

Methodology

In injury epidemiology, injuries are usually categorized in two distinct ways: by mechanism and by intent.

Injury MECHANISM: Injuries are classified by mechanism, or the external cause of injury. The following are examples of injury mechanisms: falls, motor vehicle, poisoning, drowning, etc. (for a full list, see appendices). The specific injury mechanisms reported here are based on the International Classification of Diseases Tenth Edition (ICD-10) category specifications. The leading causes of injury in Alaska during the period are reported in more detail.

Injury INTENT: Injury intents are broadly classified into two major categories: intentional and unintentional. **Intentional injuries** are those involving purposeful or deliberate harm. For fatalities included in this report, intentional injuries are grouped into two subcategories depending on who caused them: someone injured themselves (suicide) or someone injured another person (homicide). **Unintentional injuries** include those that were unplanned or not deliberate. If the intent could not be determined at time of death, such as an unwitnessed drowning or fall, the injury is identified as being of **undetermined intent**.

Because suicide and homicide have significant impacts Alaska Native and American Indian communities, intentional injuries in this report are categorized as either suicide or homicide, regardless of mechanism. In the suicide and homicide sections of this report, additional detail is provided on their various mechanisms, such as poisoning, drowning, and firearms, to help inform prevention efforts.

Except for one section specifically reporting only unintentional injuries, categories identified by mechanism include combined unintentional and undetermined intent deaths. This is intended to provide a more complete number of the injury fatalities in Alaska.

This reports uses death certificate data from Alaska Health Analytics and Vital Records. The population estimates used for rate calculations come from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Injury counts that are less than 6 (noted as "<6") and rates calculated using counts less than 10 (noted as "<10") are not reported due to small number restrictions; a standard data practice. Rates included in this report are age-adjusted, which allows populations with different age distributions to be compared. This report age-adjusts to the 2000 US standard population, and rates are reported as number of deaths per 100,000 people.

