



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Knox County Regional Forensic Center: Deaths up in 2020**

*KNOXVILLE, Tenn.*— Overall deaths across Knox and Anderson counties rose more than 11 percent last year and homicides climbed almost 71 percent from the previous year, according to the 2020 Annual Report released by The Knox County Regional Forensic Center (RFC).

The center, which operates year-round, serves as the Office for the Chief Medical Examiner for Knox and Anderson counties, and provides autopsy and consultative services for 21 other counties in Middle and East Tennessee.

The annual report is designed to provide a snapshot into the center's work each year, covering deaths that fall under the medical examiner's jurisdiction. In addition to conducting medico-legal death investigation, the RFC officials offer family assistance and participate in additional activities that impact vital records functions, law enforcement investigations, and administration of preventative actions in our communities.

The full report can be found online [here](#).

Last year saw a rise in deaths throughout Knox and Anderson counties compared to 2019:

- Accidental deaths increased 20 percent;
- Homicides increased 72 percent;
- Natural deaths increased 20 percent;
- Suicides increased 14 percent;
- Gun related deaths increased by 62 percent; and
- Cases requiring autopsies increased 29 percent.

Last July, the Knox County Regional Forensic Center received an onsite inspection of 350 specific items from the National Association of Medical Examiners. After thorough review, the RFC was granted full accreditation. It has maintained such distinction since May 2010. The RFC staff also worked with the drug task force to identify, research, and eradicate two novel psychoactive substances—synthetically manufactured opioids— from our area.

The annual Drug Related Death Report that provides an overview of emerging drug trends for the counties the RFC serves will be released in the coming weeks.

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