



SOUTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Unintentional Falls Among Adults Aged 65 Years and Older

SOUTH DAKOTA

September 2024

Unintentional Fall-Related Deaths

Unintentional falls are among the top 10 leading causes of death for South Dakotans aged 65 years and older. From 2014 to 2023, there were 1,678 unintentional fall-related deaths among South Dakotans aged 65 years and older. The number of fall-related deaths increased by 11%, from 149 deaths in 2014 to 165 deaths in 2023 (Figure 1). In 2022, South Dakota had the sixth highest age-adjusted rate (130.6 per 100,000) for unintentional fall-related deaths among individuals aged 65 years and older. The national rate was 77.5 per 100,000 (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Fall-Related Deaths and Rates, South Dakota (2014-2023)

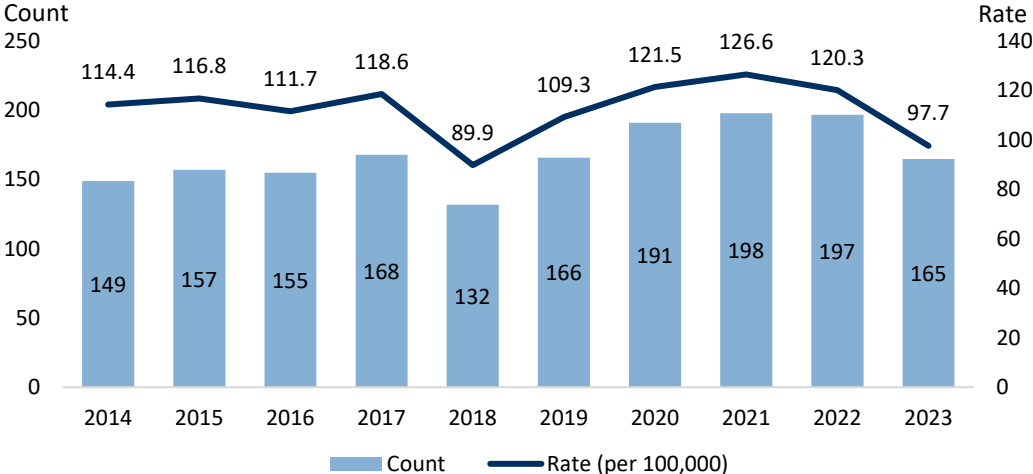
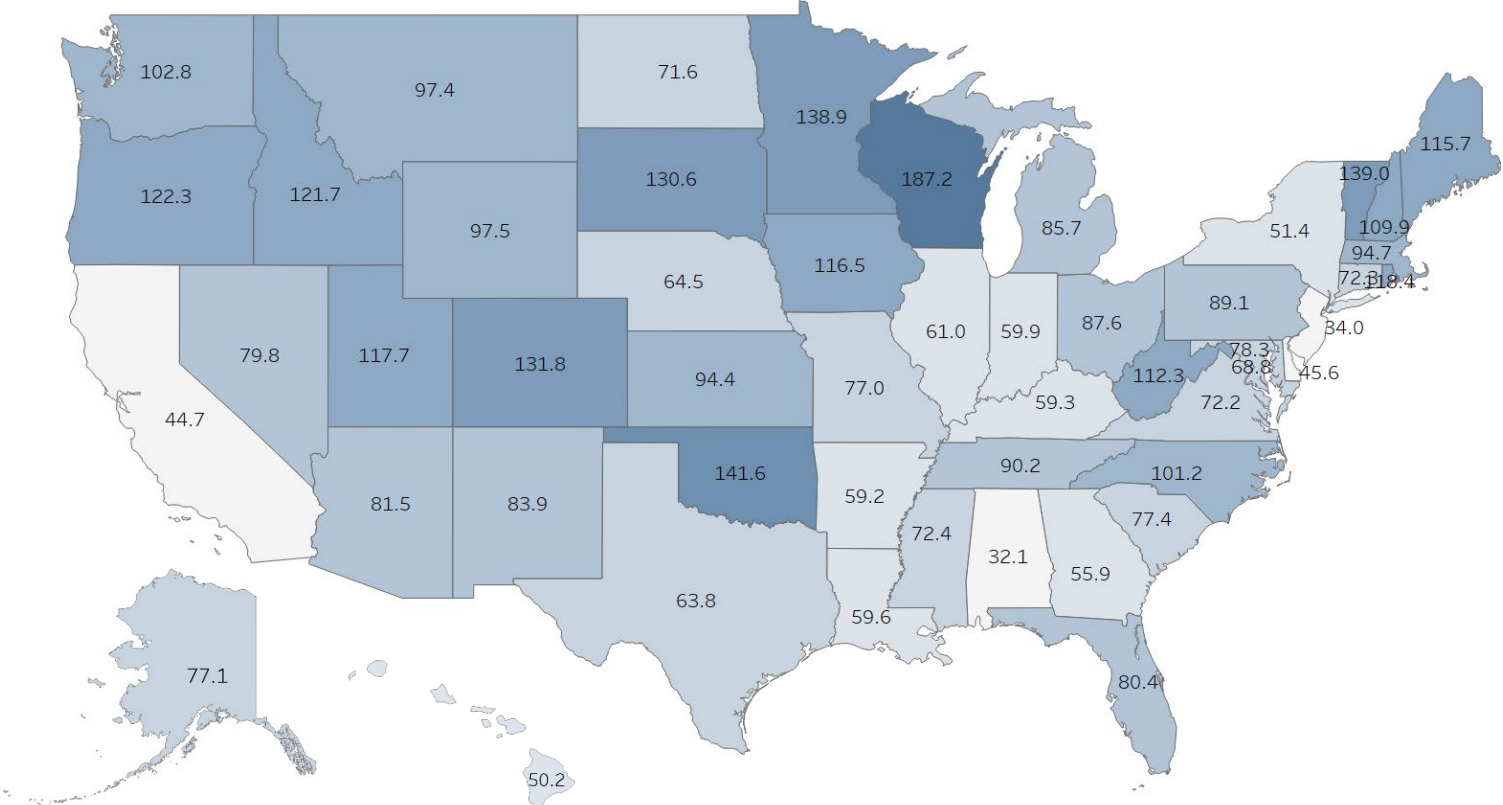


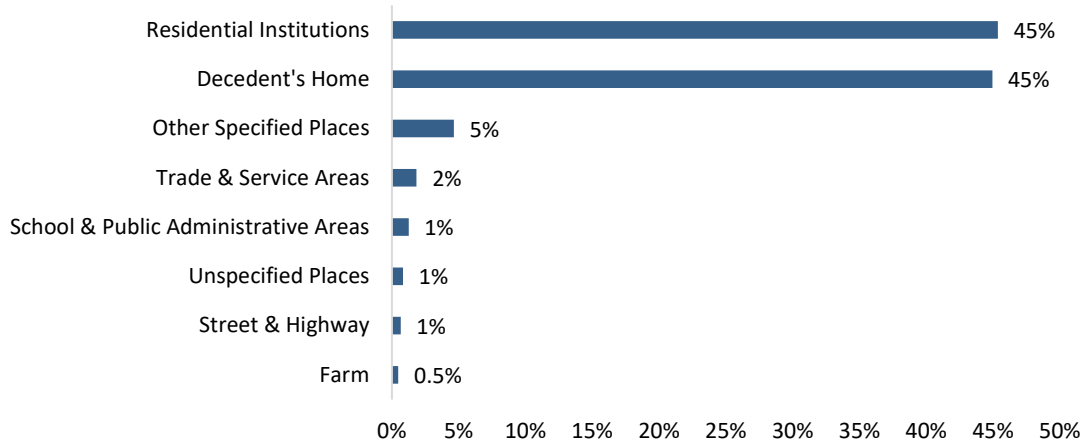
Figure 2: Fall-Related Death Rates (per 100,000) by States (2022)



Place of Injury and Types of Falls

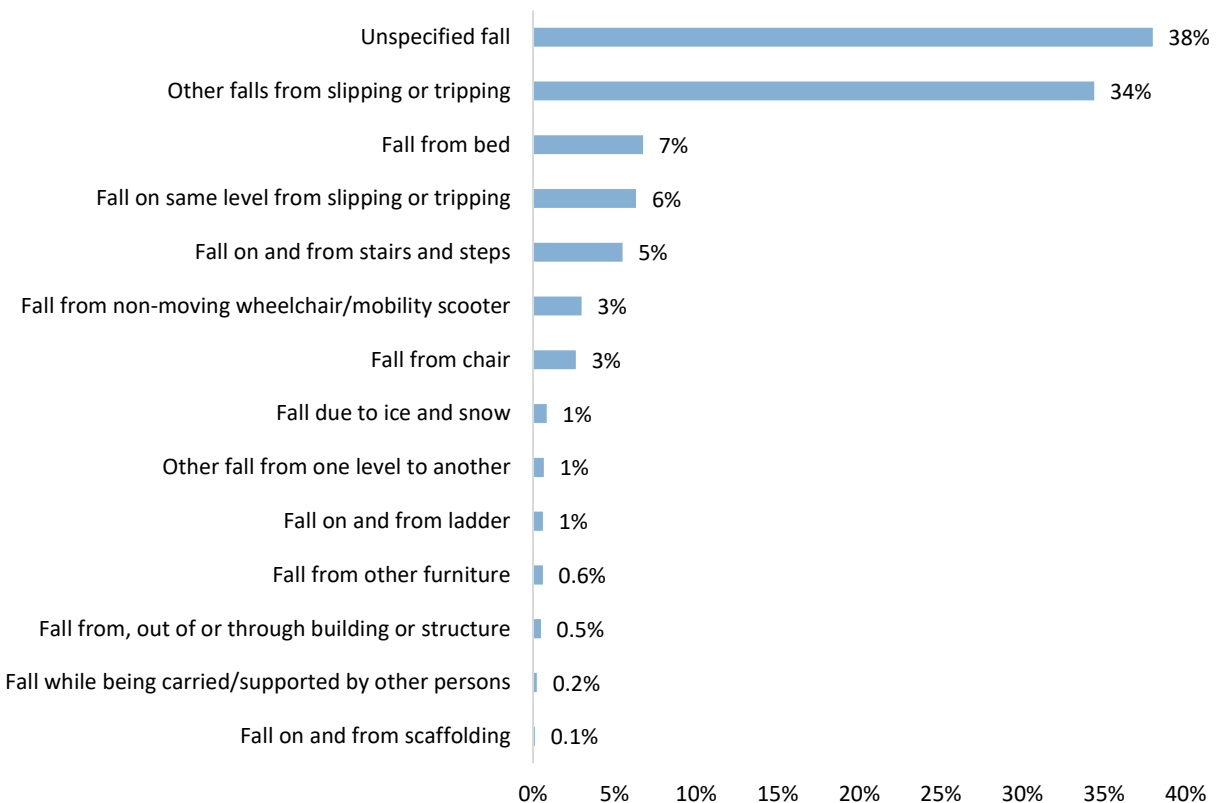
The two most common places of injury for fall-related deaths were residential institutions and the decedent's home (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Fall-Related Deaths by Place of Injury (2014-2023)



There are different types of falls that can lead to injury and death. The most common type of fall was listed as unspecified fall, accounting for 38% of deaths. The second most common type of fall was other falls from slipping, tripping, and stumbling, accounting for 34% of deaths (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Fall-Related Deaths by Type of Fall (2014-2023)



High Risk Populations

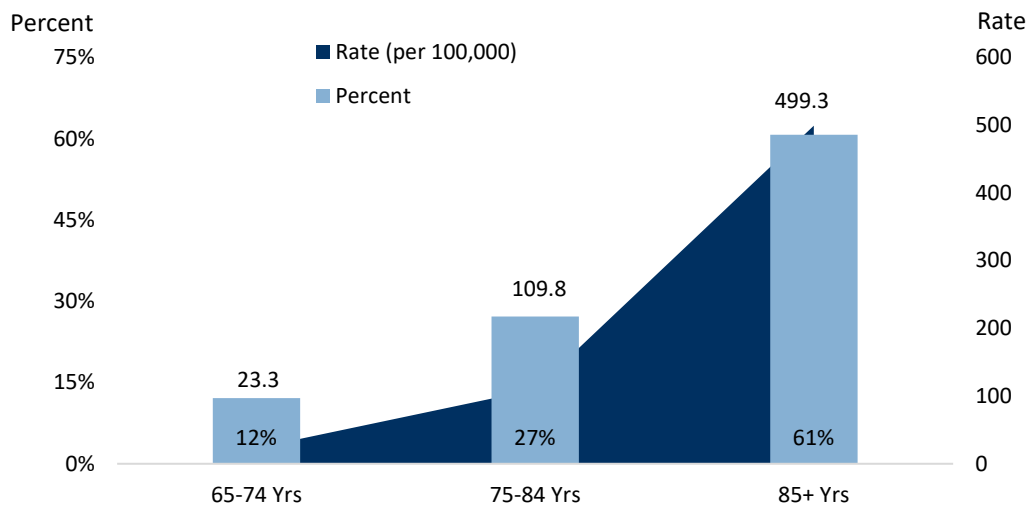
Sex

Overall, females aged 65 years and older are more likely to die from a fall-related cause of death than males. Females made up 57% of fall-related deaths and had a rate of 119.0 per 100,000. Males made up 43% of deaths and had a rate of 105.3 per 100,000 (2014-2023).

Age

Adults over the age of 65 years are at an increased risk of death due to falls. Individuals aged 85 years and older make up the largest proportion of deaths and have the highest rate among older adults (Figure 5).

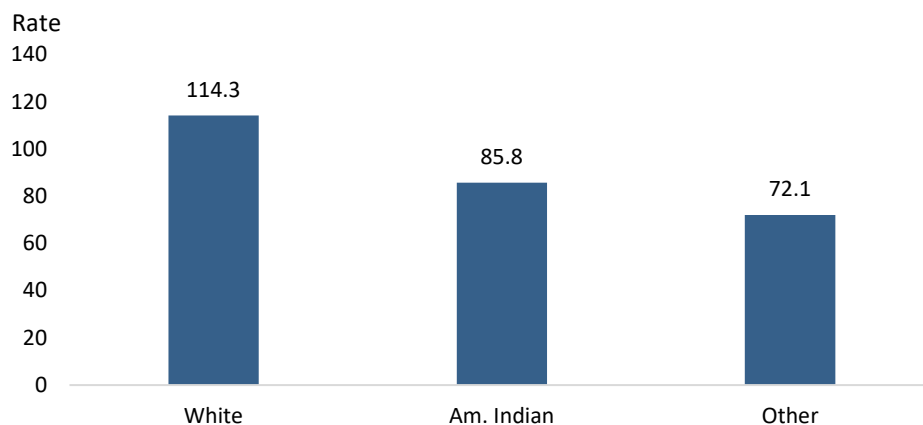
Figure 5: Fall-Related Deaths and Rates by Age Group (2014-2023)



Race

From 2014-2023, 96% of fall-related deaths were White, 3% were American Indian, and 1% Other (Black, Asian, multiracial, and Hispanic). White residents aged 65 years and older experienced a higher fall-related death rate compared to other populations (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Fall-Related Death Rates (per 100,000) by Race (2014-2023)

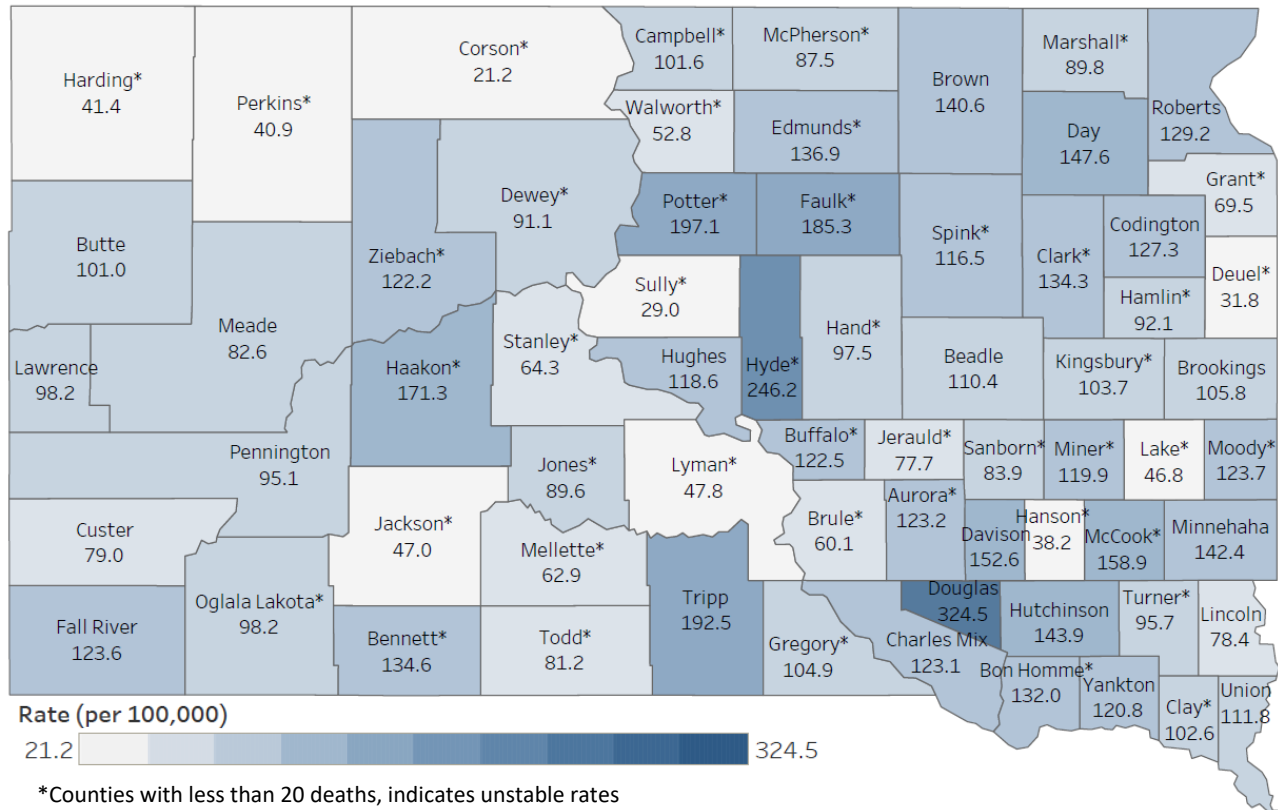


(Other race includes Asian, Black, Pacific Islander, multiracial, and Hispanic)

Fall-Related Deaths by County

The figure below shows unintentional fall-related death rates by county. Among counties with stable rates for comparison (≥ 20 deaths), the top five counties included Douglas (324.5 per 100,000), Tripp (192.5), Davison (152.6), Day (147.6), and Hutchinson (143.9).

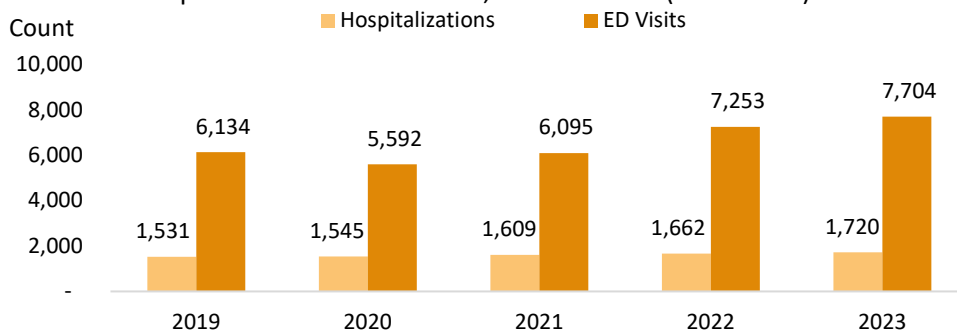
Figure 7: Fall-Related Death Rates by County (2014-2023)



Nonfatal Unintentional Fall-Related Hospitalizations & Emergency Department (ED) Visits

From 2019 to 2023, there were 8,067 nonfatal unintentional fall-related hospitalizations and 32,778 emergency department (ED) visits among South Dakotans aged 65 years and older. Fall-related emergency department visits have increased 26% from 2019 to 2023 (Figure 8).

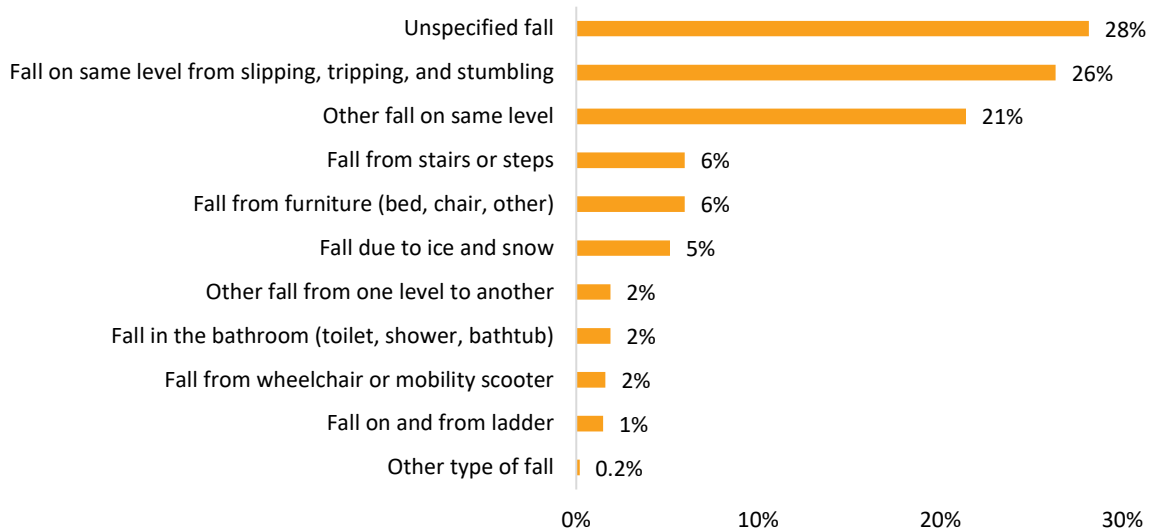
Figure 8: Fall-Related Hospitalizations and ED Visits, South Dakota (2019-2023)



Types of Falls

Different types of unintentional falls can lead to injury among older adults. Of the 40,845 nonfatal falls requiring an ED visit or hospitalization, the top three causes of injuries include unspecified falls, falls on the same level from slipping, tripping, or stumbling, and other falls on the same level (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Fall-Related Injuries by Type of Fall (2019-2023)



High Risk Populations

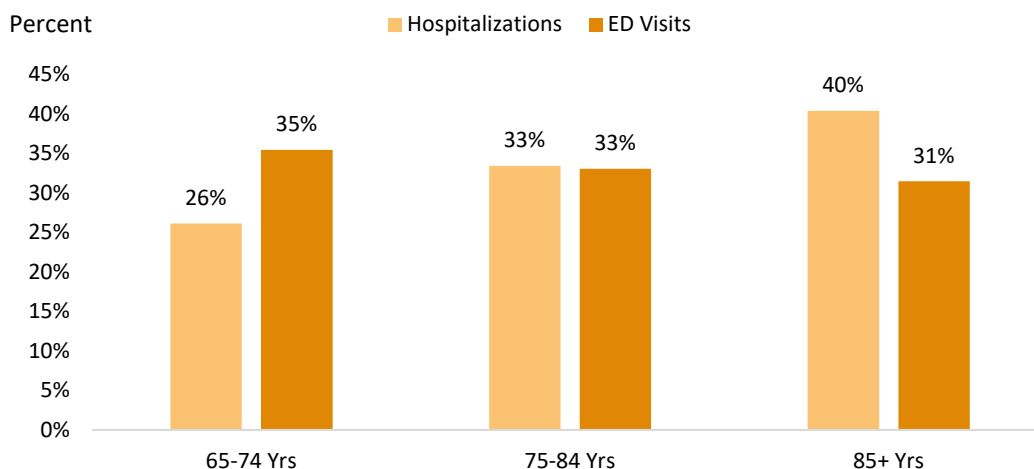
Sex

Overall, females aged 65 years and older are more likely to receive care for a fall-related injury than males. Females made up 63% of nonfatal visits and had a rate 1.5 times higher than males (6,069.1 vs 4,046.5 per 100,000), 2019-2023.

Age

South Dakotans over the age of 65 years are at an increased risk for fall-related injuries. Fall-related ED visits are most common among adults aged 65-74 years. In contrast, the risk for severe injuries resulting in hospitalizations increased with age and was most common among adults aged 85 years and older.

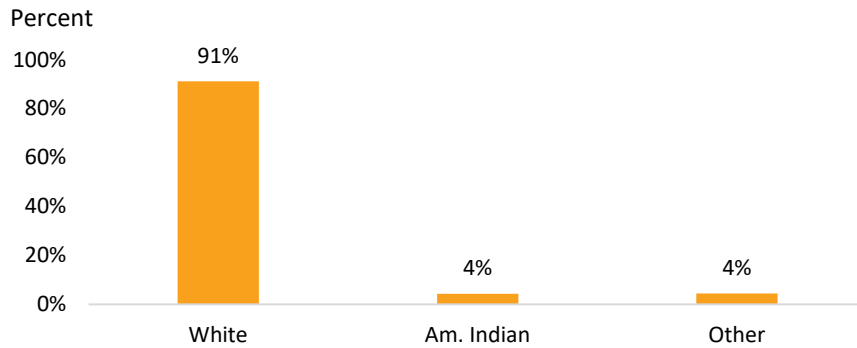
Figure 10: Fall-Related Injuries by Age Group (2019-2023)



Race

From 2019-2023, the largest proportion of nonfatal fall-related ED visits and hospitalizations were among the White population (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Fall-Related Injuries by Race (2019-2023)



(Other race includes Asian, Black, Pacific Islander, multiracial, Hispanic, and unknown race)

Prevention Resources

- To learn about the South Dakota Fall Prevention Coalition, visit <https://doh.sd.gov/programs/fall-prevention-coalition/>.
- To learn about other available state and national resources, visit <https://doh.sd.gov/health-data-reports/injury-prevention/unintentional-falls-data/>.
- To view additional injury prevention resources, visit <https://doh.sd.gov/health-data-reports/injury-prevention/>.

Data Sources and Methods

Data in this report may differ from other reports due to how the data was analyzed. See below for data sources and analysis methods.

Data Sources:

Mortality data used in this report comes from the South Dakota Department of Health Vital Statistics, which represents South Dakota residents. Data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) is utilized for national and state comparisons.

Hospital and ED data comes from the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations (SDAHO), which represents South Dakota residents and reflects nonfatal visits by year of discharge. This data does not include cases from Indian Health Services hospitals or Veterans Affairs medical centers.

Methods:

Death records are analyzed for the presence of unintentional fall-related death codes in the cause of death field. Injury fatality ICD-10 codes used in the report include W00-W19.

Hospitalization and ED data was analyzed from the injury discharge subset for non-fatal unintentional fall-related injury codes in any field. Injury ICD-10-CM codes used and analysis methods can be found here: <https://resources.cste.org/Injury-Surveillance-Methods-Toolkit/Home/GeneralInjuryIndicators>.