

# Policy and Procedure for Requesting Access to Public Use Version of Maryland Violent Death Reporting System (MVDRS) Data File

Version date: July 13, 2023

The Maryland Violent Death Reporting System (MVDRS) is a systematic surveillance system for capturing detail about the circumstances of violent death events including homicide, suicide, accidental firearm-related deaths, legal intervention deaths, and violent deaths of undetermined intent. MVDRS is collected by the Center for Environmental, Occupational, and Injury Epidemiology under direction and guidance of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention as a project of the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS). Pre-analyzed MVDRS data products such as the annual statewide circumstances of suicide data packet are available on the MVDRS webpage at <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/Injury/Pages/mvdrs.aspx>. You may also contact the MVDRS project manager for information about available data at [mdh.mvdrs@maryland.org](mailto:mdh.mvdrs@maryland.org).

Requests for a public-use version of the MVDRS data file for independent analysis by data requesters requires approval by the MVDRS data managers and review by the Strategic Data Initiative (SDI) Team <https://health.maryland.gov/iac/Pages/sdi.aspx>. This document describes the process and timeline for making requests for data files and includes all MVDRS-required forms.

MVDRS data files are available by calendar year (January – December) beginning with 2003. Please note that a lag time of up to 16 months is allowed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for completion of this project. Upon completion, data undergo a thorough quality control procedure directed by the CDC, which takes several months. Therefore, data for January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 became available during the summer of 2021, and data for 2020 were not available until summer of 2022, and so on.

Due to the sensitive nature of the data and data suppression requirements set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), requesters will generally be provided a public use version of the raw data file which includes only the variables they specifically requested and which were approved by the MVDRS data managers. Public use data files will generally not include personally identifying information (PII) such as name, date of birth, death certificate number, medical examiner number, census tract and block, and so forth unless specifically requested and approved.

## Key steps:

1. Data file requests will be acknowledged upon receipt of the completed data file request and data use agreement.

2. Data file requests will then undergo an internal review process. Additional information may be requested to clarify a data file request.
3. An approval decision by the MVDRS program is typically provided within four weeks of request.
4. Upon approval by MVDRS, all requests for data files are reviewed by Maryland's Strategic Data Initiative (SDI). Timelines and requirements for SDI review are set forth by the SDI review body. For more information about SDI, please visit <https://health.maryland.gov/iac/Pages/sdi.aspx>.
5. The data file(s) is typically sent within two weeks of SDI approval; however, the time to produce the file will vary by size of the request and other programmatic activities. If the submitted DUA is not complete, including IRB documentation as appropriate, receipt of the data file will be delayed.

**Use the form below to submit a data file request and to sign a data use agreement (DUA). Both are required at the time of request.**

Please note: All fields are required. Failure to provide requested information, including copies of IRB approvals, as appropriate, will result in delays. If additional space is needed, please attach additional sheets.

# Maryland Violent Death Reporting System (MVDRS)

## Data File Request Form

<b>Requester contact information:</b>
Last name:
First name:
Organizational affiliation:
Phone number:
Email address:

**Description of need for data:**

Q1: Identify the years for which data are requested.						
<input type="checkbox"/> 2003	<input type="checkbox"/> 2004	<input type="checkbox"/> 2005	<input type="checkbox"/> 2006	<input type="checkbox"/> 2007	<input type="checkbox"/> 2008	<input type="checkbox"/> 2009
<input type="checkbox"/> 2010	<input type="checkbox"/> 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> 2012	<input type="checkbox"/> 2013	<input type="checkbox"/> 2014	<input type="checkbox"/> 2015	<input type="checkbox"/> 2016
<input type="checkbox"/> 2017	<input type="checkbox"/> 2018	<input type="checkbox"/> 2019	<input type="checkbox"/> 2020	<input type="checkbox"/> 2021		

Q2: Describe the purpose for which data are requested and the analyses that will be conducted, including the need for the public use data file. If this may be considered research, include a description of the proposed study design. In addition to a project overview, please describe your need to link MVDRS data to other data, if applicable. Include your anticipated project timeline and a description of any anticipated reports and publications.

Q3: List the variables you would like included in the data set and explain the importance of the variables to your analysis. No explanation is required for requesting demographic variables. Single explanations for groups of variables is acceptable in some circumstances (e.g. reason for requesting toxicology findings which include multiple variables requires one explanation). If you are requesting access to personally identifying information (PII) such as medical examiner record number, census block and tract, etc., please clearly state this and provide a detailed justification of the need for PII.

Q4: Describe the primary applicant's qualifications to perform proposed analyses. Include any prior experience analyzing large and complex data files. Include names and qualifications of all additional individuals participating in this project who will be granted access to the data file.

Q5: Identify the public health benefit of the proposed analysis, including any benefit to the State of Maryland.

Q6: If a requester's project may be considered research, the requester is required to submit an approval or exemption letter from the Maryland Department of Health Institutional Review Board (IRB) in addition to their own IRB, if applicable. If the requester does not believe their proposed analysis could be considered research, a full explanation of the reasons why must be provided below.

**Project considered research?** (Check "Yes" or "No" below)

**Yes**



**Select one**

- IRB decision received  
(Attach copy of IRB approval/exemption to data file request)
  
- IRB decision pending

**No**



**Explain**

## Maryland Violent Death Reporting System (MVDRS)

### Data Use Agreement

This agreement establishes the terms and conditions under which the data recipient and other analysts stated in this application can acquire and use the Maryland Violent Death Reporting System (MVDRS) data set.

1. The data recipient agrees to only use the data set for the purposes described in this application.
2. The data recipient agrees to only share, publish, or otherwise release any findings or conclusions derived from analysis of the MVDRS data set through the specific reports and publications described in the recipient's application **and** with prior review and approval by the MVDRS program prior to release of data.
3. The data recipient has the qualifications necessary to analyze large and complex public health data sets. The data recipient agrees to consult the MVDRS program with any data use or analysis questions.
4. The data recipient agrees to work collaboratively with the MVDRS program to understand and adhere to MVDRS data analysis and data suppression requirements, which prohibit any sharing or publication of data about populations and population sub-groups with fewer than 11 decedents represented in the data file.
5. The data recipient has obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or exemption for research involving deceased subjects from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) IRB and any additional affiliated IRBs as applicable.
6. The data recipient has obtained SDI approval for this project as applicable.
7. The data recipient agrees to use appropriate administrative, physical, and technical safeguards to prevent use or disclosure of the data set other than as provided for by this agreement.
8. The data recipient agrees to only share the data set with the analyst(s) named in this application. If additional analysts will be added to the project, the data recipient agrees to notify the MVDRS Program in writing within 5 days. The data recipient agrees not to release data to any other third party without prior written approval from the MVDRS program.
9. The data recipient agrees to include the following disclaimer on any reports or publications, if applicable: *This publication utilizes data provided by the Maryland Department of Health, Maryland Violent Death Reporting System (MVDRS); collected under guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention under cooperative agreement number [INSERT COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT NUMBER(S) HERE]; and analyzed by [INSERT NAME OR ORGANIZATION HERE]. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Maryland Department of Health or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

10. The data recipient agrees to notify the MVDRS Program immediately upon having reason to know or suspect that a data breach, unauthorized data use, or confidentiality violation has occurred.
11. This data use agreement remains in effect for one calendar year from the approval date, after which time it will expire unless renewed by the MVDRS program.
12. All data shall remain the property of the Maryland Department of Health, and the data recipient agrees to return the data set to the MVDRS program or provide evidence of destruction of the data set upon termination of this agreement or the end of the project.

---

Signature of data requester

Date