

Department of Defense (DoD) Quarterly Suicide Report (QSR) 4th Quarter, CY 2021

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The estimated cost of this report or study for the Department of Defense is approximately \$6,770 for the 2022 Fiscal Year. This includes \$3,940 in expenses and \$2,830 in DoD labor.



**DEFENSE SUICIDE
PREVENTION OFFICE**

Introduction

The Department of Defense (DoD) is fully committed to preventing suicides in our military community – every death by suicide is a tragedy. The DoD recognizes the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the well-being of our Service members and families. We are closely monitoring, and taking proactive steps to mitigate, potential impacts. During this time, we remain dedicated in our efforts to educate and support the force, and emphasize social connectedness.

The number of suicide deaths in the current report are preliminary and subject to change, as previously unknown cases are reported and some known cases are further investigated. The DoD continues to investigate individual cases to make informed determinations, and conduct the necessary statistical analyses to understand trends over time. At this time, it is too early to determine whether suicide rates will increase or decrease for Calendar Year 2021.

To help determine the impact of suicide on the Total Force, the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) routinely collects and reports surveillance data on suicide mortality across the Department. The most up-to-date counts of suicide deaths are reported in the Quarterly Suicide Report (QSR).¹ The QSR complies with Objective 11.1 of the DoD Defense Strategy for Suicide Prevention (DSSP) by providing timely and accurate suicide data to guide suicide prevention efforts across the Department.

DSPO collects suicide data via collaborative effort with the Office of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) and the Suicide Prevention Program Offices of the Military Services (i.e., Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Space Force). AFMES is the official DoD entity responsible for verifying and reporting deaths by suicide for the Active Component and, to the extent available, the Reserve Component, to DSPO.^{2,3} These numbers are reconciled with the Military Services to ensure the most accurate information is reported.

Quarters are based upon the Calendar Year (CY) and defined as:

- Quarter 1 (Q1): January 1st – March 31st
- Quarter 2 (Q2): April 1st – June 30th
- Quarter 3 (Q3): July 1st – September 30th
- Quarter 4 (Q4): October 1st – December 31st

The current report presents data from Q4 of CY 2021. Data includes all known or suspected suicides (both confirmed and pending) as of December 31, 2021, for both the Active and

¹ Absolute counts do not account for changes in population size. Consequently, caution should be used when making comparisons across groups and/or interpreting changes in suicide counts across time.

² Active Component: Full-time members of the U.S. Armed Forces and Cadets/Midshipmen at the designated military academies.

³ Reserve Component: Limited to members of the Selected Reserves (SELRES). SELRES are drilling and training members of the National Guard and Reserve, Individual Mobilization Augmentees, and full-time support Active Guard and Reservists. This excludes members of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) and Inactive National Guard (ING).

Reserve Components. Hence, the numbers presented in this report are preliminary and subject to change as previously unknown suicide cases are reported.⁴

Caution should be used when making comparisons across groups and/or interpreting changes in suicide counts across time because counts do not account for changes in population size. Rates account for differences in population sizes; and, as such, provide a more standardized way to make comparisons over time or across groups.⁵ For the most recent DoD annual suicide rates and trends/changes over time, please see the CY 2020 DoD Annual Suicide Report (available at: <https://www.dspo.mil/ASR/>). The official annual suicide counts and rates for CY 2021 will be published in the DoD Annual Suicide Report – Calendar Year 2021.

QSR Data

Attachment A details the number of suicide deaths by Service⁶ and Component. For Q4 of CY 2021, the Military Services reported the following:

- 85 in the **Active Component**
- 24 in the **Reserve**
- 23 in the **National Guard**

Comparisons of suicide counts between Q4 CY 2020 and Q4 CY 2021 are provided below.⁷ These comparisons are for descriptive purposes and do not reflect statistical increases or decreases nor account for population size.

- For Q4 CY 2021, the number of **Active Component** suicide deaths decreased by 17 compared to Q4 CY 2020 (102 versus 85 suicide deaths)
 - Army Active Component suicide deaths stayed the same
 - Marine Corps Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 10
 - Navy Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 1
 - Air Force Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 6
- For Q4 CY 2021, the number of **Reserve** suicide deaths increased by 5 compared to Q4 CY 2020 (19 versus 24 suicide deaths)
 - Army Reserve suicide deaths increased by 4
 - Marine Corps Reserve suicide deaths stayed the same
 - Navy Reserve suicide deaths increased by 2
 - Air Force Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 1
- For Q4 CY 2021, the number of **National Guard** suicide deaths decreased by 18 compared to Q4 CY 2020 (41 versus 23 suicide deaths)
 - Army National Guard suicide deaths decreased by 18
 - Air National Guard suicide deaths stayed the same

⁴ Official annual suicide counts and unadjusted rates are published in the DoD Annual Suicide Report. The most recent report is for CY 2020. Available at: <https://www.dspo.mil/ASR/>.

⁵ Rates are defined as the total number of suicides divided by the population for a given time period.

⁶ Currently, Air Force data includes Space Force data.


⁷ Research on the seasonal effects of suicide death has shown mixed results (e.g., Gutzwiller, 2011; McCleary, 1994; Postalache, 2012; Rossler, 2010).


Attachment A

DoD Component and Service	CY 2015	CY 2016					CY 2017					CY 2018				
	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Active Component	266	62	56	83	79	280	74	58	71	84	287	81	78	78	89	326
Army	120	31	20	42	37	130	32	24	27	33	116	36	31	40	34	141
Marine Corps	39	12	11	8	6	37	7	9	15	12	43	13	13	15	16	57
Navy	43	9	10	19	14	52	16	13	15	21	65	23	15	11	19	68
Air Force	64	10	15	14	22	61	19	12	14	18	63	9	19	12	20	60
Reserve Component	215	56	51	45	50	202	53	68	65	40	226	49	44	62	62	217
Reserve	91	18	24	18	20	80	21	29	27	16	93	22	16	19	24	81
Army Reserve	55	6	13	11	11	41	12	20	17	14	63	15	11	13	9	48
Marine Corps Reserve	11	4	6	5	4	19	5	3	2	0	10	4	1	4	10	19
Navy Reserve	14	3	3	1	3	10	2	2	3	2	9	3	3	2	3	11
Air Force Reserve	11	5	2	1	2	10	2	4	5	0	11	0	1	0	2	3
National Guard	124	38	27	27	30	122	32	39	38	24	133	27	28	43	38	136
Army National Guard	104	33	22	26	27	108	30	35	35	21	121	24	26	36	33	119
Air National Guard	20	5	5	1	3	14	2	4	3	3	12	3	2	7	5	17

DoD Component and Service	CY 2019					CY 2020					CY 2021				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Active Component	92	72	84	101	349	90	81	113	102	386	76	97	70	85	328
Army	31	37	34	43	145	37	41	52	44	174	44	57	31	44	176
Marine Corps	14	6	11	16	47	14	10	20	19	63	13	8	12	9	42
Navy	22	14	19	19	74	20	12	20	15	67	12	18	15	14	59
Air Force	25	15	20	23	83	19	18	21	24	82	7	14	12	18	51
Reserve Component	45	43	42	26	156	46	48	44	60	198	43	42	58	47	190
Reserve	21	16	17	12	66	20	25	13	19	77	15	14	21	24	74
Army Reserve	10	8	11	8	37	9	16	7	10	42	10	8	13	14	45
Marine Corps Reserve	5	1	1	2	9	2	2	2	4	10	2	4	3	4	13
Navy Reserve	2	2	3	0	7	5	3	2	3	13	3	1	1	5	10
Air Force Reserve	4	5	2	2	13	4	4	2	2	12	0	1	4	1	6
National Guard	24	27	25	14	90	26	23	31	41	121	28	28	37	23	116
Army National Guard	19	24	22	11	76	22	18	29	36	105	26	23	34	18	101
Air National Guard	5	3	3	3	14	4	5	2	5	16	2	5	3	5	15

Note: All figures above may be subject to change in future publications as updated information becomes available. Suicide counts (both confirmed and pending) are current as of 31 December 2021. Currently, Air Force data includes Space Force data.

 Indicates a change from the previous QSR based on updated information.

 Highlighted for comparison