National Violent Death Reporting System
Data Sharing Agreement for Restricted Access Dataset Release

Please read carefully before submitting a request

The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), conducts National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) activities under the authority granted by the Public Health Service Act (PHSA). NVDRS data are protected by federal confidentiality laws including Section 308(d) of the PHSA [42 U.S.C. 242m(d)]. Consistent with Section 308(d) of the PHSA, identifiable information obtained by NCIPC for NVDRS may not be used for any purpose other than the purpose for which it was supplied and may not be released or published in identifiable form. Any effort to determine the identity of individuals and establishments using NVDRS data violates the Assurance of Confidentiality granted for this information pursuant to Section 308(d).

This agreement cannot be altered in any way and the guidance stated in this agreement cannot be modified for any individual project.

I. General

1. Purpose

The NVDRS Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) was created to govern the protection and use of sensitive or potentially identifiable NVDRS data. For CDC to release NVDRS Restricted Access Database (RAD) data, external users must establish a data sharing agreement with CDC. Approved requestors of RAD and their collaborators (including any individuals who will be working on the RAD project, regardless of their access to the RAD dataset) must agree to comply with the NVDRS DSA prior to the release of any data.

2. Background

NVDRS is a population-based, active surveillance system designed to obtain a complete census of violent deaths within a participating jurisdiction. Data collection began in 2003. Each participating jurisdiction collects information on its own deaths from death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports (including toxicology reports), and law enforcement reports. Related fatal injuries involving multiple victims that occur within 24 hours of each other are linked in one incident. The system contains hundreds of unique data elements. As of 2018, the system includes all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Cases consist of deaths from suicide, homicide, legal intervention (e.g., individual is killed by law enforcement acting in the line of duty), unintentional firearm injuries, and deaths of undetermined intent that may have been due to violence. Information is collected on the suspect (when known) and the relationship of the victim to the suspect to further characterize homicides.

CDC receives information about violent deaths from the health departments of participating jurisdictions (or their bona fide agents) pursuant to the NVDRS Cooperative Agreement (CDC-RFA-CE22-2201) that funds the jurisdictions' participation. CDC can only provide RAD requestors national-level data intended for national analyses. Applicants interested in single jurisdiction analyses (e.g., proposals focused on a single jurisdiction) or within jurisdiction analyses (e.g., counties or parishes within a particular jurisdiction) need to

request data directly from the jurisdiction of interest. Applicants interested in regional analyses (e.g., states in the Southwest or Appalachia) need to request data directly from all jurisdictions of interest. Jurisdiction information is listed at https://www.cdc.gov/nvdrs/about/state-profiles.html or may be requested by emailing nvdrs-rad@cdc.gov.

NVDRS RAD data do not contain direct personal identifiers, such as a name and street address, but they do include indirect identifiers, such as city of residence, county of injury, and certain details in the incident narratives. Some of the data pertain to open investigations and include sensitive information, such as documentation of intimate partner violence and child abuse victimization or perpetration, substance abuse, and mental illness history.

NVDRS data can be merged to a number of datasets. For example, CDC has linked NVDRS data with county-level social vulnerability data obtained from the Minority Health Social Vulnerability Index (MH-SVI) and the County Health Rankings (CHR). The MH-SVI comes from publicly available data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, CDC, Department of Homeland Security, RX Open, and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. MH-SVI data are available for each state and the District of Columbia (reference: MH-SVI overview). The CHR was developed by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute using publicly available data from a variety of national and federal datasets, including the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Summary (BRFSS), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), American Community Survey (ACS), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Stanford Education Data Archive, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and Census Population Estimates. CHR data are available for each state and the District of Columbia (reference: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps). **This linked NVDRS, MH-SVI, and CHR dataset is provided to all RAD users. If the applicant going to use this linked dataset for analysis, the applicant should state that in the proposal and note how this linked dataset will be used.**

All proposals will be reviewed by a panel of scientists at the CDC. The data must not be used for any other purpose beyond that specified in the approved request. CDC staff are unable to provide analytic or other technical assistance to any recipient(s) (i.e., applicant and any collaborators) of NVDRS RAD for the proposed analyses.

CDC will monitor compliance with the terms of the DSA. CDC will search the published literature for mention of the NVDRS to ensure that the use of NVDRS RAD for those publications was authorized. In addition, CDC may contact RAD users to inquire about publications of NVDRS RAD. CDC may take other actions to ensure compliance, as necessary.

II. Requirements for Submitting an NVDRS RAD Request

1. Eligibility to Apply for NVDRS RAD

Access to NVDRS RAD is restricted to individuals and institutions that CDC can ensure will use NVDRS data for the purpose for which it was supplied as required under Section 308(d) of the PHSA and will protect the data contained within RAD as required under NVDRS's Assurance of Confidentiality. The 308(d) Assurance of Confidentiality is used to prevent CDC staff from having to share these confidential data for unintended purposes. The success of NVDRS depends on the collection of the sensitive information from law enforcement and coroner/medical examiner reports. NVDRS is the only source that collates these data to provide comprehensive information about violent deaths in the United States. It is the professional, ethical, and legal responsibility of each permanent CDC employee, their contractors, guest researchers, fellows, and other non-CDC researchers who may be granted access to research or surveillance data to protect the confidentiality of all data reported to CDC.

Therefore, access to NVDRS RAD will only be granted to applicants and collaborators that demonstrate training in and understanding of the ethical use of protected, sensitive data, which includes any of the following criteria:

- Current completed Institutional Review Board (IRB) or similar ethical data use training (for example, Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative: https://about.citiprogram.org/);
- Earned a master's degree or higher in a relevant field (e.g., public health, criminal justice, medicine);
- Hold a public health or research position or faculty appointment at his/her institution. This includes employees of local, county, tribal, state, and federal governments or other public health authorities.

Eligible applicants must prepare and submit a proposal. The ability of the applicant to conduct the proposed analyses (e.g., whether the requested NVDRS data is appropriate for the proposed analysis or whether the applicant has access to external datasets they propose linking with NVDRS data) and to comply with NVDRS RAD security, confidentiality, and data protection requirements is considered during the proposal package review process. All applicants and collaborators must agree to comply with NVDRS RAD security, confidentiality, and data protection requirements as outlined in this document.

2. Description of the New Proposed Project

Please review the details regarding required proposal components. The 2-4 page proposal must include the following:

1. Project title
2. Abstract summarizing the proposed project (max. 250 words)
3. Full personal identification, degree(s), position or appointment type, institutional affiliation, mailing addresses, and email address of the applicant(s). Applicants will be primarily responsible for care of the data and for ensuring and monitoring compliance with the terms of the data sharing agreement.
4. Names, degrees, roles/positions, institutional affiliations, and email addresses of all other collaborators.
5. Source of funding for the proposed project. If not funded, please note "N/A" for this section.
6. Background of study (max. 250 words)
    - Dataset being used (NVDRS or the NVDRS/MH-SVI/CHR linked dataset): only one option can be chosen
    - Key study questions or hypotheses
    - Public health benefits: Requestors must provide evidence that there is a legitimate public health purpose that justifies the use of the data.
    - Explanation of why this project requires NVDRS data specifically. What unique aspect(s) of NVDRS data are needed for this project that are not available through other data sources?
7. Methods for the study (max. 700 words)
    - Summary of the variables needed for the proposed public health project. A file specifications sheet that lists available variables in the NVDRS RAD will be provided prior to submitting the proposal and should be used for this purpose. This sheet with requested variables should be returned with the proposal.
    - If sensitive variables (as marked on the file specifications sheet) are being requested, sufficient justification for their request (i.e., explanation of why the variables are needed to answer study questions) must be included in the proposal.
    - In addition to specifying the requested NVDRS variables, any data from other sources that might be merged with NVDRS data should be described. **The NVDRS dataset cannot be merged with or linked to other sources that have personally identifiable information (PII) as it could potentially result in the identification of individuals. If your proposal is a linkage project, only probabilistic linkages are allowed.** A description of the data source(s), how the source(s) will be linked to NVDRS, and written confirmation that no PII are included in the

linked data are required.
    - Proposed analytic strategy (e.g., statistical analysis, data linkages)
8. Data management plan (max. 500 words)
    - Description of the mechanisms that will be in place to secure the data, preserve confidentiality, and prevent unauthorized access. These mechanisms are to include the data storage plan, limitations on access to the data, technical security practices such as password protection, use of stand-alone computers, encryption, and procedures covering networked computers and servers.
    - Description of the destruction plan of all NVDRS RAD files, and any files derived from the RAD dataset that was provided, when the approved use of the data will have been completed (see section III.1.j).
9. Description of the anticipated public health products, reports, and publications to be derived from the data analyses proposed (max. 250 words)

3. RAD Access Request

A complete request for NVDRS RAD includes:

1. Cover letter on official home institution letterhead
2. Project proposal (see section II.2)
3. File specifications sheet, indicating all variables being requested
4. Copy of this DSA signed by all collaborators who will be working on the RAD project, regardless of whether they will be accessing the RAD dataset
5. Copy of the NVDRS RAD proposal checklist with the applicant's initials next to each item acknowledging understanding and agreement

III. Terms and Conditions of the NVDRS Data Sharing Agreement

1. Terms Governing Use, Protection, and Reporting of Data

Prior to the release of any data, applicants(s) and their collaborators must agree to comply with all of the terms and conditions described below. The applicant's home institution might also require ethical review and approval of projects by an independent body, such as an Institutional Review Board (IRB). It is the applicant's responsibility to check with his or her institution and obtain any necessary approvals (e.g., IRB approval) for your records.

a. Use Limited to Project

The applicant(s) and all collaborators agree that the data will be used solely for the project and purpose approved by CDC. Furthermore, the applicant(s) and all collaborators agree to refrain from any attempt to link NVDRS RAD to any other dataset without prior permission from CDC (any intention to link NVDRS RAD with other data should be specified in the initial request or amendment request for the RAD and approved by CDC). Applicants seeking to conduct additional analyses not specified in the approved proposal or to receive additional data years or variables that do not substantively change the scope of the approved project may contact the NVDRS RAD program to complete a project amendment request. At that time, instructions for completing an amendment request will be provided.

Examples of changes that would substantially alter the scope of a project include, but are not limited to, significant changes in the analytic question, hypotheses, study focus, analytic methods, population, manners of death, or theoretical framework such that the background section of the original proposal would no longer be appropriate. Changes would require a new proposal rather than an amendment to an existing project.

b. Non-transferability of Agreement

Personnel-related changes made to the project (including, but not limited to, the appointment of a new applicant to complete the project, the inclusion of additional collaborators, or a change in the applicant's institutional affiliation) require the execution of a new DSA during the process. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to alert the CDC of such changes (within 21 days of the change). If the applicant of NVDRS RAD changes positions or leaves an agency or institution and will no longer be continuing the project, CDC should be notified within a week, and the applicant will be required to destroy the data as directed by the CDC.

c. No Disclosure of Data

The applicant(s) and all collaborators agree to employ all reasonable efforts to maintain the confidentiality of the data, with such efforts to be no less than the degree of care exercised in the preservation and safeguarding of an applicant's own personal data. The applicant(s) and all collaborators further agree not to disclose, reveal, or transmit the data, with or without charge, to any entity or any individual not listed in section III.k. without prior approval from the CDC.

In the event that the applicant is required by judicial or administrative process to disclose the data, the applicant must: (1) immediately notify CDC's NCIPC and allow CDC a reasonable time to oppose the process; and (2) work in collaboration with CDC to maintain confidentiality of the data as allowed by applicable law.

d. Non-identification of Subjects

The applicant(s) and all collaborators of NVDRS RAD agree to the following confidentiality restrictions:

- NVDRS data will be used solely for statistical analyses related to the approved project. No attempt will be made to identify specific individuals, households, or institutions. Data lists at the individual-level will not be published or distributed.
- In the event of inadvertent discovery of the identity of any person during the course of the proposed project, the applicant(s) will (1) notify the NVDRS RAD program which will then route the notification to the NCIPC Associate Director for Science; (2) safeguard or destroy the identifying information as directed by the CDC; and (3) make no use of knowledge of the discovery. The identifying information must not be disclosed to any other individual or party.
- All identifiable information obtained by CDC for NVDRS is protected under an Assurance of Confidentiality issued pursuant to Section 308(d) of the PHSA. An Assurance of Confidentiality is a formal confidentiality protection for certain identifiable information maintained by CDC authorized under Section 308(d) of the PHSA.
- If the DSA is violated, the applicant(s) may be restricted from using NVDRS data in the future and required to destroy all copies of the data.
- The data files provided to the applicant(s) and all collaborators must be stored on, and accessed from, the secure computer system of the applicants' and all collaborators' affiliated organization or institution. This means that the applicant(s) and all collaborators should store files on a server that is behind a firewall, has data encryption, permits file access only to the approved collaborators, and has encrypted network communications. The applicant(s) and all collaborators would then access the files from a password-protected institutional desktop or laptop. If a secure computer system is not available, the applicant(s) and all collaborators should store files on an encrypted, password-protected, stand-alone computer or laptop protected by anti-virus and anti-malware software.
- Applicants must provide justification in their proposal for NVDRS variables that are more sensitive to subject identification (e.g., dates, small geographic areas, or suspect data), as outlined in the file specifications sheet. CDC will not approve release of these data without appropriate justification.
- The inadvertent disclosure of potentially identifying information is to be avoided by using the following guidelines for the release of statistics derived from the requested dataset. For any data release format:

i. Annual counts and rates must be suppressed for cities or counties of fewer than 100,000 people.

ii. Cells showing or derived from fewer than 10 deaths must be suppressed, but "zero" cells may be shown. Cell "suppression" will take one of two approaches:

1) combining row or column categories so as to eliminate the small cells, or

2) suppressing the small cell, another cell in the same row, another cell in the same column, and a fourth cell at the intersection of the row and column containing the second and third suppressed cells. Suppression of the second and third additional cells is necessary to prevent derivation of the small cell by subtraction from the row or column totals. Suppression of the fourth cell is necessary to prevent derivation of the second or third cells by subtraction. Beyond these specific guidelines, it must not otherwise be possible to derive identifying information by subtraction or other calculation from a table, or combination of tables, in any release format.

iii. Rates are not to be computed for cells containing fewer than 20 deaths (or cases).

iv. The disclosed data should never permit identification when used in combination with other known data.

- **When providing any qualitative summaries, anonymity should be ensured with all potentially identifiable information removed and any text that may indirectly identify an individual removed so all involved individuals cannot be identified.**
    i. **Do not directly "quote" narratives; do not transcribe text from a narrative into a publication or presentation. Use a composite or fictional narrative rather than an actual narrative. This can be done by taking several narratives and rearranging or modifying the details so that the example borrows details from different narratives and is therefore not reflective of a particular incident. Applicants should also include a footnote in presentations or publications that note narratives are fictional or composites. For example, the footnote may read, "To protect privacy while illustrating various aspects of victimization, we created fictional scenarios as examples."**
    ii. **Please see the NVDRS User Guidelines provided in your application materials for more details and examples regarding reporting narrative data.**

e. Maintenance of Data Security and Oversight

The applicant(s) and all collaborators must ensure that the data security measures as required by section II.2.9 are enforced and maintained at all times during possession of NVDRS RAD. The applicant shall ensure that no unauthorized person (e.g., collaborators not listed in section III.k.) has access to the contents of NVDRS RAD files or to any files derived from RAD. Upon request, the applicant agrees to permit the inspection by the CDC of the physical storage, management, and handling of RAD files (at reasonable hours) and any other information relating to the DSA.

f. Notification of Pending Publications

The applicant(s) agrees to notify the CDC in advance as to when and where a publication of a report (or other public disclosure) from the project will appear. In addition, the applicant(s) agrees to provide the CDC, in advance of its appearance, a copy of any manuscript or other public disclosure document. CDC will respect the embargoed information and requests that this information is provided for awareness and record keeping purposes.

g. Non-endorsement Liability

The applicant(s) and all collaborators agree not to claim or imply Governmental endorsement of the project, the entity, or personnel conducting the project. **Any published material derived from NVDRS data must acknowledge the CDC as the provider of the data and participating NVDRS jurisdictions as the source(s) of the data. Published materials must also include a disclaimer that credits any analyses, interpretations, or conclusions reached by the author (i.e., the applicant(s) and any collaborators) to**

that author and not to the original sources of the data (i.e., NVDRS participating jurisdictions) or to the CDC. The disclaimer should take the following form: "The National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) is administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) by participating NVDRS jurisdictions. The findings and conclusions of this study are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily represent the official position of the CDC or of participating NVDRS jurisdictions."

h. Termination and Disqualification
The CDC, in its sole discretion, may terminate the DSA if it determines that the applicant(s) and/or any collaborators are in violation of any condition of the DSA and such violation is not remedied within 30 days after the date of written notice of the violation.

Furthermore, failure to comply with the DSA may result in the disqualification of the applicant(s) and collaborators from having access to the NVDRS data. Violations should be addressed by contacting CDC's NVDRS RAD program.

i. Duplication of Project
The applicant(s) and all collaborators of NVDRS RAD acknowledge that other applicants have access to NVDRS data in the form of public-use datasets and RAD and that duplication of projects is a distinct possibility.

j. Destruction of All Sensitive Files at Project Completion
The applicant(s) agrees to destroy all NVDRS RAD files, and all derived files three years from the receipt of the data unless otherwise specified. Before the 3-year period expires, the applicant(s) can apply to extend this destruction date. Applicants can renew after the allowable access period for up to two 11-year extensions.

k. Signatures
CDC represents that it has the requisite power and authority to enter into this DSA and to perform according to its terms.

The applicant or other authorized official warrants and represents that they have the requisite power and authority to enter into this DSA and to perform according to its terms, and that the applicant or other authorized official signing this DSA has authority to do so.

All listed recipients hereby agree to abide by the terms and conditions of this DSA.

Applicant or Other Authorized Official

Printed name	Institution
Signature	Date

All other collaborators (e.g., research assistants, statisticians):

Printed name	Institution
Signature	Date

Printed name	Institution
Signature	Date
Printed name	Institution
Signature	Date
Printed name	Institution
Signature	Date

2. NVDRS Science Officer Contact Information

All requests for NVDRS RAD, or questions pertaining to NVDRS RAD, should be forwarded to:

NVDRS team
nvdrs-rad@cdc.gov

NVDRS Science Officer
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Division of Violence Prevention
Surveillance Branch
4770 Buford Hwy NE, MS106-10
Atlanta, Georgia 30341

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

NVDRS *National Violent Death Reporting System*

NVDRS Restricted Access Database (RAD) Proposal Submission Checklist

Application and Analytic Considerations

The applicant should initial each box,
indicating that you have read and understood each item.

Initials	Checklist Items
	The applicant acknowledges that he or she meets the eligibility requirements to apply for NVDRS Restricted Access Database as described here in the NVDRS Guidelines for RAD proposals.
	The NVDRS User Guidelines, NVDRS Data Dictionary, and NVDRS Coding Manual have all been carefully reviewed. Please note that different states have participated in NVDRS over time, different variables have been added over time, and certain variables are known to have high levels of missing data.
	The applicant agrees that NVDRS data will be used solely for statistical analyses related to the approved project. No attempt will be made to identify specific individuals, households, or institutions. Data lists at the individual level will not be published or distributed. Applicant(s) and collaborators who fail to comply with data use guidelines may be restricted from using NVDRS data in the future.
	If narratives will be used to illustrate case examples in presentations and papers, the applicant has reviewed the guidance for ensuring anonymity when presenting narratives (i.e., remove all text that may indirectly identify individuals, use composite or fictional narratives) outlined in the NVDRS User Guidelines.
	The applicant agrees to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of potentially identifying information by using the following guidelines for the release of statistics derived from the requested dataset. For any data release format: i. Annual counts and rates must be suppressed for cities or counties of fewer than 100,000 people. ii. Cells showing or derived from fewer than 10 deaths must be suppressed, but "zero" cells may be shown. Cell "suppression" will take one of two approaches: 1) combining row or column categories so as to eliminate the small cells, or 2) suppressing the small cell, another cell in the same row, another cell in the same column, and a fourth cell at the intersection of the row and column containing the second and third suppressed cells. Suppression of the second and third additional cells is necessary to prevent derivation of the small cell by subtraction from the row or column totals. Suppression of the fourth cell is necessary to prevent derivation of the second or third cells by subtraction. Beyond

	these specific guidelines, it must not otherwise be possible to derive identifying information by subtraction or other calculation from a table, or combination of tables, in any release format. iii. Rates are not to be computed for cells containing fewer than 20 deaths (or cases). iv. The disclosed data should never permit identification when used in combination with other known data.
	If analyses of subcounty data (e.g., ZIP code, city) will be conducted, these variables can only be used for aggregate modeling purposes. To prevent inadvertent disclosure, subcounty counts cannot be displayed in any presentations, products, or other analytic outputs.
	The applicant agrees to notify the CDC in advance as to when and where a publication of a report (or other public disclosure) from the project will appear.
	The applicant acknowledges that violation of any condition of the NVDRS RAD Data Sharing Agreement may result in the disqualification of the applicant(s) and collaborators from having access to the NVDRS data.
	Proposal Package
	The proposal package includes all required items listed here in the NVDRS RAD Proposal Packet and Submission section.
	The names of all collaborators who will be working on the RAD project, regardless of access to the RAD dataset have been included in the application packet.
	The applicant has ensured that all collaborators who will be working on the RAD project, regardless of access to the RAD dataset, have reviewed and signed the NVDRS RAD Data Sharing Agreement. The applicant and collaborators all agree to comply with the terms and conditions described in the NVDRS RAD Data Sharing Agreement.
	RAD proposals that include a request for the following variables must include a justification as to why these variables are necessary for the study: *Manners of death, County of residence, City of residence, ZIP code of residence, Date of injury, Time of injury, County of injury occurrence, City of injury occurrence, ZIP code of injury occurrence, County in which the death occurred, Date pronounced dead, Date of death, and Suspect variables*. RAD requestors who submit proposals that do not include justification for the abovementioned variables will be required to revise and resubmit proposals providing justification or removing the variables from their proposed analyses and NVDRS File Specification sheet.

	A NVDRS File Specification sheet that includes the most recent data year has been completed and is included in the application packet. Variables selected on the NVDRS File Specification sheet are necessary in order to answer study questions. A RAD requester who submits a NVDRS File Specification sheet that does not align with the proposal will be required to revise and resubmit an NVDRS File Specification sheet that only includes variables needed to answer study questions.
	The RAD requester has included a Data Management Plan, including a description of the mechanisms that will be in place to secure the data, preserve confidentiality, and prevent unauthorized access.
	All file names in your proposal package follow the naming convention of: applicant's last name, year of submission, name of document (e.g., *Jones_2025_Data Sharing Agreement, Jones_2025_Proposal*).
	The subject line of the emailed submission should follow the naming convention of: applicant's last name, NVDRS RAD Application (e.g., *Jones NVDRS RAD Application*).
Amendment Policy	
	The applicant agrees to obtain appropriate written permissions from CDC for changes to the project such as minor updates to study questions or proposed analyses, any new investigators or staff who will be added to an approved project, or requests for updated data years or additional variables. Such written permissions should be obtained in the form of an amendment. RAD requesters can request an amendment from CDC NVDRS RAD staff.