



2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Rebecca Reid
Laramie County Coroner

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<https://www.laramiecounty.com/officials/CountyCoroner/index.aspx>



**OFFICE OF THE CORONER
LARAMIE COUNTY**

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To the Citizens of Laramie County,

It is my pleasure to present the 2020 annual report for the Laramie County Coroner's Office. The goal of providing this information is to be transparent and provide statistical data, while maintaining confidentiality, respect, and integrity to the citizens of Laramie County.

The information in this report is compiled from records generated by the Laramie County Coroner's Office. The data provided represents numerical, demographic, and statistical information.

Hopefully you will find this information useful for your research endeavors. If you have any questions or need further information or clarification, please contact the Laramie County Coroner's Office.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca Reid".

Rebecca Reid, Coroner
Laramie County, Wyoming

MISSION & VISION STATEMENT

To provide professional medicolegal death investigation by determining cause and manner of death, identifying decedents, notifying next-of-kin, and protecting decedent's property.

To be the leader in providing compassionate & efficient service to the people we serve in accomplishing our mission statement

DESCRIPTION, PURPOSE, AND FUNCTION OF THE LARAMIE COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE

The Office of the Laramie County Coroner was established with jurisdiction coextensive with the boundaries of Laramie County, Wyoming.

It shall be the duty of the county coroner to determine the cause of death of any person reported to them as having been killed by violence; has suddenly died under such circumstances as to afford reasonable grounds to suspect or infer that death has been caused or occasioned by the act of another by criminal means; has committed suicide; and to determine the cause of all deaths as to which applicable state law makes it the duty of the coroner to sign certificates of death.

As the community continues to grow, so does the role of the Laramie County Office of the Coroner. The office has three distinctive divisions that work well together in an effort to provide support to the other divisions as well as to the public we are called upon to assist. Due to the nature of this most sensitive business, our goal is to provide compassionate service to those that we serve.

An obligation rests with each staff member to render honest, efficient, courteous and discrete service on behalf of the office.

As an overview of the office, a call is received reporting a death. An investigator is dispatched to the location and conducts an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death. If the case falls under our jurisdiction, the decedent is transported to our office where an autopsy or external examination is conducted to determine the cause and manner of death. The investigator generates a written report, which is provided to the Forensic Pathologist prior to the autopsy/examination. If an autopsy is performed, an autopsy report is generated. The decedent is then released to a local funeral home. A Death Certificate is generated.

WYOMING STATE STATUTES

CHAPTER 6

Standards dealing with the Investigation of Coroner's Cases

Section 1: Definitions.

W.S. 7-4-104 is appended to these standards as Appendix A and adopted and incorporated herein.

Section 2: Conduct.

Coroners shall act in accordance with all relevant state and federal law. In addition, in dealing with the deceased, the family of the deceased, and the general public, the Coroners shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the highest standards of professionalism, compassion, and respect.

Section 3: General.

- (a) The Coroner shall work jointly with all law enforcement agencies having jurisdiction in a death scene investigation.
- (b) The Coroner has jurisdiction over and shall take custody of the body.
- (c) The Coroner shall assume responsibility for the property of the deceased.
- (d) Evidence is the responsibility of law enforcement and/or the Coroner.
- (e) The Coroner shall protect the chain of custody for any evidence in their custody.
- (f) The Coroner shall provide for transportation, security, and preservation of the deceased until released to the next of kin or their designee.
- (g) The Coroner shall pronounce death, and record the date, time, and location.
- (h) The Coroner shall provide for the notification of next of kin.
- (i) The Coroner shall provide the office staff and investigators:
 - (i) Safe and adequate equipment to perform any duties of the office; and
 - (ii) Adequate and appropriate safety and personal protective equipment suitable for the circumstances of the investigation.

Section 4. Investigations.

(a) The Coroner shall identify the deceased and determine the Manner and Cause of death as accurately as possible.

(b) In determining the Manner and Cause of death, the investigation shall include:

- (i) Scene Investigation;
- (ii) Toxicology sample on the deceased;
- (iii) Inventory of property, evidence, and medications;
- (iv) Photographs;
- (v) External Exam; and
- (vi) DNA sample.

(c) The Coroner shall issue a written report for all death investigations. The written reports may include but are not limited to, data from measuring devices, diagrams, evidence and body labeling, interviews, psychological and social histories, medical histories and consultation with physicians, autopsy, fingerprints, radiology, odontology, or DNA profiles or any other method necessary to determine the cause and manner of death.

(d) Investigations requiring a forensic autopsy of the deceased shall be conducted by a Forensic Pathologist who has been certified in that specialty by a nationally recognized certification board.

(e) All investigations will be completed in a reasonable time. The term 'reasonable time' is defined as that time period necessary to complete and collect data and information from toxicology, autopsy, or other investigation procedures, to determine with medical certainty a manner and cause of death.

Section 5. Records.

The Coroner shall maintain all public records in accordance with W.S. 9-2-405 through 9-2-413.

STAFF

The staff of the Laramie County Coroner's Office consisted of the following



Coroner: Rebecca Reid

Rebecca was born in Tucson, Arizona and moved to Florida when she was three years old. Rebecca moved to Cheyenne, WY with her military family in 2013. Rebecca is proud to call Cheyenne her home. She has extensive field experience and educational qualifications that have served the countless communities she has been a part of extensively.

Prior to moving to Cheyenne, Rebecca served as death investigator with the District 14 Medical Examiner's Office in Panama City, Florida for seven years. She served as Deputy Coroner for Laramie County Coroner's Office from December 20, 2013 before being promoted to and serving as Chief Deputy Coroner since October 1, 2014. During the past seven years she has embraced the responsibility that comes with guiding families through the most difficult time in their lives; the loss of their loved ones. Rebecca's promise is to continue serving Laramie County and each decedent and family member with dignity, compassion and respect.



Chief Deputy Coroner: Char Madden

Char was born and raised in Cheyenne, Wyoming and graduated from Central High School. She has always had a passion to help people, which lead her to a career in law enforcement. Char started her law enforcement career when she was 21 years old working at the Laramie County Detention Center as a deputy sheriff and was later promoted to Sergeant. Char continued to work at the detention center until 2009, but stayed with the

sheriff's office as a reserve deputy. In 2012 Char took a position with the Pine Bluffs Police Department as a patrol officer and during this tenure started teaching D.A.R.E. to 6th graders. In 2015 Char returned to the Laramie County Sheriff's Office working as a patrol deputy and specialized as an FTO (Field Training Officer), mounted patrol, and D.A.R.E Officer.

She transferred to the Laramie County Coroner's Office in January 2019. Char also has been to numerous schools and training to include investigations, cold case homicide investigations, crimes against children, blood splatter analysis training, and crime scene photography and processing. She continues Mounted Patrol for Wyoming State Parks.



Deputy Coroner: Theresa Patterson

Theresa was born in Laramie, Wyoming and moved several times to different states including Littleton, Colorado and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Theresa graduated from Roosevelt High School in Sioux Falls, SD in 1998. She then moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming in 2002. Cheyenne is now her home with her husband, children and grandson.

Prior to moving to Cheyenne, Theresa worked for a local funeral home and enjoyed taking care of decedents and their families. She served as a Sheriff's Department dispatcher and a Central Control Operator in the Laramie County Jail for several years and has built a good understanding of law enforcement. She is invested in our community and wants to help the families in our county after loss by taking care of their loved one.



Executive Assistant: Amber Dancliff

Amber was born in Saint Joseph, Missouri and is from a small town of 950 people Oregon, MO is situated in the Northwest corner. She went to a K thru 12 school, where she played basketball and volleyball and graduated in a class size of 35. She moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming in 1998, and is married with two children.

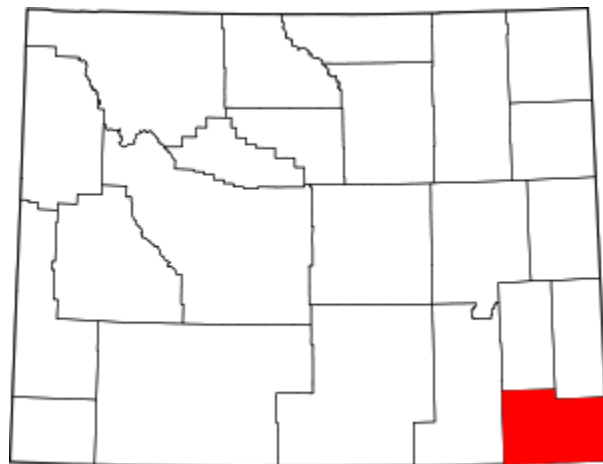
Amber began working for Laramie County Coroner's Office in January of 2019 once the newly elected coroner Rebecca Reid took office. She is well versed in the process of the Laramie County Coroner's Office and is very passionate about what she does.

SIZE AND POPULATION OF LARAMIE COUNTY

The geographic area serviced by the Laramie County Coroner's Office includes all of Laramie County, as well as incorporated towns of Pine Bluffs, Burns, Albin, Carpenter, Hillsdale, and the City of Cheyenne.

Laramie County is 2,688 square miles located in the SE corner of Wyoming and shares a border with Nebraska to the east and Colorado to the south. It is at the crossroads of two major interstate highways and two major railroads. Residents enjoy a stable, growing economy, a high-quality of life, excellent educational system and a low tax structure.

As of July 1, 2018 the United States Census Bureau reported Laramie County's population as 98,976, which makes Laramie County the largest populated county in Wyoming. Cheyenne is the county seat and state capital for Wyoming.



CAUSE AND MANNER OF DEATH

The Cause of Death is the official determination of the disease or injury and the sequence of events responsible for the occurrence which leads to the individual's death.

The Manner of Death is the description used to classify the conditions that caused a death and the circumstances by which they occur. Manner of death is determined largely by means of the investigation. In Wyoming, there are five (5) manners of death, listed below.

NATURAL: Death caused by disease process.

SUICIDE: Death as a result of a purposeful action to end one's own life.

ACCIDENT: Death other than natural where there is no evidence of intent.

HOMICIDE: Death resulting from injuries intentionally inflicted by another person.

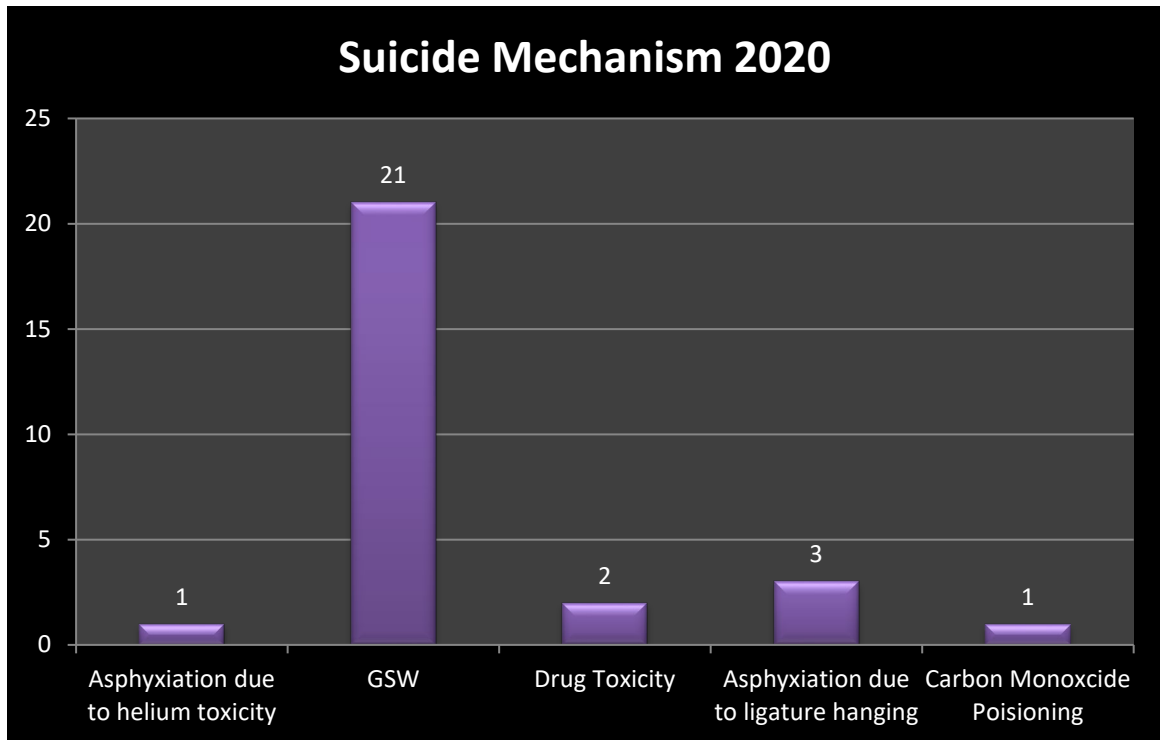
UNDETERMINED: Manner assigned when there is insufficient evidence, or conflicting/ equivocal information (especially about intent), to assign a specific manner.

STATISTICS

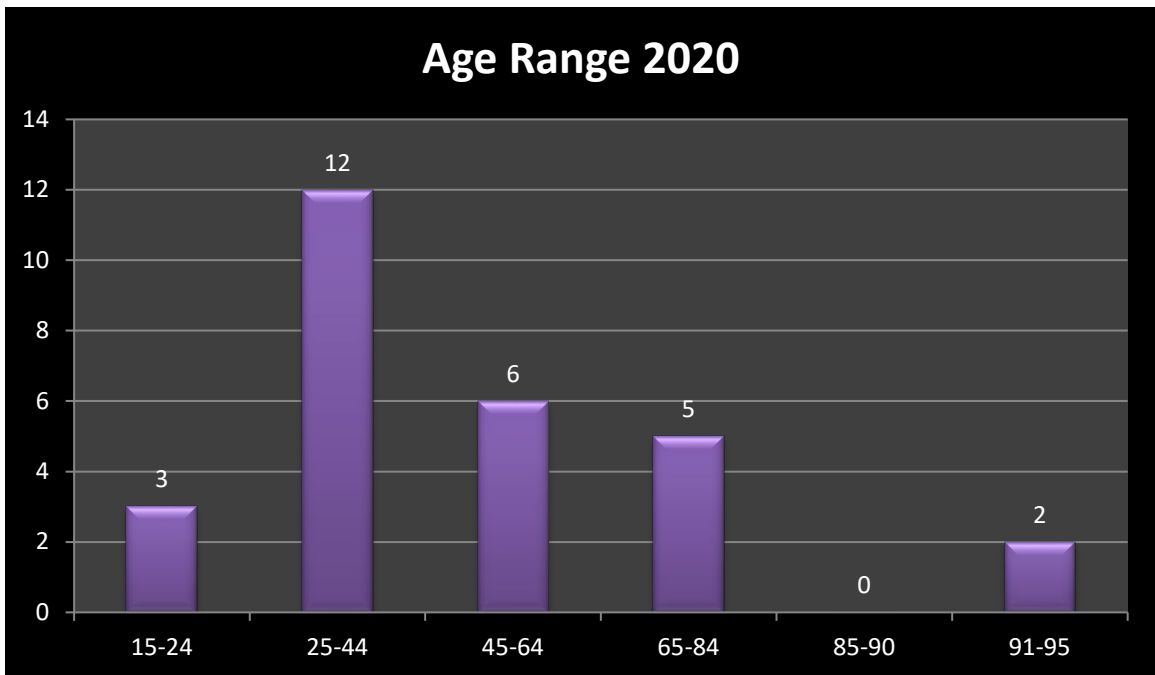
The Laramie County Coroner's Office investigated 416 deaths during 2020. All 416 cases were completed with an investigation. The number of deceased transported to the morgue is 315. Of the 416 deaths, 324 were classified as "natural" deaths, 38 accidental deaths, 28 suicide deaths, 2 homicide deaths, 2 undetermined manners of death, and 20 assist outside agencies. Out of the total cases 13 were county funded burials, all of which were unclaimed, and 2 cases were non-human remains. There were 6 eye bank donations and 6 organ/tissue donors reported in 2020.

SUICIDES

Suicide is death caused by intentional, self-inflicted injuries. In Laramie County during 2020 there were 28 suicides compared to 24 in 2019.

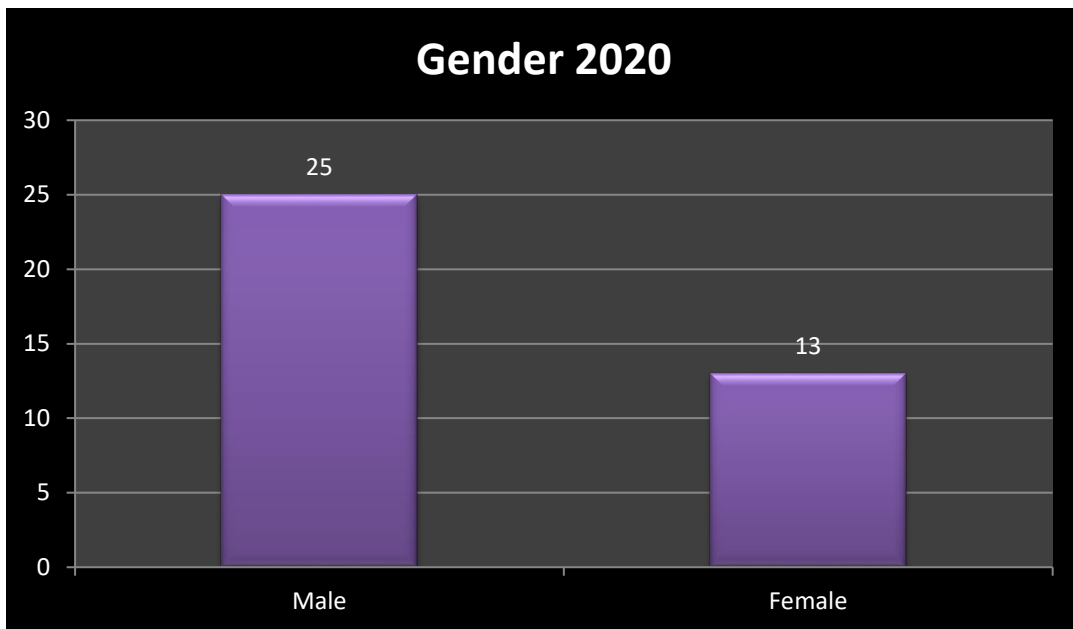
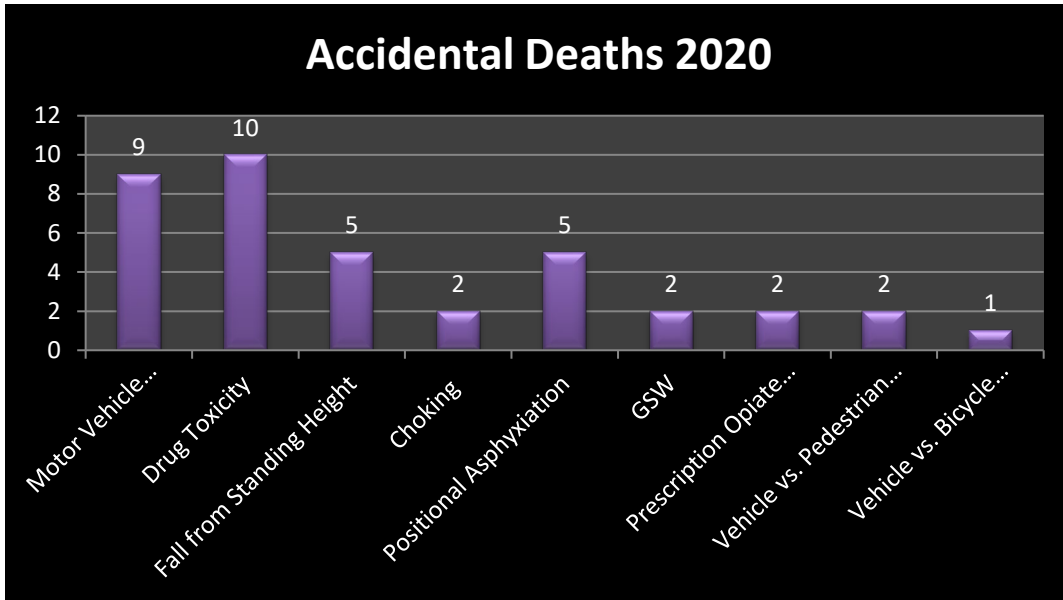


SUICIDES (Continued)



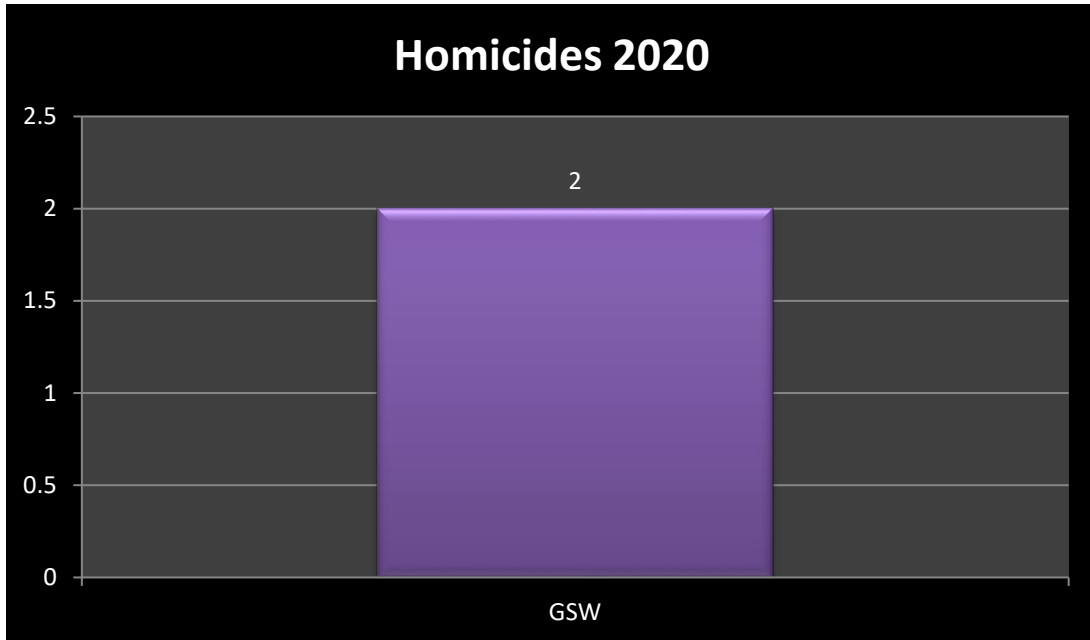
ACCIDENTAL DEATHS

Accidental deaths are those deaths that are other than natural where there is no evidence of intent; i.e. an unintentional event or chain of events. This includes most motor vehicle crashes, falls, drowning, accidental drug overdoses, fire related deaths, accidental gunshot wounds, etc. During 2020, 38 deaths were classified as accidental.



HOMICIDE

Homicide is death resulting from injuries intentionally inflicted by another person. In 2020 there were 2 homicides.



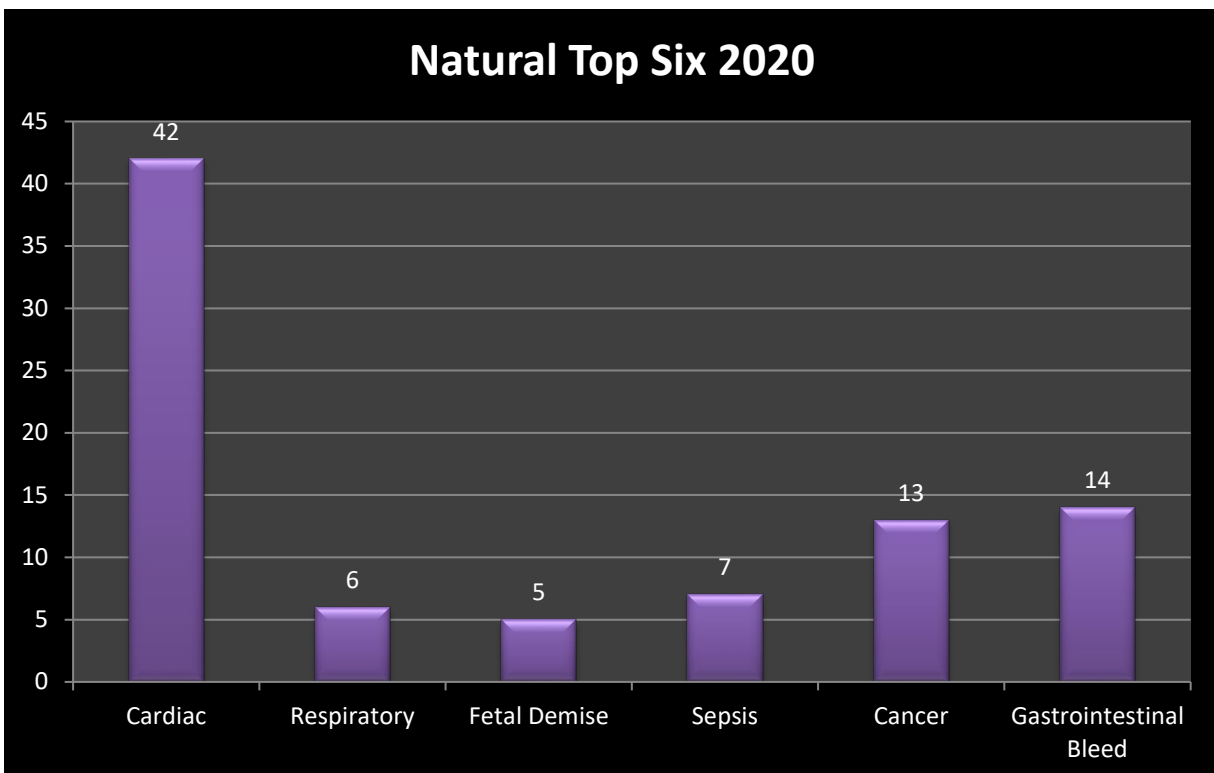
NATURAL DEATHS

Out of the 324 Natural Deaths the top six are listed. There were 2 undetermined deaths for 2020.

The cardiac category includes all cardiac events such as Myocardial Infarction, Sudden Cardiac Death, Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease, Congestive Heart Failure etc.

The respiratory category would include all respiratory events such as COPD, Emphysema, etc.

Fetal Demise is a clinical term for stillbirth used to describe the death of a baby in the uterus. The term usually applies to losses at or after the 20th week of gestation.



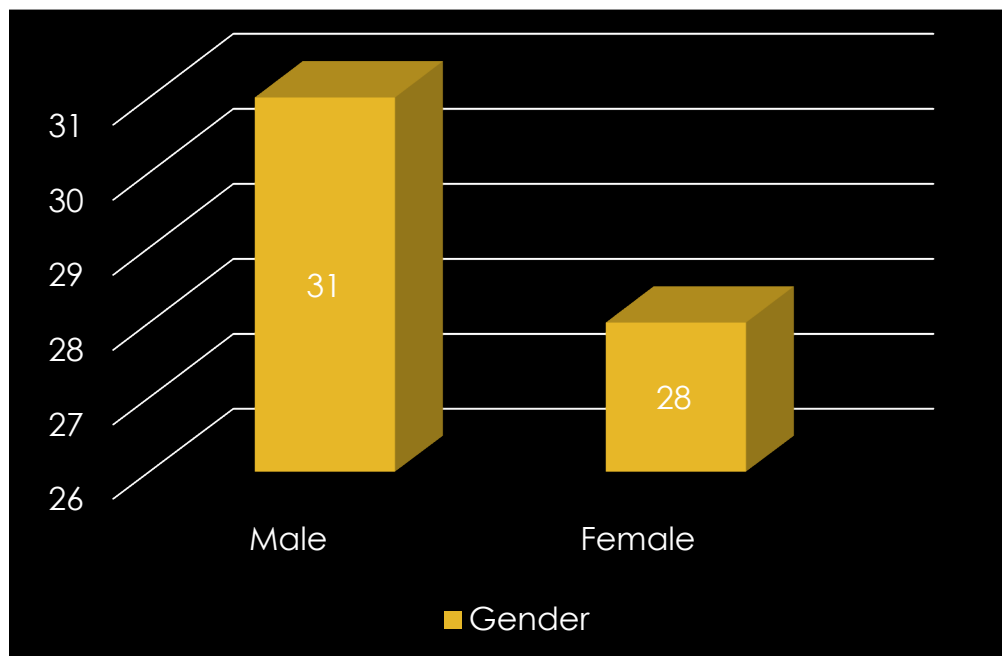
COVID-19

All deaths in Laramie County with a positive or suspected positive COVID-19 result were reported to the Laramie County Coroner's Office and transported to the Laramie County Coroner's Office facility and held for 2 to 4 days until released to a funeral home of the family's choice.

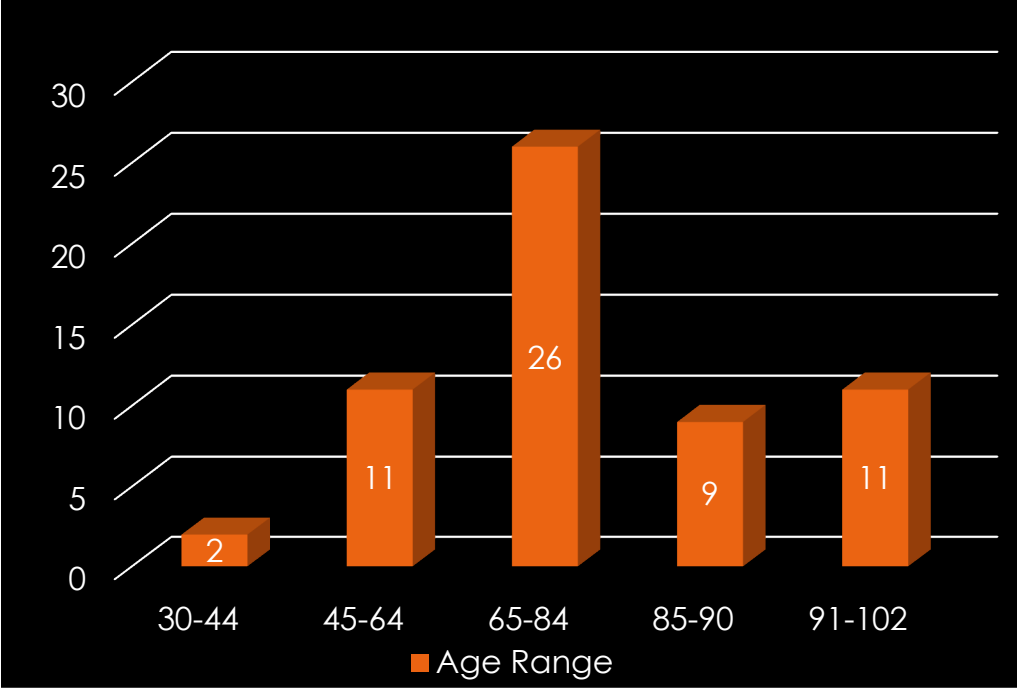
Out of the 416 cases in 2020, 72 were deaths with a positive COVID-19 result. 72 cases were transported from a facility (COVID-19 unit) or residence in Laramie County. Out of the 72 cases, 7 were non-Laramie County residents who died in Laramie County due to COVID-19 while 65 were Laramie County residents.

Out of the 65 cases, 7 were home deaths. All but 3 cases had contributing factors related to their death. 6 cases out of the 65 cases transported to the Laramie County Coroner's Office did not have COVID-19 listed on the death certificate as cause of death.

Laramie County Residents COVID-19 Deaths by Gender

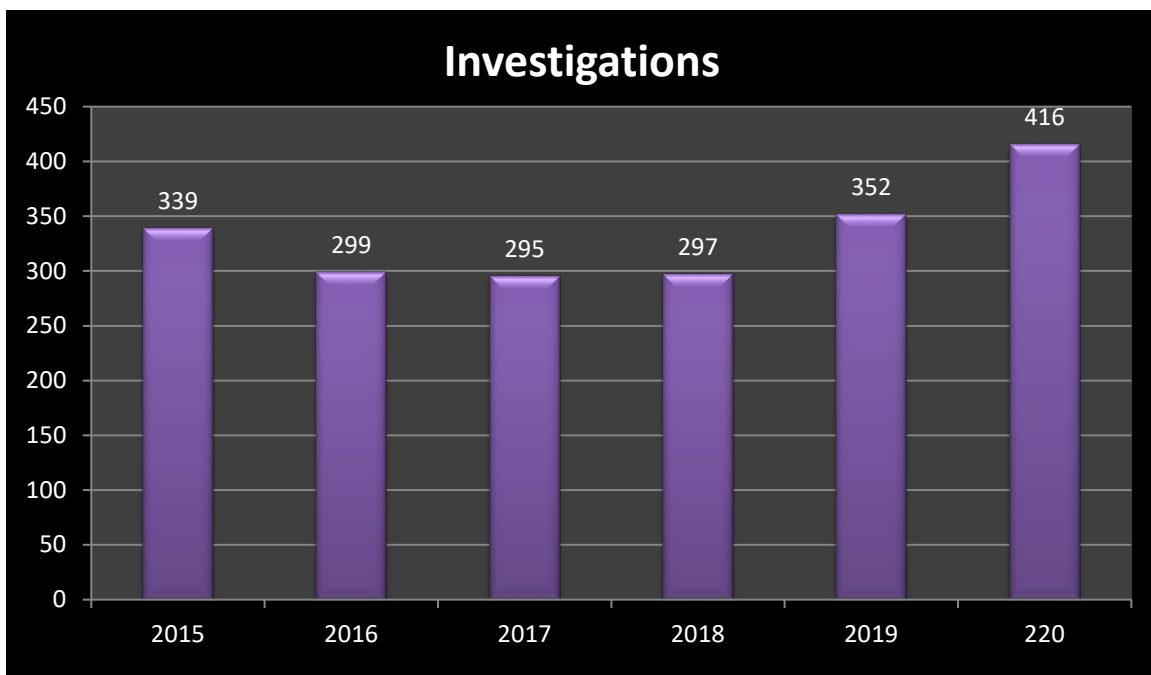


Laramie County Residents COVID-19 Deaths Age



INVESTIGATIONS

Total investigations completed by the Laramie County Coroner's Office in 2020 totaled 416 cases. Out of the 416 cases, 314 cases had a scene investigation conducted by the Laramie County Coroner's Office. These cases included human vs non-human remains and cases which are reported to our office after the fact or backwards cases. The Laramie County Coroner's Office declined jurisdiction on 102 cases, as they did not meet the requirements for a coroner's case.



AUTOPSY

The Laramie County Coroner's office ordered 69 full autopsies and no partial autopsies were conducted. An autopsy is just one of the many tools the coroner's office depends on to help determine the manner and/or cause of death. All 69 autopsies included an external exam conducted by a forensic pathologist. 8 of those autopsied were decedents who died at the hospital.

Not all deaths are autopsied. Required autopsies by state statute are those who are babies or children, all homicides, prisoner, trustee, inmate or patient of any county or state corrections facility or state hospital, suspicious deaths (to include anyone with trauma), and anyone who has not seen a doctor or does not have a primary care physician to advise why the deceased died.


TOXICOLOGY

242 cases had toxicology captured. 69 out of the 242 cases had full autopsy with toxicology captured and tested, while 173 cases had toxicology captured, which will be retained for one year, then destroyed.

BODY EXAMS

All bodies transported to the Laramie County Coroner's Office have a body exam completed by an investigator. The investigator will take photographs, collect blood samples, finger prints, a DNA card, and inventory clothing and personal property. In 2020 a body exam was completed on 173 cases by an investigator at the Laramie County Coroner's Office.

YEAR –TO-DATE SUMMARY REPORT 2020

 Laramie County Coroner's Office Year-to-Date Summary Report End Date: 12/31/2020													
Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Suicide	1	1	1	0	5	6	2	0	5	3	1	3	28
Accident	3	0	5	4	5	1	3	4	1	3	6	3	38
Natural	24	17	17	21	20	20	23	30	19	35	46	52	324
Homicide	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
PENDING	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Undetermined	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Assist out side agency*	1	0	1	3	2	2	1	1	2	3	2	2	20
Non-Human	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
TOTALS	29	18	24	29	34	31	29	35	27	45	55	60	416
Backward Cases**	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
County Funded Burials	3	1	1	1	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	2	13
Donor	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	6
Eye Bank	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	6
Autopsy	6	2	5	6	10	4	4	6	6	5	9	6	69
Exhumations	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unclaimed Bodies	3	1	1	1	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	2	13
Abandoned Bodies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unidentified Bodies	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<p>* Assist outside agency: The Coroner may be called to assist another county or State in making notification to the the legal next of kin.</p> <p>**Backward Cases: Coroner cases that were not reported to the coroner at the time of death. By the time the notification of death is reported to the coroner, the final disposition has already been determined and the body has either been cremated or buried, A paper investigation is then completed by the coroner in order to rule a cause and manner of death for completion of the death certificate.</p> <p>Toxicology: Specimens are drawn on all cases for toxicology purposes.</p> <p>External Examinations: Performed on all cases</p>													