



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Park County Coroners Office

David E Kintz Jr, BS, NRP, F-ABMDI

Coroner

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Park County Coroners Office is to provide thorough death investigations to all of those who die within Park County or suffer a fatal event within the county that results in their death outside the county. The Coroners Office is on call and responds 24 hours a day every day of the year. The Coroners Office conducts an independent investigation to determine the cause and manner of death. We embrace our role as an advocate for the deceased, who can no longer speak for themselves, solemnly and respectfully. We consider families an equal priority to the death investigation. We strive to notify families quickly and keep them informed throughout the process. Our staff is available 24 hours a day, to answer any questions or concerns family may have.

Forensic sciences are ever evolving and education is an absolute necessity. The Park County Coroners Office seeks out educational opportunities each year to enhance our team with the latest information in the forensic community. In addition to education, a standard of the Park County Coroners Office is to have each staff member certified by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigation as soon as they are eligible under the experience requirements. To further our pursuit of the truth in each investigation we became Fully Accredited by the International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners in 2015 and reaccredited in 2020. The Park County Coroners Office works with law enforcement, Human Services and Public Health to ensure that each death gets a thorough and respectful investigation.

CORONER STAFF

DAVID E KINTZ JR, BS, NRP, F-ABMDI
CORONER

DON COMSTOCK, D-ABMDI
CHIEF DEPUTY CORONER

BONNIE GUZMAN, RN, D-ABMDI
DEPUTY CORONER

GENEVIEVE DITLEVSON
DEPUTY CORONER

GENE STANLEY, PHD
SPECIAL DEPUTY CORONER

DUTIES OF THE CORONER

The Coroner is charged with determining the cause and manner of death. The Coroners office is a statutory office under title 30-10-601 through 30-10-622 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. The coroner must investigate the following types of deaths under statute:

- I.** Deaths from external violence, unexplained cause, or other unexplained suspicious circumstances
- II.** Deaths where no physician is in attendance or physician is unable to certify cause of death
- III.** Deaths from Thermal, chemical, or radiation injury
- IV.** Death from criminal abortion, including self induced
- V.** Deaths from hazardous or contagious conditions that may pose a threat to the general public
- VI.** Deaths while in custody of law enforcement or incarcerated
- VII.** Death was sudden and happened to a person in good health
- VIII.** Death from industrial accident

In Park County we do not have a hospital or inpatient hospice which means that all deaths fall under the jurisdiction of the coroner.

The Park County Coroners Office covers Park County, Colorado with a population of 18,845 in 2019 per the US census bureau. We cover the incorporated towns of Fairplay and Alma. The county is home to two state parks, many wildlife areas and hundreds of thousands of acres of state land and national forest. Park County is tourist destination for camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, sight seeing and much more. Vacation rentals have dramatically increased the amount of visitors to our county.

Coroner Accomplishments 2020

2020 brought our office many unique challenges as well as the rest of the world. Our staff shined through the difficulty of the year. We are so proud of our volunteers and staff that worked in the face of the Pandemic to help families.

COVID required us to enact our Mass Fatality Plan and obtain a temporary cooler in April and May. We use a matrix of circumstances to determine when these measures should be taken. We considered the capacity for remains coolers available in the region through hospitals, Coroners offices and funeral homes. We also considered the availability of the temporary coolers in the region and determined we should retain one and have it ready to go. We are happy to report we did not have to use the overflow remains cooler and released it in June. However, it was a necessary move to ensure our ability to serve our citizens.

Prior to the lockdowns in March we hosted the FBI fingerprint division at our office to conduct a fingerprint examiner course to numerous agencies in the region. This was a federally funded training that lasted 3 days taught by two agents from West Virginia. All of our staff attended.

Our accreditation with the IACME was up for renewal in 2020 and we originally were scheduled for an audit on April 6 however that was cancelled due to COVID. Fortunately on July 6 we were able to get rescheduled and had two out of state auditors come to our office. They reviewed our office, morgue, policies, practices, reports, equipment and more during the audit. This is after months of reviewing hundreds of pages of information about our office. These audits are very in-depth and even include interviews of other agencies we work with. We are very proud to announce that we have passed our audit and have accomplished accreditation until 2025. We have included our auditor report in this report for public review.

Coroner Accomplishments 2020- Continued

Research continued at the forensic investigation research facility in Park County. Together with our partners at Colorado Mesa University large strides were taken in high altitude research. This year saw the goal of human research begin. Nine donors went to the research facility in 2020. The research from this facility is already having an effect on forensic case work right here in Park County.

Our CARE Team volunteers continued their great work with families this year. Through many difficult cases the team provided top notch support. The CARE team was able to hold 7 of their 8 scheduled trainings this year with some of them being virtual trainings.

This year also became the busiest year in modern record for this office. We did see the relation of people not seeking medical care due to a fear of COVID and their deaths. We have also seen the correlation of stress and how it effects it peoples health this year. We strongly encourage citizens to seek regular medical and mental health exams and treatment.

In October we were able to identify an unidentified male that was found off of Guanella Pass in 1974. This individual was identified as John Armbrust from California. This case was identified due to the great work of The DNA Doe Project who we contracted with in early 2020. We still have two unidentified males which we are working diligently to identify.

In May we hosted our first ever virtual "Evening with the Coroner". We had a great turn out and a lot of great questions from the public. We hope to return to in person public meetings soon but will commit to continuing the virtual streaming for people to attend as well.



Park County, Colorado Coroner's Office

Accreditation Report

Start Date: 02-25-2020

End Date: 07-06-2020

P. Michael Murphy F-ABMDI Coroner, Retired-Lead Auditor
 Connie Jacobson, D-ABMDI Coroner, Retired-Auditor

The Park County, Colorado office has met all requirements as illustrated in the assessment table and check list below. The list was approved for completion and compliance with both required and additional recommended standards.

Assessment Results by Category

The following tables represent the results of our assessment

Park County Coroners Office Overall Results

Category	Required Standards			Standards			N/A	Bl
	Yes	No	Blank	Yes	No	N/A		
A. Medicolegal	57	0	0	65	0	2	0	
B. Investigative	43	0	0	16	0	0	0	
C. Morgue Facili-	46	0	0	23	2	0	0	
D. Laboratory	12	0	0	6	0	0	0	
E. Forensic Spe-	8	0	0	8	0	0	0	
Total	166 (100%)	0	0	118 (98%)	2	2	0	

Self-Assessment Results by Category

The following table represents the results of your "Self-Assessment."

NOTE: Full accreditation is obtained by having 100% of the Required Standards and at least 90% of the Standards.

Category	Required	Standards	Accredited
A. Medicolegal	100%	100%	✓
B. Investigative	100%	100%	✓
C. Morgue Facil-	100%	92%	✓
D. Laboratory	100%	100%	✓
E. Forensic Spe- cialists	100%	100%	✓

Standards - No

C. Morgue Facilities

2. Body Receiving Area

- b. The body receiving and handling area should be protected from public view.

5. Forensic Autopsy Procedures

- i. Body x-rays should be taken on all cases (if possible).

Standards - N/A

A. Medicolegal Office Practices

8. Quality Assurance Policies

- q. The office should participate in local or state level elder death review teams.

r. The office should participate in local or state level domestic fatality review teams.

NOTE: Full accreditation is obtained by having 100% of the Required Standards and at least 90% of the Standards.

AUDITOR'S COMMENTS

An onsite inspection was conducted of the facility located at 911 Clark Street, Park County, Colorado. The facility meets all of the requirements set forth in the standards. The building is set in a complex of several other county structures. Contained within the building is county IT, Communications and Emergency management. The space is alarmed and on camera for all entrances and exits.

There is a small lobby used to meet with families. Most families are met in the field. When needed a conference area can be used. This office utilizes a CARE team volunteer in the field to meet with families and help them during the death process. These volunteers are trained and screened prior to being allowed on scene and will remain after the investigator departs. The various spaces used by the coroner and staff are small but secure and organized appropriately. A training space is available as needed from emergency management.

Evidence is locked and secured. As well as medication that is removed from scene. Destruction of the medication confiscated is done with witnesses and according to standards.

The morgue has the ability to hold 4 cases at a time and meets the needs of the office. In the case of decomposition cases a body bag seal system is used to control odors. While the door used to move bodies in and out of the building is not blocked from view it is on the campus and efforts are made to be as discreet as possible. The morgue does not have x-ray equipment available for all cases but the contracted forensic service provides x-rays on all autopsy cases. Consideration should be given in the future for a portable x-ray machine when budget allows.

A Forensics Anthropologist is often on site at the morgue. There is an active partnership with Colorado Mesa University. The office partnered with them 3 years ago, the county donated land for the only high-altitude human decomposition research project. This program is ongoing.

The vehicles have adequate equipment and are maintained in a good state of repair. There is a preventive maintenance program and vehicles are rotated out of the fleet after 10 years. They do not display any marking but do have emergency lights and communication equipment.

The office has a solid relationship with Donate Life Colorado and even displays small placards on their vehicles.

The autopsy operation is located off site in El Paso, Co. 90 minutes from the office and is accredited by NAME, therefore an inspection was not conducted of that facility.

The Laboratory work is done by an accredited lab AXIS lab as well as El Paso Labs. Both meet standards and are used depending on need and case.

We confirmed the paperwork and information provided prior to the on-site visit was in order and as reported. Case reports are done in a records management system. A review of actual cases was conducted and all case files were organized and well written. Auditors noted a table of contents is used on the front of each case file which assisted in the case review and is used to ensure all reports are completed.

We spoke to three individuals about the working relationship between the Coroner's office and the respective organizations with the following information:

Sheriff Tom McGraw 719-836-4101 Park County, He stated he is very pleased with the quality of work and professionalism the Coroners Office displays. He is newly elected and was a Law Enforcement official in a large city in Florida and was not sure

what to expect coming to a more remote community. He has found the coroner and his staff excellent to work with no conflict. All of the staff work well together with no conflict. He and the Coroner meet regularly to discuss community issues and have a solid relationship. He cited an example of a skull that was found with no leads. The coroner was able to ID the individual it was in fact a homicide and the sheriff detectives were able to make a case as a result of the joint effort.

Chief Paul C. Mattson, 719-836-2055 South Park Ambulance District. He has known The Coroner most of his life. The Coroner is from the community and understands the different dynamics of the area. They do not have conflicts. The Chief is so impressed with the Coroner he hired him as a Captain over a squad in the district. The Coroner is professional and shows true compassion as does all the staff at the office.

County Chairman Rich Elsner 303-917-0091 Park County. He advised the Coroner is very proactive in every aspect of his work. Keeping the Chairman advised of events and needs. They have an excellent relationship and make every effort to work on areas to improve the service provided to the citizens. He further described the Coroner as a forward thinker. He always works to do things right.

AUDITOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the recommendation this office be granted unconditional re certification.

P. Michael Murphy F-ABMDI Coroner, Retired



Lead Auditor
Date 07-06-2020

Connie Jacobson, D-ABMDI Coroner, Retired



Auditor
Date 07-06-2020



International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners
Professionalism & Prevention

**Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medicolegal death investigation through
annual educational seminars for over 70 years**

August 19, 2020

Park County Coroner's Office
David E Kintz Jr, Coroner
911 Clark St/ PO Box 1742
Fairplay, CO 80440

Dear Coroner Kintz,

Ref. International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners Accreditation

Dear Coroner Kintz,

As the Chairman of the Board and Secretary of the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners (IACME) and on behalf of those members that we represent, I would like to congratulate you on your accreditation with our association.

The Accreditation Auditors made it clear the Park County Coroner's Office makes every effort to provide the highest level of service to the citizens, neighbors and visitors of Park County. This is accomplished by a dedicated team of well-trained investigators through timely and compassionate investigations of deaths occurring in their jurisdiction. They strive to maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with local law enforcement as well as with local EMS providers. Park County Coroner's Office also takes advantage of every opportunity to educate and to build trust within their medical community and they are the voice of those who can no longer speak for themselves.

The IACME is proud to say the Park County Coroner's Office is a great representation of what our association expects from an accredited office. An Accreditation certificate to recognize this achievement will be mailed to your office. Thank you again for your support of the IACME.

Respectfully,

John Fudenberg, Accreditation Manager
IAC&ME

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International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners *Professionalism & Prevention*

Dedicated to the promotion of excellence in medicolegal death investigation through annual educational seminars for over 70 years

PRESS RELEASE

The International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners announced today that the Park County Coroner's Office has received accreditation by the association.

The Park County Coroner's Office self submitted to this process for the purpose of ensuring the operating policies, procedures and practices are within international guidelines.

The Park County Coroner's Office was subjected to review of 288 standards including administrative, forensic, investigative and facility review.

The IAC&ME requires 100% compliance of mandatory standards and 90% of all applicable standards.

The IACME extends its compliments to Park County for submitting to this level of review.

"When an agency elects to subject themselves to this process it clearly indicates their desire to stand to peer review and demonstrates to the public and stakeholders a strong desire to provide excellence in service provision."

The completion of this process which is for five years indicates a professionalism and compassion by the Park County Coroner's Office.

The IACME congratulates the Park County Coroner's Office and Coroner David Kintz, for the diligence in complying with these standards leading the way in service and compassion for those they serve and their community.

2021 goals

We are planning to upgrade our cots to move the deceased. This is scheduled in early 2021 and we hope that it will make the process faster and safer than in the past.

Once again we have goal of a table top mass fatality exercise in the fall. If we are able to accomplish this it will involve responders from around the area to prepare for large scale events.

Our biggest goal for this year is to recover from 2020 and continue to work our way through the pandemic. We have a goal of learning how to be even more adaptable to the ever changing environments we are facing. Our citizens rely on us and we take that responsibility very seriously and pledge to work through these tough times and still provide the level of service our communities expect. We hope that this year holds a return to less stressful times for all.

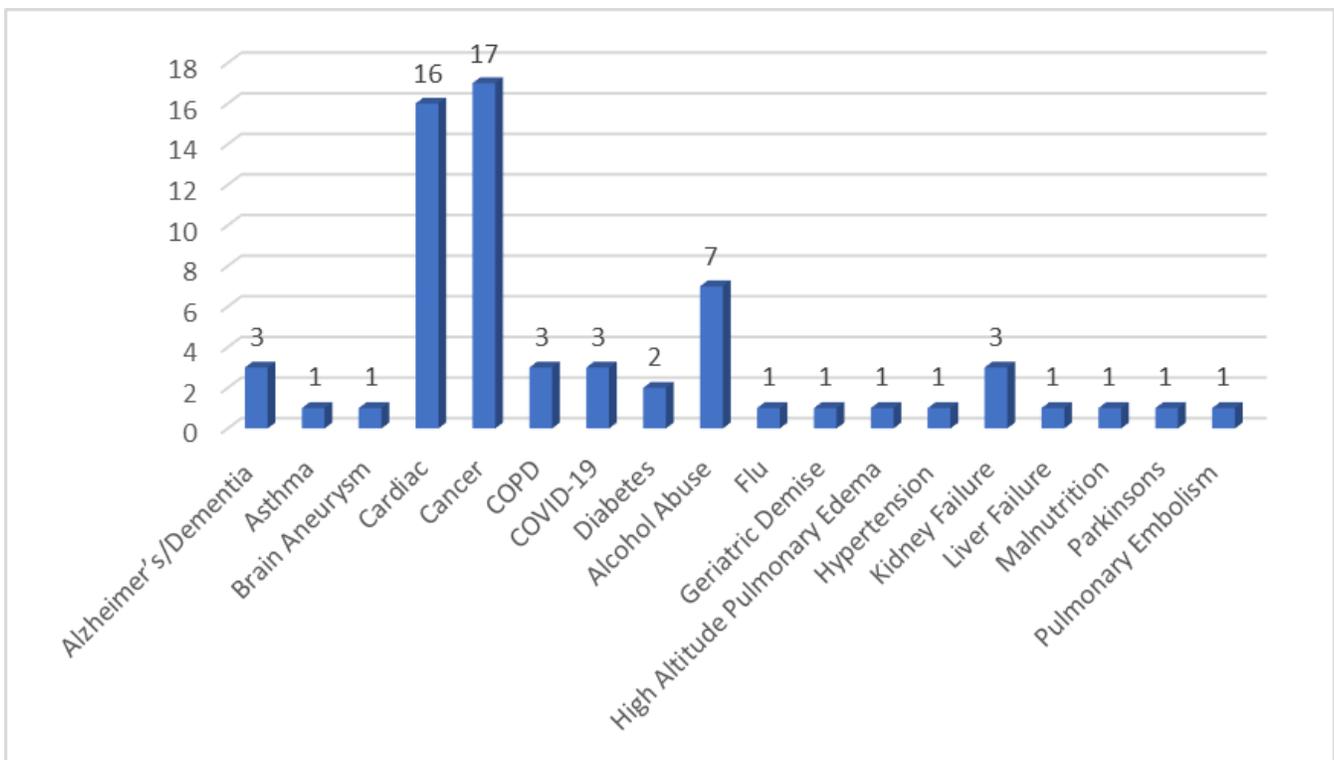
2020 CASES

TOTAL CASES:	89
COVID:	3
SCENE RESPONSES:	64
HOSPICE:	23
AUTOPSIED CASES:	25
TOXICOLOGY CASES:	32
DECEASED TRANSPORTS:	61
MORGUE USED:	61
EXTERNAL EXAMS:	64
DONOR REFERRALS:	1
ORGAN DONORS:	0
TISSUE DONORS:	1
WHOLE BODY DONORS:	4
EXHUMATIONS:	0
UNIDENTIFIED:	1
UNCLAIMED:	0
MANNERS OF DEATH:	
NATURAL:	64
ACCIDENTAL:	13
HOMICIDE:	0
SUICIDE:	9
UNDETERMINED:	3

89 CASES MAKES 2020 THE BUSIEST YEAR FOR PARK COUNTY.

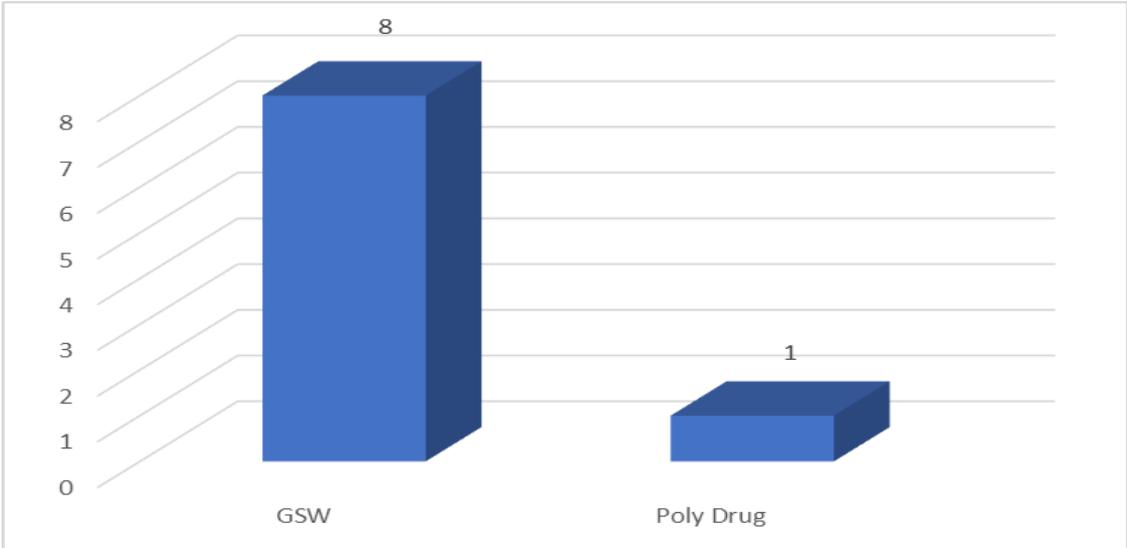
CAUSE OF DEATH BY MANNER NATURAL

TOTAL : 64



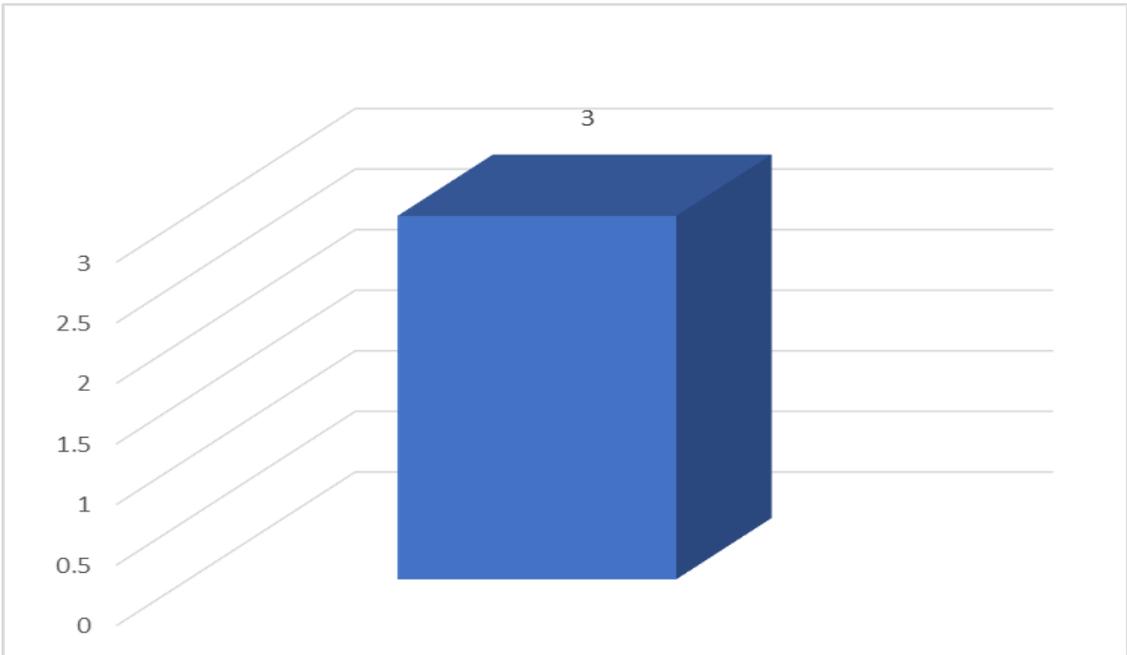
SUICIDE

TOTAL: 9



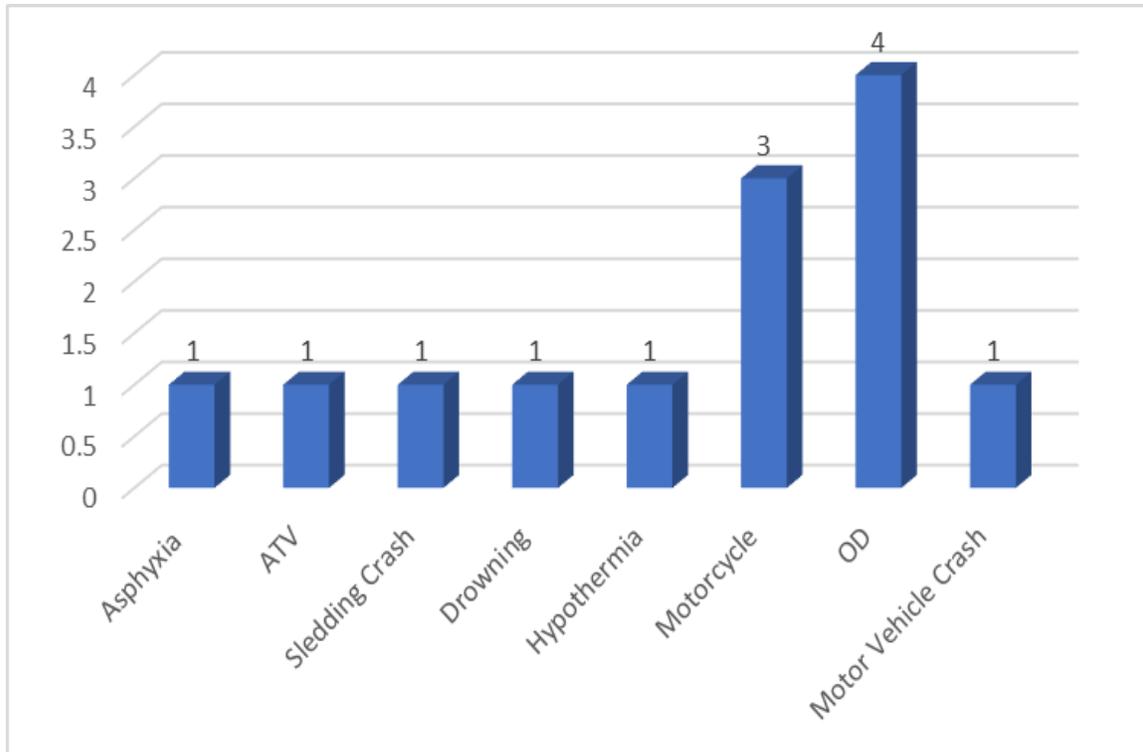
UN-DETERMINED

TOTAL: 3



ACCIDENTAL

TOTAL: 13



HOMICIDE

TOTAL: 0