

MOVCAC – Mason County Excess Death Analysis

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Based on population numbers provided by [West Virginia Demographics](#), Mason County ranks twenty-third in the state with 24,765 total residents. MOVCAC 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, even though a new record for total death was set, Mason County did not experience a rise in death like the rest of the state in 2020. However, 2021 saw death rise in Mason County by an astonishing 26.41%:

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%
2020	26,108	12.09%
2021	29,402	26.24%

Year	Total Mason County Death	Percent Change
2011	325	
2012	303	-6.77%
2013	337	11.22%
2014	359	6.53%
2015	366	1.95%
2016	343	-6.28%
2017	346	0.87%
2018	374	8.09%
2019	390	4.28%
2020	398	2.05%
2021	493	26.41%

Data source - 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.

Even though 2020 showed no unreasonable rise in death, the age range analysis below shows alarming death in Mason County’s working age citizens in the 55-64 age category? The county, as a whole, then experienced a catastrophic rise in 2021 mirroring the 26.24% rise in death statewide.

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	12		2011	45	
2012	11	-8.33%	2012	39	-13.33%
2013	12	9.09%	2013	47	20.51%
2014	9	-25.00%	2014	64	36.17%
2015	8	-11.11%	2015	46	-28.13%
2016	14	75.00%	2016	67	45.65%
2017	12	-14.29%	2017	53	-20.90%
2018	14	16.67%	2018	59	11.32%
2019	16	14.29%	2019	50	-15.25%
2020	13	-18.75%	2020	65	30.00%
2021 *	30	87.50%	2021 *	88	31.34%

The 35-44 age range saw no significant effect on death during the pandemic year of 2020. What in the world happened in Mason County in 2021 where death in the 35-44 age range skyrocketed by 87.5%? Perhaps this is drug overdoses, accidents, or deaths of despair – whatever the cause, shouldn't there be a detailed analysis by those in charge of public health? Shouldn't this be a five-alarm fire for Mason County Leadership? It can be difficult to draw any inference from such a small number, but an 87.5% increase, when we know other age ranges are also setting records, should be investigated.

For the 55-64 age range, 2020 saw a 30% rise for this working-age category in Mason County. Then in 2021, death rose by enough to surpass the record year of 2016 by 31.34%. Again, this is the backbone of Mason County's working-age population. Shouldn't we care enough to investigate these deaths thoroughly?

Age Range 65-74		
Year	Total Death	Percent Change
2011	62	
2012	64	3.23%
2013	76	18.75%
2014	75	-1.32%
2015	84	12.00%
2016	66	-21.43%
2017	67	1.52%
2018	81	20.90%
2019	85	4.94%
2020	87	2.35%
2021 *	99	13.79%

Age Range 75-84		
Year	Total Death	Percent Change
2011	97	
2012	83	-14.43%
2013	95	14.46%
2014	82	-13.68%
2015	104	26.83%
2016	77	-25.96%
2017	84	9.09%
2018	83	-1.19%
2019	108	30.12%
2020	111	2.78%
2021 *	123	10.81%

The 65-74 and 75-84 age ranges both set records for total death in Mason County in 2020. Not unexpected when dealing with a once a century pandemic. Shouldn't we be curious when the following year total death again grows by double digits to set new records?

Is anyone in Mason County curious about what happened in 2021 to create such alarming increases in death? Are these citizen's lives not worthy of investigation?

If you are concerned about this rise in Mason 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>