

# Injury the No. 3 cause of death

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■ State studied  
9 years of injury-  
death statistics.

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Injury is the third-leading cause of death in Maryland, according to a first-ever study on the causes and extent of injury deaths in the state.

The state's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene last week released an 86-page report which describes and analyzes injury-death statistics for 1979 through 1987. The figures, taken from death certificates, reveal that only heart disease and cancer were greater killers than was injury during those nine years.

Of the 22,139 injury deaths in Maryland during the nine-year period, about a third were due to transportation-related accidents. Another third were caused by "intentional" injuries — suicides and homicides. The final third were due to a variety of accidents, ranging from falls to drownings and surgical-medical deaths.

The five leading causes of injury deaths were, in order, transportation (7,113 deaths), suicide (4,458), homicide (3,729), falls (1,831) and fire (899).

From 1979 through 1987, injury deaths increased by 18 percent, from 2,380 in the first year of the study to 2,805 in its final year.

The annual number of deaths ranged from a low of 2,243 in 1983 to the high of 2,805 recorded in 1987, for a nine-year average of 2,460 annually.

Males suffered almost three-fourths of the injury deaths. Two-thirds of the deaths occurred among whites. However, the annual injury rate was higher among blacks and other minorities (about 70 deaths per 100,000 people) than among whites (about 53 per 100,000).

The five subdivisions that recorded the highest rates of injury deaths per 100,000 people during the nine years were Dorchester County (88.6), Somerset County (88.5), Baltimore (84.4), Kent County (80.9) and Caroline County (80.3). Baltimore had the highest number of injury deaths (5,808), far surpassing second-place Prince George's County (3,257).

See INJURY, C4, Col. 1

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## INJURY, From C1

Deaths were counted where the deceased had resided, rather than where the deaths occurred.

The state's report is entitled, "Injuries in Maryland." The study was funded with a grant from the federal Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. It evolved from a recommendation made in 1985 by the Advisory

Committee on Injury Prevention, a collaboration between the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems.

The department says it envisions the study being used by government officials and health-care professionals throughout the state to create

programs to prevent injury deaths.

In the report's conclusion, the department lists preventive measures such as wearing car seat belts and motorcycle helmets, installing air bags in cars, toughening existing handgun laws, building one-story rest homes for senior citizens and mandating smoke detectors in private residences.