

2024

LAW ENFORCEMENT-RELATED DEATHS IN TENNESSEE

- *DEADLY USE OF FORCE*
- *ARREST RELATED NON-FORCIBLE DEATHS (ARNFD)*
- *DEATHS IN CUSTODY (DCRA)*



A PUBLICATION OF THE TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTER | CJIS SUPPORT CENTER



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DAVID B. RAUSCH
Director

March 31, 2025

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation would like to present the 2024 Law Enforcement-Related Deaths report. This publication which satisfies the requirements set forth in Tennessee Code Annotated, § 38-10-102, has been produced by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's CJIS Support Center, and provides information on qualifying incidents as submitted by the state's law enforcement agencies to the TBI through the CrimeInsight Portal.

I am very proud of the efforts of all participating law enforcement agencies in the state to provide the data necessary to produce this report. Our combined efforts have resulted in a successful reporting program and the relationships necessary to produce a report of this nature.

Sincerely,

David B. Rausch
Director



INTRODUCTION

Annually, the TBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division collects crime data through the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS). However, Law Enforcement-Related Deaths fall outside the scope of TIBRS and, therefore, are collected in the CrimeInsight portal using the appropriate web entry utility.

According to T.C.A. § 38-10-102, Law Enforcement related Death is defined as “the death of an individual in custody, whether in prison, in a jail, or otherwise in the custody of law enforcement pursuant to an arrest or a transfer between institutions of any kind; or the death of an individual potentially resulting from an interaction with law enforcement, while the law enforcement officer is on duty, or while the law enforcement officer is off duty but performing activities that are within the scope of the officer's law enforcement duties without regard to whether the individual was in custody or whether a weapon was involved.”

An Arrest Related Non-Forcible Death (ARNFD) is any death that is attributed to suicide, alcohol, drug intoxication, or medical conditions (e.g. cardiac arrest) that occurs during the process of arrest by, or in the custody of, state or local law enforcement personnel. Though ARNFDs are not common, they do fall within the scope of the “Law Enforcement Related Deaths” definition. However, these particular incidents are not reported in CrimeInsight, but are instead reported using a form found on the TBI website.

SCOPE OF REPORT

For the purpose of this study, the TBI's CJIS Division divided Law Enforcement Related Death data into three sections: Deadly Use of Force, Arrest-Related Non-Forcible Deaths, and Deaths in Custody – all of which meet the T.C.A. §38-10-102 definition.

Data presented in this study represents numbers for calendar year 2024 and only contains information pertaining to deaths which occurred in the presence of law enforcement or deaths that occurred while in custody, such as in a local jail or prison.

Data in this study does not include occurrences where an officer fired their weapon in a situation not resulting in a death or when a subject sustained a serious bodily injury directly related to use of force by a law enforcement officer. Additionally, this study does not include deaths occurring in non-residential community-based programs run by jails, such as house arrest, work programs, community service, day reporting, or electronic monitoring.

The data in this publication is based solely on the raw data provided to the TBI by law enforcement agencies. Any statistical analysis does not account for representational Tennessee demographics, and as such rates of occurrence may be different when those factors are considered.

METHODOLOGY

Each employing agency is responsible for submitting a report for its own officers connected to incidents meeting the criteria of the data collection. Jails and prisons are responsible for submitting a CJ-9 form to the TBI for deaths which occurred in their facility. The data in the publication is sent to us by their respective agencies, TBI does not edit or alter this data in any way. All data is presented as it was received.

LAW ENFORCEMENT-RELATED DEATHS BY AGENCY TYPE

In 2024, 60 agencies reported a Law Enforcement-Related Death. Some agencies reported multiple events during the reporting period, while no deaths were reported by college/university law enforcement agencies.

Reporting Agencies by Type:

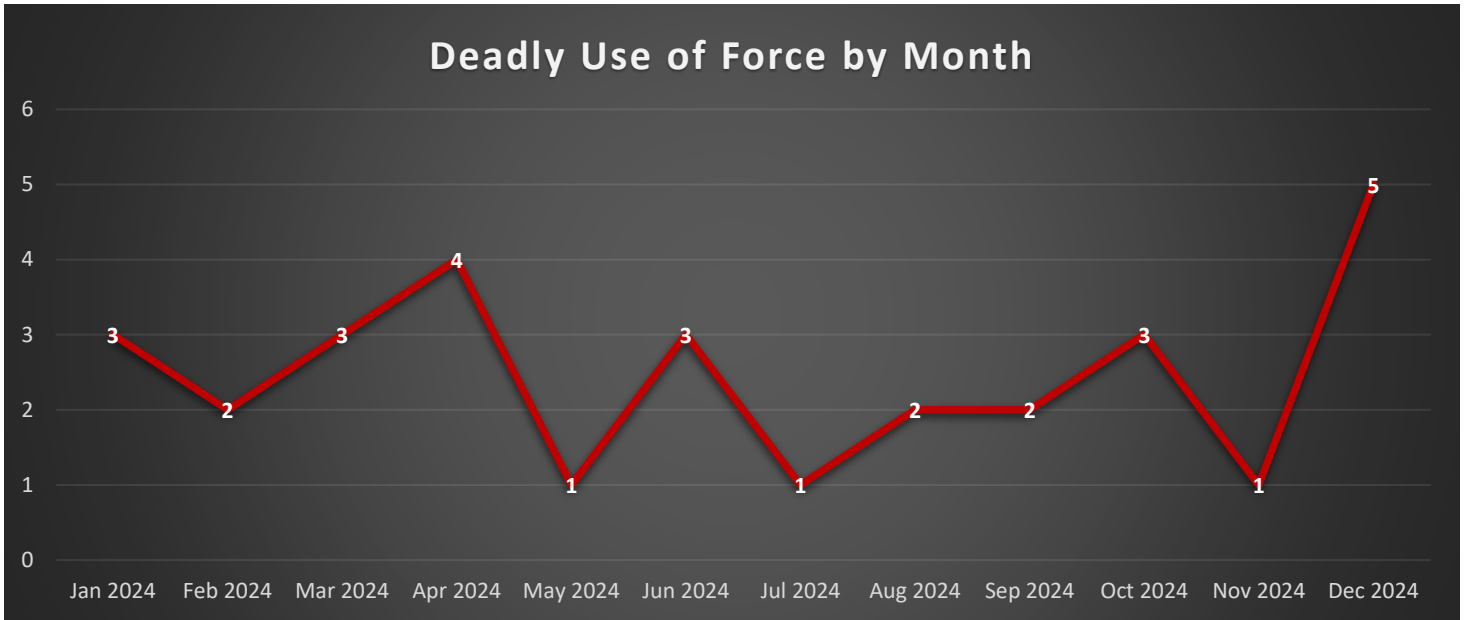
30 Jails/Prisons

16 Police Departments

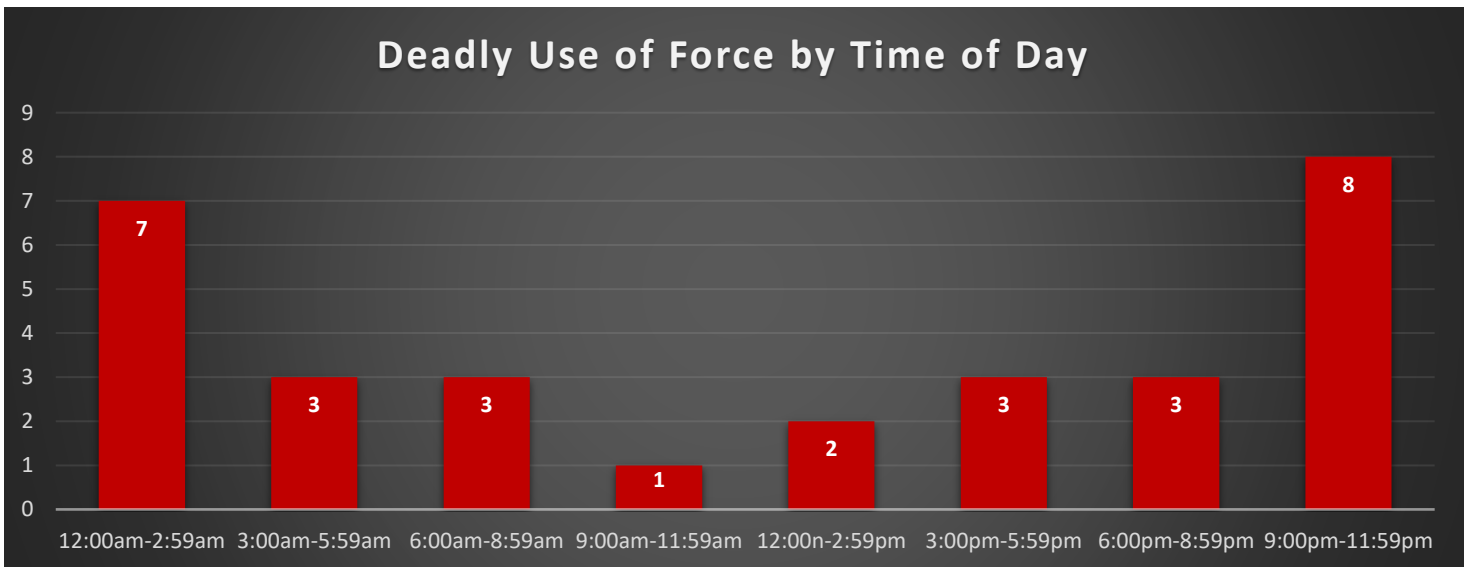
14 Sheriff's Offices

All data used in this publication was retrieved on 3/14/2025. As agencies continue to update their records, there is the possibility that numbers may change. Throughout the report, several data points are categorized as “Pending Further Investigation.” At the time this data was retrieved, these points were still under review by the relevant agency, and as those investigations are completed, those agencies are able to amend their reports with more accurate information. Although the data may change, the report will not be updated.

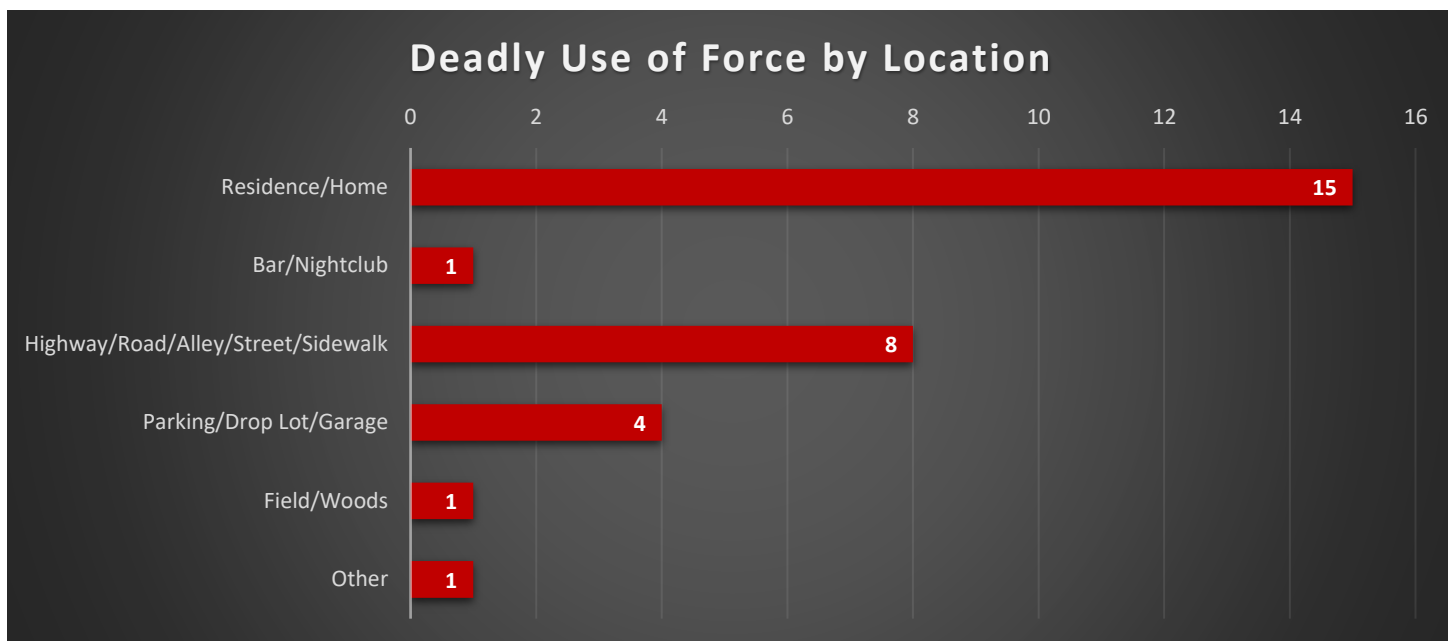
SECTION 1: DEADLY USE OF FORCE



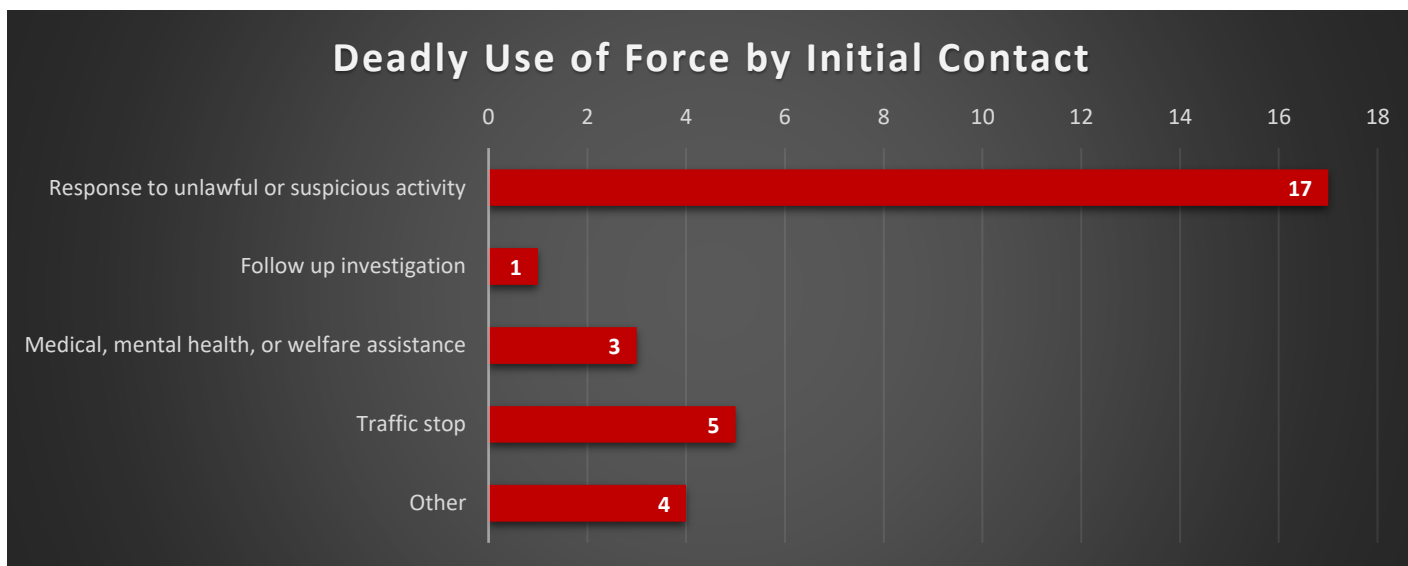
In 2024, there were 30 incidents involving a deadly use of force. Deadly Use of Force incidents occurred at a relatively consistent rate throughout the year, typically with 1 to 3 incidents per month. The outliers to this were in December, with 5 incidents, or 16.67% of total incidents, and April with 4 incidents, 13.33% of the total.



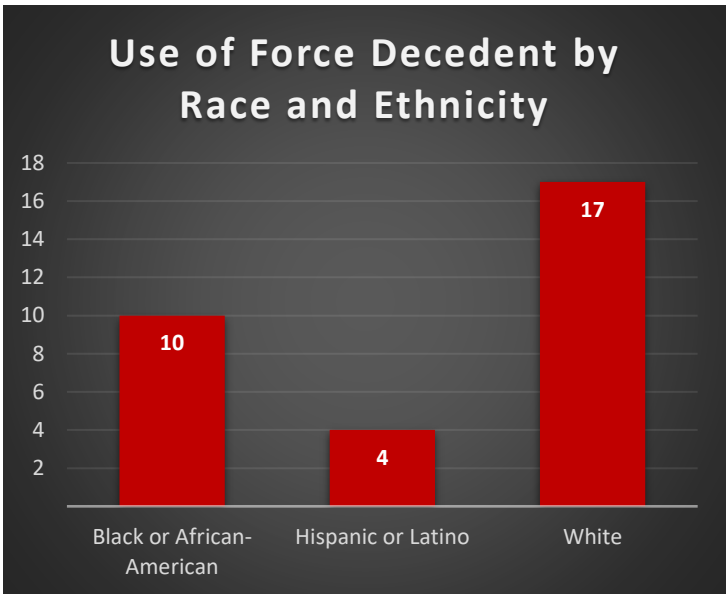
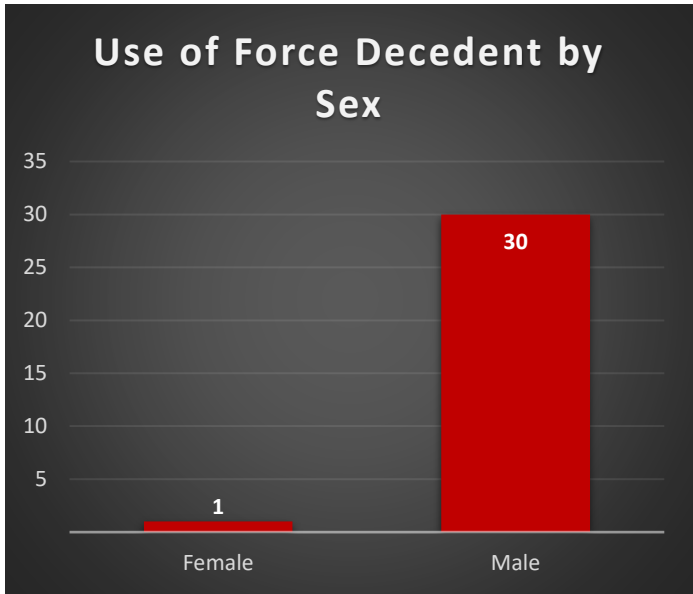
Examining Deadly Use of Force incidents by the time of day they occurred shows that the majority of incidents occurred during the night, with the two most common ranges of time being 9:00pm-11:59pm and 12:00am-2:59am, comprising 26.67% and 23.33% of incidents respectively.



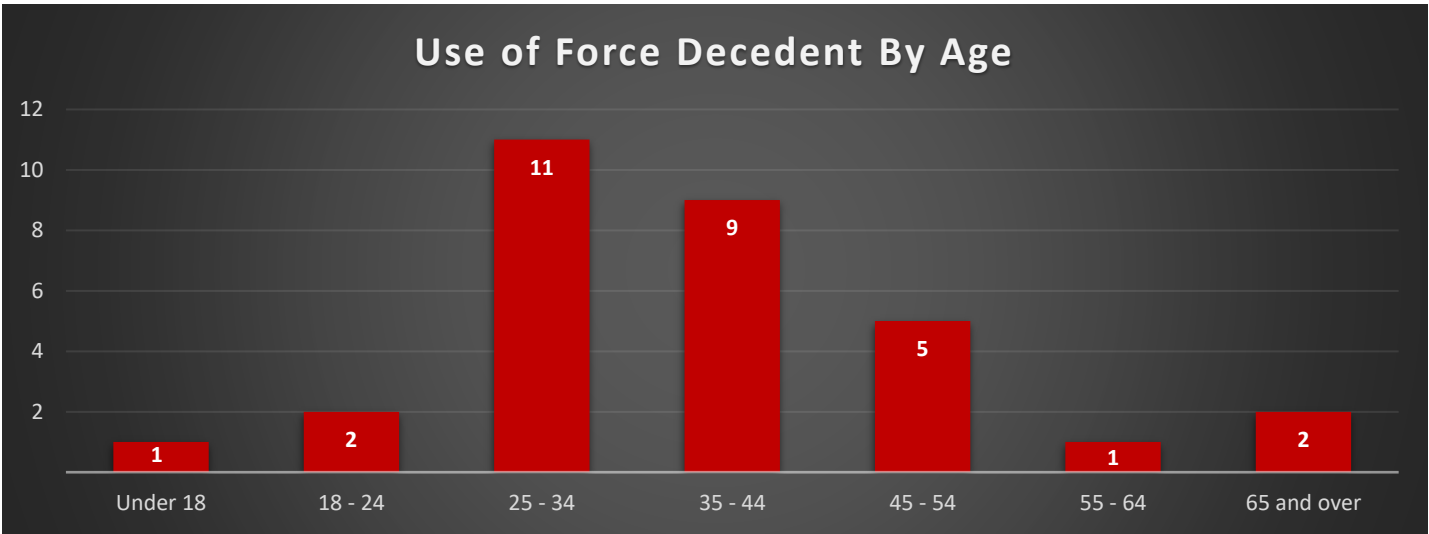
When examining deadly use of force incidents in 2024, three locations appearing the most frequently are Residence/Home at 50.00%, Highway/Road/Alley/Street/Sidewalk, at 26.67%, and Parking/Drop Lot/Garage with 13.33% of the total. The other three locations reported only appear once each.



Another facet of data collected about deadly use of force incidents are the circumstances in which contact was made with the decedent. In 2024, the most commonly reported initial contact type by far was Response to unlawful or suspicious activity at 56.67%. Of the remaining four types of initial contact reported, Traffic stop was reported the most at 16.67%.



Of the 30 reported deadly use of force incidents in 2024, 31 decedents were reported due to one incident involving two subjects. When looking at the decedents of deadly use of force incidents in 2024, 96.77% were reported as being male. When examining the race and ethnicity of deadly use of force decedents, those categorized as White make up the majority of those reported, at 54.84%. Those categorized as Black or African-American at 32.26%.



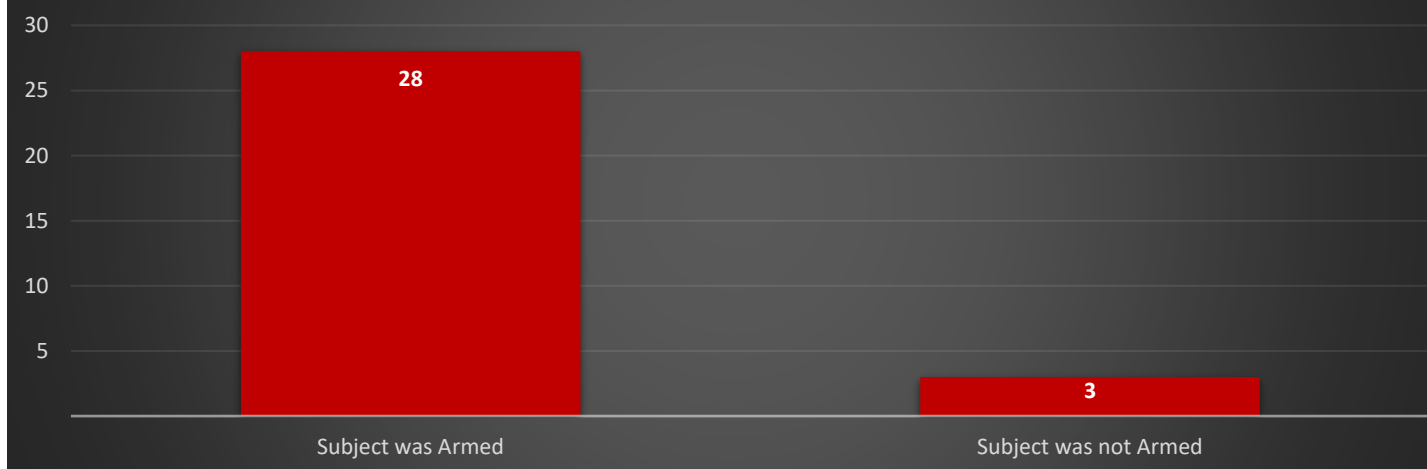
Examining 2024 use of force decedents by age reveals those aged between 25-34 were the most affected group at 35.48%. Following this group, 35-44 is the next most common, comprising 29.03% of decedents.

Deadly Use of Force by Subject Resistance



When reporting a deadly use of force incident, law enforcement agencies are able to input what type of resistance, if any, the subject showed during the event. In 2024, the most commonly reported type of resistance was Using a Firearm Against an Officer or Another, followed by Failing to Comply with Verbal Commands or Other Types of Passive Resistance and Displaying a Weapon at an Officer or Another, comprising 27.45%, 19.61%, and 17.65% respectively. Please note, multiple resistance types may be flagged for any given incident, resulting in a higher total than deadly use of force incidents.

Deadly Use of Force Subject Armed



Relating to subject resistance, law enforcement agencies also report on whether or not the subject in a deadly use of force incident was armed at the time. In 2024, nearly all deadly use of force decedents were reported as being armed with 90.32% decedents being reported as such. Of the remainder, only three, or 9.68% of decedents, were definitively reported as being unarmed.

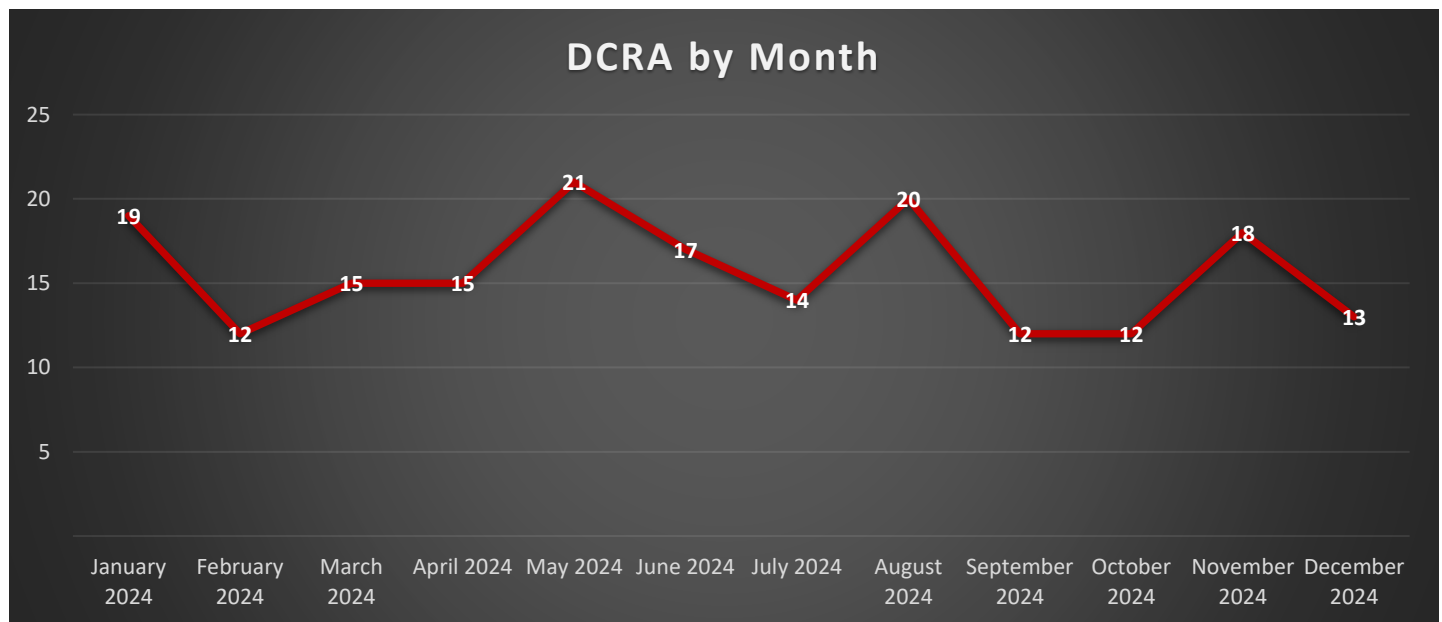
SECTION 2: ARREST RELATED NON-FORCIBLE DEATHS (ARNFD)

This section analyzes deaths which occurred in the presence of police but were not directly related to the use of force by a law enforcement official. As mentioned in the introduction, an Arrest Related Non-Forcible Death (ARNFD) is any death attributed to suicide, alcohol, drug intoxication, or medical conditions (e.g., cardiac arrest, etc.) occurring during the process of an arrest by, or in the custody of, state or local law enforcement personnel.

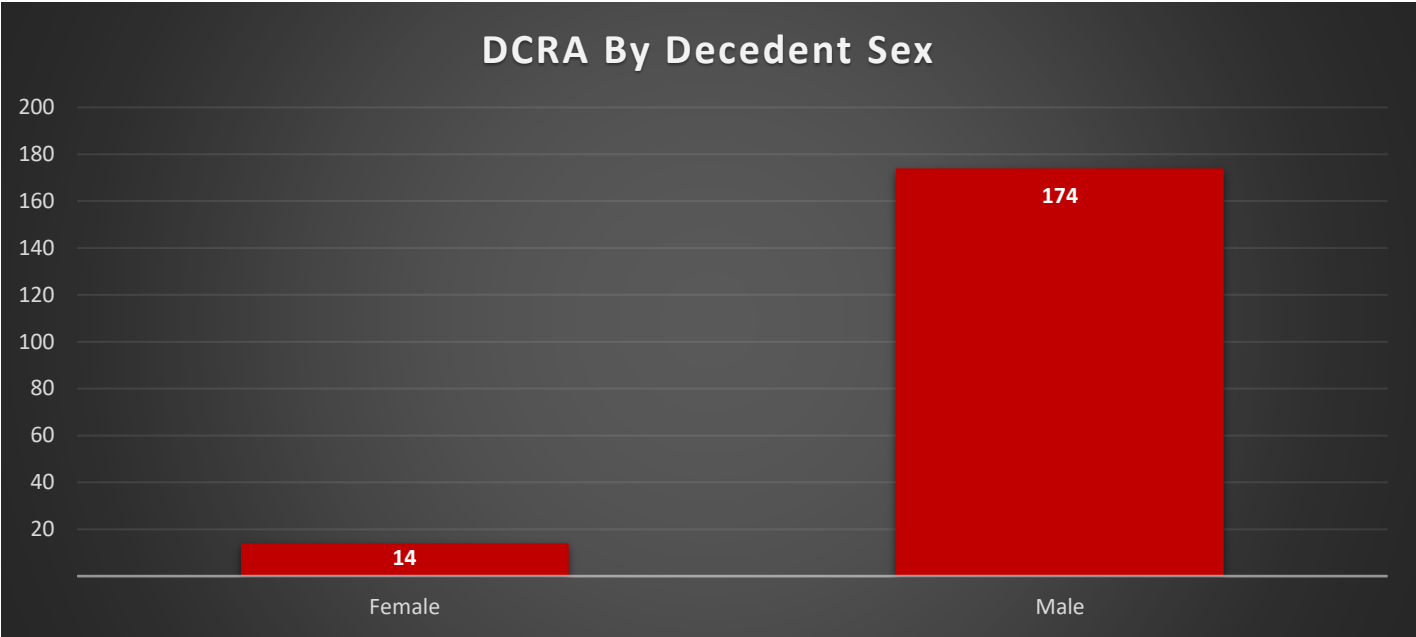
In 2024, zero Arrest Related Non-Forcible Deaths were Reported.

SECTION 3: DEATHS IN CUSTODY REPORTING ACT (DCRA)

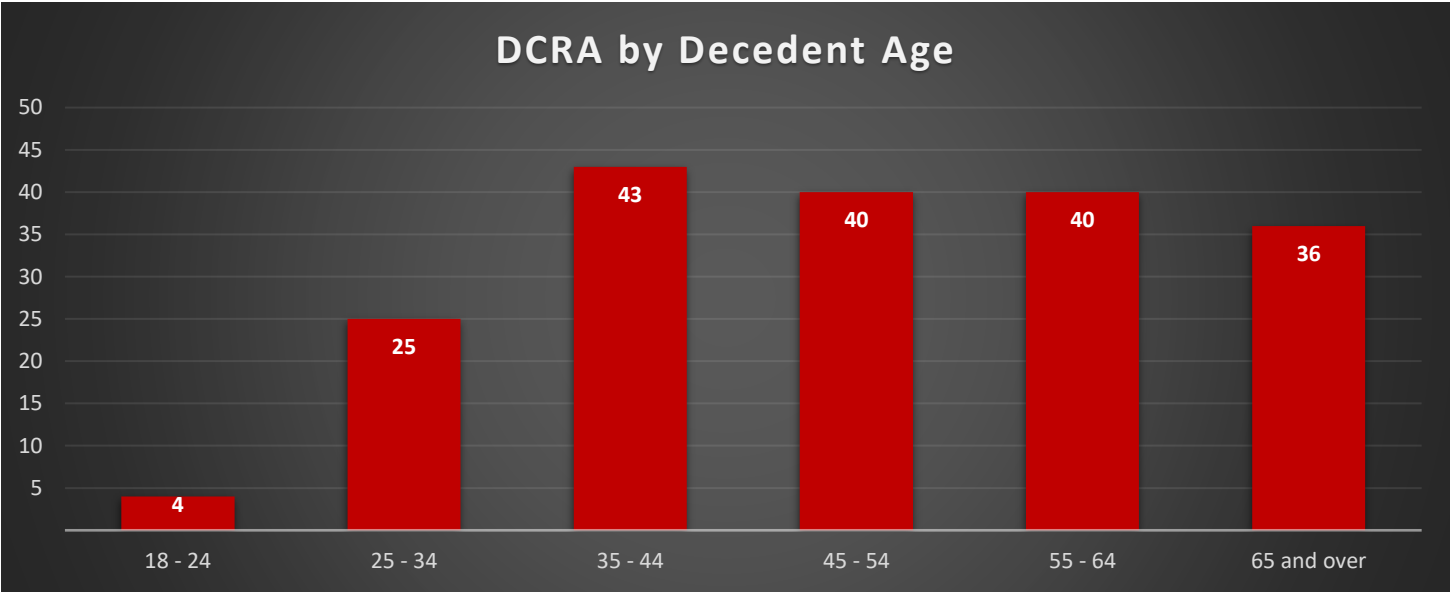
The Deaths in Custody Reporting Act collects data on deaths occurring in jails and prisons.



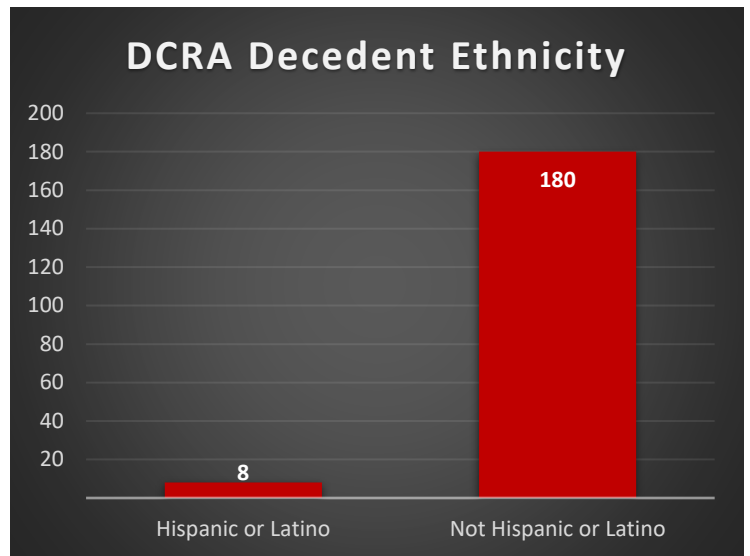
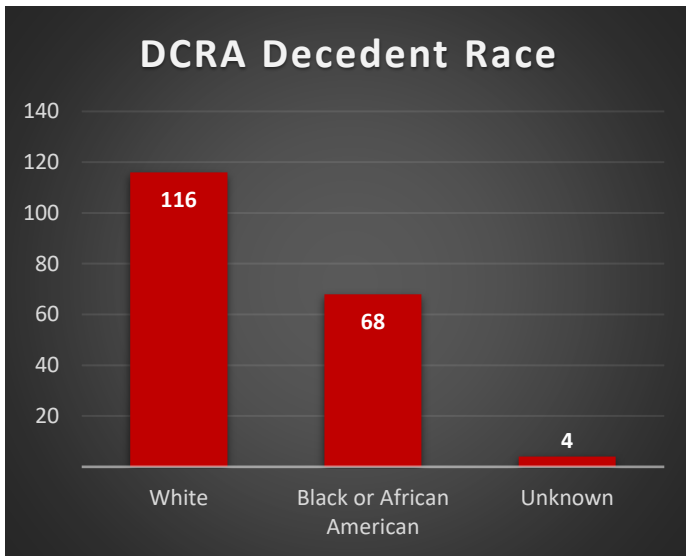
In 2024, 188 deaths were reported across 30 correctional facilities. The highest number of deaths in custody occurred in May at 21 deaths, or 11.17%, followed by August at 20 or 10.64%. The months with the fewest number of reported deaths in custody were February, September, and October with 12, or 6.38% each.



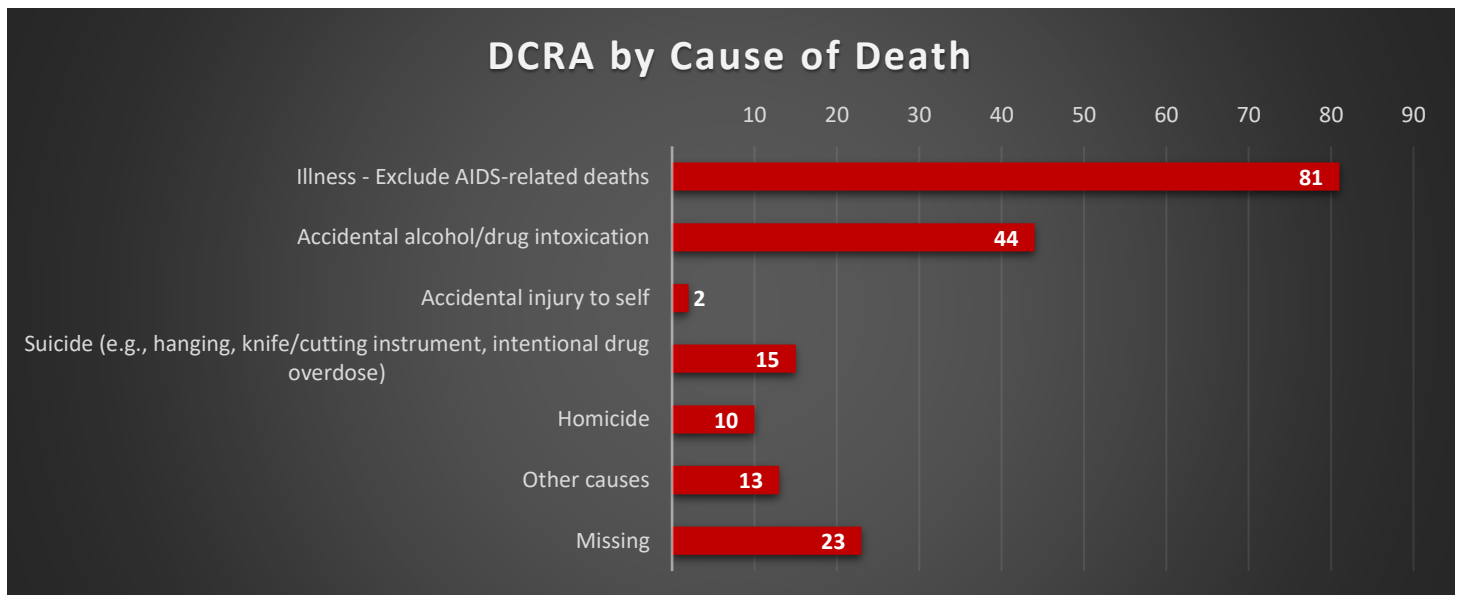
Of the 188 reported DCRA decedents, Males accounted for the majority at 92.55% compared to Females at 7.45%. This means that in 2024, over 12 times as many Males were reported as having died in custody than Females.



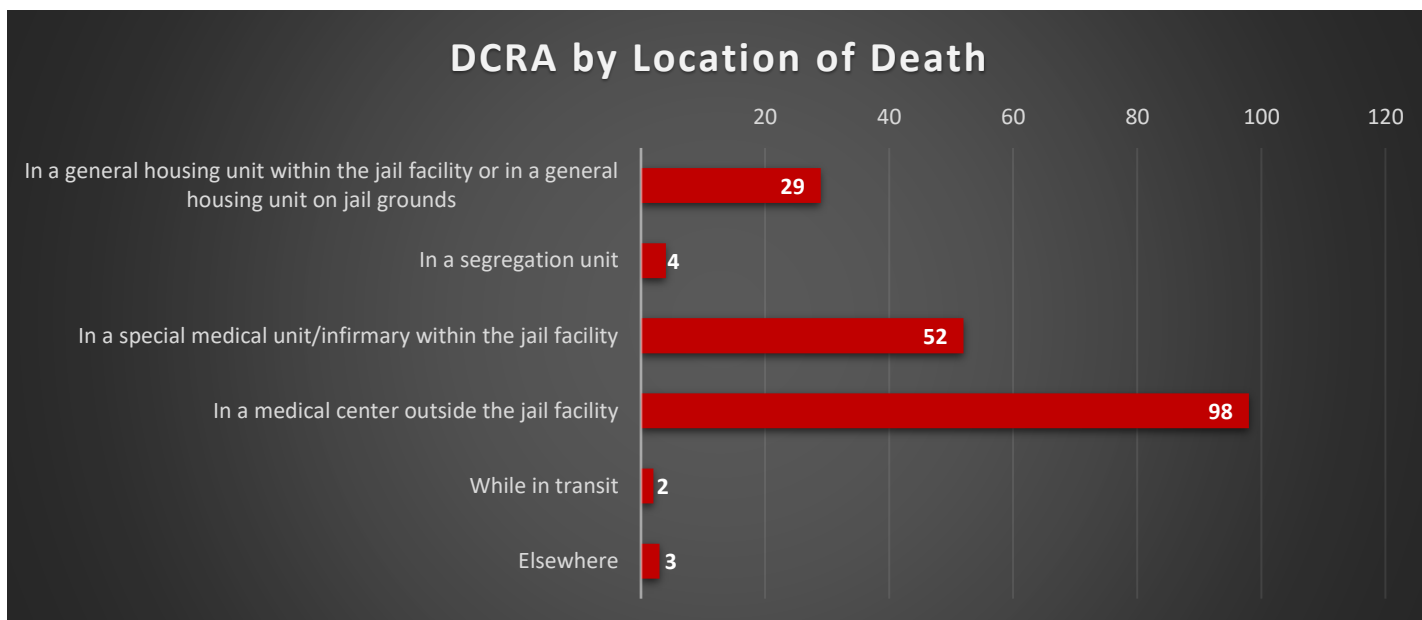
The ages of DCRA decedents in 2024 tended to be between the ages of 35-44, comprising 22.87% of the total. Following this are the age groups of 45-54 and 55-64, accounting for 21.28% of incidents each.



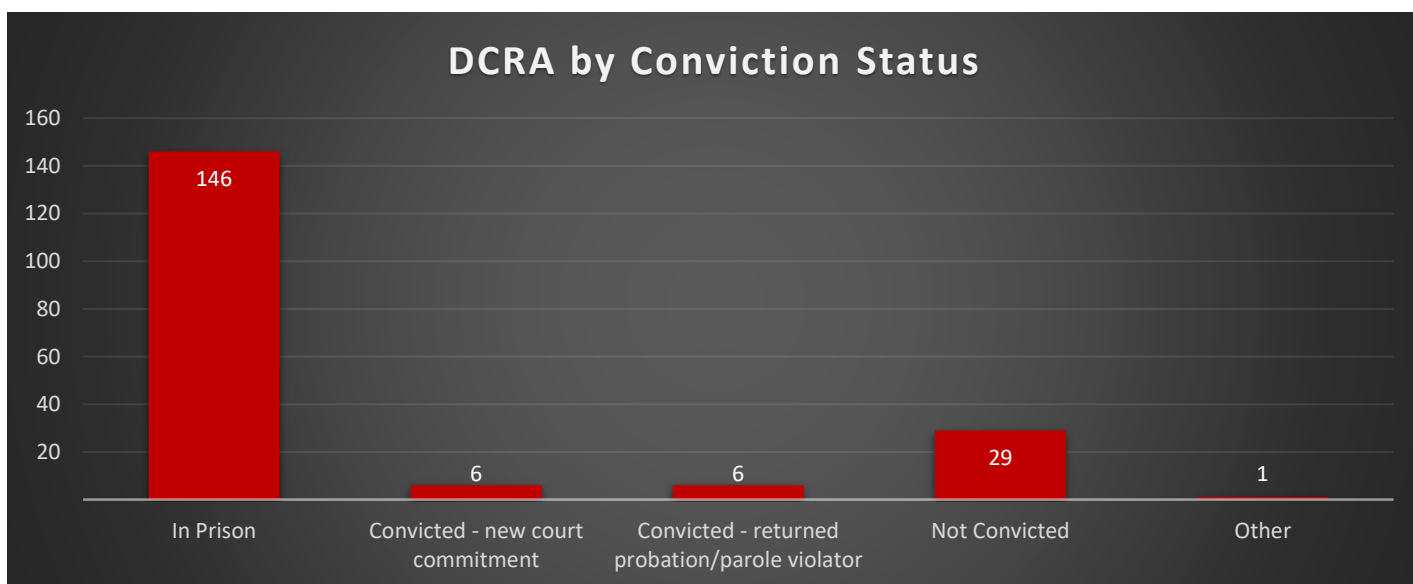
The most commonly reported race of DCRA decedents was White, accounting for 61.70%. Those categorized as Black or African American comprised 36.17% of DCRA decedents, with the remaining 2.13% of decedents being categorized as Unknown. Examining the ethnicity of DCRA decedents shows that nearly all of those reported, or 95.74%, were categorized as Not Hispanic or Latino.



When looking at DCRA incidents by Cause of Death, the most commonly reported cause in 2024 was Illness- Exclude AIDS-Related Deaths, accounting for 43.09% of deaths. The next most commonly reported cause was Accidental Alcohol/Drug Intoxication, at 23.40% of the total.



Relating to the fact that the most commonly reported cause of death under DCRA in 2024 was Illness- Exclude AIDS-Related Deaths, the two most commonly reported locations of death were in a medical center outside the jail facility and in a special medical unit/infirmary within the jail facility, accounting for 52.13% and 27.66%. The other statistically significant location of death was in a general housing unit within the jail facility or in a general housing unit on jail grounds, comprising 15.43%.



The last data element of DCRA reviewed was the Conviction Status of the decedent at the time of death. The majority of those who died in custody had the status of In Prison, making up 77.66% of decedents. The other large group reported were those with a status of Not Convicted, mostly meaning those in custody who are still awaiting, or in the midst of a trial, at 15.43%.



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