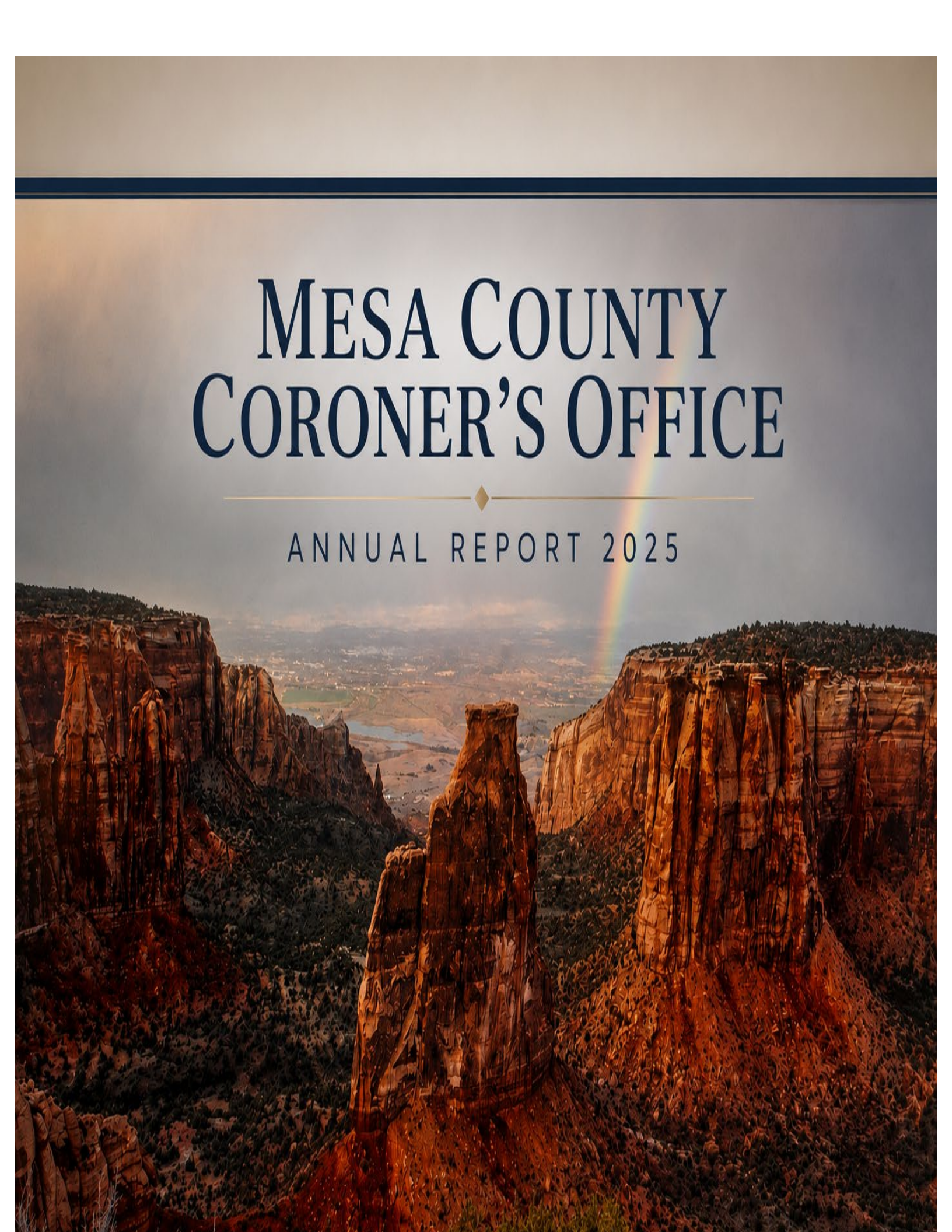


The background of the entire page is a scenic landscape photograph of a canyon. In the foreground, there are several prominent, reddish-brown rock formations with vertical textures. In the middle ground, a valley is visible with some greenery and a small body of water. In the background, a rainbow is visible in the sky, arching over the valley. The sky is a mix of blue and white, suggesting a clear day with some clouds.

MESA COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Mesa County Coroner's Office 2025 Annual Report

[970-244-1898](tel:970-244-1898) - Office

E-mail: coroner@mesacounty.us

This report provides a summary and statistical analysis of the deaths that were investigated by the Mesa County Coroner's Office in the year 2025. Mesa County encompasses an area over 3,300 square miles, which consists of desert, agricultural, and mountain areas. Mesa County is home to approximately 163,000 people in 12 communities. The largest of these is Grand Junction, followed by Fruita and Palisade. Other towns and unincorporated areas of the County include Clifton, Fruitvale, De Beque, Collbran, Mesa, Mack, Loma, Gateway, Glade Park and Whitewater.

The Coroner and/or Deputy Coroner are on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Coroner's mission is to satisfy the legal requirements of the office in a thorough and expeditious manner. The primary task of the Coroner's Office is to determine the cause and manner of death of those who have died in Mesa County or in those whose traumatic event originated in Mesa County. An autopsy may be required depending upon the circumstances of the death.

The Coroner's Office investigates sudden, unexpected deaths, especially those that occur under violent or suspicious circumstances. Those deaths to be reported to the Mesa County Coroner's Office include all deaths occurring in Mesa County as outlined below regardless of where or when the initial injuring event occurred. In addition, all deaths as outlined below shall be reported that occurred outside of Mesa County but the initiating injuring event occurred in Mesa County.

- From disease which may be hazardous or contagious or which may constitute a threat to the health of the general public
- From external violence, an unexplained cause, or under suspicious circumstances
- Where no physician is in attendance, or where, though in attendance, the physician is unable to certify the cause of death
- From thermal, chemical, or radiation injury
- From criminal abortion
- While in the custody of law enforcement officials or while incarcerated in a public institution
- When the death was sudden and happened to a person who was in good health
- From an industrial accident or any death suspected to involve the decedent's occupation
- When death occurs in a hospital less than 24 hours after admission to a hospital or after any invasive procedure
- Any death suspected to be due to alcohol intoxication or the result of exposure to drugs or toxic agents
- Any death due to neglect or suspected neglect
- Any stillbirth of 20 or more weeks gestational age unattended by a physician
- Any maternal death to include death of a pregnant woman regardless of the length of the pregnancy, and up to six weeks (or one year) post-delivery, even where the cause of death is unrelated to the pregnancy
- Any death of an infant or child where the medical history has not established a significant pre-existing condition.

Staff

- Dean Havlik, MD - Forensic Pathologist & Coroner
- Julia Stern, D-ABMDI - Deputy Coroner
- Masey Pratt, D-ABMDI - Deputy Coroner
- Ginger Sprague, D-ABMDI - Deputy Coroner
- Emma Fox - Deputy Coroner
- Kasandra Salvati, BA - Support Coordinator/Deputy Coroner

General Statistics

(Including deaths transferred to the county of origin)

Information	Data
Mesa County population in 2025	163,00 estimated
Total Mesa County deaths	2251 compared to 2,445 in 2024
Percentage of Mesa County citizens who died in 2025	1.38% compared to 1.53% in 2024
Number of deaths reported to MCCO	679 compared to 736 in 2024
Percentage of total deaths investigated	30% compared to 30% in 2024
Scene Investigations	377 compared to 390 in 2024
Facility reports	288
Facility reports where the decedent received an autopsy	14
Number of deaths originating in other counties/states	77 compared to 66 in 2024
Number of deaths where jurisdiction was transferred	39 compared to 28 in 2024

Manner of Death by Month

	Natural	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Undetermined	Total
January	46	13	4	1	0	64
February	38	11	2	2	0	53
March	33	21	6	1	1	62
April	33	13	5	0	0	51
May	33	17	6	2	0	58
June	36	11	5	0	0	52
July	30	9	5	0	1	45
August	41	15	6	0	0	62
September	43	14	7	1	0	65
October	32	12	5	1	0	50
November	43	11	5	2	0	61
December	40	15	1	0	0	56
Total	448	162	57	10	2	679

Cases per Investigator

Julia Stern

	Natural	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Undetermined
Facility	43	21	1	1	0
Scene	59	13	13	1	1
Total	102	34	14	2	1

Masey Pratt

	Natural	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Undetermined
Facility	33	13	2	0	0
Scene	34	5	8	0	1
Total	67	18	10	0	1

Ginger Sprague

	Natural	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Undetermined
Facility	47	25	3	1	0
Scene	55	13	11	2	0
Total	102	38	14	3	0

Emma Fox

	Natural	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Undetermined
Facility	51	18	3	1	0
Scene	67	23	10	0	0
Total	118	41	13	0	0

Kasandra Salvati

	Natural	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Undetermined
Facility	20	16	0	0	0
Scene	24	5	3	1	0
Total	44	21	3	1	0

Multi investigator response

	Natural	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Undetermined
Facility	1	2	0	0	0
Scene	14	8	3	3	0
Total	15	10	3	3	0

Mesa County Coroner Office and Law Enforcement Agencies responses by agency

Agency	Responses
Colorado National Parks	1
Palisade Police Department	6
Colorado State Patrol	10
Fruita Police Department	23
Grand Junction Police Department	171
Mesa County Sheriff Office	176

Examinations in Mesa County

Information	Data
Number of postmortem examinations in Mesa County	165 compared to 168 in 2024
Percentage of all deaths in Mesa County having an examination	7.33% compared to 6.87% in 2024
Percentage of deaths reported to office having an examination	24.3% compared to 22.8% in 2024
Complete Autopsies	150
Partial Autopsies	3
External Examinations	12

Toxicology performed in Mesa County

Information	Data
Total cases tested	129 (78% of autopsy cases)
Axis	125
Community Hospital	4
Axis & Community Hospital	0
No toxicology done or unable to be performed	16

Pathologists who performed examinations

Staff	Cases
Dean Havlik, MD	78 cases (68 complete, 3 partial, 7 external)
Brent Davis, MD	12 cases (all complete)
Sophie Rodriguez, MD	75 cases (70 complete, 0 partial, 5 external)

Gender of those deaths investigated

Sex	Data
Males	414
Females	265
Unidentified	0

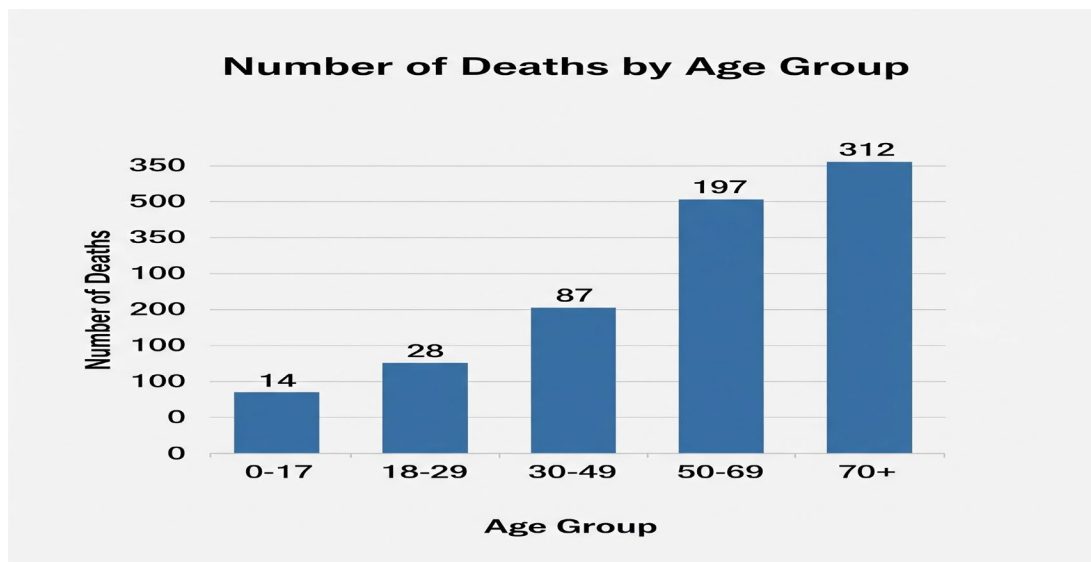
Race of all deaths reported

	Caucasian	Hispanic	Native American	African American	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other
Female	250	6	3	3	2	0	1
Male	366	36	2	5	4	1	0
Total	616	42	5	8	6	1	1

Additional Information

Information	Data
Decedents transported	393
Unidentified bodies	0
Organ and Tissue referrals	5
Unclaimed bodies	0
Exhumations	0

The following information pertains only to deaths that were not transferred back to the county or state of origin.



Number of Deaths by Age Group

Age	Total	Male	Female
0-17	15	10	5
18-29	28	21	7
30-49	87	68	19
50-69	197	127	70
70 or older	312	164	148

Deaths under the age of 18

	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Natural	Undetermined
Male	2	2	1	5	0
Female	2	2	0	1	0
Total	4	4	1	6	0

** In the 0 to 17 years old group there were 15 total deaths, which included ten males and five females. Of the six natural deaths in this age group, two were of youth over the age of 13, four of the deaths were of youth under the age of 1. The four accidental deaths included three infants that died of asphyxia due to an unsafe sleep environment, and one toddler involved in a motor vehicle vs pedestrian accident. Of the four suicide deaths three were due to self-inflicted gunshot and one by hanging. The one homicide was that of a toddler.

Infant deaths (deaths of those 1 year or younger)

- Total deaths: 9 deaths (7 males and 2 females)
- Of the 9 deaths, 4 were Accidents (3 due to unsafe sleep environment & positional asphyxiation, 1 due to a motor vehicle vs pedestrian accident)
- Of the 9 deaths, 5 of them underwent autopsy

Manner of death age 18 and over

Age	Natural	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Undetermined
18-29	3	12	11	2	0
30-49	34	29	22	2	0
50-69	157	28	11	2	0
70 & over	245	58	6	1	2
Total	439	127	50	7	2

Natural deaths age 18 and over

Age	Male	Number of postmortem exams	Percent having postmortem exam	Female	Number of postmortem exams	Percent having postmortem exam
18-29	1	0	0%	1	1	100%
30-49	26	13	50%	9	2	22%
50-69	97	13	13%	60	6	10%
70 and over	133	1	.75%	112	2	1.80%

Of the 443 total natural deaths investigated in individuals over 18 years of age, the majority of the deaths were cardiovascular related (259 deaths, 58%) Deaths due to cardiovascular causes include myocardial infarcts (heart attacks), cardiac arrhythmias, strokes, aneurysms, and other cardiovascular conditions. There were 18 deaths related to infectious causes, predominantly pneumonia in elderly individuals with one of these deaths attributed to Influenza A. There were 30 cancer related deaths, 22 deaths related to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (emphysema) associated with cigarette smoking, 28 deaths related to chronic alcoholism, and 33 deaths related to complications of dementia. The remaining 54 deaths were primarily due to complications of other long-standing disease processes.

Accidental deaths age 18 and over

Age	Male	Number of postmortem exams	Percent having postmortem exam	Female	Number of postmortem exams	Percent having postmortem exam
18-29	10	9	90%	2	1	50%
30-49	23	18	78%	6	6	100%
50-69	21	12	57%	7	5	71%
70 and over	26	7	27%	32	3	9.09%
Total	80	46		47	15	

There were 157 accidental deaths involving individuals aged 18 years and older. Of these, 93 deaths did not require a postmortem examination. These individuals had been hospitalized for an extended period of time and their injuries were well documented by the hospital and/or care facility. The majority of these deaths involved elderly individuals who sustained falls from standing height, resulting in injuries, most commonly blunt force injuries of the head. One of the accidental deaths were out-of-county cases for which jurisdiction was transferred back to the originating county.

Accidental deaths age 18 and over

Total investigated = 143

Type	Number of deaths
Motor vehicle (MV) collisions (including motorcycles, mopeds, and ATV's)	17
Bicycle accidents	5
Falls	75
Drug intoxication (including acute alcohol intoxication)	33
Pedestrian struck by motor vehicle	7
Drowning	1
Other **	5

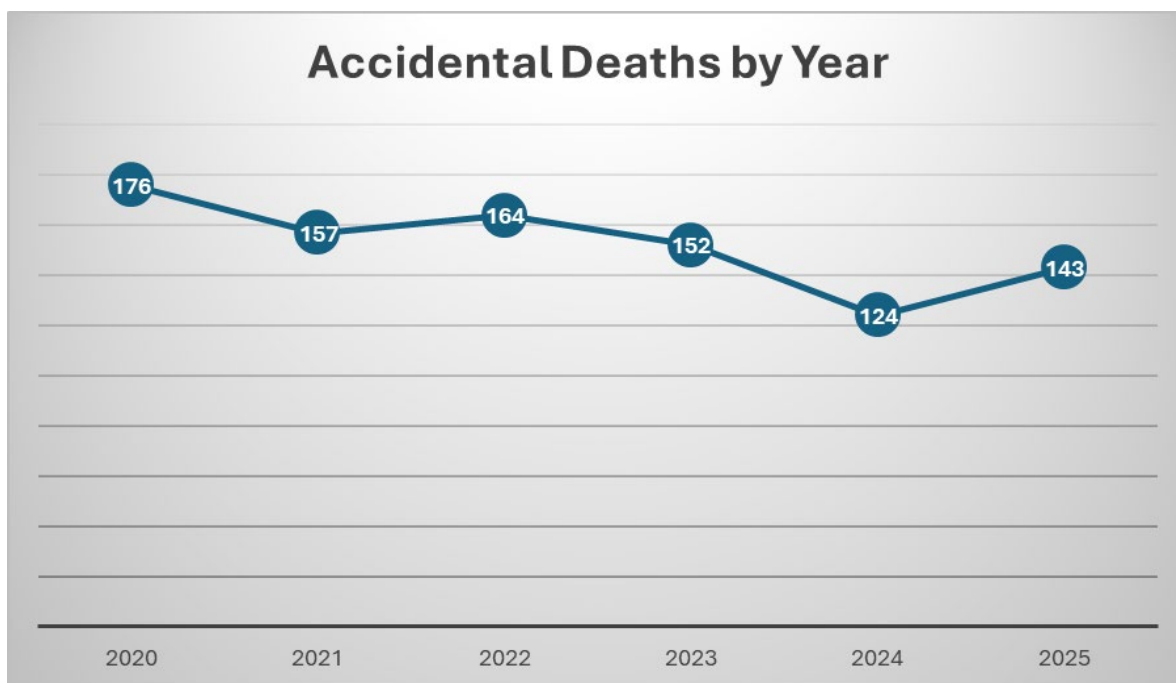
The 17 motor vehicle collision-related deaths displayed the following characteristics:

- Automobile accidents where decedents were drivers – 8
- Automobile accidents where decedents were passengers – 1
- Motorcycle/ATV wearing a helmet – 2
- Motorcycle/ATV without a helmet – 6
- Automobile accidents where decedent was wearing a seatbelt – 4
- Automobile accidents where decedent was not wearing a seatbelt – 4
- Automobile accidents where it is unknown if wearing a seatbelt – 1
- Collisions (to include bicycles, skiers, pedestrians) where the decedent was positive for alcohol or drugs in at least 22 of the deaths
 - Alcohol only in 7 deaths
 - Drugs only in 9 deaths
 - Alcohol and drugs in 2 deaths
 - Unknown if alcohol and drugs were involved 4

The drownings consisted of:

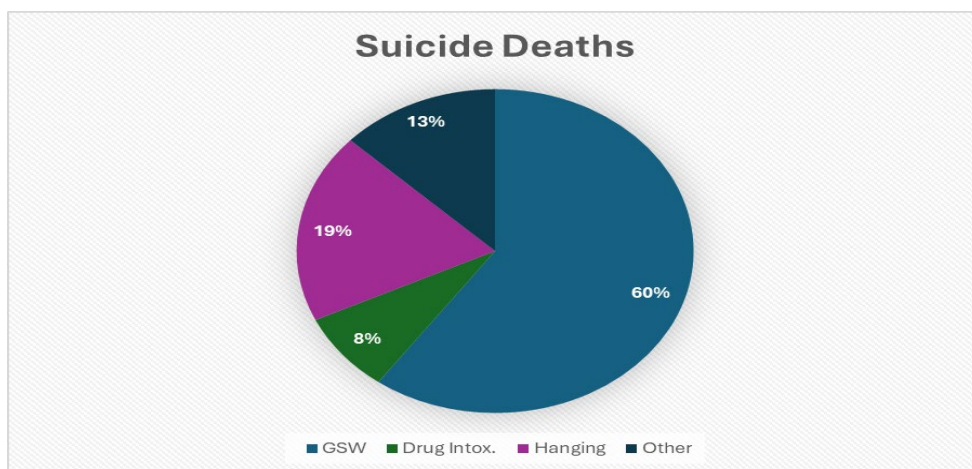
- 1 death in a stream

Total accidental deaths by year



Total suicide deaths

- Total reported to office: 57
- Total in which the incident originated in Mesa County (true Mesa County deaths): 52
- The below information only pertains to deaths where the incident originated in Mesa County



Gunshot wound = 32

Age	Male	Female	Number autopsied	Percent having autopsies
0-17	1	2	3	100%
18-29	7	2	9	100%
30-49	9	0	9	100%
50-69	7	0	7	100%
70 and over	3	1	4	100%
Total	27	5	32	100%

Drug intoxications = 4

Age	Male	Female	Number autopsied	Percent having autopsies
0-17	0	0	0	0
18-29	0	0	0	0
30-49	0	2	2	100%
50-69	0	1	1	100%
70 and over	0	1	1	100%
Total	0	4	4	100%

Hanging = 10

Age	Male	Female	Number autopsied	Percent having autopsies
0-17	1	0	1	100%
18-29	0	0	0	0
30-49	6	1	7	100%
50-69	1	1	2	100%
70 and over	0	0	0	0
Total	8	2	10	100%

Multiple blunt force injuries = 3

Age	Male	Female	Number autopsied	Percent having autopsies
0-17	0	0	0	0
18-29	0	1	1	100%
30-49	2	0	2	100%
50-69	0	0	0	0
70 and over	0	0	0	0
Total	2	1	3	100%

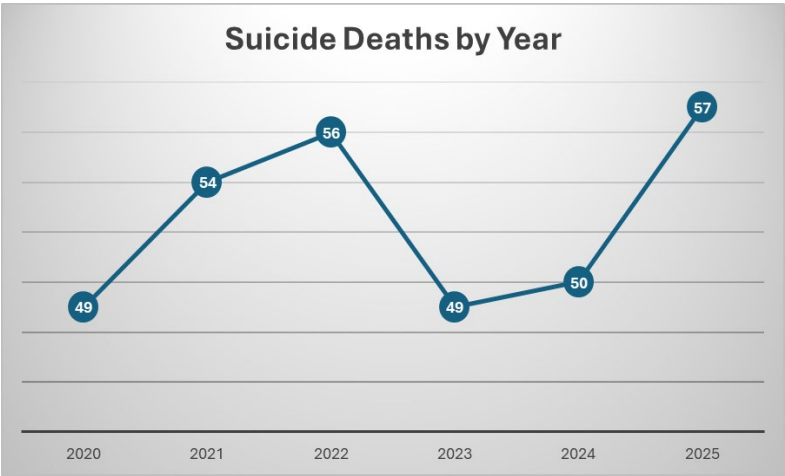
Drowning = 2

Age	Male	Female	Number autopsied	Percent having autopsies
0-17	0	0	0	0
18-29	0	0	0	0
30-49	1	0	1	100%
50-69	0	0	0	0
70 and over	1	0	1	100%
Total	2	0	2	100%

Incised wounds = 2

Age	Male	Female	Number autopsied	Percent having autopsies
0-17	0	0	0	0
18-29	0	0	0	0
30-49	1	0	1	100%
50-69	1	0	1	100%
70 and over	0	0	0	0
Total	2	0	2	100%

Suicide deaths by year 2020-2025



Homicide Deaths

Age	Male	Female	Number Autopsied	Percent Autopsied	Gunshot wounds	Stab wounds	Blunt force injuries
0-17	1	0	1	100%	0	0	1
18-29	2	0	2	100%	2	0	0
30-49	1	1	2	100%	2	0	0
50-69	1	1	1	100%	1	0	1
70 and over	0	1	1	100%	0	1	0
Total	5	3	7	87.50%	5	1	2

Homicide deaths by year 2020-2025



Undetermined Deaths

Age	Male	Female	Number of postmortem exams	Percent having postmortem exams
0-17	0	0	0	
18-29	0	0	0	
30-49	0	0	0	
50-69	0	0	0	
70 and over	1	1	2	100%

The 2 undetermined deaths had the following characteristics:

- 1 death due to malnutrition and 1 death due to asphyxiation

Drug-related deaths (including acute alcohol intoxication)

There were 30 deaths in which alcohol and/or other drugs caused or contributed to death. This does not include the deaths in which a drug is identified but did not contribute to the death in any way. Of these drug-related deaths, there were 23 males and 6 females. 27 of the deaths were that of Caucasian descent, 1 of Asian descent, and 2 of Hispanic descent. The deaths were Accidents and Suicides. There were no drug-related deaths in 2025 in which the manner of death was Homicide or Undetermined.

Drug-related deaths in Mesa County are due to a variety of drugs including methamphetamine, opioids, cocaine, antidepressants, antipsychotics and other prescription-type drugs. The deaths in this group also include those related to acute alcohol intoxication but it does not include deaths due to complications of chronic alcoholism such as from cirrhosis, electrolyte abnormalities, alcohol withdrawal or gastrointestinal hemorrhage.

Methamphetamine was the most common drug in Mesa County that caused or contributed to death in Mesa County in 2025. There were 6 deaths related solely to methamphetamine and 7 other deaths in which methamphetamine was mixed with one or more other drugs (13 total cases of the 30 deaths; 43% of the drug-related deaths were due to methamphetamine).

Deaths with cause due to or contributed by substance intoxication

Age (years)	Accident	Suicide
0-17	0	0
18-29	7	0
30-49	12	2
50-69	6	1
70 and over	1	1

Drug description in drug-related deaths 2025

Drugs	Number of deaths
Methamphetamine only	6
Methamphetamine and fentanyl	4
Methamphetamine and other drugs	3
Fentanyl only	2
Fentanyl and acetylfentanyl	2
Oxycodone, alcohol and other drugs	1
Cocaine	1
Cocaine and alcohol	1
Cocaine, alcohol and other drugs	1
Alcohol only	4
Alcohol and other drugs	3
Diphenhydramine, oxycodone and other drugs	1
Quetiapine	1