

Cowlitz County



Coroner's Office

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Longview, WA 98632

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Dana M. Tucker, AA, D-ABMDI
Coroner

2023 Annual Report

It is important to remember that every statistic in this report represents a person who is missed by family and friends and is also a loss to our community.

PURPOSE/GOALS

The Cowlitz County Coroner's Office (CCCO) serves the county by investigating sudden, unexpected, violent, suspicious, and unnatural deaths. All members of the CCCO staff recognize that every death investigated involves grieving family members as well as friends and co-workers. Conducting timely and complete death investigations is necessary, in part, to assist those grieving people. Complete investigations also help families with the settling of issues such as estate and insurance claims as well as any criminal or civil action. Often questions come up long after the death that were not thought of at the time and complete and thorough investigations aid in the answering of these questions.

Deaths investigated by the CCCO include on-the-job deaths which are conducted in conjunction with the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I).

The CCCO also plays a role in public health by isolating and identifying the causes of deaths that might affect large groups of the population. If an infectious agent or toxin is implicated in a death, the CCCO works with Cowlitz County Public health and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to ensure appropriate medical treatment is obtained.

In cases that are unexpected deaths outside of a medical facility, suspicious circumstances, homicide, suicide, drug related or traffic deaths the CCCO works closely with the jurisdictional law enforcement agency. The agencies conduct parallel investigations, cooperating fully with each other, while maintaining their independent roles. All members of the CCCO staff are subject to being subpoenaed to testify in civil/criminal cases as to the extent of the investigation conducted.

The CCCO is dedicated to developing community partnerships to reduce preventable deaths. We participate in the following groups/activities:

- Cowlitz County Drowning Prevention Coalition
- Cribs For Kids (providing free cribs to families that cannot afford one)
- D.U.I. classes presentation
- Career Days for local high schools
- HiCap presentation for Kelso schools

JURISDICTION

Cowlitz County is approximately 1,166 square miles and includes Forest Service and other non-county maintained roads. The county population is approximately 114,058

Cities/Communities served: (Incorporated and unincorporated communities)

- [Ariel](#)
- [Carrolls](#)
- [Castle Rock](#)
- [Cougar](#)
- [Kalama](#)
- [Kelso](#)
- [Longview](#)
- [Ryderwood](#)
- [Silverlake](#)
- [Toutle](#)
- [Woodland](#)

The CCCO works with many agencies including:

Cowlitz County Prosecutor's Office

Cowlitz County Public Health

Cowlitz County Chaplaincy

Local Fire & EMS

Local Medical facilities

Columbia Wellness

Human Response Network

WA Labor & Industries

WA DSHS (CPS/APS)

Federal Aviation Administration

BNSF Railroad

Amtrak

Missing and Unidentified Persons Unit

Washington State Odontologist

Washington State Anthropologist

Archaeology & Historic Preservation

There is one hospital in our jurisdiction:

PeaceHealth St. John Medical Center- Longview

The CCCO conducts parallel/independent death investigations with all the law enforcement agencies in the county:

- Woodland PD
- Kalama PD
- Kelso PD
- Longview PD
- Castle Rock PD
- Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office
- Washington State Patrol

STATISTICS

The annual statistics listed below will not reflect all the various types of deaths for each category. I have tried to provide the most general ones that are within the system and can be obtained easily. Some of the others are ones that are most asked about. However, this is just a generalized list.

2023 Statistics

Case type

Total Cases	ME/C Cases:	Non-ME/C	Call Responses:	Transported to CCCO:	DC's Certified by ME:
1,077	361	716	291	271	187

Natural Cause of Deaths

Cardiac	Pulmonary	Liver	Cancer	Neurological	Gastro.	Other
292	103	21	209	155	7	160

Manner of Death

Total cases	Natural	Homicide	Suicide	Accidental	Undetermined	Other County Autopsies
1,077	946	8	30	89	4	40

Examinations

External	Limited	Full autopsies	None	Toxicology Performed:
157	73	81	713	165

Additional

Unidentified decedents	Unclaimed/Abandoned	Exhumations
0	8	0

Hospital Notifications	Autopsies from Hospital	Hospital M/E cases	Hospital Cases Signed by ME
51	6 Full – 2 tox only	8	8

Drug Related

Drug Death	w/Meth	w/Fentanyl	w/Heroin	w/Cocaine
49	34	42	1	7

Other

MVAs	Pedestrian	Drowning	Gun Related
19	1	5	24

Child ME Case Deaths under 5

Under 1 Year	1-2 Years	2-3 Years	3-5 Years
5	0	0	2

Procurements

	Referrals	Potentials	Donations
Corneas	54	18	7
Tissue	43	17	2
Organ	n/a		3