

## WAID 2024 Summary for Water Safety Wales

This report details the 2024 release of water-related fatality data. An interactive version of this report can be found online [here](#). Please be aware that this trend report uses enhanced five-year WAID data (2019 – 2023). This means that overall numbers, outcomes and some fatality details (e.g. location, ages, sex) may differ to previously published data tables and reports (more information on the enhanced data can be accessed [here](#)).

### Overall water-related fatalities

In 2024, there were 54 water-related fatalities in Wales from all recorded causes. There were more fatalities, overall, compared to the previous years (see Figure 1, which also breaks down water-related fatalities by outcome).

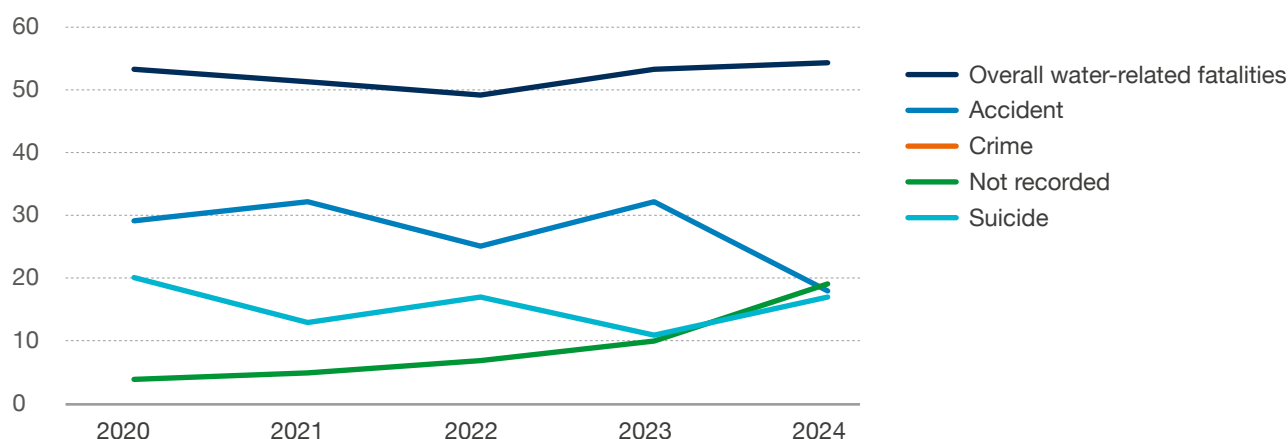


Figure 1: Overall fatalities by year (2020 – 2024)

**The 2024 figures show that overall water-related fatalities increased. When compared to Wales' Drowning Prevention Strategy (WDPS) baseline and the Mid-Strategy Review average, the 2024 figures are above both (see Figure 2).**

Year	Overall water-related fatalities
WDPS Baseline (2016 – 2018 average)	45
Mid-Strategy Review average (2021 – 2023)	51
2020	53
2021	51
2022	49
2023	53
2024	54

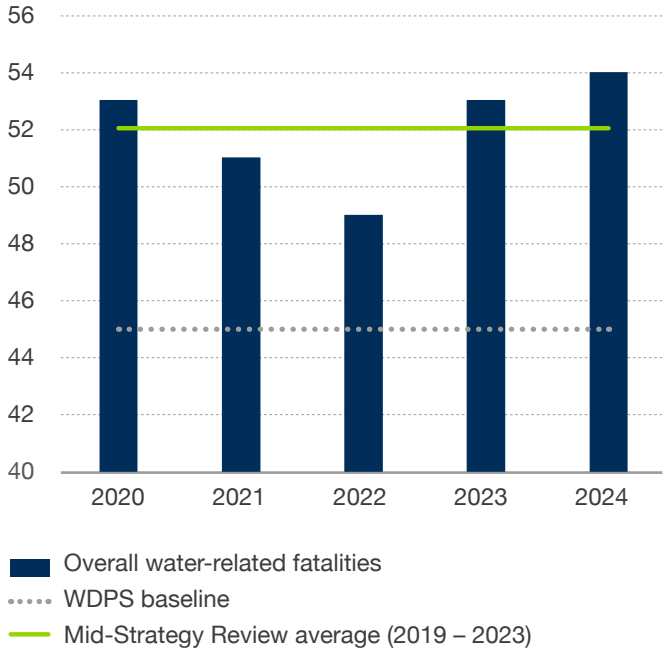


Figure 2: Overall fatalities by year vs WDPS baseline (2016 – 2018) and Mid-Strategy Review average (2021 – 2023)

## Accidental fatalities

In 2024, there were 18 accidental fatalities<sup>1</sup> in Wales. **This is a 25 per cent decrease in comparison to WDPS baseline and a 28 per cent decrease in comparison to the Mid-Strategy Review average** (see Figure 3). However, caution should be taken in the interpretation of this trend due to the high number of not recorded/inconclusives in the 2024 data. The 2020 – 2023 data uses an enhanced dataset with a reduced number of not recorded/inconclusives.

Year	Accidental fatalities
WDPS Baseline (2016 – 2018 average)	24
Mid-Strategy Review average (2021 – 2023)	25
2020	29
2021	32
2022	25
2023	32
2024	18

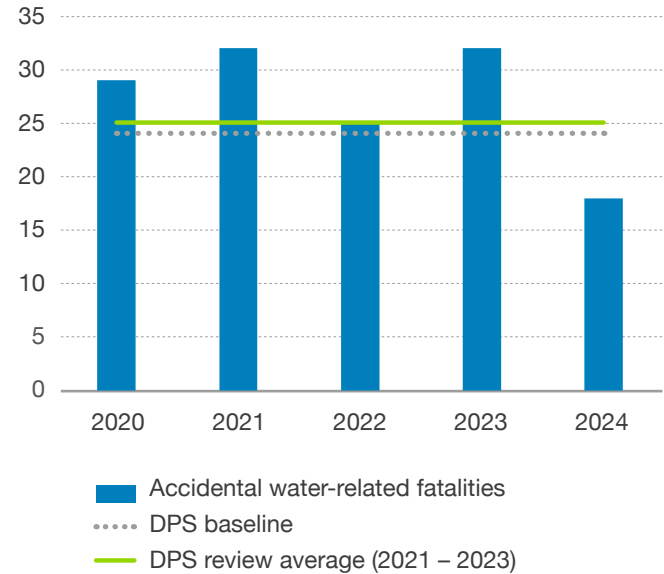


Figure 3: Accidental fatalities by year (2020 – 2024) vs DPS baseline and DPS review average, England

<sup>1</sup> Accidental fatality refers to accidental and natural causes suspected.

## Key points

In 2024:

- There were 18 accidental fatalities
- 82 per cent of accidental fatalities were male
- Males aged 20 to 29, 50 to 59 and 70 to 79 were the highest groups for accidental fatalities (see *Figure 4*)
- 56 per cent of accidental fatalities happened at coastal waters (see *Figure 5*)
- Recreational activities accounted for 67 per cent of accidental fatalities (see *Figure 6*)
- 2 accidental fatality reports noted the presence or potential presence of drugs and/or alcohol
- The rate of accidental water-related fatalities has decreased in comparison to the WDPS and the Mid-Strategy review. In 2023, the accidental water-related fatality rate was 0.57 (see *Figure 7*)
- When considering the population rate, males aged 70 to 79 were the highest group (see *Figure 8*)
- May to July and November were the months with the most accidental fatalities (see *Figure 9*).

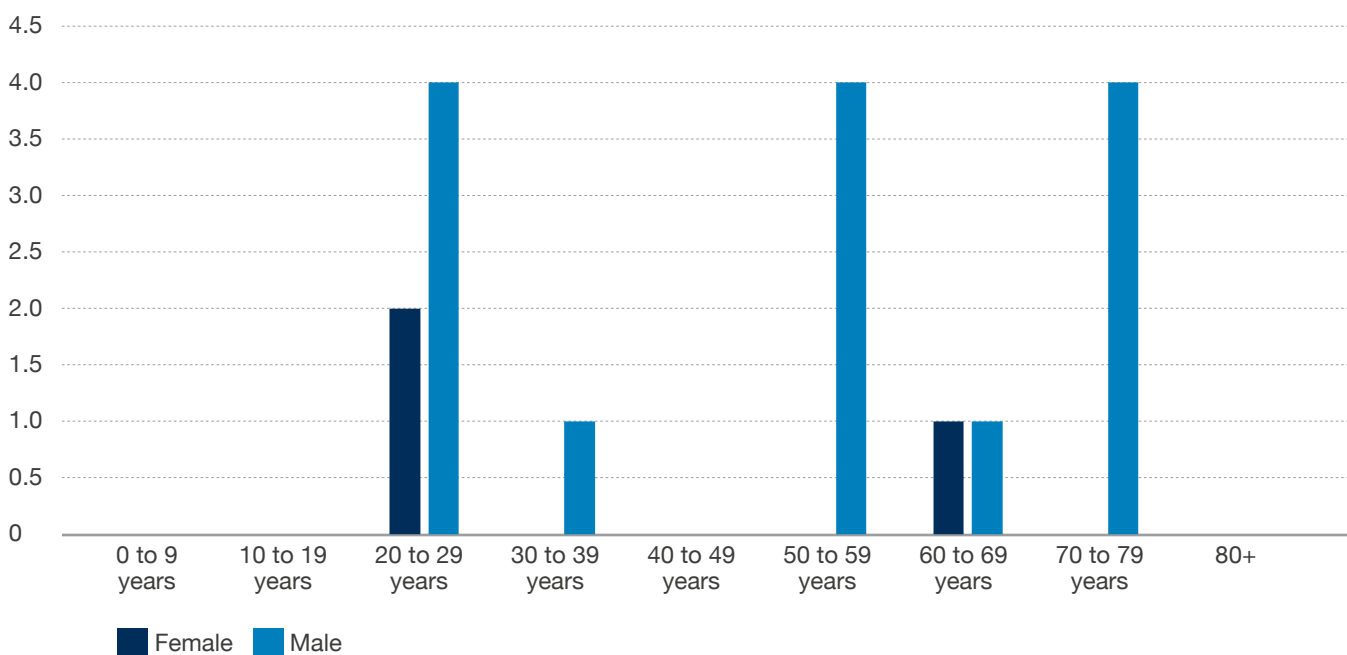


Figure 4: Accidental fatalities by age. N = 17, 1 not recorded

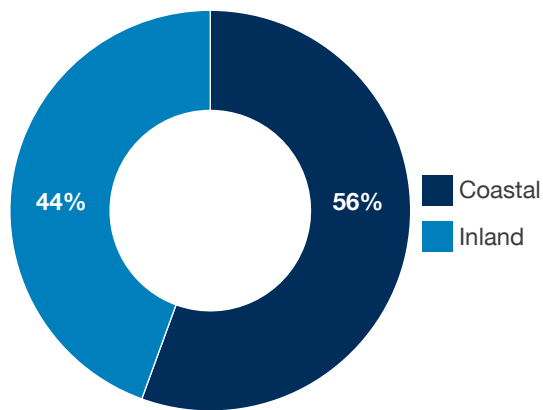


Figure 5: Accidental fatalities by location. N = 18

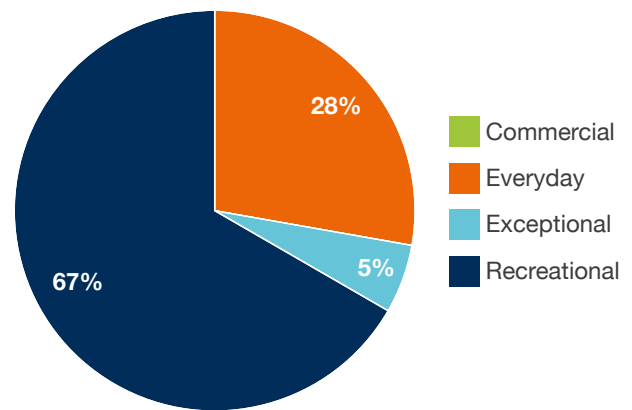


Figure 6: Accidental fatalities by activity. N = 18

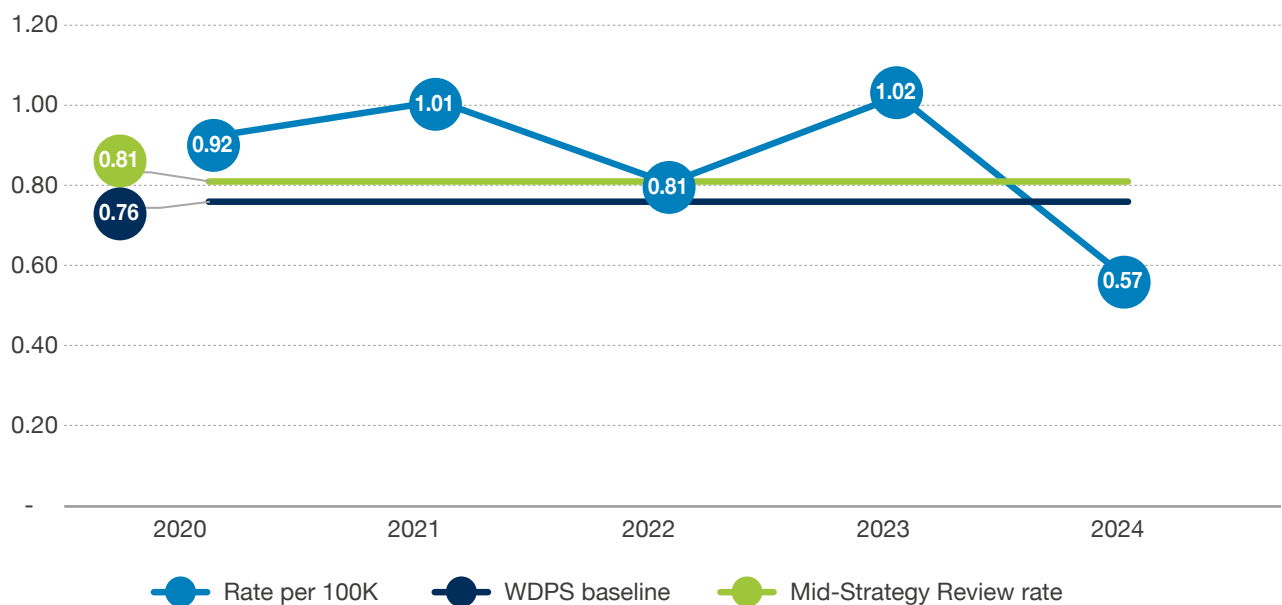


Figure 7: Accidental fatalities by year and rate (2020 – 2024) and WPDS baseline rate and Mid-Strategy Review rate. Rates based on ONS figures per 100,000

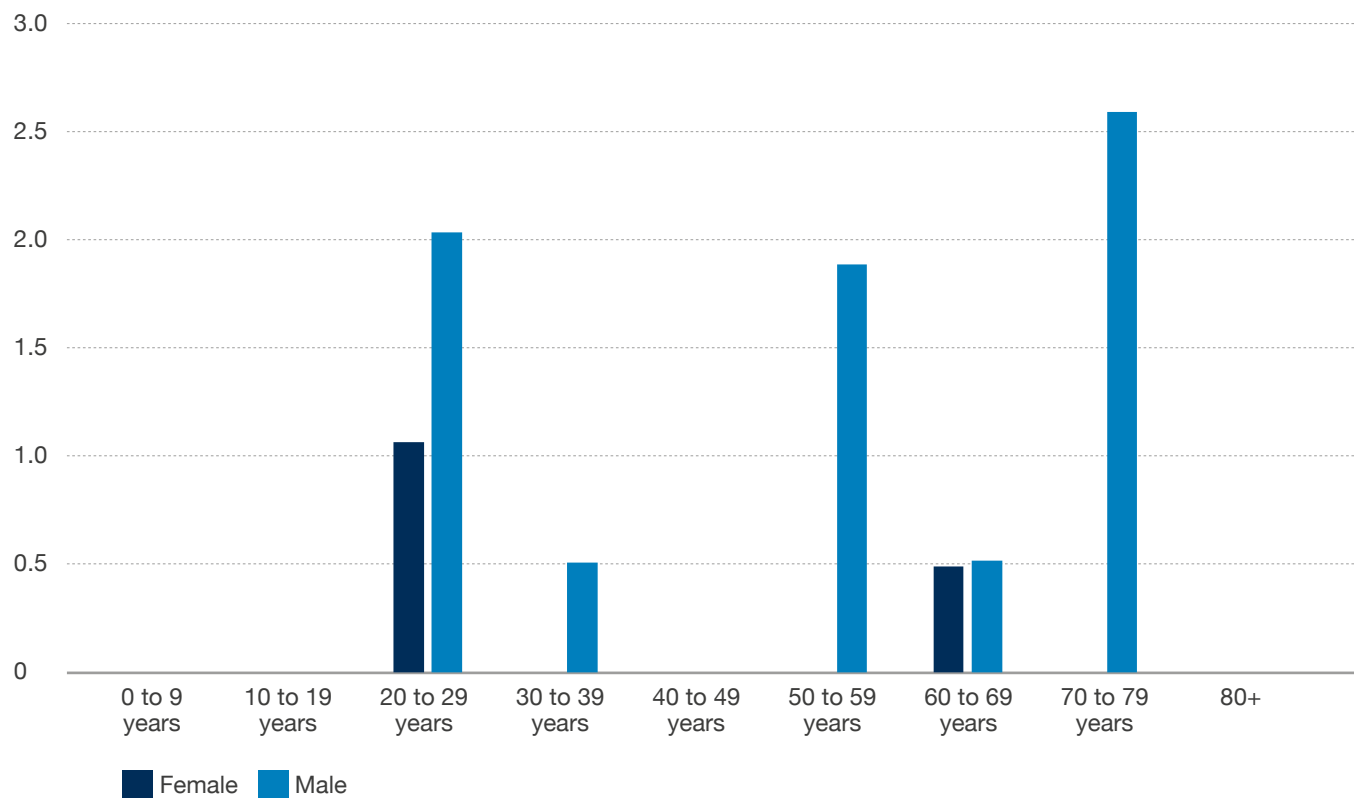


Figure 8: Accidental fatalities by age, sex and rate (based on ONS figures per 100,000). N = 17, 1 not recorded

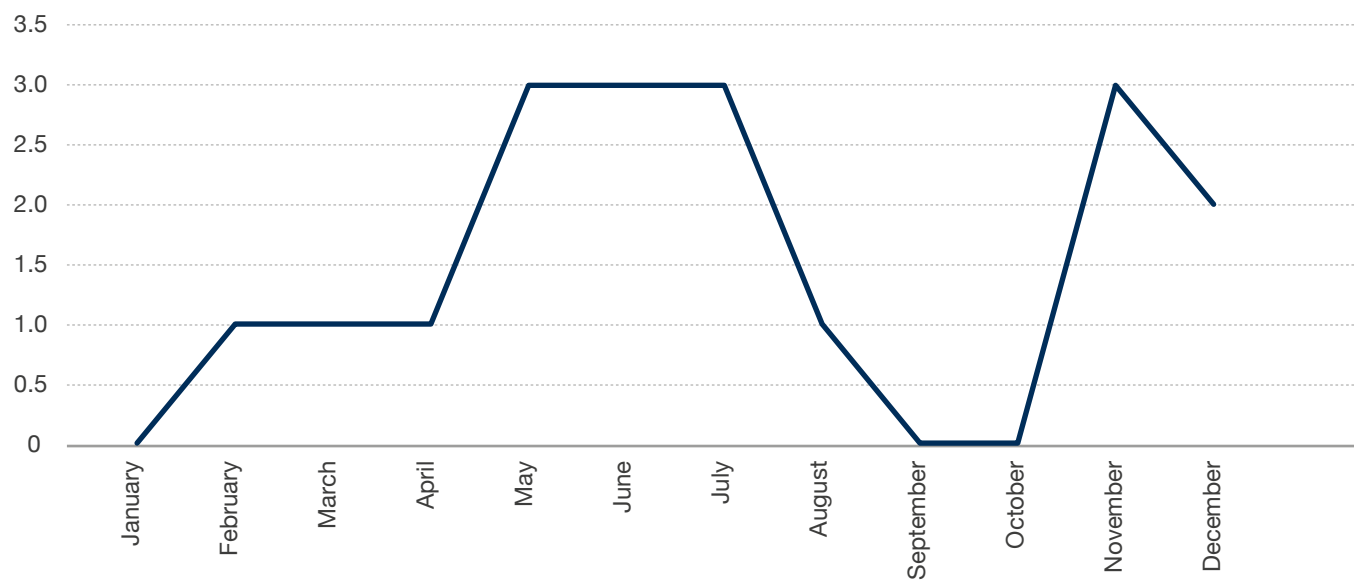


Figure 9: Accidental fatalities by month. N = 18

# Suicide fatalities

In 2024, there were 17 suicide fatalities at or near water in Wales. This is the higher than the previous year.

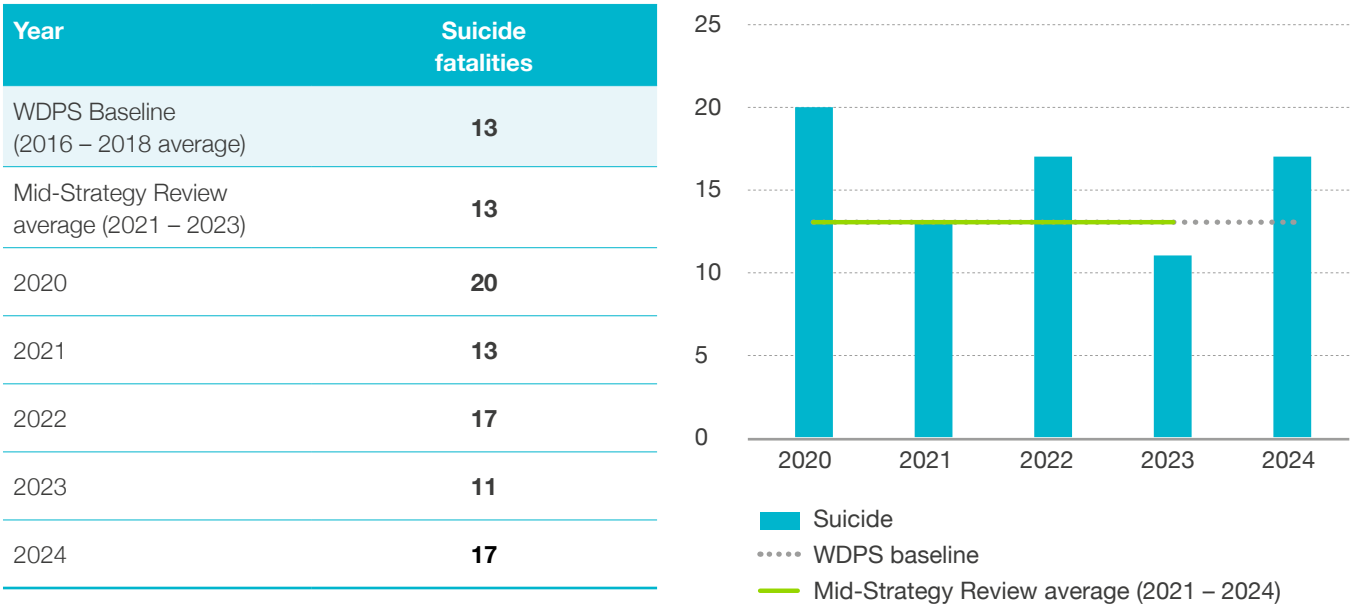


Figure 10: Suicide fatalities by year vs WDPS baseline (2016 – 2018) and Mid-Strategy Review average (2021 – 2023)

## Notes

All data used are from WAID 2019 – 2023 (v2) and 2024 (v1).  
“Accidental fatalities” refers to suspected/confirmed to accidental causes and natural water-related causes.  
“Suicide fatalities” refers to suspected/confirmed suicide causes.  
Population rate figures use ONS mid-year data.  
Figures 5 and 6 exclude ‘Ungrouped activities’.

### Baseline figures

The Wales baseline is based upon 2016 – 2018 WAID data – as detailed in Wales’ Drowning Prevention Strategy (WDPS) – and shows 45 water-related fatalities per year. 24 of which are accidental, 13 are suicide and the remainder are ‘not recorded’ or crime.

The Mid-Strategy Review provided updated averages (years 2021 – 2023) in order to ascertain changes to the baseline. It established that since the implementation of WDPS, there were an average of 51 overall water-related fatalities per year including 25 accidental fatalities and 13 suspected suicides.

### WAID taxonomies

WAID taxonomies for activity include:

- ‘Everyday activities’ – running, walking, cycling, mobility vehicle, motor other, commuting
- ‘Recreational activities’ – adventure sports, angling, boating (other), motorboating, sailing, waterside activities
- ‘Commercial activities’ – only includes those categorised as ‘commercial’
- ‘Exceptional activities’ – person/animal rescue, person on ice, flooding
- ‘Ungrouped activities’ – bathing, residential, unknown activity, undetermined