

National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)



Data to Save Lives

Each year, about 55,000 violent deaths occur in this country and cost the United States \$60 billion in medical care and lost productivity. Tragically, more than 38,000 people die by suicide in the United States each year. Homicide claims another 16,000 people in this country annually. We know these numbers can be reduced.

To stop violent deaths from happening in the first place, we must first know the facts. CDC's National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) is a state-based surveillance system that pools information about the "who, when, where, and how" from data on violent deaths to provide insights on "why" they occur. To answer the questions surrounding these deaths, NVDRS:

- Links records to describe in detail the circumstances that may contribute to a violent death, including health, financial, and other stressors;
- Identifies violent deaths occurring in the same incident to help describe the circumstances of multiple victim homicides or homicides followed by the suicide of the suspect;
- Provides timely preliminary information on violent deaths; and
- Characterizes the relationship of the victim to the suspect.



Filling in the Gaps

Frontline investigators, including homicide detectives, coroners, crime lab investigators and medical examiners, collect valuable information about violent deaths. But these data are often not combined to provide a complete picture.

In 2002, CDC received funding to create NVDRS. This provided an opportunity to link detailed information – from death certificates, police reports, coroner or medical examiner records, and crime laboratories – into a useable, anonymous database. Today NVDRS operates in 18 states, pulling together data on violent deaths (including child maltreatment fatalities, intimate partner homicides, other homicides, suicides, and deaths where individuals are killed by law enforcement in the line of duty), unintentional firearm injury deaths, and deaths of undetermined intent.

NVDRS data are critical to:

- Informing decision makers and program planners about the magnitude, trends, and characteristics of violent deaths so that appropriate prevention efforts can be identified and put into place.
- Facilitating the evaluation of state-based prevention programs and strategies.



National Violent Death Reporting System

Informing Prevention

As NVDRS data become available, state and local violence prevention practitioners are looking to NVDRS to guide their prevention programs, policies, and practices. For example, NVDRS data has provided opportunities to:

- Collaborate with the Department of Defense (DoD) and Veteran's Administration (VA) and link data from both systems (NVDRS and DoD Suicide Event Reporting System) to better understand the characteristics and circumstances of suicides among current and former military personnel.
- Identify violent deaths that suggest gang-like activity for more accurate classification of high-risk areas and opportunities for gang prevention programs.
- Partner with older adult caregivers and local coalition groups for instructional education on the signs of potential elder suicide.
- Look beyond law enforcement agency boundaries and examine comprehensive statistics for neighborhoods, counties, regions, and states to further understand issues related to intimate-partner homicide.
- Access datasets to provide customized reports of fatal and nonfatal injury-related data.

Moving Forward

As CDC expands NVDRS across states and territories, information will be available for every state to inform their state and local prevention efforts. The standardized information collected in NVDRS will also facilitate comparison across states and ensure we have enhanced information on the national scope of the problem to monitor and track trends and inform national prevention efforts.

Beginning in 2010, NVDRS implemented a module on intimate partner violence (IPV) to provide a systematic way of capturing additional information on incidents with elements of IPV. This will allow states to monitor circumstances unique to intimate partner violence. In 2012, CDC released its fourth annual report summarizing data on violent deaths. These annual reports include a comprehensive overview of the most recent year of data.

CDC's NVDRS increases our knowledge about where violent deaths occur, who is most at risk, the factors that contribute to violent deaths, and allows us to track trends over time. These data provide the foundation for building successful strategies for preventing violence so that all communities are safe and free from violence and people can live life to their full potential.

