

## MOVAC – Berkeley County Excess Death Analysis

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Based on population numbers provided by [West Virginia Demographics](#), Berkeley County is the second largest county in the state with 132,440 total residents. MOVAC has performed numerous detailed analyses on Wood County excess death. Via that analysis, we confirmed that 2021 saw the highest levels of death experienced in recent history. Based on that analysis and the publication of the 2021 vital statistics by the WV DHHR, we are finally able to provide an analysis of this excess death phenomenon for each county in West Virginia.

As you can see from the two tables below, Berkeley County’s experience with excess death in 2020 and 2021 was almost twice as devastating as it was for the state as a whole:

Year	Total WV Death	Percent Change
2011	21,870	
2012	21,651	-1.00%
2013	21,846	0.90%
2014	22,164	1.46%
2015	22,643	2.16%
2016	22,721	0.34%
2017	23,290	2.50%
2018	23,462	0.74%
2019	23,291	-0.73%
<b>2020</b>	<b>26,108</b>	<b>12.09%</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>29,402</b>	<b>26.24%</b>

Year	Total Berkeley County Death	Percent Change
2011	881	
2012	888	0.79%
2013	918	3.38%
2014	992	8.06%
2015	984	-0.81%
2016	1,050	6.71%
2017	1,051	0.10%
2018	1,102	4.85%
2019	1,097	-0.45%
<b>2020</b>	<b>1,372</b>	<b>25.07%</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>1,533</b>	<b>39.74%</b>

Data source - [https://dhhr.wv.gov/HSC/SS/Vital\\_Statistics/Pages/Vital\\_Statistics.aspx](https://dhhr.wv.gov/HSC/SS/Vital_Statistics/Pages/Vital_Statistics.aspx)

**Note – While each of the other years in the tables above are compared to the prior year, 2021 is compared to the pre-pandemic year of 2019. It makes no sense to compare 2021 to an already pandemic-effected elevated death total in 2020.**

The first thing one should notice from this table is that Berkeley County was greatly impacted by the pandemic in 2020. The increase in death for 2020 skyrocketed by 25.07%. Easily the largest increase in the 2011-2020 ten-year span and twice the 12.09% experienced statewide.

The 1,533 deaths experienced in 2021 represent a 39.74% increase over the pre-pandemic year of 2019, and that growth in death was significantly higher than the 2021 statewide increase of 26.24%. As you can see, 2020 and 2021 ravaged Berkeley County.

The age-ranged tables that follow were created by compiling each year’s age-ranged data provided on the “Age at Death by County of Residence” table in the appendix section of each year’s [Vital Statistics Report published by DHHR from 2011 to 2020](#). The 2021 report no longer contains these detailed schedules. We contacted the DHHR for the 2021 details and were provided a spreadsheet containing the county level detail.

**Age Ranges of Concern**

The following are the tables for age ranges with the most alarming trends culminating in 2021. Please note, many of these deaths are occurring in our working age citizens. Shouldn’t this be investigated by our elected officials?

(\*)Note – For each of the age ranges below, the two highest years in regards to total death are identified by the bold boxes. The percent change column is comparing totals for each year to the prior year for years 2011 through 2020. For the 2021 percent change calculation, the next highest death total is identified and used as the comparison year.

Age Range 35-44			Age Range 55-64		
Year	Total Death	Percent Change	Year	Total Death	Percent Change
2011	42		2011	145	
2012	30	-28.57%	2012	146	0.69%
2013	38	26.67%	2013	151	3.42%
2014	38	0.00%	2014	144	-4.64%
2015	32	-15.79%	2015	149	3.47%
2016	49	53.13%	2016	170	14.09%
2017	50	2.04%	2017	150	-11.76%
2018	28	-44.00%	2018	189	26.00%
2019	34	21.43%	2019	202	6.88%
<b>2020</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>129.41%</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>2021 *</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>-15.38%</b>	<b>2021 *</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>24.75%</b>

For the 35-44 age range, 2020 appears to have been a devastating year in Berkeley County. Not only did death rise by 129.41% over the prior year, death in 2020 was 56% percent higher than any other year from 2011 through 2019. And although 2021 saw a decrease in death from the 2020 high, the 66 deaths in 2021 represent a 32% increase over the pre-pandemic high of 50 in 2017.

For the 55-64 age range, 2020 saw no increase in death whatsoever. The concerning issue with this age range is – if the pandemic in 2020 had no impact, what happened in 2021 to so drastically increase total death. And while one could point to the 26% increase in 2018 as being comparable, those 189 deaths represent only an 11.17% increase over the previous high set in 2016 at 170 deaths. 2021’s increase of 24.75% over the next highest death total of 202 experienced in both 2019 and 2020, is double the next highest comparable increase.

Age Range 65-74			Age Range 75-84		
Year	Total Death	Percent Change	Year	Total Death	Percent Change
2011	182		2011	196	
2012	148	-18.68%	2012	244	24.49%
2013	187	26.35%	2013	213	-12.70%
2014	238	27.27%	2014	222	4.23%
2015	209	-12.18%	2015	230	3.60%
2016	229	9.57%	2016	236	2.61%
2017	232	1.31%	2017	247	4.66%
2018	257	10.78%	2018	250	1.21%
2019	265	3.11%	2019	236	-5.60%
2020	319	20.38%	2020	311	31.78%
<b>2021 *</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>17.24%</b>	<b>2021 *</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>16.72%</b>

Neither the 65-74 or 75-84 age ranges ever exceeded 270 deaths from 2011 to 2019. In both of these age ranges, not only did we exceed 300 deaths in 2020 and 2021, but 2021 saw a double digit increase over the previous year’s historic high.

If you are concerned about this catastrophic rise in Berkeley County death (as documented by your state), please consider sharing this information with state leaders responsible for representing your population.

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**Please note** – After the election, your delegate or senator may change. After November 5, 2024, please refer to the new rosters as published on the legislature’s website –

House Roster - <https://www.wvlegislature.gov/house/roster.cfm>

Senate Roster - <https://www.wvlegislature.gov/Senate1/roster.cfm>