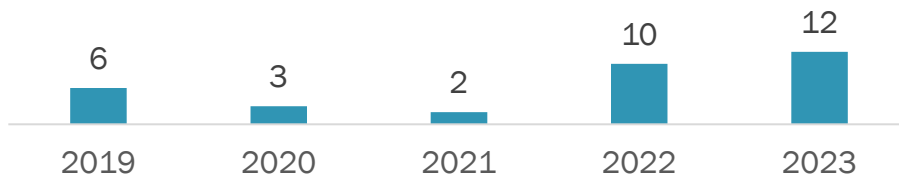


Between 2019 and 2023¹, 33 people died who were incarcerated by the Vermont Department of Corrections. This includes five people on medical furlough².

Number of Deaths of Vermont Incarcerated Persons by Year

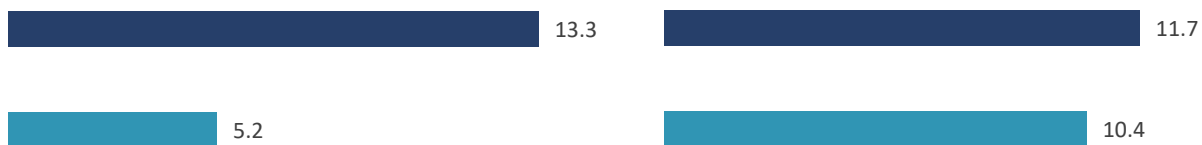


All incarcerated individuals who died were male, therefore **population comparisons in the remainder of this brief are to the Vermont male adult population** and not the Vermont population as a whole.

The five-year death rate is 5.2 per 1,000 incarcerated males per year. The five-year death rate for Vermont male adults is 13.3 per 1,000, more than twice the rate for incarcerated males. However, the proportion of older adults ages 65+ is much higher (nearly six times greater) in the Vermont adult population than in the population of incarcerated persons, and the risk of death increases significantly with age. When adjusted to control for differences in the age distribution of the populations the rates are **similar**³, 10.4 and 11.7 per 1,000 population for incarcerated males and Vermont male adults respectively.

Death Rate per 1,000 Population, 2019 - 2023

Age-Adjusted Death Rate per 1,000 Population, 2019 - 2023



■ Vermont Male Adults ■ Incarcerated Persons

Mortality of Vermont Incarcerated Persons

Death certificates were analyzed to review the demographics, manner and cause of death of individuals who died while incarcerated from 2019 to 2023. Death data for Vermont resident male adults during the same time were also analyzed for comparison and to provide some context. Caution should be used when drawing conclusions from comparisons between the populations in this brief because rates based on a small number of events may make differences with the larger population seem substantial when they are in the range of natural variability. Additionally, there may be factors contributing to an observed difference between the populations being compared such as differences in age, race and ethnicity, overall health, and risk behaviors that are not accounted for.

It is important to note death certificate data were not available for four incarcerated individuals who were not Vermont residents and died out of state. As a result, information on incarcerated individuals after this point is limited to the 29 people who either died in Vermont or any residents who died in another state.

Sex

- All (29, 100%) incarcerated individuals who died were male.
- 52% of all Vermont adults who died were male.

Age⁴

- Slightly less than half (13, 45%) of incarcerated individuals who died were between 18 and 54 years old. Slightly more than half (16, 55%) were 55 and older.
- 13% of all Vermont male decedents were ages 18-54 and 87% were 55 and older.

Race and Ethnicity

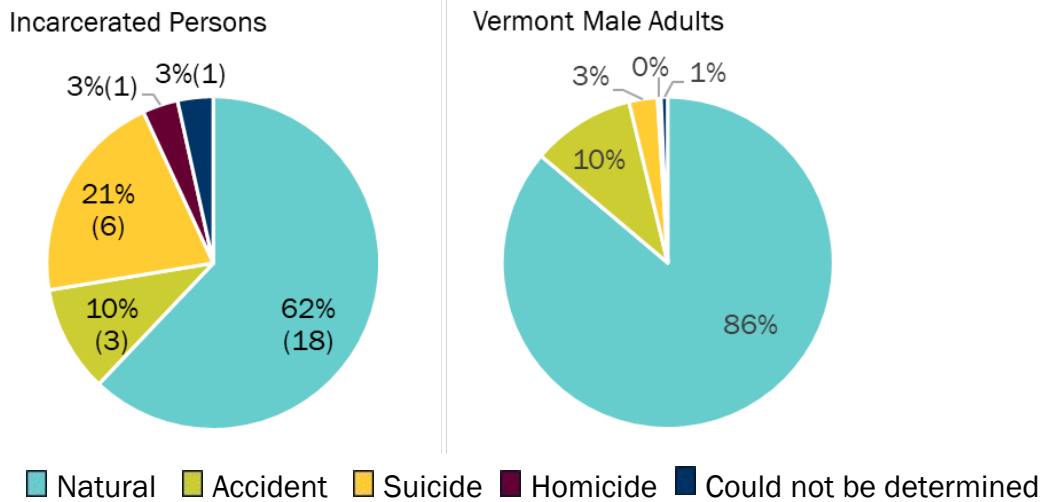
- Nearly all (27, 93%) incarcerated decedents were white, non-Hispanic.
- 97% of Vermont male decedents were white, non-Hispanic.

Manner and Cause of Death

Death certificates of those who die in custody in Vermont are completed by The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and include the manner and cause of death. The manner of death is a broad classification of the circumstances that lead to death. The cause of death provides details of the series of events resulting in death, which are then classified for ranking the leading causes of death.

- Nearly two-thirds (18, 62%) of incarcerated individuals died due to a natural⁵ manner of death. One-fifth (6, 21%) died of suicide.
- 86% of Vermont male decedents died due to a natural manner of death. Three percent died by suicide.

Manner of Death, 2019 - 2023



Heart disease (9, 31%), suicide (6, 21%), cancer (3, 10%) and accidents (drug overdose) (3, 10%) are the leading causes of death among incarcerated individuals. In comparison, the leading causes of death among Vermont male adults, are heart disease (24%), cancer (23%), accidents (9%), chronic lower respiratory disease (4%), and suicide (3%).

For more information:

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¹ All 2023 Vermont resident mortality data are preliminary.

² A supervision status that allows people with a terminal or debilitating condition to get outside treatment, hospice, or palliative care.

³ Not statistically different.

⁴ For incarcerated individuals, those aged 55+ are considered elderly due to early onset and more rapid progression of many chronic conditions when compared to the general population where 65+ is considered elderly.

⁵ Deaths classified with a natural manner of death are due to disease or the process of aging. For example, deaths due to heart disease, cancer, and chronic lower respiratory diseases are classified with a natural manner of death.