



The Florida Violent Death Reporting System

Linking Data to Save Lives

Violence is a major public health problem nationally and in Florida. In 2018, there were more than 5,200 violent deaths in Florida. Of these deaths, approximately 70% were suicides and 26% were homicides. Combined, suicide and homicide represented 96.1% of all violent deaths in Florida in 2018.

The Florida Violent Death Reporting System (FLVDRS) is a part of the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded state-based surveillance system that collects detailed information on deaths that occurred from violence, including homicide, suicide, unintentional firearm deaths, legal intervention, and deaths with undetermined intent. The FLVDRS combines information from Vital Statistics death certificates, medical examiner records, and law enforcement reports to enhance data surveillance of violent deaths and aid in the design and implementation of injury and violence prevention and intervention efforts.

Violence and Injury Prevention is a Priority in Florida

The FLVDRS is housed at the Florida Department of Health (FDOH), the state agency responsible for assessing public health status using surveillance efforts and preventing hazards to human health (381.0011, Florida Statute). The FLVDRS aligns with FDOH's 2018-2021 Agency Strategic Plan, strategy 2.1.4. to reduce injury and the Florida State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) Injury, Safety, and Violence (ISV) priority area's goal to prevent and reduce intentional and unintentional injuries and deaths in Florida.

How Medical Examiners and Law Enforcement Can Help



Your Reports Hold Answers That Can Save Lives

Public health, law enforcement officials, and medical examiners all collect valuable information about violent deaths, but data remain in a variety of different systems. By integrating these reports, we can provide policy-makers with better information to develop more effective violence prevention policies.

FLVDRS Success Depends on Your Reports

To help prevent violent deaths, it is important to understand all the facts. FLVDRS enables law enforcement and public health officials to share information and develop a better understanding of the causes of violent deaths. Without this knowledge, violence prevention policies and programs are not being informed by the full spectrum of available information.

Data Topics and Sources

Death Certificate	Law Enforcement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person type • Name • ZIP code • County • Age • Sex • Race/ethnicity • Cause & manner of death • Time of death • Weapon type 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident narrative • Wounds • Associated circumstances • Relationship(s) among persons involved • History of victim abuse • Suspect was victim caretaker • Weapon type • Firearm descriptors • Poison details
Medical Examiner	Other Data Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief narrative of incident • Demographics • Wound location • Cause & manner of death • Alcohol & drug tests • Wounds • Health conditions • Recent medical treatment • Relationship(s) among persons involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime lab • Child fatality review • Domestic violence • Hospitalization and emergency department data

What do we need from you and what should you expect from us?

- The biggest contribution we need from you is to provide us with the incident reports that you already have in your records. We will be requesting incident reports based on death certificates that indicate violent deaths.
- Our goal is to make reporting quick and easy.
- The schedule for reporting is flexible; you can provide reports monthly, quarterly, or annually. We will work with you to find the best way to collect the data from your office.

What kind of questions could be answered by FLVDRS data?

- How many women were killed by intimate partner violence?
- What life crises are most common in victims of suicide?
- How often are drugs involved in homicides or suicides?
- What is the rate of murder-suicides?
- How many suicides were committed by first responders or military personnel?

Spotlight on Other States: What are Other NVDRS State Programs Doing?

- Oregon draws on NVDRS data to create elder/youth suicide prevention plans. Oregon VDRS was used to connect the dots between mental illness, depression, and suicide. As a result, the program identified populations at risk, and information was used to engage community and faith-based organizations and the medical community in a multi-pronged outreach and prevention effort to help reduce suicide in older adults and young people.
- Utah used VDRS data to inform a policy change to close a gap in services for the children of domestic violence-related homicide victims. UTVDRS and its partners collaborated to increase immediate referrals to the Department of Children and Family Services at the time of a homicide – usually by law enforcement investigating the death – if the victim or perpetrator has one or more children in the home. These referrals enabled the children and their families to receive an assessment and get connected to intervention and follow-up services, such as mental health services, to help cope with the homicide and other domestic violence-related issues.
- Alaska tackles the highest suicide rate in the nation. Epidemiologic information from the Alaska VDRS helped to target improvements in Alaska's forensic toxicological capabilities and to strengthen public health and law enforcement communications and infrastructure.
- South Carolina integrates suicide prevention planning and mental health care. South Carolina's Mental Health Association used data from South Carolina's VDRS to strengthen an application to secure more than \$1 million in funding for suicide prevention. The grant allowed implementation of Project SAFE, which provides evidenced-based training to schools, institutions of higher education, faith-based and community organizations, and foster and adoptive parents.

Violence Can Be Prevented If We Work Together

The good news is that violence can be prevented. Accurate information about violence is the first step. As we expand FLVDRS, we can all access this data to monitor, track trends, and inform local and state prevention efforts.



For more information, send inquires to FLVDRS@flhealth.gov