



TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
CJIS Division, Statistical Analysis Center

LAW ENFORCEMENT-RELATED DEATHS 2020





BILL LEE
Governor

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

901 R.S. Gass Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee 37216-2639
(615) 744-4000
Facsimile (615) 744-4500
TDD (615) 744-4001



DAVID B. RAUSCH
Director

April 8, 2021

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation would like to present the 2020 Law Enforcement-Related Deaths report. This publication, which satisfies the requirements set forth in Tennessee Code Annotated, § 38-10-102, has been produced by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation’s CJIS Support Center, and provides information on qualifying incidents as submitted by the state’s law enforcement agencies to the TBI through the CrimeInsight Portal.

I am very proud of the efforts of all participating law enforcement agencies in the state to provide the data necessary to produce this report. Our combined efforts have resulted in a successful reporting program and the relationships necessary to produce a report of this nature.

Sincerely,

Director
David Rausch



INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED SINCE 1994

INTRODUCTION

Annually, the TBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division collects crime data through the Tennessee Incident Based Reporting System (TIBRS). However, Law Enforcement-Related Deaths fall outside the scope of TIBRS and are therefore collected in the CrimeInsight portal using the appropriate web entry utility.

According to T.C.A. § 38-10-102, Law Enforcement-Related Deaths is defined as “the death of an individual in custody, whether in prison, in a jail or otherwise in the custody of law enforcement pursuant to an arrest or a transfer between institutions of any kind or; the death of an individual potentially resulting from an interaction with law enforcement, while the law enforcement officer is on duty or while the law enforcement officer is off duty but performing activities that are within the scope of the officer's law enforcement duties.”

An Arrest Related Non-Forcible Death (ARNFD) is any death that is attributed to suicide, alcohol, drug intoxication, or medical conditions (i.e., cardiac arrest) that occurs during the process of arrest by, or in the custody of, state or local law enforcement personnel. Though ARNFDs are not common, they do fall within the scope of the “Law Enforcement Related Deaths” definition. However, these particular incidents are not reported in CrimeInsight, but are instead reported using a form found on the TBI website.

SCOPE OF STUDY

For the purpose of this study, the TBI's CJIS Division divided Law Enforcement Related Death data into three sections: Deadly Use of Force, Arrest-Related Non-forcible Deaths, and Deaths in Custody – all of which meet the T.C.A. § 38-10-102 definition.

Data presented in this study only represents numbers for calendar year 2020.

This report only contains information pertaining to deaths which occurred in the presence of law enforcement or deaths that occurred while in custody, such as in a local jail or prison.

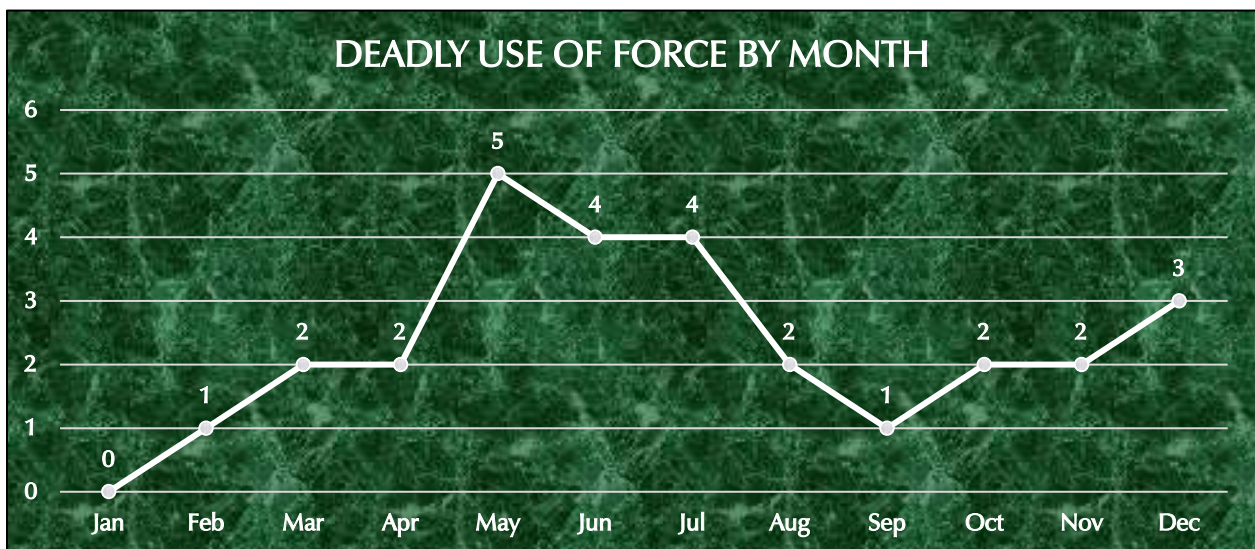
Data in this study does not include occurrences where an officer fired his/her weapon in a situation not resulting in a death or when a subject sustained a serious bodily injury directly related to use of force by a law enforcement officer.

Additionally, this study does not include deaths occurring in non-residential community-based programs run by jails, such as house arrest, work programs, community service, day reporting, or electronic monitoring.

METHODOLOGY

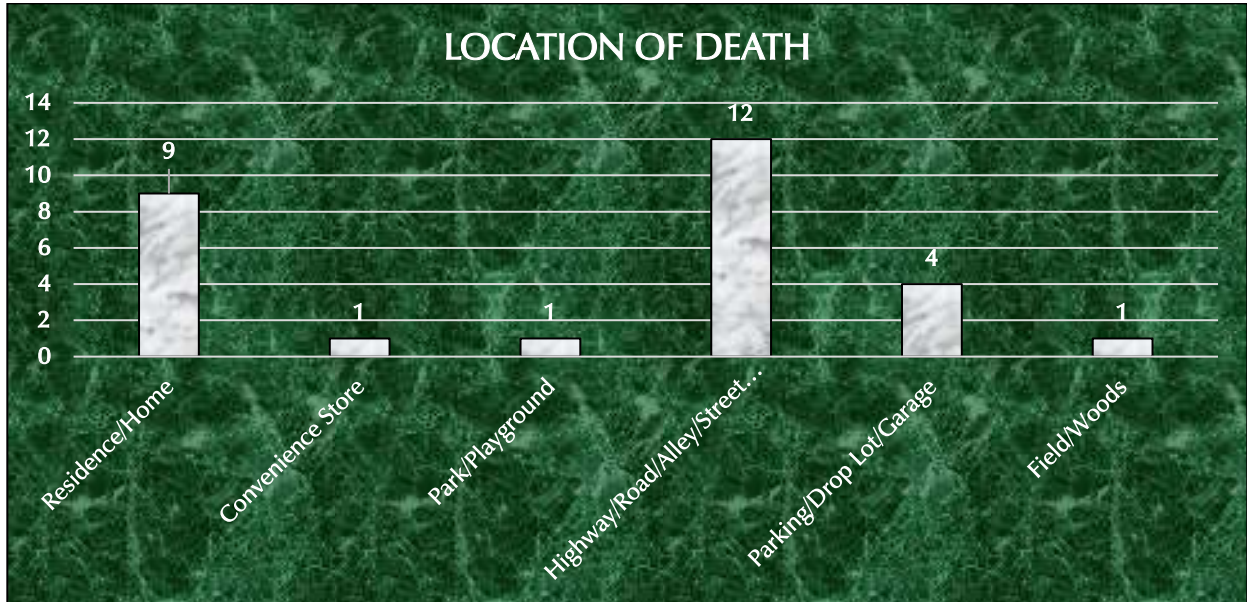
Each employing agency is responsible for submitting a report for its own officers connected to incidents meeting the criteria of the data collection. Jails and prisons are responsible for submitting a CJ-9 form to the TBI for deaths which occurred in their facility.

SECTION ONE DEADLY USE OF FORCE

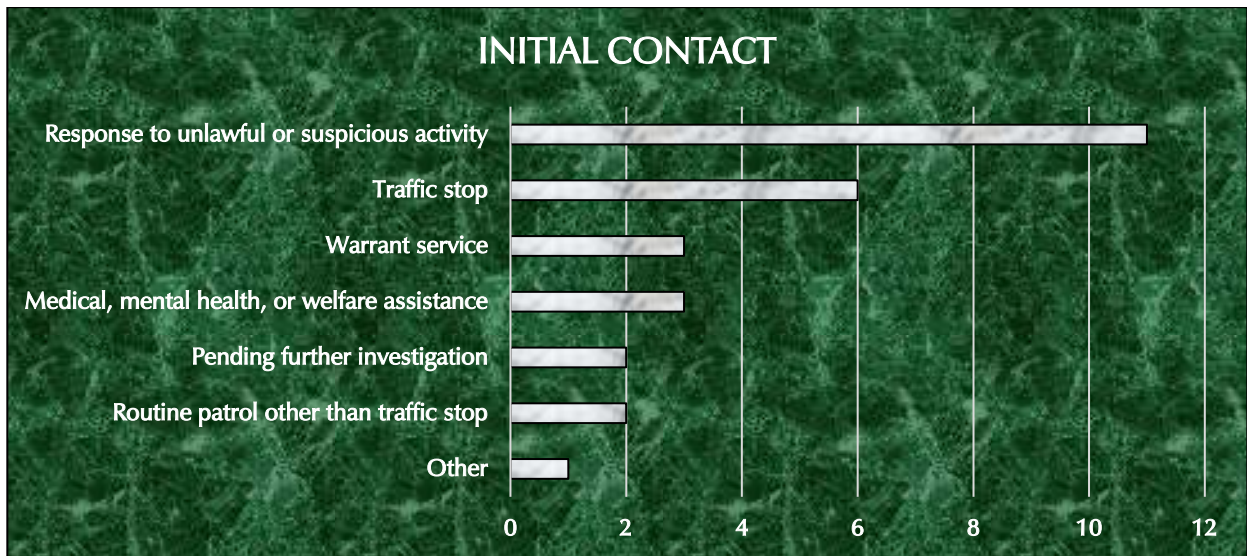


Data revealed that Deadly Use of Force incidents occurred predominately during the months

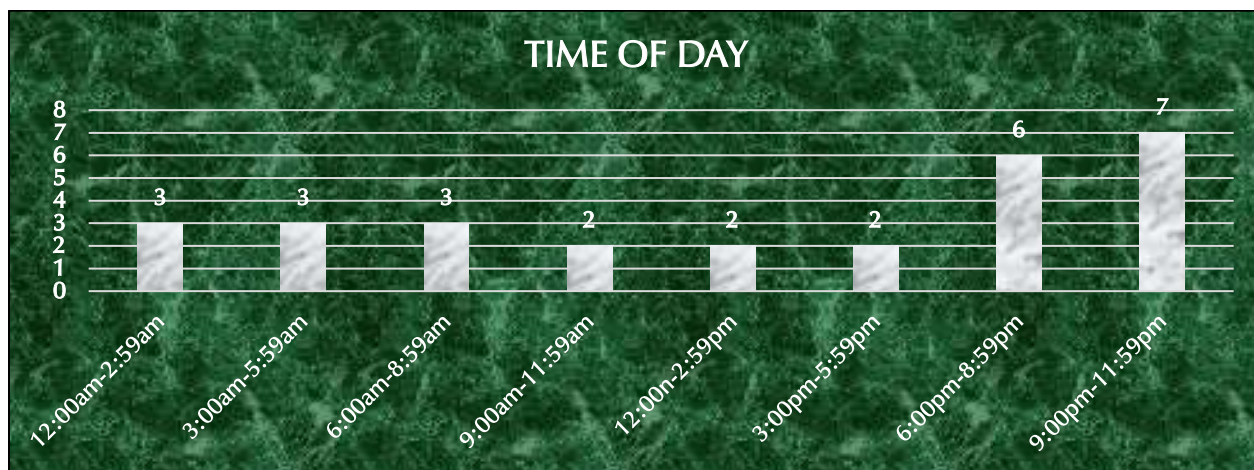
of May, June, and July, accounting for a combined total of thirteen (13) incidents, or 46.4% of all deaths reported. Although the number of reported deaths decreased to two each for the months of March, April, August, October, and November, the lower numbers still resulted in a combined total of 35.7%. No deaths were reported during the months of January. *Count reflects the number of incidents (28).*



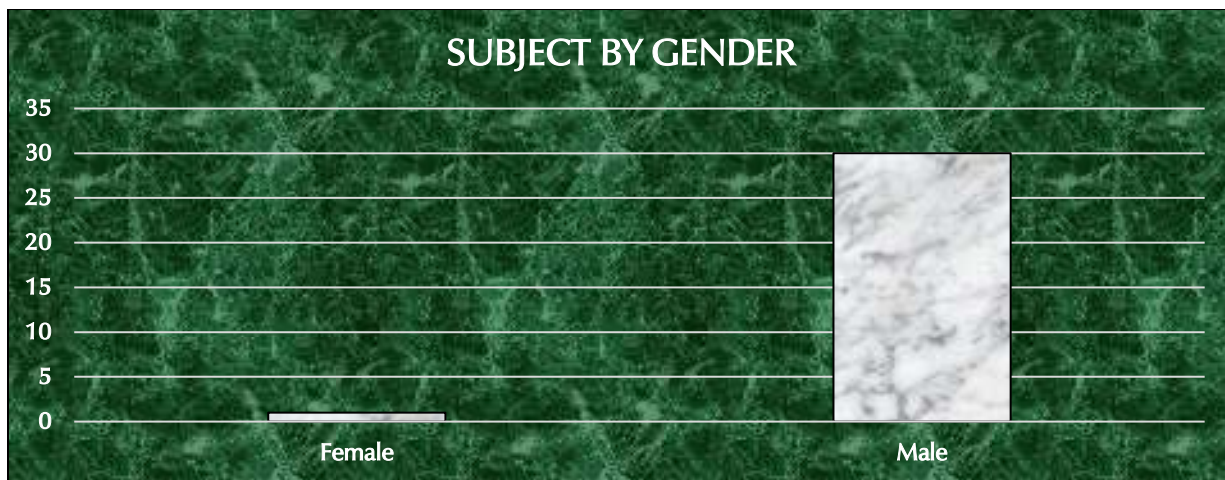
Further analysis revealed that 42.9% of Deadly Use of Force incidents occurred at Highway/Road/Alley/Street/Sidewalk locations followed by the location of Residence/Home at 32.1% in 2020. When analyzing incident location, the area of initial contact between the officer and subject must be considered. *Count reflects the number of incidents (28).*



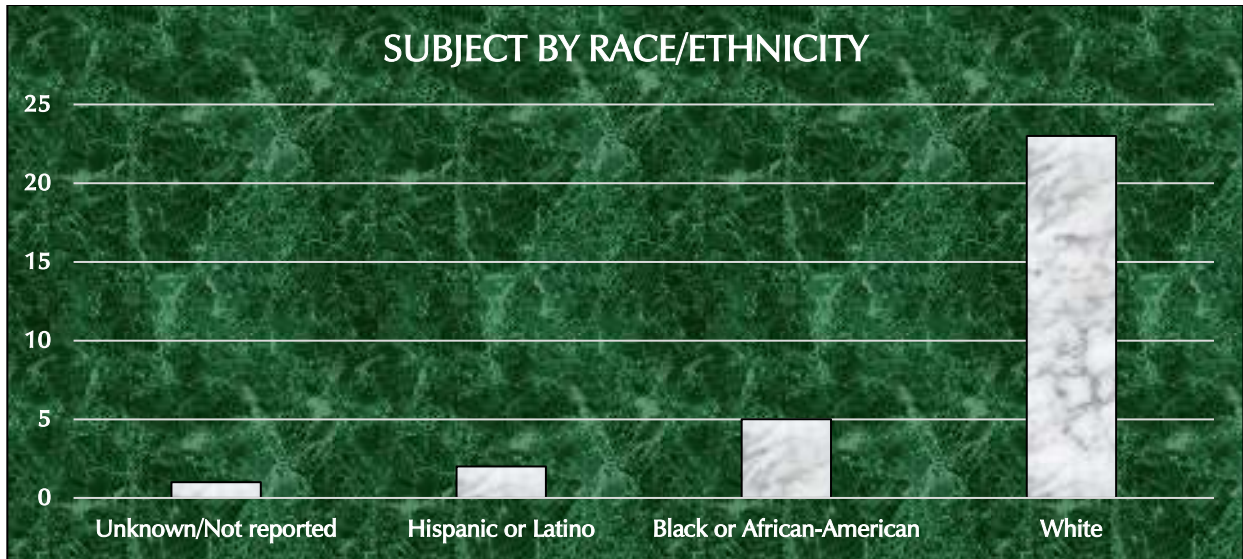
“Response to unlawful or suspicious activity” was the most reported contact type in 2020, accounting for 39.3% of all incidents. There were three instances in which officers responded to medical, mental health, or welfare assistance in 2020. Despite the number of deaths reported on Highway/Road/Alley/Street/Sidewalk locations, contacts occurring during a traffic stop were reported as the Initial Contact type a total of six times. *Count reflects the number of incidents (28).*



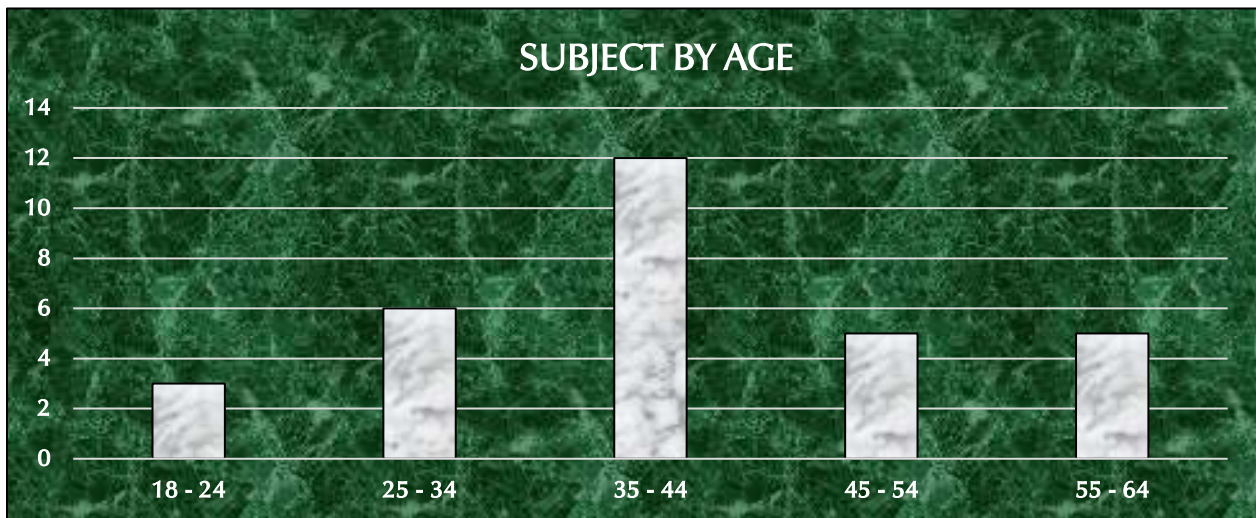
Incidents were reported most frequently as occurring between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m., followed by 6:00 p.m. to 8:59 p.m. *Count reflects the number of incidents (28).*



There were 28 deadly use of force incidents reported in 2020, a 64.7% increase when compared to the 17 incidents having occurred in 2019. A review of these incidents yielded information showing 96.8% of subjects were Male while Females accounted for only 3.2% of the total number. *Count in graph reflects the number of decedents (31).*



Further analysis revealed 74.2% of the total number of subjects identified as White, compared to 16.1% Black or African American subjects. *Count in graph reflects the number of decedents (31).*

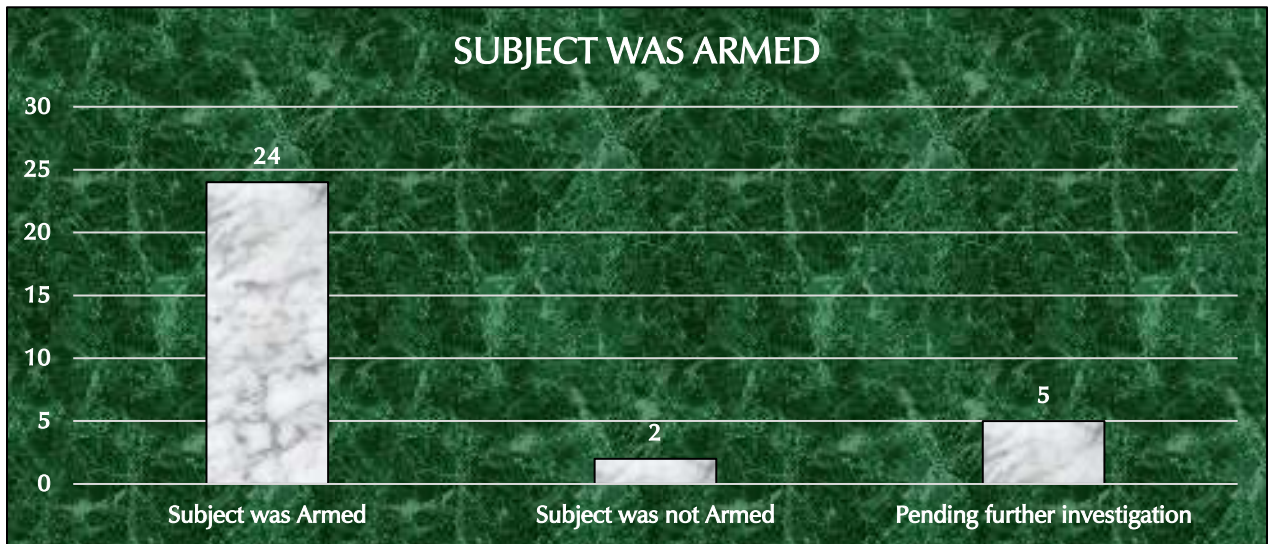


A review of all known subject ages determined the age group of 35-44 accounted for 38.7% of all subjects reported. The age groups of 45-54 and 55-64 showed an equal number of persons involved in incidents for the year 2020. Younger age groups, such as those reported as being under the age of 18 had no reported subjects, followed by the 18-24 age group reporting only three. There were no persons over the age of 65 reported as being involved in a Law Enforcement-Related Death incident. *Count reflects the number of decedents (31).*

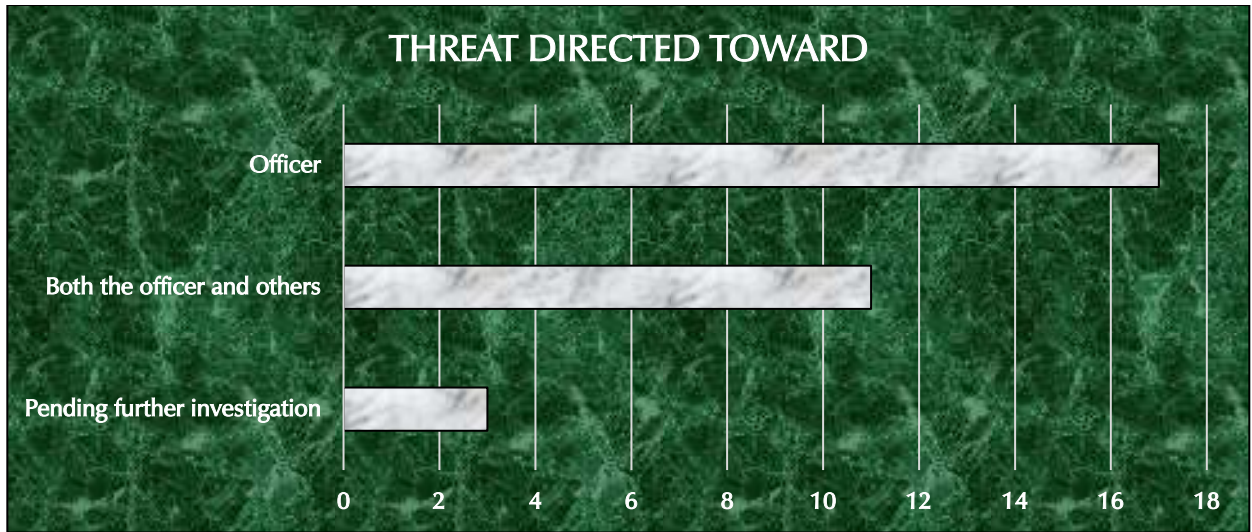
SUBJECT RESISTED

The data element of “Resisted” is used to indicate whether the subject involved resisted against an officer during the initial contact. Some examples of resistance types include fleeing, barricaded subjects, verbal threats, resisting arrest, physical assault on officer or others, display/use of a weapon or noncompliance to verbal commands. The most frequently reported type of resistance was ‘Displaying a weapon at an officer or another’ at 31.7%. The second most frequently reported was ‘Using a firearm against an officer or another’ at 22.0%.

Data indicates 100.0% of decedents resisted arrest in some form against law enforcement officers.



The data element of “Armed” is used to indicate whether the subject had, or appeared to have, a weapon during an incident. Of the 28 reported deadly use of force incidents in 2020, 77.4% of incidents were reported as “Subject was Armed” during the initial contact between the officer and the subject. *Count reflects the number of decedents (31).*



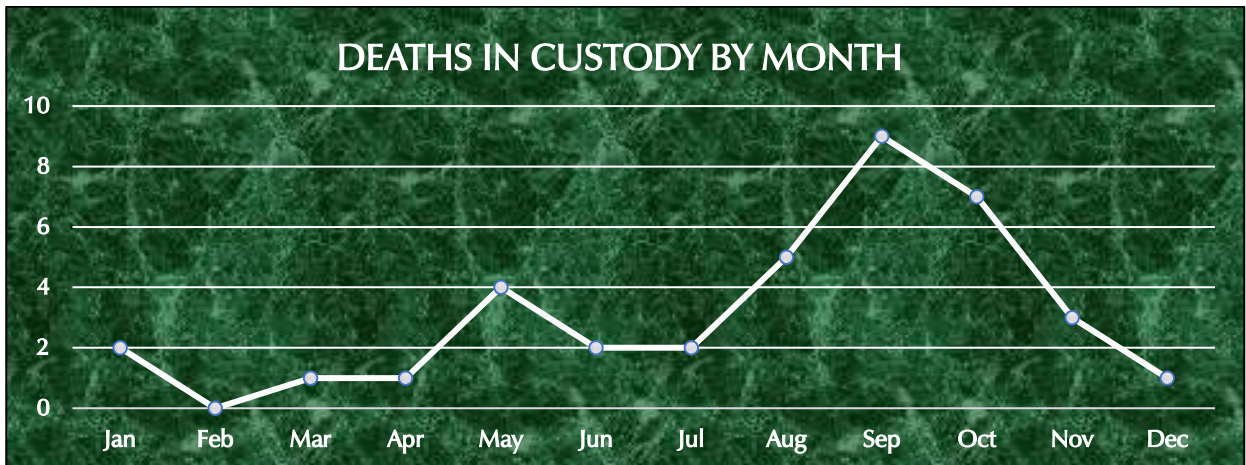
An officer was threatened in 54.8% of the total number of incidents reported in 2020. 35.5% of incidents indicated the subject threatened both the officer(s) and others. Three incidents were documented as “Pending Further Investigation”. In the reporting of Law Enforcement-Related Deaths, it may be necessary to delay the entry of unknown information until the agency investigation is complete. Upon completion of the investigation, the agency can edit or modify the initial incident to reflect the outcome of the investigation. *Count reflects the number of decedents (31).*

SECTION TWO: ARREST-RELATED NON-FORCIBLE DEATHS (ARNFD)

This section analyzes deaths which occurred in the presence of police but were not directly related to the use of force by a law enforcement official. As mentioned in the introduction, an Arrest-Related Non-Forcible Death (ARNFD) is any death attributed to suicide, alcohol, drug intoxication, or medical conditions (i.e., cardiac arrest, etc.) occurring during the process of an arrest by, or in the custody of, state or local law enforcement personnel.

Of the Law Enforcement-Related Deaths reported in 2020, one death met the Arrest-Related Non-Forcible Death (ARNFD) reporting criteria. The agency’s Initial Contact with the subject was reported as a “Civilian Request for Response to Criminal or Suspicious Activity.” In addition to information specific to the incident, the Manner of Death is another important data element when analyzing ARNFD incidents and, in this case, the Manner of Death was reported as “Overdose”. The subject demographics revealed the decedent to be a White Male, Not Hispanic or Latino, aged 32. The subject was not armed, nor did he threaten law enforcement or the public.

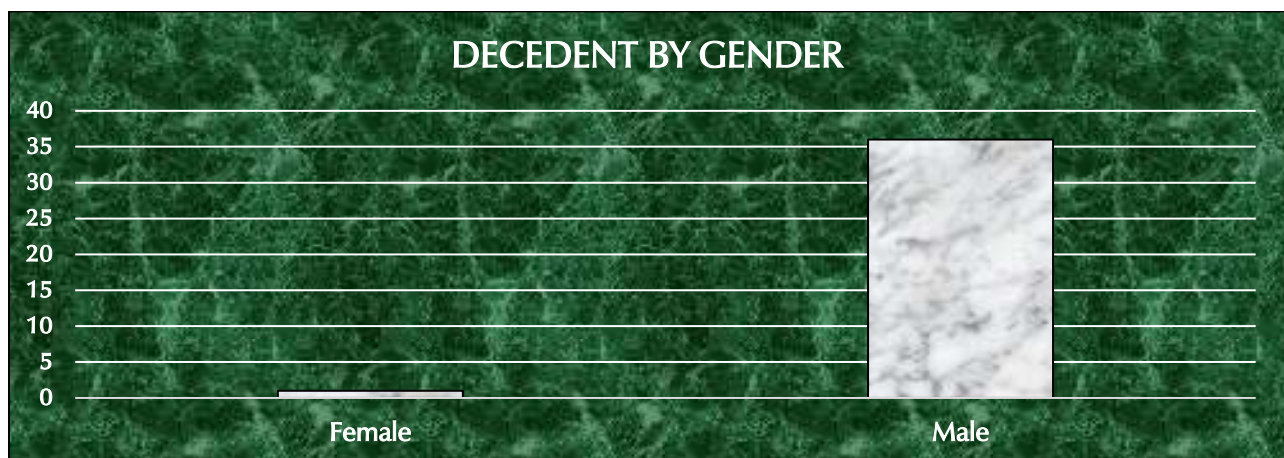
SECTION THREE: DEATHS IN CUSTODY REPORTING ACT (DCRA)



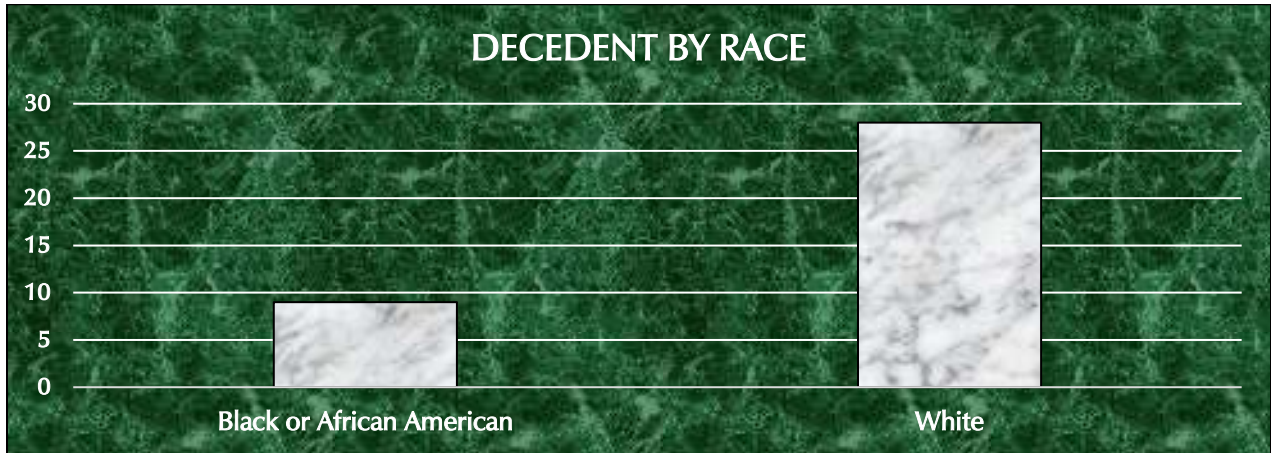
The Deaths in Custody Program collects data on deaths occurring in jails or state prisons.

In 2020, 37 deaths in custody were reported by 22 facilities across the state of Tennessee. September accounted for the highest reported month at 24.3%, followed by October

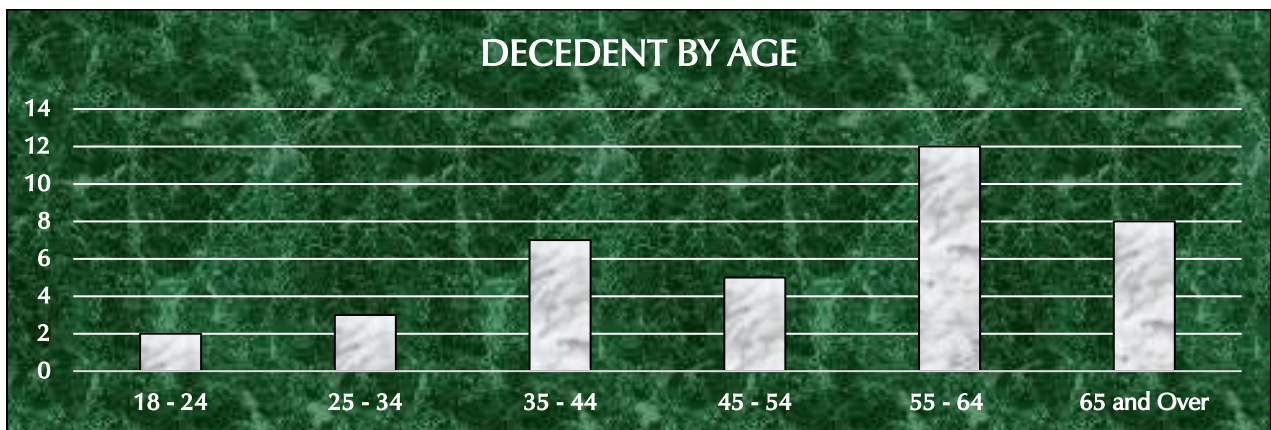
at 18.9%. While no deaths in custody were reported for the month of February and only one death was reported in the following months of March and April, the numbers tend to begin an upward trend in the months following July. As noted previously and on the chart above, after reaching their highest peak in September, the numbers follow a decreasing pattern through the winter months. *Count reflects the number of decedents (37).*



Male decedents accounted for the highest reported gender type at 97.3% compared to Females at 2.7%. As these numbers represent 100% of the population reported, it was determined that no other genders were reported. *Count reflects the number of decedents (37).*



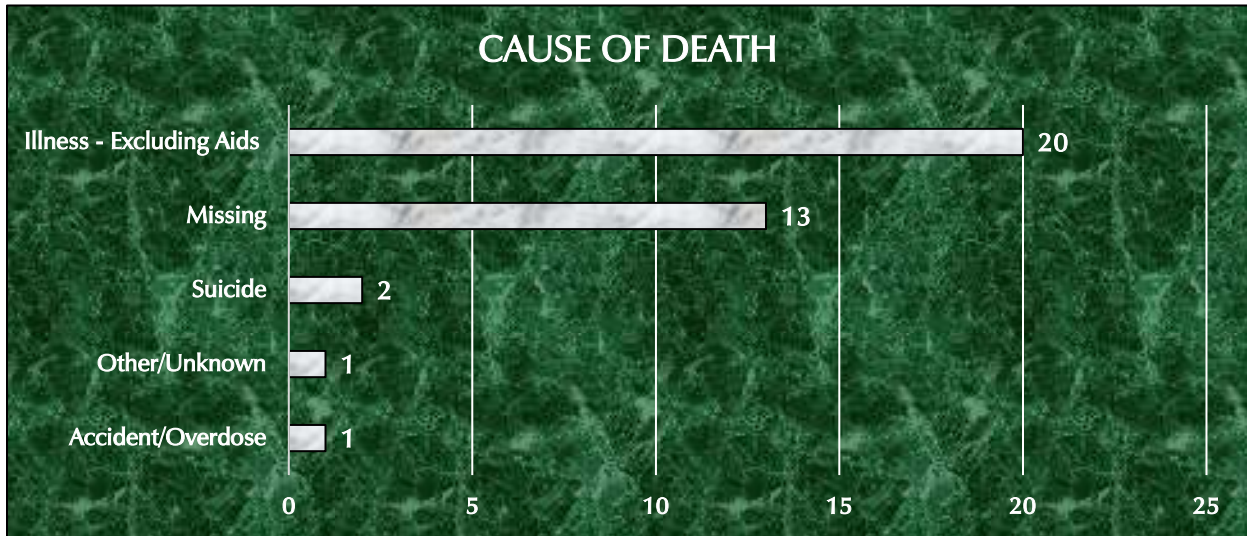
Inmates classified as White comprise 28 (75.7%) of all reported deaths in custody, while the remaining 9 (24.3%) were reported as Black or African American. No other races were represented by a decedent. *Count reflects the number of decedents (37).*



Although local jails book individuals of all ages, decedents under 24 are less likely to be reported by state prisons and decedents under the age of 18 are less likely to be reported by a local jail designed to house adult offenders.

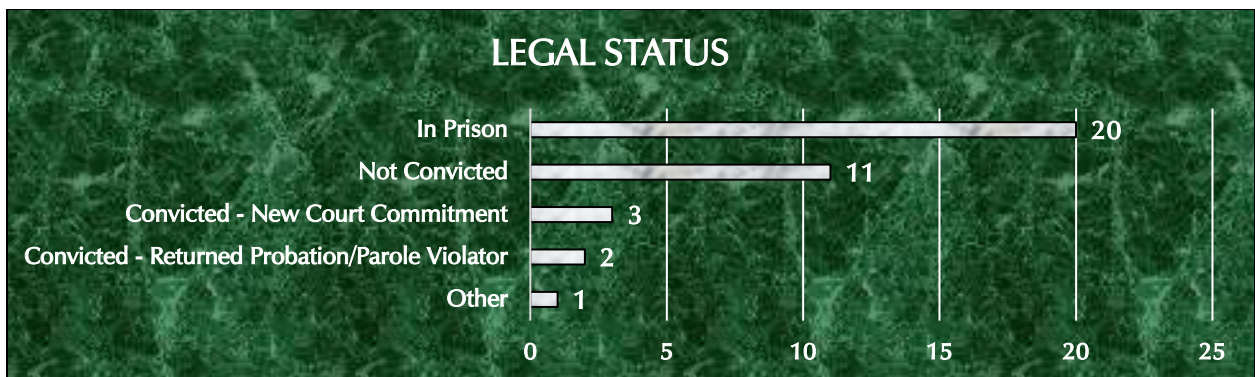
Local jails generally hold inmates less than a year whereas state prisons generally hold inmates for more than one year. As the population of a prison ages, the more common it

becomes for the decedent age range to increase. In 2020, the most frequently reported age range for decedents was 55-64 at 32.4%, while the second most frequently reported age range was 65 and Over at 21.6%. As expected, the least reported age range was 18-24 at 5.4%. and no decedents were reported to be under the age of 18 or to have an Unknown age. The youngest decedent was aged 21, while the oldest was 87 years of age. *Count reflects the number of decedents (37).*

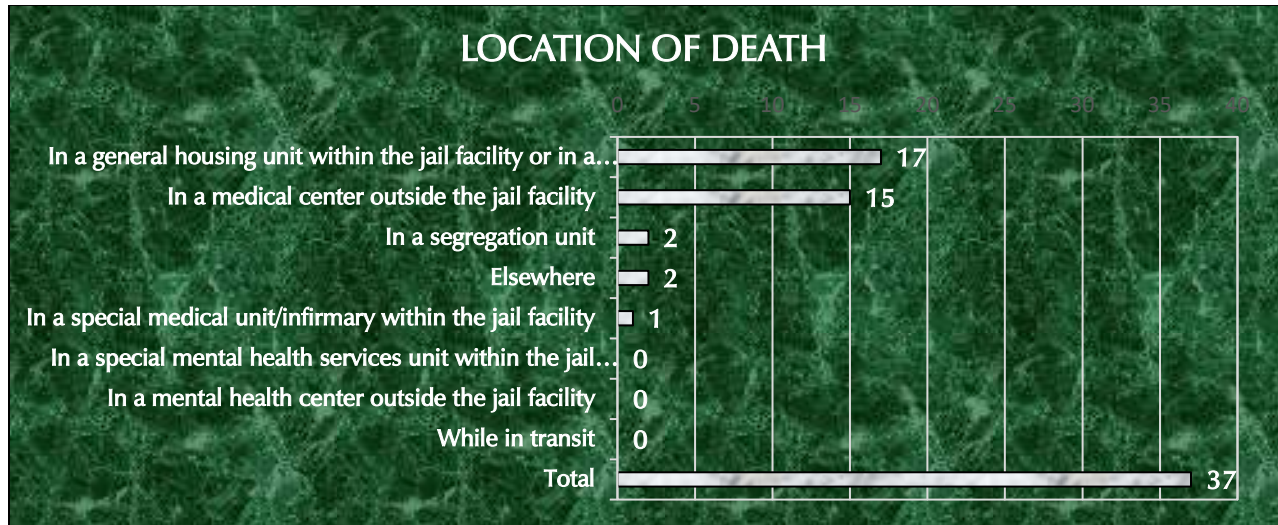


The most common cause of death for a person in custody of a state prison or local jail is one relating to an illness but excluding AIDS. These types of deaths constituted 54.1% of the reported types of causes for 2020 while deaths determined to be suicides comprised 5.4%.

Analysis of data for 2020 revealed that the most frequently reported medical condition for decedents was Not Applicable at 22 or 59.5%. The second most frequently reported condition was Missing at 13 or 35.1%. *Count reflects the number of decedents (37).*



For 2020, 11 (29.7%) of the decedents were not convicted of a crime. 54.1% of deaths in custody occurred in decedents who were already in jail. The youngest decedent was aged 22 while the oldest was 85 years of age.



For 2020, the most frequently reported location of death was in a general housing unit within the jail facility or in a general housing unit on jail grounds at 45.9%. The second most frequently reported location of death was in a medical center outside the jail facility at 40.5%. The least frequently reported location was in a special medical unit/infirmiry within the jail facility at 2.7%. *Count reflects the number of decedents (37).*



Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, April 2021 Public Authorization Number 348133, electronic copies only. This publication was promulgated at a cost of \$ 0.00 per copy.