

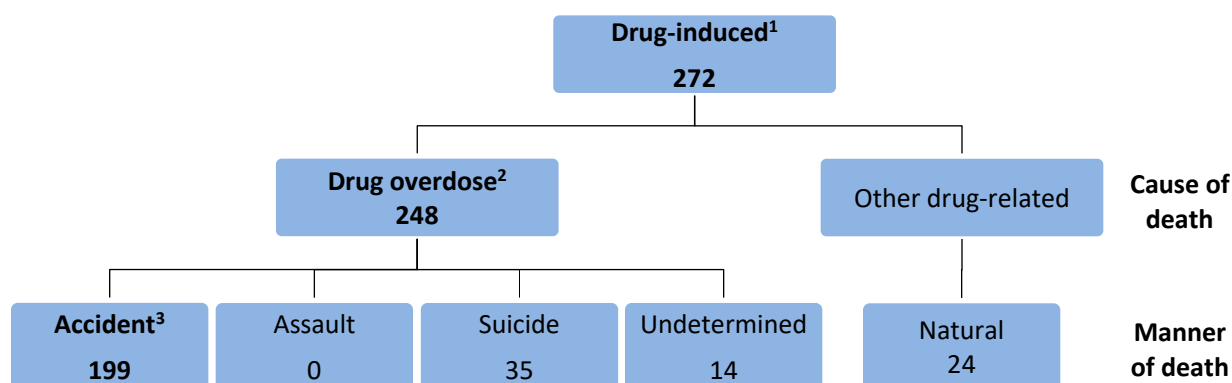
## Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics' Drug Mortality Interpretation Guide

**Underlying cause of death:** all deaths are assigned a single underlying cause of death based on both the cause of death and the manner of death (suicide, accident, natural, assault, undetermined intent).

Drug-related deaths are typically reported using the following classifications-

1. **Drug-induced deaths:** the underlying cause of death was illicit, prescription, and/or over-the-counter drug use, including deaths from acute poisoning by drugs and deaths from illnesses, disorders, or diseases resulting from long-term or chronic drug use (Figure 1). Deaths from falls, motor vehicle crashes, and other causes indirectly related to drug use are excluded. This is the broadest classification.
2. **Drug poisoning deaths (also called drug overdose):** the underlying cause of death was acute poisoning by drugs (Figure 1). These are a subset of drug-induced deaths and exclude illness, disorders, and diseases resulting from long-term or chronic drug use.
3. **Accidental drug poisoning deaths:** the underlying cause of death was accidental acute poisoning by drugs (Figure 1). These are a subset of drug poisoning deaths and include only deaths where the manner was accidental (see Figure 4 for example).

**Figure 1.** The Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics' drug-related mortality classifications and number of deaths in 2018.

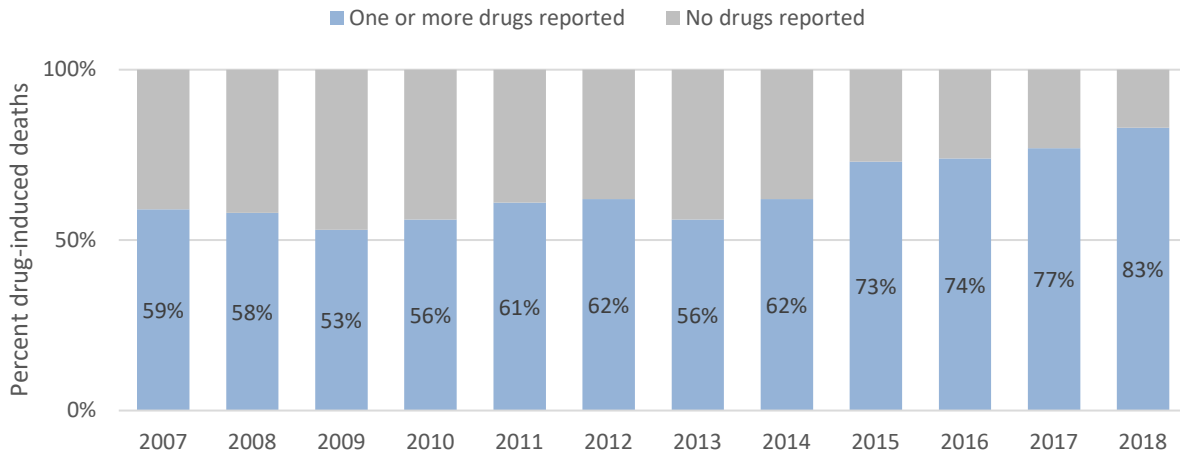


\*includes all illnesses, disorders, or diseases resulting from long-term or chronic drug use

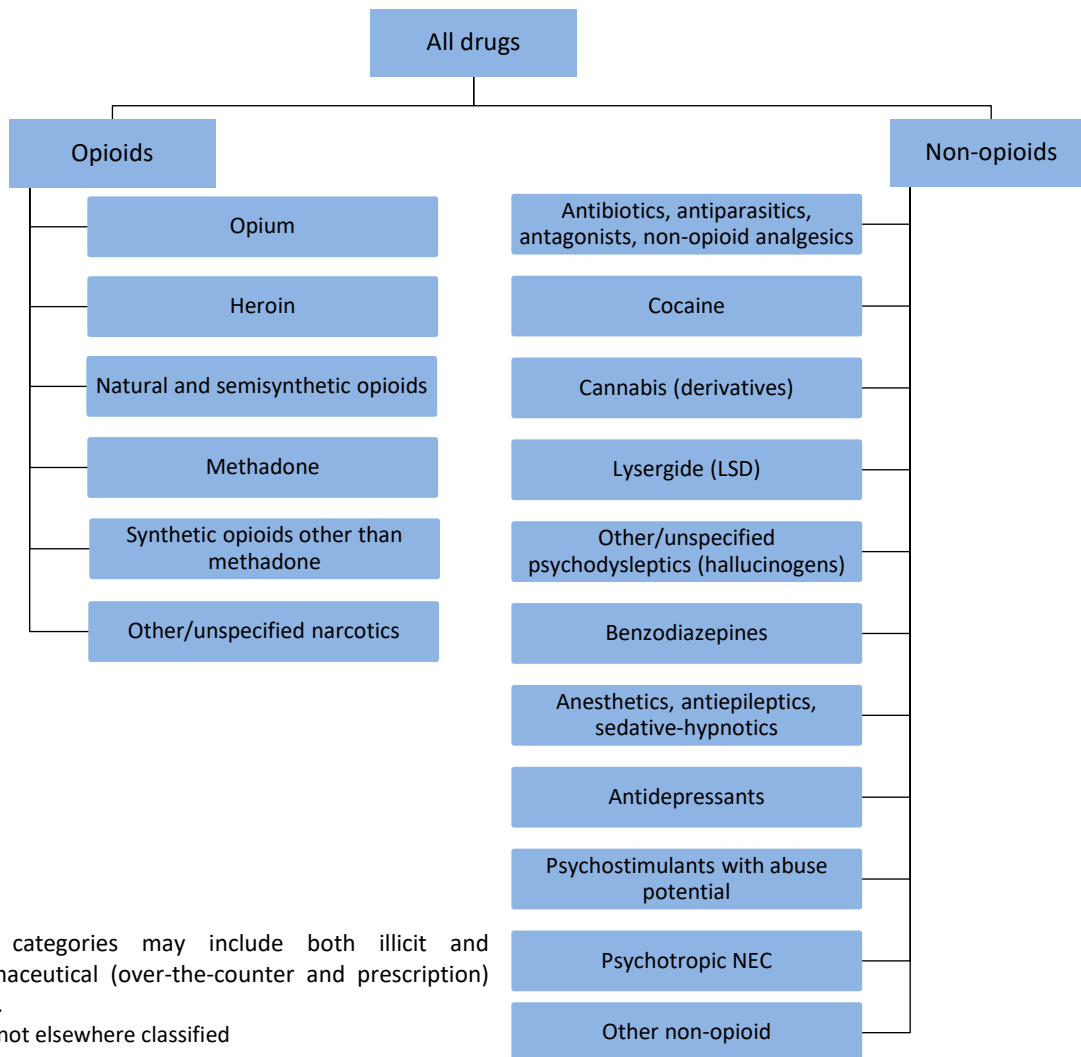
**Contributing cause of death:** death certifiers may report additional causes that contributed to death, including drug-specific information, but this is not mandatory (Figure 4). The percent of drug-induced deaths with drug-specific information differs greatly by the county where the death occurred and the year (Figure 2).

**Drug categories:** specific drugs are grouped into 17 categories (Figure 3). A decedent may have multiple categories of drugs reported.

**Figure 2.** Percent of drug-induced deaths by whether drug-specific information was reported: Idaho residents, 2007-2018.



**Figure 3.** The Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics' drug categories.



**Figure 4.** Example excerpt from the Idaho Certificate of Death for an accidental drug poisoning death.

27. CAUSE OF DEATH		Approximate Interval: Onset to Death
PART I. Enter the chain of events -- diseases, injuries, or complications -- that directly caused the death. DO NOT enter terminal events such as cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, or ventricular fibrillation without showing the etiology. DO NOT ABBREVIATE. Enter only one cause on a line:		
IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death) →	a. ACUTE RESPIRATORY FAILURE	hours
	DUE TO (or as a consequence of):	
Sequentially list conditions, if any, leading to the cause listed on line a. Enter the UNDERLYING CAUSE LAST (disease or injury that initiated the events resulting in death)	b. OVERDOSE OF FENTANYL AND HEROIN	hours
	DUE TO (or as a consequence of):	
	c.	
	DUE TO (or as a consequence of):	
	d.	
PART II. Enter other significant conditions contributing to death but not resulting in the underlying cause given in Part I		
		28a. WAS AN AUTOPSY PERFORMED? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		28b. WERE AUTOPSY FINDINGS AVAILABLE TO COMPLETE THE CAUSE OF DEATH? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
31. MANNER OF DEATH		
<input type="checkbox"/> Natural <input type="checkbox"/> Homicide		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accident <input type="checkbox"/> Pending Investigation		
<input type="checkbox"/> Suicide <input type="checkbox"/> Could not be determined		

**Underlying cause of death**

Accidental poisoning by and exposure to narcotics and psychodysleptics [hallucinogens], not elsewhere classified (ICD-10 code X42)

**Contributing causes of death**

Drug category: Heroin  
Drug category: Synthetic opioids other than methadone

This decedent would be included in the following:

- Total drug-induced deaths
  - Drug-induced deaths reporting involvement of opioids
  - Drug-induced deaths reporting involvement of heroin
  - Drug-induced deaths reporting involvement of synthetic opioids other than methadone
- Total drug poisoning deaths
  - Drug poisoning deaths reporting involvement of opioids
  - Drug poisoning deaths reporting involvement of heroin
  - Drug poisoning deaths reporting involvement of synthetic opioids other than methadone
- Total accidental drug poisoning deaths
  - Accidental drug poisoning deaths reporting involvement of opioids
  - Accidental drug poisoning deaths reporting involvement of heroin
  - Accidental drug poisoning deaths reporting involvement of synthetic opioids other than methadone