

NOT **AN** **~~ACCIDENT~~**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Not an Accident Campaign (NAC) is uniting with victims, survivors, and advocates across the United States to demand honesty, transparency, and accountability in how preventable deaths are classified and reported. We call on coroners, medical examiners, public agencies, and media outlets to stop mislabeling deaths caused by impaired driving, drug poisoning, or reckless behavior as “accidents” — a label that obscures the truth and dishonors victims. Every year, thousands of families lose loved ones to deadly, preventable choices. Recent data show how widespread and varied these tragedies are.

Recent U.S. Statistics on Preventable Deaths

Total motor vehicle crash deaths in 2023: **40,901**. [III+2NHTSA+2](#)

- In crashes involving at least one alcohol-impaired driver, there were **12,429 fatalities** in 2023 — roughly 30% of all traffic deaths. [TRID+1](#)
- Fatalities in crashes involving distracted drivers: **3,275 people** died in 2023. [NHTSA+1](#)

According to provisional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2023 there were an estimated **81,083 drug-poisoning deaths involving opioids** nationwide [CDC+1](#)

- Of those, deaths involving synthetic opioids (e.g. illegally manufactured fentanyl) numbered **74,702** in 2023. [CDC+1](#)
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“When someone dies because another person chose to drive impaired, distribute lethal opioids, or act recklessly — that is not an accident,” said Matt Capelouto, Not an Accident Campaign.

“Misclassifying these deaths as ‘accidents’ refuses responsibility, distorts public understanding, and denies families the dignity of truth. These numbers remind us that each death was a preventable act. We demand that every victim be recognized for what really happened — and that no preventable death be dismissed as an accident.”

Supporters such as We Save Lives, led by Candace Lightner, underscore the urgency:

“Families need the truth — not euphemisms,” Lightner said. **“Just as passengers should speak up when they see dangerous driving, we must speak up when we see misleading language that protects offenders and harms victims. Words matter — and the truth matters most.”**

Why Accurate Classification Matters

- Misclassification hides the criminal and preventable nature of these fatal acts.
 - It distorts public health and safety data, undermining policy, prevention, and justice efforts.
 - It retraumatizes families by minimizing the reality of what occurred.
 - It hinders advocacy, accountability, and meaningful reform.
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NAC's Call to Action

The Not an Accident Campaign urges:

- **Truthful classification** — preventable deaths caused by impaired driving, drug poisoning (especially opioids), or reckless behavior should be recorded as such, not softened by “accident” labels.
 - **Modern, evidence-based standards** — update outdated classification systems still in use since 1910.
 - **Transparent public records and media reporting** — ensure the real cause is clear and communicated honestly.
 - **Policy reform and prevention efforts** — use accurate data to support stronger laws, better enforcement, community education, and victim support.
 - **Support for families** — enable grieving families to challenge misclassification, access resources, and honor their loved ones truthfully.
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The Truth and Accountability Promise

NAC calls on families, supporters, public officials, and media to sign the **Truth and Accountability Promise** — a pledge to:

- Reject language that hides responsibility.
- Demand accurate classification for preventable deaths.
- Stand with victims and families seeking justice and transparency.
- Support changes to public policy, reporting, and prevention to help ensure no life lost is forgotten or misrepresented.

More information — including resources, sample letters, and how to join the petition — is available at **NotAnAccident.info**.

About the Not an Accident Campaign (NAC)

The Not an Accident Campaign is a national alliance of victims, survivors, families, legal professionals, and advocates committed to truth, transparency, and justice. NAC challenges outdated classification systems that mislabel preventable deaths as accidents. The organization works to reform policies, support families, educate the public, and ensure that every preventable death is recognized for what it truly was — a preventable act caused by human choices.

They deserve the truth.