

Spartanburg County Coroner



Coroner
Rusty Clevenger

2023 Annual Report

Spartanburg County Coroner's Office
366 North Church Street
Spartanburg, 29303

Last Revised: April 25, 2024

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Message to the County Council and Citizens of Spartanburg County	3
Coroner's Office	4
Types of Deaths Reportable to the Coroner's Office	5
Spartanburg County Coroner's Office Cases (April 26, 2023 - December 31, 2023)	6
Manner of Death by Postmortem Examination (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)	7
Deaths by Natural Causes (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)	7
Deaths by Unnatural Causes (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)	9
Accidental Deaths by Type (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)	9
Accidental Deaths - Motor Vehicle Crashes (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)	11
Drugs Contributing to Cause of Death (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)	
Suicide by Means (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)	1311
Homicide Deaths (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)	13
Deaths by Age Group (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)	14

Message to the County Council and Citizens of Spartanburg County

To the county council and the citizens of Spartanburg County,

I am pleased to share our 2023 annual report. My goal in making this information public is to increase the public's awareness about the role of the coroner's office and to bring attention to the cause and manner of death in our county in effort to prevent such deaths where possible.

The Information you will find in this annual report has been gathered from records held by the Spartanburg County Coroner's Office which include autopsy reports, investigative reports, death certificates, cremation permits (1016) issued, and motor vehicle reports. It is our wish to provide the public with the most up-to-date and complete information possible in a format that is accurate and easy-to-read.

Due to a ransom attack that occurred in April of 2023 that effected not only the coroner's office but a majority of Spartanburg County departments, My office was not able to generate data prior to April 26, 2023. However, with the systems that my office has in place, all data was further secured in other methods that did not prevent the coroner's office from completing the task; serving families of this great community. Any data that was prior to April 26, 2023 is able to be obtained by physically going through each case file, however due to time constraints and efforts to continue providing services to decedent's and families of the decedent's, that data is not included in this report. The estimated calls reported to the coroner's office that are missing from this report would be an additional (1152) reported calls for service to include scene responses, cremation permits issued, and other ancillary requests that are normal for everyday operation within the coroner's office.

To assist with the further growth of the Spartanburg County Coroner's Office, I strive to be the best coroner's office in the nation. I am not able to complete these tasks alone or without the help of my team, this office could not succeed and provide top rated service to decedent's and their families. Between 2021 and 2023, the Spartanburg County Coroner's Office has successfully been awarded a total of \$1,252,000.00 dollars in grant funds. All of the grant awards have been 100% funded and did not cost the citizens of Spartanburg County. With these grant funds, the Spartanburg County Coroner's Office has been able to purchase in car computer systems, a mobile X-ray machine, 12 digital mirrorless cameras, rapid DNA analysis machine, rapid toxicology machine, computer software, and other pertinent items that are beneficial to the citizens of Spartanburg County.

I hope the statistics will be of value. If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact my office.

As always thank you for allowing me and my staff to serve You.

Rusty Clevenger - Coroner

Coroner's Office

Rusty Clevenger
Coroner
Jessica Ervin
Assistant Chief Investigator

Jonathan Lawson
Chief Investigator
Sue Mobley
Grant Coordinator

Holly Crooke
Office Administrator

Ashlyn Bowen
Part time Investigator

Dennis Brown
Coroner's Investigator

Kacie Brown
Coroner's Investigator

Blake Cole
Coroner's Investigator

Rick Ellis
Cold Case Investigator

Anna Fowler
Coroner's Investigator

Brian Gillespie
Coroner's Investigator

Jeff Grant
Coroner's Investigator

Skylar Henderson
Coroner's Investigator

Stephen Lully
Coroner's Investigator

Ellen Holmes
Part time Investigator

Ashlyn Bowen
Part time Investigator

Michelle Lewis
Indigent Care Investigator

John Wassum
Deputy Medical Examiner

Blair Mckinney
Part time Investigator

Claire Rose
Deputy Medical Examiner
Michael Ward
Chief Medical Examiner

Judy Yacoviello
Part time Investigator

Tonya Anderson
Pathology Assistant / Admin Assistant

Grace Dukes
Deputy Medical Examiner

Christen Hall
Case Manager

Dot Trent
Administrative Assistant

Types of Deaths Reportable to the Coroner's Office

The main task of the coroner's office is to determine legal identification as well as the medico-legal causes for deaths in Spartanburg County with priority focused on sudden, suspicious as well as death that occur for no apparent reason. The coroner is a County official who is elected to serve a four-year term.

The coroner, an elected constitutional officer, has jurisdiction over all deaths investigated by their office. Generally, the coroner is responsible for investigating all suspicious and violent deaths, as well as all deaths that occurred outside of a hospital or nursing home. In addition to the aforementioned scenarios, the coroner's office is also responsible for investigation of all death that occurred less than 24 hours of admission or invasive surgical procedure at any treatment facility. The Spartanburg County Coroner's Office operates under South Carolina state law title 17. Criminal procedures, chapter 5. Coroners and medical examiner's, article 1. Definitions-17-5-5 through 17-5-610. For additional information regarding South Carolina state law, please refer to the website at www.scstatehouse.gov

It is the statutory responsibility and authority of the coroner to determine the cause and manner of death of people who die in Spartanburg County or are injured in Spartanburg County and die in any other part of South Carolina. Deaths in another state must be certified in the state they occur by law. As circumstances warrant, the coroner may retain the assistance of experts in the fields of anthropology, toxicology, odontology, entomology, radiology, photography, trace evidence collection, and other fields of forensic science to assist in their investigation. The coroner has to determine and make the decision for natural, accident, suicide, homicide, and undetermined cause of death. The coroner is solely responsible for deciding when an autopsy will be performed.

It is the responsibility of the Coroner to see that all evidence from a decedent that is investigated is preserved and safeguarded. Items that do not fall under the statutory requirements of preservation of evidence regarding section code (17-28 sections 10 through 360) may be released to the designated family member after case closure. When possible, the coroner personally notifies relatives and loved ones of an unfortunate death. Court remedies for release may be possible as stated in law.

In addition to the above responsibilities, the Coroner issues burial removal transit permits, authorizes and issues cremation permits, signs death certificates, and maintains permanent records for every case. The Coroner may also conduct inquests.

Deaths Reportable to the Coroner's Office:

- 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., deaths in any county or city jail while imprisoned or in custody).
- Suspicious Circumstances (e.g., Unidentified Bodies or events surrounding 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 attendance 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 of the cause of death.
- Death of a mother due to an abortion.
- Unexpected infant deaths

The Coroner's Office would generally order an autopsy for any of the reportable deaths listed above.

Spartanburg County Coroner's Office Cases (April 26, 2023 - December 31, 2023)

Population	335406
Cases Reported to Coroner	2305
A. Number of deaths certified after postmortem examination	304
1. Number of Coroner Cases with Complete Autopsy	207
2. Number of Coroner Cases with External Examination	82
3. Number of Coroner Cases with Limited Examination	17
B. Number of deaths certified without postmortem examination	644
C. Number of deaths not certified by Coroner's Office after investigation	1661

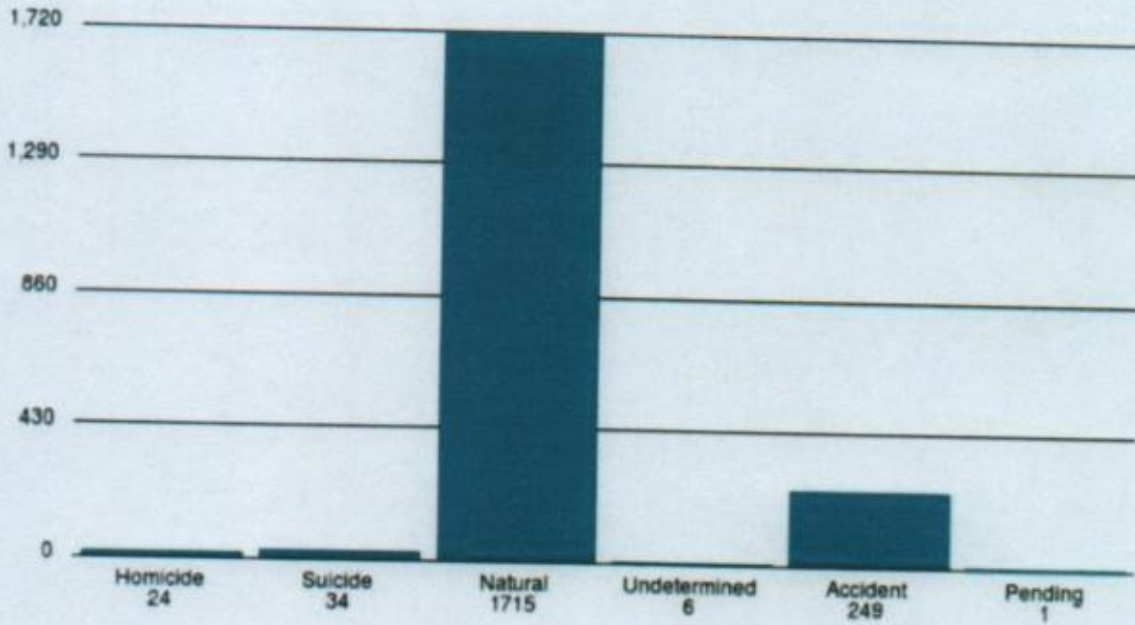
Definitions

Full Autopsy: A complete external and internal examination of a decedent

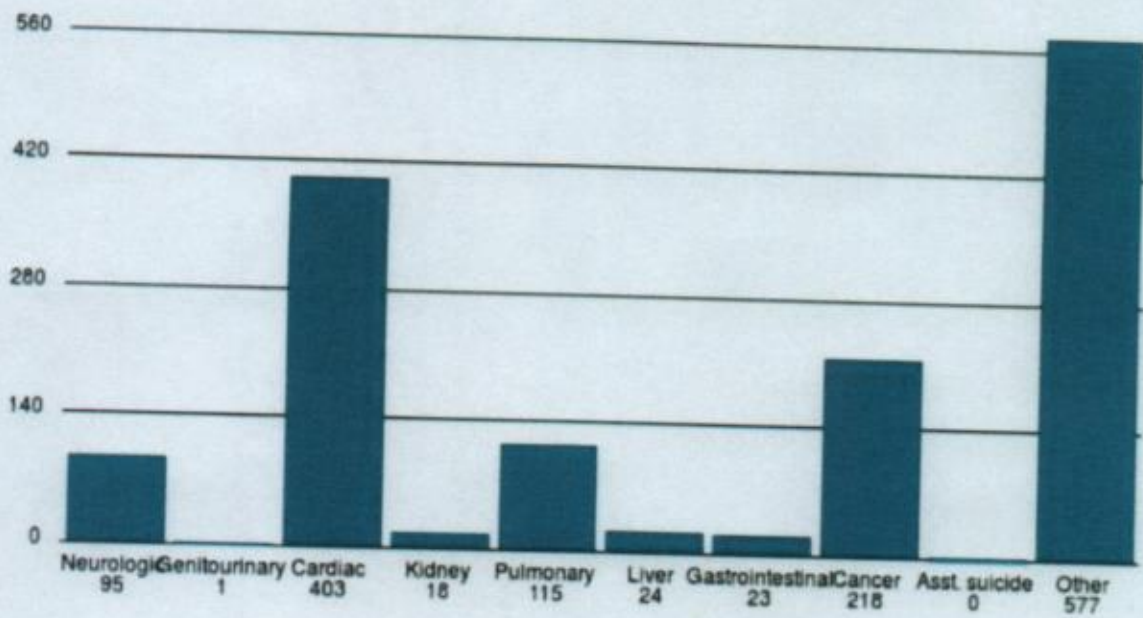
Limited Examination: An examination which is focused on a specific organ or region of the body, i.e., heart. The limited examination also includes an external examination.

External Examination: An examination of the exterior of a decedent.

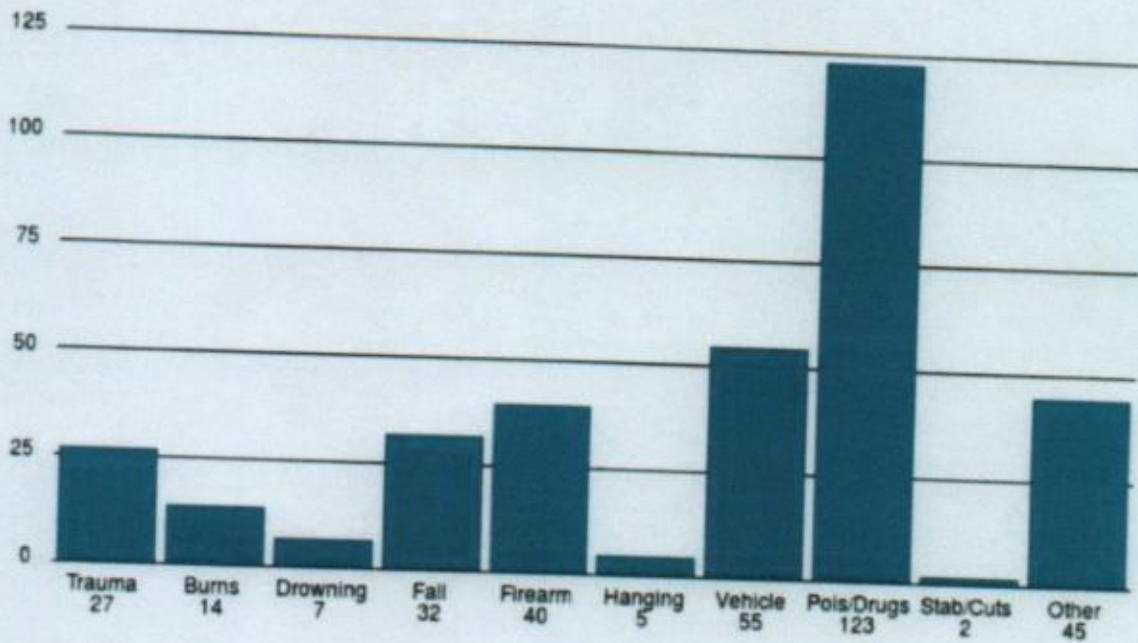
Manner of Death by Postmortem Examination (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)



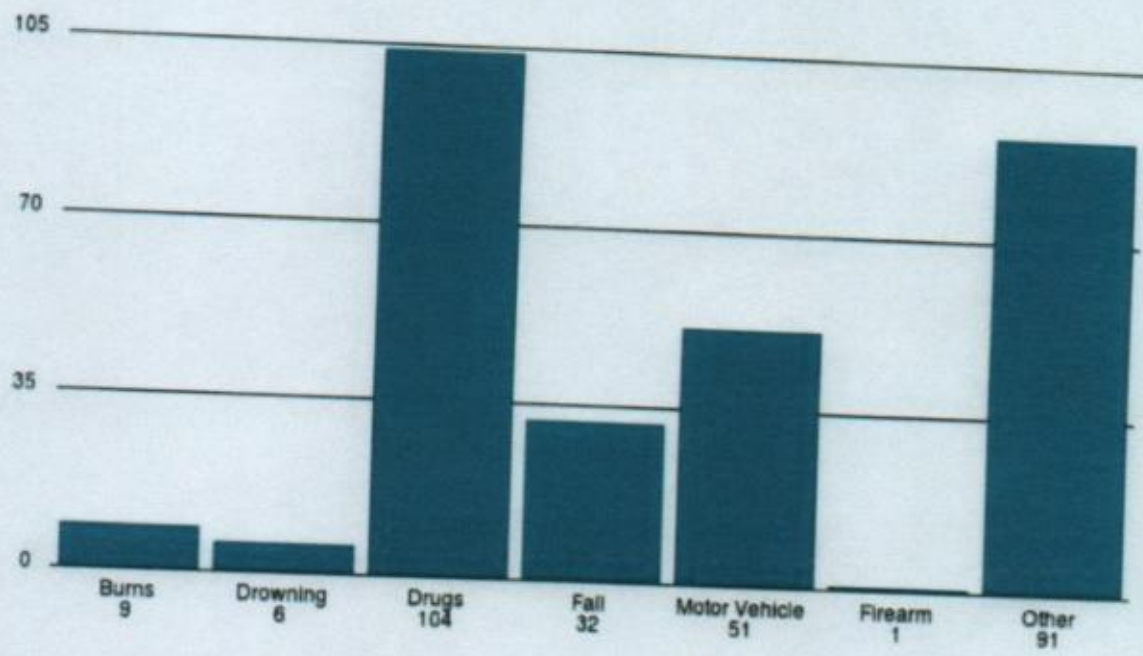
Deaths by Natural Causes (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)



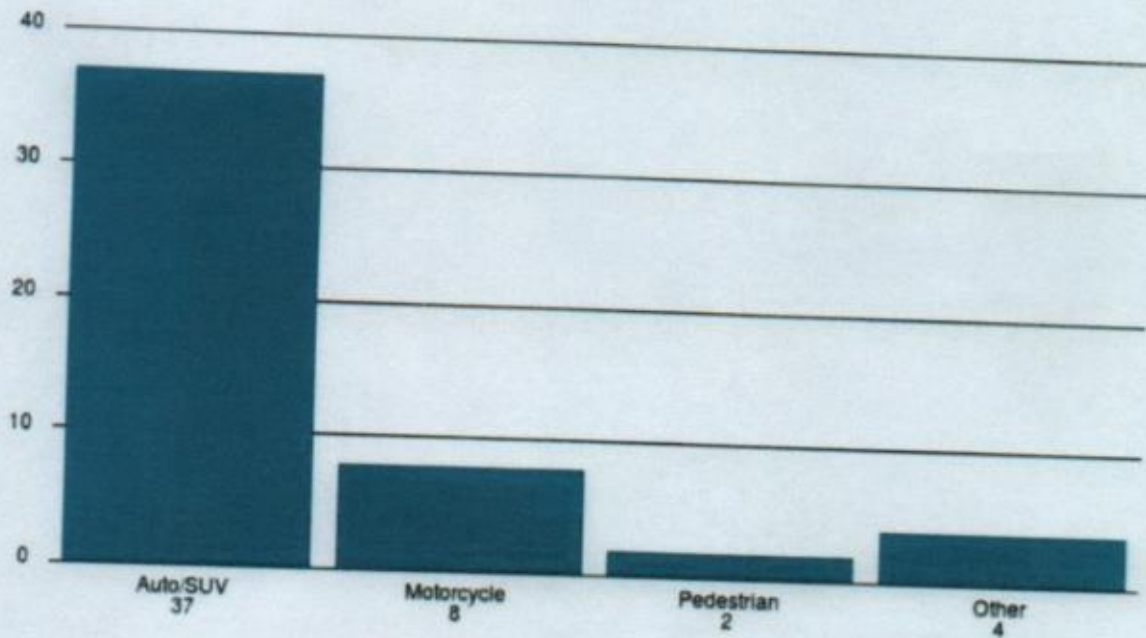
Deaths by Unnatural Causes (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)



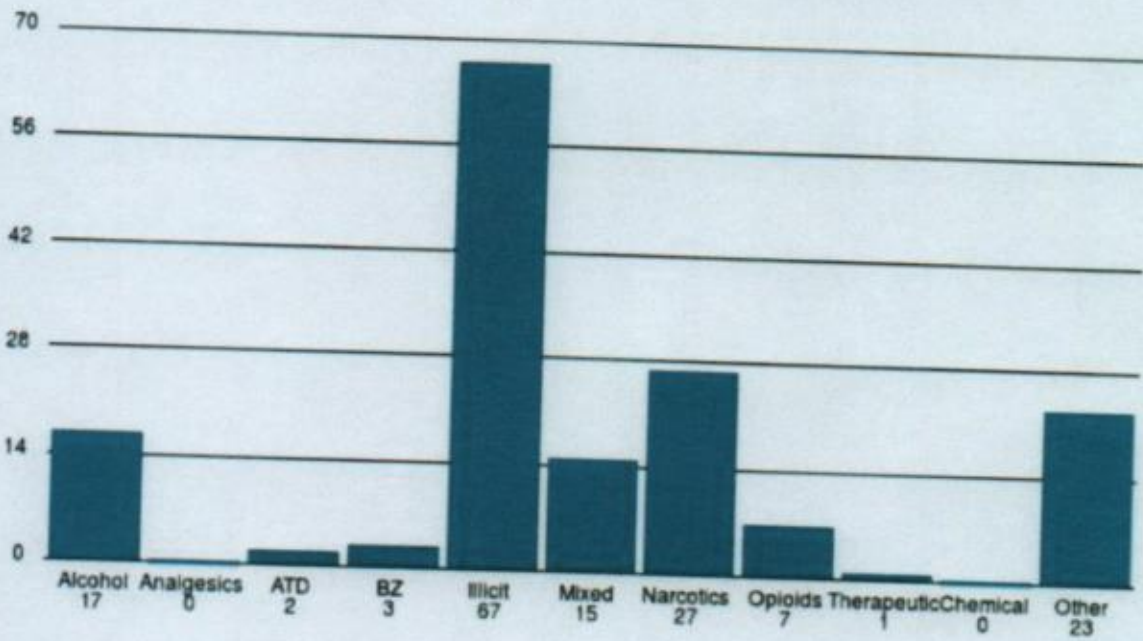
Accidental Deaths by Type (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)



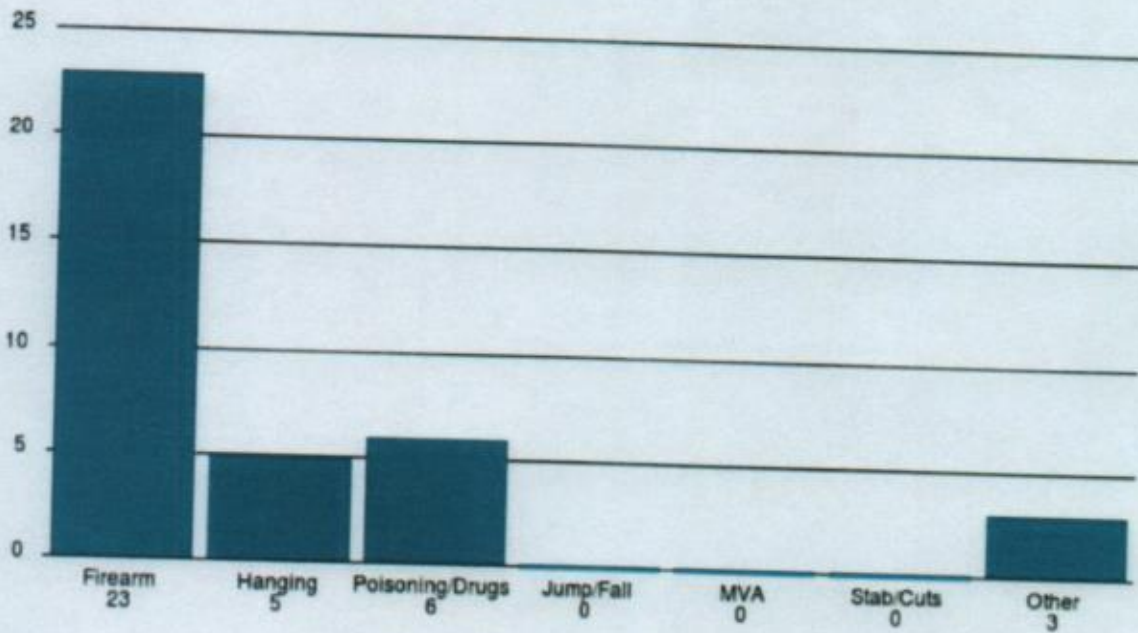
Accidental Deaths - Motor Vehicle Crashes (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)



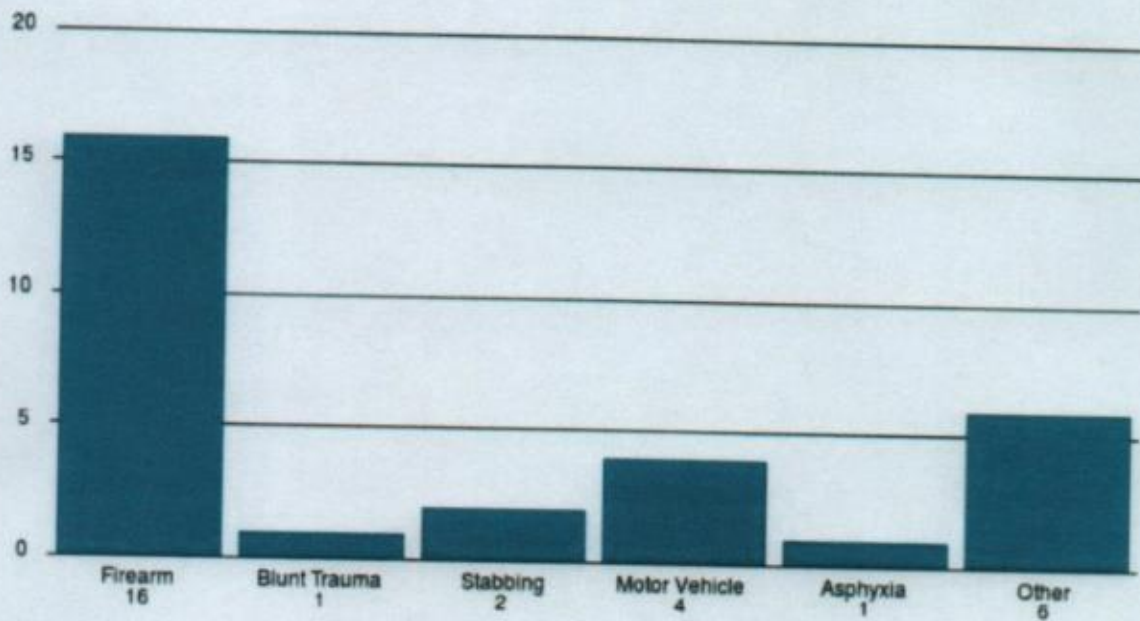
Drugs Contributing to Cause of Death (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)



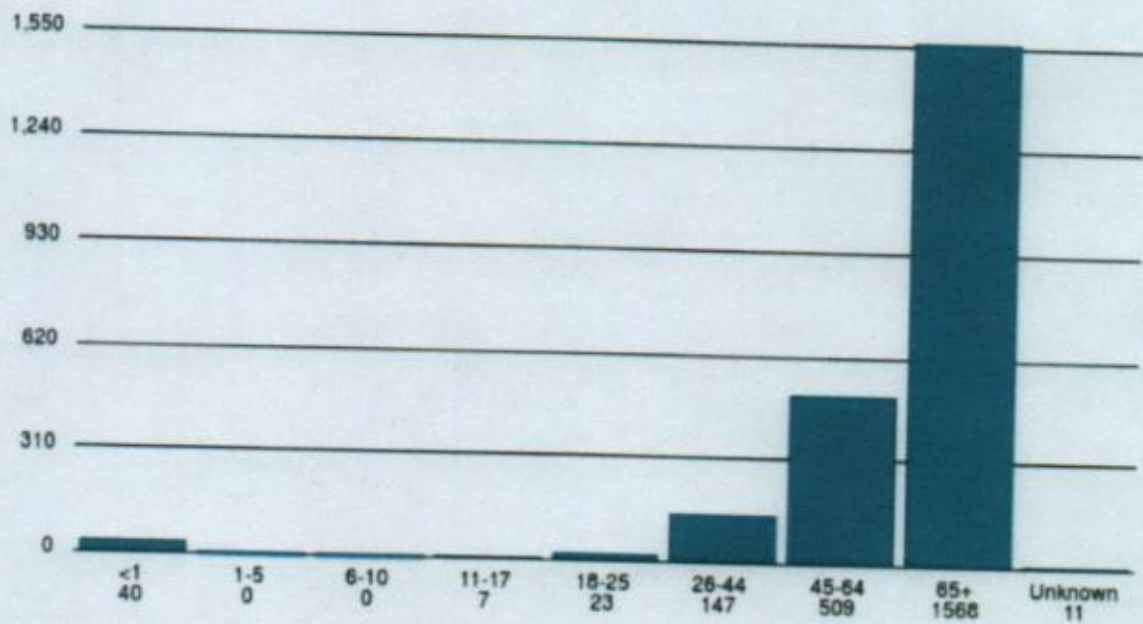
Suicide by Means (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)



Homicide Deaths (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)



Deaths by Age Group (April 26, 2023 - Dec 31, 2023)



2023 In-Custody Deaths-Spartanburg County

In custody deaths are deaths that have been reported to the Spartanburg County Coroner's office of an inmate from any detention or prison facility within Spartanburg County, along with individuals that are in custody for an offense for any law enforcement agency within Spartanburg County. Please note that this data is from April 26, 2023 through December 31, 2023

Private Residence – 2 Total

Spartanburg County Detention Center – 4 Total – (3) of these individuals passed at Spartanburg Regional Medical Center

Tyger River Correctional Facility – 1 Total

Rutherford Correctional Facility NC – 1 Total – Passed at Spartanburg Regional Medical Center

Total number in-custody deaths – 8

<u>Manners of Death Total</u>				
<u>Natural</u>	<u>Homicide</u>	<u>Suicide</u>	<u>Accident</u>	<u>Undetermined</u>
5	2	1	0	0

Decedent's Transported by Coroner's Transport

The Spartanburg County Coroner's Office utilizes a contracted transportation company to transport any decedent's that are considered coroner's cases or when a funeral home has not been chosen. The transportation company is utilized to transport from an incident location to the morgue facility. The Spartanburg County Coroner's Office promotes professionalism and courtesy to ensure families that their loved one is being handled with respect and compassion. For the year of 2023, **753** individuals were transported by the Spartanburg County Coroner's Office.



217 Opportunities for Donation

165 Organ Donors

575 Organs Recovered

395 Lives Saved

98% Coroner Approval Rate

ORGAN DONATION SUMMARY SPARTANBURG county coroner - Rusty Clevenger

23 opportunities for organ donation

Permission for organ donation declined

1 times

0 on donor registry

0 not registered

19 Organ Donors

60 Organs Recovered

38 Lives Saved



DONOR REFERRAL LINE
800.269.9777

01/01/2023 - 12/29/2023



1977

Tissue Potential

288

Tissue Donors

5036

Tissues Recovered

21,600

Lives Enhanced

95%

Coroner Approval Rate

TISSUE DONATION SUMMARY

SPARTANBURG county coroner - Rusty Clevenger

139

opportunities for tissue donation

Permission for tissue donation declined

2

times

Pre-autopsy donation allowed

114

times

Post-autopsy donation allowed

23

times

1

on donor registry

1

not registered

Coroner Approval Rate

99%

29

Tissue Donors

553

Tissues Recovered

2,175

Lives Enhanced

On-scene referral

0

times



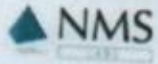
DONOR REFERRAL LINE

800.269.9777

01/01/2023 - 12/31/2023

Client Experience Report 2.0

Completed Work Orders Received 1/1/2023 - 12/31/2023



WO Received Date
1/1/2023 12/31/2023

Client
Spartanburg County Coroner, Spartanburg

Price Code
All

Territory
All

SBU
All

	2023-01	2023-02	2023-03	2023-04	2023-05	2023-06	2023-07	2023-08	2023-09	2023-10	2023-11	2023-12	Total
WOs Completed	36	45	42	25	33	35	31	47	32	31	37	42	436
WOs In Progress	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TAT Avg	20.6	16.0	18.1	18.3	18.5	21.6	17.7	21.3	16.1	14.2	13.2	13.1	17.4
Cancellation Pct	0.0%	8.9%	4.8%	0.0%	3.0%	8.6%	6.5%	6.4%	12.5%	6.5%	8.1%	7.1%	6.2%
Cancellation due to QNS WO Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Screen Positive Rate WO	94.4%	84.4%	83.3%	88.0%	87.9%	88.6%	83.9%	89.4%	84.4%	80.6%	86.5%	85.7%	86.5%
Corrected Results	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

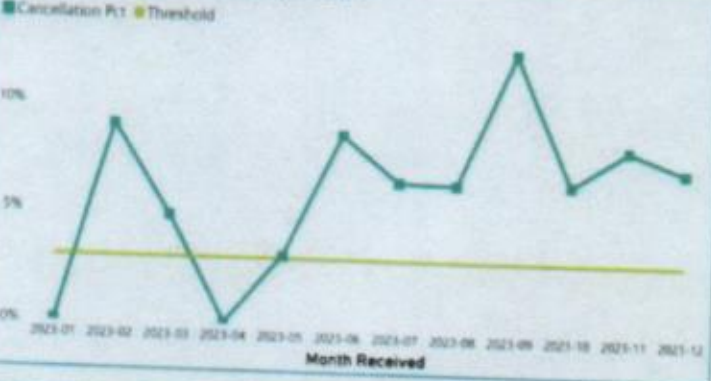
Work Orders



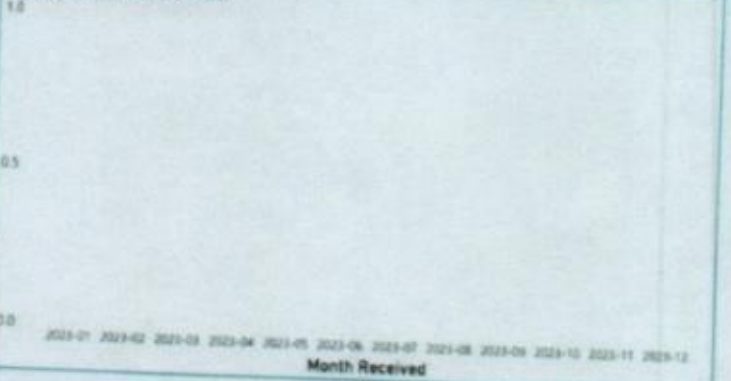
TAT (Avg Days Receive to Report)



Cancellations (Threshold Display = 2.9%)



Cancellations Due to QNS



Repeat Testing (Threshold Display = 5%)



Screen Positive Rate

