

Main points

Accidental deaths include:

- Accidental Poisoning (such as toxic gas and accidental drug/alcohol deaths)
- Falls
- Transport accidents
- Exposure to smoke or fire
- Exposure to forces of nature
- Drownings
- Other deaths specified as accidental on the death certificate

Trends in Accidental Deaths

- Between the late 1970s and the late 1990s, the number of accidental deaths in Scotland almost halved.
- Numbers were relatively stable for the next 15 years but since 2012 accidental deaths have been increasing. This increase was mostly caused by a large increase in deaths by accidental poisoning.

Accidental Deaths in 2019

- There were 2,726 accidental deaths registered in Scotland, accounting for 5% of all deaths in 2019 (58,108). This is an increase of 214 (8.5%) compared with 2018.

Accidental Poisoning

- The most common cause of accidental death in Scotland in 2019 was accidental poisoning by and exposure to noxious substances (1260, 46% of all accidental deaths in 2019).
- This is an increase of 114 deaths (10%) compared to 2018.
- Accidental poisonings overtook falls as the most common cause of accidental death in 2018 and this continues in 2019.

Falls

- The second most common cause of accidental death in Scotland was falls (1,028, 38% of all accidental deaths in 2019).
- This is an increase of 86 deaths (9%) compared to 2018.

Transport Accidents

- Deaths from transport accidents have fallen in recent years although there was a slight increase in 2019.
- 189 people died from transport accidents in 2019 (7% of all accidental deaths).

- This is an increase of 11 deaths (6%) compared to 2018.

Age

- The 85+ age group had most deaths out of all age groups, accounting for 24% of deaths.
- There were also a large number of deaths in the age groups 35-39, 40-44 and 45-49 which, when combined together, accounted for 29% of all deaths.
- For the second consecutive year, there were no deaths in the age 5-9 category.

Sex

- Of the 2,726 accidental deaths recorded in 2019, 1,613 were male (59%) and 1,113 female (41%).

Deprivation

- People in the most deprived areas (103 per 100,000 population) are more than 4 times as likely to have an accidental death than those in the least deprived areas (23 per 100,000 population).

Notes on methodology changes

There have been methodology and procedural changes which affect the comparability of accidental death statistics over time. Please refer to the methodology document for more details.