

Suicide

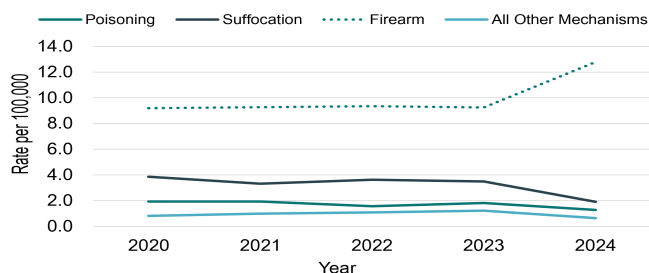
UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE

Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States. A suicide is a death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior. Suicide is a growing public health problem, affecting all people, ages, genders, races, and ethnicities. There is no single cause of suicide, as several factors at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels may increase the risk for suicide and protect against it. Suicide contributes to premature death, morbidity, lost productivity, and healthcare costs. Suicide is preventable.

Impact and Magnitude of Suicide

On average from 2020 to 2024, there were 1,201 suicide deaths per year among Virginians, with an average rate of 13.8 deaths per 100,000 population; 59% were by firearm (Fig 1). In 2024, suicide death rates were consistently higher for males than females (Fig 3).

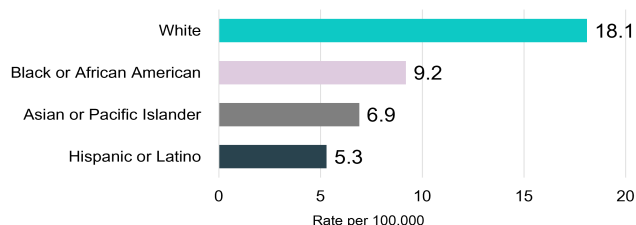
Figure 1: Suicide Death Rate by Mechanism, 2020-2024



Suicide by Population Characteristics

White Virginians had higher death rates (Fig 2).

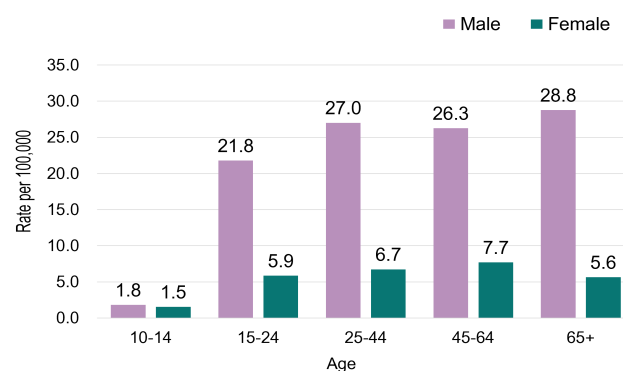
Figure 2: Suicide Death Rate by Race/Ethnicity, 2024



Suicide data is available and included only for those 10 years of age and above.

Suicide by Age and Sex

Figure 3: Suicide Death Rate by Age and Sex, 2024



Suicide by Geography

In 2024, the majority of suicide deaths were among Virginia residents living in the Southwest Region. The Southwest region also saw the highest suicide death rate per 100,000 population (Fig 4).

Figure 4: Suicide Death Count & Rate by Health Region, 2024

Health Region	Count	Rate
1. Southwest Region	262	21.9
2. Northwest Region	240	18.8
3. Eastern Region	255	15.2
4. Central Region	204	15.0
5. Northern Region	227	9.9

Special Emphasis Report: Suicide

Suicide Prevention Strategies

Suicide is preventable, and everyone can play a role. Suicide prevention requires a comprehensive approach that occurs at all levels of society. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed a set of strategies to help states, communities, and individuals reduce risk and increase resilience (see figure at right).

For planning and prevention resources visit [CDC's Suicide Prevention website](#).

Means: Reducing a suicidal person's access to highly lethal means is an important part of suicide prevention. Learn more about means reduction at [Harvard's Means Matters](#) or at [AFSP's Project 2025](#).

Circumstances: Suicide is complex, and many factors contribute to thoughts of suicide. Learn more from CDC's [Vital Signs](#).

Support: If you think someone you know is considering suicide, talk to them and connect them to the support they need. Learn [5 Steps](#) you can take to be a supportive and empathetic listener for them.

Lived Experience: If you are thinking of suicide or made a suicide attempt, please know that help is available. Along with supportive family and friends, people who have experienced thoughts of suicide and suicide attempt survivors have created strong peer communities. Learn more at [Now Matters Now](#).

Postvention: It is important to support the individuals, families, and communities affected by suicide loss, to reduce the cycle of trauma and increased risk. Learn more at the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#).



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line

Text 741741

Veterans' Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255 or text 838255

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Dial 988 for a trained counselor 24/7

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Suicide Prevention Activities

RESOURCES: Reducing Access to Lethal Means: Lock and Talk is a suicide prevention initiative in the state of Virginia that strives to encourage community conversation around mental wellness and promote safe care of lethal means, including firearms and medications. The initiative offers free training, distributes lethal means safety supplies, and promotes safe storage through educational campaigns, resources, and a statewide out-of-home safe storage map. For more information, please visit: <https://www.lockandtalk.org/>

TRAININGS: The Virginia Department of Health sponsors the following suicide prevention trainings for clinicians and community helpers: Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS), Counseling On Access to Lethal Means (CALM) Clinical, CALM Conversations, NAMI New Hampshire Connect Postvention training, and more.

COLLABORATIONS:

The Campus Suicide Prevention Center of Virginia equips Virginia's community colleges, institutes of higher education, and K-12 school divisions to address suicide risk proactively and responsively by promoting well-being and providing training, consultation, opportunities for collaboration, and planning for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. For more information, please visit: <https://www.campusuicidepreventionva.org/>

Full Circle Grief Center serves as a postvention hub for Virginia, offering bereavement support groups for suicide loss survivors, resources to help individuals navigating suicide, and training and technical assistance tailored to K-12 school divisions. For more information, please visit: <https://fullcirclegc.org/>

Health Brigade is a nonprofit free clinic that has launched a Zero Suicide implementation pilot project and provides screening, clinical services, and care coordination. For more information, please visit: <https://www.healthbrigade.org/>

The Suicide Prevention Interagency Advisory Group (SPIAG) is a statewide partnership co-led by the Virginia Department of Health and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. This diverse group includes over 160 members dedicated to improving suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

For more information on suicide prevention efforts at the Virginia Department of Health, and to join SPIAG, please visit <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/suicide-prevention/>.