

Alpena County Office of the Medical Examiner



2025 Annual Report

Mid Michigan Medical Examiner Group

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Message to the Board of Commissioners and Citizens of Alpena County

Dear Board of Commissioners and Citizens of Alpena County,

As the Administrator of the Medical Examiner Office for Alpena County, I am honored to present our annual report, reflecting on the past year's activities and trends. Our team remains committed to serving the community with professionalism, accuracy, and compassion, ensuring that every investigation is conducted thoroughly and with the utmost care.

Over the past year, we have observed the following notable trends:

- **Total Cases:** 141 unexpected death investigations were conducted in 2025.
- **Scene Investigations:** Increased by 11.9%, highlighting the growing need for thorough on-site examinations.
- **Homicide:** For the first time since 2022, Alpena County experienced a homicide.

Our dedicated team remains steadfast in its mission to provide accurate determinations and compassionate service to families during their most difficult times. We extend our sincere appreciation to the Board of Commissioners for their continued support, which allows us to uphold the highest standards in our investigations.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve Alpena County in this capacity. We remain committed to maintaining the trust you have placed in us and to contributing to the safety and well-being of our community.

Respectfully,

Lisa Kaspriak and Dr. Paul Wagner

Medical Examiner Office, Alpena County

Medical Examiner Staff

Dr. Paul Wagner
Chief Medical Examiner

Lisa Kaspriak
Administrator

David G. Turner, F-ABMDI
Chief Investigator

Taylor Hoekwater, Ed.D., MSA, D-ABMDI
Deputy Chief Investigator / QA Coordinator

Nicole H
Office Manager

Jennifer S
Administrative Assistant

Nick Harrison, D-ABMDI
Medical Examiner Investigator

Amber Olson
Medical Examiner Investigator

Bob Stankiewicz
Medical Examiner Investigator

Douglas Krueger
Medical Examiner Investigator

David Kammerer
Medical Examiner Investigator

Laurie Kirby
Medical Examiner Investigator

Linnessa Mellberg
Medical Examiner Investigator

Steve Orlandi
Medical Examiner Investigator

Mid Michigan Medical Examiner Group and its investigators remain committed to maintaining and advancing the highest standards in medicolegal death investigation. We continue to implement monthly training to educate our investigators in current best practice and discuss emerging trends. We remain dedicated to providing the highest level of service to the communities we serve.

Deaths Reportable to the Medical Examiner:

The Michigan County Medical Examiner Law, Act 181, P.A. of 1953, as amended, and the Michigan Public Health Code, Act 368, P.A., of 1978, as amended, mandates that specific types of death be referred to the Medical Examiner for investigation (see list below). These deaths include sudden unexpected deaths, accidental deaths, and violent deaths. The medical examiner has the authority under these Acts to order an autopsy at any time it is deemed necessary to determine or confirm the cause and manner of death.

Deaths Reportable to the Medical Examiner:

- Violent death (e.g., strangulation, gunshot, stabbing, poisoning, etc.)
- Accidental deaths (e.g., falls, drowning, motor vehicle collisions, burns, overdose, etc.)
- Death of a prisoner (e.g., death in any county or city jail while imprisoned or in custody).
- Suspicious Circumstances (e.g., unidentified bodies or event surround death)
- Sudden and unexpected deaths (e.g., all deaths during a surgical procedure, in recovery, anesthesia-related, unexpected natural death, occupational-related deaths)
- Without medical assistance within 48 hours of death
- In cases of chronic illness, the attending physician may sign the death certificate if s/he can be reasonably certain the cause of death.
- Death of a mother due to an abortion.
- Unexpected infant deaths

The medical examiner may order an autopsy for any of the reportable deaths listed above.

ANNUAL REPORT

Year	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Overall Cases	141	126	129	111	132	132
Scene Investigations	86	78	64	67	60	62
Cremation Reviews	372	337	340	328	349	318
Autopsy	7	8	7	6	3	11
Toxicology	24	17	28	16	13	8

MANNER OF DEATH BY YEAR COMPARISON

Year	Natural	Accident	Suicide	Homicide	Indeterminate	Pending
2025	114	20	6	1	0	0
2024	91	26	8	0	1	0
2023	91	25	4	0	0	0
2022	83	16	7	1	0	0
2021	111	13	6	2	0	0
2020	102	21	4	2	3	0

Summary: The total number of deaths are up 11.9% compared to 2024. In 2024, natural deaths accounted for 72.2% of the total deaths. In 2025, natural deaths accounted for 80.3% of the total deaths. A comparison of accidental deaths between 2024, and 2025, reveals the percentage of total deaths ruled “Accident” has decreased with the percentage of accidental deaths comprising 20.6% of total deaths in 2024, and 14.8 in 2025.

CAUSE OF DEATH BY YEAR COMPARISON

Cause of Death	% of Deaths 2025	# of Death 2025	# of Deaths 2024
Heart Disease	57.7%	82	51
Accidental Injuries	14.8%	21	26
Chronic Respiratory Disease	6.3%	9	8
Sepsis	5.6%	8	9
Cancer	3.5%	5	8
Diabetes	2.8%	4	4
Chronic Ethanol Abuse	2.8%	4	2
Kidney Disease	0.7%	1	1
Other	0.7%	1	0

Summary: The death classified as “Other” was a non traumatic intracranial hemorrhage.

SUICIDE DEATHS

Year	# of Deaths
2025	6
2024	8

Summary: The age range for suicide victims spans from 17 to 92 years old, with the median age being 67.5 years.

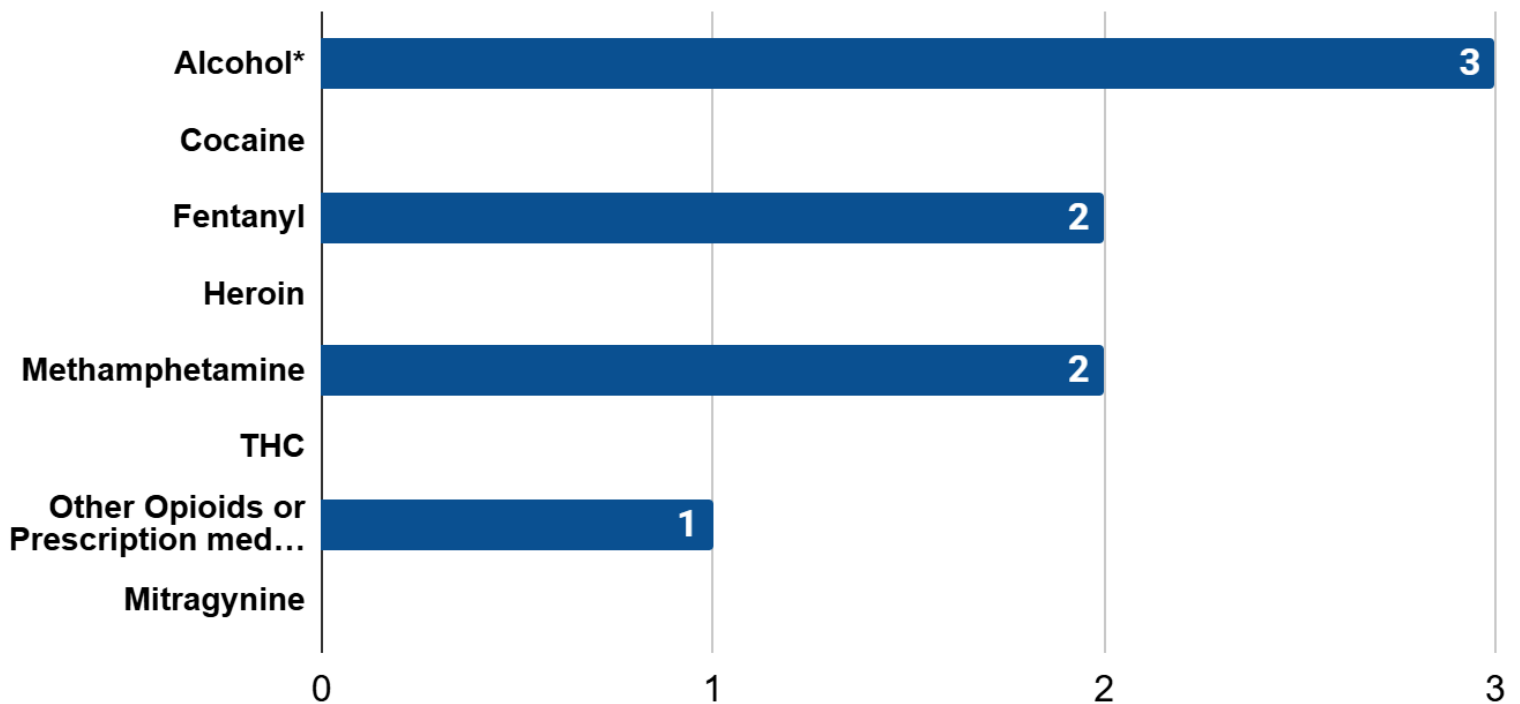
CAUSES OF ACCIDENTAL INJURIES

Alpena County Cause of Death	# of Deaths	% of Accidental Calls
Fall	13	61.9%
Drug Use	4	19.0%
Other	4	19.0%

Falls: The age range of individuals who died from falls spans from 60 to 103 years, with a median age of 85 years.

DRUG RELATED DEATHS

2025 Findings



Drug Use: Substances are reported in drug-related deaths or where drug use contributed. Alcohol is noted if above the limit, and THC is listed if contributory, in confirmed cases.

ORGAN DONOR REGISTRY

ONE organ & tissue donor can **SAVE 8 LIVES** and **RESTORE** health to over **75** others

In 2025, 13 Alpena County residents were referred to Organ Procurement Organizations.



