

Anchorage Police Department Child Death Investigations



- What APD does and what role APD plays in responding to fatalities and near fatalities, and who are APD's biggest partners?
- The first role of APD then is that of first responder and number one priority is preservation of life: we have to do everything possible to save the child's life.
- Protection of life supersedes a police investigation.

APD's biggest partners during the child death investigations are:

- **Medical professionals, including AFD paramedics, emergency room doctors and nurses, doctors specializing in treating children's diseases, injuries, and trauma**
- **Medical Examiner's Office**
- **Office of Children Services**
- **District Attorney's Office**
- **Alaska Cares**

The child death investigation (which starts with Patrol) typically includes:

- 1. Attempting to photograph the victim while being attended to by medical personnel (done by Patrol Officers)**
- 2. Isolating and protecting the scene (Patrol)**
- 3. Assessing the circumstances (Patrol)**
- 4. General questioning of all persons present (Patrol)**
- 5. Homicide Unit callout**
- 6. Briefing the Homicide Unit Detectives**
- 7. Detailed interviews with the parents/caregivers, and filling out the SUIDI form**
- 8. Photographing the victim (at the hospital or at the scene of death)**
- 9. Interviewing medical personnel**
- 10. Scene investigation**
- 11. Reenactment with the parents/caregivers**
- 12. Autopsy performed by the Medical Examiner**
- 13. Gathering information from OCS**
- 14. Coordinating the investigation with the DA's Office if there is a suspicion of foul play**
- 15. Executing search warrants**
- 16. Following up on investigative leads**

What APD sees as common risk factors across the families/individuals we serve, and what are some of the biggest barriers APD experiences?

Risk factors

- 1. Substance abuse in the family**
- 2. Mental issues in the family**
- 3. Low education of the parents/and the low income that comes with it**
- 4. Single parenthood**
- 5. Abusive spouse**
- 6. Lack of parenting skills**

Causes of Child Fatalities

1. Undetermined causes
2. Unintentional injuries (such as fires, falls, accidental strangulations)
3. Violence (homicides; abusive trauma deaths, intentional/negligent shooting deaths)
4. Car collisions
5. Child abuse and neglect
6. Sudden unexpected infant death
7. Suicide (for older children)

What areas APD feels need addressed with the system or gaps that need filled to support prevention?

What needs APD has from both the MCDR program and other providers/agencies in order for APD to be completely responsive and successful in prevention/responding to fatalities?

What you/APD have found to be beneficial/challenging from participating in the MCDR meetings?

ANCHORAGE CHILD DEATHS

(investigated by the Homicide Unit detectives)

2017 10 as of 11-9-2017 (including 1 homicide)

2016 13 (including 1 homicide)

2015 21 (including 3 homicides)

ANCHORAGE HOMICIDE CASES

(investigated by the Homicide Unit detectives)

2005 to 2014 - 183 homicides in 10 years, with the average of about 18 homicides a year

2015 - 28 homicides

2016 - 38 homicides

2017 - 31 homicides as of 11-9-2017

Since January 2015, the Homicide Unit (consisting of 6 detectives, a sergeant and a crime scene detective) investigated 97 homicides, 44 child deaths, 7 officer involved shooting cases, plus numerous missing person cases, suspicious deaths and kidnappings

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Afternoon Break

- Take time to meet people and strengthen or form new connections.
- Don't forget the Parking Lots for:
 - Challenges you've faced working between agencies that hinder optimized care.
 - Successes you've experienced working between agencies that supported care.