

PRESS RELEASE

MARIN COUNTY CORONER

KEN HOLMES

*For more information contact:*

Ken Holmes 415-499-6043

[kholmes@co.marin.ca.us](mailto:kholmes@co.marin.ca.us)

or

Bridge Rail Foundation

Paul Muller—415 643-9506

[info@bridgerail.org](mailto:info@bridgerail.org)

**For Release**

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## **Marin County Coroner's Office Releases Ten-Year Study on Golden Gate Bridge Suicides**

A ten-year study released today by Marin County Coroner Ken Holmes shatters the myth that people come from “all over the world” to jump from the Golden Gate Bridge, and sheds new insight into the more than 1,250 people who have jumped:

- Over 85% of people who jump from the bridge are Bay Area residents.
- Northern California residents account for more than 92% of the suicide jumps.
- The average bridge jumper was 41.7 years old. The youngest was a 14-year old girl, the oldest an 84-year old man.
- Men outnumber women almost three to one.
- While all races are represented among the jumpers, whites account for 83% of all fatalities.
- San Francisco and Marin had the highest number of deaths, followed by Santa Clara and Contra Costa counties. However, all nine Bay Area counties contribute to the suicide rate from the Bridge.

The Golden Gate Bridge is an attractive suicide site because it is easy to access and features a short railing along the pedestrian walkway.

“My office has dealt with families from all over the Bay Area—and I can tell you, these losses are devastating. Parents, brothers and sisters, and other loved ones are often caught completely off guard and are deeply shocked. It is estimated that every suicide leaves behind at least six close family and friends.

“It goes beyond just family and friends. Over the study period, commuters or tourists witnessed and reported 76% of all jumps. Imagine that your vacation to the Bay Area includes watching another person die—it can be horrible,” Holmes concluded.

The new data are part of a study Holmes’ office released in conjunction with the Bridge Rail Foundation, to coincide with the anniversary of the first bridge suicide 70 years ago this week. These data do not include all bridge suicides, as officials in other counties investigate some deaths. Also excluded are deaths where a witness reports a jump, there is a suicide note or other evidence of a suicide, but no body is recovered.

The entire data set is available on the Bridge Rail Foundation website at <http://www.bridgerail.org/>

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*The Marin Coroner's Office is responsible for determination of the cause and manner of death for individuals who die in Marin County. The office receives the bodies of most Bridge suicides after the Coast Guard recovers the remains in the Bay. Bodies that the Coast Guard does not find may subsequently wash to shore in other jurisdictions, whose authorities are then responsible for identification and determination of cause and manner of death.*

*The Bridge Rail Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to public education about the suicide problem on the Golden Gate Bridge.*