

Alcohol Deaths Plummet as ‘Warmest Winter’ Hits Russia

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Deaths from alcohol poisoning fell 37.3% in the space of a year. **Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

Experts are attributing a sharp drop in the number of deaths from alcohol poisoning in Russia to the unseasonably warm winter.

Some 619 people died from alcohol poisoning in January 2020, down 37.3% from January 2019, Russia's National Center for Alcohol Policy Development said Thursday. The past winter was the warmest since records began in 1891, Russia's Hydrometeorology Center [announced](#) the same day.

Russia's consumer protection union said the mild winter played a key role in that drop, Interfax [reported](#). Union leader Pavel Shapkin said there is a direct correlation between an increase in temperatures and a decline in alcohol consumption.

“An average 10-degree temperature rise above normal reduces the burden of alcohol on the population's health by the same 10 degrees,” Shapkin told Interfax.

“As a result, the negative outcomes of alcohol consumption have dramatically decreased,” Shapkin was quoted as saying.

Related article: [Russia's Alcohol Consumption Plummets More Than 40% – WHO Study](#)

The consumer protection union previously [reported](#) a slight decline in vodka sales between 2019 and 2018.

Russia’s 40% decline in alcohol consumption, though still some of the world’s highest, has contributed to Russia’s rapid rise in life expectancy, the World Health Organization [said](#) last year.

Alcohol consumption fell in the mid-1980s under the last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev-led campaign, though rates skyrocketed after the Soviet collapse in 1991.

Russia has introduced several measures to cut down on alcohol consumption under President Vladimir Putin, including a sales ban after 11 p.m., minimum retail price increases for spirits and an advertising blackout.

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