



ACCIDENTAL DEATHS IN THE UNITED STATES

Source: National Safety Council. Accident Facts, 1994-1997.

#1 Motor Vehicle Accidents – Approximately 47,000 deaths per year

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of accidental deaths in the U.S. each year. They include deaths resulting from accidents involving mechanically or electrically powered vehicles (excluding rail vehicles) that occur on or off the road.

#2 Falls – Approximately 13,000 deaths per year

This category includes all deaths from falls except those associated with transport vehicles. For example, a person who is killed as the result of falling while boarding a bus or train would not be included in this category.

#3 Poisoning – Approximately 7,000 deaths per year

The poisoning category is divided into two subcategories: (1) poisoning by solids and liquids, and (2) poisoning by gases and vapors. The first category includes deaths that result from the ingestion of drugs, medicine, widely recognized solid and liquid poisons, mushrooms, and shellfish. It does not include poisoning from spoiled food or salmonella. The second category includes death caused by incomplete combustion (for example, gas vapors from an oven or unlit pilot light) or from carbon monoxide (for example, exhaust fumes from an automobile). In a typical year, there are approximately 6,000 deaths in the first category and 1,000 in the second.

#4 Drowning – Approximately 5,000 deaths per year

This category includes work-related and nonwork-related drownings but excludes those associated with floods or other natural disasters.

#5 Fire-related Injuries – Approximately 4,000 deaths per year

This category includes deaths from burns, asphyxiation, falls, and those that result from falling objects in a fire.

#6 Suffocation (ingested object) – Approximately 4,000 deaths per year

This category includes deaths from the ingestion of an object that blocks the air passages. In many such deaths, the ingested object is food.

#7 Firearms – Approximately 2,000 deaths per year

This category includes deaths that result when recreational activities involving firearms or household accidents involving firearms result in death. For example, a person killed in a home while cleaning a firearm would be included in this category. However, a person killed in combat would not be.

Other – Approximately 14,000 deaths per year

This category includes deaths resulting from medical complications arising out of mistakes made by health care professionals, air transport injuries, interaction with machinery, mechanical suffocation, and the impact of falling objects.

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