

# EMS Responses to Nonfatal Overdoses Before a Fatal Overdose

August 2025

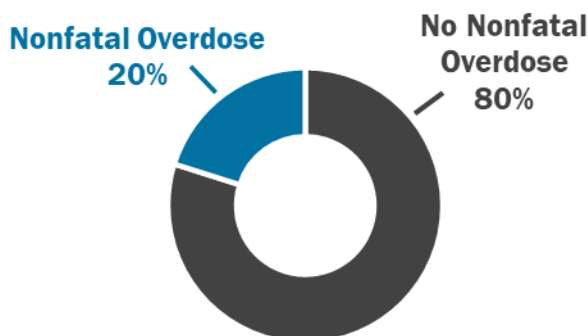
In 2023, 243 Vermonters died of a drug overdose in Vermont. Of these people, 49 had at least one EMS response for a nonfatal overdose in the year before their fatal overdose. Understanding more about how Vermonters who died of an overdose interacted with emergency medical services (EMS) prior to death can help identify opportunities for intervention to prevent deaths and reduce strain on healthcare systems.

**The following data only include EMS nonfatal overdose responses that happened in the 12 months before a fatal overdose among the 243 Vermonters who died of overdose in 2023.** This analysis uses EMS data from the Statewide Incident Reporting Network ([SIREN](#)) and death data from Vermont [Vital Statistics](#) System (see [Data Notes](#) for more information).

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact [AHS.VDHOVerdorseDataVT@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHOVerdorseDataVT@vermont.gov).

## EMS Nonfatal Overdose Responses

**1 in 5 Vermonters who died of overdose had at least one EMS response for nonfatal overdose in the year before their fatal overdose.**



Among the 49 Vermonters who died of an overdose in 2023 and had at least one EMS response for a nonfatal overdose in the year before their fatal overdose:

- The **median time between** the fatal overdose and the most recent EMS response for nonfatal overdose was about **3.5 months** (108 days).
- The **average number** of EMS responses for nonfatal overdose in the year before the fatal overdose was **two**.
- The **maximum number** of EMS responses for nonfatal overdose in the year before the fatal overdose was **six**.



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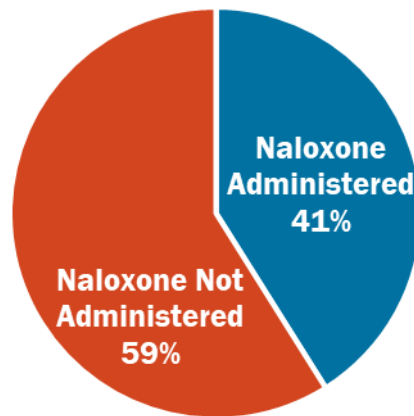


## Total Nonfatal Overdose Responses

There were **112 total EMS responses for a nonfatal overdose** in the year before a fatal overdose among those who died of overdose in 2023.

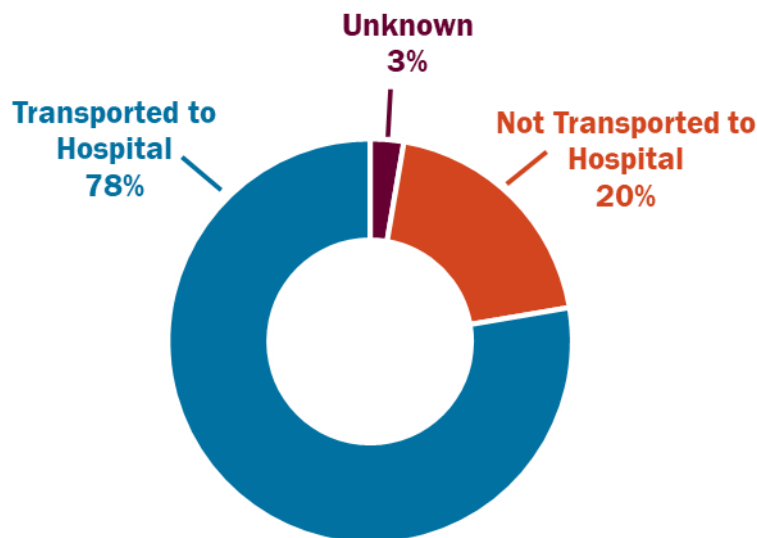
- EMS determined that administering naloxone was necessary and did so during 46 of the 112 (41%) nonfatal overdose responses. (Note: Naloxone is not always the advised treatment for suspected overdoses. See the [Vermont EMS Protocols](#) for more information.)

**Naloxone was administered by EMS in less than half of nonfatal overdose responses.**



- Most EMS responses for a nonfatal overdose (78%) involved EMS transporting the patient to the hospital.

**About 8 out of 10 nonfatal overdoses involved transport to the hospital by EMS.**



## Data Notes

- **SIREN** is a comprehensive electronic prehospital patient care data collection, analysis, and reporting system that has been in use since 2010.
- **Vital Statistics** death certificate data for the 243 Vermonters who died of a drug overdose in Vermont in 2023 was linked to EMS nonfatal overdose data based on first and last name and date of birth.
- Nonfatal 911 emergency incidents (including mutual aid) occurring in the state of Vermont with primary and secondary impressions that indicated a drug overdose were included. Incidents where naloxone was administered and the medication response indicated “improved” were also included.
- The date of injury on the death certificate was used to identify people who were seen by EMS for a nonfatal overdose within the year prior to their fatal overdose. When the date of injury was missing, the date of death was used. If both were missing, the date was set to the first of the month of injury.
- This data brief only includes nonfatal overdose patients that were seen by EMS. Any person who experienced a nonfatal overdose and did not seek medical care or sought a different form of healthcare (e.g. the emergency department) is not included.
- This analysis only considers Vermont residents who died of overdose in Vermont. People who died in other states and non-Vermont residents were not included.

## References

1. Statewide Incident Reporting Network ([SIREN](#)), 2022 - 2023.
2. Vermont [Vital Statistics](#) System, 2023.