



# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

## Chelan County Coroner's Office

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# OPENING MESSAGE

## Our Office

Our office is located in Wenatchee and at least one investigator is on call 24/7 in order to respond to scenes and answer questions as they arise. As of April 2026, we have been fortunate to move into a new facility that has additional resources to help meet the unique needs of our work, such as a room to meet with the families of decedents, more holding space for decedents and separate offices. Currently, there are 2 positions within our office, the Coroner and the Chief Deputy Coroner.



The current Chelan County Coroner is Earl Crowe, an investigator certified through both ABMDI (American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators) and the State of Washington. He currently holds a Board Certification through ABMDI. This is something that only 297 individuals in the world hold, with 9 of those being in Washington state. Earl brings a wealth of knowledge and compassion to his work, ensuring that death investigations and other associated duties of the Coroner's Office are completed to the highest standard.



The Chief Deputy Coroner is Faye Fetters, an investigator who is currently certified through the State of Washington. They are currently working to become certified through ABMDI and hope to complete this by the end of 2026. In addition, they are completing their M.S. in Forensic Science with a specialization in arson and explosives investigation. Faye brings a variety of life experiences to their work and looks forward to continuing to assist the community where they live.

As approved in the 2026 budget by the Chelan County Board of County Commissioners, a third position may be added to our office. This will help us to continue to meet the needs of our community, both with the living and the deceased. We are grateful to the Board of County Commissioners for its continued support of our office and our work within the community.

Our office works to ensure decedents are all treated with the greatest amount of respect and dignity, regardless of circumstances, background or beliefs. This starts with the initial call informing us of the case and continues throughout our investigation, notification to parties with a right to know, examination and release to the funeral home.

## Jurisdiction Served

Chelan County is just under 3,000 square miles, with most of that being land and roughly 73 square miles being water. Geographic features in this jurisdiction include Lake Chelan, the eastern slopes of the Cascade Mountains, the Wenatchee and Columbia rivers, and the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. Some of the cities and unincorporated towns within the county are Wenatchee, Cashmere, Chelan, Malaga, Leavenworth, Entiat and Stehekin. The geography of the region is varied, with forests, mountains, rural areas and cities all being a part of Chelan County.

## Population Served

Our office serves the population of Chelan County; individuals who die within the county fall under our jurisdiction. Deaths that fall under our jurisdiction are outlined in RCW 68.50.101:

*The jurisdiction of bodies of all deceased persons who:*

- *come to their death suddenly when in apparent good health without medical attendance within the 36 hours preceding death;*
- *or where the circumstances of death indicate death was caused by unnatural or unlawful means;*
- *or where death occurs under suspicious circumstances;*
- *or where a coroner's autopsy or postmortem or coroner's inquest is to be held;*
- *or where death results from unknown or obscure causes, or where death occurs within one year following an accident;*
- *or where the death is caused by any violence whatsoever, whether self-induced or otherwise; where death apparently results from drowning, hanging, burns, electrocution, gunshot wounds, stabs or cuts, lightning, starvation, radiation, exposure, alcoholism, narcotics or other addictions, tetanus, strangulations, suffocation or smothering;*
- *or where death is due to a violent contagious disease or suspected contagious disease which may be a public health hazard;*
- *or where death results from alleged rape, carnal knowledge or sodomy, where death occurs in a jail or prison; where a body is found dead or is not claimed by relatives or friends, is hereby vested in the county coroner or medical examiner, which bodies may be removed and placed in the morgue under such rules as are adopted by the coroner or medical examiner with the approval of the county commissioners, having jurisdiction, providing therein how the bodies shall be brought to and cared for at the morgue and held for the proper identification where necessary.*

Per the U.S. Census Bureau, the population as of the April 2020 census was 79,074, with an estimate as of July 2024 of 81,228 people. The racial demographics of the county are 92.7% white, 1% black, 2.2% American Indian and Alaska Native, 1.5% Asian, 0.3% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and 2.4% being two or more races. About 30.4% of the overall population is Hispanic or Latino.

## **C/ME Statutes**

A vast majority of the laws that govern what our office does come from the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). Some of these laws are:

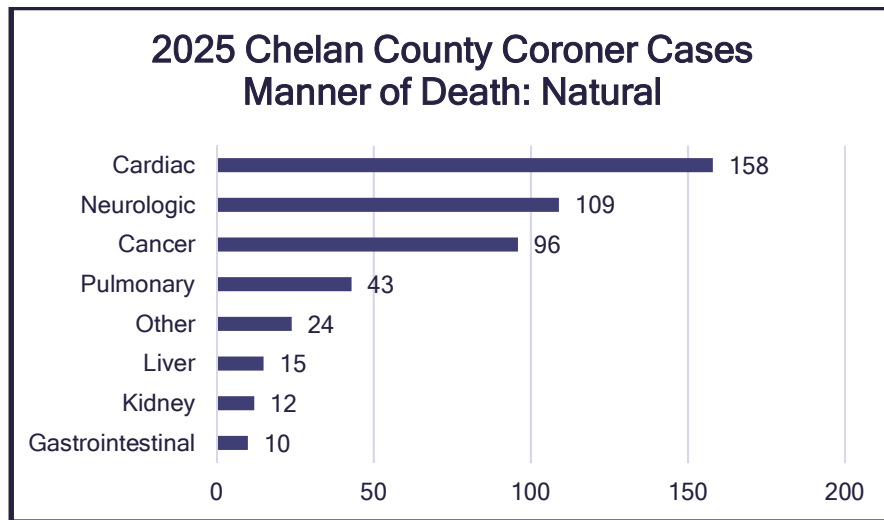
- **RCW 68.50.010:** Coroner's jurisdiction over remains
- **RCW 68.50.101:** Autopsy, post mortem—Who may authorize
- **RCW 68.50.104:** Cost of autopsy
- **RCW 68.50.230:** Human remains that have not been disposed—Rules
- **RCW 68.50.300:** Release of information concerning a death
- **RCW 36.39.030:** Disposal of remains of indigent persons

## 2025 CASES SUMMARY

The case summary below lists 2025 cases where our agency was involved. Cases are grouped by Manner of Death (MOD) and then Cause of Death (COD). Manner of Death is the category under which the death falls and is listed on the death certificate. Cause of Death is the specific injury/disease/condition that ultimately led to the death and is also listed on the death certificate.

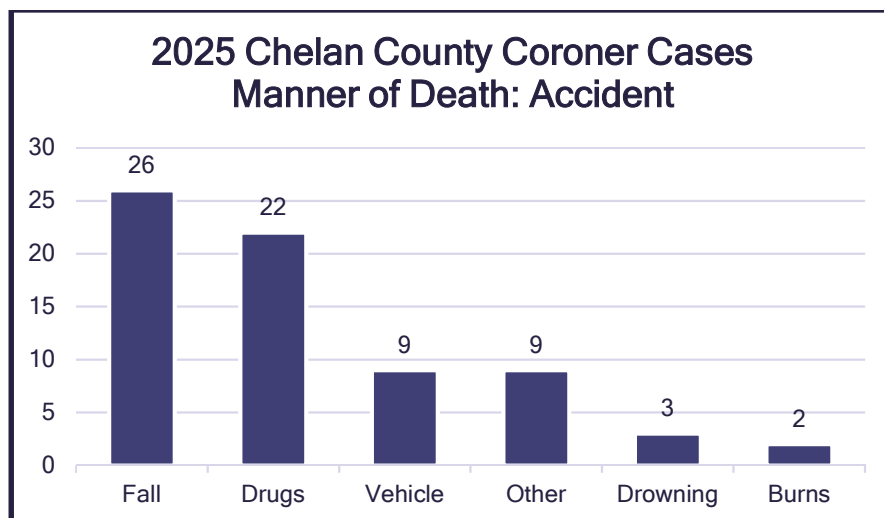
### Natural

Natural is defined as death caused solely by disease or natural process.



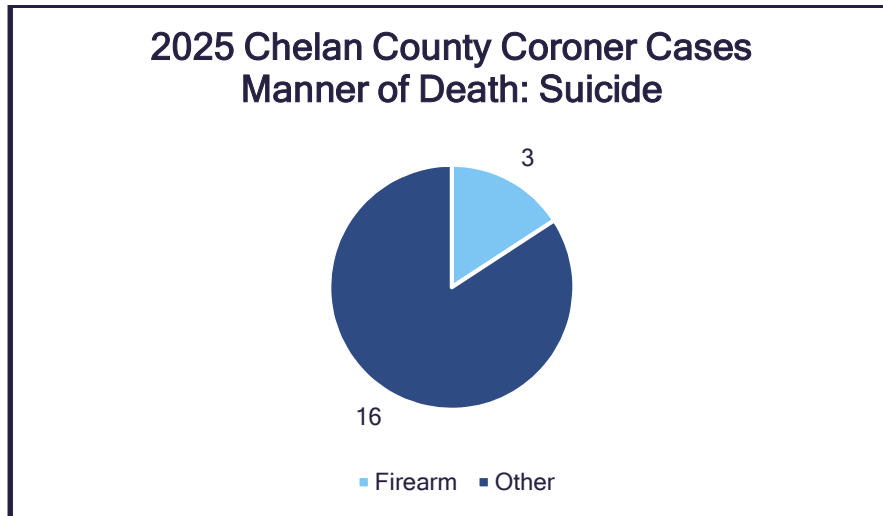
### Accident

An accident is defined for coroner and medical examiner death certification purposes as an unnatural death resulting from an inadvertent chance happening.



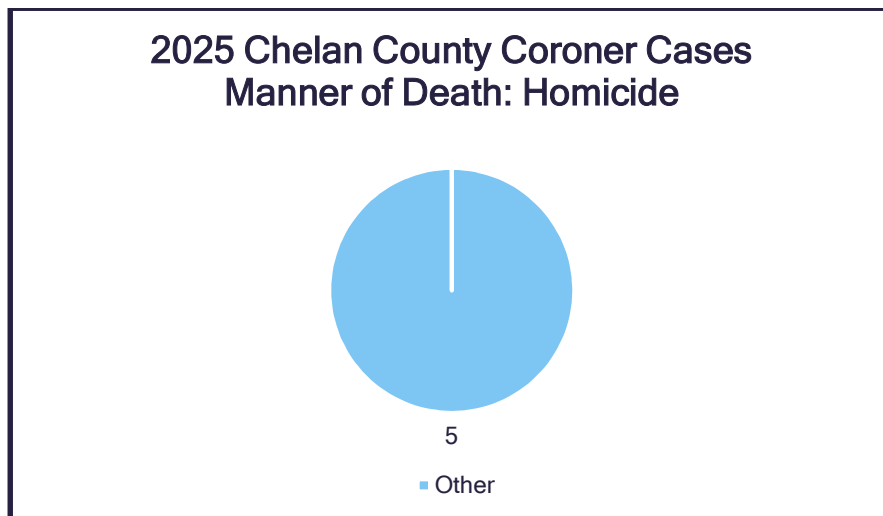
## Suicide

Suicide is defined for coroner and medical examiner death certification purposes as a death from self-inflicted injury with evidence of intent to die.



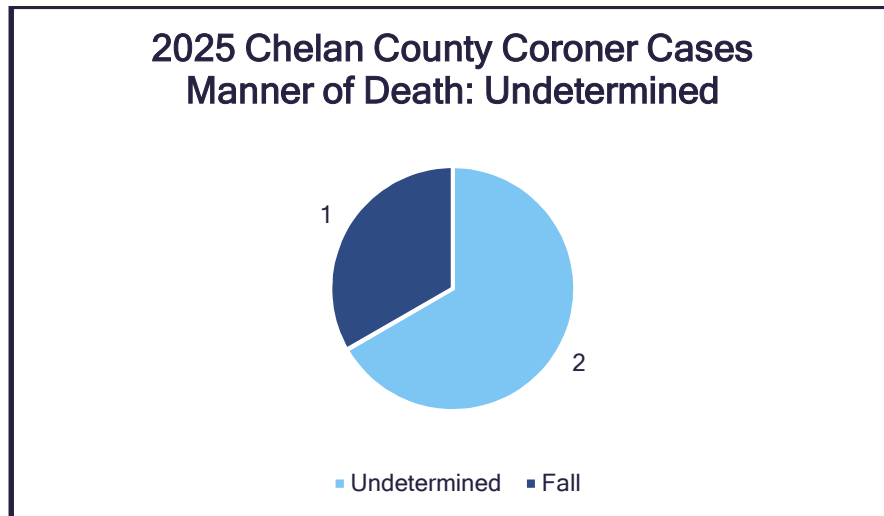
## Homicide

Homicide is defined as the action of one person directly causing the death of another.



## Undetermined

Undetermined is an appropriate designation for cases that have very little available information about the circumstances surrounding the death or where known information equally supports, or conflicts with, more than one manner of death.



## Pending

Pending may be listed temporarily on the death certificate for cause and/or manner when additional investigation, information and/or test results are required for certification. These classifications are generally amended as soon as additional information becomes available.

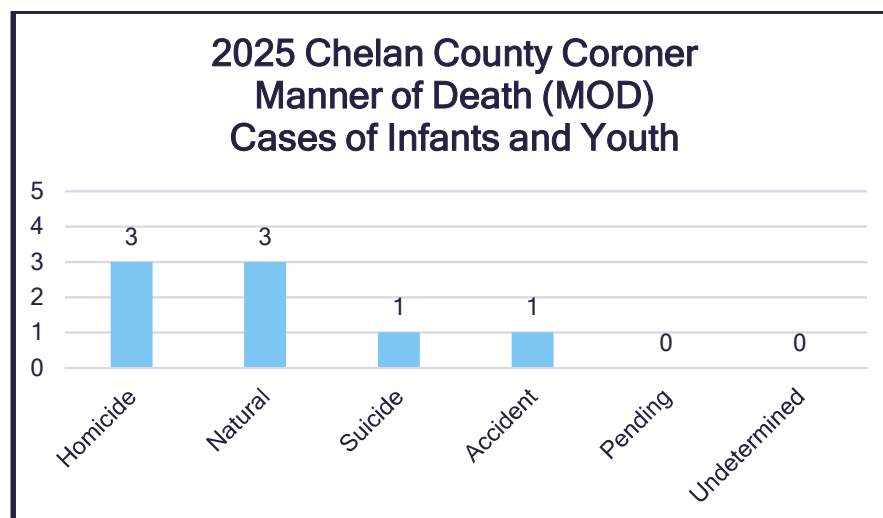
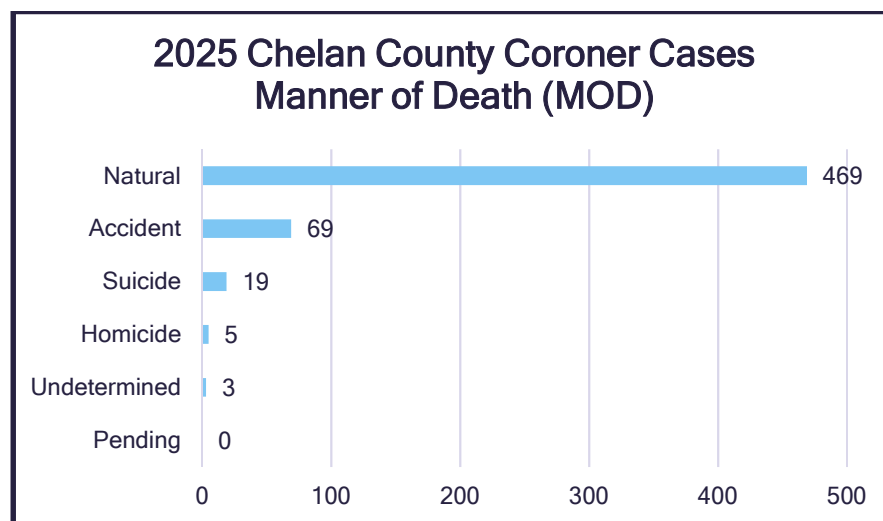
**Note: There were no 2025 cases where Manner of Death was listed as Pending.**

# 2025 STATISTICS

Note: Beginning in 2026, several agency processes, including how certain data is classified, will be changing. As a result of this, the 2025 Annual Report is not to be used as a comparison point for future reports.

## 2025 Overall Statistics

- 925 Total Deaths in Chelan County
- 645 Total Deaths were Reported to Our Agency
- 240 Total Cases were Investigated by Our Agency
- 0 Total Cases Involving In-Custody Deaths and/or Law Enforcement-Involved Shootings
- 0 Exhumations Ordered by Our Agency
- 0 Cremations Approved by Our Agency



## 2025 Investigative Statistics

- 77 Scene Investigations Performed
- 83 External Examinations Performed
  - These are visual examinations our office conducts
- 61 Cases Where Toxicology Testing was Performed
  - This includes cases where our office runs a presumptive test and where samples are sent to WSP and/or NMS labs for quantitative analysis.
- 8 Death Notifications Conducted by Our Agency
- 8 CT Scans Performed
  - These scans take place at Confluence Health and the images are sent for a Forensic Radiologist to review.
- 13 Full Autopsies Performed
  - These autopsies take place at the King County Medical Examiner's Office, Pierce County Medical Examiner's Office or the Spokane County Medical Examiner's Office.

## 2025 Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) Statistics

Our office works with Organ Procurement Organizations such as LifeNet and Lion's World Vision. The organizations work to lawfully and ethically obtain organ, tissue and eye donations from decedents that are then used to assist individuals on waiting lists for such donations. For more information about this process, visit <https://www.organdonor.gov/>

- 26 Referrals Made to Organ, Tissue and Eye Procurement Organizations
- 2 Procurements Completed by those Organizations

## 2025 Unidentified and Indigent Decedent Statistics

Our office does its best to identify decedents and notify the appropriate next of kin (NOK). However, this cannot be completed in every case for a variety of reasons. After 60 days, an unidentified decedent is listed in NamUs (National Missing and Unidentified Persons System). Indigent decedents are those without NOK, or with NOK unable or unwilling to collect the remains of the decedent. In those cases, we attempt to locate NOK for 45 days. After time has expired, our office works with local funeral homes to cremate the remains. The cremated remains are then secured by our office if NOK is located at a later date. For further information about this, visit our website or contact our office.

- 66 Decedents Remain Unclaimed
- 7 Decedents Remain Unidentified