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Arrest-Related Deaths in the United States, 2003-2005

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ADVANCE FOR RELEASE AT 4:00 P.M. EDT	**Bureau of Justice Statistics**
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2007	**Contact: Stu Smith 202-307-0784**
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs	**After hours: 301-983-9354**

STATES REPORTED MORE THAN 2,000 ARREST-RELATED DEATHS FROM 2003 THROUGH 2005

Homicides by Officers Made Up More Than Half of Such Fatalities

WASHINGTON - Forty-seven states and the District of Columbia reported 2,002 arrest-related deaths during the three years from 2003 through 2005, the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. Homicides by state and local law enforcement officers were the leading cause of such deaths during this period (55 percent), followed by alcohol and drug intoxication incidents (13 percent) and suicides (12 percent).

These data are the first national measure of all types of arrest-related deaths under a new program mandated by the federal Death in Custody Reporting Act (Public Law 106-297). The statute directed all states to report deaths during arrests as a condition of eligibility for receiving federal correctional grants. Three states, Georgia, Maryland and Montana, failed to submit data. Federal agencies are not required to report such deaths.

Violent crime arrests were involved in three-quarters of homicides by law enforcement officers. In 80 percent of homicides by officers, the arrest subject reportedly used a weapon to threaten or assault the arresting officer or officers. Virtually all homicides by officers (96 percent) resulted from firearm use.

Most persons who died while being arrested were men (96 percent) between the ages of 18 and 44 (77 percent). Approximately 44 percent were white; 32 percent, African American; 20 percent Hispanic and 4 percent of other or multiple races.

Among persons killed in law enforcement homicides, 18 percent appeared intoxicated during the attempted arrest and 36 percent attempted to escape or flee from custody. Half of arrest-related suicides (51 percent) involved attempted arrests for violent crimes. Of the suicides that took place in the field, prior to booking, 85 percent of the subjects used a firearm to kill themselves. Of the suicides at a police station or booking facility, nearly all (96 percent) of the decedents hung themselves. Suicide was the only type of death in which the majorities (57 percent) were white.

Alcohol and drug intoxication deaths involved a lower percentage of violent offenders (28 percent) than any other cause of death. Substance abuse-related crimes, such as drug law violations, disorderly conduct and drunkenness as well as driving while intoxicated, were involved in one-third of all intoxication deaths. Three-quarters of intoxication deaths occurred in the field, prior to booking. The majority (over 80 percent) took place either at a medical facility or en route to a medical facility.

From 2003 through 2005 FBI data show 380 law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. The majority of these deaths were accidental (221), whereas 159 were homicides. The FBI also reported 174,760 assaults on law enforcement officers during those three years.

The report, *Arrest-Related Deaths in the United States, 2003-2005* (*NCJ-219534)*, was written by BJS policy analyst Christopher J. Mumola. Following publication, the report can be found at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=379.

For additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical reports and programs, please visit the BJS website at http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/.

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP is headed by an Assistant Attorney General and comprises five component bureaus and an office: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office for Victims of Crime, as well as the Community Capacity Development Office, which incorporates the Weed and Seed strategy and OJP's American Indian and Alaska Native Affairs Desk. More information can be found at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov.

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