

California Vital Data (Cal-ViDa) Technical Notes: Death

Data Source:

Vital Records Business Intelligence System (VRBIS):

- Electronic Death Registration System (CA-EDRS), 2014 – Ongoing

Suggested Citation

State of California, Department of Public Health, *California Vital Data (Cal-ViDa)*, Death Query, <https://cal-vida.cdph.ca.gov/>, Last modified< Date last modified>.

Example:

State of California, Department of Public Health, *California Vital Data (Cal-ViDa)*, Death Query, <https://cal-vida.cdph.ca.gov/>, Last modified September 21,2020.

Limitations of Death Data

Death data is refreshed monthly. Counts may change as new data is added and records are updated.

Custom death reports in Cal-ViDa use data derived from information entered on death certificates. The death data is then loaded into the Cal-ViDa application using a data file generated by the Vital Records Business Intelligence System (VRBIS). Although some data fields within the death file are standardized, these variables may still contain missing or erroneous data entries. Transformations have been applied to the data in Cal-ViDa to make the reports as meaningful as possible; however, there may be discrepancies between separate reports and different queries may exclude different records causing total counts to differ.

Demographic death information in Cal-ViDa is provided by an informant who may or may not have been known to the decedent. Medical information related to the cause of death is provided by either a physician, coroner, or medical examiner. Incomplete data will be present in Cal-ViDa for records in which an investigation is needed to determine the identity and/or cause of death of the decedent. Records in Cal-ViDa will be refreshed on a monthly basis as updated information becomes available. Updates will continue for 24 months following the date of death.

Records for California residents who died out of state are added to Cal-ViDa on an annual basis. Records that have been sealed, such as those registered in error, are removed from Cal-ViDa on an annual basis.

Data Transformations

All Death Queries:

All counts represent records with a unique State File Number (SFN). Existing death records are replaced when updated records with the same SFN are loaded into Cal-ViDa. Pseudo SFNs have been created for historical records that are missing SFNs.

Race/Ethnicity:

The multi-race status and the Hispanic ancestry/origin are both used to determine the race/ethnicity category of the decedent. All individuals with Hispanic ancestry/origin are categorized as Hispanic in Cal-ViDa. For example, multi-race individuals with Hispanic ancestry or origin are categorized as Hispanic in Cal-ViDa, while multi-race individuals without Hispanic ancestry or origin are categorized as Non-Hispanic Multi-Race. Non-Hispanic other and unknown are combined into Non-Hispanic Other/Unknown.

City of Residence:

The Cal-ViDa city list available for query on the Place of Residence page is limited to cities with a population of 20,000 or greater. City population is based on California Department of Finance population estimates: [Tables of January 2019 City Population Ranked by Size, Numeric, and Percent Change](#).

Note: Because the city reference list in VRBIS is based on the 2010 Census, the city of Jurupa Valley is not included in the code list and is unavailable to be queried at this time.

Residence ZIP Codes:

The list of ZIP Codes available for query on the Place of Residence page is based on valid ZIP Codes for California from the ZIP Code list in the [California Open Data Portal County and ZIP Code References dataset](#).

Variable Descriptions

Time Period and Frequency:

Time Period:

Year selections for the Time Period generate results for the specified years when the deaths occurred.

Time Frequency:

Selections for Time Frequency determine whether generated results will be tabulated annually (By Year) or monthly (By Month) by the year or month in which the death occurred.

Residence/Place of Occurrence:

Place of Residence:

Selecting Place of Residence produces counts of deaths of Californians – even if the death did not take place in California.

Place of Death:

Selecting Place of Death produces counts of deaths that occurred in California.

Place of Residence:

Statewide:

Selecting Statewide on the Place of Residence page produces reports with statewide counts of deaths of Californians.

County:

Selecting County on the Place of Residence page produces reports with counts by county where the decedent resided.

City:

Selecting City on the Place of Residence page produces reports with counts by city where the decedent resided.

ZIP Code:

Selecting ZIP Code on the Place of Residence page produces reports with counts by the ZIP Code where the decedent resided.

Place of Death:

Statewide:

Selecting Statewide on the Place of Death page produces reports with statewide counts of deaths that occurred in California.

County:

Selecting County on the Place of Death page produces reports with counts by county where the death occurred.

Demographics and Death Details:

Age (Years) Pre-defined Age Group:

There are two pre-defined age groupings that can be selected: 10-Year Age Groups and 5-Year Age Groups.

10-Year Age Groups include the following categories: "Less than 1 year", "1 - 4 years", "5 - 14 years", "15 - 24 years", "25 - 34 years", "35 - 44 years", "45 - 54 years", "55 - 64 years", "65 - 74 years", "75 - 84 years", and "85 years and over".

5-Year Age Groups include the following categories: "Less than 1 year", "1 - 4 years", "5 - 9 years", "10 - 14 years", "15 - 19 years", "20 - 24 years", "25 - 29 years", "30 - 34 years", "35 - 39 years", "40 - 44 years", "45 - 49 years", "50 - 54 years", "55 - 59 years", "60 - 64 years", "65 - 69 years", "70 - 74 years", "75 - 79 years", "80 - 84 years", "85 - 89 years", "90 - 94 years", "95 - 99 years", and "100 years and over".

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Sex:

Sex includes the following categories: “Male”, “Female.” Note: records listed as “Nonbinary” or “Unknown” are excluded due to small counts.

Race/Ethnicity:

Describes the Race/Ethnicity of the decedent. Includes the following categories: “Hispanic”, “Non-Hispanic White”, “Non-Hispanic Asian”, “Non-Hispanic Black/African-American”, “Non-Hispanic Multi-Race”, “Non-Hispanic Native American/Alaskan Native”, “Non-Hispanic Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian”, and “Non-Hispanic Other/Unknown”. “Non-Hispanic Other” and “Unknown” are combined into a single category due to small counts.

Country of Birth:

Country of Birth includes the following categories: “United States”, “Foreign Born”, and “Unknown.”

Education:

Education represents the highest level attained by the decedent. Includes the following categories: “Less than High School”; “High School Graduate or GED Completed”; “Some College Credit, No 4-Year Degree”; “Bachelor’s Degree”; “Graduate Degree”; and “Unknown.”

Marital Status:

Marital Status includes the following categories: “Married (including SRDP)”, “Widowed”, “Divorced”, “Never Married”, and “Unknown.” SRDP is an abbreviation of State Registered Domestic Partnership. “Widowed” includes surviving member of SRDP and simultaneous death of spouses.

Veteran Status:

Veteran Status is whether the decedent was ever in the United States armed forces. Includes: “Yes”, “No”, and “Unknown.”

Underlying Causes of Death:

There are three pre-defined cause of death groupings that can be selected: 14 Leading Causes of Death, 113 Selected Causes of Death, and Rankable Causes of Death. The Tenth Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) is used to categorize the underlying cause of death into the pre-defined cause of death groupings. For more information on ICD-10 codes, please visit the [ICD-10 website](#) hosted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

14 Leading Causes of Death includes 14 of the leading causes of death in California selected from the Rankable Causes of Death below and an “Other” category containing any causes of death not in the 14 leading causes. The categories include: “Accidents (unintentional injuries),” “Alzheimer’s disease,” “Assault (homicide),” “Cerebrovascular diseases,” “Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis,” “Chronic lower respiratory diseases,” “Diabetes mellitus,” “Diseases of heart,” “Essential hypertension and hypertensive renal disease,” “Influenza and pneumonia,” “Intentional self-harm (suicide),” “Malignant neoplasms,” “Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis,” “Parkinson’s disease,” and

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“Other.” To view the ICD-10 codes included within each category, please see the supplemental workbook posted on the [Cal-ViDa Help and FAQ](#) site.

113 Selected Causes of Death: See supplemental workbook posted on the [Cal-ViDa Help and FAQ](#) site.

Rankable Causes of Death: See supplemental workbook posted on the [Cal-ViDa Help and FAQ](#) site.

Manner of Death:

Manner of Death reflects the value entered on the death certificate by a coroner or medical examiner. Because most California death certificates are not completed by a coroner or medical examiner, this field is blank for many records. If no value is present, the death is categorized as “Natural” within Cal-ViDa. The Manner of Death categories include: “Accident,” “Suicide,” “Homicide,” “Pending Investigation,” “Could Not Be Determined,” and “Natural.” The counts obtained using Manner of Death may differ from those obtained using the Underlying Cause of Death due to discrepancies between the Manner of Death listed by the coroner or medical examiner and the ICD-10 code assigned by NCHS.

Place of Death Type:

Place of Death Type is the type of place where the death occurred and includes the following categories: “Inpatient,” “Emergency Room/Outpatient,” “Decedent's Home,” “Hospice Facility,” “Nursing Home/Long Term Care Facility,, and “Other/Unknown.” Due to small counts, “Dead on Arrival” and “Unknown” are combined with “Other” as the category “Other/Unknown.”

Disposition Type:

Disposition Type categories include “Burial,” “Cremation,” “Alkaline Hydrolysis,” “Scientific Use,” and “Other/Unknown.” Cremation counts may be slightly higher than the actual number of cremations that occurred because ambiguous codes that are commonly used for “Cremation” but occasionally used for “Burial” are included in the “Cremation” category. The category “Alkaline Hydrolysis” was added in late 2020 and will return zero results for deaths prior to its addition.