NDEWS Special Report
EMS encounters for suspected nonfatal and fatal overdoses in the US
February 1, 2026 – July 31, 2026

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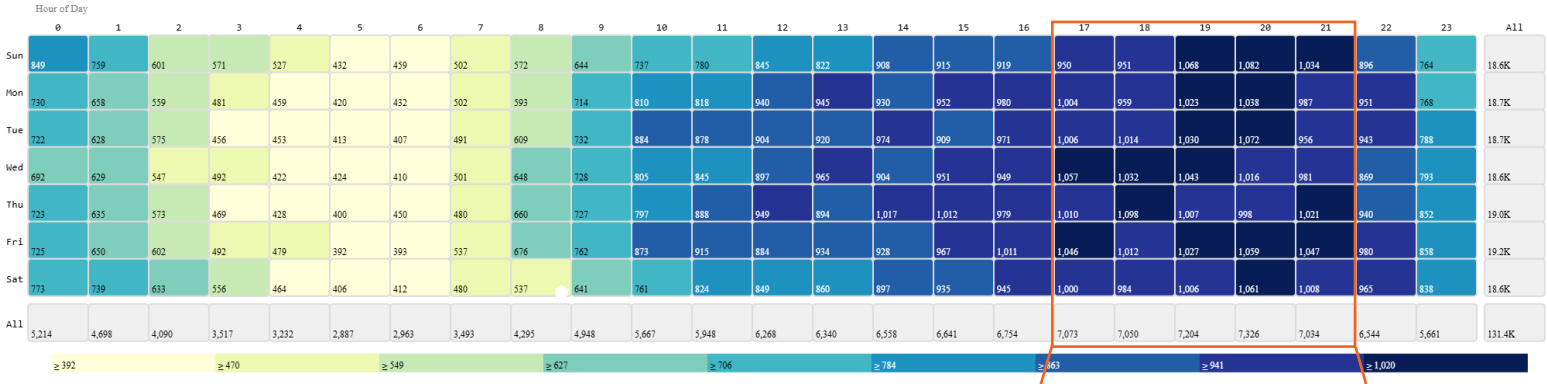
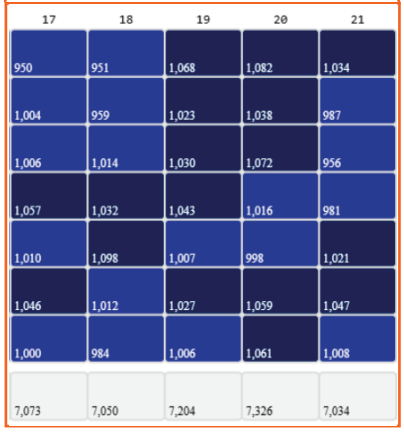
Nationally, 131,409 nonfatal and 4,292 fatal EMS encounters were reported for suspected overdose from February 1, 2026 to July 31, 2026. Heatmaps of EMS encounters for suspected nonfatal and fatal overdoses across the US by time of day and day of the week are shown. Demographic summaries of these EMS encounters (age, sex, and race) are included.

Heatmap of EMS encounters for suspected nonfatal overdoses across the US by time of day and day of the week

February 1, 2026 to July 31, 2026 (N=131,409)





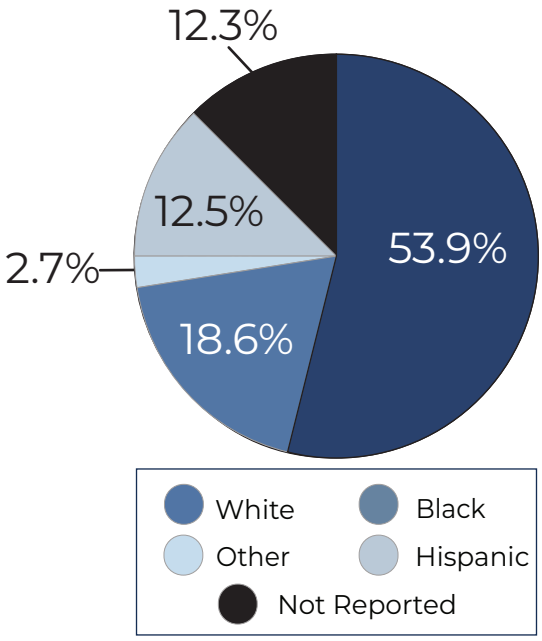
Between February 1, 2026 and July 31, 2026 EMS personnel reported 131,409 EMS encounters for nonfatal overdoses in the US.

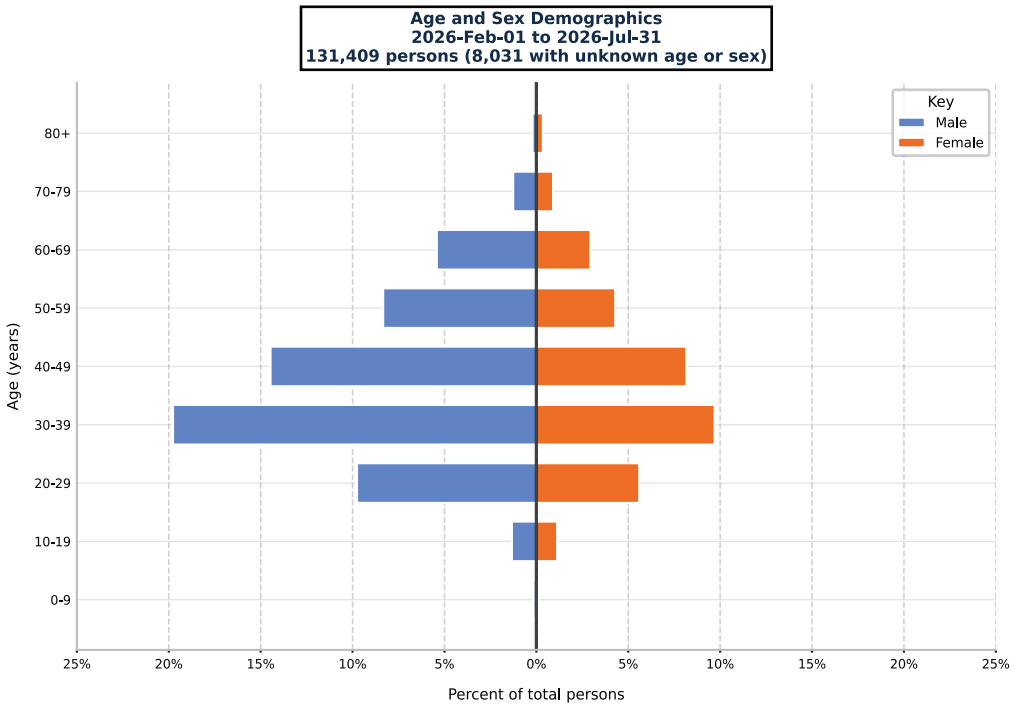
The largest proportion (27.2%) occurred between 17:00 and 21:59.

See page 2 for distributions detailing demographic information from EMS encounters for suspected nonfatal overdoses

Demographic summaries of EMS encounters for suspected nonfatal overdoses across the US

February 1, 2026 to July 31, 2026 (N=131,409)





Heatmap of EMS encounters for suspected fatal overdoses across the US by time of day and day of the week

February 1, 2026 to July 31, 2026 (N=4,292)

* denotes suppressed result with count <10

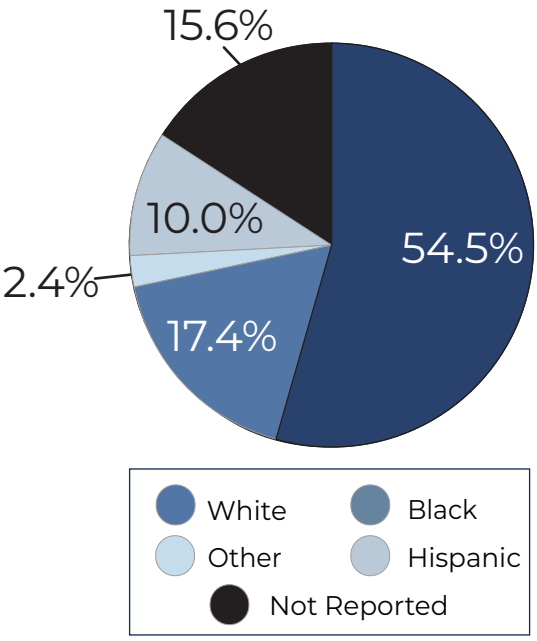
Between February 1, 2026 and July 31, 2026 EMS personnel reported 4,292 EMS encounters for fatal overdoses in the US.

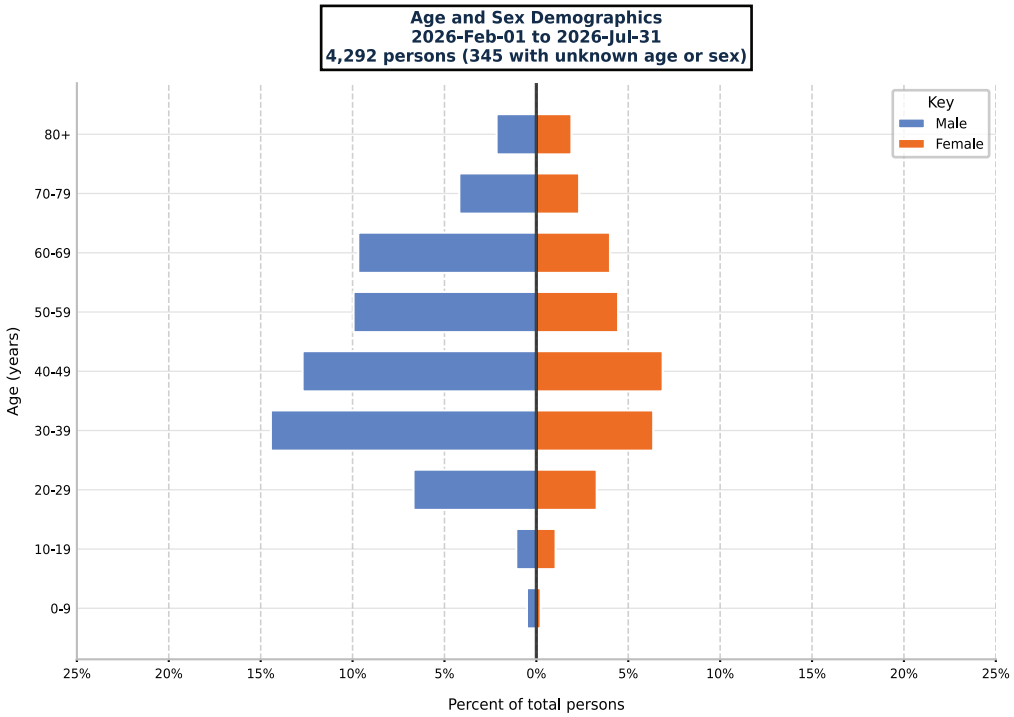
The largest proportion (26.0%) occurred between 14:00 and 18:59.

See page 3 for distributions detailing demographic information from EMS encounters for suspected fatal overdoses.

Demographic summaries of EMS encounters for suspected fatal overdoses across the US

February 1, 2026 to July 31, 2026 (N=4,292)





Methodology: Trends in EMS encounters involving suspected nonfatal and fatal overdoses were examined by day of the week and hour of the incident as reported in the queried records. Demographic summaries of age, sex, and race, as reported in the EMS record, were also included.

EMS encounters involving suspected overdoses were included when the record met the specified overdose-related symptom criteria.

The EMS encounters involving suspected nonfatal overdoses were based on the Florida Enhanced State Opioid Overdose Surveillance (ESOOS) Overdose syndrome. EMS encounters involving suspected nonfatal overdoses were included if there was indication of fentanyl, heroin, methamphetamine, benzodiazepines, cocaine, crack, ketamine, or MDMA in the patient complaint or narrative fields. Only records related to Emergency Response were considered. Records which contained documentation of administration of substances such as fentanyl or ketamine were excluded.

The EMS encounters involving suspected fatal overdoses were identified according to the Florida ESOOS Overdose syndrome. Only records related to Emergency Response were considered.
Records which contained documentation of administration of substances such as fentanyl or ketamine were excluded.

The EMS response and dispatch classifications above follow the guidelines set by the National Emergency Medical Services Information System (NEMSIS).

Limitations: biospatial.io data reflect pre-hospital EMS encounters and do not include hospital outcomes, or toxicology confirmation. Much of the data relies on clinical impressions, self-report, or bystander accounts. Additionally, EMS encounters involving suspected nonfatal and fatal overdoses may be underreported, overreported, or misclassified. Underlying Event Coverage varies by state, with incomplete reporting in some states. States with less than 60% coverage are AZ, CT, DE, IA, IN, LA, MA, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NV, OH, OK, OR, TX, VT, WA, and WV.

75% of the data are reported within 24 hours of the event. Source: biospatial.io, 2026. NDEWS is funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse to the University of Florida (MPI: Cottler (contact), Co-Is: Goldberger, Nixon, Striley), NYU Langone Health (MPI: Palamar), and Florida Atlantic University (Co-I: Barenholtz). Recommended citation: National Drug Early Warning System (NDEWS). (2026). Special Report (August 21, 2026). (NDEWS-2026-SR00039.5). Retrieved from https://ndews.org.