

27 September 2021

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Tēnā koe Mark

**Your Official Information Act request, reference: GOV-013842**

Thank you for your email 2 September 2021, asking for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*Can you please provide me with the number of accidental (non illness) deaths in New Zealand by cause for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 if available (I understand this might not be formalized due to the requirements of verifying cause of death and coronial enquiries)*

*By accidental death/non illness deaths I'm referring to  
Road Accidents, Homicide, Drowning, Falls (specific type if available, ie ladder, climbing)  
Suicide, Hypothermia, and Sporting accidents (skiing, horse riding, cycling)*

**Fatal claims**

ACC is not able to provide comprehensive fatality statistics as ACC data is collected on the basis of claims made. Our data may not represent the total number of fatalities related to accidents for the following reasons:

1. Many people are not aware that they can make a claim related to an accidental death of a family member and therefore ACC only ever receives claims for a subset of accidental deaths.
2. If a person who has an open claim with ACC dies of their injuries, or other causes, ACC is not necessarily notified of this.

Fatal claims are claims which resulted in the death of the injured person. The death may have occurred at the scene of the injury or at any later time. The number may increase in the future if any claimants of non-fatal claims subsequently die of their injuries.

For more accurate fatality data, we suggest that you contact the Ministry of Health Mortality Collection (MORT), which classifies the underlying cause of death for all deaths registered in New Zealand. MORT uses a range of sources (Police, funeral director, coroner, hospital records) to validate data reliability.

More information on MORT is available on [www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/national-collectionsand-surveys/collections/mortality-collection](http://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/national-collectionsand-surveys/collections/mortality-collection) or by contacting [data-enquiries@moh.govt.nz](mailto:data-enquiries@moh.govt.nz).

In addition, more accurate data for workplace fatalities is available from WorkSafe NZ. They can be contacted on [oia@worksafe.govt.nz](mailto:oia@worksafe.govt.nz).

### **The data ACC can provide**

The data ACC collects about accidental deaths is largely reliant on the information provided on the ACC 21 claim form when a partner/spouse, child or dependant seeks entitlements related to the accidental death. Some parts of this form are mandatory to complete, and others are not. For example, it is mandatory for the person completing the ACC21 form to indicate when the accident occurred, whether it occurred at work, and the deceased person's occupation and if a death certificate or interim death certificate has been issued.

An individual's death certificate or interim death certificate are attached and kept as part of the accidental death claim. However, the contributing factors to the accidental death, such as 'hypothermia' are not specifically recorded.

There is also a free text field on the claim form where the representative is able to provide a brief description of how the accident happened. It is not mandatory to complete this field and not every person does so. Depending on their knowledge about the events of the accident, some people completing the claim form may provide more detail than others and the accuracy of these descriptions varies significantly.

For the above reasons, we are not providing data for claims that include the word 'hypothermia', because not everyone mentions hypothermia in the accident description, nor is 'hypothermia' necessarily the cause of death on the death certificate.

### **Notes about the data provided**

The following points should be considered when interpreting the data in the excel spreadsheet provided:

- Accidental death claims are identified by a fatal indicator.
- Injury diagnosis is based on the primary injury. A claim can be made for more than one injury (primary and secondary injuries). The data provided excludes secondary injuries.
- Accredited employer claims have been excluded as ACC holds limited details about these.
- Costs are GST exclusive, and have been extracted by the date a payment was made. This date may differ from the date the service was provided.
- Costs do not include Public Health Acute Services (PHAS) payments. Acute treatment for covered claims in public hospitals is provided by an annual service agreement between ACC and the Ministry of Health and is funded by bulk payments from ACC to the Crown. As such, PHAS costs cannot be attributed to individual claims.
- The data was extracted on 15 September 2021 and may differ if extracted again at a later date.

*Claim injury cause breakdowns are defined as follows:*

- MVA/road accident claims are claims in the motor vehicle funding account.
- Falls are claims where the claim cause is 'Slipping, skidding on foot', 'Tripping or stumbling', 'Loss of consciousness / sleep', 'Something giving way underfoot', 'Misjudgement of support' or 'Loss balance / personal control'.
- Falls from ladders are provided separately.
- With the exception of falls from ladders and the breakdown of sports, the activities have not been ranked and a claim could appear in more than one category. For example, someone who drowned while swimming or boating is likely to appear in Drowning and Sport / Rec.
- Claim counts and costs are displayed in calendar years, i.e. 1 January to 31 December.

*New and Active claims*

New claims are counted where the claim was lodged with ACC between 1 January 2016 and 31 August 2021. A claim may be lodged immediately following an accident or at any later stage.

Active claims are counted where at least one payment was made by ACC between 1 January 2016 and 31 August 2021. A claim was not necessarily lodged or had the accident occur within this time period. Active claims are those that have had a payment in the period and are counted by the date of all payments. As a claim can generate a payment at any point after being registered with ACC, a claim may be active for more than one calendar year and, in Table 3, will be counted once for each year in which at least one payment was made.

*ACC takes privacy seriously*

ACC does not routinely disclose claim counts fewer than four. Accordingly, some entries in the tables provided only indicate that the value is less than four (denoted as <4). This limits the potential for particular individuals or matters specific to certain individuals from being identified. Withholding the data in this way is necessary to protect our clients' privacy. This decision has been made under section 9(2)(a) of the Act. In doing so, we have considered the public interest in making the information available and have determined that it does not outweigh the need to protect the privacy of the individuals concerned.

**If you have any questions**

If you have any questions, you can email me at [GovernmentServices@acc.co.nz](mailto:GovernmentServices@acc.co.nz).

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by phoning 0800 802 602.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Sasha Wood

**Manager Official Information Act Services**  
Government Engagement & Support