For nearly a decade, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), through the Deaths in Custody Reporting Program (DCRP) (PL 106-297), has collected inmate death records from each of the nation's 50 state prison systems, 50 state juvenile correctional authorities, and from local jails throughout the country.

In 2003, BJS began collecting arrest-related deaths data from state and local law enforcement agencies as a part of the DCRP. Since the initial data collection year, law enforcement agencies in Nevada have not provided BJS with arrest-related deaths in custody information and are under no obligation to do so.

In 2009, funding from the State Justice Statistics Program (award #2009-BJ-CX-K035), administered by BJS, was used by the Center for the Analysis of Crime Statistics (CACS) to develop and implement a statewide online data collection instrument. This survey tool offers local law enforcement agencies throughout Nevada a quick and easy way to provide arrest-related deaths in custody information that can be included in the DCRP. In 2011, 51 of Nevada's 53 agencies (96%) participated in the project.

This State Data Brief presents details related to the arrests-related deaths that occurred in Nevada from 2009 through 2011 and that were reported to CACS. The report includes information on when incidents occurred, demographic information of the suspects, the cause and manner of the reported deaths, the mental/physical condition of suspects at the time of the incidents, the locations of the deaths, and whether suspects were armed.

This report includes information on incidents that met certain criteria for inclusion. Detailed information on those incidents that were included and excluded from this study are presented in the Methodology section. The opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of BJS.
Arrest-Related Deaths, 2009-11

From 2009 through 2011, state and local law enforcement agencies in Nevada identified 33 incidents that involved a suspect who died during the course of an arrest. The number of arrest-related deaths in Nevada has increased from 8 incidents in 2009 to 13 incidents in 2011, which is a 62% increase over three years. Detailed demographic information about decedents is summarized in Table 1.

Annex:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>93.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>6.1</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
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<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
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<td>42.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
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<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple races</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic, any race</td>
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<td>21.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
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<td>9.1</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
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<td>25-35</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>+50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Detail may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Nearly all arrest-related deaths that occurred between 2009 and 2011 and that were reported to CACS were classified by law enforcement agencies as a “homicide by law enforcement officer(s).”

Unlike the manner of death, the medical cause of death varied across incident. For example, while most suspects’ medical cause of death was determined to be the result of a gunshot(s) wound (82%), other suspects died from cocaine/ethanol intoxication (6%) or from hanging (3%).

Offense(s) Committed by Deceased

Information on the type of offense(s) committed by individuals who died during the course of an arrest was also requested from Nevada’s agencies that participated in the CACS data collection project. The most serious offense committed by decedents is provided in Table 3.

Analysis of these data indicates that nearly a quarter of all individuals who died during an arrest would have been charged with attempted murder. About 1-in-5 would have been charged with assault with a deadly weapon, and 18% would have been charged with a battery/domestic violence. One decedent would have been charged with arson, while another would have been charged with jaywalking.
Condition and Location of Deceased

Information concerning the deceased’s mental and physical condition was requested from the agencies that provided CACS with arrest-related death data. Among the types of conditions reported, most individuals (46%) who died during an arrest in Nevada resisted arrest or being handcuffed and about 3-in-10 attempted to escape (Table 4). One-third of decedents appeared intoxicated or exhibited mental health problems. Seventy percent of decedents died at the scene.

Weapon Use

Eighty-two percent of situations involving an arrest-related death in Nevada from 2009 through 2011 involved an individual armed with a weapon (Table 5). During those situations, the weapon was used to either threaten the officer or some other person 96% of the time. The deceased was reportedly unarmed in about one-eighth of all incidents.

From 2009 through 2011, when an individual was killed by a Nevada law enforcement officer who used equipment or a weapon, a firearm was most often the type of weapon used. A conductive energy device (i.e., a stun gun) was used relatively less often. Other “less than lethal device” was used 20% of the time.
Methodology

Data for this report was collected by the Center for the Analysis of Crime Statistics (CACS)—the state of Nevada’s Statistical Analysis Center (SAC)—through an online reporting system funded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and its State Justice Statistics (SJS) Program.

Only incidents that met specific criteria were considered an arrest-related death in custody for the purpose of this data collection effort. An incident was included as an arrest-related death in custody if it took place in 2009 and involved the death of a person in the process of arrest and who was...

- Killed by any use of force by law enforcement officers;
- 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; or
- While confined in lockups or booking centers (facilities from which arrestees are usually transferred within 72 hours and not held beyond arraignment).

An incident was excluded if it involved a person in the process of arrest that was...

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

All but two agencies in Nevada provided 2009 arrest-related deaths in custody information. Selected findings summarized in this State Data Brief are based on these data and are presented as part of the CACS State Data Brief Project.

State Data Brief Project

As independent research projects, faculty and graduate students in UNLV’s Department of Criminal Justice write research reports on major issues in criminal justice in Nevada. These "State Data Briefs" are statistical summaries of various criminal justice system practices in Nevada over time and highlight differences between Nevada and other states. These reports cover all aspects of the criminal justice system.

The data briefs are short in length, provide several graphs and charts of statewide and national patterns, and are written in an easily readable, non-technical style. They are designed to provide members of the general public, local officials, community organizations, and media outlets a concise and objective statistical profile of current criminal justice practices in Nevada that may serve as a foundation for informed discussions of future crime control policies and practices. CACS State Data Briefs are modeled after similar reports produced by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.
Questions or comments about the information contained in this report, data used to generate this report, or about other resources available related to this topic should be addressed to:

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