

## FIREARM INJURIES AND DEATHS IN KITSAP COUNTY

This fact sheet pertains to injuries and deaths caused by firearms, including handguns, rifles, and shotguns. The injuries and deaths may have been caused by another person or self-inflicted, and they may be intentional or unintentional.

### THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM NATIONALLY AND IN WASHINGTON

The firearm death rate in the U.S. is 7.5 times higher than the rates in 23 other high-income countries.<sup>i</sup> More than 31,000 people in the U.S. are killed by gun violence each year. Many more are injured, with enormous economic and emotional costs.

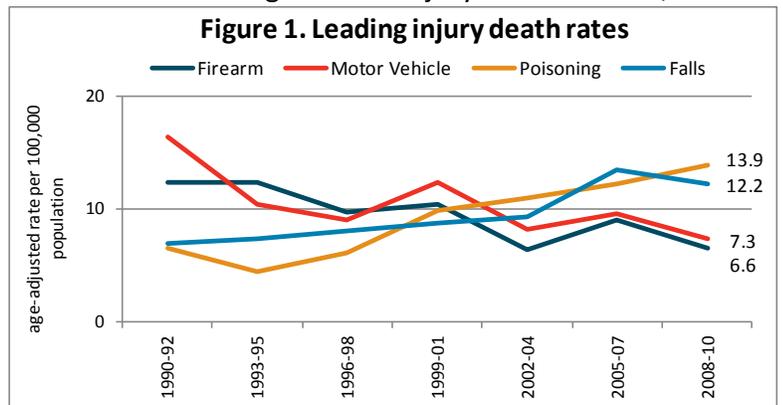
In Washington State, firearms are the third leading cause of injury-related death behind poisonings and falls.<sup>ii</sup> In 2011, firearm deaths outnumbered motor vehicle deaths, 619 to 497. Over one-half of all suicides were completed with firearms— a total of 492 in 2011. Additionally, firearms were involved in 1 in 6 deaths of youth ages 15-24. The firearm death rate in Washington has not changed much since 2000 and is slightly lower than the national rate.

Firearm injuries and deaths have a high cost. It is estimated that in 2010, medical expenses and lost productivity from firearm injuries and deaths in Washington cost 781 million dollars.

### FIREARM DEATHS COMPARED TO OTHER INJURY DEATHS<sup>iii</sup>

In Kitsap County, firearms are the fourth leading cause of injury-related death, behind poisoning, falls, and motor vehicle deaths (Figure 1). Firearms have been the fourth injury-related cause since 2002-04.

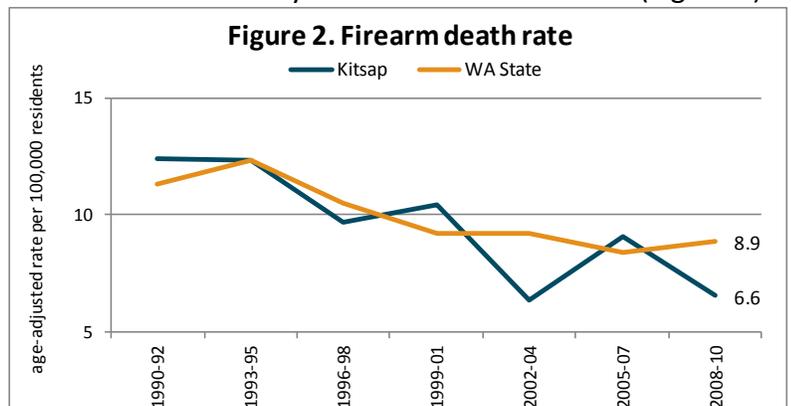
Unlike in Washington, Kitsap firearm deaths do not outnumber motor vehicle deaths— 51 versus 54 during 2008-10.



### FIREARM DEATHS<sup>iii</sup>

Kitsap County's firearm death rate has statistically decreased since 1990-92 (Figure 2).

The Kitsap County rate of firearm deaths during 2008-10 was statistically lower than the Washington rate. During 2008-10, there were 51 firearm deaths in Kitsap County, an average of 17 per year.



KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

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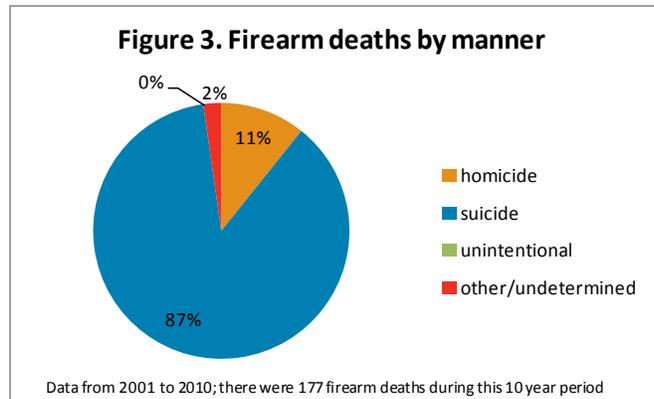
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During the past 10 years, the majority (87%) of firearm deaths were suicide, 11% were homicide, and there have been no unintentional firearm deaths (Figure 3).

More males die by firearms than females. During 2008-10, 75% of firearm deaths were to males.

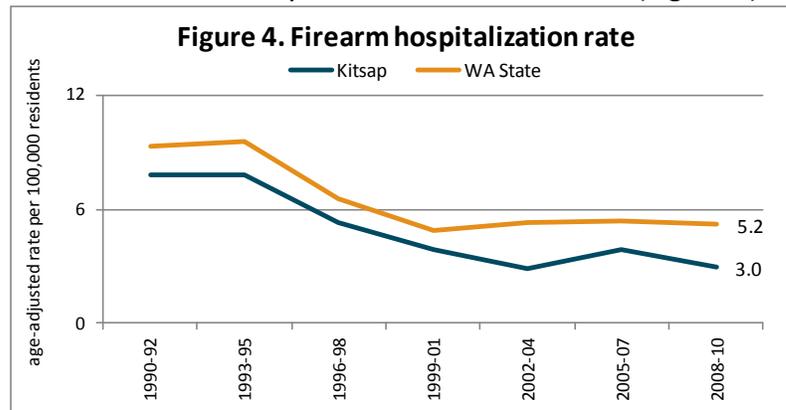
During 2008-10, all age groups had firearm deaths except those under 15: 16% were age 15-24, 31% age 25-34, 35% age 45 to 64, and 18% age 65 or older.



Among males age 15-24, 13% of all deaths involve firearms, while among females age 15-24, 8% of all deaths involve firearms.

### FIREARM HOSPITALIZATIONS<sup>iii</sup>

Kitsap County’s firearm hospitalization rate has statistically decreased since 1990-92 (Figure 4). The Kitsap County rate of firearm hospitalizations during 2008-10 was statistically lower than the Washington rate. During 2008-10, there were 23 Kitsap resident firearm hospitalizations, an average of 8 per year, and 1 in 5 resulted in death.



During the past 10 years, 34% of firearm hospitalizations were due to assault, 33% were unintentional, 24% were self-inflicted, and 9% were other/undetermined.

### FIREARM ACCESS

**HOUSEHOLDS:** One in 3 Kitsap County adults report that a firearm is kept in or around their home. Of those with a firearm, more than one-half (57%) report that the firearm is unlocked.<sup>iv</sup>

**YOUTH:** One in 20 Kitsap County 8<sup>th</sup> graders reports carrying a gun in the past 30 days. Fifteen percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 16% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders report that it would be “sort of or very easy” to get a handgun if they wanted one.<sup>v</sup>

### POSSIBLE PREVENTION STRATEGIES<sup>ii</sup>

Evidence-based strategies	Provide safe storage of firearms: decreases risk of unintentional injuries and suicides
Promising strategies	Participate in state and national efforts to improve firearm surveillance
	Establish community coalitions to reduce access to firearms
	Promote the ASK (Asking Saves Kids) Campaign
Strategies used by other states	Implement Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws
	Require criminal and mental health background checks beyond dealer sales

<sup>i</sup>Gun violence in King County, Public Health Seattle & King County, February 5, 2013, <sup>ii</sup>Firearm-related injury, WA State Department of Health, February 2011, <sup>iii</sup>Community Health Assessment Tool (CHAT), WA State Dept of Health: Death Certificate databases and Comprehensive Hospital Abstract Reporting System (CHARS), <sup>iv</sup>2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, WA State Dept of Health: analyzed by Kitsap Public Health, <sup>v</sup>2012 Healthy Youth Survey, WA State Dept of Health: analyzed by Kitsap Public Health