



New Jersey Department of Health Center for Health Statistics Provisional Death Data

- Provisional counts are **temporary** and will change. They are intended for surveillance purposes, not for conclusive research.
- The **source** of provisional death counts from the Center for Health Statistics (CHS) is DOH's death certificate database.
 - Information for deaths that occur in-state is entered into the DOH Office of Vital Statistics and Registry's Electronic Death Registry System (EDRS).
 - Information for deaths of New Jersey residents that occur out-of-state are provided by the jurisdiction of occurrence through the State and Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE) system. More info: <https://www.naphsis.org/steve>
 - New York City is the only jurisdiction that does not participate in STEVE. They send records for NJ residents directly to CHS in batches.
- Deaths that occur in NJ must be entered in EDRS within 24 hours. In practice, the **data lag** for in-state deaths is at most a few days but a handful of records will come in later.
 - Each jurisdiction submits records to STEVE on their own schedule, so deaths that occur out-of-state have a greater lag.
- While EDRS has multiple built-in edit checks for invalid data entries, records may still have **valid but incorrect values** that need to be reviewed and corrected. (e.g., date of death entered as 1/25/21 when it was actually 1/25/20)
 - In addition to in-house data quality checks, the Office of Vital Statistics and Registry (OVSR) transmits death records to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) at CDC where they are run through additional edit checks.
 - Potential errors are sent back to NJDOH for verification or correction. For some records, this process may take months to resolve.
- **Cause of Death**
 - The chain of events--diseases, injuries, or complications--that directly caused the death are entered in EDRS by the certifying physician or medical examiner as text. More info: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/revisions-of-the-us-standard-certificates-and-reports.htm>

- The Mortality Medical Data System (MMDS) at NCHS automates the coding of causes of death to ICD-10 codes and determines the underlying cause of death. The final underlying cause of death is not necessarily what was entered by the certifier on the bottom line of the cause of death section of the death certificate. The MMDS takes into account the entirety of the cause of death information given, including the order in which causes are listed and what they mean in combination with one another. More info: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/mmds/about_mmds.htm
 - Records with ICD-10 coded underlying cause of death are returned to OVSR once or twice a week, but some records take longer to process than others for a variety of reasons including confirmation of cause and manner of death by a medical examiner. For those records, cause of death remains blank in the provisional data file.
- **Residence**
 - The decedent's home address is entered into EDRS but because of peculiarities with NJ's mailing addresses, the municipality of residence is often misassigned to a neighboring municipality. Records are run through a geocoding process to correct this, but this is done after records are submitted through EDRS and requires time to process.
 - Because of this, the municipality of residence for any given record may be updated in a subsequent version of the data file.
 - **Occurrence and place of death**
 - The address of where the decedent died is also included on the death certificate but does not get run through the geocoding process.
 - The death certificate has checkboxes for type of place of death. This is literally the place where the person was at the time of their death. It is not where they lived prior to arrival at a hospital. (i.e., If a nursing home resident dies in a hospital, the place of death on the certificate will be the hospital.)

More information

- Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Death Data and Reporting Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/covid-19.htm>
- General NJDOH Death Data Information: <https://www-doh.state.nj.us/doh-shad/query/DeathQueryTechNotes.html>