



MEDIA RELEASE

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Unnatural Deaths Continue Rise in 2022

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— Overall deaths across Knox and Anderson counties rose more than 12 percent last year and accidental deaths climbed 32 percent from the previous year, according to the 2022 Annual Report released by The Knox County Regional Forensic Center (RFC).

The center, which operates year-round, serves as the Office for the Chief Medical Examiner for Knox and Anderson counties, and provides autopsy and consultative services for 21 other counties in Middle and East Tennessee.

The annual report is designed to provide a snapshot into the center's work each year, covering deaths that fall under the medical examiner's jurisdiction. In addition to conducting medico-legal death investigation, the RFC officials offer family assistance and participate in additional activities that impact vital records functions, law enforcement investigations, and administration of preventative actions in our communities.

The full report can be found online [here](#).

Last year saw a rise in deaths throughout Knox and Anderson counties compared to 2021. Some key findings include:

- Accidental deaths increased 32 percent
- Homicides increased six percent in Knox County though there were no homicides in Anderson County
- Motor Vehicle deaths increased 30 percent
- Indigent decedents requiring county cremations rose 24 percent
- Cases requiring autopsies increased 27 percent

The Knox County Regional Forensic Center is accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners. It has maintained such distinction since May 2010.

“Our team has been extremely busy, and the numbers clearly demonstrate that,” said Chief Medical Examiner Dr Darinka Mileusnic-Polchan. “Many of the deaths investigated by our office were preventable in nature with awareness, mindfulness, selfcare, and respect for humankind.”

The annual Drug Related Death Report that provides an overview of emerging drug trends for the counties the RFC serves will be released in the coming weeks.

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