

## Appendix II: Definitions

**Hospitalization:** Each **hospitalization** in this report is a Los Angeles County resident who was discharged alive from inpatient care in a licensed hospital in the state of California. This includes General Acute Care, Acute Psychiatric, Chemical Dependency Recovery, and Psychiatric Health facilities. Hospitalizations do not include emergency department visits, or inpatient visits at federal facilities (e.g., the Veteran's Administration Hospital). A single individual is counted more than once in this report if he/she had multiple injury-related hospital discharges during the report period. Patients who die after hospital admission are not included in this report because fatal injuries were the subject of a separate and previous data report.<sup>1</sup>

**Hospital Discharge Data:** California law requires that every state-licensed hospital submit patient **discharge data** semi-annually to the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD). These hospital discharge data consist of 18 data elements including, patient demographics, diagnosis and cause of injury codes, procedures performed, total charges and expected payer, admission date and source, and discharge date.

**Rates:** **Rates** describe the occurrence of hospitalizations over a period of time in relation to the size of the population and the duration of the time period. In this report all rates are calculated annually per 100,000 population. Rates for each year are averaged to obtain an average rate for the entire report period.

**Age-Specific Rates:** **Age-specific rates** are calculated by dividing the total number of injuries in a particular age group by the total population for that age group and multiplied by 100,000.

**Age-Adjusted Rates:** Since age is strongly related to injury, it is important to compensate for age differences between populations when comparing the rates between areas within the County, or when comparing Los Angeles to other counties. To calculate **age-adjusted rates**, weights from a standard population are applied to rates for each specific age group (for this report, the 2000 U.S. population was used as the standard). The resulting weighted rates are added to create the age-adjusted rate. In this report, all rates that are not for specific age groups are age-adjusted.

**ICD Codes:** The circumstances surrounding injuries are coded using a standardized system called the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). These **ICD codes** are used to classify injuries by mechanism and intent. ICD codes are used by hospitals primarily for billing purposes. However, they can also be useful to researchers and others interested in the types and ranges of diseases and injuries that hospitals treat.

Mechanism: Injuries are classified by **mechanism**, which describes what caused the injury. Common mechanisms by which injury can occur are firearms and motor vehicle collisions.

Intent: **Intent** is often referred to as the 'mode' or 'manner' of injury. Undetermined, unintentional, homicide/assault, suicide/self-inflicted, terrorism, legal intervention, and war are all manners by which nonfatal and fatal injuries occur.

Legal Intervention: These are injuries caused by the police or other legal authorities during law enforcement activities. **Legal intervention** injuries can occur as a result of poisonings (e.g., mace or pepper spray), arrest procedures, or restraint and/or confinement conditions. Executions are also included in this category.

Leading Causes of Injury: To determine the **leading causes of injury**, we counted the number of injury hospitalizations caused by each mechanism listed in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's *Recommended Framework for Presenting Injury Mortality Data*.

Falls: **Falls** include injuries both from falling from heights and also from falling one level (e.g., tripping). Suicide attempts and assaults in this category include jumping and being pushed from a high place.

Motor Vehicle Traffic: In this report, **motor vehicle traffic** collisions include only those collisions involving a motor vehicle on public roads. Collisions involving a motor vehicle that take place in parking lots, driveways, and other non-public roadways are not included in this category.

Poisoning: **Poisonings** are caused by a wide variety of substances including medications, illicit drugs, alcohol, household and agricultural products, and gases such as carbon monoxide. This category does not include hospitalizations from food poisoning due to bacterial contamination. However, the category does include hospitalizations from ingesting inherently poisonous plants and animals (e.g., some varieties of mushrooms).

Struck Injuries: **Struck** injuries occur when the victim is struck by or against an object or person. Common causes of these injuries include unarmed fights and collisions in sports.

Cut/Pierce Injuries: **Cutting and piercing** injuries are caused by being cut or stabbed with a sharp instrument. Many cut/pierce injuries are caused by knives, but other instruments, such as lawn mowers, tools, and appliances can cause this type of injury.

Firearm Injuries: This category includes all injuries from **firearms** including, handguns, shotguns, and rifles. The category does not include injuries from air guns, BB guns, paintball guns, or explosives.

Natural/Environmental Injuries: This category includes injuries from a wide variety of **natural and environmental** factors. It includes injuries from animals (e.g., bites and stings) and injuries from inclement and extreme weather.

Uncategorized Injuries: Injuries in this category did not fit into any of the other injury categorizations used in this report. **Uncategorized** injuries are discussed in this report because they comprise a large portion of injury hospitalizations.

Service Planning Area (SPA): The Los Angeles County Departments of Health and Public Health have divided the county into eight **service planning areas (SPAs)** to better provide local communities with public health services. Please see Appendix V for a map showing the location of and cities in each of the eight SPAs.

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<sup>1</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Injury and Violence Prevention Program. Report on Injury Related Morbidity and Mortality in Los Angeles County: Prevalence and Prevention. 2005