

MOVAC – Ritchie County Excess Death Analysis

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Based on population numbers provided by [West Virginia Demographics](#), Ritchie County ranks forty-fourth in the state with 8,167 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.

Ritchie County is very small and thus the death numbers can be very volatile. However, even in this very small county, both 2020 and 2021 set the record for total deaths, when compared to the previous 11 years:

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 Ritchie County Death	Percent Change
2011	122	
2012	123	0.82%
2013	100	-18.70%
2014	132	32.00%
2015	126	-4.55%
2016	108	-14.29%
2017	133	23.15%
2018	133	0.00%
2019	113	-15.04%
2020	137	21.24%
2021	147	30.09%

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.

Why are we setting records for total death in the year after the pandemic began?

The age-ranged table that follows was 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 age-ranged table shows the most alarming growth for Ritchie County.

(*)Note – For the table 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 55-64		
Year	Total Death	Percent Change
2011	14	
2012	16	14.29%
2013	10	-37.50%
2014	18	80.00%
2015	18	0.00%
2016	16	-11.11%
2017	21	31.25%
2018	18	-14.29%
2019	21	16.67%
2020	18	-14.29%
2021 *	25	19.05%

It is very difficult to come to any conclusions with a population so small. The detailed age-range data provided by DHHR omits any death counts in an age range if the total is less than five deaths. For this reason, many of the age ranges could not be properly analyzed. However, the 55-64 age range shown above set the record for death in Ritchie County in 2021.

Ritchie County is not alone in setting their total death record in 2021. Forty-seven of the fifty-five counties in West Virginia saw 2021 set their record for total death.

If you are concerned about this alarming rise in total death in West Virginia (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>