

# **Uniform Data Elements**

## National Violent Injury Statistics System (NVISS)

Release 2.0

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NVISS Workgroup

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November 2002

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### NVISS Workgroup

The National Violent Injury Statistics System is a pilot reporting system. Organizations and individuals across the country are invited to comment on the data elements as they are being evaluated and refined. Organizations are also invited to incorporate parts or all of the data elements in their own surveillance programs. For more information visit [NVISS.org](http://NVISS.org) or contact Catherine Barber at the Harvard Injury Control Research Center, Harvard School of Public Health, 617-432-1143, [cbarber@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:cbarber@hsph.harvard.edu)

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November 2002



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\*Essential data element

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NVISS Coordinating Center  
Harvard Injury Control Research Center

## INTRODUCTION

### *Purpose of the Manual*

This document describes the Uniform Data Elements used by the National Violent Injury Statistics System (NVISS), a reporting system for violent deaths that is being piloted in several states and counties around the country. NVISS is intended as a prototype for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS). The purpose of the reporting system is to gather more detailed data on suicides, homicides, and firearm-related deaths to better inform prevention efforts.

This manual is intended to be used in conjunction with the *Violent Death Reporting System Training Manual*. That document describes how to start a violent death reporting system locally, what the sources of data for the reporting system are, how to develop working relationships with those data sources, and how to collect and link the data. The *Uniform Data Elements* defines each variable collected by the reporting system and outlines the protocols for entering a case.

### *Background*

Violence and motor vehicles represent the number one and two injury killers in the United States today. In contrast to motor vehicle-related deaths, on which a detailed, federally-supported reporting system exists to inform policy-making, only the most rudimentary national data are available on violent deaths. The enormous benefits of a national data system for injury deaths have been demonstrated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). On each of the 40,000 motor vehicle deaths annually, FARS collects over 125 pieces of information—including features of the crash, the vehicles involved, the road and weather conditions, and the people involved—supplying objective data with which to formulate and evaluate traffic safety programs and policies. The nation needs a comparable reporting system for the 45,000 lives lost to suicide and homicide annually.

In 1999, the Harvard Injury Control Research Center launched the National Violent Injury Statistics System (NVISS) with funding from six private foundations to pilot a model injury reporting system and to advocate for a federally-supported national reporting system. Harvard collaborated with the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) and other academic institutions and health departments around the country (see NVISS Collaborating Sites) to design and pilot test the system based in part on earlier models developed by the collaborators. In 2000 the CDC announced its intention to launch the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), and in fiscal year 2002, Congress appropriated start-up funds to CDC to begin building the system. The NVISS pilot is serving as a starting point for planning the NVDRS.

### *About the Reporting System*

The reporting system is intended to provide a census of violent deaths that occur in the United States and mirrors the Fatality Analysis Reporting System in its scope, level of detail, database structure, and data collection methods. The collaborating sites participated intensively in the process of designing the data elements. Abstractors from the sites collect information on violent deaths at the local level from coroners and medical examiners, vital statistics registries, police, and crime laboratories. The information is then linked, coded according to the UDE protocols, entered into the NVISS software, stripped of individual identifiers, and forwarded to the national database at Harvard. The database is an incident-based, relational database that collects detailed information on the victims, suspects, precipitating circumstances, incident location, substance use, and weapon type.

This manual outlines Version 2 of the reporting system. Version 1 collected information on firearm-related deaths occurring in the year 2000 in the pilot sites. Version 2 incorporates lessons learned from Version 1 and expands the case definition to include all suicides and

homicides, regardless of weapon type or manner. Version 2 applies to violent deaths occurring in 2001.

When possible, the specifications for data elements in Release 2.0 incorporate existing health data standards, particularly standards for computer-based records. An objective of the NVISS initiative is to provide uniform data elements that harmonize with prevailing standards for electronic data entry and exchange.

#### *How the Manual is Organized*

A key document in the manual is “Entering a Case,” which outlines the case definition and leads the user through how to enter a case. A new document in the Appendix, “Definitions,” provides detailed definitions of the circumstance variables and codes.

The data elements are organized into four major sections: Incident Characteristics, Person (Victim and Suspect) Characteristics, Victim Characteristics, Suspect Characteristics, and Firearm Characteristics. A structured format is used to document each data element: a concise **Definition**, a description of **Uses**, a **Discussion** of the conceptual and operational issues, a specification of the recommended **Primary Data Source** and **Secondary Data Source** for the data element, the designation of the **Priority** of the data element as either essential or not essential, specification of the **Data Type (and Field Length)** as either numeric or character, a **Variable Name**, a **Code Description**, and reference to **Data Standards or Guidelines** used to define the data element and its code description.

#### *Priority of Data Elements*

The Priority of a data element distinguishes those elements thought to be essential to a basic violent injury reporting system from those elements that are not essential. The essential data elements are listed in Table 1. *Sites need not report all of the data elements that are listed as “not essential.”* Several data elements included in Release 2.0 are not typically collected in violent injury reporting systems, but are included because they have policy relevance and because at least one or two of the pilot sites were already collecting them and intended to continue. An additional priority status is identified in the document: “local” indicates that the data element is to be collected only at the local reporting site and will not reported to the national dataset. These are data elements containing information that may be personally identifying, such as victim’s residential street address.

#### *Recommended Data Sources*

The Primary and Secondary Data Sources that are recommended for each data element represent those data sources from which one can most efficiently obtain the most valid and reliable information for a specific data element. If a piece of information is not found in either recommended data source, other sources can be used.

There are four recommended data sources for the data elements in this document:

1. Medical examiner/coroners,
2. Death certificates,
3. Police (Uniform Crime Report data and/or incident reports), and
4. Crime laboratories.

For a complete discussion of these data sources, see the Violent Death Reporting System Training Manual.

**Medical examiners and coroners** are a primary source for data on the victim as well as the circumstances under which suicides and unintentional injuries occur (see Table 2). Typically data will be abstracted from medical examiner or coroner reports. In some jurisdictions medical examiner data are available electronically, but this is the exception rather than the rule. In the case of suicides or accidents, medical examiners and coroners may be the only source of detailed information on the circumstances of the event and the characteristics of the weapon that caused the injuries.

**Death certificates** are another important source of information for characteristics of the victim. The death certificate is the official document for certifying cause of death in the United States and serves as the “gold standard” for total counts of violence-related deaths.

Death certificate data can be obtained in two ways. First, hard copies of death certificates can usually be examined within weeks of the death. While these hard copies contain useful information (e.g., marital status, highest educational level), at this stage, they often lack the ICD code for cause of death and nature of injury and the codes indicating the decedent’s usual occupation and industry (in states where this information is collected). Death certificate information can also be obtained from 6 to 18 months after the death from a statewide electronic mortality database. This database contains the ICD codes for cause and nature of injury and—in some states—occupational and industry codes to summarize the victim’s usual occupation.

**Police data** are critical for acquiring information on the circumstances under which the homicides occur. There are two modes of acquiring data from police. First, data on homicides can be acquired from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports reporting format for homicides. In most states, this is the Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR), but some states are moving toward a newer reporting format called National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Both SHR and NIBRS are reported to a statewide UCR office (or, in a few states without UCR offices, directly to the FBI) on a monthly basis. The reports contain the age, race, sex, and ethnicity of the victim and suspected offender, victim/offender relationship, precipitating circumstance, and weapon. A second source of information is the police incident report and case files. This is a much more labor-intensive form of data collection, but provides the opportunity to get a richer set of data on the event.

**Crime laboratories**, the agencies that examine physical evidence gathered from crime and injury scenes, are an important source of information for firearm-related deaths. Ballistics units at crime labs collect detailed information on the type of weapon and ammunition recovered from injury scenes, information not available on death certificates and SHRs. This information currently resides only with the individual crime laboratory and has not previously been linked in a national reporting system, in spite of the urgent need for information on deaths by weapon type. Most states are served by one or two or a handful of crime laboratories.

In addition to these four basic data sources, some sites are also using **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearm** reports on firearm traces to document the city and date of a weapon’s first purchase and whether the victim or suspect was its first purchaser. Some sites are also using state or local **criminal history databases** to document victims’ and suspects’ criminal records. NVISS is also currently developing a module for the reporting system based on the additional information learned about children’s violent deaths by **Child Fatality Review Teams**.

## TABLE 1: ESSENTIAL DATA ELEMENTS

### Incident Information

- Incident ID
- Version
- Incident Narrative
- Investigating Police Agency
- Incident Location Type
- Address of Incident

### Person (Victim and Suspect) Information

- Person ID
- Person Type
- Age
- Sex
- Race, Ethnicity
- Incident at Person's Residence?

### Victim Information

- Weapon type
- Incident Type
- ME/Coroner Manner of Death
- Death Certificate Underlying Cause of Death
- Victim/Suspect Relationship—Abstracted
- Date and Time of Injury
- Date and Time of Death
- Residential Address
- Place of Death
- Alcohol Presence
- Drug Presence

### Circumstance

- Circumstances Known?
- Violence Circumstance
- Accident/Unintentional Circumstance
- Suicide – Mental Health
- Suicide Circumstance

### Supplementary Homicide Report Variables (homicides only)

- SHR Homicide Type and Situation
- SHR Victim/Offender Relationship
- SHR Circumstance
- SHR Justifiable Shooting Circumstance

### Firearm Characteristics

- Firearm ID
- Firearm Information Available
- Firearm Type
- Firearm Make, Model
- Firearm Caliber/Gauge
- Firearm Victim

## ENTERING A CASE

**Case Definition:** Reportable cases are incidents in which one or more people die as the result of a suicide, homicide, or firearm-related death. Violence-related deaths can be identified in death certificate data by using the “Underlying Cause of Death” variable. This variable uses International Classification of Disease (ICD) codes that are maintained by the World Health Organization and modified for use in the United States by the National Center for Health Statistics. The following ICD 10<sup>th</sup> Revision codes\* identify violent deaths:

<i>Type of death</i>	<i>ICD-10 code</i>
<b>Intentional self-harm</b>	X60-X84, Y87.0
<b>Assault</b>	X85-Y09, Y87.1
<b>Legal intervention</b>	Y35, Y89.0
<b>Operations of war</b>	Y36, Y89.1
<b>Terrorism, assault (homicide)</b>	U01, U02
<b>Terrorism, intentional self-harm (suicide)</b>	U03
<b>Accidental discharge of firearms</b>	W32-W34
<b>Firearm events of undetermined intent</b>	Y22-Y24

Sites may identify a reportable case through law enforcement records or coroner/medical examiner (C/ME) records that is not coded in the death certificate data as a suicide, homicide, or firearm-related death. In those cases, include the incident in your database and contact the Vital Statistics registry in your state to notify them if you believe the case was coded in error.

For sites that identify cases before they are ICD-coded, the case definition includes:

- Suicide by any means or weapon type
- Homicide related to interpersonal violence (as opposed to accidental or unintentional homicides such as unintentional vehicular homicide. Interpersonal violence-related homicides include fatal assaults, justifiable homicides, random violence, and terrorist attacks whether by conventional or biological weapons)
- Deaths resulting from legal intervention (i.e. killings by a law enforcement officer in the line of duty and legal executions)
- Deaths resulting from war operations
- Deaths resulting from a projectile injury from a firearm, regardless of intent (including firearm injuries that were unintentionally inflicted or of undetermined intent)

Fatal injuries from nonpowder guns (such as BB guns and air guns) that were accidental/unintentional or of unknown intent are excluded from the case definition.

Injury deaths of undetermined intent do not meet the case definition (unless they are firearm-related). Cases that are coded as undetermined intent for both underlying cause of death and manner of death do not meet the case definition.

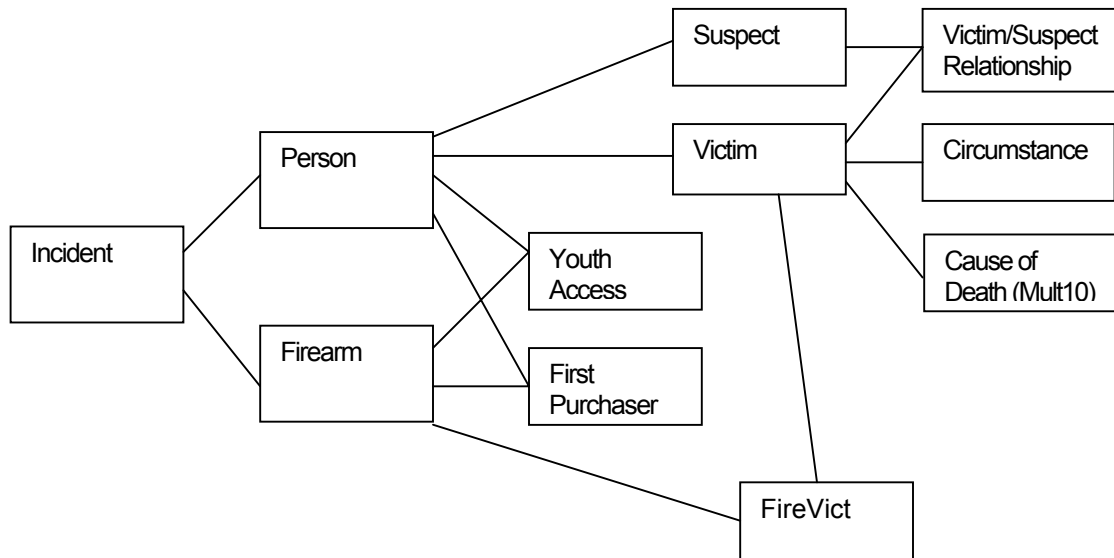
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\* In the United States, ICD-10 codes are used for deaths occurring in 1999 and beyond. (Hospitals continue to code patient discharges using ICD-9 Clinical Modification codes.) The codes for terrorism were added by the NCHS in 2002 and apply to US deaths in 2001 and beyond.

Within a fatal incident, there may be more than one fatal victim. Each fatality meeting the case definition above should be included in the incident. Use the C/ME report or law enforcement records to identify all of the victims associated with an incident.

To enter a case in the NVISS software, you will enter information on a series of tables that capture information about the incident itself, the person(s) involved (victims and suspects), and the weapon(s) involved.

#### Hierarchical Relationship between Tables in the Database



#### A. Incident Table

Start with the main table, which is the incident table. An incident is an event that results in a violent death or multiple related violent deaths during an unbroken stretch of time. So, for example, a person who shoots a family member and then shoots himself would be entered as one incident with two persons involved. (See “Definitions” document in the Appendix for a more complete definition of incident.)

1. **Assign an Incident ID.** The incident ID is made up of your site’s NVISS-assigned ID number followed by a number assigned consecutively by your site, starting with 000001 and incremented by one for each incident. The incident ID number appears in all of the subordinate tables (all tables in the database) so that all related data can be linked. If your site starts each calendar year in a new database, the new database should not start again at 000001 but should start at a number higher than the last number in the previous database.
2. **Fill in the remaining Incident Table variables.** Throughout the database, the code value 9 (or multiple 9s, depending on the field width of the variable) indicates that the information is not known, 8(s) that it is not applicable, and 7(s) that it is routinely not collected by the reporting site.
3. **Summarize the case in the Incident Narrative.** One of the most important variables on the Incident Table is the Incident Narrative. This is an unlimited memo field in which you briefly describe the incident, who is involved, the relationships among victims and suspects, and the

circumstances. The narrative enables surveillance personnel to evaluate the quality and uniformity of the circumstance coding. It also gives researchers valuable contextual information on the incident. Indicate the main source of information. For all circumstances that are coded, be sure to include documentation in the Incident Narrative that supports their coding (e.g. “According to the police report, the stabbing resulted from an argument between the victim and his neighbor over noise from a party at the victim’s house.”) Please do not include any personally identifying information in the Incident Narrative, such as police incident report numbers, local street addresses, or specific employment information. For example, “Victim was the night manager at the Walmart store in Brookfield” is personally identifying; “victim was attacked while working at a department store” is not.

## **B. Person Table**

The Person Table stores the variables that are collected in common on both the victim and the suspect.

- 1. Assign Person IDs to each victim and suspect in the incident.** The people on whom the database captures information are the victim(s) and, if applicable, the person or people suspected of inflicting the death. The database does not capture information on witnesses. As currently configured, the database does not capture information on nonfatal victims. (If your site would like to include victims who were nonfatally injured during a fatal incident, contact NVISS staff to discuss how to adjust your database to accommodate this.) Assign a consecutive ID to each person (victim and suspect) in the incident, starting with all victims first and then moving to suspects. The person ID starts over at 00001 for each incident. It is repeated in all subordinate tables to allow linking of related data.
- 2. Assign the person’s Person Type.** An important variable on the Person Table is “PType,” which indicates whether the person is a Victim, Suspect, or Both.

**Victims** are people who died in a suicide, violence-related homicide, war, legal intervention, or as the result of a firearm injury. A fetus who dies as the result of maternal self-harm, assault, or accidental gunshot wound should not be recorded as a victim unless he or she was delivered following the injury and lived outside the womb for any period of time (i.e. was issued both a birth certificate and a death certificate).

**Suspects** are those people who are suspected of having killed another person in the incident, whether intentionally or (in the case of firearm injuries) unintentionally. If more than one person was involved in perpetrating a violent crime that resulted in a homicide, each should be listed as a suspect in the case, even if only one actually inflicted the injury. For example, in the case of two armed robbers who enter a store and shoot the clerk, both robbers should be listed as suspected offenders in the homicide even if only one actually pulled the trigger.

**Both** are persons who are both victims and suspects; that is, they are victims who also killed someone else in the incident. For example, a person who kills his wife and himself would have a PType of “Both” as would a person who shoots a police officer and then is himself shot by another police officer during the shoot-out. A suicide victim has a PType of “Victim” unless they also shot someone else in the incident, in which case their PType would be “Both.” A victim who inflicts a nonfatal injury (e.g. a man beats someone unconscious and is then shot to death by a police officer) would not be coded as a PType of “Both.” PType is assigned only with reference to fatal injuries. (This is a change from Version 1 of the reporting system.)

### **When do you create a record for a suspect?**

The default answer is to list as a suspect whoever is listed on the Supplementary Homicide Report (or NIBRS) in the “offender” category. If you do not have access to the SHR/NIBRS, or if the information is clearly wrong, list the person or people whom the police incident report or the coroner/medical examiner report has identified as offenders in the case. Offender information will not always be correct. Some people who are initially suspected of committing a crime did not in fact commit it. Coding a person as a suspect is not a statement of fact but a reflection of law enforcement’s best guess at the time they completed the SHR or other documentation. A person does not have to be arrested or identified to be listed as a suspect. For example, if police state that witnesses saw someone shoot another person, but they don’t know the shooter’s sex, race, or age, do fill in a person record for that person. Virtually all of the variables for that person will be coded as “unknown,” but because it is known that there was one person and not multiple offenders involved, it is important to capture the information.

### **When *don’t* you create a record for a suspect?**

- Don’t create a suspect record for self-inflicted injuries.
- Don’t create a suspect record for other-inflicted injuries if absolutely no information is known about who committed the shooting. For example, if a body was found and the case is presumed to be a homicide, but there is no information about who did it or how many offenders were involved, don’t create a suspect record.
- Don’t create records for people who are suspects under competing theories about who committed the offense. List only the suspect(s) listed on the SHR (or NIBRS). If it is unavailable, list only the suspect(s) associated with the lead theory. If there is no lead theory and there are multiple competing theories, don’t create a suspect record.

### **Case Examples**

Case 1: An angry employee holds a customer at gunpoint. During a shoot-out with three police officers who arrive on the scene, the employee is shot dead. No other individuals are injured. The case should list four persons: person 1 is the victim (the employee); persons 2, 3, and 4 are the suspects (the police officers).

Case 2: A witness reports seeing two people stab a man. Because the people were dressed in heavy, hooded coats, he couldn’t guess their age, race, or even their sex. List three persons for the case: person 1 is the victim; persons 2 and 3 are the suspects.

Case 3: A body is found in the trunk of a car. The case is a homicide, but the police have no further information. List only one person for the case, the victim.

Case 4: A teenager is found murdered. Police are investigating her parents, her boyfriend, and her coach as possible suspects. The SHR does not list an offender. List only one person for the case, the victim.

### **3. *Complete the remaining Person Table variables for each person listed in the incident.***

These include the person’s age, sex, race, and ethnicity, and whether the incident occurred at the person’s residence or while the person was at work.

### **C. Victim Table**

The Victim Table includes additional variables that are collected only on victims. Make sure that every person with a PType of “Victim” or “Both” has a record on the Victim table.

1. ***Complete the victim demographics variables.*** These include the victim’s address, marital status, education, and other variables. Sites record the victim’s actual street address. However, because this is personally identifying, the information is not part of the national

dataset. Street address is used to geocode the victim's residence. From that geocoded point, the census tract and census block group are calculated. What is forwarded to the national dataset are variables identifying the individual's community (state, city/town, county, zip code, census tract, and census block group). Sites that do not have the capacity to geocode their data can send the street address information to NVISS where it will be treated as confidential information and geocoded. After the geocoding is complete, only the community-level variables will be retained in the national dataset; the street address and map coordinates will be deleted.

2. ***Complete the victim-specific cause-of-death variables.*** These include the victim's Manner of Death (as it appears on the Coroner/Medical Examiner report), Underlying Cause of Death (as it appears in the death certificate data), and the Incident Type (according to the NVISS protocol for coding Incident Type). It is vital that Incident Type is coded uniformly across sites. Read the protocol for assigning Incident Type that appears in the Appendix "Definitions" document. Incident Type will usually agree with Underlying Cause of Death and Manner of Death, but not always. For example, the accidental shooting of one person by another may be coded by the coroner or medical examiner as "homicide" for Manner of Death and by the NVISS abstractor as "accidental/unintentional" for Incident Type.
3. ***Complete the remaining victim table variables.*** These include information about the time and date of injury and of death, number and location of wounds, place of death, drug and alcohol presence, EMS use, ED and inpatient care, and others. The variables "usual occupation" and "usual industry" should only be entered if they appear on the death certificate or in the death certificate database. Don't attempt to code these yourself if your state vital statistics registry does not supply them.

If the victim was killed by another person, enter the **Supplementary Homicide Report** (or NIBRS) variables for Situation, Homicide Type, Victim/Offender Relationship, Circumstance, and Justifiable Shooting Circumstance (if applicable) as they appear in the SHR dataset. If the wound was self-inflicted, or if you were unable to obtain the SHR record, enter "not applicable" for the SHR variables. SHRs at the local level typically use alphanumeric codes. The NVISS database uses all numeric codes, so map the SHR variables from alphas to numerics as applicable. Some states have added their own codes to the standard national SHR codelist. Because these state-added codes are not uniform across states, they do not conform to a national database. If your state uses state-added SHR values, find out from your state UCR office how these codes are translated in the national database. Please map these to the code that would apply from the national codelist. If a variable is coded with a state-added code and you are unable to find out how it will be mapped to the national codes, don't guess. Instead select the "not applicable" code to indicate that the information was unavailable. (To retain the specificity of the state SHR codes, you have the option of adding local variables to your program to record this information. These variables will not be exported to the national NVISS database. Contact the NVISS data manager for assistance on adding local variables.)

#### **D. Suspect Table**

Every person on the person table with a PType of "Suspect" or "Both" should also be included on the Suspect Table. At this point, there is only one variable collected on suspects that isn't already collected on the Person table. (In future versions of the database more may be added.) This is a variable to indicate whether the suspect attempted to take his or her life during the incident, regardless of the weapon type used. So, for example, if a suspect fatally stabbed a victim and then cut his own wrists but survived, you would code the suspect as "attempted suicide."

## **E. Relationship Table**

This table pairs each victim listed in an incident with each suspect listed. The NVISS software automatically populates the table with the Person ID numbers for each victim/suspect pair. Enter up to two codes to describe the relationship of the victim to the offender. If one code describes the relationship adequately (e.g. stranger), enter 88 (not applicable) for the second relationship variable. In complex incidents, there will be cases in which a victim/suspect pair will not be relevant because the suspect is not a suspect for that particular victim. In those cases, enter 88 (not applicable). For example, take the case of a teenager who shoots his father and then is shot himself by a police officer. There are three persons in that incident. Person 1 is the father, person 2 is the teenager (who is both a suspect and a victim), and person 3 is the police officer. The relationship of Persons 1 and 2 (the father and son) should be coded as "parent;" the relationship of Persons 1 and 3 (the father and the police officer) should be coded as "88" to indicate that the police officer was not suspected of shooting Person 1; and the relationship of Persons 2 to 3 (the son and the police officer) is "shooter was law enforcement officer."

Two additional variables are collected on the relationship table. One asks whether the suspect was a caretaker of the victim. A caretaker is someone who is responsible for the physical care or supervision of the victim at the time of the death, such as a parent of a young child, a babysitter, or a nursing home attendant. This variable is important for identifying cases of child abuse, elder abuse, or other caretaker-related abuse. If the suspect was a caretaker of the victim or a current or former intimate partner of the victim, the software also asks if there is evidence of ongoing abuse of this victim by this suspect.

## **F. Circumstance Table**

You will indicate whether any information is known about the circumstances associated with the death (that is, the precipitating circumstances leading to the death; in the case of a suicide, this also includes information about the victim's mental health and treatment status and evidence of intent). If you answer "no," all variables on the Circumstance Table will default to 8s or 9s as appropriate. If you answer "yes," you will complete a series of circumstance variables. These fall into two categories: traditional variables (that have several code options, including a code for "unknown"), and 0/1 variables (where 0 represents both "no" and "unknown"). The 0/1 variables default to 0. Conceptually, the 0/1 variables are not separate variables but are codes on a long list of precipitating circumstances; however, they are treated in the software program as separate variables to facilitate multiple circumstance coding.

Circumstance coding is the most difficult task involved in abstracting a case. Please read the "Definitions" document in the appendix for an in-depth description of each variable and code value.

## **G. Multiple Cause of Death Table (Mult10)**

Death certificates include not only the Underlying Cause of Death code but other Multiple Cause of Death codes that describe all of the injuries and medical conditions contributing to death. Because these can vary in number, the multiple cause of death codes are captured on a separate table called Mult10.

## **H. Firearm Table**

The firearm table is used for cases in which a firearm injury resulted in death. The firearm table is linked to the incident, not to the victim. Some subsidiary tables noted below link persons and firearms.

- 1. Assign Firearm IDs to the firearm(s) associated with the case.** The NVISS software assigns a consecutive ID number to each firearm in the incident. The firearm ID starts over at 01 for each incident. Most cases will involve only one gun. The firearm ID will be repeated in its

related tables (Youth Access and First Purchaser). For each incident, list only those guns actually suspected of causing the injury.

Case 1: Police arrest an offender during a shooting incident and confiscate the gun. They later search the suspect's house and find several more guns. Only the gun that was actually involved in the shooting incident would be listed in the database.

Case 2: Police apprehend a suspect at his home after a street shooting. Two guns are on his person. Because it isn't known at the time the record was abstracted which of the guns was used in the incident, both are entered.

2. ***Complete the variables that describe the gun.*** One of the first questions on the firearm table is whether additional information is known about physical features of the gun such as the specific type, make, or model of the gun. Answer "no" if the gun, bullet, or spent casings were not recovered and neither the police nor the medical examiner or coroner viewed any physical evidence. Answer "yes" if the gun, bullet, or casings were recovered or if the police or medical examiner viewed any physical evidence related to the weapon. If you answer "no," the remaining variables describing attributes of the gun will default to "unknown" or "not applicable" as appropriate. If you answer "yes," you will answer a series of variables about the type, make, model, caliber/gauge,

Case 1: A victim of a shooting homicide is discovered on the street and no gun, bullets, or casings are recovered. Answer "no" to the variable asking if further information is known about the gun.

Case 2: Police are called to a shooting scene. The shooter has fled with the gun; the bullet passed through the body and was not found. A witness on the street said they thought the gun was a .25 caliber revolver. For the weapon type variable on the victim table, it is appropriate to enter the code for "revolver." On the Firearm Table, answer "no" to the variable asking if further information is known about the gun since the information is not based on physical evidence.

Case 3: The coroner is called to a suicide scene. She views the gun, identifies it as a Winchester rifle, and leaves it with the family. Enter "yes" to indicate that further information is known about the weapon.

If you answered "yes" to indicate that further information is known about the gun, complete the variables describing the make, model, type, caliber, and other features of the gun. For make and model, if you don't see the information on the drop-down code list, choose the code for "other" and enter the information in the text field provided. For all cases, fill out text describing the cartridge exactly as it appears in the documentation. A firearm expert will review the final dataset to check the accuracy of the caliber/gauge coding based on the cartridge designation.

3. ***If applicable for your site, complete the firearm trace variables.*** If your site submits firearms for traces by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (most sites do not), document the gun's serial number and, if the gun was imported, the importer's name, city, and state. (Serial number and importer information remains with the local site and is not forwarded to the national database.) The Trace Attempt variable indicates whether a trace was attempted and whether it was successful. If not attempted or unsuccessful, the remaining trace variables default to "not applicable." If successful, complete the trace variables to indicate the date of first purchase and city and state of first purchase.

## **I. Subsidiary Firearm Tables**

### **1. *Firearm Victim Table***

For each gun involved in a given incident, the Firearm Victim table identifies which victim was injured by that gun. This table is useful in multiple victim and/or multiple firearm

incidents to sort out which gun injured which victim. The program initially pairs each victim in the incident with each gun in the incident and asks (in a temporary variable called FireVict) if this gun injured this victim. Answer “no” if the gun injured a different victim in the incident and “unknown” if multiple guns were recovered from a crime scene and it is not known which one killed the victim or if it is not known which victim in a multiple-victim incident the gun injured. Answer “yes” if the gun is a confirmed injury gun for this victim. Use reasonable certainty rather than confirmed ballistic testing as the standard for identifying a gun as a confirmed injury gun. (See the data element “Firearm Victim Table” for further discussion.) Only those victim-gun pairs coded as “yes” for FireVict are permanently stored on the FireVict table.

**2. *Youth Access Table***

Several sites are attempting to document how youths who shoot themselves or another person gained access to their weapons. This information is stored on the Youth Access Table. For any youthful shooter who is under the minimum age to purchase a handgun legally in his/her jurisdiction, the Youth Access variables will be enabled. The table pairs the shooter’s Person ID with the Firearm ID. A series of four variables document how the youth obtained the gun. When you initially install the NVISS software program, you will be prompted to indicate the local minimum age for purchasing a handgun in your state. While this age will often be younger than the age required for purchasing a long gun, it serves a useful cut-off for documenting Youth Access information across the board. Sites wishing to collect the Youth Access information on shooters of all ages should enter the age “150” at the “local minimum age” prompt so that Youth Access variables will be enabled for shooters of all ages. In an incident involving multiple suspects and multiple weapons, the software may pair a shooter with a gun that the shooter did not use. In that case, code the Owner variable as “8” (Not Applicable) and the remaining Youth Access variables will default to 8s.

**3. *First Purchaser Table***

Most of the variables that document a firearm trace are included on the main Firearm Table. One remaining variable, First Purchaser, is included on a separate table and is completed only if the trace was successful. For each person in the incident, indicate whether that person was the first purchaser of the weapon according to the trace results.

*Section 1*  
Incident Information

## INCIDENT ID

### Definition

Primary identifier used to identify the incident.

### Uses

The incident ID uniquely identifies each incident in the database using a combination of site number and an incident number consecutively assigned by the reporting site. The incident ID is used to link data from all of the tables in the relational database, including the person, victim, suspect, and firearm tables. Because the site number is part of the incident ID, it can be used to subset data by site for analysis.

### Discussion

See the Appendix for a definition of “incident.”

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
SITEID	Numeric	3	Essential	Incident	Site ID assigned by NVISS
INCID	Numeric	6	Essential	Incident	Incident ID assigned by site
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Reporting site			-		

### Code Description

SITEID is the reporting site code assigned by the NVISS coordinating center. INCID is the site incident number assigned consecutively by the reporting site. There are no provisions for missing or unknown information for this data element. Each incident must be assigned an incident ID. Reporting site codes 1-79 are reserved for state health departments (and the equivalent entities in Washington DC and US territories) and correspond to the FIPS codes for states. The sites that are not State Public Health Departments are consecutively assigned starting with 80.

<u>Site #</u>	<u>Year 2000 Sites</u>
080	Allegheny County Health Department
081	Atlanta, Emory University, Center for Injury Control
082	Connecticut, Children’s Medical Center, Childhood Injury Prevention Center
021*	Kentucky, Kentucky Department for Public Health
083	Maine, Maine Medical Center, MMC Surgical Associates
084	Maryland, University of Maryland, Violence Research Group
026*	Michigan, Michigan Public Health Institute and Michigan Department of Community Health
085	San Francisco, City and County Department of Public Health
087	Utah, University of Utah, Intermountain Injury Control Research Center
088	Wisconsin, Medical College of Wisconsin, Firearm Injury Center
089	Rhode Island, Rhode Island Hospital, Injury Prevention Center
090	University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Medical Center

\* State Public Health Department

### Data Standards or Guidelines

FIPS state codes: Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS), National Institute of Standards and Technologies

## VERSION

### Definition

Indicates which release of the Uniform Data Elements is being used to code the case. **Uses**  
Will assist data users in understanding which variables and coding schemes applied to the case.

### Discussion

The first official release, 1.0, was dated August 2000. This manual covers version 2.0. It is expected that there will be annual releases. Any slight modifications within a year will be indicated after the decimal.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
IVERSION	Numeric	3	Essential	Incident	Version of the reporting system (formatted as #.#)
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Reporting site			-		

### Code Description

#.#

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## INCIDENT NARRATIVE

### Definition

Captures a narrative account of the incident.

### Uses

There are two purposes to collecting a narrative account of the incident. The first is to better convey the context of the incident and to include important information that is not otherwise captured in the variables, and the second is to facilitate quality control checks on the coding of key variables—particularly incident type, circumstance, and victim/suspect relationship.

### Discussion

Do not include subjects' names or personally identifying information in this field. Describe in a few sentences who was injured by whom, the relationship between victim and suspect if other than self-inflicted, where the incident occurred, and why. Here are two examples: "According to the police report, 42-year old white male who was a passenger in a taxi cab was shot by the cab driver, a 28 year-old white male, after an altercation when the decedent refused to pay his fare. The two were not previously acquainted." "According to the medical examiner's report, a 32-year old white man was found in his parked car in the driveway of his home with a gunshot wound to the head in a presumed suicide. No suicide note was found. His wife reports he was despondent over the recent loss of his job and had talked about suicide. ME report does not document any information regarding medical history or substance abuse." Try to keep the narratives short. Avoid using abbreviations and incomplete sentences, as they are hard to understand. There is no need to document timing, body position, wound information, etc. For example, the following is a **poor** example of an incident narrative: "Victim approached by 2 AMs IFO Store 24 at approximately 11:50pm. First AM dropped to his knees, took aim, and shot V in left leg. V raises hand to block shot. Second S shoots V in hand and chest. V crawls to pay phone." Instead, this could be worded as follows: "21 year-old victim was shot on the street by two Asian males. No information on precipitating circumstance or victim-offender relationship was reported."

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
INCNARR	Memo	No limit	Essential	Incident	Incident narrative
<i>Primary data source:</i>		<i>Secondary data source:</i>			
C/ME		Police			

### Code Description

Free text

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## INVESTIGATING POLICE AGENCY

### Definition

The lead police agency investigating the events and circumstances leading to injury.

### Uses

Information on the lead police agency involved in the investigation can be useful for purposes of data linkage and for examining issues related to the quality and validity of data.

### Discussion

The police agency investigating a homicide can be identified in the Supplementary Homicide Report dataset using the SHR variable "ORI." The investigating police agency (if any) in the case of suicides and accidents should also be identified where possible.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
IORICODE	Character	9	Essential	Incident	NCIC ORI code
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
SHR			Police, C/ME		

### Code Description

This variable is coded according to the Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) codes developed and maintained by the National Crime Information Center which is part of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Each police agency in the country is assigned an ORI code. The first two characters indicate the state, the next five identify the agency that has jurisdiction in the geographic location of the incident, and the last two indicate if a federal agency reported the case. For example, an incident reported on the SHR by the New York City Police Department would have an ORI code of NY0303000. An incident reported on the SHR by the FBI in NYC would have an ORI code of NY03030JF. A codelist of ORI codes for a given state will be available from that state's Uniform Crime Reporting office.

777777777 Not collected by reporting site  
888888888 Not investigated by police or not reported on SHR  
999999999 ORI # unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

National Crime Information Center, Federal Bureau of Investigation (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998).

## DEATH INVESTIGATION SOURCE

### Definition

Indicates whether the case was investigated by the office of a coroner or medical examiner.

### Uses

Can be used to compare the completeness and detail of death investigation data recorded by coroners and medical examiners.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
ISOURCE	Numeric	1	Essential	Incident	
<i>Primary data source:</i>		<i>Secondary data source:</i>			
Reporting site		-			

### Code Description

- 0 No death investigation report available
- 1 Coroner
- 2 Medical examiner
- 3 Both coroner and ME
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## NUMBER OF NONFATAL VICTIMS

### Definition

Identifies the number of nonfatal victims associated with the fatal incident. These include victims of gunshot wounds and victims of other weapon-related injuries.

### Uses

Can be used to assess the extent of multiple-victim incidents and the association of nonfatal injuries with fatal incidents.

### Discussion

The total number of deaths associated with the incident is a calculated variable and need not be data-entered as a separate variable here. The total number of victims of nonfatal injury are data-entered variables. For INFGUN, record the total number of victims who sustained a projectile wound from a firearm and survived. For INFOTH, record the total number of victims who sustained a wound from a weapon other than a firearm and survived. Count only victims injured with a weapon (e.g. bomb, knife, poison). We are not attempting to capture victims who were injured without a weapon (as in someone being punched) because of the difficulty in defining a wound in those cases.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
INFGUN	Numeric	2	Not Essential	Incident	# of nonfatal firearm injury victims in the incident
INFOTH	Numeric	2	Not Essential	Incident	# of nonfatal victims from other weapon types in the incident
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

00...74 Number of victims in incident  
75 75 or more  
76 Multiple, unspecified  
77 Not collected by reporting site  
99 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## INCIDENT LOCATION TYPE

### Definition

Type of place at which the incident occurred.

### Uses

Data on the type of place at which an incident occurred help to describe the injury-producing event and are valuable for planning and evaluating prevention programs.

### Discussion

Code the location at which the victim was first injured. If locations vary in a multiple-victim incident, code the location at which the first injury was inflicted. Designations of specific buildings (such as “house, apartment” or “bar, nightclub”) include both the building itself and the area directly outside, such as a driveway, porch, or front walk. Up to two location codes can be entered. Code the second variable as “88” if one code sufficiently describes the location. If a victim was injured in a variety of locations (for example, the victim was stabbed on a bus and was pursued by the attacker off the bus and into a store where they were stabbed a second time), code the location at which the victim was *first* injured. Use the two codes to adequately describe that location, not to describe an additional location along the chase route.

If an incident occurs in a garage at a private home, code “house, apartment.” If an incident occurs in a public parking garage (e.g. a downtown commercial parking garage) or a garage used by four or more different households (e.g. a garage serving a large apartment building), code the location as “12 – parking lot/public parking garage.”

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
ILOCTYP1, ILOCTYP2	Numeric	2	Essential	Incident	Code up to two locations
ILOCTEXT	Character	30	Non-essential	Incident	Free text: specify location if ILOCTYP1 or 2=66 (“other”)
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

- 1 House, apartment
- 2 Street/road, sidewalk, alley
- 3 Highway, freeway
- 4 Motor vehicle (excluding school bus, 15, and public transportation, 21)
- 5 Bar, nightclub
- 6 Service station
- 7 Bank, credit union, ATM location
- 8 Liquor store
- 9 Other commercial establishment (e.g., grocery store, retail outlet, laundromat)
- 10 Industrial or construction areas (e.g., factory, warehouse)
- 11 Office building
- 12 Parking lot/public parking garage
- 13 Abandoned house, building, or warehouse
- 14 Sports or athletic area (e.g., stadium, baseball field, gymnasium, recreation center)
- 15 School bus

- 16 Child care center, daycare, pre-school
- 17 Elementary school, middle school (i.e., K-8)
- 18 High school
- 19 College/University, including dormitory, fraternity/sorority
- 20 Unspecified school
- 21 Public transportation or station (e.g., bus, train, plane, airport, depot, taxi)
- 22 Synagogue, church, temple
- 23 Hospital or medical facility
- 24 Supervised residential facility (e.g., shelter, halfway house, group home)
- 25 Farm
- 26 Jail, prison, detention facility
- 27 Park, playground, public use area
- 28 Natural area (e.g., field, river, beaches, woods)
- 66 Other (specify in ILOCTEXT)
- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 88 Not applicable (for ILOCTYP2 only)
- 99 Unknown (for ILOCTYP1 only)

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

None.

## ADDRESS OF INCIDENT

### Definition

Address at which the injury incident occurred.

### Uses

The address of the incident is used to determine the agency responsible for potential public health interventions, to calculate local fatality/injury rates using available population data, to gain information about the socioeconomic status (SES) of the neighborhoods in which injuries occur (via US Census data), and to conduct analyses of the distribution of cases by SES and geographic area.

### Discussion

The city, county, state, zip code, census block group, and census tract in which the incident occurred will be reported to the national database. The specific street address of the incident—because it often coincides with the victim’s home address and is therefore considered by some to be a personal identifier—will be collected at the local level but not included in the national database. If the incident covers more than one address, code the address at which the first injury was inflicted. For example, if a person shoots a police officer in the park (victim 1), runs down the street with other officers in pursuit, and is shot in a subway station (victim 2), code the park as the incident address.

The address information should be collected at the local level in a format that meets the local standards for geocoding. Reporting sites planning to geocode their data at the local level can generate the census block group and tract in which the incident occurred from a geocoding program. If reporting sites do not have the capacity to geocode their data and choose to have that done at the national coordinating center, address information can be provided to NVISS. NVISS will then geocode the information and supply the geocoded data back to the site. NVISS will not retain street address after geocoding is complete.

The city, town, and county are coded using standard FIPS codes (Federal Information Processing Standards). They are provided in drop-down menus in the software program. FIPS codes are not always comprehensive for every local government entity in a state. If you cannot find a FIPS code for a place in your state, enter 9s into the field and supply the city/town or county name in the Incident Narrative. It will later be stripped out at the national level once we have contacted the agency that maintains the FIPS codes to notify them of the need for a new code.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
IADDRES	Character	50	Local	Victim	Street address. FOR LOCAL USE ONLY; not to be included in national dataset.
IPLACE	Numeric	5	Essential	Victim	FIPS 5-digit city/town code (“place” code)
ICOUNTY	Numeric	3	Essential	Victim	FIPS 3-digit county code
ISTATE	Numeric	2	Essential	Victim	FIPS 2-digit state code
IZIP	Numeric	5	Essential	Victim	5-digit zip code
ICENSTRT	Numeric	7	Essential	Victim	US Census tract (####.##)
ICENSBG	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	US Census block group
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

IADDRES: (FOR LOCAL DATA COLLECTION ONLY)

Enter street address, including any pre- or post-directionals (e.g. 658 S. Main Street, NW). In some cases there will not be an explicit address for the injury incident (e.g., in a field or park). In these cases, the nearest address or cross streets should be recorded. If no street address can be found for the incident, enter “unknown.”

All other address variables:

Field filled with 7s      Not collected by site

Field filled with 9s      Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS), National Institute of Standards and Technologies; US Bureau of the Census; US Postal Service

## SPECIAL LOCATIONS

### Definition

Identifies whether the injury incident occurred in public housing or on public housing property, military property or an Indian reservation.

### Uses

Data on whether the incident occurred on public housing property, military property, or Indian reservations can be used to identify incidents that may be investigated by federal or other special law enforcement agencies. These data can be used to plan, and assess the impact of, injury prevention programs in these areas.

### Discussion

None

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
IFEDPROP	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Incident	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

- 1 Public housing property (other than on an Indian reservation)
- 2 Military property
- 3 Indian reservation – public housing property
- 4 Indian reservation – other location
- 5 None of the above
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

*Section 2*  
Person (Victim and Suspect) Information

## PERSON ID

### Definition

Primary identifier used to uniquely identify the people (victims and suspects) associated with an incident.

### Uses

Along with the Incident ID, the Person ID (PERSID) is used to link information about a person on the Person Table with information about that person from the associated tables, such as the Victim Table and Relationship Table.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
PERSID	Numeric	5	Essential	Person, Victim, Suspect, Relationship, Mult10, YthAcc, Circum, FstPurch	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Reporting site			-		

### Code Description

The Person ID is consecutively assigned by reporting sites for each person (victim or suspect) in an incident starting with 001. For each incident, the first person is set at 001. Persons are uniquely identified in the dataset through a combination of Incident ID and Person ID. There are no provisions for missing or unknown information.

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## PERSON TYPE

### Definition

Indicates whether the person is a victim, suspect, or both.

### Uses

Used to link the person table to the victim and suspect tables.

### Discussion

**Victims** are people who died in a suicide, violence-related homicide, war, legal intervention, or as the result of a firearm injury. A fetus who dies as the result of violent injuries sustained by the mother should not be recorded as a victim unless he or she was delivered and lived outside the womb for any period of time and was issued both a birth certificate and a death certificate.

**Suspects** are those people who are suspected of having killed another person in the incident, whether intentionally or (in the case of firearm injuries) unintentionally. In an incident in which two or more people attack a victim, all of the attackers should be recorded in the incident as suspects, regardless of who actually dealt the fatal blow. For example, in the case of two armed robbers who hold up a store, even if only one actually pulled the trigger, both robbers should be listed as suspected offenders in the homicide.

**Both** are victims who also killed someone else in the incident. For example, a person who kills his wife and himself would have a PType of “Both” as would a person who kills a police officer and then is himself shot dead by another police officer. A suicide victim has a PType of “Victim” not “Both” unless they also killed someone else in the incident. A person’s status as a victim, suspect, or both should be assigned with reference only to fatal injuries. This is a change from Version 1.0 of the reporting system.

For a longer discussion of Person Type, see section B in “Entering a Case.”

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
PTYPE	Numeric	1	Essential	Person	Person's role in the incident
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME, death certificate			SHR, police reports		

### Code Description

- 1 Victim
- 2 Suspect
- 3 Both victim and suspect

Note: suicide victims should be coded as 1 (unless they killed another person as well)

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## PERSON'S AGE

### Definition

Age of victim(s) and suspect(s).

### Uses

Age is standard demographic information used in epidemiologic analyses.

### Discussion

In some cases the victim's or suspect's exact age will not be known. This data element is designed to record either the actual or estimated age of the person. Coding for date of birth is also specified below. Because of its specificity and its potential for identifying individuals, this variable is for local data collection only and will not be reported to the national dataset.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
PAGE1	Numeric	3	Essential	Person	Actual age or lowest end of estimated range
PAGE2	Numeric	3	Essential	Person	Enter 888 if actual age is known; enter highest estimated age if age is estimated
PDOB	Character	10	Local	Person	Date of birth. FOR LOCAL DATA COLLECTION ONLY; not to be reported to national dataset
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Death certificate, C/ME (victim)			SHR (suspect)		

### Code Description

PAGE1, PAGE2

0	Baby under 1 year
1...	Actual age or low (PAGE1) or high (PAGE2) bound of estimated age
777	Not collected by reporting site
888	Not applicable (not a valid code for PAGE1; use only for PAGE2 if actual age is known)
999	Unknown (for PAGE1 only)

Coding sample: if the actual age of the person is known to be 24, PAGE1=024 and PAGE2=888. If the age is estimated to be between 19 and 25, PAGE1=019 and PAGE2=025.

PDOB

mm/dd/yyyy	Person's date of birth
99/99/9999	Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## PERSON'S SEX

### Definition

Sex of the victim(s) and suspect(s).

### Uses

The person's sex is standard demographic information used in epidemiologic analyses.

### Discussion

None.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
PSEX	Numeric	1	Essential	Person	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Death certificate, C/ME (victim)			SHR, police (suspect)		

### Code Description

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

DEEDS.

## PERSON'S RACE

### Definition

Race of the victim(s) and suspect(s).

### Uses

Although the biological significance of race has been questioned, data on race are used frequently in public health surveillance and epidemiologic, clinical, and health services research.

### Discussion

Race is a concept used to differentiate population groups largely on the basis of physical characteristics transmitted by descent. Racial categories are neither precise nor mutually exclusive, and the concept of race lacks clear scientific definition. The common use of race in the United States draws upon differences not only in physical attributes, but also in ancestry and geographic origins. Since 1977, the federal government has sought to standardize data on race and ethnicity among its agencies through the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) *Statistical Policy Directive Number 15: Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting* (OMB, 1978). *Directive Number 15* standards were developed to meet federal legislative and program requirements, and they are used widely in the public and private sectors. The directive provides four basic racial categories but states that the collection of race data need not be limited to these categories. However, any additional reporting that uses more detail must be organized in such a way that the additional categories can be aggregated into the four basic groups. Although the directive does not specify a method of determining an individual's race, OMB prefers self-identification to identification by an observer whenever possible. The directive states that persons of mixed racial origins should use the single category that most closely reflects the individual's recognition in his or her community. A new approach to documenting race is being phased in by federal agencies, but is not expected to be adopted by death certificates nationally until 2003.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
PRACE	Numeric	1	Essential	Person	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Death certificate, C/ME (victim)			SHR, police (suspect)		

### Code Description

- 1 *American Indian or Alaskan Native.* A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.
- 2 *Asian or Pacific Islander.* A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands. This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, and Samoa.
- 3 *Black.* A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- 4 *White.* A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 *Unknown*

### Data Standards or Guidelines

*DEEDS, Statistical Policy Directive Number 15: Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting* (OMB, 1978), *Standards for the*

*Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity* (OMB, 1995), and *E1633-96* (ASTM, 1996).

## PERSON'S ETHNICITY

### Definition

Ethnicity of the victim(s) and suspect(s).

### Uses

Data on ethnicity can be used in public health surveillance, and in epidemiologic, clinical, and health services research.

### Discussion

Ethnicity is a concept used to differentiate population groups on the basis of shared cultural characteristics or geographic origins. A variety of cultural attributes contribute to ethnic differentiation, including language, patterns of social interaction, religion, and styles of dress. However, ethnic differentiation is imprecise and fluid. It is contingent on a sense of group identity that can change over time and that involves subjective and attitudinal influences. Since 1977, the federal government has sought to standardize data on race and ethnicity among its agencies through the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) *Statistical Policy Directive Number 15: Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting* (OMB, 1978). *Directive Number 15* standards were developed to meet federal legislative and program requirements, and they are used widely in the public and private sectors. The directive provides two basic ethnic categories — *Hispanic* and *Not of Hispanic Origin* — but states that collection of ethnicity data need not be limited to these categories. However, any additional reporting that uses more detail must be organized in such a way that the additional categories can be aggregated into the two basic groups. OMB prefers that data on race and ethnicity be collected separately. The use of the Hispanic category in a combined race/ethnicity data element makes it impossible to distribute persons of Hispanic ethnicity by race and, therefore, reduces the utility of the four basic racial categories by excluding from them persons who would otherwise be included. Although the directive does not specify a method of determining an individual's ethnicity, OMB prefers self-identification to identification by an observer whenever possible. The directive states that persons of mixed ethnicity should use the single category that most closely reflects the individual's recognition in his or her community. A new approach to documenting ethnicity is being phased in by federal agencies, but is not expected to be adopted by death certificates nationally until 2003.

Variable Name	Type	Field Length	Priority	Table	Notes
PETHNIC	Numeric	1	Essential	Person	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Death Certificate, C/ME (victim)			SHR, police (suspect)		

### Code Description

- 1 *Hispanic*. A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- 2 *Not of Hispanic Origin*. Anyone with a known ethnicity not fitting the definition of Hispanic.
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 *Unknown*

### Data Standards or Guidelines

*DEEDS, Statistical Policy Directive Number 15: Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting* (OMB, 1978), *Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity* (OMB, 1995), *E1633-96* (ASTM, 1996), and *Core Health Data Elements* (National Committee on Vital Health Statistics, 1996).

## INCIDENT AT PERSON'S RESIDENCE

### Definition

Identifies whether the incident occurred in the person's (victim's or suspect's) residence.

### Uses

Data on the whether the incident occurred in the person's residence can be used to further characterize the injury incident and may be valuable for planning and evaluating injury prevention programs. It can be used, for example, to evaluate the impact of laws or policies regulating the use of firearms in public vs. private locations or to inform domestic violence interventions.

### Discussion

This variable is completed for each victim and suspect in an incident and is person-specific. For example, if a man shot his wife and his wife's sister at the sister's house, PRESID=0 for both the husband and the wife but PRESID =1 for the sister.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
PRESID	Numeric	1	Essential	Person	
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

- 0 No, incident not at person's residence
- 1 Yes, incident at person's residence
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## AT WORK

### Definition

Did the injury incident occur while the person (victim or suspect) was at work or working?

### Uses

Knowledge of the relationship of the incident to a person's work can help to determine the impact of violence and suicide in the workplace and be used in the planning and development of work-related violence prevention programs.

### Discussion

"At work" includes those incidents that occur while the person is at work or working. These injuries could occur at the person's place of work or off-site during the course of the person's work-related activities. For example, a person murdered while driving a truck to deliver produce should be coded as a work-related injury. However, a person shot while commuting between work and home would not be considered to have suffered a work-related injury. For victims, the At Work definition applies only to current jobs. For suspects, the definition applies to both current jobs and jobs they recently left or from which they were recently terminated. For victims, the "at work" item on the death certificate is supposed to be filled out for all injury victims with the exception of those under the age of 14 (unless warranted for a child injured at work). "Not applicable" can therefore be coded for victims 13 and under.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
PWORK	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Person	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Death certificate			C/ME		

### Code Description

- 0 No, not at work
- 1 Yes, at work
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable (child 13 and under)
- 9 Unknown

Injury at work includes:

- Injury occurred on employer premises while engaged in work activity, apprenticing, or in vocational training (regardless of the relationship between the victim and suspect)
- Injury occurred on employer premises while on break, in hallways, rest room, cafeteria, or storage area
- Injury occurred on employer parking lots while working, arriving or leaving
- Injury occurred while working for pay or compensation, including at home
- Injury occurred while working as a volunteer EMS, firefighter, or law enforcement officer
- Injury occurred while working in a family business, including family farm (activity should be clearly related to a profit-oriented business)
- Injury occurred while traveling on business, including to and from customer/business contacts
- Injury occurred while engaged in work activity where a vehicle is considered the work environment

Injury at work does **not** include:

- Injury occurred while commuting to or from work
- Injury occurred while engaging in criminal activity as a means of economic support
- Injury occurred on employer premises while engaged in recreational activities on employer controlled facilities (e.g., games) for personal enjoyment
- Injury occurred on employer premises while victim was visiting for non-work purposes (i.e., not on official business) (This applies only to victims, not to suspects)
- Injury occurred to a homemaker working at homemaking activities
- Injury occurred to a student engaged in school activities
- Injury occurred while working for self for no profit (e.g., mowing yard, repairing own roof, hobby, recreational activities)
- Injury occurred while operating a vehicle (personal or commercial) for non-work purposes

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

U.S. standard death certificate.

## INTOXICATION SUSPECTED

### Definition

Suspected use of “drugs of abuse” or alcohol by the victim or suspect at the time of the injury.

### Uses

Allows researcher to capture additional information regarding use of mind-altering drugs and alcohol by victim or suspect that may not be reflected in the Coroner/ME toxicology report.

### Discussion

PINTOX can be coded as “yes” based on test results (e.g. coroner/ME report, hospital urine test, police breathalyzer), witness or investigator reports (e.g. police note that the offender “had been drinking heavily”), and circumstantial evidence (e.g. empty six pack scattered around suicide victim). Drug intoxication is defined here as altered mental status resulting from use of illicit drugs (e.g. heroin, marijuana, cocaine, angel dust); unauthorized use of prescription medications (e.g. oxycontin, morphine, valium); and recreational use of inhalants (e.g. sniffing gasoline). Authorized use of prescription medications (such as antidepressants or antipsychotics) does not meet the definition of drug intoxication.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
PINTOX	Numeric	1	Essential	Person	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

PINTOX

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

*Section 3*

**Victim Information**

*A. Victim-specific Incident Information*

## WEAPON TYPE

### Definition

Type of weapon or means used to inflict the injury.

### Uses

Useful for categorizing broad types of suicides and homicides, for understanding patterns of perpetration, and for identifying case fatality rates by weapon type.

### Discussion

Weapon type reports the broad category of weapon(s) used to inflict the injury. Code up to two weapons. If more than two weapon types were used (as in a person who was beaten, stabbed, and shot), choose the weapon that corresponded with the Underlying Cause of Death code on the death certificate as VWEAPON1 and the second weapon listed on the death certificate as VWEAPON2. A second weapon can be listed even if the wound it inflicted was not severe (as in a suicide victim who made superficial cuts to her wrists and then overdosed on prescription medications). Use VWEAPTXT to document the specific weapon or poison used (e.g. machete, car exhaust).

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VWEAPON1, VWEAPON2	Numeric	2	Essential	Victim	Weapon type used
VWEAPTXT	Text	50	Not essential	Victim	Free text to describe briefly the weapon if details are available (e.g. heroin overdose by injection; machete; inhaled car exhaust)
VPOISON1, VPOISON2	Numeric	2	Not essential	Victim	Use only for poisoning deaths to indicate broad category of poison used.
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

VWEAPON1, VWEAPON2

- 1 Handgun
- 2 Rifle
- 3 Shotgun
- 4 Other or unspecified firearm
- 5 Non-powder gun (e.g. BB gun, air gun, pellet gun)
- 6 Sharp instrument
- 7 Blunt instrument
- 8 Poisoning (includes drug overdose, medication overdose, poison ingestion, carbon monoxide or other poisonous gas inhalation)
- 9 Hanging, strangulation, suffocation
- 10 Personal weapons (e.g. fist, foot)
- 11 Fall (pushed, if homicide; jumped, if suicide)
- 12 Explosive
- 13 Drowning
- 14 Fire or burns
- 15 Shaking (e.g. shaken baby syndrome)
- 16 Motor vehicle
- 17 Biological weapons (e.g. intentional anthrax or smallpox release)
- 66 Other
- 77 Not collected by reporting site

- 88 Not applicable (for VWEAPON2 only)
- 99 Unknown (for VWEAPON1 only)

VPOISON

- 1 Street/recreational drugs (e.g. cocaine, heroin)
- 2 Alcohol
- 3 Pharmaceuticals – prescription
- 4 Pharmaceuticals – over-the-counter
- 5 Pharmaceuticals – unknown whether prescription or over-the-counter
- 6 Carbon monoxide or other gas, vapor
- 66 Other poison (e.g. rat poison, insecticide, lye)
- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 88 Not applicable
- 99 Unknown (for VPOISON1 only)

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

VWEAPON based on collapsed International Classification of Disease codes for external cause of injuries.

## INCIDENT TYPE

### Definition

Type of incident leading to the victim's injury.

### Uses

A coding system to differentiate victims of interpersonal violence, intentional self-harm, and accidents is vital to any injury surveillance system because of the importance of intent-type to prevention strategies.

### Discussion

The purpose of this variable is to apply a uniform protocol for categorizing the underlying cause of death using the broad categories established by the International Classification of Diseases. The code is assigned by surveillance personnel based on reading coroner/medical examiner reports and police information on the case. In some cases, Incident Type may differ from the manner of death assigned by the medical examiner because of the slight difference in categories used and because medical examiner protocols for defining intent vary across jurisdictions and across individual C/MEs. A clear accidental shooting of one child by another, for example, may be categorized as an accident by one medical examiner and a homicide by another. **The protocol for defining Incident Type is included in the Appendix. Please read this document.**

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VINCTYPE	Numeric	2	Essential	Victim	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			SHR, Police		

### Code Description

- 20 Accident – self-inflicted
- 21 Accident – inflicted by other person
- 22 Accident – unknown whether self-inflicted or other-inflicted
- 3 Suicide or intentional self-harm
- 4 Interpersonal violence-related
- 5 Legal intervention (injured by police or other authorities during law enforcement)
- 6 Operations of war
- 66 Other (specify in incident narrative)
- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 99 Unknown

*See Appendix for Protocol for Coding “Incident Type.”*

### Data Standards or Guidelines

Based on International Classification of Disease, 9<sup>th</sup> Revision, broad e-code categories.

## DEATH CERTIFICATE UNDERLYING CAUSE OF DEATH

### Definition

Underlying cause-of-death code assigned by the registry of vital records to the death certificate record.

### Uses

The underlying cause of death assigned on the death certificate is the basis for the nation's official count of homicides, suicides, and unintentional deaths. A comparison of this variable and the variables "Incident Type" and "Manner" will indicate the degree to which data sources vary in classifying deaths.

### Discussion

Cause of death is coded using the system established by the World Health Organization's International Classification of Disease (ICD). This variable should be coded as it appears in the underlying cause of death field in death certificate data. Death certificates recorded after 1999 use the 10<sup>th</sup> revision of the ICD (ICD-10). If death certificate data are not available at the time that the reporting site is gathering data on the case, code as unknown. These data may be reported at a later update. Use the decimal point following the third digit. Do not use trailing zeros after the decimal point (unless a true zero is part of the actual code).

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VECODE10	Character	6	Not Essential	Victim	format: L##.## (the first character must be a letter, followed by up to four digits)
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Death certificate			none		

### Code Description

#### ICD-10 Coding of first 3-4 characters (cause of injury):

U01	Assault by terrorism
U01.0	Assault by terrorism by explosion of marine weapons
U01.1	Assault by terrorism involving destruction of aircraft
U01.2	Assault by terrorism involving other explosions and fragments
U01.3	Assault by terrorism involving fires, conflagration, hot substances
U01.4	Assault by terrorism involving firearms
U01.5	Assault by terrorism involving nuclear weapons
U01.6	Assault by terrorism involving biological weapons
U01.7	Assault by terrorism involving chemical weapons
U01.8	Assault by terrorism, other specified
U01.9	Assault by terrorism, unspecified
U02	Sequelae of terrorism
U03	Intentional self-harm by terrorism
U03.0	Intentional self-harm by terrorism involving explosions and fragments
U03.9	Intentional self-harm by terrorism by other and unspecified means
W32	Accidental handgun discharge
W33	Accidental rifle, shotgun and larger firearm discharge
W34	Accidental discharge from other and unspecified firearms (this code does not discriminate between firearms and nonpowder guns)
X40-X49	Accidental poisoning by and exposure to noxious substances
X60-X69	Intentional self-poisoning
X70	Intentional self-harm by hanging, strangulation and suffocation
X71	Intentional self-harm by drowning and submersion

X72 Intentional self-harm by handgun discharge  
X73 Intentional self-harm by rifle, shotgun and larger firearm discharge  
X74 Intentional self-harm by other and unspecified firearm discharge  
X75 Intentional self-harm by explosive material  
X76 Intentional self-harm by smoke, fire and flames  
X77 Intentional self-harm by steam, hot vapors and hot objects  
X78 Intentional self-harm by sharp object  
X79 Intentional self-harm by blunt object  
X80 Intentional self-harm by jumping from a high place  
X81 Intentional self-harm by jumping or lying before moving object  
X82 Intentional self-harm by crashing of motor vehicle  
X83 Intentional self-harm by other specified means  
X84 Intentional self-harm by unspecified means  
X85 Assault by drugs, medicaments and biological substances  
X86 Assault by corrosive substance  
X87 Assault by pesticides  
X88 Assault by gases and vapors  
X89 Assault by other specified chemicals and noxious substances  
X90 Assault by other unspecified chemicals and noxious substances  
X91 Assault by hanging, strangulation and suffocation  
X92 Assault by drowning and submersion  
X93 Assault by handgun discharge  
X94 Assault by rifle, shotgun and larger firearm discharge  
X95 Assault by other and unspecified firearm discharge  
X96 Assault by explosive material  
X97 Assault by smoke, fire and flames  
X98 Assault by steam, hot vapors and hot objects  
X99 Assault by sharp object  
Y00 Assault by blunt object  
Y01 Assault by pushing from high place  
Y02 Assault by pushing or placing victim before moving object  
Y03 Assault by crashing of motor vehicle  
Y04 Assault by bodily force (unarmed brawl or fight)  
Y05 Sexual assault by bodily force  
Y06 Neglect and abandonment  
Y07 Other maltreatment syndromes (physical or sexual abuse, torture)  
Y08 Assault by other specified means  
Y09 Assault by unspecified means  
Y22 Handgun discharge, undetermined intent  
Y23 Rifle, shotgun and larger firearm discharge, undetermined intent  
Y24 Other and unspecified firearm discharge, undetermined intent  
Y35.0 Legal intervention involving firearm discharge  
Y35.1 Legal intervention involving explosives  
Y35.2 Legal intervention involving gas  
Y35.3 Legal intervention involving blunt objects  
Y35.4 Legal intervention involving sharp objects  
Y35.5 Legal execution  
Y35.6 Legal intervention involving other specified means  
Y35.7 Legal intervention, means unspecified  
Y36.0 War operations involving marine weapons  
Y36.1 War operations involving destruction of aircraft

Y36.2	War operations involving other explosions and fragments
Y36.3	War operations involving fires, conflagrations and hot substances
Y36.4	War operations involving firearm discharge and other forms of conventional warfare (does not include explosives; does include bayonet injuries and drowning)
Y36.4	War operations involving nuclear weapons
Y36.6	War operations involving biological weapons
Y36.7	War operations involving chemical weapons and other forms of unconventional warfare
Y36.8	War operations occurring after cessation of hostilities
Y36.9	War operations, unspecified
Y87.0	Sequelae of intentional self-harm
Y87.1	Sequelae of assault
Y89.0	Sequelae of legal intervention
Y89.1	Sequelae of war operations
L77.77	Not collected by reporting site
L99.99	Unknown or missing

ICD-10 Coding of 4<sup>th</sup> character (Type of place of occurrence) – does not apply to Y35.0 or Y36.4

0	Home
1	Residential institution
2	School, institution, public administrative area (e.g. courthouse, hospital, daycare center)
3	Sports and athletic area
4	Street and highway
5	Trade and service area
6	Industrial and construction (e.g. factory, shipyard)
7	Farm
8	Other
9	Unspecified

ICD-10 Coding of 5<sup>th</sup> character (Type of activity when injured) – does not apply to Y35.0 or Y36.4

0	While engaged in sports activity
1	While engaged in leisure activity
2	While working for income
3	While engaged in other types of work (e.g. chores, school)
4	While resting, sleeping, eating, or engaging in other vital activities
5	While engaged in other specified activities
6	While engaged in unspecified activities

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

*ICD-10: International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems: 10<sup>th</sup> Revision.* Geneva: World Health Organization, 1992.

## ME/CORONER MANNER OF DEATH

### Definition

Medical examiner's or coroner's determination of the manner of death. Manner of death is a broad classification of the cause of death as natural, accidental, suicide, homicide, pending investigation, or not determined.

### Uses

Data describing the manner of death are useful for public health surveillance, for health care planning and administration, and for clinical, health services, and epidemiologic research. Because the ME/coroner's determination of manner of death sometimes contradicts the manner of death inferred from the death certificate's underlying cause-of-death code or the incident type that the abstractor assigns to the case, it is useful to document the ME/coroner's determination.

### Discussion

Medical examiners and coroners investigate suspicious injury deaths and determine the likely manner of death using a check-off box on the death certificate. Record the manner of death exactly as it appears on the hand-written death certificate (or, if the death certificate is not available, on the ME/coroner report), even if it appears to be in error. Some MEs and coroners routinely classify the accidental shooting of one person by another (e.g. a hunter mistakenly shooting another hunter) as a homicide, even when the unintentional nature of the shooting is not in dispute.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VMANNER	Numeric	1	Essential	Victim	
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
C/ME					

### Code Description

- 1 Natural
- 2 Accident
- 3 Suicide
- 4 Homicide
- 5 Pending investigation
- 6 Could not be determined
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 C/ME report not available

### Data Standards or Guidelines

U.S. standard death certificate.

## ABSTRACTED VICTIM/SUSPECT RELATIONSHIP

### Definition

Description of the relationship of the victim to the suspect, as coded by the reporting system's abstractor.

### Uses

Data describing the relationship between the victim and the suspect are useful for developing and evaluating prevention programs as well as for characterizing various forms of family and intimate violence.

### Discussion

This variable will be assigned by the abstractor for each victim-suspect pair in an incident based on review of the medical examiner/coroner report and police incident report. The NVISS software automatically "populates" the Relationship Table with victim/suspect pairs. PersIDV is the Person ID# of the victim and PersIDS is the Person ID# of the suspect. Each person with a Ptype of 1 or 3 ("victim" or "both") is paired with each person with a Ptype of 2 or 3 ("suspect" or "both"). In complex incidents (which will be relatively rare), there will be times when a suspect in an incident is not a suspect for a particular victim. For example, if a young man stabs a bartender and then is shot himself by a police officer, there are two victims in the incident (the bartender and the young man) and two suspects (the young man and the police officer). Code the relationship between the bartender and the police officer as 88 (not applicable) since the police officer wasn't a suspect in the first killing.

Up to two codes can be selected for each victim-suspect pair. Use the second RELABS variable for cases such as when a victim is both a schoolmate and a rival gang member. Because this will be infrequent, the NVISS software sets the second relationship variable (RELABS2) to default to 88.

Use the following sentence as a guide for selecting the appropriate description of the relationship: the victim is *the \_\_\_\_\_ of* the suspect. For example, when a parent kills a child, the relationship is "child" not "parent." ("The victim is the *child* of the suspect.") Homosexual relationships should be coded in the same way as heterosexual relationships (e.g. "girlfriend or boyfriend"). The homosexual or heterosexual nature of the relationship will be inferred by the sex of the victim and suspect.

For the purposes of this data element, an acquaintance is someone with or about whom the victim has had some prior interaction or knowledge. A stranger is someone with whom the victim has had no prior interaction before the event that culminated in the violent injury. For example, code as "stranger" the following scenario: two individuals who do not know each other play pool together, argue, then one stabs the other.

When more than one offender is working in concert in an incident (as in a driveby shooter and his or her driver), code the victim's relationship to each offender. Do not use 88s in this situation to identify the offender who did not actually fire the weapon because all of the offenders working in concert are considered offenders on the Supplementary Homicide Report and in police reports.

If the nature of the relationship is unknown, code RELABS1 as 99. RELABS2 defaults to 88 and should not be changed to 99.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
RELABS1, RELABS2	Numeric	2	Essential	Relationship	2 relationships per victim/ suspect pair can be coded
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Police			C/ME		

### Code Description

#### *Spouse or intimate partner*

- 1 Spouse
- 2 Ex-spouse
- 3 Girlfriend or boyfriend
- 7 Ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend
- 8 Girlfriend or boyfriend, unspecified whether current or ex

#### *Family*

- 10 Parent
- 11 Child
- 12 Sibling
- 13 Grandchild
- 14 Grandparent
- 15 In-law
- 16 Stepparent
- 17 Stepchild
- 18 Child of suspect's boyfriend/girlfriend (e.g., child killed by mother's boyfriend)
- 19 Boyfriend/girlfriend of suspect's parent (e.g., child kills his mother's boyfriend)
- 29 Other family member (e.g. cousin, uncle)

#### *Other known*

- 30 "Babysitree" (e.g. child killed by babysitter)
- 31 Acquaintance
- 32 Friend
- 33 Roommate (not intimate partner)
- 34 Schoolmate
- 35 Current or former work relationship (e.g., co-worker, employee, employer)
- 36 Rival gang member
- 44 Other person, known to victim

#### *Stranger:*

- 45 Stranger

#### *Law enforcement:*

- 50 Victim was injured by law enforcement officer
- 51 Victim was law enforcement officer injured in the line of duty.

#### *Unknown or Not Applicable:*

- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 88 RELABS1: Suspect is not a suspect for this victim; suspect is a suspect for another victim in the incident. RELABS2: All relevant information about relationship is already provided in RELABS1.
- 99 Relationship unknown (for RELABS1 only)

### Data Standards or Guidelines

Modification of FBI Supplementary Homicide Report categories (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998).

## ABUSE

### Definition

For cases involving intimate partner violence, violence against children by their caretakers, and violence against elders or dependent adults by their caretakers, this data element identifies cases in which a history of ongoing abuse is suspected.

### Uses

These variables are intended to assist in identifying deaths resulting from intimate partner abuse, child abuse, elder abuse, and other forms of caretaker violence.

### Discussion

**RCARETAK:** This variable appears on the Relationship table. For each victim/suspect pair, after indicating the relationship (RELABS from previous page) indicate whether the offender was a caretaker for the victim. Examples of caretakers include a parent who kills their child, a babysitter who kills his or her charge, a nursing home attendant who kills a patient, and an adult who kills a dependent elderly parent. This variable is included because some definitions of child abuse and elder abuse are based solely on whether the offender was a caretaker of the victim.

**RABUSE:** This variable appears on the Relationship table. For each victim/suspect pair in which (1) the offender was a caretaker of the victim or (2) the offender was a current or ex-intimate partner, indicate whether the data sources document a history (or suspected history) of abuse of this victim by this suspect. The evidence of ongoing abuse *may be suspected but not confirmed*. For example, if the ME/C report states, “Husband shot wife after learning that she was having an affair. No history of previous police visits to the residence or restraining orders; neighbors indicate no previous problems,” code RABUSE as “no” to indicate that there is no evidence in the record of ongoing abuse. If the ME/C report states, “Stepparent killed child during an altercation. Family has been investigated by Child Protective Services last year,” code RABUSE as “yes.”

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
RCARETAK	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Relationship	Was this suspect a caretaker of this victim?
RABUSE	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Relationship	Evidence of ongoing abuse of this victim by this suspect?
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

**RCARETAK** *Is this offender a caretaker of this victim? (e.g. parent, foster parent, nursing home attendant)*

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

**RABUSE** *Is there evidence of ongoing abuse by this offender against this victim?*

- 0 No
- 1 Yes (suspected or confirmed)
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None

## TIME AND DATE OF INJURY

### Definition

Date and time at which victim was injured.

### Uses

Date of incident can be used to examine trends over time in violent deaths and to detect epidemics. Time can be used to identify times of day at which incidents may be more likely to occur.

### Discussion

Exact time of injury is not always known. If the month of injury is known to be July 2001, but the day is unknown, code the date as 07/99/2001. If month and day are unknown, but the year is known to be 2001, code the date as 99/99/2001. If a range of greater than one hour is noted for the time of injury (e.g. "sometime between 9:30am and 12 noon"), treat that as an unknown. If a range of less than an hour is given (e.g. "around 9:30am" or "between 9:30 and 10:30") code that as the lowest hour in the range (0930 in both cases).

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VIDATE	Character	10	Essential	Victim	Date of injury
VITIME	Numeric	4	Essential	Victim	Time of injury (military time)
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME report			Police		

### Code Description

#### VIDATE

MM/DD/YYYY	Date
77/77/7777	Not collected by reporting site
99/99/9999	Unknown

#### VITIME

0000...2359	Military time (note: midnight is 0000)
7777	Not collected by reporting site
9999	Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## TIME AND DATE OF DEATH

### Definition

Date and time at which victim died and the time that elapsed between injury and death.

### Uses

Date and time of death, in conjunction with date and time of the incident and with survival time, can be used for emergency response planning and to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of EMS services and hospital care.

### Discussion

See discussion on previous page for handling unknown values in date and time. Exact time and date of death are frequently unknown. Do not enter the time that death was pronounced if actual time of death or date of death is unknown. Instead, record the time of death as unknown. Year of death must be entered. If year of death is truly unknown, enter the year in which the body was found. Survival time is noted on the death certificate in the lower right hand corner. It is often either explicitly mentioned on the coroner/medical examiner's report or can be calculated based on date and time of injury and death. Indicate the length of survival interval in VSURVIVE and the units of measurement for the interval (minutes, hours, days) in VSUNIT. For under 2 hours, use minutes; for 2 hours through 47 hours, use hours; for 48 hours and over, use days. For 365 or more days, use years. Round to the nearest unit. If survival time was noted as a range, use the high end of the range (e.g. 15-30 minutes, use 30). If survival time is not precisely noted indicate 999 in VSURVIVE and the applicable unit in VSUNIT (e.g. "patient survived a few minutes" would be 999 in VSURVIVE and 1 [minutes] in VSUNIT).

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VDDATE	Character	10	Essential	Victim	Date of death
VDTIME	Numeric	4	Essential	Victim	Time of death
VSURVIVE	Numeric	3	Essential	Victim	Number of minutes, hours, days, or years the victim survived between injury and death.
VSUNIT	Numeric	1	Essential	Victim	Indicates what unit (minutes, hours, days, or years) are used in VSURVIVE
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Death Certificate			C/ME report		

### Code Description

VDDATE *Victim's date of death*

MM/DD/YYYY	Date
77/77/7777	Not collected by reporting site
99/99/YYYY	Unknown (Year of death must be filled in. If year of death is truly unknown, use year in which body was discovered.)

VDTIME *Victim's time of death*

0000...2359	Military time (note: midnight is 0000)
7777	Not collected by reporting site
9999	Unknown

VSURVIVE *Number of minutes, hours, days, or years victim survived from injury to death*

0...###	Interval of survival
777	Not collected by reporting site
999	Unknown

VSUNIT *Unit of measurement used in VSURVIVE*

1	Minutes
2	Hours
3	Days
4	Years
7	Not collected by reporting site
9	Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

None.

## Victim Information

### *B. Victim Circumstance*

## CIRCUMSTANCES KNOWN?

### Definition

Indicates whether any information is available about the circumstances associated with the incident.

### Uses

This variable operates as a stem question. If the answer is 0 (no) or 7 (not collected by reporting site), all other Violence Circumstance, Accident Circumstance, and Suicide Circumstance variables default to unknown or not collected.

### Discussion

Do not code this variable as “no” until you have reviewed all of the data sources you intend to review for this case.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
CCIRC	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Operates as a stem question for remaining Violence, Accident, and Suicide Circumstance variables.
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
C/ME			Police, UCR		

### Code Description

0 No  
1 Yes  
7 Not collected by reporting site

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## VIOLENCE CIRCUMSTANCE

### Definition

Describes the precipitating circumstances associated with interpersonal violence-related deaths as coded by a data abstractor.

### Uses

This data element assists in describing the precipitants of violent deaths and identifying trends in subtypes of violence over time. It will aid in planning and evaluating prevention programs targeted at specific subtypes of violence.

### Discussion

Information gathered from police reports, SHR/NIBRS, and ME/Coroner reports may be used to code this data element. Code CCRIME as “yes” if the homicide was sparked by another crime. If yes, indicate whether the other crime was a crime in progress at the time of the homicide (e.g. killed during a robbery) or a previous crime (e.g. revenge over a bad drug deal). If another crime was involved, use CVNATCR to indicate the nature of the crime(s). Code up to 2 crimes. See Appendix “Circumstance Definitions” for in-depth definitions and coding examples for each Violence Circumstance variable.

Variable Name	Type	Field Length	Priority	Table	Notes
CVCRIME	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Sparked by another crime?
CVNATCR1, CVNATCR2	Numeric	2	Essential	Circumstance	Use only if responded yes to CVCRIME.
CVDEFENS	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Justifiable homicide?
CVGANG	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Gang-related?
CVDRUG	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Drug-related?
CVPART	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Intimate partner violence-related?
CVARMED	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Victim armed?
CVARG thru CVOTHER	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	See list of variables below
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Police, SHR			C/ME		

### Code Description

CVCRIME *Homicide sparked by another crime?*

- 0 No
- 1 Yes, crime in progress
- 2 Yes, revenge over previous crime
- 3 Yes, other or unspecified
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

CVNATCR1, CVNATCR2 *Nature of other crime:*

- 1 Drug trade
- 2 Robbery
- 3 Burglary
- 4 Larceny
- 5 Motor vehicle theft
- 6 Arson
- 7 Rape, sexual assault
- 8 Prostitution, commercialized vice

- 9 Gambling
- 10 Assault, homicide
- 11 Witness intimidation/elimination
- 66 Other (specify in Incident Narrative)
- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 88 Not applicable
- 99 Unknown (for CVNATCR1 only)

CVDEFENS *Defensive or law enforcement-related homicide?*

- 0 No
- 1 Yes, by civilian acting in self-defense or defense of others
- 2 Yes, by law enforcement officer in line of duty
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

CVGANG *Gang-related?*

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

CVDRUG *Drug-related?*

- 0 No
- 1 Yes, drug dealing
- 2 Yes, drug use (victim or offender intoxicated; addict seeking money for drugs)
- 3 Yes, suspected drug-related (e.g. body found in crack house; victim was known dealer; bags of cocaine on scene)
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

CVPART *Intimate partner violence-related?* (Intimate partners are current or former girlfriends/boyfriends or spouses. Code as yes even if the victim is a “collateral” victim: e.g. man kills ex-girlfriend and her children; woman aimed for boyfriend and hit bystander—the children and the bystander would also be coded as “yes” for this variable.)

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

CVARMED *Victim armed?*

- 0 No
- 1 Firearm

- 2 Knife
- 3 Other weapon
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

*Indicate if any of the following circumstances applied to this victim by coding 1 for “yes” and 0 for all other responses (no, unknown, not collected, not applicable).*

- CVARG Argument over money, property
- CVJEAL Jealousy (lover’s triangle)
- CVOTHARG Other argument, abuse, or conflict
- CVDRIVE Drive-by
- CVRANDOM Random violence (e.g. sniper picking out cars randomly to shoot on highway)
- CVBYST Bystander
- CVPOFF Victim was police officer injured on duty
- CVINTERV Intervener (other than police) assisting crime victim (e.g. Good Samaritan, rescue personnel)
- CVHATE Hate crime (specify type in Incident Narrative)
- CVSCHOOL School-related (happened at a K-12 school, on a school bus, at a school event, or on the way to or from school)
- CVMERCY Mercy killing
- CVBRAWL Brawl (mutual physical fight)
- CVMENTAL Mentally ill suspect (attack believed related to suspect’s mental illness)
- CVTERROR Terrorist attack
- CVEXECUT Legal execution
- CVOTHER Other (specify in Incident Narrative)

- 0 No, not collected, not applicable, or unknown
- 1 Yes

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

None.

## ACCIDENTAL/UNINTENTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE

### Definition

Describes the circumstances leading to unintentional firearm-related injuries.

### Uses

This data element assists in describing the mechanisms and contexts leading to accidental shootings. It can be used to identify trends in subtypes of accidental shootings over time and will aid in planning and evaluating prevention programs targeted at improving gun design, reducing child access to guns, teaching gun safety, and other strategies.

### Discussion

Supplementary Homicide Reports use a very short list of circumstances to describe accidental shootings. These are augmented below by a much longer list of additional circumstances. See **Appendix “Circumstance Definitions” for in-depth definitions and coding examples for each Accidental/Unintentional Circumstance variable.**

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
CA* (see below)	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

*Indicate if any of the following circumstances applied to this victim by coding 1 for “yes” and 0 for all other responses (no, unknown, not collected, not applicable).*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Description</b>
CAHUNT	Hunting-related
CACLEAN	Cleaning gun
CAPLAY	Child(ren) playing with gun
CAToy	Gun mistaken for toy
CAHOLST	Holstering/unholstering gun (from holster or clothing)
CADROP	Dropping gun
CAPULL	Unintentionally pulled trigger
CAENGAGE	Engaging/disengaging safety or lock
CALOAD	Loading, unloading
CASHOW	Showing gun to others
CACELEB	Celebratory firing
CAMISAIM	Aiming for non-person target
CAOTHAN	Other handling/carrying gun
CASAFETY	Thought safety was engaged
CAUNLMAG	Thought gun was unloaded---magazine disengaged
CAUNLOTH	Thought gun was unloaded--other reason
CARICO	Bullet ricocheted
CADEFECT	Gun defect, malfunction
CASELF	Accidental self-inflicted injury during self-defensive shooting
CAOTHER	Other accidental circumstance (describe in Incident Narrative)

- 0 No, not collected, not applicable, or unknown  
1 Yes

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## SUICIDE – MENTAL HEALTH

### Definition

Summarizes information about the victim’s mental health, substance abuse problems, and treatment status.

### Uses

Can be used to help examine the role of mental health problems as risk factors for suicide and to document the extent to which victims are in current treatment.

### Discussion

Code a victim as “yes” for CSDEPRES (current depressed mood) if the victim was perceived by self or others to be depressed (for example the ME report states victim was “suffering from depression,” “was despondent over recent break-up,” or “had been feeling low.”) Code a victim as “yes” for CSMENTAL if the victim has been identified as having a mental health disorder (such as depression, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, etc.) or a neurodevelopmental disorder (such as Attention Deficit Disorder). Use CSDIAG1 and CSDIAG2 to indicate the actual diagnoses, if they are documented. Sometimes it is clear that the decedent was identified as having a mental health problem but the actual diagnosis is unclear (e.g. the ME report states “under the care of a psychiatrist for various mental problems”). In that case code CSMENTAL as “yes” but CSDIAG1 as “99-unknown.”

The variable CSTXMENT (current mental health treatment) should be coded “yes” if the victim was in *current* treatment (that is, had a current prescription for a psychiatric medication or saw a mental health professional within the past two months.) Treatment includes seeing a psychiatrist, psychologist, medical doctor, therapist, or other counselor for a mental health problem; receiving a prescription for an antidepressant or other psychiatric medicine; or residing in an inpatient or halfway house facility for mental health problems. The variable CSTXPAST indicates whether the victim was noted as *ever* having received professional treatment for a mental health problem, either at the time of death or in the past. Code a victim as “yes” for CSALCOH or CSSUBST if the victim was perceived by self or others to have a problem with, or to be addicted to, alcohol or other drugs. Victims who are noted as having *ever* participated in a drug or alcohol rehabilitation program or treatment, including self-help groups and 12-step programs, should be coded as “yes” for CSTXSUB.

**See Appendix “Circumstance Definitions” for in-depth definitions and coding examples for each Suicide Mental Health variable.**

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
CSDEPRES	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Current depressed mood
CSMENTAL	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Victim had a mental health problem
CSDIAG1, CSDIAG2	Numeric	2	Not Essential	Circumstance	Type of mental health problem (diagnosis)
CSMENTXT	Character	40	Not Essential	Circumstance	Text field to record diagnoses if CSDIAG1 or CSDIAG2=66 (“other”) or if the victim had more than two diagnoses
CSTXMENT	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Victim in <i>current</i> treatment for mental health problem?
CSTXPAST	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Circumstance	Victim <i>ever</i> treated for mental health problem?
CSALCOH	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Alcohol dependence or abuse
CSSUBST	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Other substance dependence or abuse
CSTXSUB	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Victim <i>ever</i> treated for alcohol or substance disorder?
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

**Code Description**

CSDEPRES, CSMENTAL, CSTXMENT, CSTXPAST, CSALCOH, CSSUBST, CSTXSUB

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

CSDIAG1 and CSDIAG2

- 1 Depression
- 2 Bipolar disorder
- 3 Schizophrenia
- 4 Anxiety disorder
- 5 Post-traumatic stress disorder
- 66 Other (specify in CSMENTXT)
- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 88 Not applicable
- 99 Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

None.

## SUICIDE INTENT

### Definition

Indicates whether the suicide victim left a suicide note or previously disclosed to another person their intention to commit suicide. Also indicates whether the victim previously attempted suicide.

### Uses

Can be used to help determine the significance of discussing or attempting suicide as warning signs for completed suicide and opportunities for intervention. It is not clear how useful the suicide note variable is; however, this piece of information is often consistently documented in coroner/medical examiner records.

### Discussion

Code the variable “CSNOTE” as “yes” if the victim left a note, email, video, or other written communication that they intended to commit suicide. Code the variable “CSINTENT” as “yes” if the victim had previously expressed suicidal feelings to another person, whether explicitly (e.g. “I’m considering killing myself”) or indirectly (e.g. “I think everyone would be better off without me” or “I don’t think I can go on like this”). Do *not* code this variable as “yes” if the victim disclosed their intention to kill themselves only at the moment of the suicide (that is, when there was no opportunity to intervene to stop the suicide). Code the variable “CSATTMPT” as “yes” if the victim was known to have made previous attempts, regardless of the severity of those attempts.

**See Appendix “Circumstance Definitions” for in-depth definitions and coding examples for each Suicide Intent variable.**

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
CSNOTE	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Suicide note left
CSINTENT	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Previously disclosed intent to commit suicide to another person
CSATTMPT	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Previous suicide attempts
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

Drawn in part from Medical College of Wisconsin Firearm Injury Reporting System

## SUICIDE CIRCUMSTANCES

### Definition

Summarizes external circumstances believed to have played a role in precipitating a suicide.

### Uses

Documentation of the circumstances surrounding a suicide may assist in developing and evaluating preventive interventions. Identification of suicides that followed an acute life crisis (such as a suicide committed immediately after an arrest) may indicate some level of impulsivity in the suicide act.

### Discussion

Medical examiners' and coroners' reports and police incident reports often include rich detail on the circumstances that contributed to the person's decision to take their life. While this information is not *consistently* documented, the data element is being treated as an essential one to underline the need for C/MEs and/or police to document this information. The variable CSCRISIS identifies those cases in which a very current, acute life crisis appears to have contributed to the suicide (e.g. the victim was just arrested, the divorce papers were served that day, the victim was about to be laid off). Code cases as "No" if no acute crisis was noted (e.g. suicides committed in response to a longterm, worsening physical or mental condition). Code cases as "Yes, same day" if a crisis occurred that day, and code cases as "Yes, recent or impending" if the crisis happened within the past two weeks or was imminent. A victim who just received news that he or she has a terminal or debilitating disease should be coded as "yes" for CSCRISIS. However, if the diagnosis were not recent (not within two weeks), the health condition would not be considered an acute crisis. **See Appendix "Circumstance Definitions" for in-depth definitions and coding examples for each Suicide Circumstance variable.**

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
CSHEALTH thru CSOTHER	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Circumstance or problem related to suicide
CSCRISIS	Numeric	1	Essential	Circumstance	Victim had recent acute crisis?
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

*Indicate if any of the following circumstances appeared to be related to the suicide by coding 1 for "yes" and 0 for all other responses (no, unknown, not collected, not applicable).*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Description</b>
CSHEALTH	Physical health (e.g. terminal disease, debilitating condition)
CSPART	Intimate partner problem (e.g. divorce, breakup, discord)
CSREL	Other relationship problem (e.g. family argument)
CSJOB	Job problem (e.g. layoff, problems at work, job pressure)
CSSCHOOL	School problem (e.g. failure, academic pressure, bullying)
CSFINAN	Financial problem (e.g. bankruptcy, debts, foreclosure)
CSSUIC	Recent suicide of friend or family member
CSDEATH	Other death of friend or family member
CSCRIM	Criminal legal problem (e.g. recent or impending arrest, police pursuit, recently committed crime, currently in jail, impending criminal court date)
CSLEG	Other or unspecified legal problems (e.g. custody dispute, civil lawsuit)
CSPERP	Perpetrator of interpersonal violence
CSVICT	Victim of interpersonal violence

CSOTHER      Other (specify in Incident Narrative)

CSHEALTH thru CSOTHER:

- 0      No, not collected, not applicable, or unknown
- 1      Yes

CSCRISIS      Did suicide follow an acute life crisis? (e.g. very recent or impending arrest, job loss, relationship break-up, police pursuit, devastating loss, major altercation)

- 0      No
- 1      Yes, same day crisis
- 2      Yes, recent (within two weeks) or impending crisis
- 7      Not collected by reporting site
- 8      Not applicable
- 9      Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

None.



## Victim Information

*C. Supplementary Homicide Report Information  
(for homicides only)*

## SHR OFFENSE TYPE

### Definition

Indicates type of homicide (murder/nonnegligent manslaughter or manslaughter by negligence) and whether single or multiple victims and offenders were involved in the incident.

### Uses

This data element is used to better describe the incident. It is useful for classifying types and situations of homicide for the development and evaluation of prevention programs.

### Discussion

The variables VSITUAT and VHOMTYPE provide information supplied by the SHR. It should be completed on all victims appearing in the SHR reports. The coding system mirrors that used by the national SHR. The homicide type (offense code) indicates whether the homicide was classified as a murder/nonnegligent manslaughter (i.e. interpersonal violence-related) or a manslaughter by negligence (e.g. an accidental shooting death as in a child playing with a gun or a hunting accident).

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VSITUAT	Numeric	1	Essential	Victim	Corresponds to SHR variable: Situation
VHOMTYPE	Numeric	1	Essential	Victim	Corresponds to SHR variable: Offense
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
SHR					

### Code Description

(Codes in regular font are SHR codes; codes in italics are NVISS-added codes.)

#### VSITUAT

- 1 A – Single victim/single offender
- 2 B – Single victim/unknown offender(s)
- 3 C – Single victim/multiple offenders
- 4 D – Multiple victims/single offender
- 5 E – Multiple victims/multiple offender
- 6 F – Multiple victim/unknown offenders
- 7 *Not collected by reporting site*
- 8 *Not applicable*
- 9 *Unknown*

#### VHOMTYPE

- 1 1A – Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter
- 2 1B – Manslaughter by negligence
- 7 *Not collected by reporting site*
- 8 *Not applicable*
- 9 *Unknown*

### Data Standards or Guidelines

FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Supplementary Homicide Report (U.S. Department of Justice, 1988)

## SHR VICTIM/SUSPECT RELATIONSHIP

### Definition

Description of the relationship of the victim to the suspect in deaths reported on Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) or NIBRS.

### Uses

Data describing the relationship between the victim and the person who caused the injury are useful for developing and evaluating prevention programs as well as for characterizing various forms of family and intimate partner violence.

### Discussion

This variable should capture victim/suspect relationship exactly as it appears in the Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) or NIBRS. Codes should be entered exactly as they appear in the source database, even if the abstractor believes an individual code was chosen in error. If your state uses any codes that do not appear in the standard FBI codelist for relationship below, see discussion in part 3C under “Entering a Case.” If the SHR is not available, code the case as 88.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VRELSHR	Numeric	2	Essential	Victim	SHR Relationship
<b>Primary data source:</b>		<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
SHR/NIBRS		None			

### Code Description

(Codes in regular font are SHR codes; codes in italics are NVISS-added codes.)

*Within family:*

- 1 Husband
- 2 Wife
- 3 Common-law Husband
- 4 Common-law Wife
- 5 Mother
- 6 Father
- 7 Son
- 8 Daughter
- 9 Brother
- 10 Sister
- 11 In-law
- 12 Stepfather
- 13 Stepmother
- 14 Stepson
- 15 Stepdaughter
- 16 Other Family

*Outside family, but known to victim:*

- 17 Neighbor
- 18 Acquaintance
- 19 Boyfriend
- 20 Girlfriend
- 21 Ex-husband
- 22 Ex-wife
- 23 Employee
- 24 Employer

- 25 Friend
- 26 Homosexual Relationship
- 27 Other – Known to Victim
- Stranger*
- 28 Stranger
  
- 77 *Not collected by reporting site*
- 88 *Not applicable (e.g. accident, suicide) or SHR code not available*
- 99 Relationship Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

FBI Supplementary Homicide Report (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998).

## SHR CIRCUMSTANCE

### Definition

This data element indicates the circumstance leading to homicides for deaths reported on the Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) or NIBRS.

### Uses

This data element assists in describing the precipitants of homicides and identifies trends in subtypes of violence over time. Will aid in planning and evaluating prevention programs targeted at specific subtypes of violence and unintentional injury.

### Discussion

This variable provides the information supplied by the SHR on the circumstances precipitating a homicide. It should be completed for all victims appearing in the SHR reports. Codes should be entered exactly as they appear in the SHR database, even if the abstractor believes an individual code was chosen in error. If your state uses codes in addition to the standard FBI codelist for circumstance, see discussion in part 3C under “Entering a Case.” If the SHR is not available, code the case as 88.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VSHRCIRC	Numeric	2	Essential	Victim	SHR circumstance
<b>Primary data source:</b>		<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
SHR/NIBRS		None			

### Code Description

(Codes in regular font are SHR codes; codes in italics are NVISS-added codes; there is no “1.”)

- 2 Rape
- 3 Robbery
- 5 Burglary
- 6 Larceny
- 7 Motor vehicle theft
- 9 Arson
- 10 Prostitution and commercialized vice
- 17 Other sex offense
- 18 Narcotic drug laws
- 19 Gambling
- 26 Other felony type - not specified
- 32 Abortion
- 40 Lovers’ triangle
- 41 Child killed by babysitter
- 42 Brawl due to influence of alcohol
- 43 Brawl due to influence of narcotics
- 44 Argument over money or property
- 45 Other arguments
- 46 Gangland killings
- 47 Juvenile gang killings
- 48 Institutional killings
- 49 Sniper attack
- 60 Other non-felony type homicide
- 70 Suspected felony type
  
- 80 Felon killed by private citizen

- 81 Felon killed by police
- 50 Victim shot in hunting accident
- 51 Gun-cleaning death, other than self-inflicted
- 52 Children playing with gun
- 53 Other negligent handling of gun
- 59 All other manslaughter by negligence except traffic deaths
  
- 77 *Not collected by reporting site*
- 88 *Not applicable (e.g. accident, suicide) or SHR code not available*
- 99 Circumstances undetermined

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

FBI Supplementary Homicide Report (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998).

## SHR JUSTIFIABLE CIRCUMSTANCE

### Definition

Captures additional detail on the circumstances associated with justifiable shootings of one person by another as coded in the Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR).

### Uses

This data element assists in describing the use of deadly force for self-defense or in the line of law enforcement duty.

### Discussion

This variable provides the information supplied by the SHR on the circumstances precipitating a justifiable homicide. Codes should be entered exactly as they appear in the SHR database (sub-circumstance variable), even if the abstractor believes an individual code was chosen in error. If your state uses codes in addition to the standard FBI codelist for sub-circumstance, see discussion in part 3C under “Entering a Case.”

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VSHRSUB	Numeric	2	Essential	Victim	SHR Sub-circumstance
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
SHR			None		

### Code Description

(Codes in regular font are SHR codes; codes in italics are NVISS-added codes.)

- 1 Felon attacked police officer
- 2 Felon attacked fellow police officer
- 3 Felon attacked civilian
- 4 Felon attempted flight from a crime
- 5 Felon killed in commission of a crime
- 6 Felon resisted arrest
- 7 Not enough information to determine
- 9 Not a justifiable homicide
- 77 *Not collected by reporting site*
- 88 *Not applicable (e.g. accident, suicide) or SHR code not available*
- 99 *Missing*

### Data Standards or Guidelines

FBI Supplementary Homicide Report (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998).



## Victim Information

*D. Victim Demographics*  
*(Most variables are from the Death Certificate)*

## VICTIM'S RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

### Definition

Residential address of the victim.

### Uses

The address is useful to determine the agency responsible for potential public health interventions, to undertake geo-coding, and to calculate population-based injury rates. Address can also be used to gain access to US Census information about the socioeconomic status of the victim's neighborhood. The data element also identifies non-US residents.

### Discussion

The city, county, state, country, zip code, census block group, and census tract of the victim's address will be reported to the national database. The specific street address of residence—because it can be personally identifying—will be collected at the local level but not included in the national database.

If a person is currently residing in a short-term facility such as a rehabilitation hospital, drug treatment program, jail, etc., use his or her home address as their residential address. If a person is residing in a long-term facility such as a college dormitory, prison, or residential nursing home, use the institution's address. If they are living in a short-term facility and no residential address is noted, use the address of the short-term facility.

The address information should be collected at the local level in a format that meets the local standards for geocoding. Reporting sites planning to geocode their data at the local level can generate the census block group and tract in which the incident occurred from a geocoding program.

If reporting sites do not have the capacity to geocode their data and choose to have that done at the national coordinating center, address information can be provided to NVISS. NVISS will geocode the information and supply the geocoded data back to the site. NVISS will retain only the census block group, census tract, city, state, zip and county. *Note:* Vital Statistics data use **two** coding systems for states: FIPS and their own system. Please use the FIPS version.

The city, town, and county are coded using standard FIPS codes (Federal Information Processing Standards). They are provided in drop-down menus in the software program. FIPS codes are not always comprehensive for every local government entity in a state. If you cannot find a FIPS code for a place in your state, enter 9s into the field and supply the city/town or county name in the Incident Narrative. It will later be stripped out at the national level once we have contacted the agency that maintains the FIPS codes to notify them of the need for a new code.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VADDRESS	Character	50	Local	Victim	Victim's residential street address; FOR LOCAL DATA COLLECTION ONLY; not included in national database
VPLACE	Numeric	5	Essential	Victim	FIPS 5-digit city/town code ("place" code)
VCOUNTY	Numeric	3	Essential	Victim	FIPS 3-digit county code
VSTATE	Numeric	2	Essential	Victim	FIPS 2-digit state code
VZIP	Numeric	5	Essential	Victim	5-digit zip code
VCOUNTRY	Character	45	Essential	Victim	Drop-down list of countries
VCENSTRT	Numeric	7	Essential	Victim	US Census tract (####.##)
VCENSBG	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	US Census block group
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME, death certificate			Police		

**Code Description****VADDRESS: (FOR LOCAL DATA COLLECTION ONLY)**

Enter victim's residential street address, including any pre- or post-directionals (e.g. 658 S. Main Street, NW). Do not use post office box numbers. If address is unknown, enter "unknown."

All other address variables: (see specifications in table above)

Field filled with 7s	Not collected by site
Field filled with 8s	Not applicable (applies to VCOUNTRY, VSTATE, VZIP, VCENSTRT, and VCENSBG if VCOUNTRY is not the United States)
Field filled with 9s	Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS), National Institute of Standards and Technologies; US Bureau of the Census; US Postal Service

## VICTIM'S HOMELESS STATUS

### Definition

Indicates whether the victim was homeless at the time of the incident.

### Uses

Used to describe the incidence of violent deaths in a vulnerable population.

### Discussion

Homeless is defined here as having no fixed address and living in a shelter, on the street, in a car, in makeshift quarters in an outdoor setting. A person who has no home of their own but is staying indefinitely with friends or family is not considered homeless here.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VHOMELES	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

0	No
1	Yes
7	Not collected by reporting site
9	Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## VICTIM'S MARITAL STATUS

### Definition

Marital status of the victim.

### Uses

The victim's marital status is standard demographic information used in epidemiologic analyses.

### Discussion

Marital status is regularly completed on the death certificate. Marital status should be completed for victims of all ages, including children. If the marital status is not explicitly noted, code as 9, "unknown."

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VMARSTAT	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Death certificate			C/ME		

### Code Description

1	Married
2	Never Married
3	Widowed
4	Divorced
7	Not collected by reporting site
9	Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

U.S. standard death certificate.

## PLACE OF BIRTH

### Definition

Birthplace of the victim.

### Uses

Used for identifying immigrants.

### Discussion

The state of birth is indicated on the death certificate. The state (or foreign country) of birth is coded by the vital statistics registry using the codelist below. If a victim's country of birth is not among the short list provided below, please enter the name of the country in VBTHPTXT. *Note: the codelist used for place of birth is not a FIPS codelist.*

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Repeating? (# of mentions)</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VBIRTHPL	Numeric	2	Essential	No	Victim	Vital Statistics coding system
VBTHPTXT	Text	30	Essential	No	Victim	Free text: specify location if VbirthPI=59 ("remainder of world")
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
Death certificate			C/ME			

### Code Description

- 1 Alabama
- 2 Alaska
- 3 Arizona
- 4 Arkansas
- 5 California
- 6 Colorado
- 7 Connecticut
- 8 Delaware
- 9 District of Columbia
- 10 Florida
- 11 Georgia
- 12 Hawaii
- 13 Idaho
- 14 Illinois
- 15 Indiana
- 16 Iowa
- 17 Kansas
- 18 Kentucky
- 19 Louisiana
- 20 Maine
- 21 Maryland
- 22 Massachusetts
- 23 Michigan
- 24 Minnesota
- 25 Mississippi
- 26 Missouri
- 27 Montana
- 28 Nebraska
- 29 Nevada
- 30 New Hampshire
- 31 New Jersey

32	New Mexico
33	New York
34	North Carolina
35	North Dakota
36	Ohio
37	Oklahoma
38	Oregon
39	Pennsylvania
40	Rhode Island
41	South Carolina
42	South Dakota
43	Tennessee
44	Texas
45	Utah
46	Vermont
47	Virginia
48	Washington
49	West Virginia
50	Wisconsin
51	Wyoming
52	Puerto Rico
53	Virgin Island
54	Guam
55	Canada
56	Cuba
57	Mexico
59	Remainder of the world (please specify in VBTHPTXT)
61	American Samoa
62	Northern Marianas
77	Not collected by reporting site
99	Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**  
National Vital Statistics System

## VETERAN STATUS

### Definition

Indicates whether the victim is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Services.

### Uses

Useful to examine violent injury deaths among veterans.

### Discussion

Veteran status is indicated on the death certificate in section “Ever in U.S. Armed Services.”

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VVETERAN	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	
<b>Primary data source:</b>		<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
Death Certificate		C/ME			

### Code Description

VVETERAN

- 0 No, not a veteran
- 1 Yes, a veteran
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

US standard death certificate.

## VICTIM PREGNANT

### Definition

Identifies if victim was pregnant at time of injury.

### Uses

Useful for identifying pregnant victims and to document types of violence against pregnant women. Also useful in understanding potential precipitating circumstance in suicide cases.

### Discussion

Victim's pregnancy status is often noted on the death certificate and in the C/ME report. Findings are more likely to be authoritative if a full autopsy has been performed.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VPREG	Numeric	1	Essential	Victim	
<b>Primary data source:</b>		<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
Death certificate		C/ME			

### Code Description

VPREG *Victim pregnant?*

- 0 No
- 1 Yes, 1<sup>st</sup> trimester
- 2 Yes, 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester
- 3 Yes, 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester
- 4 Yes, unspecified
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable (male)
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

Death certificate.

## VICTIM'S EDUCATION

### Definition

Highest grade of education completed by the victim.

### Uses

The victim's educational level is an important indicator of socioeconomic status and is used in epidemiologic and other scientific analyses. For very young children who are not in school, code as 0.

### Discussion

None.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VEDUC	Numeric	2	Not Essential	Victim	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Death certificate		C/ME			

### Code Description

0...12	Highest grade completed
13	One year of college, technical school
14	Two years of college, technical school
15	Three years of college, technical school
16	Four years of college, technical school
17	One or more years of post-graduate education
44	Some grade school or middle school, grade not specified
45	Some high school, grade not specified
46	Some college or technical school, years not specified
77	Not collected by reporting site
99	Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

Based on U.S. standard death certificate.

## VICTIM'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS

### Definition

Indicates the victim's employment status, and, if employed, current occupation.

### Uses

Employment status and occupation are indicators of socioeconomic status. Certain occupations may also be associated with increased risk of suicide or homicide.

### Discussion

Report the occupation in a text field exactly as it appears on the Coroner/Medical Examiner report or other report. The information will later be coded at the national level using standard SOC classifications. If both occupation and industry are reported, please include both (e.g., office manager for insurance agency).

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VEMPLOY	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	Victim's employment status
VOCCUP	Character	50	Not Essential	Victim	Victim's current occupation
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

#### VEMPLOY

- 1 Employed
- 2 Unemployed
- 3 Homemaker
- 4 Retired
- 5 Student
- 6 Other (including disabled)
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable (under age 14)
- 9 Unknown

#### VOCCUP

Free text

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## VICTIM'S USUAL OCCUPATION, INDUSTRY

### Definition

Usual occupation and industry of the victim, as reported on the death certificate. Usual occupation and industry (for example, in the case of a retiree) is not necessarily the same as current occupation and industry.

### Uses

The victim's usual occupation is an indicator of socioeconomic status and may be associated with increased risk of intentional injury. "Usual industry" is the kind of business or industry to which the victim's occupation is related, such as insurance, farming, or government.

### Discussion

Some states' registry of vital records encode the decedent's usual occupation and industry on the death certificate. This data element should be drawn from death certificate records only in those states and should not be used elsewhere. Usual occupation/industry is not necessarily the victim's current occupation. Provide information exactly as it appears in the death certificate data. If the text descriptor is recorded on the death certificate and a numeric code is not provided, report only the text information and use the code "080" in to indicate that the actual code is unavailable. The codes 999 for occupation and 090 for industry are codes assigned by the Occupation and Industry coder to indicate "blank, unknown, or NA." These codes should only be used if they appear in the death certificate data. If text is provided describing the occupation and industry, but no code is provided, sites should not code the information themselves, as industry and occupation coding requires special training.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VUOCC	Numeric	3	Not Essential	Victim	US Bureau of Census occupation code
VUOCCTXT	Character	50	Not Essential	Victim	Free text: specify occupation if VUOcc=080 ("code unavailable")
VUIND	Numeric	3	Not Essential	Victim	US Bureau of Census industry code
VUINDTXT	Character	50	Not Essential	Victim	Free text: specify occupation if VUInd=080 ("code unavailable")
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Death certificate					

### Code Description

(Codes in regular font are mortality data codes; codes in italics are NVISS-added codes.)

#### VUOCC

- 003-905 Occupation code as assigned by a trained occupation/industry coder on the death certificate
- 913 Retired; with no other occupation reported
- 914 Housewife/Homemaker
- 915 Student
- 916 Volunteer
- 917 Unemployed, never worked, disabled, child, infant
- 070 Not collected by reporting site*
- 080 Code not available*
- 999 Blank, unknown, NA (this is the death certificate code)

#### VUIND

- 010-960 Industry code as assigned by a trained occupation/industry coder on the death certificate
- 961 Own home/At home

970	Retired; with no other industry reported
070	<i>Not collected by reporting site</i>
080	<i>Code not available</i>
990	Blank, unknown, NA (this is the death certificate code)

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

For occupation and industry codes: US Bureau of the Census. Classified index of industries and occupations. 1990 Census of Population and Housing. First Edition. Washington. US Government Printing Office, April 1992.

For codes designating those without occupations (such as “student”): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Public Use Data File Documentation: Multiple Cause of Death for ICD-9 1997 Data. Hyattsville, MD. June 1999.



## Victim Information

### *E. Injury Information and Substance Use*

## PLACE OF DEATH

### Definition

The place or location where the death occurred.

### Uses

The place of death may be useful for emergency response planning and to assist in evaluating hospital or EMS services.

### Discussion

The codes for this data element are adapted from the standard death certificate.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VPDEATH	Numeric	2	Essential	Victim	Place of death
VPDTHTXT	Character	30	Not Essential	Victim	Free text: specify place of death if VPDEATH=66 ("Other")
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME or death certificate					

### Code Description

- 1 Hospital, inpatient facility
- 2 Hospital, emergency department/outpatient facility
- 3 Dead on arrival at the emergency department (DOA)
- 4 Hospital, facility unspecified
- 5 Dead at injury incident location
- 66 Other (specify)
- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 99 Undetermined

### Data Standards or Guidelines

Modification based on the U.S. Standard Death Certificate.

## NUMBER OF WOUNDS AND WOUND LOCATION

### Definition

Number and location of penetrating wounds by anatomic region.

### Uses

Can be used to assess the relationship between incident circumstance and area of wound location and to stratify case fatality ratios by area of the body injured.

### Discussion

*This data element applies to firearm injuries and sharp instrument wounds only.* For VNWOUND, code the total number of penetrating wounds on the victim. For VNBULLET (for gunshot wound victims only) code the total number of bullets that hit the victim. For each anatomic area of the body, 0 indicates no wound is present and 1 indicates a wound is present. (See figure on next page for body regions.) For example, if one bullet entered the cheek and exited the back of the head, code VNWOUND as 2, VNBULLET as 1, VHEAD as "present," and VFACE as "present." Code the wound locations of penetrating wounds only; do not code the locations of superficial grazing wounds or blunt trauma wounds. Code only the location of the external entrance or exit wound. When determining the number of wounds and bullets for shotgun injuries, treat each shotgun blast as one injury and each shotgun shell as one bullet. For victims injured by both a gun and a knife, count all wounds from both weapon types and code all wound locations.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VNWOUND	Numeric	2	Not Essential	Victim	Number of wounds in the victim
VNBULLET	Numeric	2	Not Essential	Victim	Number of bullets that hit the victim
VHEAD	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	Presence of wound to the head
VFACE	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	Presence of wound in the face (e.g. mouth, nose, eyes, ears)
VNECK	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	Presence of wound in the neck
VTHORAX	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	Presence of wound in the thorax, chest, or upper back
VABDOMEN	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	Presence of wound in the abdomen, pelvic contents (including genital area), or lower back
VSPINE	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	Presence of wound in the spine or spinal region
VLEXTRM	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	Presence of wound in the lower extremities (feet, hips, legs)
VUEXTRM	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	Presence of wound in the upper extremities (shoulders, arms, hands)
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Death certificate, police		

### Code Description

#### VNWOUND

- 1-74 Number of wounds
- 75 75 or more
- 76 Multiple, unspecified
- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 88 Not applicable (not a penetrating injury)
- 99 Unknown

#### VNBULLET

- 0-74 Number of bullets
- 75 75 or more

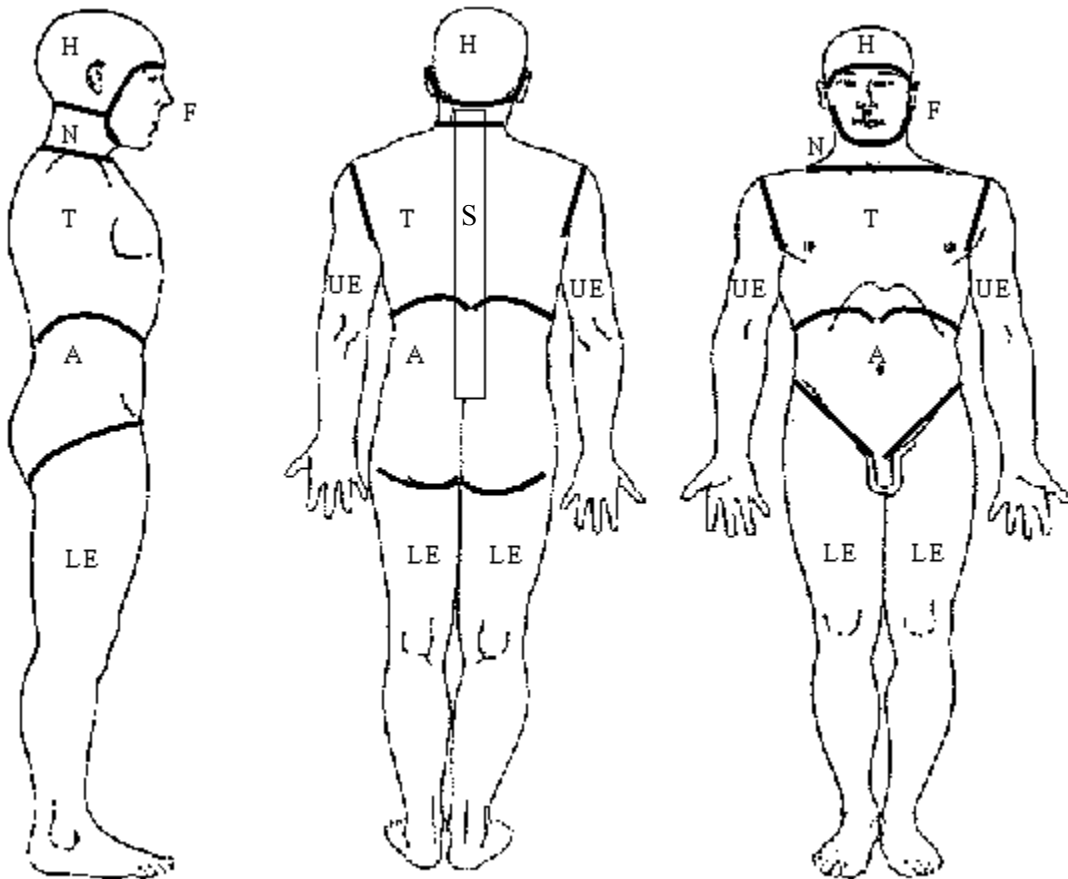
- 76 Multiple, unspecified
- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 88 Not applicable (not a gun injury)
- 99 Unknown

Wound location variables (VHEAD through VUEXTRM)

- 0 Absent (not wounded)
- 1 Present (wounded)
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

None.



- |                                |                         |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| H – Head                       | A – Abdomen, lower back |
| F – Face                       | S – Spine               |
| N – Neck                       | UE – Upper Extremities  |
| T – Thorax (chest, upper back) | LE – Lower Extremities  |

## DEATH CERTIFICATE MULTIPLE CONDITION CODES

### Definition

Describes the nature of the injury and other conditions leading to death. THIS VARIABLE IS A REPEATING VARIABLE; AN UNLIMITED NUMBER OF CODES CAN BE ENTERED.

### Uses

The “nature of injury” (or “multiple condition”) codes assigned on the death certificate provide specificity on the anatomic location and nature of the injuries. This information can be useful in calculating case fatality ratios by weapon type while controlling for portion of the body wounded. It may also be used to assist in evaluating emergency medical response.

### Discussion

Multiple condition codes are assigned by the registry of vital records to death certificate records to indicate the nature of injuries and diseases leading to death. Codes are based on the International Classification of Disease 10<sup>th</sup> edition coding protocols. The underlying cause of death is captured in a separate variable. This variable should be coded exactly as it is coded in the multiple cause of death fields in death certificate data. These codes can include both diagnosis codes (nature of injury and disease) and external cause of injury codes. The leading character indicates whether the code is an external cause code or a nature of injury code. Codes should be entered with decimal points. Do not add trailing zeroes. Use a leading “L” for unknowns. Because there can be a variable number of conditions for any victim, this information is stored on a separate table and an unlimited number of codes can be entered per victim.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
MULT10	Character	6	Not Essential	MULT10	L###.## (the first character must be a letter, followed by up to four digits). Unlimited codes can be entered.
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
Death certificate					

### Code Description

#### ICD10 Nature of Injury and Multiple Cause of Death Codes

A00.00-Z99.99

L77.77 Not collected by reporting site

L88.88 Not applicable

L99.99 Unknown or missing

### Data Standards or Guidelines

*ICD-10: International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems: 10<sup>th</sup> Revision.* Geneva: World Health Organization, 1992.

## AUTOPSY

### Definition

Indicates if an autopsy, either full or partial, was performed on the victim.

### Uses

Decedents who have been autopsied are likely to have more reliable multiple cause of death codes and pregnancy findings.

### Discussion

Autopsies are not always performed on every case that comes to the attention of a coroner/ME. For example, a witnessed suicide may not be autopsied. In some cases a partial autopsy may be performed. For example, a person who kills him or herself with a gunshot wound to the head may receive a head-only autopsy. A “visual-only autopsy” (that is, the body was visually inspected but not physically examined) does not qualify as an autopsy here. A yes/no item appears on the death certificate to indicate if an autopsy was performed. This information has been dropped from the national vital statistics database since 1994.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VAUTOPSY	Numeric	1	Not essential	Victim	
<b>Primary data source:</b>		<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
Death certificate		C/ME			

### Code Description

#### VAUTOPSY

- 0 Not autopsied (or “visual autopsy” only)
- 1 Autopsied (full or partial)
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## ALCOHOL PRESENCE

### Definition

Identifies those victims whose blood was tested for the presence of alcohol during the death investigation and identifies whether the results were positive or negative.

### Uses

Alcohol intoxication is a risk factor in many types of injury deaths. Identifying those victims on whom objective evidence of alcohol ingestion exists will be useful to those researchers exploring the role of alcohol in violent injury.

### Discussion

This information will be most useful in jurisdictions that routinely analyze blood alcohol levels in victims of homicide and/or suicide, as opposed to those that only sporadically do so.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VALCOHOL	Numeric	1	Essential	No	Victim
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
C/ME					

### Code Description

- 0 Tested, alcohol not present
- 1 Tested, alcohol present
- 2 Not tested
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVEL

### Definition

For those victims who tested positive for the presence of alcohol, this variable reports the actual blood alcohol level.

### Uses

Enables researchers to categorize victims by blood alcohol level.

### Discussion

Caution should be exercised in interpreting blood alcohol levels because variation in the time elapsed between ingestion of substances, time of death, and time of drawing body specimens for toxicological analysis will affect outcome. Labs vary in how they report blood alcohol concentrations (BAC). Many use the format used here—percent by volume (serum %)—as in a BAC of .08. Others report BAC as milligrams of alcohol per deciliter of blood (mg/dl)—as in 80 mg/dl. To convert mg/dl results to serum % results, divide by 1,000. Blood alcohol levels are coded in terms of percent by volume (serum %). Percent by volume equals the milligrams of alcohol found per deciliter of blood (mg/dl) divided by 1000. For example, a level of 30 mg/dl would be 0.03% alcohol.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VALCLEV	Numeric	4	Not Essential	Victim	###
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
C/ME					

### Code Description

Code blood alcohol levels in terms of percent by volume. For example a level of 30 mg/dl would be coded as 0.03

###	Blood alcohol level
7.77	Not collected by reporting site
8.88	Not applicable, no testing was done
9.99	Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## DRUG PRESENCE

### Definition

Identifies those victims whose bodily fluids were tested during the death investigation for the presence of drugs and identifies whether the results were positive or negative.

### Uses

This information will be most useful in jurisdictions that routinely run toxicology tests on victims, as opposed to those that only sporadically do so.

### Discussion

Because individual C/ME offices may vary in the number of drugs within a given drug class for which they routinely screen, the coding of “not present” for drug classes such as amphetamines, antidepressants, and “other” is not necessarily a definitive determination for the class as a whole.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VCOKE	Numeric	1	Essential	Victim	Presence of cocaine or cocaine metabolites
VOPIATE	Numeric	1	Essential	Victim	Presence of opiates or opiate metabolites
VMARIJ	Numeric	1	Essential	Victim	Presence of marijuana
VANTIDEP	Numeric	1	Essential	Victim	Presence of antidepressants
VAMPHET	Numeric	1	Essential	Victim	Presence of amphetamines
VODRUG	Numeric	1	Essential	Victim	Presence of other drugs
VDRUGTXT	Character	100	Essential	Victim	Free text: specify drug type if VODRUG=1 (“drug present”)
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME					

### Code Description

- 0 Tested, drug not present
- 1 Tested, drug present
- 2 Not tested
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## DATE/TIME BODY SPECIMENS COLLECTED

### Definition

Date and time at which the body specimens were drawn or collected for toxicological testing.

### Uses

Date and time of collection of body specimens, in conjunction with date and time of death, can be used to assess the validity of the results of alcohol and drug testing.

### Discussion

Date and time of collection of body specimens for toxicological testing is included in order that the validity of testing results can be assessed. For example, blood specimens drawn long after death may not accurately reflect intoxication level at the time of death.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VSPCDATE	Character	10	Not Essential	Victim	Date that specimens were collected
VSPCTIME	Numeric	4	Not Essential	Victim	Time that specimens were collected
<i>Primary data source:</i>		<i>Secondary data source:</i>			
C/ME		None			

### Code Description

#### VSPCDATE

MM/DD/YYYY	Date specimens were collected
77/77/7777	Not collected by reporting site
88/88/8888	Not applicable (no specimens collected)
99/99/9999	Unknown

#### VSPCTIME

Time is in the military time format HHMM. For example, if blood was drawn at 10:30 p.m., code as 2230. Midnight is coded as 0000.

0000...2359	Military time
7777	Not collected by reporting site
8888	Not applicable
9999	Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## EMS AT SCENE

### Definition

Were emergency medical services present at the scene of the injury incident?

### Uses

EMS status can be used to describe the involvement of emergency medical services in violent injury cases. This may assist in planning and evaluating EMS services and in capturing costs associated with violence.

### Discussion

None.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
VEMS	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

- 0 No, EMS not at scene
- 1 Yes, EMS at scene
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## HOSPITAL TREATMENT

### Definition

Indicates whether the victim presented in an acute care hospital emergency department as a result of their violent injury, and whether patient was admitted as an inpatient at an acute care hospital.

### Uses

Useful for both medical care planning and surveillance system planning and for describing the burden of violent injury.

### Discussion

Victims who arrived at the emergency department should be coded as “yes,” regardless of whether they were dead or alive on arrival and regardless of whether they received treatment. If a victim was seen in the emergency department, admitted for an “observation only” overnight stay, and not admitted as an inpatient, code VED as “yes” and VHOSP as “no.” If the victim was admitted to the hospital, code both VED and VHOSP as “yes.” If the victim was noted as having been in the operating room, code VED and VHOSP as “yes,” even if the patient died in the operating room.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VED	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	Victim seen in emergency dept?
VHOSP	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Victim	Victim admitted to inpatient care?
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Emergency department records, hospital discharge data					

### Code Description

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## HOSPITAL ECODE

### Definition

“External cause-of-injury” code assigned by the hospital.

### Uses

Used to classify the case as unintentional, intentionally self-inflicted, or assault-related.

### Discussion

This variable should be coded as it appears in the hospital discharge data, or, if unavailable, in the emergency department records. E-codes are assigned by the medical records department using the International Classification of Disease coding scheme to describe the external cause of an injury. Do not use trailing zeros after the decimal point (unless a true zero is part of the actual code).

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
VHECOD9a, VHECOD9b	Character	5	Not Essential	Victim	format: ###.#
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Hospital Discharge Data			Emergency department data		

### Code Description

#### ICD9 Coding of Cause of Injury (E-codes)

950-959	Suicide and self-inflicted injury
960-969	Homicide and injury purposely inflicted by other persons
970-978	Injury due to legal intervention
990-999	Injury resulting from operations of war
922	Accident caused by firearm missile
922.0	--Handgun
922.1	--Shotgun (automatic)
922.2	--Hunting rifle
922.3	--Military firearms
922.8	--Other specified firearm missile
922.9	--Unspecified firearm missile
985	Injury by firearms & explosives, undetermined whether accidentally or purposely inflicted
985.0	--Handgun
985.1	--Shotgun (automatic)
985.2	--Hunting rifle
985.3	--Military firearms
985.4	--Other & unspecified firearm
000.7	Not collected by reporting site
000.8	Not applicable
000.9	Unknown or missing

### Data Standards or Guidelines

*International Classification of Disease, 9<sup>th</sup> Revision, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., vol. 2.* Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Service. Pub No. (PHS)89-1260.

*Section 4*  
**Suspect Information**

## SUSPECT ATTEMPTED SUICIDE?

### Definition

This data element identifies suspects who attempted (or completed) suicide after injuring another person.

### Uses

Enables researchers to identify cases involving murder/suicide or murder/attempted suicide, a violence subtype that is prominent in cases of family violence and mass public shootings.

### Discussion

This variable is suspect-specific. Code this variable as “yes” if a homicide suspect attempted (or completed) suicide shortly after killing another person. Do not code this variable as “yes” if the offender attempted suicide in the past but not after the homicide.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
SUSPSUIC	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Suspect	Suspect attempted suicide?
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

- 0 No
- 1 Yes, completed suicide
- 2 Yes, attempted suicide
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.



*Section 5*  
**Firearm Information**  
*A. Firearm Characteristics*

## FIREARM ID

### Definition

Primary identifier used to uniquely identify the firearm(s) associated with an incident.

### Uses

A Firearm ID number is assigned to each gun suspected to have caused an injury during the incident. For each incident, the firearm ID numbering starts with 01. The combination of Incident ID and Firearm ID uniquely identifies the weapon. The Firearm ID number is used to link information about a particular weapon on the Firearm Table with information about that weapon from the Youth Access, Firearm Victim, and First Purchaser tables.

### Discussion

There are no provisions for missing or unknown information. **The only firearms that should be entered on the firearm table are those that are suspected to have inflicted an injury. Do not enter other guns recovered from the scene or from the victim or suspect's residence if these were not suspected to have inflicted an injury.**

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
FIREID	Numeric	2	Essential	No	Firearm
<b>Primary data source:</b>		<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
Reporting site		-			

### Code Description

For each incident, start numbering first firearm at 01.

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## FIREARM INFORMATION AVAILABLE

### Definition

Indicates whether any information is available about the physical characteristics of the gun (type, make, model, caliber, barrel length, etc.). If no information is known, all remaining variables on the main Firearm Table describing physical features of the gun default to “unknown” or “not applicable” as appropriate.

### Uses

This variable is used as a convenience in data entry and to flag incidents in which no gun information is available.

### Discussion

If the only thing known about the firearm is what has already been reported in the Weapon Type variable on the Victim Table (e.g. “handgun”), code this variable as “No.” If a death investigator (police, crime lab personnel, coroner, or medical examiner) has viewed or examined the gun itself or a bullet or spent casing from the gun and has additional information about the weapon, answer “Yes.” If the only additional information available about the gun is based on the statement of a witness (e.g. a bystander who witnessed a homicide told police they thought the gun looked like a revolver), do not answer “Yes.” The additional information must be based on a death investigator viewing physical evidence.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
FKNOWN	Numeric	1	Essential	No	Firearm
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
Crime lab			C/ME, police		

### Code Description

0 No  
1 Yes

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## FIREARM PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

### Definition

Type of physical evidence that was recovered on the firearm and/or ammunition.

### Uses

Data on the type of firearm physical evidence can be useful in assessing the degree of confidence one can put in the information gathered on firearm characteristics.

### Discussion

“Recovered” evidence is evidence that an investigator (crime lab personnel, police officer, coroner, or medical examiner) has either viewed, examined, or logged as evidence. Bullets count as evidence if they were retrieved from the victim or if they were retrieved from the crime scene and were clearly used during the incident (e.g. a bullet lodged in the wall behind a victim with a through-and-through wound). Pellets retrieved from a shotgun wound count as a recovered bullet. Consider only spent casings that are believed to be from the injury gun as recovered casings.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
FGUN	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Firearm	Gun recovered
FBULLET	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Firearm	Bullet recovered
FCASING	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Firearm	Casing recovered
<b>Primary data source:</b>		<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
Crime lab		C/ME, police			

### Code Description

- 0 Not recovered
- 1 Recovered
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## FIREARM TYPE

### Definition

Specific type of firearm that was used to inflict the injury.

### Uses

Data on firearm type are used to describe the injury-producing event and to document the extent to which handguns, long guns, and automatic weapons are involved in gun deaths.

### Discussion

The Firearm Type codelist is the standard codelist used by the National Crime Information Center. It is very detailed, and many abstractors will not have the technical expertise to know, for example, whether a shotgun is a pump action or bolt action based on reading the gun's make and model. A firearm expert will review the dataset after it has been received at NVISS to identify cases that could move from a more general code (like unspecified shotgun) to a more specific code.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
FTYPE	Numeric	2	Not Essential	Firearm	Firearm type
FTYPETXT	Character	30	Non-essential	Incident	Free text: specify if FTYPE=66 ("other")
<b>Primary data source:</b>		<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
Crime lab		C/ME, police			

### Code Description

- 1 Submachine Gun
- 2 Handgun, Unknown Type
- 3 Handgun, Pistol- Bolt Action
- 4 Handgun, Pistol- Derringer
- 5 Handgun, Pistol- Single Shot
- 6 Handgun, Pistol- Semi-automatic
- 7 Handgun, Revolver
- 8 Rifle, Unknown Type
- 9 Rifle, Automatic
- 10 Rifle, Bolt Action
- 11 Rifle, Lever Action
- 12 Rifle, Pump Action
- 13 Rifle, Semi-automatic
- 14 Rifle, Single Shot
- 15 Rifle-Shotgun Combination
- 16 Shotgun, Unknown Type
- 17 Shotgun, Automatic
- 18 Shotgun, Bolt Action
- 19 Shotgun, Double Barrel (Over/Under, Side by Side)
- 20 Shotgun, Pump Action
- 21 Shotgun, Semi-automatic
- 22 Shotgun, Single Shot
- 23 Long gun, Unknown type
- 66 Other (e.g. handmade gun)
- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 99 Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

Based on National Crime Information Center coding system.

## FIREARM MAKE

### Definition

Make or manufacturer of the firearm that was used to inflict the injury.

### Uses

Data on the make of the firearm are used to identify the manufacturers of firearms used in fatalities and facilitate the tracing of incident firearms.

### Discussion

None.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
FMAKE	Character	3	Essential	Firearm	NCIC Code
FMAKETXT	Character	40	Essential	Firearm	Free text: Specify if FMAKE=666 ("other").
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
Crime lab			C/ME, police		

### Code Description

This data element uses 3-character manufacturer codes developed by the National Crime Information Center of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. (A code list covering make and model is supplied in a separate document that serves as an appendix to this document. The codelist is also provided as a drop-down list in the NVISS software.)

666 Other  
777 Not collected by reporting site  
999 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

National Crime Information Center Code Manual. Version 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, December 1998. Vendata Inc., info@vendata.com.

## FIREARM MODEL

### Definition

Model of the firearm that was used to inflict the injury.

### Uses

Data on the model of the firearm are used to identify the models used in gun deaths and facilitate the tracing of incident firearms. Because pieces of legislation in various jurisdictions have outlawed the production, sale, and/or importation of particular classes of guns (e.g. so-called “assault” weapons or “junk guns”) by features of the gun or by listing particular models, this variable can assist in identifying models affected by legislation.

### Discussion

This data element is coded using a list of models (sorted by manufacturer) that is maintained by the Firearm Injury Center of the Medical College of Wisconsin and included in the Appendix. The codes (because they are long) should be included on a drop-down menu sorted by Make to prevent data entry errors. A combination of make and model must be used to uniquely identify the model. Some models are made by more than one manufacturer. If a specific model is not known, choose unknown. If a model is known but not on the drop-down menu, code 66666 and enter the name of the model in FMODELTEXT, a freetext field. All text should be capitalized, dashes and decimals should not be used, and no spaces should be inserted. All models should be spelled out completely, and abbreviations should not be used. Because there are thousands of gun models, you will frequently find models not on the drop-down. The make/model list is updated annually based on models appearing in FMODELTEXT.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
FMODEL	Character	40	Essential	Firearm	Firearm model
FMODLTX	Character	40	Not Essential	Firearm	Free text: Specify if FMODEL=66666 (“other”).
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
Crime lab			C/ME, police		

### Code Description

(A code list of models sorted by make is model is supplied in a separate document that serves as an appendix to this document..)

66666	Other (specify in FMODELTEXT)
77777	Not collected by reporting site
99999	Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

Firearm Injury Center, Medical College of Wisconsin

## FIREARM CALIBER/GAUGE

### Definition

Caliber or gauge of the firearm used to inflict the injury and specification of the cartridge type.

### Uses

Can be used to identify trends in the use of smaller- and larger-caliber weapons. May be useful (when coupled with data on nonfatal injuries) in assessing case fatality rates by certain classes of weapon and ammunition.

### Discussion

This field is designed to capture the caliber or estimated caliber of the firearm used in the fatal event. The codes correspond to *calibers*, measured in fractions of an inch or millimeters, or *gauges* in the case of shotguns. In addition, a free text field captures the cartridge specification (when available). Sources for indicating or estimating the firearm caliber are recovered cartridge casings, the firearm itself, and the bullet.

Some firearms will fire more than one type of cartridge. For example, firearms designed to fire the .357 Magnum will also fire .38 (Smith & Wesson) Special cartridges. Unless a cartridge casing is recovered, it may be impossible to tell which cartridge type was involved in the incident. Consequently, this field should be coded from cartridge casings when they are available, from the markings stamped onto the firearm when cartridge casings are not recovered and from recovered bullets when neither a casing nor a firearm is recovered. A special code (38357) has been created for cases when a bullet has been recovered and the absence of a cartridge or firearm makes it impossible to determine the difference between a .38 or a .357.

The caliber of a rifle or handgun is the diameter of the bore before the rifling grooves were cut. Caliber may also be given in terms of bullet, land, or groove diameter. In some cases, the caliber specification associated with particular cartridge types is neither accurate nor consistent. For example, the caliber of the .38 Special cartridge is actually .357, not .38 as the cartridge type suggests.

The term “gauge” is used to describe the size of the bore of a shotgun. The term refers to the number of lead balls of the given bore diameter that make up a pound. In a 12-gauge, for example, it takes 12 bore-diameter lead balls to make up a pound. The most common exception to this nomenclature is the .410, which has a bore diameter of 0.410 inches.

Cartridge types are commonly expressed in calibers (fractions of an inch), or in millimeters. In some cases, the same cartridge has both an English and Metric type designation. For example, the .308 Winchester is also known as the 7.62 X 51mm NATO (Vendata, 1999). The former designation is typically stamped onto weapons originally designed for civilian use whereas the latter designation is common on weapons designed for military use. Record whichever caliber is stamped on the firearm or the base of the cartridge casing. Conventionally, weapon manufacturers name cartridge types they develop after the company. Care should be taken not to confuse the manufacturer associated with a cartridge type with the make of the firearm. For example, the .38 Smith & Wesson (S&W) Special cartridge was developed by Smith & Wesson, but many companies manufacture weapons chambered for this cartridge type (Vendata, 1999).

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
FGAUGE	Numeric	3	Essential	Firearm	
FCALIBER	Numeric	4	Essential	Firearm	
FCARTRID	Character	40	Not Essential	Firearm	Enter the cartridge specification as it appears in the source documents.
<b>Primary data source:</b>		<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
Crime lab		C/ME, police			

**Code Description**

## FGAUGE (For shotguns only)

10	10 gauge
12	12 gauge
16	16 gauge
20	20 gauge
28	28 gauge
410	.410
666	Other
777	Not collected by reporting site
888	Not applicable
999	Unknown

## FCALIBER

## Millimeters (mm)

556	5.56 mm
6	6 mm
635	6.35 mm
65	6.5 mm
7	7 mm
735	7.35 mm
75	7.5 mm
762	7.62 mm
763	7.63 mm
765	7.65 mm
8	8 mm
9	9 mm
10	10 mm
11	11 mm

## Inches

17	.17
22	.22
221	.221
222	.222
223	.223
243	.243
25	.25
250	.250
256	.256
257	.257
264	.264
270	.270
280	.280
284	.284
30	.30
300	.300
303	.303
308	.308
32	.32

338	.338
35	.35
351	.351
357	.357
36	.36
375	.375
38	.38
380	.380
40	.40
401	.401
405	.405
41	.41
44	.44
444	.444
45	.45
455	.455
458	.458
460	.460
50	.50
54	.54
58	.58
60	.60

1000	Undetermined whether .38 or .357
1001	Small, unspecified ( $\leq .32/8\text{mm}$ )
1002	Medium, unspecified ( $> .32/8\text{mm}$ , $< .40/10\text{mm}$ )
1003	Large, unspecified ( $\geq .40/10\text{mm}$ )
6666	Other
7777	Not collected by reporting site
8888	Not applicable (shotgun or unknown gun type)
9999	Unknown

**FCARTRID**

Enter cartridge specification, if available, exactly as it is reported, e.g. .357 Remington  
Magnum; .38 Special

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

None

## FIREARM VICTIM

### Definition

Identifies which victim was injured (or which victims were injured) by the firearm.

### Uses

This table can be used to identify confirmed injury guns and to link victims to the specific gun that injured them when the information is known.

### Discussion

The software program creates a table that pairs each gun and victim in a given incident and asks if the victim was injured by that gun. Answer “no” if the gun injured a different victim in the incident and “unknown” if multiple guns were recovered from a crime scene and it is not known which one killed the victim or if it is not known which victim in a multiple-victim incident the gun injured. Answer “yes” if the gun is a confirmed injury gun for this victim. Use “reasonable certainty” rather than confirmed ballistic testing as the standard for identifying a gun as a confirmed injury gun. For example, if a gun was found next to a suicide victim and the death investigators are not in doubt that the gun inflicted the injury, you can assume the gun to be the injury gun even in the absence of ballistic testing. Sometimes several guns are recovered from a death scene and it is not known which gun inflicted the injury.

FireVict is a temporary variable. Only those victim-gun pairs coded as “yes” for FireVict are permanently stored on the FireVict table.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
FIREVICT				FireVict	
<b>Primary data source:</b>		<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
Crime lab		C/ME, police			

### Code Description

0	No
1	Yes
7	Not collected by reporting site
9	Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None

## STOLEN

### Definition

Indicates whether the firearm was listed or reported as stolen.

### Uses

This information is useful in determining the source of guns used in fatalities.

### Discussion

Code FSTOLEN as “yes” if the gun was formally reported as stolen in police records or if the police or coroner/medical examiner learned during the course of the death investigation that the gun had been stolen. If a household member takes a gun from another household member and uses it without his or her permission (e.g. son takes father’s weapon from his drawer and shoots himself), do not code that gun as stolen unless the owner had reported the gun as stolen to the police (e.g. parent has a restraining order against a violent teenager; parents previously reported to police that teen has stolen their gun; son shoots parents with the gun).

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
FSTOLEN	Numeric	1	Not Essential	No	Firearm
<b>Primary data source:</b>		<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
Police, ATF		C/ME			

### Code Description

- 0 No, not listed or reported as stolen
- 1 Yes, listed or reported as stolen
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## FIREARM BARREL LENGTH

### Definition

Length in inches of the firearm's barrel.

### Uses

Barrel length can be used to identify sawed-off shotguns. It can also be used to characterize handguns as to the ease with which they can be concealed. Data on barrel length may be useful in testing the utility of particular policies that address barrel length (e.g. U.S. policy regarding imports restricts the importation of certain guns based, in part, on their barrel length, and some jurisdictions in the U.S. have introduced legislation to ban firearms with barrel lengths below a certain size).

### Discussion

Some state standards for measuring barrel length include the chamber area (for revolvers). The federal standard should be used here: the area from the end of the chamber area to the end of the barrel.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
FBARREL	Numeric	5	Not Essential	No	Firearm
<b>Primary data source:</b>		<b>Secondary data source:</b>			
Crime lab		C/ME, police			

### Code Description

The barrel length is expressed in terms of inches in decimal format. A barrel length of 3 and 7/8 inches should be coded as 3.88 rounding the last digit up.

##.## Barrel length  
77.77 Not collected by reporting site  
99.99 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## FIREARM MAGAZINE CAPACITY

### Definition

The number of bullets that can be held in the magazine of the firearm that was used to inflict the injury.

### Uses

Data on magazine capacity may be useful for evaluating policies governing high-capacity magazines.

### Discussion

None.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
FMAG	Numeric	3	Not Essential	No	Firearm
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Crime lab		C/ME, police			

### Code Description

### Number of bullets magazine can hold  
777 Not collected by reporting site  
888 Not applicable (firearm does not have a magazine)  
999 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## SAFETY FEATURES

### Definition

The absence or presence of features of a gun that are intended to prevent accidental or unintended discharge of the weapon: 1) loaded chamber indicator, 2) magazine disconnect, 3) drop safety, and 4) integrated trigger lock.

### Uses

Data on the presence of various safety features can be used to document gun deaths in greater detail, particularly accidental/unintentional deaths, and may assist in evaluating the impact of policies or programs designed to encourage or discourage the use of these features. Because particular safety features may themselves be associated with unintended deaths (e.g. a jammed loaded chamber indicator may mislead a gun user into believing a loaded gun is unloaded), these data may be useful in evaluating the effectiveness of particular safety features.

### Discussion

A *loaded chamber indicator* is a small device found on some pistols. When displayed, the indicator warns the user that the gun contains a cartridge in the chamber. The chamber indicator can be a small pin that is built into the mechanism of the pistol. When a cartridge is in the chamber and the action of the gun is closed, the pin protrudes from the gun.

A *magazine disconnect* is a passive mechanical locking device that prevents the discharge of a gun when the magazine is removed from the pistol. When the magazine is not fully inserted into the gun, the linkage between the trigger and the hammer release is either disconnected or blocked. This prevents the pistol from being fired even if a cartridge is in the chamber.

A *drop safety* (any of a number of mechanisms such as hammer blocks and firing pin blocks) is designed to passively or actively (depending on the design) prevent the unintentional discharge of a handgun if it is dropped on the hammer. On revolvers and pistols without drop safeties (when the hammer is in the uncocked position) a blow to the hammer may cause it to discharge. Most internal safeties prevent the firing pin from impacting the cartridge until the trigger is pulled. Ballisticians investigating suspicious gun deaths frequently submit a weapon to a drop test to rule in or out the possibility of an unintentional discharge from a blow to the weapon.

An *integrated trigger lock* prevents an unauthorized user from firing the gun and is an integrated part of the design of a gun, as opposed to a trigger lock device that is added on to a gun after it is manufactured. Because integrated trigger locks are evident when the gun is recovered (and added-on locks typically are not), this variable refers only to the integrated locks.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
FLOAD	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Firearm	Loaded chamber indicator present?
FDISC	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Firearm	Magazine disconnect present?
FDROP	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Firearm	Drop safety present?
FLOCK	Numeric	1	Not Essential	Firearm	Integrated trigger lock present?
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Crime lab			C/ME, police		

### Code Description

- 0 Feature not present
- 1 Feature present
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

Drawn in part from the Medical College of Wisconsin Firearm Injury Reporting System.

# Firearm Information

## *B. Youth Access to Firearms*

## YOUTH ACCESS

### Definition

For firearm deaths, this data element identifies the owner and source of the gun in all shooting deaths involving a shooter aged 17 and under (or under the local minimum age for gun acquisition). *Note: Some pilot sites are using one or more of the Youth Access variables for shooters of all ages.*

### Uses

This set of variables can be used to better understand how youths gain access to the guns that they use to injure themselves or others.

### Discussion

The Youth Access data elements are completed for youths who shoot themselves or other people. In the case of a 16 year-old who murders a 24 year-old with a handgun, the Youth Access variables are attached to the 16 year-old, not the 24 year-old. (See information on the Youth Access table in “Entering a Case.”) Note that age restrictions may be lower for, or may not apply at all to, rifles and shotguns. If the specific age of a suspect is unknown but is reported as a range (e.g. 15-19), the software will use the lower age of the range in determining whether Youth Access variables apply. In an incident involving multiple suspects and multiple weapons, the software may pair a shooter with a gun that the shooter did not use. In that case, code the Owner variable as “8” (Not Applicable) and the remaining Youth Access variables will default to 8s.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
YOWNER	Numeric	2	Not Essential	YthAcc	Who owned the gun?
YSOURCE	Numeric	2	Not Essential	YthAcc	Source of the gun. Code YSOURCE only if the youth was the owner (YOWNER=1)
YLOCKED	Numeric	1	Not Essential	YthAcc	Was the gun stored locked? Code YLOCKED only if the youth was not the owner (YOWNER not =1)
YLOADED	Numeric	1	Not Essential	YthAcc	Was the gun stored loaded? Code YLOADED only if the youth was not the owner (YOWNER not =1)
YACCESS	Numeric	1	Not Essential	YthAcc	Was the youth's access to the gun authorized? Code YACCESS only if the youth was not the owner (YOWNER not =1)
YTHNARR	Character	50	Not Essential	YthAcc	Youth Access narrative. Specify if any of the above are coded “Other”
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
C/ME			Police		

### Code Description

YOWNER (Owner of gun)

- 1 Self
- 2 Parent/guardian
- 3 Other family member
- 6 Friend/acquaintance
- 7 Stranger
- 66 Other (Specify in Youth Access Narrative)
- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 88 Not applicable (this person did not use this gun)
- 99 Unknown

YSOURCE (If the youth was the owner, where or from whom did the youth obtain the gun)

- 1 Gun store
- 2 Other store (department store, sporting goods store, etc.)
- 3 Pawn shop
- 4 Mail order or email
- 5 Gun show
- 7 "Street" purchase (black market)
- 8 Family member
- 9 Other person
- 66 Other (Specify in Youth Access Narrative)
- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 88 Not applicable
- 99 Unknown

YLOCKED (If someone other than the youth was the owner, was the gun stored locked?)

- 0 Not locked
- 1 Locked (locked means stored in locked enclosure like a closet or cabinet or stored with trigger lock locked)
- 6 Other (Specify in Youth Access Narrative)
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

YLOADED (If someone other than the youth was the owner, was the gun stored unloaded?)

- 0 Unloaded
- 1 Loaded
- 6 Other (Specify in Youth Access Narrative)
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

YACCESS (If other person was the owner, was the youth's access to the gun authorized or unauthorized; e.g. if youth was given the key to the gun cabinet or told the trigger lock combination, access was authorized; if gun was unlocked but youth was told s/he could not use it, access is unauthorized; if gun was locked or hidden and youth was given no instructions, access is assumed to be unauthorized)

- 0 Not authorized
- 1 Authorized
- 6 Other (Specify in Youth Access Narrative)
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

None

## Firearm Information

### *C. Trace Information (optional)*

## **FIREARM SERIAL NUMBER – (for local data collection only)**

### **Definition**

The serial number of firearm that was used to inflict the injury.

### **Uses**

The serial number of the firearm can be used to facilitate tracing of the firearm used in an incident to its first purchaser and to the gun dealer from which it was purchased.

### **Discussion**

The serial number for firearms is not unique across gun manufacturers and is not designed to identify the type or characteristics of the firearm. As currently designed, its only value is to facilitate tracing.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
FSERIAL	Character	12	Local	Firearm	For local data collection only; not to be included in national dataset.
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Crime lab			C/ME, police		

### **Code Description**

This data element is coded exactly as the serial number recorded on the firearm. Serial numbers can include both letters and numbers.

666666666666 Serial number totally or partially obliterated

999999999999 Unknown

### **Data Standards or Guidelines**

None.

## IMPORTER'S NAME, CITY, AND STATE

### Definition

The name of the importer and the city and state of import of the firearm used in the injury incident.

### Uses

The importer's name, city and state is needed to conduct a trace by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms on firearms that are imported into the United States from other countries. Imported guns typically have this information stamped on the gun itself.

### Discussion

None.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
FIMPNAME	Character	30	Local	Firearm	Importer name
FIMPLACE	Numeric	5	Local	Firearm	FIPS 5-character place code to indicate city or town in which the importer is located
FIMPST	Numeric	2	Local	Firearm	FIPS 2-character state code to indicate the state in which the importer is located
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
Crime lab			Police, C/ME		

### Code Description

FIMPNAME, FIMPST

- 77 Not collected by reporting site
- 88 Not applicable (gun not imported or trace not conducted)
- 99 Unknown

FIMPLACE

- 77777 Not collected by reporting site
- 88888 Not applicable (gun not imported or trace not conducted)
- 99999 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## TRACE ATTEMPT

### Definition

Identifies whether an ATF trace was attempted on the firearm(s) involved in the case.

### Uses

This data element will be used by those sites that are working with a local police agency and the ATF to conduct traces on guns used in fatalities. It will identify whether a gun was submitted for a trace, and, if submitted, whether the trace succeeded or failed.

### Discussion

None.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
FTRACE	Numeric	1	Not Essential	No	Firearm
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
Reporting site					

### Code Description

- 0 Firearm manufactured prior to 1969
- 1 Gun not submitted for trace
- 2 Gun successfully traced
- 3 Trace was unsuccessful
- 7 Reporting site does no tracing
- 8 Not applicable (no firearm recovered)
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## DATE OF FIRST PURCHASE

### Definition

Date on which the firearm was first purchased, according to trace results.

### Uses

This data element will be used by those sites that are working with a local police agency and the ATF to conduct traces on guns used in fatalities. The date on which the gun was first purchased can be used, for example, to assist in identifying the “time to crime” (the length of time between the first purchase of a gun and its use in a homicide or other fatality).

### Discussion

The data entry program will accept partially unknown dates (e.g. 99/99/1989).

Note: a variable (First Purchaser) which documents whether the victim or suspect was the first purchaser of the gun is described in the Person section.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
FPDATE	Date	10	Not Essential	No	Firearm
<i>Primary data source:</i>			<i>Secondary data source:</i>		
ATF					

### Code Description

MM/DD/YYYY	Date of first purchase
88/88/8888	Not applicable (no trace done)
99/99/9999	Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

## CITY/STATE OF FIRST PURCHASE

### Definition

City and state in which the firearm was first purchased, according to trace results.

### Uses

This data element will be used by those sites who are working with a local police agency and the ATF to conduct traces on guns used in fatalities. The city in which the gun was first purchased can be used, for example, to track the number of guns whose sale originated locally vs. out of state.

### Discussion

None.

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Field Length</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Notes</b>
FPPLACE	Numeric	5	Not Essential	Firearm	FIPS 5-digit city/town code ("place" code)
FPSTATE	Numeric	2	Not Essential	Firearm	FIPS 2-digit state code
<b>Primary data source:</b>			<b>Secondary data source:</b>		
ATF					

### Code Description

Field filled with 7s	Not collected by reporting site
Field filled with 8s	Not applicable
Field filled with 9s	Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS), National Institute of Standards and Technologies; US Bureau of the Census

## FIRST PURCHASER

### Definition

Identifies whether the person (victim or suspect) was the first purchaser of the gun.

### Uses

This data element will be used by those sites that are working with a law enforcement agency and the ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms) to conduct traces on guns used in fatalities. Traces establish the first purchaser and the place of purchase. The data element summarizes trace results by identifying whether the victim or suspect in a case was the first purchaser of the gun. The data can be used, for example, to help identify shooters who obtained their guns from the secondary market. It can identify victims who used their own guns to kill a suspected criminal in self-defense or whose own guns were used against them in a homicide.

### Discussion

This variable is triggered only in cases in which a trace has been successfully completed. It is completed for each person in the case to indicate whether they or a person sharing their surname or address was the first purchaser.

<i>Variable Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Field Length</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Notes</i>
FSTPURCH	Numeric	1	Not Essential	FstPurch	Person was first purchaser?
<i>Primary data source:</i>		<i>Secondary data source:</i>			
ATF		Police			

### Code Description

- 0 Person was not the first purchaser
- 1 Person identified as first purchaser of the gun (match on full name)\*
- 2 Person shares surname and address of first purchaser (no match on full name)
- 3 Person resides at same address as first purchaser (no match on full name or surname)
- 4 Person shares same surname as first purchaser (no match on address or on full name)
- 7 Not collected by reporting site
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

### Data Standards or Guidelines

None.

\* In cases of close match on full name, birthdate and address may also be considered (e.g. Bill Thompson, DOB 11/27/72, can match to William Thompson, DOB 11/27/72)

# Appendix

## **PROTOCOL FOR CODING “INCIDENT TYPE”**

### **Violence-related**

Violence-related is a broad term encompassing injuries resulting from the use of physical force or the threat of physical force to harm, threaten, control, or defend against another person.

If a weapon is used not to harm but to threaten another person, and someone is injured as a result, the injury should be coded as violence-related, even if the injury itself was unintended. For example, if a gang shoots up the wall of an apartment building to intimidate a rival gang, and a passerby is shot unintentionally, the case should be coded as violence-related, not accidental, because the gun was being used to threaten others.

If physical force is used to defend against a violent crime, or what is perceived to be a violent crime, that event should also be coded as violence-related, even if the actual victim was unintended (e.g. a store clerk shoots at an armed robber in self-defense but mistakenly hits a customer).

If someone is attempting or threatening suicide and unintentionally injures another person, the case should be coded as accidental/unintentional, not violence-related.

Acts of terrorism should be coded as “violence-related” unless they occur as part of a declared war, in which cases they should be coded as “War Operations.”

### **Self-inflicted (Intentional)**

Intentional self-inflicted injuries include:

- suicides (purposely taking one's own life)
- fatal intentional self-harm (e.g. punishing oneself by mutilating a body part)

Intoxication or psychiatric impairment should not be used as extenuating factors to disqualify a case as intentionally self-inflicted.

In some cases, coroners/medical examiners classify accidental self-inflicted gunshot wounds as suicides, even when the facts establishing the case as accidental are not in dispute. We will not follow that protocol.

For many self-inflicted injuries—particularly drug overdoses—it is difficult to determine whether victims intended to harm themselves. If the facts of the case are unclear, go with the coroner/medical examiner’s determination. Code cases in which the victim voluntarily played Russian roulette with a gun as suicides.

### **Accidental/Unintentional Shootings**

The accidental/unintentional incident type applies only to cases involving firearms. Accidental/unintentional deaths result when a gun discharges accidentally (e.g. falls to the floor and discharges), is discharged by a person unintentionally (e.g. a person unintentionally pulls the trigger while unholstering the gun), or when a gun is discharged intentionally under circumstances in which the shooter was not attempting to harm, threaten, or control another person (as in mistakenly hitting another person during target shooting when a bullet ricochets).

Many medical examiners identify accidental shootings of one person by another as a homicide (using the word "homicide" literally to mean the killing of one person by another, regardless of intent). We will not follow that protocol. If the facts establishing the incident as an accident are not in dispute, we will code it as an accident/unintentional. If the facts are in dispute (a hunter says he shot his hunting buddy accidentally, but the family suspects murder), code the case according to how it is reported on the Supplementary Homicide Report (i.e., code it as violence-related if it is included on the SHR's "Murder and non-negligent manslaughter" section and as accidental if it is on the SHR "Negligent manslaughter" section. (And if such a case is not on the SHR, code the case as “unknown.”)

If a gun is drawn for the purpose of harming, threatening, controlling, or defending against another person, injuries to other people that result will not be coded as accidents/unintentionals,

regardless of the shooter's intent. If the shooter injures *him/herself* unintentionally when the gun is drawn to harm, threaten, control or defend against another person, the injury will be coded as an accident/unintentional.

### **Law Enforcement**

Use for those deaths that occur when a law enforcement officer (e.g. police officer, FBI agent, security guard) kills a criminal or someone thought to be a criminal in the line of duty. Also use for case of legal execution of a prisoner.

### **War Operations**

Use for those violence-related deaths that result from a war, civil war, or armed conflict between two nations.

### **Undetermined**

Use for those cases in which it is impossible to determine intent; but use as sparingly as possible. "Incident type" is not an investigatory ruling but a preliminary data categorization.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Case Examples:**

An angry husband storms into the living room with a gun drawn, yelling at his wife about the children watching too much TV. He shoots at the TV and accidentally kills one of the children.

CODE: Violence-related

WHY? The gun was drawn to threaten and control other people

A man is watching TV alone, becomes disgusted with what he is watching and shoots the TV. The bullet travels through the wall and kills a meter reader who, unbeknownst to the man, was just outside.

CODE: Accident

WHY? The gun was not drawn to harm, threaten, control, or defend against another person.

A man burns down a building to collect insurance money. He believes the building to be empty. A homeless person who was living in the building dies in the blaze.

CODE: Violence-related

WHY? Arson is considered a violent crime.

A person is being attacked with a knife. He pulls out a gun and kills the attacker.

CODE: Violence-related

WHY? The gun was used in self-defense to defend against another person (the justifiable nature of the incident will be captured in the circumstance code).

A woman hears a noise on her porch and is frightened that someone is trying to break in. She opens the door, sees a person, and shoots, learning later that the person was lost and seeking help.

CODE: Violence-related

WHY? The gun was drawn to defend against a suspected criminal, even though the suspicion was in error.

A person robs a bank at gunpoint. In his rush to leave the bank, he trips and the gun goes off, accidentally shooting another person.

CODE: Violence-related

WHY? The gun was drawn to threaten and control another person.

A person robs a bank at gunpoint. In his rush to leave the bank, he trips and the gun goes off, accidentally shooting himself.

CODE: Accident

WHY? While the gun was drawn to threaten and control another person, the "violence-related" category is only used when the gun harms another person, not the shooter him or herself. Since the robber did not intentionally harm himself, the case is coded as an accident/unintentional.

Two people are arguing and begin hitting one another. One steps back, falls down a flight of stairs, and dies. The other person says s/he had no intention of harming the victim and the death was accidental.

CODE: Violence-related

WHY? The injury resulted from violence.

A teenager is fooling around with a gun that he and his friends believe are unloaded. He points it at a friend, jokingly says "bang, you're dead," and shoots. The gun was loaded and the friend dies.

CODE: Accident

WHY? All of the kids believed the gun to be unloaded; therefore, the gun wasn't being used to harm, threaten, control or defend against another person.

A teenager wants to frighten a classmate he has a grudge against by pretending to shoot him. He believes the gun is unloaded. It isn't, and he kills the classmate.

CODE: Violence-related

WHY? The gun was drawn for the purpose of threatening and controlling another person.

A young woman threatens to kill herself. Her father lunges to knock the gun out of her hand and is accidentally shot dead himself.

CODE: Accidental/unintentional

WHY? The daughter had drawn the gun for the purpose of harming herself, not another person. The father's death was unintended.

## DEFINITIONS

*Violent Death* – A reportable violent death includes any homicide resulting from interpersonal violence (regardless of weapon type), any suicide (regardless of means), and any death resulting from a firearm injury (including those that are accidentally or unintentionally inflicted or of undetermined intent).

*Firearm Injury* - A penetrating injury caused by a projectile discharged from a firearm.

*Firearm* - A weapon consisting of a metal tube that fires a projectile at high velocity using an explosive charge as a propellant. This definition includes handguns, rifles, and shotguns. It excludes BB guns, pellet guns, and air guns.

*Suspect* – A “suspect” is a person suspected of having killed another person. (Suicide victims are not considered “suspects.”) In cases in which a person accidentally shoots another person, the suspected shooter is the person who pulled the trigger or otherwise caused the gun to discharge. In interpersonal violence-related cases, suspects may include not only the person who inflicted the injury, but other offenders who were part of the incident. For example, if two people robbed a bank and a bank teller was shot, both offenders should be listed in the incident even if only one pulled the trigger. Similarly, if a woman hired a hitman to kill her husband, both the hitman and the wife should be listed as the suspects in the case. The main source of these data—the Supplementary Homicide Report—does not differentiate the actual inflicter of the injury from the other offenders. If there are alternate theories about who the suspect in a case is (for example, in the case of a young woman’s death, the police are considering her boyfriend, parents, and coach all as suspects under alternate theories) do not list all of the suspects. List only the suspect who is listed on the Supplementary Homicide Report. If the SHR is unavailable, treat the case as one in which no suspect has yet been identified.

*Incident* – An “incident” is defined as an event resulting in a violent death or multiple related violent deaths during an unbroken stretch of time.

The following are cases that ARE single incidents:

1. A person shoots and kills another person.
2. Two rival gangs clash in a bar and a member of the first gang is killed; the conflict spills out into the street and a member of the other gang is killed.
3. A boy accidentally shoots his father while hunting. Distraught, the boy then shoots himself to death.
4. A young man holds up a liquor store and stabs the storeowner. The police arrive on the scene while the robber is attempting to flee. After a long car chase, the police shoot the young man.

The following are cases that ARE NOT single incidents (that is, each death should be recorded in its own incident record).

1. Two rival gangs clash in a bar and a member of the first gang is killed. The next night, the first gang kills one of the rival gang’s members for revenge.
2. A boy accidentally shoots his father while hunting. Two months later, unable to recover from the horror, the boy shoots himself.
3. A young man holds up a liquor store and kills the storeowner. The police arrive, give chase, but are unable to capture him. Two days later, they catch up with him, and he is killed in a shoot-out.
4. A troubled person kills his parents. The next day he appears at his former workplace and shoots a supervisor.

5. Four homeless people are shot on different dates over the course of one summer, and the same killer is believed responsible for all of the deaths.

In each of the cases that are not single incidents, there is clearly a link between the incidents. Currently, the NVISS database does not have a way to capture these links. In part, this is because we assume that we will rarely have accurate information available to us to identify linked incidents. In part, it is because we have not developed a conceptual model for identifying such links nor tested the feasibility of documenting the information when it is available. This is a project that may or may not be pursued during the third pilot year.

*Victim* – “Victim” refers to the person who was killed. Use of the term does not imply that the victim was innocent of any wrongdoing. For example, a disturbed employee who holds a co-worker at gunpoint and is then himself shot by a security guard would be coded as the victim in the incident, even though he was also the aggressor in the incident.

## CIRCUMSTANCE DEFINITIONS

### Violence Circumstance Definitions

#### **Variable: CVCRIME *Homicide sparked by another crime?***

Code options

0	No	7	Not collected by reporting site
1	Yes, crime in progress	8	Not applicable
2	Yes, revenge over previous crime	9	Unknown
3	Yes, other or unspecified		

Homicides that were sparked by another crime are those that occurred while another felony\* was in progress (e.g. robbery, drug trafficking, etc.), those that were committed in retaliation for another crime, and those that were in other ways crime-related (e.g. one drug dealer kills another drug dealer in order to take over his territory). Code this variable as “No” if the circumstances of the homicide are clear and no mention is made of a crime other than the violence itself (e.g. suspect kills neighbor after dispute over parking space). This variable attempts to differentiate those homicides that are related to other serious (usually economically-motivated) crimes from those that result from personal conflicts.

#### *Examples*

Yes, crime in progress

A robbery of a convenience store is in progress and one of the customers is shot. (Also code Nature of Other Crime as “Robbery” and Bystander as “Yes.”)

Yes, revenge over previous crime

The brother of a homicide victim finds the suspect responsible for the homicide and stabs him to death. (Also code Nature of Other Crime as “Assault/Homicide.”)

Yes, other or unspecified

A partner in a company embezzled funds. In an effort to cover-up his crime, he killed an accountant who was about to blow the whistle on him. (Also code Nature of Other Crime as “Other.”)

No

Suspect was a 17-year-old who was drunk and argued with a stranger at a bar over an insult and stabbed him to death. (Don’t look too hard for a crime—the fact that it is a crime to serve a minor liquor doesn’t qualify this case as having been sparked by another crime.) Code Other Argument/Abuse/Conflict as “Yes.”

No

Suspect violated a restraining order, returned home, tortured his wife over a period of several hours, and then killed her. (While the suspect was probably charged with many different offenses, all of the offenses were part of the violence itself. There was not a separate crime type like a robbery or a drug deal that lead to the homicide.) Code Intimate Partner Violence-Related as “Yes.”

Unknown

A homicide victim is found with crack cocaine on his/her person but no other information is available on what precipitated the homicide. (Drug possession alone cannot be assumed to have sparked the homicide. See also how this case is coded for Drug-Related.)

#### **Variable: CVNATCR *Nature of other crime***

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\* *Felony* is defined as a crime of graver or more serious nature than those designated as misdemeanors; e.g. aggravated assault (felony) vs. simple assault (misdemeanor). Under federal law and many state statutes, any offense punishable by death or imprisonment for a term exceeding one year.

Code options

1	Drug trade	9	Gambling
2	Robbery	10	Assault, homicide
3	Burglary	11	Witness intimidation
4	Larceny	66	Other (specify in Incident Narrative)
5	Motor Vehicle theft	77	Not collected by reporting site
6	Arson	88	Not applicable
7	Rape, sexual assault	99	Unknown
8	Prostitution, commercialized vice		

If a case qualified as “Yes” for Homicide Sparked by Another Crime, code the nature of the other crime (or attempted crime). Two crimes can be coded (CVNatCr1 and CVNatCr2). If there were more than two crimes, choose the two most relevant to the homicide.

**Drug Trade:** The buying, selling or passing of drugs from one person to another in exchange for goods or money.

*Examples*

Yes

A cocaine user is shot by a drug dealer while attempting to trade a gun for a bag of crack cocaine. Also code Drug-Related as “Yes, drug dealing.”

**Robbery:** The taking, or attempting to take, anything of value from another person or persons by force or threat of force or violence.

*Examples*

Yes

A suspect stops a person on the street and threatens the person with a knife and demands the person’s wallet. When the victim refuses, he is stabbed to death.

Yes

A suspect breaks into a home believing it is unoccupied, finds residents in the home, threatens them at gunpoint, and steals their wallets. One victim attempts to reach the phone and is shot to death. Also code “Burglary” (since the suspect was originally attempting to burglarize the home).

**Burglary:** The unlawful entry into a building or other structure without the owner’s consent with the intent to commit a felony or a theft.

*Examples*

Yes

A person breaks into a garage and takes equipment. The owner later discovers the burglar’s identify and kills him.

Yes

A suspect breaks into a home believed to be unoccupied and finds a woman in the home; he rapes the woman, chokes her to death, and takes a video camera. Also code “Rape/sexual assault.”

No

The suspect was in the process of trying to steal a bike from a yard when the owner caught him, a struggle ensued, and the suspect killed the bike owner. This should be coded as “Larceny/theft.”

**Larceny/theft:** The unlawful taking, carrying, leading or riding away of property from the possession or constructive possession of another. It includes crimes such as shoplifting, pocket-picking, purse-snatching, thefts of motor vehicle parts and accessories, bicycle thefts, etc., in which no force, violence, or fraud occurs. Motor vehicle thefts are excluded from this category.

*Examples*

Yes

A teenager sneaks up behind a woman walking down the sidewalk, grabs her purse and runs off. A police officer pursues the thief; the boy turns, pulls out a gun, and is shot by the officer. Also code Justifiable Homicide as “Yes, by law enforcement officer.”

No

A suspect threatens a woman with a gun, takes her purse, and then shoots her because he’s angry over how little money is in the purse. This should be coded as “Robbery.”

**Motor Vehicle Theft:** The theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle, includes the stealing of automobiles, trucks, buses, motorcycles, motorscooters, snowmobiles, etc. Does not include the taking of a motor vehicle for temporary use by those persons having lawful access.

*Examples*

Yes

A suspect pulls the driver out of a car, kills him, gets in and drives away.

No

Decedent was killed by the owner of car when the owner caught the decedent attempting to steal the car’s hubcaps. Code this as “Larceny.”

**Arson:** To unlawfully and intentionally damage, or attempt to damage any building, real estate, or personal property by fire or incendiary device. This code will generally be used for deaths that occur when an arsonist or building owner burns down a building for economic advantage and residents die in the fire. The victims are considered victims of a criminal homicide even if their deaths were not intended. This code also applies when “firebugs” set fire to a building or property for kicks and someone dies in the blaze.

*Examples*

Yes

An arsonist is hired by an apartment building owner to torch the empty building so that the owner can collect the insurance money. The flames spread to the occupied building next door, killing an elderly resident.

Yes

A group of teenage boys pour gasoline on a car and throw several matches on the vehicle causing the vehicle to burst into flames. The boys did not realize that there was a child in the car; the child did not escape.

No

A woman kills her husband by setting him on fire. (Her purpose is not to burn property but to kill a person.) Code this as Intimate Partner Violence-Related “Yes.”

No

A person stabs someone to death during an argument over money. They attempt to cover up the crime by burning down the house. This should be coded as Argument Over Money, Property “Yes” and it should be noted in the narrative that suspect tried to burn the house down with the body in it to cover up the evidence. (While the suspect *did* commit arson by purposely burning down property, the arson act followed the homicide and did not precipitate the homicide.)

**Rape, sexual assault:** Sexual contact without consent. Includes sex with a minor with or without consent. Ranges from the non-consensual touching of an intimate part of the body to forced, manipulated, or coerced penetration. It can involve verbal coercion and threats, physical restraint, intimidation, and/or violence.

*Examples*

Yes

Suspect rapes and murders the victim.

Yes

Decedent was killed by the father of a child whom the decedent was suspected of having sexually abused.

**Prostitution, commercialized vice:** Performing sexual acts in exchange for money or its equivalent.

*Examples*

Yes

A prostitute is murdered by a client during a trick (or, alternately, a client is robbed and murdered during a trick).

Yes

A woman is killed by her pimp when she says she will no longer work for him.

No

A woman who is a prostitute is found dead in her apartment; no information is available about the circumstances leading to her death.

**Gambling:** To play games of chance for money or other stakes. This includes dealing, operating or maintaining any game. It involves not only chance, but also a hope of gaining something beyond the amount played.

*Examples*

Yes

A man is killed by an organized crime enforcer for illegal gambling debts.

Yes

A man is killed by another man for encroaching on his numbers-running territory.

**Assault/homicide:** An unlawful fatal or nonfatal attack by one person upon another. The offender may or may not use a weapon or display it in a threatening manner. The victim may or may not suffer severe or aggravated bodily injury or death.

*Examples*

Yes

A gang member is slain by a rival gang member to avenge a murder that occurred the week before.

**Witness intimidation:** To intentionally say or do something that would cause a witness of a crime to be fearful of harm to them if they provide information to authorities about the crime.

*Examples*

Yes

Decedent witnessed a murder and was set to testify in court. Police believe the killing was intended to prevent the victim from testifying.

**Variable CVDEFENS *Defensive or law enforcement-related homicide (Justifiable homicide)***

Code options

0	No	7	Not collected by reporting site
1	Yes, by civilian acting in self-defense or defense of others	8	Not applicable
2	Yes, by law enforcement officer in line of duty	9	Unknown

The variable CVDEFENS identifies homicides that the police and prosecutors regard as “justifiable homicides” or socially-sanctioned use of lethal force.

*Civilian acting in self-defense or defense of others:* Self-defense is defined as the right of a civilian to repel by force, even to the taking of life, in defense of his person or property against any one who attempts by violence or surprise to commit a forcible felony. Essential elements of

self-defense are that the civilian does not provoke difficulty and that there must be impending peril without convenient or reasonable mode of escape. Sufficient evidence is required to support coding a case as a defensive act. Acceptable evidence is that either the SHR is coded as justifiable homicide or police records indicate that police believe the civilian was acting in self-defense. If there is a conflict between the information provided in the SHR and police report, use the police report. Security guards, private investigators, private armed car guards, etc., should be considered civilians, not law enforcement officers.

*Law enforcement officer in line of duty:* Law enforcement officer kills a suspect in the line of duty. Also code the precipitating event (e.g. robbery, burglary, etc.)

*Examples*

Yes, by civilian

An armed suspect enters a gas station to commit a robbery; the clerk pulls a gun out from under the counter and kills the suspect. Also code Homicide Sparked by Another Crime as “Yes, crime in progress” and Nature of Other Crime as “Robbery.”

Yes, by law enforcement officer

An officer is attempting to apprehend a robbery suspect; the suspect pulls a gun and fires at the officer, and the officer returns fire, shooting the suspect. Also code Homicide Sparked by Another Crime as “Yes, crime in progress” and Nature of Other Crime as “Robbery.”

Yes, by law enforcement officer

An officer is in pursuit of a suspect for purse snatching, the suspect pulls out a gun and points it at the officer, and the officer shoots and kills the suspect. The gun turns out to be a toy gun. Also code Homicide Sparked by Another Crime as “Yes, crime in progress” and Nature of Other Crime as “Larceny/theft.”

Yes, by law enforcement officer

A death row prisoner is executed by lethal injection. Also code Legal Execution as “Yes.”

Yes, by law enforcement officer

Officer stops a man erroneously believed to be a suspect in a robbery. The man reaches for his wallet to prove his identity, but the officer mistakes this as going for a gun and shoots the man. In spite of the fact that, in retrospect, the killing was not justifiable, because the officer was acting reasonably in the line of duty, it should be coded as “Yes.”

No

The victim and suspect are arguing; in the heat of the argument the victim pulls out a gun, aims it at the suspect; the suspect pulls out his gun and shoots the victim. This should be coded Other Argument/Abuse/Conflict as “Yes” and Victim Armed as “Yes.”

No

Woman kills her boyfriend against whom she has a restraining order. She claims self-defense, but she is charged with murder. (Although she may eventually be acquitted of the charges, code based on the current police-designated status of the case.) Also code Intimate Partner Violence-Related as “Yes.”

No

An on-duty police officer kills his wife in an ongoing domestic dispute. This should be coded Intimate Partner Violence-Related “Yes.”

No

An officer is demonstrating a feature of a gun that he believes is unloaded to another officer. The fellow officer is accidentally shot. This should be coded as an unintentional shooting, not a law enforcement homicide.

**Variable: CVGANG *Gang-related***

Code options

0 No  
1 Yes

7 Not collected by reporting site  
8 Not applicable

Gang members are persons who are members of the same association or organization which has as one of its purposes the commission of crime. The incident is a result of gang activity. If the police or coroner/medical examiner indicate in their report that they believe the case is gang-related, code “Yes.” If there is no evidence that the incident is gang-related in the police report, code “No.” In cases in which the victim and/or the suspect are gang members but the incident is not gang-related, code “No,” but indicate in the narrative that the victim and/or suspect is a gang member. In cases where the victim is a gang member and nothing else is known about whether the incident was gang-related, code Gang-Related as “Unknown.”

*Examples*

Yes

Two rival gangs are arguing over turf. One gang initiates a drive by shooting of the other gang’s drug house. Caught in the line of fire is a little girl playing on her front porch next door to the drug house, she is shot and killed. Also code Drive-by as “Yes” and Bystander as “Yes.”

No

Two males are arguing after the victim speaks disrespectfully about the suspect’s girlfriend. The suspect pulls out his gun and shoots the victim. The victim is a gang member. Indicate in the narrative that the victim is a gang member. This should be coded Other Argument/Abuse/Conflict as “Yes.”

Unknown

A body is found in a car. The victim is a known gang member. No further information is available.

**Variable: CVDRUG *Drug-related*** (Also see Drug Trade under *Nature of Other Crime*)

Code options

0	No	7	Not collected by reporting site
1	Yes, drug dealing	8	Not applicable
2	Yes, drug use	9	Unknown
3	Yes, suspected drug-related		

This variable indicates whether investigators believe the homicide was related to illegal drugs in any way.

*Yes, drug dealing:* May be either the seller or the purchaser (e.g. drug deal gone bad, drug market turf battle etc.)

*Yes, drug use:* Victim or offender intoxicated; addict seeking money for drugs.

*Yes, suspected drug-related:* Indicates suspicion that drugs may have played a role. Examples: found in crack house, victim or suspect was known dealer or user; bags of cocaine at the scene; drug paraphernalia found on the victim; scales found at the scene; etc.

*Examples*

Yes, drug dealing

A drug purchaser is unsatisfied with the drugs obtained from drug dealer, he argues with the drug dealer and dealer shoots him.

Yes, drug dealing

A dealer kills his grandmother because she will not allow him to sell drugs out of her home.

Yes, drug use

A cocaine addict attempts to rob someone on the street to support his habit. Also code Homicide Sparked by Another Crime as “Yes, crime in progress” and Nature of Other Crime as “Robbery.”

Yes, drug use

A 16 year-old addict kills his mother after she flushes his drugs down the toilet.

Yes, suspected drug-related

A homicide victim is found with crack cocaine on his/her person but no other information is available on what precipitated the homicide.

Yes, suspected drug-related

A known drug dealer is found murdered with a large sum of money in his pocket.

No

A 16 year-old kills his mother after she says he must stop seeing his girlfriend. The case is well-documented in police reports and no mention is made of drug involvement.

No

A known drug dealer is murdered by his girlfriend after she discovers that he has been sleeping with another woman. (Although he is a known drug dealer, the facts of the case are known to be related to sexual jealousy and intimate partner violence, not drug-dealing.)

Unknown

A man is killed by his roommate. Police are still investigating the motive. (Details are too sketchy to code Drug-Related as “No.”)

**Variable: CVPART *Intimate partner violence-related***

Code options

0 No  
1 Yes

7 Not collected by reporting site  
8 Not applicable  
9 Unknown

Intimate partner is defined as current or former girlfriend/boyfriend, date, or spouse. If other person(s) are also killed (for example a child or friend of the victim or a bystander), code “Yes” for them as well. (It will be apparent in the Victim/Suspect Relationship variable [RELABS] whether the victim and suspect were actual intimate partners or not.) We are adhering to the definition of intimate partner used by the Centers for Disease Control, which includes first dates.

*Examples*

Yes

A woman and her lawyer are getting into a car; the woman’s ex-boyfriend walks up to the woman and shoots her and the lawyer. Code “Yes” for both the woman and the lawyer.

Yes

A man and his boyfriend are out at a party. The ex-boyfriend of the man is outraged that he would show up at a party with his new boyfriend. The ex-boyfriend pulls out a gun and shoots both. Also code Jealousy/Lover’s Triangle as “Yes.”

Yes

A man and woman are out on their first date. They go back to her apartment after the date. He tries to force her in to bed and strangles her to death. Also code Homicide Sparked by Another Crime as “Yes, crime in progress” and Nature of Other Crime as “Rape, Sexual Assault.”

No

Man administers an overdose to his terminally-ill wife in a mercy killing. Wife leaves note indicating her request that her husband end her life. Code Mercy Killing as “Yes.”

No

Man is slain by two gang members to whom he owed a large sum of money. Although the police record may not explicitly state that the case is not intimate partner-violence related, if the facts of the case are known and well-documented and no mention is made of intimate partner violence, it is acceptable to assume intimate partner violence was not involved. Code Gang-Related as “Yes” and Argument Over Money, Property as “Yes.”

Unknown

The primary suspect in the slaying of a teenaged girl is her coach at school. The nature of the relationship between them is not known.

**Variable: CVARMED *Victim armed?***

Code options

0	No	7	Not collected by reporting site
1	Firearm	8	Not applicable
2	Knife	9	Unknown
3	Other weapon		

Consider victims armed if a weapon is on their person, if they are holding a weapon, or if they are wielding an ordinary object as a weapon and the object poses a credible threat (e.g. baseball bat).

*Examples*

Yes

Victim is found with a gun in his pocket.

Yes

Victim broke a bottle and was using it to slash at the suspect.

No

Victim has a loaded gun on the nightstand next to his/her bed.

*THE REMAINING VIOLENCE VARIABLES DEFAULT TO "0" (INDICATING EITHER NO OR UNKNOWN).*

**Variable: CVARG *Argument over money, property***

Code options

0	No or unknown	1	Yes
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Record review indicates that an argument or conflict over money or property led to the homicide.

*Examples*

Yes

The victim and suspect are overheard arguing over possession of a sofa that belonged to the victim but was left in the suspect's apartment.

Yes

The victim and suspect argue over how to divide up the cocaine they just purchased. Also code Drug-Related as "Yes, drug use."

**Variable: CVJEAL *Jealousy (lover's triangle)***

Code options

0	No or unknown	1	Yes
---	---------------	---	-----

Record review indicates the offender was jealous or distraught over an intimate partner's relationship or suspected relationship with another person. In general, you can assume that if an incident involves sexual rivals, CVJeal should be coded as "Yes" unless the circumstances clearly do not involve jealousy.

*Examples*

Yes

Ex-wife is getting married to new boyfriend. Ex-husband waits for them to leave ex-wife's apartment and shoots them both. Also code Intimate Partner Violence-Related as "Yes."

No or unknown

Ex-boyfriend is buying drugs from ex-girlfriend's new boyfriend when the new boyfriend is shot. Records indicate that the homicide was drug-related. Code Homicide Sparked by Another Crime as "Yes, crime in progress" and both Nature of Other Crime and Drug-Related as "Drug dealing."

**Variable: CVOTHARG *Other argument, abuse, or conflict***

Code options

0	No or unknown	1	Yes
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Record review indicates that the victim and offender were arguing over something other than money, property or drugs; there was abuse going on (child, elder, domestic); or some other conflict precipitated the killing. This variable is designed to capture all other types of interpersonal issues or arguments that do not satisfy the other argument definitions.

*Examples*

Yes

Victim and suspect were arguing over a parking spot.

Yes

Suspect was trying to quiet a crying baby when he lost his temper and shook the baby to death. (On the victim/suspect relationship table also indicate whether there was evidence of ongoing abuse.)

**Variable: CVDRIVE *Drive-by***

Code options

0 No or unknown

1 Yes

A drive-by shooting is one in which the suspect or group of suspects drives near an intended victim or target and shoots while driving. Code drive-by even if the actual victim was a bystander and not the intended victim. Drive-by is the mechanism by which the victim was shot; also document *why* the drive-by occurred, if known.

*Examples*

Yes

A car drives by a bar. Several people have gathered outside in front of the bar. Two people in the car fire guns at the group. Prior to the gunfire, the two groups had been in the bar when an argument over personal space developed. Also code Other Argument “Yes.”

**Variable: CVRANDOM *Random violence***

Code options

0 No or unknown

1 Yes

Was the victim killed by a random act of violence? A random act is one in which the suspect is not concerned with *who* is being harmed, just that *someone* is being harmed, such as a person who shoots randomly at passing cars from a highway bridge. This code should not be used when the motive for the homicide is unknown.

*Examples*

Yes

The suspect is distraught over a losing his job. He goes to a crowded shopping mall and starts shooting people.

No or unknown

A person is found in an alley beaten to death. No other information is known.

No or unknown

A white supremacist opens fire in a daycare center that serves black and Latino children. (While the individual children were shot at random, the selection of the children of color as a group was intentional. Code Hate Crime as “Yes.”)

**Variable: CVBYST *Bystander***

Code options

0 No or unknown

1 Yes

The victim was a bystander and not directly involved in the incident (e.g. pedestrian walking past a gang fight, customer in a convenience store at the time of a robbery). Also code the precipitating event (e.g. gang-related, robbery).

*Examples*

Yes

A bank patron is shot while a bank robbery is in progress. Also code Sparked by Another Crime as “Yes, crime in progress” and Nature of Other Crime as “Robbery.”

Yes

A shooting match occurs between two rival gangs, an older woman is shot in her home by a stray bullet. Also code Gang-Related as “Yes.”

**Variable: CVPOFF *Victim was police officer injured on duty***

Code options

0 No or unknown

1 Yes

At the time of the incident, was the victim a police officer killed while working. Also code the precipitating event.

*Examples*

Yes

A drug dealer shoots police officer during a sting operation. Also code drug dealing.

No or unknown

A retired police officer is shot while trying to stop the suspect from stealing a car. This should be code as Intervener as “Yes;” Homicide Sparked by Another Crime as “Yes, crime in progress” and Nature of Other Crime as “Motor vehicle theft.”

**Variable: CVINTERV *Intervener (other than police) assisting crime victim***

Code options

0 No or unknown

1 Yes

Was the victim attempting to assist a crime victim at the time of the incident? Also code precipitating event.

*Examples*

Yes

A woman was being badly beaten by her boyfriend. Her child tried to intervene when the boyfriend turns on the child and beats him/her to death. Also code Intimate Partner Violence as “Yes.”

Yes

A fire fighter is attempting to rescue a person trapped in a fire set by an arsonist, and the building collapses on the fire fighter. Also code Homicide Sparked by Another Crime as “Yes, crime in progress” and Nature of Other Crime as “Arson.”

Yes

A volunteer rescue worker is bringing supplies to fire fighters working on a building bombed in a terrorist attack; the building collapses killing all rescue workers. Also code Terrorist Attack “Yes.”

**Variable: CVHATE *Hate crime***

Code options

0 No or unknown

1 Yes

Suspect was perpetrating a crime of aggravated assault, arson, burglary, criminal homicide, motor vehicle theft, robbery, sexual assault, and/or crime involving bodily injury in which the victim was intentionally selected because of the victims' actual or perceived race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or disability. Specify the type of hate crime in the Incident Narrative.

*Examples*

Yes

A suspect bombs a meeting of a gay and lesbian group.

Yes

A Chinese boy is assaulted by another boy because of his ethnicity.

**Variable: CVSCHOOL *School-related***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The incident happened at a K-12 school, on a school bus, at a school event, or on the way to or from school.

*Examples*

Yes

Two teen boys are waiting for the school bus, they argue, one of the boys pulls out a knife and stabs the other boy. Also code Other Argument as “Yes.”

**Variable: CVMERCY *Mercy killing***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Euthanasia, the offender performs an affirmative act of bringing about immediate death allegedly in a painless way and generally administered by one who has a justifiable basis for believing that the dying person wishes to die because of a terminal or hopeless disease or condition. Don’t assume that a murder/suicide in an elderly couple is always a mercy killing. There must be some indication that the victim wanted to be killed (a note, told relative or friend).

*Examples*

Yes

A woman with advanced stage ALS (Lou Gerhigs Disease) tells her friend that she and her husband would like to be cremated and that “they would like to leave this world together.” The next day her husband shoots her and then shoots himself.

No or unknown

A woman has a stroke and has difficulty getting around. Her husband has been diagnosed with liver cancer; he kills himself and his wife. (This may or may not be a mercy killing. It is coded 0 for “unknown.”)

**Variable: CVBRAWL *Brawl (mutual physical fight)***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The victim and offender are engaged in a mutual physical fight. If weapons are being used, it is not a brawl.

*Examples*

Yes

Two groups of kids are having a fistfight. The fight escalates and one of the kids pulls out a gun and starts shooting.

No or unknown

Two people are struggling over a gun and the gun goes off.

No or unknown

Suspect beats the victim to death in a one-sided attack, not a mutual fight.

**Variable: CVMENTAL *Mentally ill suspect***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The suspect’s attack of the victim is believed to be related to the suspect’s mental illness.

*Examples*

Yes

The suspect is suffering from paranoid schizophrenia and believes the victim is spying on him/her.

No or unknown

The suspect is acting very aggressively and attacks the victim. The suspect is high on PCP. Code Drug-Related as “Yes, drug use.”

**Variable: CVTERROR *Terrorist attack***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The victim was injured in a terrorist attack, including attack with a biological weapon. This would include those who died while assisting in rescue operations from the attack. We are using the FBI definition of terrorism: "Injuries resulting from the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."

*Examples*

Yes

An abortion clinic is set on fire by a group of anti-abortion supporters; two clinic workers die in the blaze.

No or unknown

A group of white men beat a black man to death shouting racial epithets. Code Hate Crime as "Yes."

**Variable: CVEXECUT *Legal execution***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The victim is executed as a punishment for murder and other capital crimes.

*Examples*

Yes

A prison inmate on death row is executed by lethal injection.

No or unknown

A member of an organized crime group is found dead; he has been shot execution style. Code Gang-Related as "Yes."

**Variable: CVOTHER *Other***

All other circumstances not listed above. This code should not be used for unknown circumstances. Specify the circumstance in the Incident Narrative.

*Examples*

Yes

Teenagers committed a "thrill kill" murder on a dare.

Yes

Serial killer murdered 8<sup>th</sup> victim.

## **Accidental/Unintentional Circumstance Definitions**

*All accidental/unintentional circumstances default to 0 (indicating either no or unknown). All accidental/unintentional circumstances apply to both self-inflicted or other-inflicted incidents with the exception of CASELF.*

### **Variable: CAHUNT *Hunting-related***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The incident resulted from a person's actions while hunting. May occur while actively hunting, in preparation for hunting, while getting down from a tree stand, while unloading in the field, etc. Includes any incident that occurs after leaving home or camp to go hunting. Does not include target practice, horseplay while not hunting, or cleaning a gun. Also code mechanism (loading/unloading, dropping gun, etc.)

#### *Examples*

Yes

A hunter is getting down from his deer stand; he drops his rifle and the gun discharges. Also code Dropping Gun as "Yes."

Yes

A hunter is out hunting and engages in horseplay and his companion gets shot. Also code Other Accidental Circumstance as "Yes."

Yes

A hunter is out hunting, gets bored and decides to do a little target shooting before packing up and to go home. Also code Aiming for Non-Person Target as "Yes."

No

A hunter is actively hunting and returns to the truck and to clean his gun before returning it to its rack. This should be coded Other Handling/Carrying Gun as "Yes."

No

A hunter is at home cleaning his gun before he goes on a deer-hunting trip. The gun discharges. This should be coded Cleaning Gun as "Yes."

### **Variable: CACLEAN *Cleaning gun***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The incident occurs while cleaning a gun.

#### *Examples*

Yes

A target shooter is cleaning his/her gun before a competition and the gun discharges.

### **Variable: CAPLAY *Child(ren) playing with gun***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The incident occurs while a child or children (aged 17 and under) are playing with a gun. Phrases that would trigger coding this circumstance include "horsing around," "fooling around," "playing," etc.

#### *Examples*

Yes

Two teenagers are playing a game of quick draw with their father's revolvers. They are unaware that one of the guns has a bullet in the cylinder and it discharges. Also code Thought Gun was Unloaded—Other Reason as "Yes."

**Variable: CATOY *Gun mistaken for toy***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The incident occurs when an adult or child believes the gun is a toy gun.

*Examples*

Yes

A first grader finds a gun under his uncle's bed; he thinks it is a toy gun, squeezes the trigger, and discharges the firearm.

**Variable: CAHOLST *Holstering/unholstering gun (from holster or clothing)***

The incident occurs while the gun is being either holstered or unholstered.

*Examples*

Yes

The victim grabs his gun to take it out of his pocket when the gun discharges.

No

The victim grabs the gun off the nightstand and unintentionally pulls the trigger. This should be coded Unintentional Trigger Pull as "Yes."

**Variable: CADROP *Dropping gun***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The incident occurred when the gun is dropped and accidentally discharged.

*Examples*

Yes

A man was carrying his gun in his shirt pocket; he leans over to pick something up off the ground. The gun falls on to the floor and discharges, shooting him in the face.

**Variable: CAPULL *Unintentionally pulled trigger***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Shooter pulled the trigger unintentionally.

*Examples*

Yes

A man is taking the gun away from his friend who just finished target practice. While he is taking the gun in a non-violent manner the trigger is pulled and the gun discharges.

No

A man is being threatened at gunpoint by a robber. He struggles to take the gun away from the robber; the trigger is pulled, discharging the firearm and killing the robber. Code Homicide Sparked by Another Crime as "Yes, crime in progress;" also code Nature of the Crime as "Robbery" and Justifiable Homicide as "Yes, by civilian."

**Variable: CAENGAGE *Engaging/disengaging safety or lock***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Firearm discharged while the shooter was engaging or disengaging the safety or lock.

*Examples*

Yes

The shooter is trying to disengage the safety on the firearm and the gun discharges.

Yes

The shooter is attempting to take a lock off a firearm when the trigger is unintentionally pulled. Also code unintentionally pulled trigger.

**Variable: CALOAD *Loading, unloading***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Firearm discharges while the shooter is loading or unloading ammunition from the gun.

**Variable: CASHOW *Showing gun to others***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Shooter was showing gun to another person(s) when the gun discharged.

*Examples*

Yes

A person has just purchased a new gun; he is showing the gun to his friends and the gun discharges.

**Variable: CACELEB *Celebratory firing***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Shooter was firing the firearm upward in a celebratory manner.

*Examples*

Yes

It is New Year's Eve; several people are outside watching the fireworks. One of the people pulls out his gun, points the gun toward the stars, and fires.

No

A man is trying to clear out the people in his house after a party. He points the gun at the ceiling and discharges the firearm. This should be coded as Violence-Related for Incident Type, not Accidental/Unintentional, since the gun was used in a threatening manner to control others. (See protocol for coding Incident Type.)

**Variable: CAMISAIM *Aiming for non-person target***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Shooter is aiming for a non-person target and unintentionally shoots a person.

*Examples*

Yes

Two guys are having a target-shooting contest with aluminum cans in the backyard. A bullet misses the cans and hits the neighbor in the next yard.

**Variable: CAOTHAN *Other handling/carrying gun***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Shooter is handling or carrying the gun in some other manner than previously described. Indicate in the narrative nature of the handling/carrying.

*Examples*

Yes

The victim is putting his/her gun in a cabinet when the trigger catches on a peg and the gun fires.

**Variable: CASAFETY *Thought safety was engaged***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Shooter believed the safety was engaged and the firearm would not discharge.

*Examples*

Yes

A man recently purchased a gun. He thought he had engaged the safety and tried to pull the trigger when the gun went off.

**Variable: CAUNLMAG *Thought gun was unloaded---magazine disengaged***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Magazine was removed, shooter did not realize there was a bullet remaining in the chamber.

*Examples*

Yes

Two teenagers are playing with an uncle's semi-automatic pistol. They remove the magazine and believe they have unloaded the gun. Not realizing there is a chambered bullet, one points the gun at the other and pulls the trigger. Also code Children Playing with Gun as "Yes."

**Variable: CAUNLOTH *Thought gun was unloaded--other reason***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Shooter did not believe the gun was loaded.

*Examples*

Yes

The victim and his friend were practicing speed loading and unloading a revolver. One of the friends thought the gun had just been unloaded, when he picked up the gun and shot the victim.

**Variable: CARICO *Bullet ricocheted***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Shooter fires a gun; the bullet ricochets off an object (changes direction) and injures the victim.

*Examples*

Yes

Two friends are target shooting. One of the friends aims at a street lamp, hits the lamp, and the bullet ricochets off the lamp into the neighbor's house.

**Variable: CADEFECT *Gun defect, malfunction***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Firearm involved in the incident is defective or malfunctions. Firearm may back fire or discharge due to defect or malfunction.

*Examples*

Yes

The gun will not fire. The shooter is trying to unjam the slide action in a semi-automatic handgun when the gun discharges.

Yes

The firearm is accidentally dropped and the gun discharges on impact. Also code Dropping Gun as "Yes."

**Variable: CASELF *Accidental self-inflicted injury during self-defensive shooting***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The victim is attempting to defend him or herself with a gun when they inadvertently strike themselves.

*Examples*

Yes

The victim is attempting protect himself from a home invasion when he trips and accidentally shoots himself.

No

The victim is attempting to protect herself from a home invasion when she trips and inadvertently shoots the intruder. (Code Incident Type as Violence-Related Homicide, not Accidental/Unintentional, because the death was inflicted to protect against a suspected crime.)

**Variable: CAOTHER *Other accidental circumstance (describe in Incident Narrative)***

Code options

0 No or unknown

1 Yes

Other accidental circumstances not covered in previous variables should be described in the Incident Narrative.

## **Suicide-Mental Health Definitions**

### **Variable: CSDPRESSED *Current depressed mood***

Code options

0	No	7	Not collected by reporting site
1	Yes	8	Not applicable
		9	Unknown

The victim, at the time of the incident, was perceived by self or others to be depressed. The victim may or may not have been diagnosed with depression. Examples from ME/C reports “suffering from depression,” or “was despondent over recent break-up,” or “had been feeling low,” or “depressed over ...” etc. The depressed mood may be part of a clinical depression or may be a short-term sadness.

#### *Examples*

Yes

A husband states that his wife was suffering from depression at the time she took her life.

Yes

Decedent was saddened by his brother’s death a year ago and had not been himself since then.

No

Victim was agitated over news that he may be pink-slipped at work.

### **Variable: CSMENTAL *mental health disorder***

Code options

0	No	7	Not collected by reporting site
1	Yes	8	Not applicable
		9	Unknown

The victim had a mental health disorder (depression, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, etc.) or a neurodevelopmental disorder (Attention Deficit Disorder, learning disability). Also indicate “yes” if it is mentioned in the ME/C report that the victim was being treated for a mental health problem but the nature of the problem is unclear (e.g. “was being treated for various psychiatric problems”). This variable should be coded “yes” if the victim is either in current treatment or past treatment for a mental health problem or has a prescription for an antidepressant or other psychiatric medicine.

#### *Examples*

Yes

Toxicology report from ME indicates that the victim tested positive for sertraline (an antidepressant).

Yes

According to the ME report the victim was currently being treated for bipolar disorder.

Yes

The ME indicates that the victim has a history of depression.

No

A neighbor of the victim indicates that the victim was not acting normally.

### **Variable: CSDIAG1, CSDIAG2 *Type of mental health disorder (diagnosis)***

Code options

1	Depression	66	Other (specify in CSMENTXT)
2	Bipolar disorder	77	Not collected by reporting site
3	Schizophrenia	88	Not applicable
4	Anxiety disorder	99	Unknown
5	Post-traumatic stress disorder		

Indicate the nature of the victim’s mental health problem (their diagnosis) if available. Code up to two diagnoses. If a diagnosis is not on the code list, code “Other” and record the diagnosis in the

text field, CSMENTXT. If the record indicates more than two diagnoses, note the additional diagnoses in CSMENTXT. For cases in which the victim was noted as suffering from a mental health problem but the actual diagnosis is not documented, code CSDIAG1 as “Unknown.”

**CSMENTXT *Text field to record diagnoses***

Use this text field to specify diagnoses coded as “Other” in CSDIAG1 or CSDIAG2, or to record additional diagnoses.

**Variable: CSTXMENT *Victim in current treatment for mental health problem?***

Code options

0	No	7	Not collected by reporting site
1	Yes	8	Not applicable
		9	Unknown

Current treatment includes: recent visit (within two months) to psychiatrist, psychologist, medical doctor, therapist or other counselor for mental health problem; current prescription for antidepressant or other psychiatric medication; residing in inpatient or halfway facility for a mental health problem. If a decedent died as the result of overdose by multiple medications and it is not clear whether the medications were his or her own (as in a victim swallowing everything in the family’s medicine cabinet), the existence of an antidepressant or other psychiatric medication in the victim’s bloodstream is not sufficient evidence of mental health treatment. For victims who die by other means than drug overdose (e.g. shooting, hanging), toxicologic test results indicating the presence of a psychiatric medication is sufficient evidence of mental health treatment. If you are uncertain whether the medication in question is considered a psychiatric medication, list it in the “other drug” text field (VDRUGTXT). During the data review process at NVISS, a toxicologist will review the substance and determine whether it should be considered a psychiatric medication.

*Examples*

Yes

A recently filled, unopened prescription for an antidepressant is found in the medicine cabinet.

Yes

The victim has been in treatment for depression for the last 10 years.

Yes

The victim was released from inpatient care for bipolar disorder a week ago.

No

Victim was taking St. John’s Wort (non-prescription herb) for depression because of a magazine article he’d read.

No

Victim was taking sleeping pills for insomnia.

**Variable: CSTXPAST *Victim ever treated for mental health problem?***

Code options

0	No	7	Not collected by reporting site
1	Yes	8	Not applicable
		9	Unknown

Indicates whether the victim was noted as *ever* having received professional treatment for a mental health problem, either currently or in the past. Treatment includes seeing a psychiatrist, psychologist, medical doctor, therapist, or other counselor for a mental health problem; receiving a prescription for an antidepressant or other psychiatric medicine; residing in an inpatient facility or halfway house for mental health problems.

*Examples*

Yes

Several years ago the victim was treated for bipolar disorder and at the time of death was off all medications.

Yes

The victim has been in treatment for depression for the last 10 years.

**Variable: CSALCOHL *Alcohol dependence or abuse***

Code options

0	No	7	Not collected by reporting site
1	Yes	8	Not applicable
		9	Unknown

Victim was perceived by self or others to have a problem with or to be addicted to alcohol. Being in treatment—even if sober—qualifies a case as being coded for alcohol problems. A problem from the distant past that has resolved and no longer appears to apply should not be coded.

*Examples*

Yes

ME/C report indicates the patient was in an alcohol rehab program last year.

Yes

Called AA sponsor the day before the incident.

Yes

Noted in ME/C report that the victim had been drinking a lot lately.

No

ME/C report indicates that 20 years ago the victim had trouble with drugs and alcohol but not since then.

**Variable: CSSUBST *Other substance dependence or abuse***

Code options

0	No	7	Not collected by reporting site
1	Yes	8	Not applicable
		9	Unknown

Victim was perceived by self or others to have a problem with or to be addicted to other drugs such as cocaine, heroin, prescription medications (such as pain relievers or valium), or inhalants. If the victim is mentioned as using illegal drugs such as cocaine or heroin—even if addiction or abuse is not specifically mentioned—code CDSUBST as “yes.” The exception to this is marijuana use. For marijuana, the use must be noted in as chronic, abusive, or problematic (e.g. “victim smoked marijuana daily,” “victim’s family indicated he had been stoned almost constantly for the past month”). A victim who takes methadone can be assumed to be in treatment for heroin addiction.

*Examples*

Yes

ME/C report indicates that the victim is a cocaine/pain killer/drug addict or user.

Yes

Victim made regular visits to a methadone clinic.

No

Victim smoked marijuana occasionally.

**Variable: CSTXSUB *Victim in treatment for alcohol or substance disorder?***

Code options

0	No	7	Not collected by reporting site
1	Yes	8	Not applicable
		9	Unknown

Records indicates that the victim has been treated in a drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, including self-help groups and 12-step programs. This variable is not limited to current treatment.

*Examples*

Yes

ME report notes that the decedent was in a detox program three years ago.

Yes

Victim attended AA meetings.

Yes

Victim was taking methadone.

## **Suicide Intent Definitions**

### **Variable: CSNOTE *Suicide note left***

Code options

0 No  
1 Yes

7 Not collected by reporting site  
8 Not applicable  
9 Unknown

Victim left a note, email, video, journal or diary entry, or other written communication that they intended to commit suicide. Does not include a will.

#### *Examples*

Yes

The victim wrote a letter to her son indicating that she was ending her life.

No

A woman is terminally ill. She writes and signs her will. The next day she commits suicide.

### **Variable: CSINTENT *Previously disclosed intent to commit suicide to another person***

Code options

0 No  
1 Yes

7 Not collected by reporting site  
8 Not applicable  
9 Unknown

Prior to the incident victim disclosed suicidal feelings (“I am going to kill myself,” “I think everyone would be better off without me,” “I can put a permanent end to my misery,” etc.) to another person. If a victim has not disclosed his or her suicidal intention until it’s too late for anyone to intervene (e.g. shouts “I’m going to kill myself” the moment before they lift the gun to their head), do not code CSINTENT as “Yes.”

#### *Examples*

Yes

According to the ME/C report the victim told his wife that he was planning to end his suffering and stop being a burden on her.

No

Family members were unaware of the victim’s suicidal feelings until he announced, “Now you’ll see what you’ve done to me; I’m gonna blow my head off,” and left the room and shot himself.

### **Variable: CSATTMPT *Previous suicide attempts***

Code options

0 No  
1 Yes

7 Not collected by reporting site  
8 Not applicable  
9 Unknown

The victim had previously attempted to commit suicide. This should be coded without regard to the seriousness of the attempt.

## **Suicide Circumstances Definitions**

### **Variable: CSCRISIS Did suicide follow an acute life crisis?**

#### Code options

0	No	7	Not collected by reporting site
1	Yes, same day crisis	8	Not applicable
2	Yes, recent or impending crisis	9	Unknown

Examples of life crises include very recent or impending arrest, job loss, relationship break-up, police pursuit, financial loss, or other devastating loss. “Crisis” is in the eyes of the victim. (This is particularly relevant for young victims whose crises—such as a bad grade or a dispute with parents over a curfew—may not seem objectively to be major.) A major argument should trigger coding CSCRISIS as “yes” if it is followed by the suicide that day. A “recent crisis” is one that occurred within the past two weeks. An actual time period is unlikely to be mentioned in the records, however, so use language as a clue. For example, “decedent was experiencing financial difficulties after losing his job” would not trigger coding a recent crisis because the timeframe is unclear, whereas “decedent had just received a pink slip at work” would. An “impending crisis” is one that is feared to occur within the next few days. A patient whose chronic health problem is worsening should not trigger coding CSCRISIS as “yes;” however a person who just received the news that he or she has a terminal illness should be regarded as having experienced a recent crisis.

#### *Examples*

No

A 45-year-old man had lost his job six months prior to the suicide event and he was having trouble paying his bills.

No

The victim had emphysema and the condition was worsening.

No

The victim was in the process of divorcing her husband.

Yes, same day crisis

The victim’s husband announced that day that he was divorcing her.

Yes, same day crisis

A 15 year-old had a heated argument with his mother, stormed out of the room, and shot himself.

Yes, same day crisis

The decedent killed his wife and then himself.

Yes, recent or impending crisis

A few days prior to the suicide incident it was released in the newspaper that the victim was a cross dresser.

Yes, recent or impending crisis

A 33 year-old lost the use of both his legs in a ski mobile accident the week before and decided he could not continue.

Yes, recent or impending crisis

The victim was about to be returned to prison in a few days.

Unknown

The suicide note indicated that the decedent was despondent about his job loss. (The report does not indicate whether there was a very recent job loss.)

*THE REMAINING SUICIDE CIRCUMSTANCE VARIABLES DEFAULT TO “0” (INDICATING EITHER NO OR UNKNOWN).*

**Variable: CSHEALTH *Physical health***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The victim was experiencing physical health problems (e.g. terminal disease, debilitating condition, chronic pain) and this physical illness is relevant to the suicide event. If the precipitants are known, endorse this variable only if a health problem is noted as contributing to the suicide.

*Examples*

Yes

The victim was recently diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and was given two months to live.

Yes

Victim suspected by might have AIDS and killed himself before he received his test results.

No

Victim was fleeing from police. He ran into a restroom and shot himself. History of arrests for violent crime. Health history indicates diabetes.

**Variable: CSPART *Intimate partner problem***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

At the time of the incident the victim was experiencing problems with an intimate partner (current or former girlfriend/boyfriend or spouse) such as divorce, break-up, or discord.

*Examples*

Yes

The victim is distraught over the breakup of his marriage. He goes to his old house, shoots his wife and then shoots himself. Also code perpetrator of interpersonal violence.

Yes

The victim was served with divorce papers. Later that day he took his life. Also code same day crisis.

No

The ME report indicates that the victim is a divorced, 45 year-old, white male.

No

Victim was lonely and felt isolated.

**Variable: CSREL *Other relationship problem***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

At the time of the incident the victim was experiencing an interpersonal problem with someone other than an intimate partner (for example, a family member or friend.)

*Examples*

Yes

A teenage boy finds out that he has gotten a girl pregnant; he cannot face telling his parents.

**Variable: CSJOB *Job problem***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

At the time of the incident the victim was experiencing a job-related problem such as recent or feared job loss, trouble getting along with a co-worker, pressure at work, or poor performance reports.

*Examples*

Yes

An investment banker has single handedly forced his employer into bankruptcy.

Yes

A father of three has just lost his third job in six months.

**Variable: CSSCHOOL *School problem***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Record review indicates that the victim was experiencing school problems with teachers, administrators, or peers (e.g. failure, academic pressure, bullying).

*Examples*

Yes

A sophomore in high school received her report card with failing grades a week ago. Also code recent or impending crisis.

Yes

The new kid in school continues to get picked on and beat up by a particular group of boys. He thinks no one likes him.

**Variable: CSFINAN *Financial problem (e.g. bankruptcy, debts, foreclosure)***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

Record review indicates that the victim was experiencing financial problems.

*Examples*

Yes

The victim has been notified that the bank is foreclosing on his property in 10 days. Also code Did Suicide Follow an Acute Life Crisis as “Yes, recent or impending crisis.”

**Variable: CSSUIC *Suicide of friend or family member***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The victim was distraught over, or reacting to, a recent (within 5 years) suicide of a friend or family member.

*Examples*

Yes

An 18-year-old man decides that his friend who committed suicide a year earlier had the right idea and takes his own life.

No

The victim is a 36-year-old woman. Her mother committed suicide when she was 12 years old.

**Variable: CSDEATH *Other death of friend or family member***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

The death of a friend or family member appears to be related to the incident. The death should be within the past five years.

*Examples*

Yes

The victim felt he could no longer go on with out his wife. She passed away several months earlier. He wanted to be with her again.

No

The husband of the victim died 9 years prior to her suicide.

**Variable: CSCRIM *Criminal legal problem***

Code options

0 No or unknown 1 Yes

At the time of the incident the victim was facing criminal legal problems such as recent or impending arrest, police pursuit, currently in jail, impending criminal court date.

*Examples*

Yes

The victim has been convicted of a crime and is awaiting his court appearance for sentencing; he is facing 60 years in prison. He takes his life.

No

The victim has been served divorce papers. This should be coded as intimate partner problem.

**Variable: CSLEG *Other or unspecified legal problems (e.g. custody dispute, civil lawsuit)***

Code options

0 No or unknown

1 Yes

At the time of the incident the victim faced civil legal problems (such as a custody dispute or civil lawsuit) or legal problems that were unspecified as to whether they were criminal or civil.

*Examples*

Yes

The victim is in the midst of a heated custody battle for his children with his wife. Also code intimate partner problem.

Yes

Suicide note indicates “many legal problems.” (Code CSLEG since it is unclear whether the problems are criminal or civil.)

No

The victim has been arrested for multiple violent crimes. This should be coded as Criminal Legal Problem “Yes.”

**Variable: CSPERP *Perpetrator of interpersonal violence***

Code options

0 No or unknown

1 Yes

The victim of the suicide was also the perpetrator of a recent or ongoing violent crime or interpersonal violence. Should be coded “yes” if the victim has a restraining order against them.

*Examples*

Yes

The suicide victim was also the suspect in the homicide of his wife.

Yes

The victim had beaten his ex-wife on several occasions. She had a restraining order against him.

Yes

Victim was wanted in a string of robberies and assaults. Also code Criminal Legal Problem as “Yes.”

**Variable: CSVICT *Victim of interpersonal violence***

Code options

0 No or unknown

1 Yes

The victim was currently or recently a victim of interpersonal violence.

*Examples*

Yes

A teenaged girl had been the victim of repeated sexual assaults by her uncle before she took her life.

Yes

The victim was being abused by her spouse.

No

A 30 year-old victim had been abused as a child.

**Variable: CSOTHER *Other* (specify in Incident Narrative)**

Code options

0 No or unknown

1 Yes

Use for all other known circumstances when no other codes are applicable. Describe the circumstance in the Incident Narrative.

***Examples***

Yes

The victim died from starvation during a hunger strike on behalf of a political cause.

No

The victim is a teenage boy whose friends have ostracized him. (The case can be coded as Other Relationship Problem “Yes” and therefore does not need an “other” code.)

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ATF	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
C/ME	Coroner or Medical Examiner
E-code	External cause-of-injury code
EMS	Emergency medical service
FARS	Fatality Analysis Reporting System (for traffic-related deaths)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FIPS	Federal Information Processing Standard
ICD-9	International Classification of Disease, 9 <sup>th</sup> revision
ICD-10	International Classification of Disease, 10 <sup>th</sup> revision
NCIC	National Crime Information Center
NIBRS	National Incident Based Reporting System
NVISS	National Violent Injury Statistics System, Harvard School of Public Health
NVDRS	National Violent Death Reporting System
SHR	Supplementary Homicide Report
UCR	Uniform Crime Reports

## VARIABLE FORMATS

Where character fields require letters in certain positions and digits in others, the “Note” section of the variable specification table describes the format by specifying “L” for letter and “#” for digit. For example, VECODE10 is of format L##.##. It requires a letter followed by up to 4 digits.

## CODING SCHEME FOR UNKNOWN DATA VALUES

*Unknown* values are values that are sought and found to be unavailable or not recorded. To record an “unknown” value, the variable is filled with 9s.

*Not collected* values are values that are not sought, i.e., the data collection site does not collect the information. To record a “not collected” value, the variable is filled with 7s.

*Not applicable* values are values that are recorded to indicate that the information needed for a particular data element is not relevant to a specific incident, victim, suspect, or firearm. For example, if alcohol was determined not to be present in the victim’s blood and recorded as such in the alcohol presence data element, the data element for blood alcohol level should be assigned a “not applicable” value. To record a “not applicable” value, the variable is filled with 8s.

Values of *Zero* reflect a valid data value meaning that there is none of the quantity that a particular data element is intended to measure or that a “yes/no” question can be answered with no. For example, if a victim has had no formal education, a value of “0” for the victim’s highest educational level accurately reflects that individual’s number of years of completed education. If a death did not occur at the victim’s residence, a value of “0” for the variable “Incident at Victim’s Residence?” would indicate “no.”

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