

North Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS)

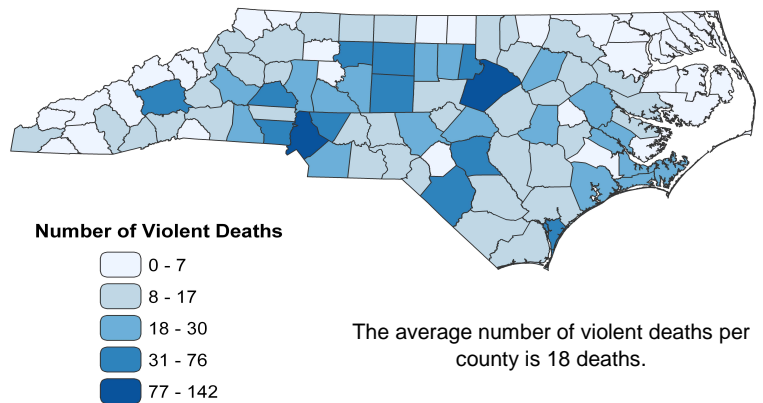
Each year, 50,000 Americans die from violence. Homicide and suicide are, respectively, the third and fourth leading causes of death for everyone in the United States under age 40 except infants. Overall, almost twice as many people in the United States die from suicide than homicide.

Most communities lack the information they need to understand and ultimately prevent these violent deaths. Responding to the need for better, more complete information, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention established the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) in 2002. By linking data from multiple sources into one comprehensive system, NVDRS provides a comprehensive picture of why these deaths occur, helping law enforcement, policymakers, public health advocates and others develop strategies for preventing deaths from violence.

NVDRS is a proven public health tool currently operating in 18 states including North Carolina, with more states prepared to join as funding becomes available.

North Carolina became one of 18 states participating in the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) in 2003 and began collecting data in 2004. The North Carolina Division of Public Health's Injury and Violence Prevention Branch was awarded funding through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (CDC/NCIPC) which began in 2003 for a period of five years. North Carolina is currently in the second five-year cycle of funding.

Number of Violent Deaths by County: North Carolina Residents, 2009



The North Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (NC-VDRS) is an incident-based, relational database that collects detailed information from death certificates, medical examiner records, law enforcement reports, and reports from the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation on all deaths from violence that occur in North Carolina. Those deaths include: homicides, suicides, deaths of undetermined intent, unintentional firearm-related deaths, and deaths due to legal intervention. Personal identifying information is stripped out; the de-identified data is then transmitted daily to the national database which is maintained and supported by the CDC.

What are the goals of North Carolina's Violent Death Reporting System?

- * Collect detailed information about violent deaths in North Carolina, including when, where, and how it happened.
- * Link data collected by crime labs, police, vital statistics, and the Medical Examiner's office into a single reporting system.
- * Provide information to help law enforcement, public health officials, violence prevention groups, and policy makers better understand the problems and guide local action plans for prevention.
- * Strengthen a joint public health and criminal justice response to violence.

What are the sources of data?

- * Vital Statistics provides such information as work-related status, education level, demographics and cause of death.
- * Medical Examiner Reports provide such information as toxicology reports, circumstances of injury, medical history and manner of death.
- * Law Enforcement Investigation Reports provide such information as perpetrator data, weapon information, risk factors and past criminal history.

Unique data elements from each of these sources will be linked and combined to create a comprehensive source for statewide violent death data.

What kinds of questions will be answered by this data system?

NC-VDRS provides detailed descriptions of victims and suspects involved in incidents where violence results in death. Reports combine information on circumstances, demographics, relationships between victims and suspects, and weapons. Although there are other sources in North Carolina that report information on deaths from violence, the NC-VDRS presents a fuller picture. The detailed information can be used to help local, state and national policy makers, along with community organizations, better understand patterns and trends in violence. The system is able to answer questions such as:

- What life crisis most commonly precedes a suicide?
- What percent of women are killed by an intimate partner?
- How many suicide victims made previous attempts?
- How often do murder-suicides occur?
- What proportion of homicides are drug-related?
- What proportion of homicide victims are killed by a stranger?
- How often are homicides precipitated by another crime?

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