

## 2,002 Died in Police Custody in U.S. in 2003-05: Justice Department Report

FOX NEWS

Friday, October 12, 2007



**WASHINGTON** - More than 2,000 criminal suspects died in police custody over a three-year period, half of them killed by officers as they scuffled or attempted to flee, the government said Thursday. The study by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics is the first nationwide compilation of the reasons behind arrest-related deaths in the wake of high-profile police assaults or killings involving Abner Louima and Amadou Diallo in New York in the late 1990s.

The review found 55 percent of the 2,002 arrest-related deaths from 2003 through 2005 were due to homicide by state and local law enforcement officers. Alcohol and drug intoxication caused 13 percent of the deaths, followed by suicides at 12 percent, accidental injury at 7 percent and illness or natural causes, 6 percent. The causes for the deaths of the remaining 7 percent were unknown. The highly populated states of California, Texas and Florida led the pack for both police killings and overall arrest-related deaths. Georgia, Maryland and Montana were not included in the study because they did not submit data. New York now ranks sixth nationwide in the number of police killings, behind Arizona and Illinois, according to Thursday's report.

Most of those who died in custody were men (96 percent) between the ages of 18 and 44 (77 percent). Approximately 44 percent were white; 32 percent black; 20 percent Hispanic; and 4 percent were of other or multiple races. "Keep in mind we have 2,000 deaths out of almost 40 million arrests over three years, so that tells you by their nature they are very unusual cases," said Christopher J. Mumola, who wrote the study.

State laws and police department policy typically let officers use deadly force to defend themselves or others from the threat of death or serious injury. Deadly force also is allowed to prevent the escape of a suspect in a violent felony who poses an immediate threat to others. The Justice Department study released Thursday suggests that most of the police killings would be considered justified, although it does not make that final determination. About 80 percent of the cases involved criminal suspects who reportedly brandished a weapon "to threaten or assault" the arresting officers. Another 17 percent involved suspects who allegedly grabbed, hit or fought with police. More than one-third of the police killings, or about 36 percent, involved a suspect who tried to flee or otherwise escape arrest.

Among law enforcement, 380 officers were killed in the line of duty over the three-year period and 174,760 were reportedly assaulted, according to FBI data. Most of the deaths were accidental (221), while 159 were homicides. Blacks were disproportionately represented in arrest-related deaths due to alcohol or drug intoxication (41 percent vs. 33 percent for whites); accidental injury (42 percent vs. 37 percent for whites); and unknown causes (46 percent vs. 39 percent for whites). Arrest-related deaths involving tasers or other conducted-energy devices are rising, although overall numbers are low. From 2003-2005, there were 36 such deaths total, with a jump from 3 cases in 2003 to 24 in 2005. About half of arrest-related suicides (51 percent) involved attempted arrests for violent crimes. Whites were disproportionately represented in those deaths (57 percent), six times the percent of blacks (14 percent). Hispanics accounted for 26 percent of the cases, and 3 percent involved other or multiple races.

1. In accordance with the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics identify the approximate number of criminal suspects who died in police custody as a fraction, decimal, percentage, and overall casualty count via the following categories: a) homicide by state and local law enforcement officers, b) alcohol and drug intoxication, c) suicides, d) accidental injury, e) illness and natural causes. Neatly organize all of this data into a table, coordinate graph, and a pie chart.
2. What percentage of the United States blatantly neglected to participate in the Justice Department's study?
3. Of the criminal suspects who died in police custody, how many were a) women? b) Caucasian? c) African American? d) Hispanic? e) Multiple races? f) *Not* between the ages 18 and 44.
4. Of the criminal suspects who died in police custody, how many a) involved criminal suspects who reportedly brandished a weapon, b) involved suspects who allegedly grabbed, hit or fought with police, and c) involved a suspect who tried to flee or otherwise escape arrest.
5. Armed solely with the information acquired from the passage above, describe the stereotypical however, more importantly, statistically supported criminal suspect who died in police custody (i.e. gender, race, age, reasons suspect was killed, etc.) Does this support any initial assumptions you may have had regarding criminal suspects killed in police custody? Explain.
6. In the passage above, in paragraph form, explain at least five ways using the "Four-Step Reading" poster simplifies understanding of the material. Be specific.
7. In complete sentences, using contextual clues only, explain the meaning of the words: *compilation* and *brandished*. Additionally, use each in a sentence to demonstrate further comprehension.
8. In paragraph form, explain at least five legitimate and educational purposes behind The Daughtry Times.