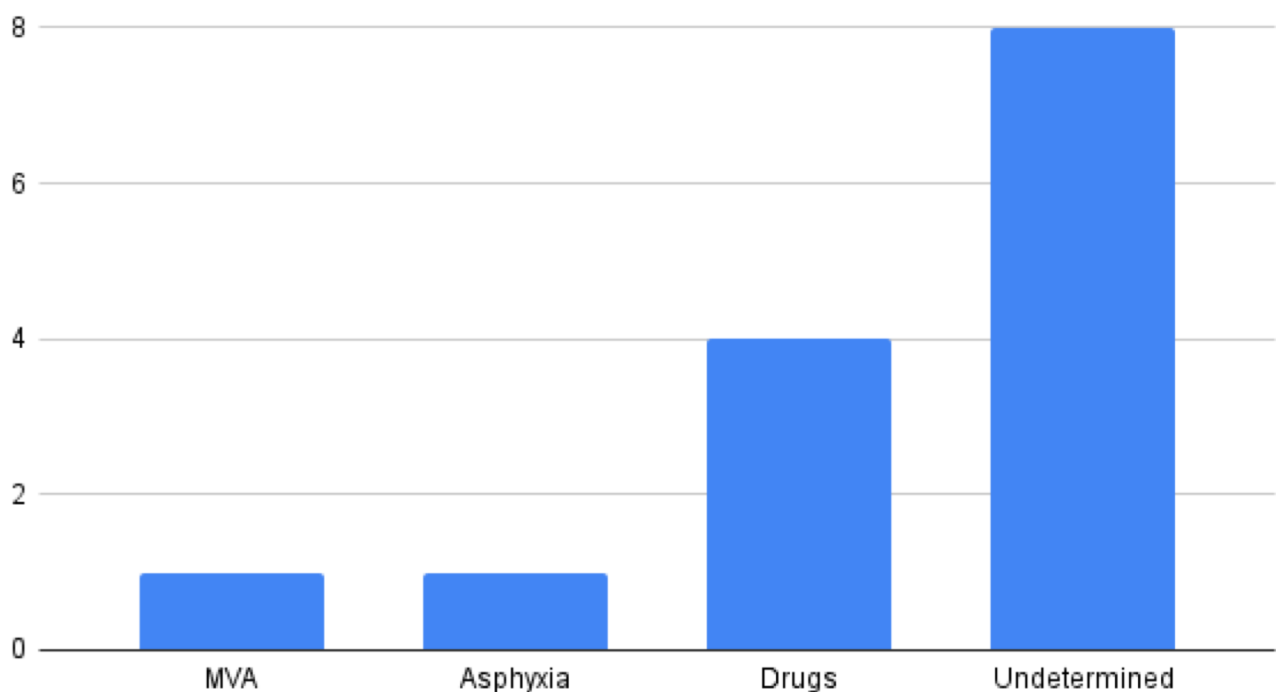
# 2024 – Undetermined Cases

Total Undetermined Cases 2024- 14

By Cause:

MVA	1
Asphyxia	1
Drugs	4
Undetermined	8

2024 Undetermined Cases

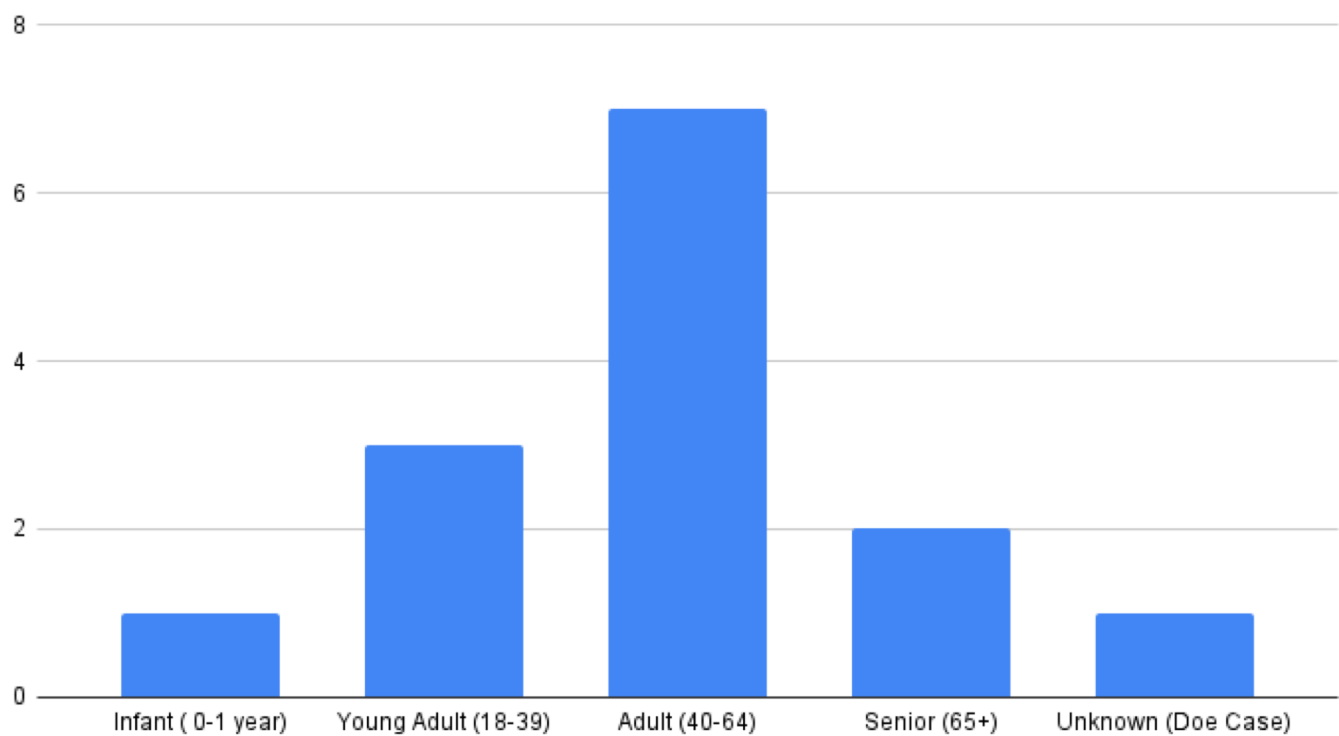


# 2024 – Undetermined Cases

By Age Group:

Infant ( 0-1 year)	1
Young Adult (18-39)	3
Adult (40-64)	7
Senior (65+)	2
Unknown (Doe Case)	1

2024 Undetermined Cases by Age Group

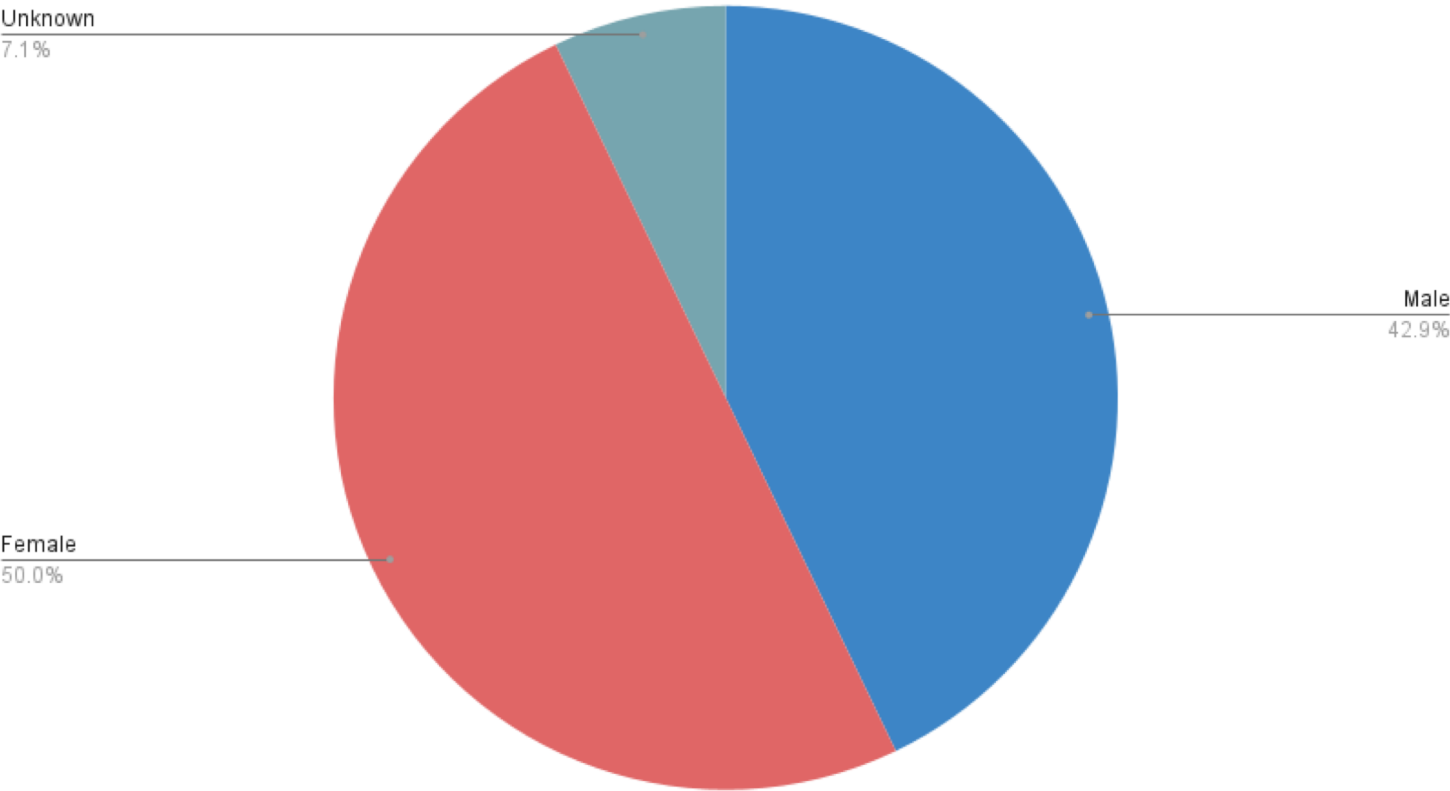


# 2024 – Undetermined Cases

By Sex:

Male	6
Female	7
Unknown	1

2024 Undetermined Cases by Gender

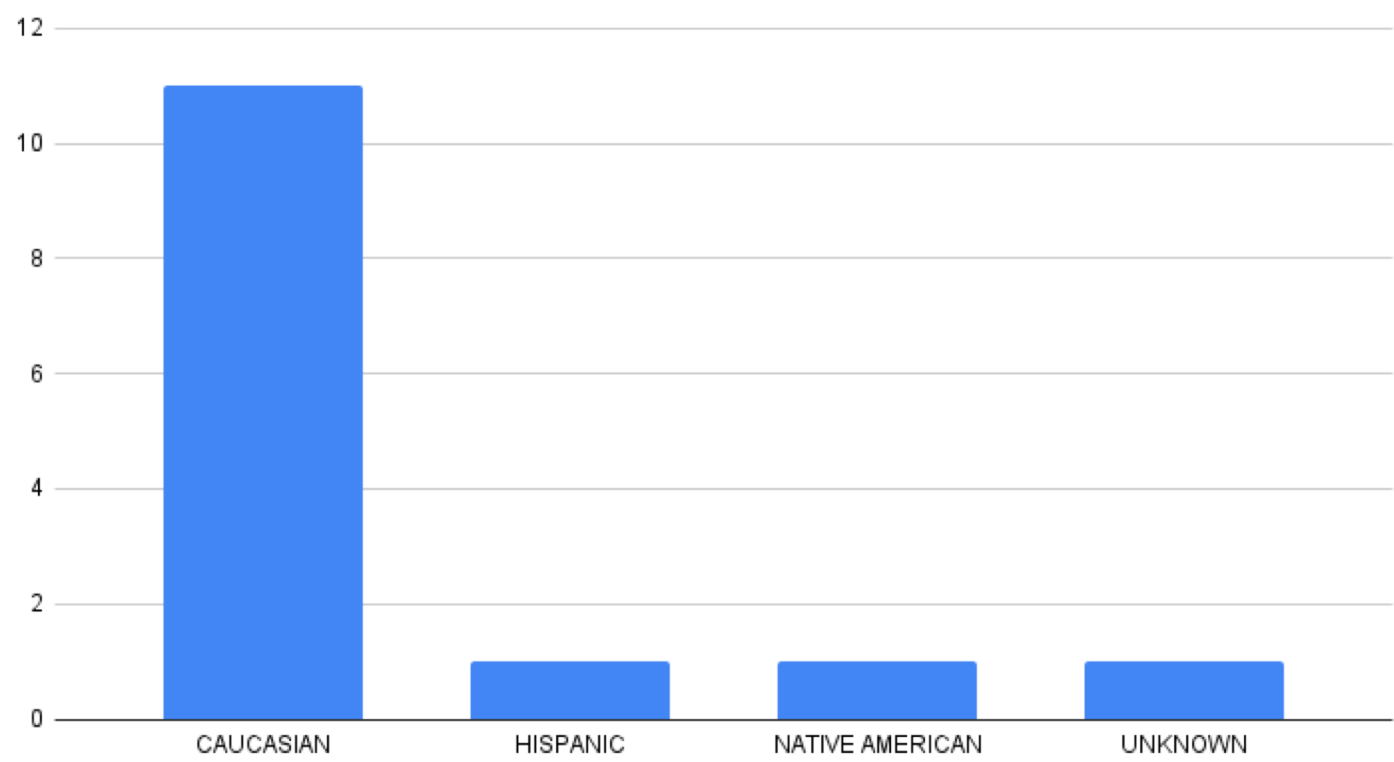


# 2024 - Undetermined

By Race:

Caucasian	11
Hispanic	1
Native American	1
Unknown	1

2024 Undetermined Cases by Race



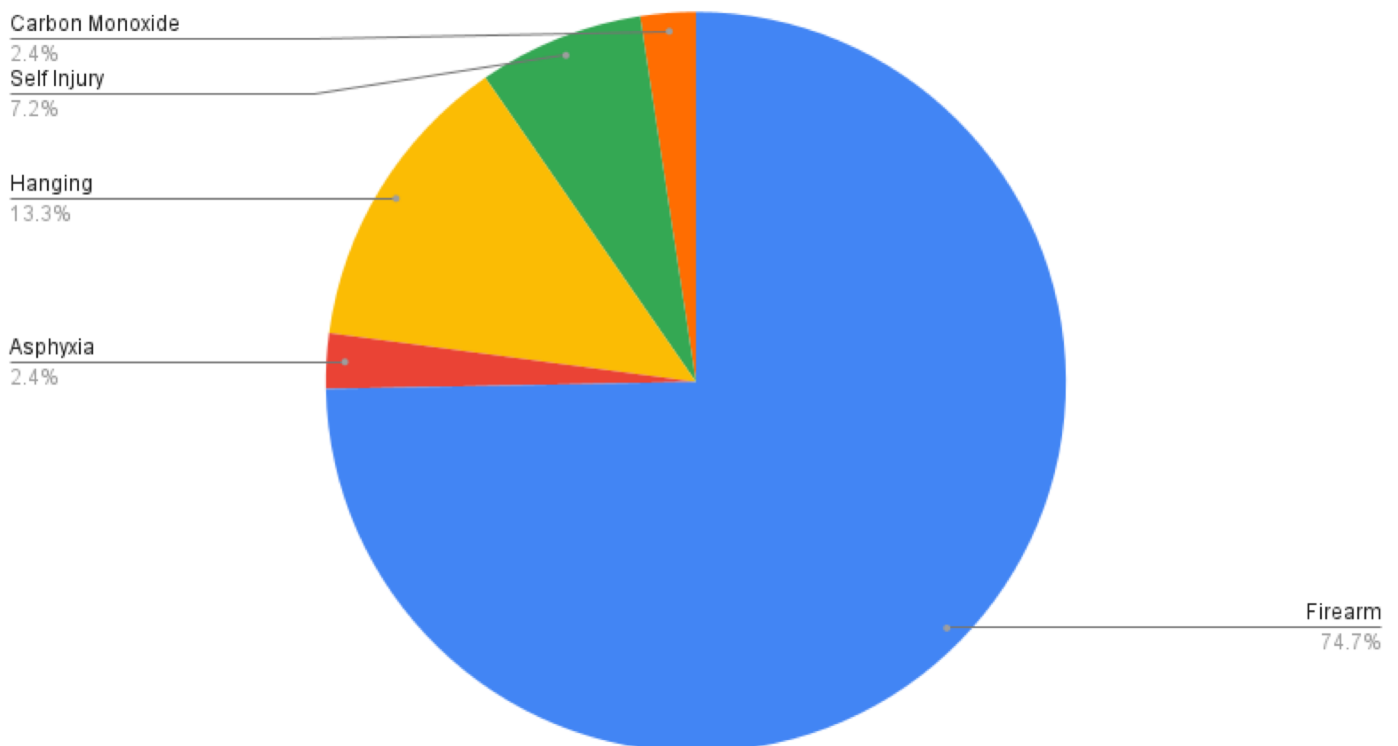
# 2024 - Suicides

Total Suicides Cases 2024- 83

Suicide Cases by Cause:

Firearm	62
Asphyxia	2
Hanging	11
Self Injury	6
Carbon Monoxide	2

2024 Suicide Cases by Type



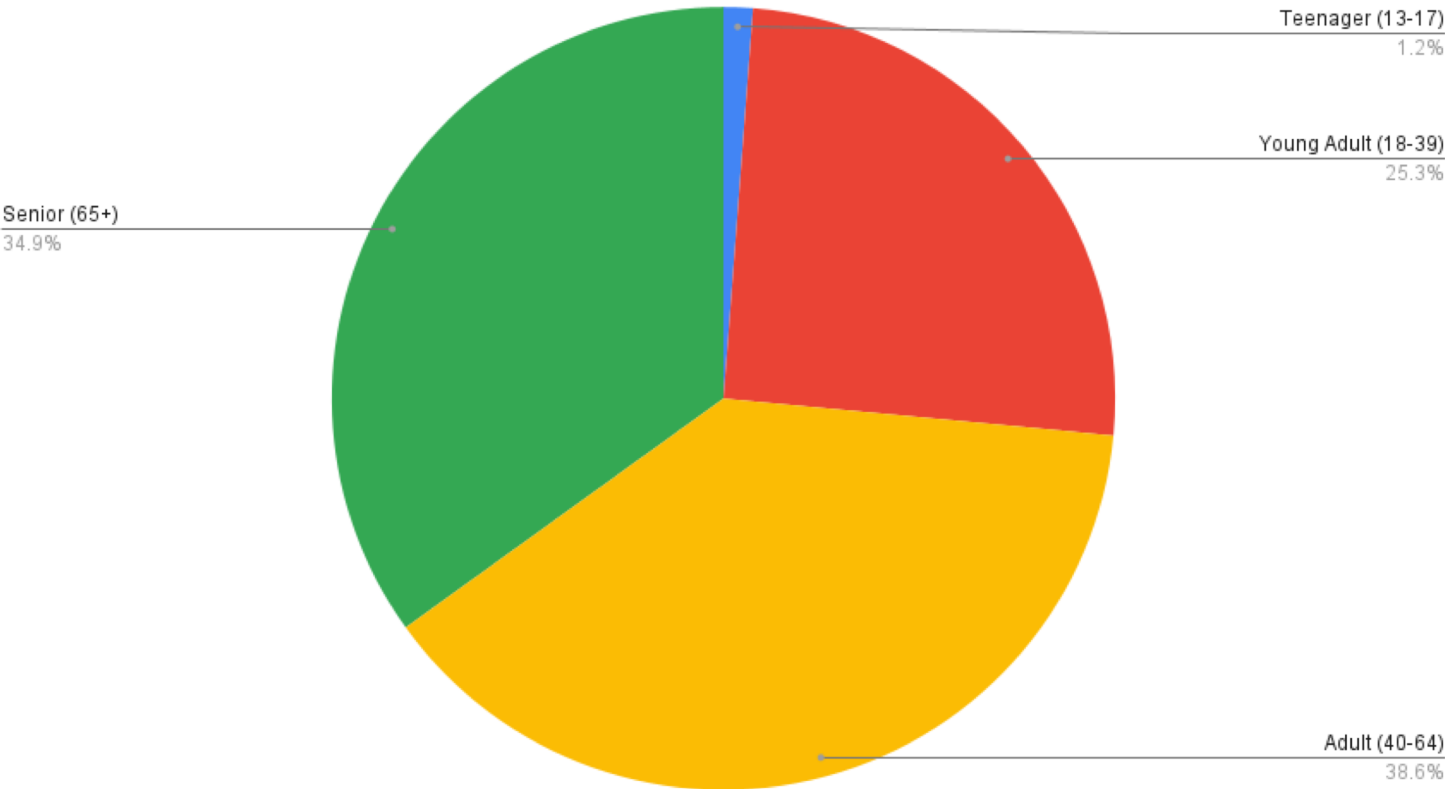


# 2024 - Suicides

## Suicide Cases by Age Group

Teenager (13-17)	1
Young Adult (18-39)	21
Adult (40-64)	32
Senior (65+)	29

2024 Suicides by Age Group

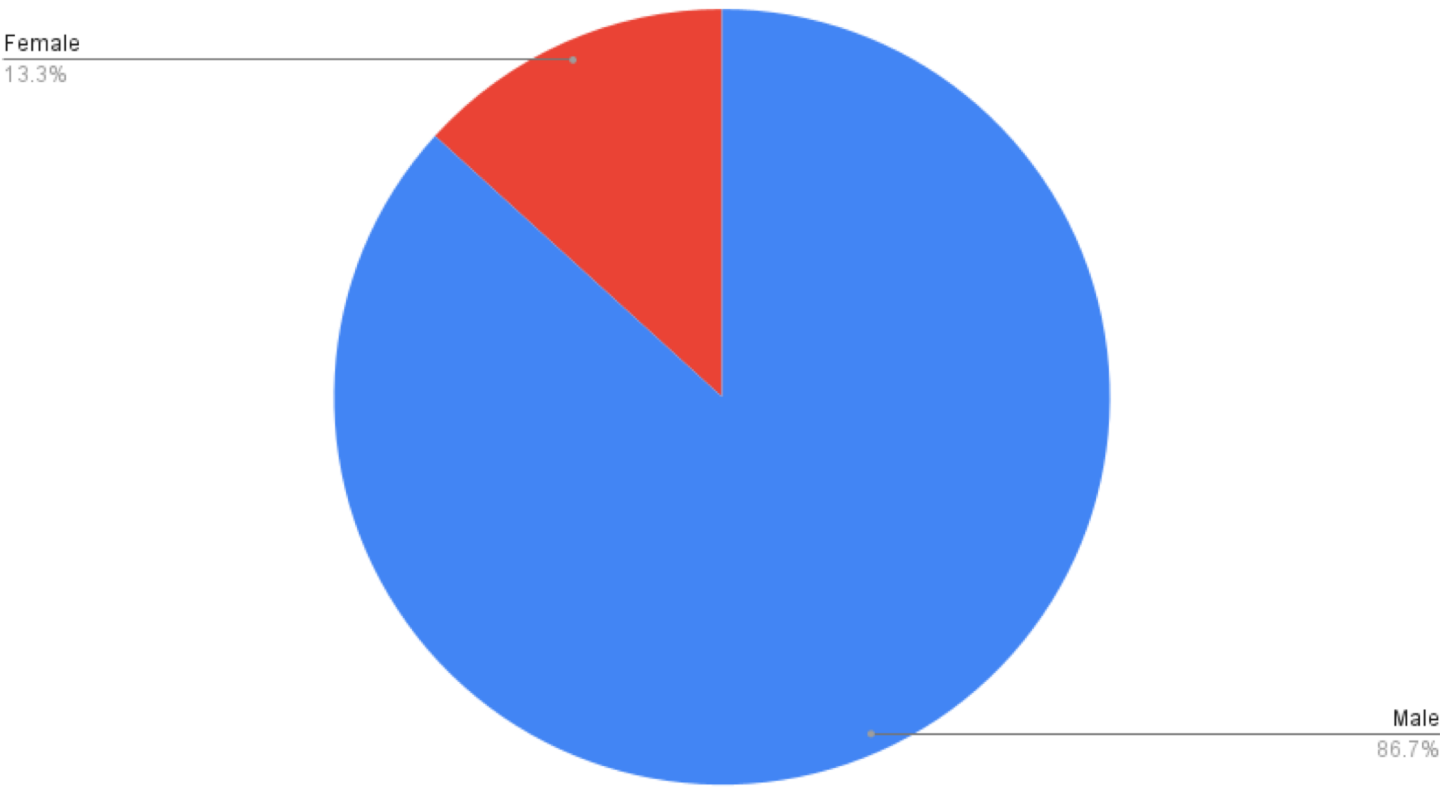


# 2024 - Suicides

Suicide Cases by Sex:

Male	72
Female	11

2024 Suicides by Gender

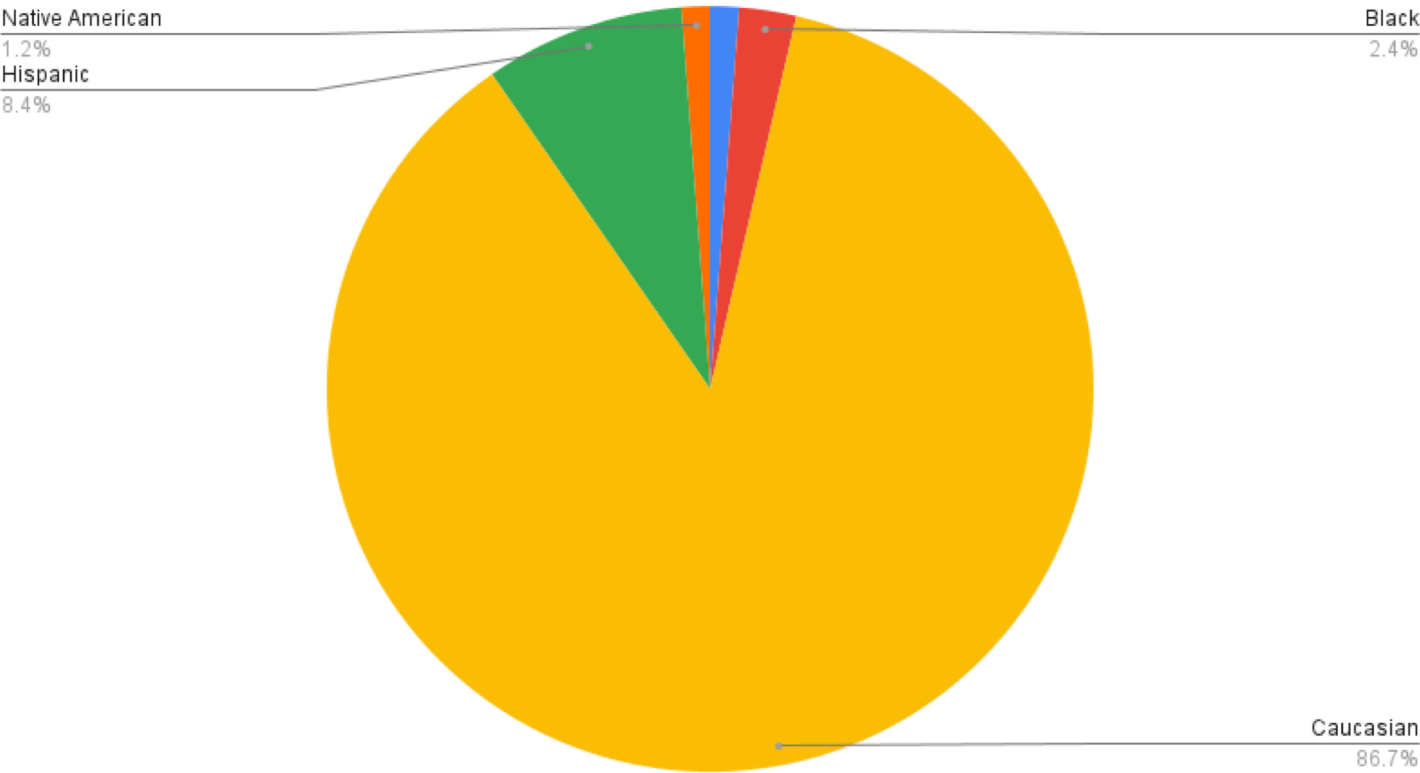


# 2024 - Suicides

Suicide Cases by Race:

Asian	1
Caucasian	72
Black	2
Hispanic	7
Native American	1

2024 Suicides by Race



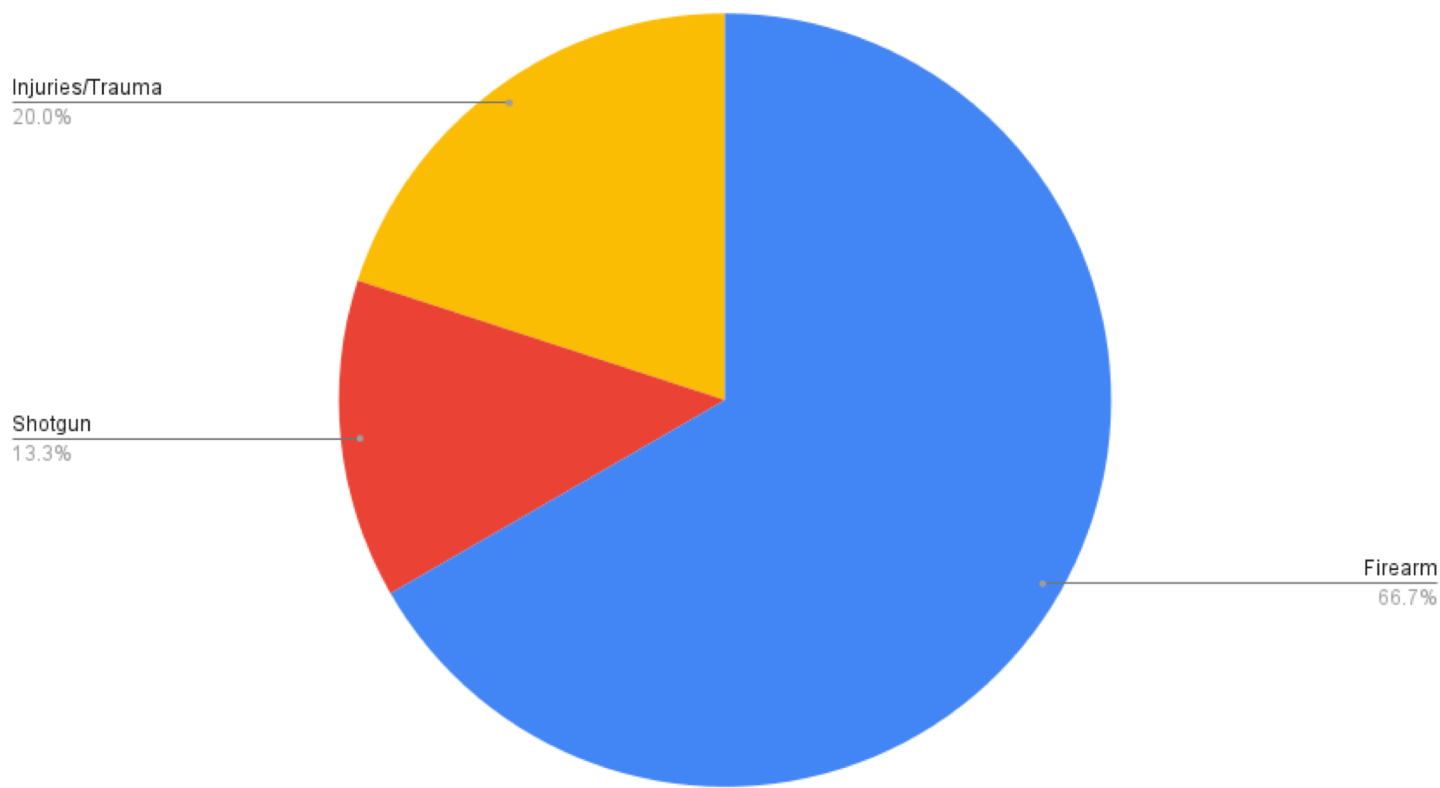
# 2024 - Homicides

Total Homicide Cases 2024- 15

Homicide Cases by Causes:

Firearm	10
Shotgun	2
Injuries/Trauma	3

2024 Homicides by Type

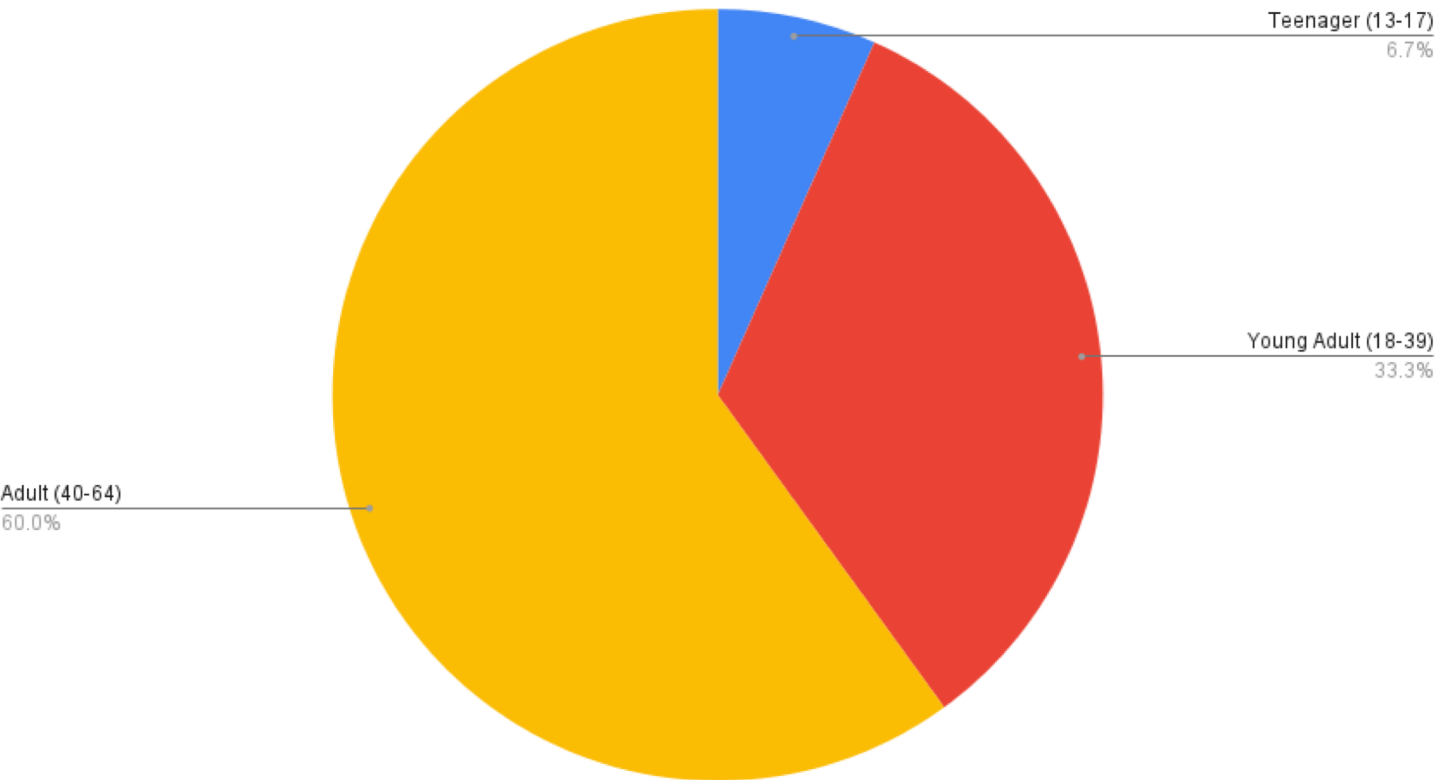


# 2024 - Homicides

Homicide Cases by Age Group:

Teenager (13-17)	1
Young Adult (18-39)	5
Adult (40-64)	9

2024 Homicides by Age Group

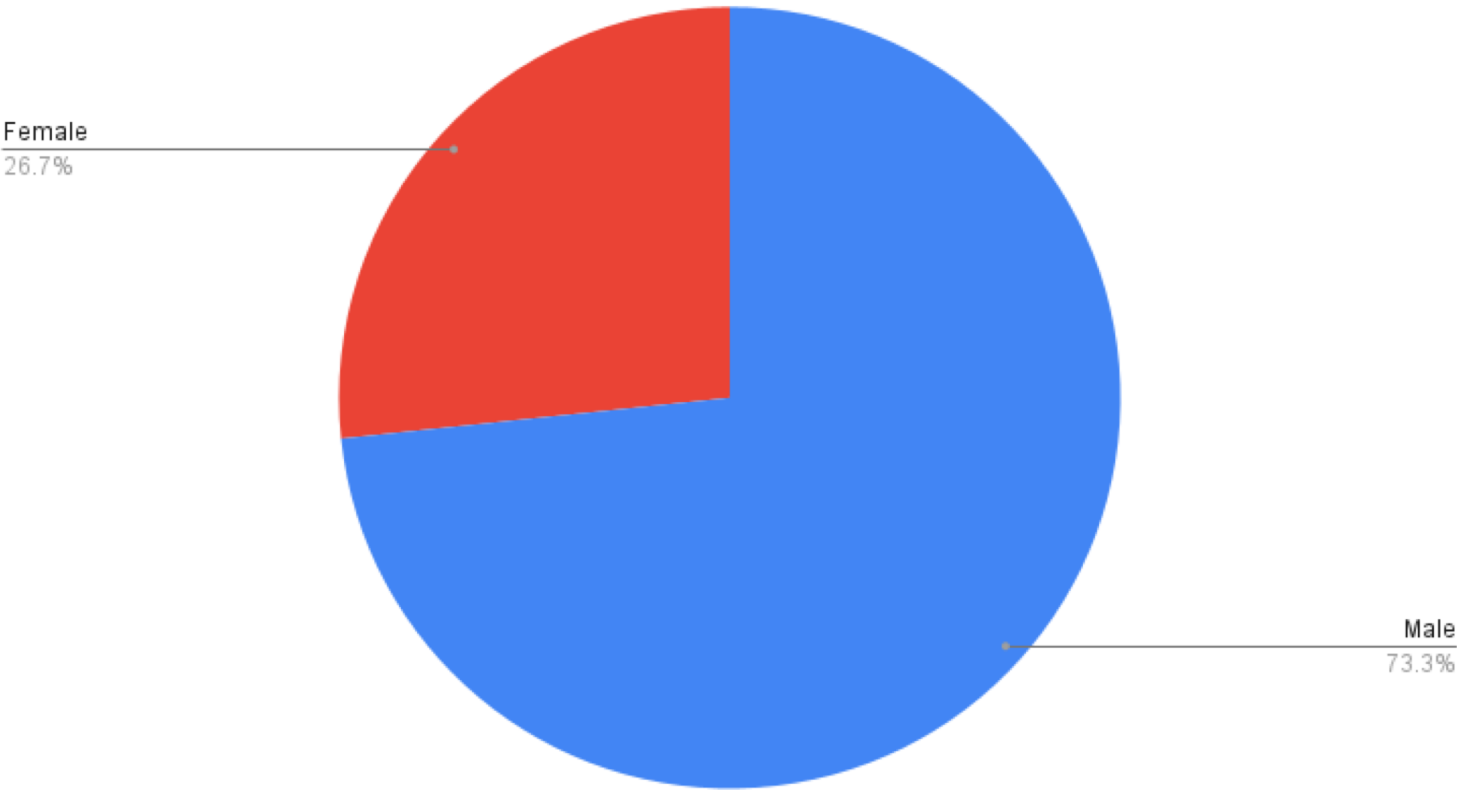


# 2024 - Homicides

By Gender:

Male	11
Female	4

2024 Homicides by Gender

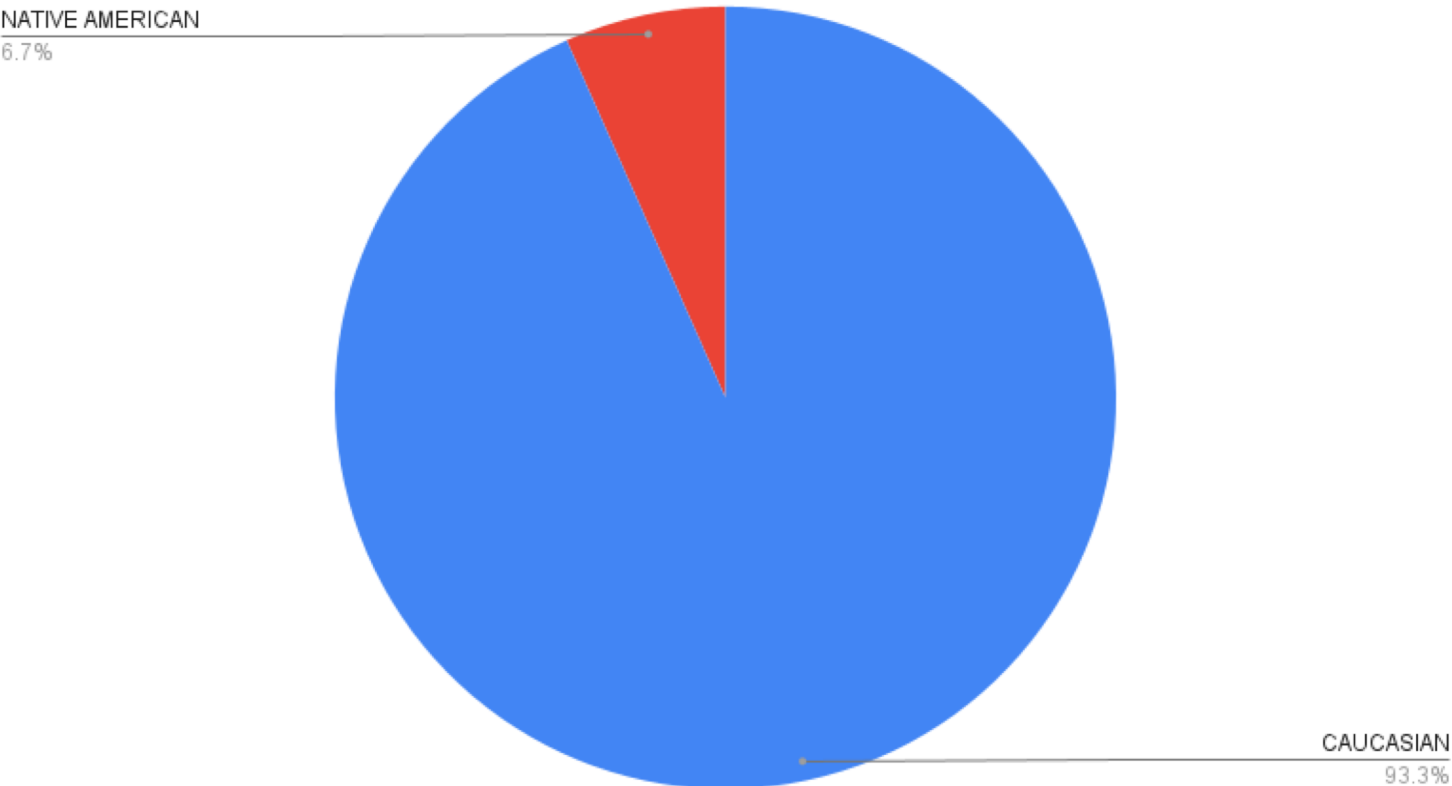


# 2024 - Homicides

By Race:

Caucasian	13
Native American	1

2024 Homicides by Race



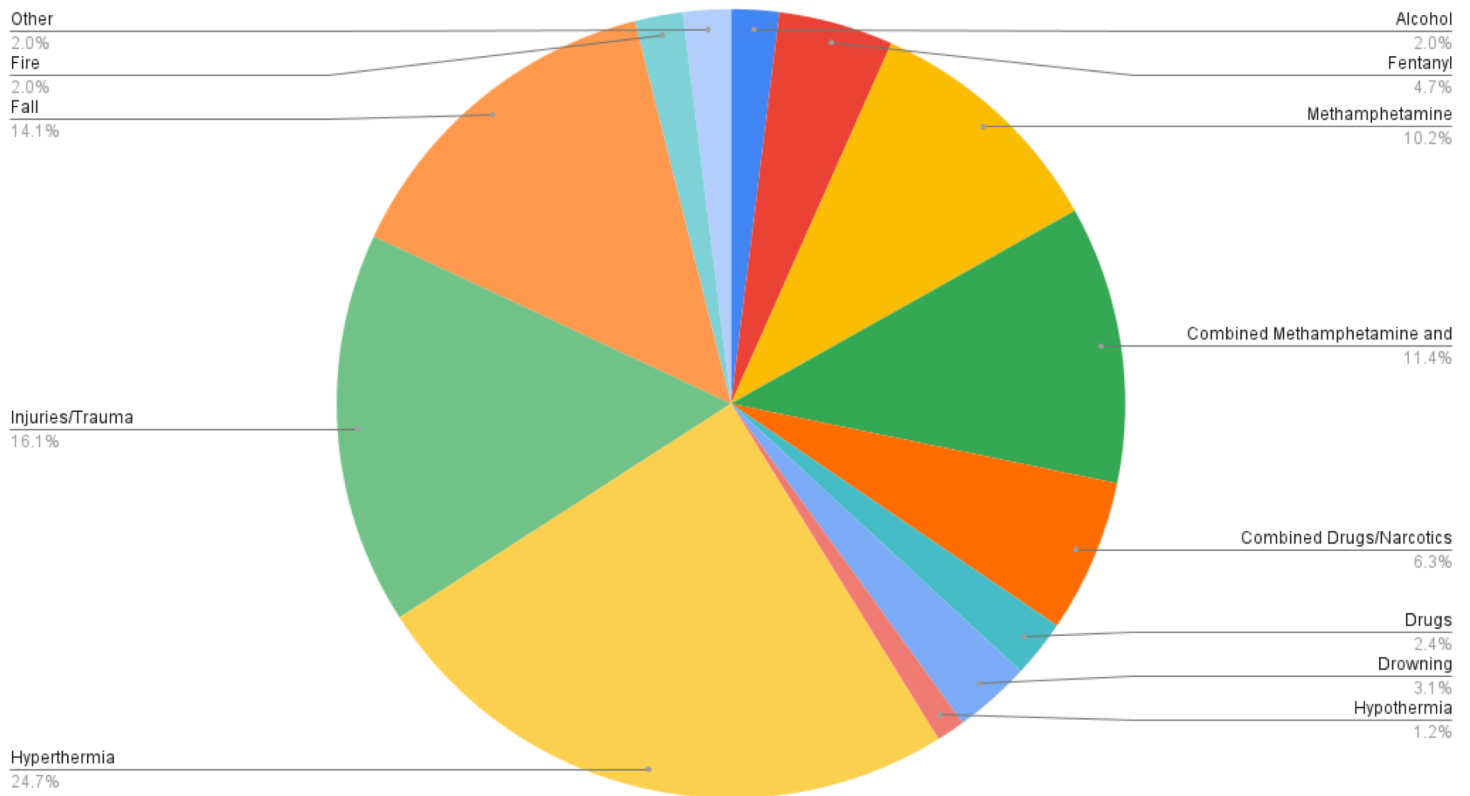
# 2024 - Accidents

Total Accidental Deaths- 255

Alcohol	5
Fentanyl	12
Methamphetamine	26
Combined Methamphetamine and Fentanyl	29
Combined Drugs/Narcotics	16
Drugs	6
Drowning	8
Hypothermia	3
Hyperthermia	63
Injuries/Trauma	41
Fall	36
Fire	5
Other	5



## 2024 Accidental Deaths



### Findings:

The three major causes of Accidental deaths involve Injuries/Trauma due to Motor Vehicle Accidents, Drug Overdoses, and Weather (Heat Related) passings.

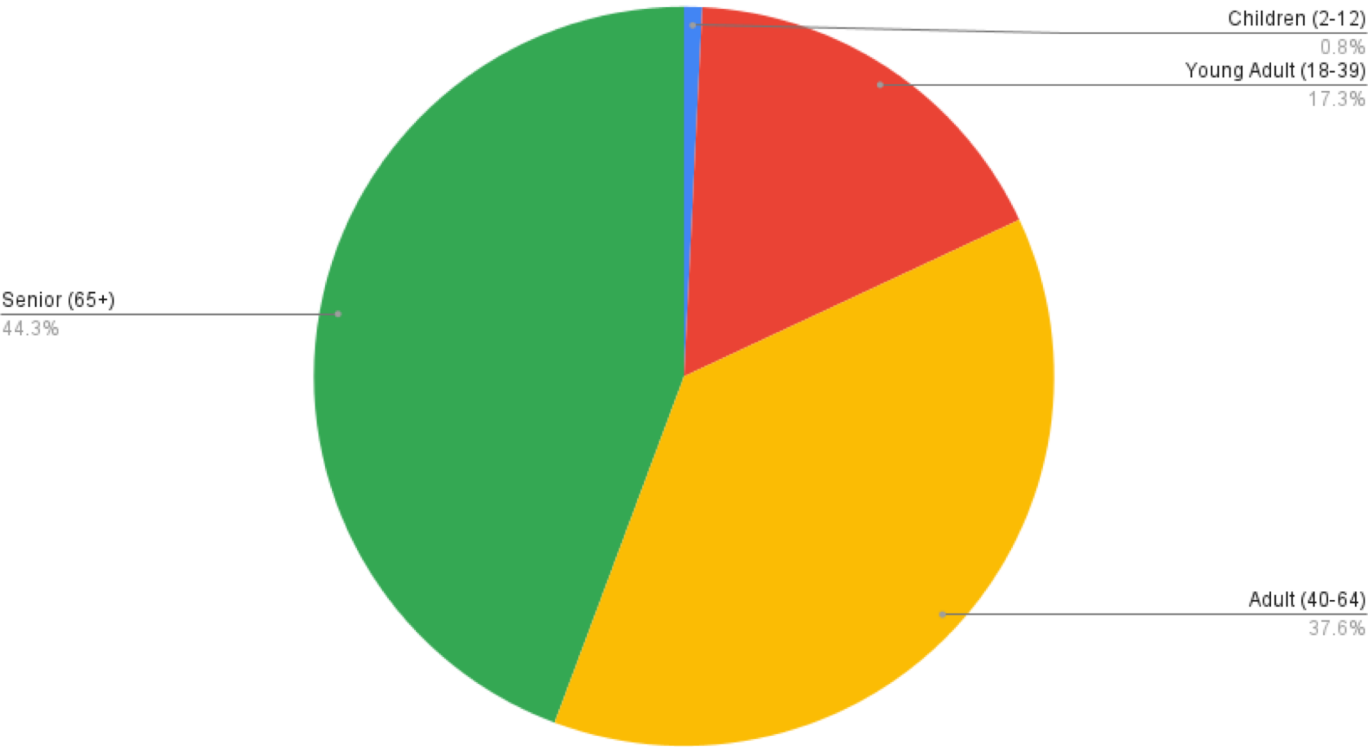
Overdoses- Methamphetamine remains primary drug used in overdoses in our area . Fentanyl and Methamphetamine combined is the leading cause of passing for drug overdoses. Fentanyl and Combined Drugs follow, coming in third.

# 2024 - Accidents

By Age Group :

Children (2-12)	2
Young Adult (18-39)	44
Adult (40-64)	96
Senior (65+)	113

2024 Accidental Deaths by Age Group

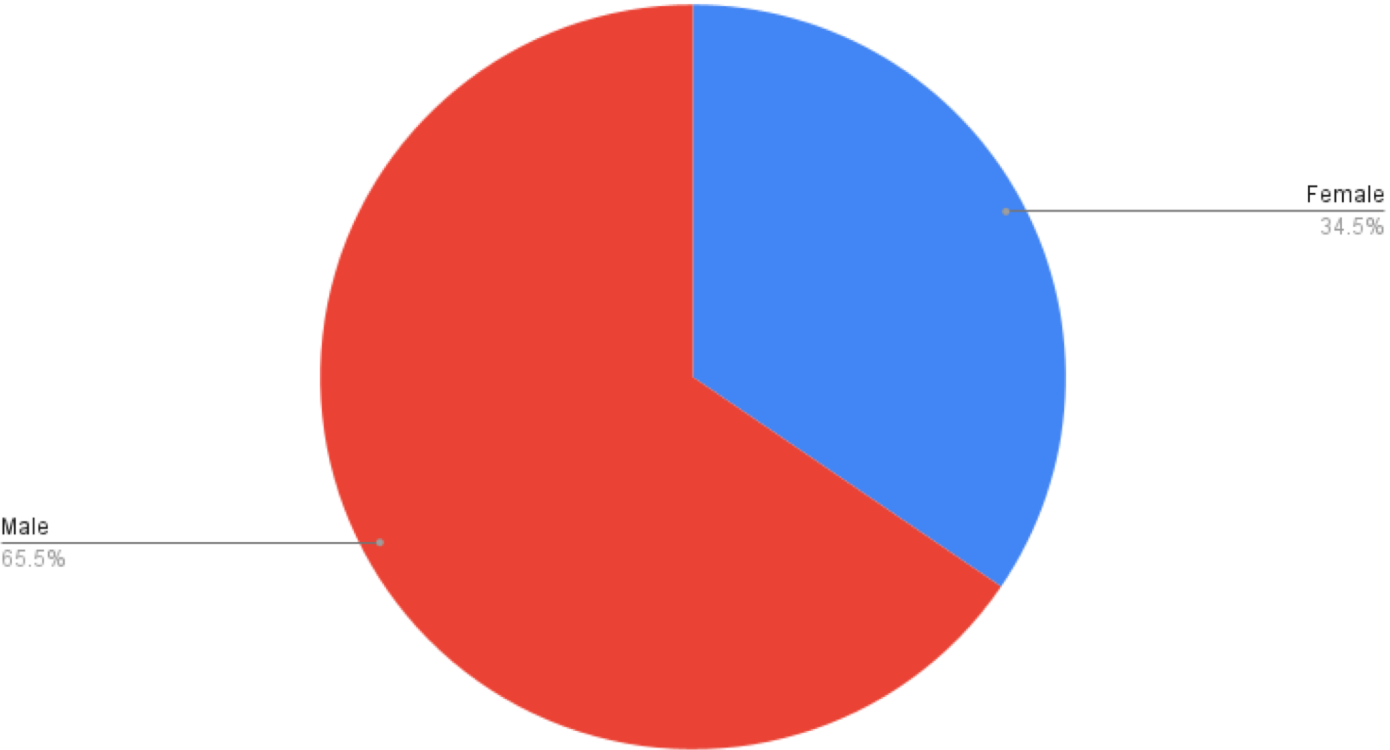


# 2024 - Accidents

By Sex :

Male	167
Female	88

2024 Accidental Deaths by Gender

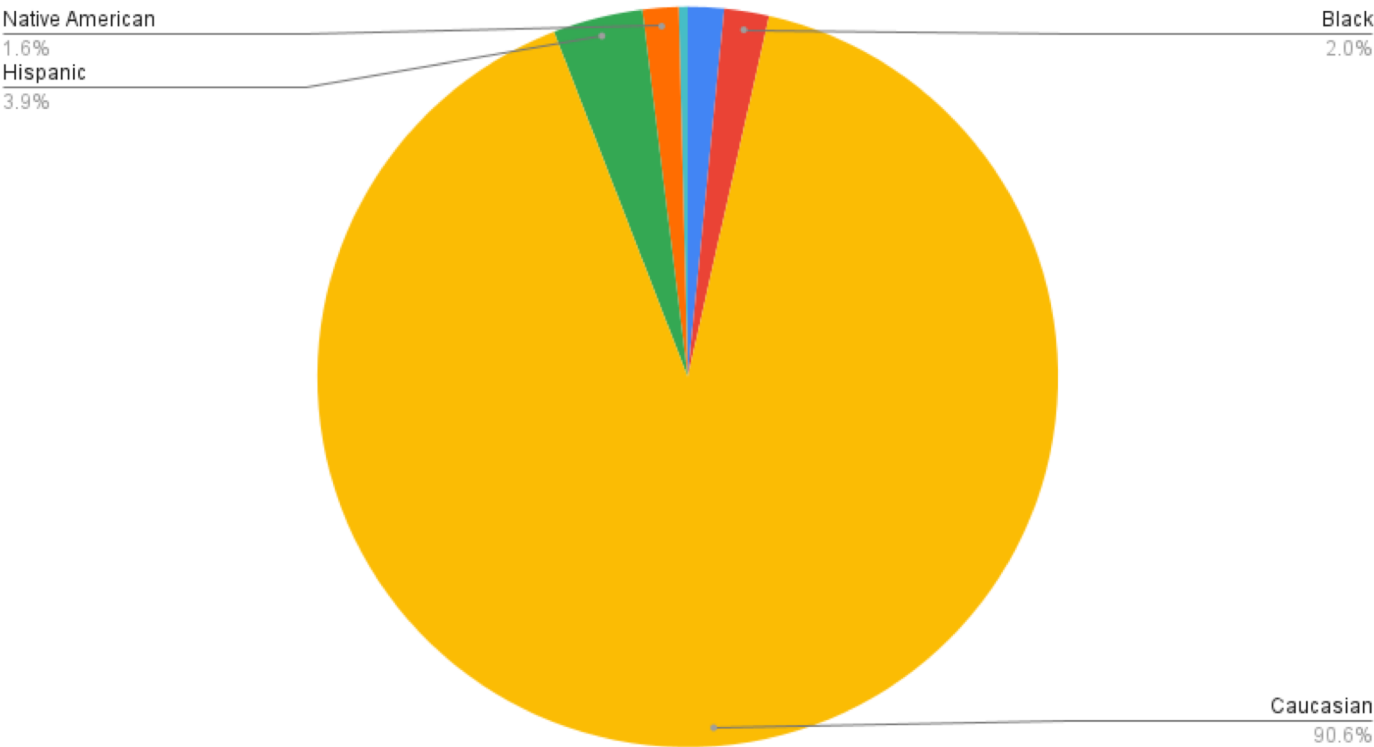


# 2024 - Accidents

By Race:

Caucasian	231
Black	5
Asian	4
Hispanic	10
Native American	4
Pacific Islander	1

2024 Accidental Deaths by Race



# Doe Cases

Currently in office we have 15 Doe Cases actively working on identification.

Oldest Doe case dates back to 2021 and majority (7) cases are Doe Cases from 2022.

2021- 1

2022- 6

2023-1

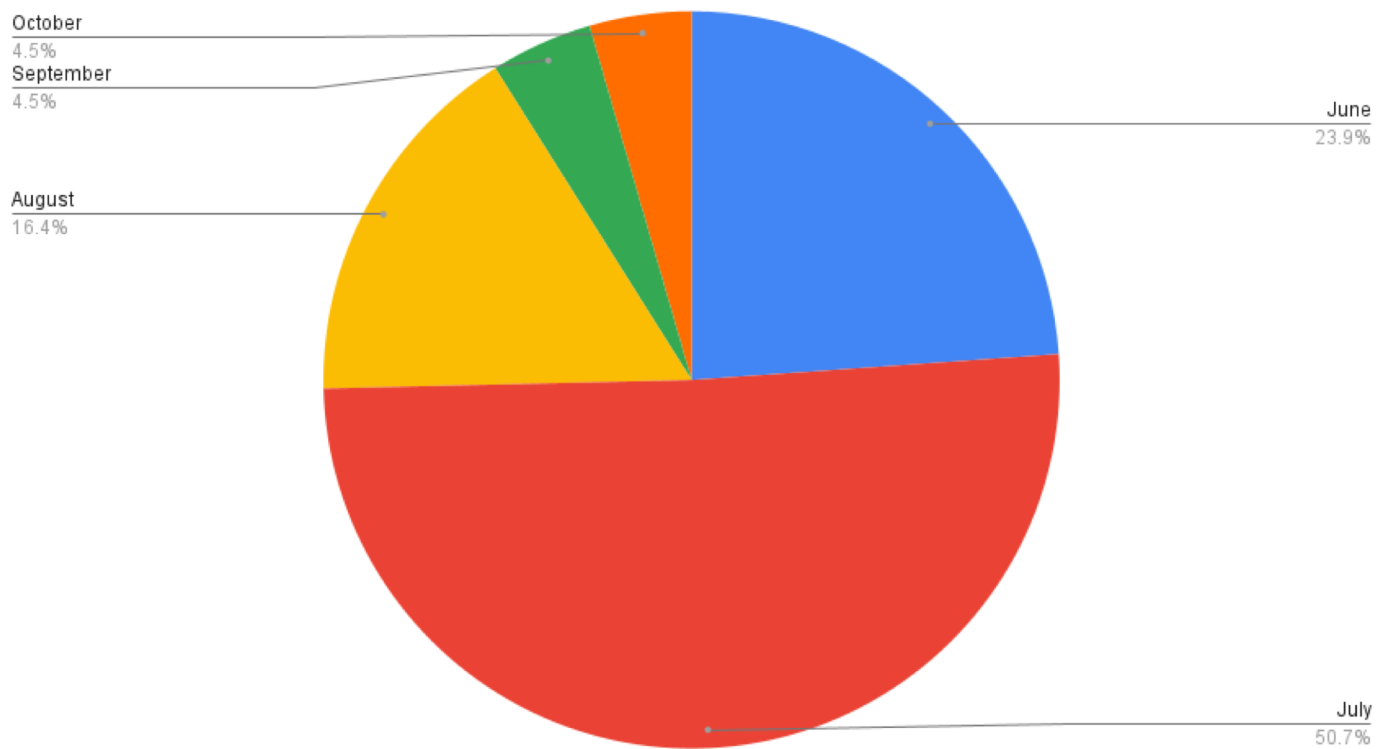
2024- 7 – 1 has been ID'd, hold due to FBI DNA Sampling

# Weather Related Cases

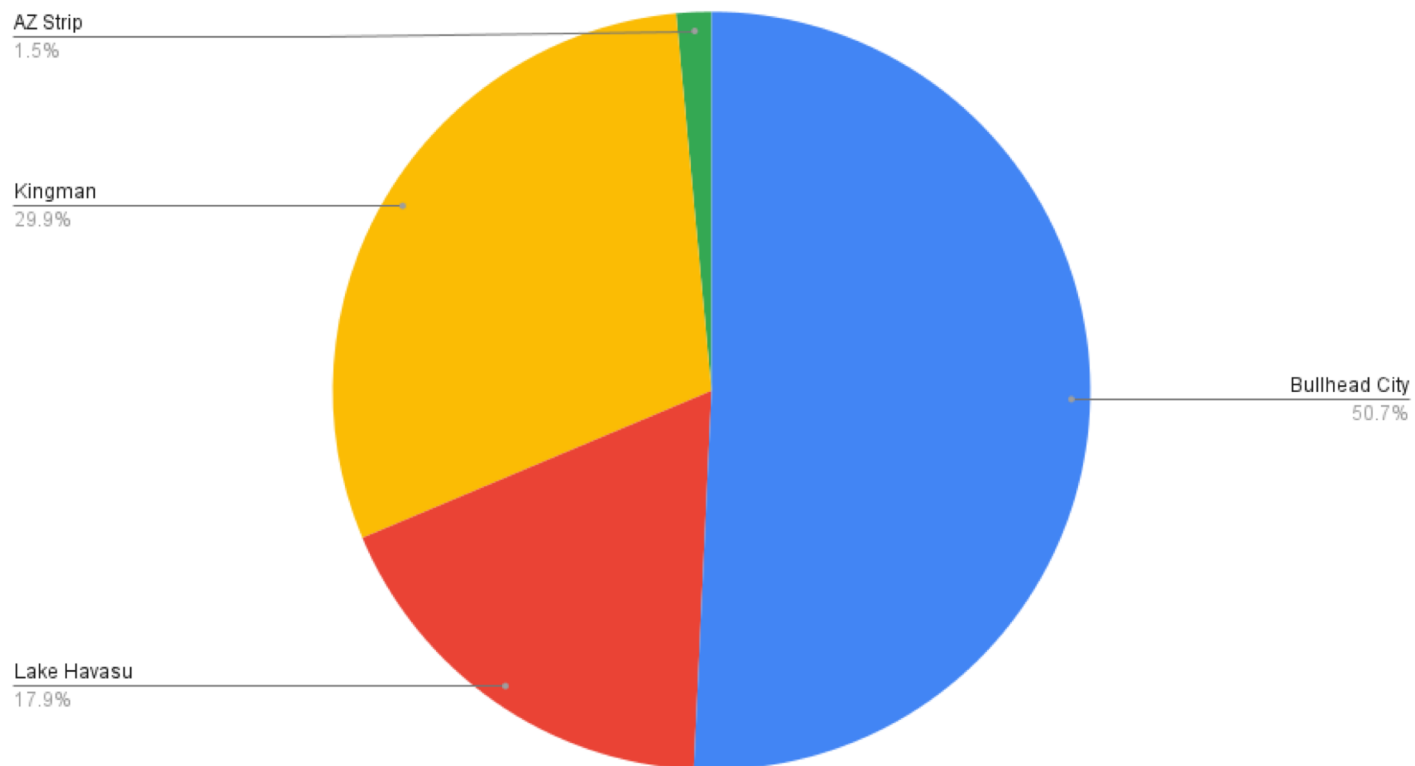
In 2024, 70 weather related cases were handled by our office.

- Hypothermia- We handled 3 Hypothermia cases in 2024, one beginning of the year and two end of the year. All three were in the Kingman Region.
- Hyperthermia- We handled 67 Hyperthermia cases in 2024, with our first case being end of June, and last case being reported in October.
  - Our influx in Hyperthermia occurred in July, with 34 cases or 50% being reported
  - Our breakdown of Hyperthermia cases by month:
    - June: 16
    - July: 34
    - August: 11
    - September: 3
    - October: 3
  - By Region: Bullhead City, 34 cases or 50% of Hyperthermia cases occurred in the region. Below is breakdown per region:
    - Bullhead City- 34
    - Lake Havasu- 12
    - Kingman- 20
    - AZ Strip- 1

## 2024 Hyperthermia Cases by Month



## 2024 Hyperthermia Cases by Region



# 2024 vs 2023

## 2024

- Deaths Notified to MCMEO: 2,519
- Hospice Notifications: 1,360
- Investigations: 1,159
- Declines: 711
- Accident: 255
- Suicide: 83
- Homicide: 15
- Undetermined: 14
- Natural : 75
- Pending : 6

## 2023

- Deaths Notified to MCMEO: 2,242
- Hospice Notifications: 1,060
- Investigations: 1,182
- Declines: 740
- Accident: 232
- Suicide: 100
- Homicide: 14
- Undetermined: 12
- Natural : 73
- Pending : 11



# 2024 vs 2022

## 2024

- Deaths Notified to MCME0:  
2,519
- Hospice Notifications:  
1,360
- Investigations: 1,159
- Declines:711
- Accident: 255
- Suicide: 83
- Homicide: 15
- Undetermined: 14
- Natural : 75
- Pending :6

## 2022

- Deaths Notified to MCME0:  
2,463
- Hospice Notifications: 1,135
- Investigations: 1,328
- Declines:844
- Accident: 265
- Suicide: 121
- Homicide: 23
- Undetermined: 26
- Natural :43
- Pending : 16

# 2024 vs 2021

## 2024

- Deaths Notified to MCME0: 2,519
- Hospice Notifications: 1,360
- Investigations: 1,159
- Declines: 711
- Accident: 255
- Suicide: 83
- Homicide: 15
- Undetermined: 14
- Natural : 75
- Pending : 6

## 2021

- Deaths Notified to MCME0: 2,463
- Hospice Notifications: 1,135
- Investigations: 1,328
- Declines: 844
- Accident: 265
- Suicide: 121
- Homicide: 23
- Undetermined: 26
- Natural : 43
- Pending : 6

# 2024 vs 2020

## 2024

- Deaths Notified to MCME0:  
2,519
- Hospice Notifications:  
1,360
- Investigations: 1,159
- Declines: 711
- Accident: 255
- Suicide: 83
- Homicide: 15
- Undetermined: 14
- Natural : 75
- Pending : 6

## 2020

- Deaths Notified to MCME0:  
2,524
- Hospice Notifications:  
1,313
- Investigations: 1,211
- Declines: 846
- Accident: 165
- Suicide: 76
- Homicide: 18
- Undetermined: 55
- Natural : 51

# 2024 vs 2019

## 2024

- Deaths Notified to MCME0:  
2,519
- Hospice Notifications:  
1,360
- Investigations: 1,159
- Declines: 711
- Accident: 255
- Suicide: 83
- Homicide: 15
- Undetermined: 14
- Natural : 75
- Pending : 6

## 2019

- Deaths Notified to MCME0:  
2,229
- Hospice Notifications:  
1,280
- Investigations: 949
- Declines: 643
- Accident: 156
- Suicide: 68
- Homicide: 9
- Undetermined: 31
- Natural : 42

# 2024 vs 2018

## 2024

- Deaths Notified to MCME0:  
2,519
- Hospice Notifications:  
1,360
- Investigations: 1,159
- Declines: 711
- Accident: 255
- Suicide: 83
- Homicide: 15
- Undetermined: 14
- Natural : 75
- Pending : 6

## 2018

- Deaths Notified to MCME0:  
2,366
- Hospice Notifications:  
1,351
- Investigations: 1,015
- Declines: 723
- Accident: 120
- Suicide: 88
- Homicide: 13
- Undetermined: 35
- Natural : 36

# 2024 vs 2023 Analysis

## 2024 VS 2023

- Total Deaths Notified- Up 277 cases, 12%
- Hospice Notifications- Up 300 cases, 28%
- Investigations- Down 23 cases, 2%
- Declines- Down 29 cases, 4%
- Accidental Deaths- Up 23 cases, 10%
- Suicides- Down 17 cases, 17%
- Homicides-Up 1 cases, 7%
- Undetermined- Up 2 cases, 17%
- Natural- Up 2 cases, 3%
- Pending- Up 5 cases, 45 %

Be mindful that this data will change as we finalize the pending cases.  
Majority of the pending cases are Doe cases.

# Acknowledgements

- The Mohave County Medical Examiner's Office is eternally grateful for the dedicated public servants who choose to join us in serving the community. Day in and Day out, they dedicate their service to our County, witnessing death and tragedy..
- MCMEO works with many other public and private officials including those in public health, public safety, healthcare, and death-care industries. We are grateful for their service, professionalism, and collaboration.
- And finally, we are grateful for the public, the Mohave County Health Department, and for the Mohave County Board of Supervisors for their support. As our county continues to grow, our office grows as well to provide the utmost service.