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deaths

Some confirmed heatwave deaths were of homeless or inadequately housed people



Frederick Allen lives in a homeless camp in Southwest Portland. He said he's trying to beat the heat by getting most of his physical activity done in the early hours of the day. June 22, 2021 (KOIN).

by: **Danny Peterson**

Posted: Jul 23, 2021 / 02:21 PM PDT / Updated: Jul 23, 2021 / 02:21 PM PDT



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Now, Oregon counties are acknowledging for the first time that at least some confirmed heatwave-related deaths were of homeless or inadequately sheltered people.

From June 26-June 28, Portland experienced an intense heatwave that saw triple digits each day. The forecast prompted the county and surrounding areas to open day-use and overnight cooling shelters for anyone in need. In addition, Multnomah County also [said](#) prior to when the heatwave hit it would be ramping up its outreach to homeless people, with teams providing extra water bottles, cooling towels, misting bottles and electrolyte packets to those on the street.

‘Did you just feel that?’: Dayton road buckles in extreme heat →

Each day of that three day stretch broke the all-time high temperature record in Portland, which was previously 107. June 26 saw the mercury hit 108, then it hit 112 on June 27, then a staggering 116 on June 28.



Tiffany and Andrew Prather said they felt a tremor when the road buckled outside their home in Dayton on June 27, 2021. Photo courtesy Tiffany and Andrew Prather

The latest figures in Oregon are 115 deaths that were either fully confirmed or are under investigation for being caused by the heatwave, according to a July 9 release by Oregon State Police.

It breaks down to 83 fully confirmed cases of heatwave deaths – determined by the State Medical Examiner to be hyperthermia – and 32 deaths that are pending

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to 2019.

In the July 9 release, OSP said four deaths previously included in preliminary counts have been excluded and have been determined to not be caused by the heatwave.

KOIN 6 News inquired to OSP if there were any updates since that July 9 release, including if there is any information on how many of the deaths were of people experiencing homelessness. Captain Timothy R. Fox, with OSP's Government and Media Relations, told KOIN 6 News via email that there were no new updates since that July 9 release, but added that the State Medical Examiner's Office is collaborating with County Medical Examiners to investigate and certify the deaths. Fox said various county public health agencies are also undertaking efforts to analyze confirmed death data in the interest of identifying trends that may help prevent deaths in future heatwaves.

Oregon heat deaths at 107; Brown orders emergency heat rules →

In Oregon, it's not required by any county to track homeless deaths, though Multnomah County opts into tracking those deaths thanks to a program they've had in place since 2011, called Domicile Unknown, in collaboration with homeless advocacy and newspaper nonprofit, Street Roots.

A Multnomah County spokesperson said earlier this month that they are still engaging in intensive death investigation follow ups and are not able to release the exact number of heatwave deaths that were of homeless people. The latest version of Domicile Unknown was released in December 2020 and analyzed homeless deaths from 2019. According to OSP, Multnomah County currently has the most confirmed heatwave-related deaths of any county in Oregon, at 54.

Statewide, it's unclear whether the public will ever

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since a law requiring counties to track homeless deaths that was passed by the Oregon Legislature this year won't go into effect until next year.

Homeless campers enjoyed a pop-up pool under the overpass at Hwy 99E and Division during the late June 2021 heat wave (Courtesy: Sergio Olmos)

A recap to the historic June 2021 heatwave →

However, KOIN 6 News has inquired to individual Oregon and surrounding counties whether they have information about homeless deaths from the heatwave that they could share voluntarily, even though it is not required. Asking individual counties for such figures was the recommended course of action when we inquired to Oregon State Police on the matter.

We asked every Oregon county that had heatwave-related deaths confirmed or under investigation in preliminary reports from OSP — and Clark County, Washington — whether they had information about homeless deaths from the heatwave. While most did not have the information available, some did apparently track what data they did have and share it with KOIN 6 News.

This was the response from Wendy Gordon, Department Communications Coordinator for Washington County Health and Human Services on Tuesday:

“We have seven deaths that have been confirmed and two that are pending further investigation. Of the nine, five were either homeless or inadequately housed.”

In Marion County, the Medical Examiner's Office said they are investigating 13 deaths that they believe may be related to the June 26-28 heatwave. But they said further testing is needed to fully confirm the cause of death. However, of those 13



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addition, eight of the deaths were in Salem, two in Keizer and three in Woodburn.

WashCo: Investigating whether deaths are heat-related; 'appear to be homeless' →

A spokesperson for Clark County, Washington, told KOIN 6 News via email that they have so far confirmed three heat-related deaths. Marissa Armstrong, Senior Communications Specialist with Clark County Public Health, said in an email that the Medical Examiner's Officer's does not currently track housing statuses as part of their death investigations so they don't have information about how many of the individuals may have been

A chart showing the statuses of heatwave-related deaths currently under investigation, but not fully confirmed, in Marion County. July 17, 2021 (courtesy Marion County).

experiencing homelessness.

Washington state reported at least 91 heatwave-related deaths in total, according to the [Associated Press](#).

A recent [scientific analysis](#) by [World Weather Attribution](#) found that the deadly Pacific Northwest heatwave would have been next to impossible if it weren't for human-caused climate change that added a few extra degrees to the record breaking temperatures.



AROUND THE WEB



Big Change in Houston Leaves Drivers Fuming

Auto Savings



[photos] 31 Movies So Disturbing People Walked out the Theater

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[photos] Inside Parker Schnabel's Mansion Where He Lives with His Partner

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One "Genius" Hack to Keep Your Blood Sugar Under 100

Newhealthylife



an Entire City

Definition



Surgeon: if You Have Tinnitus (Ear Ringing) Do This Immediately! (it's Genius!)

Newhealthylife

is in Texas

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Netflix Cancels Another Rounds of Great Shows

Definition



[gallery] Parker Schnabel is Only 27 & This is the House He Lives in Today

ItsTheVibe

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MORE STORIES



Two teens arrested for Vancouver purse snatching

by Kelly Doyle / Sep 23, 2021

PORTLAND, Ore. (KOIN) -- Two teenagers were arrested following a rash of purse snatchings in Vancouver.

Shortly before 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, officers responded to reports of a man grabbing a purse from a chair outside a coffee shop on SE Columbia River Driver before fleeing in a car. According to the Vancouver Police Department, the suspect's description matched that of a suspect involved in several other recent purse thefts in the area.

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Give More 24! pushes to meet fundraising goal

by Emily Burris, Ken Boddie / Sep 23, 2021

PORTLAND, Ore. (KOIN) -- The biggest charity fundraiser of the year for Southwest Washington is happening now!

Last year, Give More 24! raised \$2.9 million for over 200 charities in Southwest Washington. This year's goal is \$3.2 million.

[Read the Full Article](#) →



6 years later: Woodlawn murder remains unsolved

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Bureau are asking for the public's help with any information leading to an arrest for the unsolved 2015 murder of 30-year-old Stephen McCorvey Jr.

Stephen McCorvey Jr. and a 41-year-old woman were both shot while inside a car on September 23 near the intersection of Northeast 15th Avenue and Buffalo Street. The woman survived, but McCorvey died from his injuries.

[Read the Full Article](#) →

TOP STORIES



OHSU doc talks Falls Prevention Awareness Week

20 firefighters battle down Vancouver house blaze



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Safe Rest Village sites in Portland to be announced soon



Governor Brown visits vaccine clinic in Forest Grove



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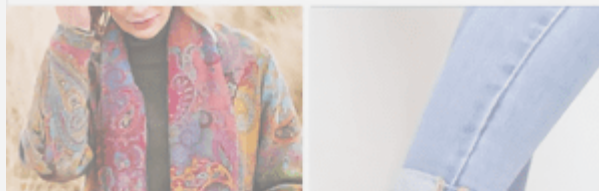
600+ Beaverton students in quarantine



City Council votes to accept report calling for PPB reforms

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Tomorrow
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- 1 **Two teens arrested for Vancouver purse snatching**

- 2 **Some Kaiser Permanente staff could vote to strike soon**

- 3 **Bill to refund Oregon taxes on stimulus checks was 'held hostage'**

- 4 **Separate crashes on SR-14 and I-5 kill 2 drivers**

- 5 **Why can't we just move water to solve a drought?**



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