

SUICIDE

Includes suicide deaths only. Does not include suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, or nonsuicidal self-harm. For suicidal and homicidal ideation, see condition-specific case definition.

Background

This case definition was developed by the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Division (AFHSD) for the purpose of epidemiological surveillance of suicide in military-associated populations. The AFHSD is *not* the official source of Department of Defense (DoD) suicide statistics. Users seeking official DoD suicide mortality counts and rates should consult the Defense Suicide Prevention Office's *Annual Report on Suicide in the Military*. The Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) is responsible for verifying and reporting suicide deaths.¹

The Department of Defense Suicide Event Report (DoDSER) is the standard DoD reporting system for suicide events across the Services. In addition to suicide deaths, DoDSER captures reported suicide attempts and associated event information to support prevention, surveillance, and analysis. The DoDSER data are available to authorized users; publicly released DoD reports generally provide aggregated data rather than individual-level records.²

Clinical Description

Suicide is "self-inflicted death with evidence (either explicit or implicit) of intent to die."³

Case Definition and Incidence Rules (March 2012-present)

For surveillance purposes, a case of suicide is defined as:

- An individual whose manner of death is categorized as suicide in the Casualty Table provided to AFHSD by the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES).

The Casualty Table classifies DoD active duty casualties by manner of death. Categories include the following: accident, combat, homicide, natural, suicide, terrorist activity, pending and undetermined.

Incidence rules:

- None

Exclusions:

- None

¹ Defense Suicide Prevention Office. 2024 annual report on suicide in the military. Published March 2026. Accessed September 2026. Available at: <http://www.dsppo.mil/Home/Tools/Reports>.

² Defense Health Agency Psychological Health Center of Excellence. (n.d.). *Department of Defense Suicide Event Report*. Accessed September 2026. Available at: <https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Centers-of-Excellence/Psychological-Health-Center-of-Excellence/Department-of-Defense-Suicide-Event-Report>.

³ Office of the Surgeon General / U.S. Army Medical Command (OTSG/MEDCOM), Policy Memo 09-03.



Codes

The following ICD9 and ICD10 codes are included in the case definition:

Condition	ICD-10-CM Codes	ICD-9-CM Codes
Suicide	NA	NA

Development and Revisions

- In March of 2012, the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center (AFHSC) Surveillance Methods and Standards (SMS) workgroup determined, by consensus opinion, to adopt the AFMES suicide surveillance and reporting standards.

Case Definition and Incidence Rule Rationale

- Not applicable

Code Set Determination and Rationale

- Suicide deaths are not identified using a single ICD10 diagnosis code. ICD-10-CM includes codes for suicidal ideation (R45.851), suicide attempt (T14.91A), intentional self-harm (X60-X84), nonsuicidal self-harm (R45.88), and personal history of suicidal behavior (Z91.51); however, these codes do not independently establish a death by suicide. Accordingly, the case definition relies on the manner-of-death designation of suicide in Casualty Table data provided by the AFMES, rather than on ICD10 codes alone. This approach supports standardized surveillance of suicide deaths among active-duty service members.

Reports

The AFHSD reports on suicide in the following reports:

- Periodic MSMR articles.⁴
- Defense Suicide Prevention Office: *Annual Report on Suicide in the Military*.¹

Review

Sep 2026	Case definition reviewed by the AFHSD Surveillance Methods and Standards (SMS) working group.
May 2022	Case definition reviewed by the AFHSD SMS working group.
May 2019	Case definition reviewed and updated by the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch (AFHSB) SMS working group.
Mar 2010	Case definition developed by the AFHSC SMS working group.

⁴ Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center. Suicides and suicide attempts among active component members of the U.S. Armed Forces, 2010–2012: Methods of self-harm vary by major geographic region of assignment. *MSMR*. 2014; 21(10):2-5.



Comments

None

