



Oklahoma Statistical Analysis Center

Arrest-Related Deaths, 2010

The Oklahoma Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) is housed in the Office of Criminal Justice Statistics at the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. The Oklahoma SAC is funded in part by the State Justice Statistics Program, which is administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).

Introduction

Annually, the Oklahoma SAC collects and submits data on deaths that occur *in the process of arrest* to BJS. Data collection started after the implementation of the *Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2000* (P.L. 106-297). Other state agencies collect and report deaths that occur later in the criminal justice process, including those that occur during the booking process or while an individual is incarcerated. According to BJS, qualifying deaths include:

ALL deaths that occur in process of arrest including those:

- killed by any use of force by law enforcement agents;
- in the physical custody, or under the physical restraint of law enforcement officers, even if the person was not formally under arrest at the time;
- at crime/arrest scene or medical facility prior to booking;
- killed in vehicular pursuit accidents during which law enforcement officers took direct action against the driver or vehicle (e.g., shooting at the suspect, forcing the vehicle off the road with an obstruction, spike strip, or the officer's own vehicle);
- while in transit to or from law enforcement facilities;
- while confined in lockups or booking centers (facilities from which arrestees are usually transferred with 72 hours and not held beyond arraignment).

The following deaths are EXCLUDED:

- those confined in local jails (facilities which typically house inmates for periods beyond 72 hours and after arraignment);
- those confined in State prisons, State juvenile correctional facilities, or private correctional facilities;
- those killed in the course of law enforcement activities against whom no charges were intended;
- those who die before coming into contact with any law enforcement officer (e.g., subjects of arrest warrants who died before any arrest process began);
- and those killed in vehicular accidents during which law enforcement officers did NOT take any direct action against the driver or vehicle.

This report provides a brief description of events surrounding each arrest-related death in 2010. Descriptive data and individual case summaries for each death are also provided. Additional findings, including an aggregate analysis of criminal history records, will be included in a future SAC Publication.

Acronyms Used in This Document:

- Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)
- Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI)
- Statistical Analysis Center (SAC)
- Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH)
- Medical Examiner (ME)

Table 1. Descriptive Data for Arrest-Related Deaths in 2010

Date	Sex	Race	Age	City	County	Manner of Death
01/06/10	Male	White	55	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	Suicide
01/09/10	Male	Black	28	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	Homicide
02/01/10	Male	Black	23	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	Homicide
02/08/10	Male	White	40	Shawnee	Pottawatomie	Homicide
02/26/10	Male	Black	25	Tulsa	Tulsa	Homicide
03/11/10	Male	White	22	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	Homicide
04/09/10	Male	White	49	Tulsa	Tulsa	Homicide
04/14/10	Male	White	24	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	Suicide
04/23/10	Male	White	31	Norman	Cleveland	Homicide
04/24/10	Male	White	20	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	Homicide
05/01/10	Male	American Indian	22	Pawnee	Pawnee	Homicide
05/05/10	Male	White	71	Shawnee	Pottawatomie	Suicide
07/05/10	Male	Black	44	Midwest City	Oklahoma	Accident
07/05/10	Male	Black	31	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	Illness
07/15/10	Male	Black	24	Norman	Cleveland	Suicide
07/29/10	Male	American Indian	28	Tulsa	Tulsa	Accident
09/16/10	Male	White	48	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	Natural
10/01/10	Female	Black	38	Muskogee	Muskogee	Homicide
10/06/10	Male	White	43	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	Suicide
12/29/10	Male	White	47	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	Suicide

Methodology

Staff collected data from several sources including newspapers, television reports, Internet searches, and medical examiner’s (ME) reports. Staff contacted the Medical Examiners’ Offices by e-mail throughout the year to request their reports. The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) provided data on deaths missed using traditional sources.

When a qualifying death was identified, staff requested the medical examiner’s report and reviewed media accounts of the event. After data was collected, staff completed a quarterly form and an individual form for each death, and then submitted the forms to BJS. SAC staff also collected data for state-level analysis, which included descriptive data, circumstances surrounding the death, weapons used by police, weapons used by the arrest subject, and behaviors of the arrest subject prior to death.

Findings

In 2010 there were 20 arrest-related deaths in Oklahoma.

Six deaths occurred in the first and second quarters, five in the third quarter, and three in the fourth quarter. This section provides descriptive and demographic data about each arrest subject and the events surrounding each death.

Descriptive Data for Each Arrest-Related Death

Table 1 summarizes the demographic data on the deceased individuals including sex, race, age, county where the death occurred, and the official manner of death.

The average age of the decedents was 36; the oldest was 71, and the youngest was 20. All but one of the decedents was male. Eleven of the individuals were White, seven were Black, and two were American Indian. Eleven deaths occurred in Oklahoma County, three in Tulsa County, two in both Cleveland and Pottawatomie County, and one in both Muskogee and Pawnee County. Thirteen of the deaths occurred in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Oklahoma’s two largest cities.

Cause of Death

Sixteen of the arrest subjects died from gunshot wounds, including wounds to the face, back, arms, and chest. Two of the subjects died from blunt force trauma to the head after they wrecked their vehicles during high speed police pursuits. There were also two Taser-related deaths, both in Oklahoma City. According to medical reports, both decedents had medical conditions that also contributed to their deaths.

Descriptive Data of Events Surrounding the Death

The following two tables provide descriptive data on the location of death and the cause of death. Table 4 provides data on behaviors exhibited by the decedent at the time of death. Table 5 outlines the most serious charges each decedent would have faced.

As indicated in Table 2, 80% of deaths occurred at the crime/arrest scene, while 20% of the deaths occurred at a medical facility. In 2010, none of the decedents died en route to the hospital or booking center.

Table 2. Location of Death

Location	Percent of Deaths
Statewide	100%
Crime/Arrest Scene	80
Medical Facility	20
En Route to Medical Facility	0
En Route to Booking Center	0

As shown in table 3, the MEs Office determined the official cause of death for all 20 arrest subjects. Homicide by law enforcement was the cause of death in 50% of the cases. Six deaths were caused by suicide, and two deaths were caused by illness in 2010.

Table 3. Cause of Death

Cause	Percent of Deaths
Total	100%
Homicide by Law Enforcement	50
Suicide	30
Accidental Injury	10
Illness/Natural Causes	10
Drug/Alcohol Intoxication	0

Prior to their death, arrest subjects displayed a range of behaviors, which included appearing intoxicated, threatening officers, resisting arrest, trying to escape or flee, and fighting with officers. Over half (55%) of the arrest subjects resisted arrest, and 15% appeared intoxicated.

Table 4. Behaviors Exhibited at Time of Death

Behaviors	Percent Exhibiting Behavior
Resisted Arrest	55%
Tried to Escape/Flee Custody	40
Fought Officer(s)	35
Threatened Officer(s)	20
Appeared Intoxicated	15
Mental Health Problems	10

Arrest subjects were facing a variety of charges at the time of their death. Charges included violent, non-violent/property, drug-related, and crimes against law enforcement.

Table 5. Most Serious Offense at Arrest

Charge	Number of Decedents
Violent Offense	6
Property Offense	5
Drug-Related Offense	1
Crime against Law Enforcement	2
Other	6

Eighty-eight percent (16 of 20) of arrest-related deaths were caused by a firearm. As mentioned, two deaths were caused by injuries sustained in car accidents, and two of the deaths involved the use of Tasers.

Conclusion

This report analyzed the descriptive data for arrest-related deaths that occurred in 2010. SAC staff reported 20 deaths to BJS. As mentioned, SAC staff will release an additional report, which will include an aggregate analysis of criminal history records, in the near future.

Case Descriptions

This section of the report describes the events surrounding each death. Staff removed all identifying information.

1. A 55-year-old male committed suicide after a seven hour standoff with Oklahoma City police. Officers were responding to a disturbance call. Another person was in the home but was released unharmed. The official manner of death was suicide.

2. A 28-year-old male was fatally shot by Oklahoma City police officers after he failed to stop for a traffic stop. According to reports, the decedent shot at officers and a car chase began. The chase ended two blocks away when officers shot the suspect. An officer was also hospitalized for injuries he sustained in the incident. The official manner of death was homicide.

3. A 23-year-old male was fatally shot by Oklahoma City police officers after he attempted to take an officer's gun at a local hospital. Officers initially responded to reports of a disturbance at the hospital. When they arrived the decedent and another man were fighting. While officers were attempting to break up the fight, the decedent tried to take the officer's gun. In response, officers shot the suspect. He reportedly was at the hospital to get help with a drug addiction. The official manner of death was homicide.

4. A 40-year-old male was shot by Shawnee police after he lunged at officers. Officers initially responded to a disturbance call made by the decedent's neighbor. According to her, the decedent threatened her with a knife. When officers attempted to talk to the suspect he reportedly lunged at them. The official manner of death was homicide.

5. A 25-year-old male died in Tulsa after sustaining injuries related to a domestic violence call. After determining a crime had been committed, officers attempted to handcuff decedent. A fight ensued; the decedent attempted to take the officer's gun and was then shot by the other officer. The official manner of death was homicide.

6. A 22-year-old male was shot by Oklahoma City police after he attempted to run them over with a stolen car. The decedent had recently escaped from a correctional facility. Officers spotted the stolen car and attempted to pull the driver over. As officers walked to the side of the car, the decedent attempted to run them over. Officers then shot at the moving car, eventually shooting the decedent several times. The official manner of death was homicide.

7. A 49-year-old male died after he was shot by Tulsa police officers. The officers were attempting to serve a warrant at a local motorcycle club. When officers entered the club, they observed the suspect reaching for a gun located on a nearby table and shot the suspect. The official manner of death was homicide.

8. A 24-year-old Oklahoma City man died from self-inflicted gunshot wounds. Officers were attempting to make contact with the suspect due to an outstanding warrant (strangulation of a child). Officers heard a gunshot when they knocked on the door. The official manner of death was suicide.

9. A 31-year-old man died after being shot by Norman police officers. The officers responded to his residence after receiving a call from concerned family members who reported that the suspect was suicidal. When officers made contact with the decedent, he grabbed a gun from a nearby table. After ordering him several times to put down the gun, officers shot and killed the man. The official manner of death was homicide.

10. A 20-year-old man died after a shoot-out with Oklahoma City police officers. Officers were responding to a disturbance call. When they arrived, the man ran and hid in an alley trash can. Officers opened the trash can lid and the man began shooting at them. At that time, officers shot and killed the suspect. The official manner of death was homicide.

11. A 25-year-old Shawnee man was shot by officers after he stabbed an officer in the face. Officers were responding to a burglary call. They entered the abandoned building and the decedent lunged at them, stabbing the assistant chief of police in the face. The officer then shot the man. The manner of death was ruled homicide.

12. A 71-year-old male committed suicide after barricading himself in his garage. Officers were responding to a domestic disturbance. The man refused to leave the garage and then spilled a large amount of gasoline at the doorway. A short while later the officers heard a single gunshot. They entered the garage and found the man dead. The official manner of death was suicide.

13. A 44-year-old male died from injuries he sustained in a high-speed chase. An Oklahoma City police officer attempted to stop the suspect because he was driving at speeds exceeding 100 mph. When the officer attempted to stop the vehicle, the decedent sped up and crashed his car. The official manner of death was an accident.

14. A 31-year-old Oklahoma City man died after he collapsed following an arrest. Officers responded to a burglary call at a local store. When they arrived, the officers began fighting with the decedent. Officers tased the decedent and a few moments later he collapsed. According to the medical examiner, the decedent died from a medical condition (cardiac arrhythmia).

15. A 31-year-old male from Oklahoma City killed himself after a standoff with Norman police. Earlier in the day, the man had kidnapped and killed his ex-girlfriend. By tracing her cell phone signal, police located the car, which was parked at a hotel. When police located the vehicle, they found her body in the front seat. She died from a single gunshot wound to her head. Officers then attempted to make contact with the suspect. After a short standoff, officers heard a single gunshot. They entered the room and found the decedent dead. The official manner of death was suicide.

16. A 28-year-old male died from injuries he sustained in a car accident following a high-speed chase. Tulsa police officers attempted to stop the man after they observed him driving at a high rate of speed. Officers activated their emergency lights. By the time they caught up to his car, the decedent had wrecked into a nearby apartment

building. The official manner of death was ruled an accident.

17. A 48-year-old male died from a medical condition after being tased by an Oklahoma City police officer. Officers were called to his residence because of a reported domestic disturbance. The decedent's wife said that he had physically assaulted her and then locked himself in their bedroom. Officers attempted to make contact with the decedent but he refused to open the door. Eventually, officers made entry and a struggle ensued. Officers tased and handcuffed the defendant. The decedent became unresponsive a short time later. The official manner of death was ruled as an illness.

18. A 38-year-old Muskogee woman was shot by officers after she attempted to attack them. Officers were responding to a domestic disturbance call. When officers arrived, the woman barged out of her house and began attacking the officers. At some point she attempted to take an officer's gun. She was then shot by officers. The official manner of death was ruled homicide.

19. A 43-year-old Oklahoma City man died after a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Officers were attempting to question the decedent about several recent kidnapping/molestation cases. When officers arrived at his home and attempted to make contact with him, the man shot himself. The official manner of death was suicide.

20. A 47-year-old man committed suicide after a long standoff with Oklahoma City police officers. The decedent was holding two people hostage in a local hotel. After hours of negotiation, the decedent released the hostages. Moments later, officers heard a single gunshot. When they entered the hotel room, officers found the decedent with a single gunshot wound. The official manner of death was suicide.

The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation is recognized by the Bureau of Justice Statistics as the Statistical Analysis Center (SAC). The SAC collects, analyzes, and disseminates justice information; these functions are located within OSBI's Office of Criminal Justice Statistics. The following individuals wrote this report, under the direction of David Page, Information Services Division Director, and Linda DeArman, Administrative Programs Officer.

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