



ARREST-RELATED DEATHS IN THE UNITED STATES, 2003-2005

Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services

1970 W. Broad Street, 4th Floor

Columbus, Ohio 43223

Toll-Free: (800) 448-4842

Telephone: (614) 466-7782

Fax: (614) 466-0308

www.ocjs.ohio.gov



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In October 2007, the Bureau of Justice Statistics released the Special Report *Arrest-Related Deaths in the United States, 2003-2005*. Forty-seven states and the District of Columbia reported 2,002 arrest-related deaths to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' Deaths in Custody Reporting Program (DCRP) as mandated by the federal Deaths in Custody Reporting Act (Public Law 106-297) as a condition of receiving federal correctional grants.

All states were required to submit a record of any death that occurred 'in the process of arrest'. A DCRP questionnaire was used by the states to report any such death. Information to complete the questionnaire came from many sources, including local law enforcement agencies, media, coroners or medical examiners, state police or highway patrol, and prosecutors, among others.

The following information comes from this report. A copy of the full report can be obtained on the BJS web site: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ardus05.pdf>.

- Homicides by law enforcement officers made up 55 percent of all deaths during arrests by state and local agencies. Nearly all such homicides involved the use of a firearm.
 - While assaults and use of weapons on officers by subjects being arrested were common circumstances in homicides by law enforcement officers, the number of persons killed by law enforcement officers in the process of making arrests from 2003 to 2005 was less than 1 percent of all reported assaults on officers over the same time period¹.
- After homicide, drug and alcohol intoxication accounted for 13 percent of all deaths, followed by suicides (12 percent), accidental injuries (7 percent), and illness or natural causes (6 percent).
- Nearly all decedents were male. Forty-four percent were white, 32 percent were black, and 20 percent were Hispanic or Latino. Fifty-seven percent fell between the ages of 25 and 44.
- In 56 percent of arrest-related deaths, the decedent's most serious offense was a violent offense.
- In 80 percent of the law enforcement homicides, the deceased reportedly used a weapon to threaten or assault the arresting officers.
- Conducted-energy devices (CEDs) such as stun guns or tasers were involved in 36 arrest-related deaths reported between 2003 and 2005. In about half (17) of these deaths, the device was reported as the weapon that caused the death. In the remaining 19 deaths, the use of a CED was indicated but not reported as the cause of the death.
- In Ohio, there were 71 reported arrest-related deaths between 2003 and 2005. Of these, 69 percent were categorized as homicides, 11 percent were due to intoxication, 8 percent to accidents, and 3 percent to illness. For 8 percent of the cases, the cause of death was categorized as 'other' or was unknown.

¹ FBI's Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) data, 2003-2005.