

# Maximum capacity: Madison County Jail was at record numbers this week

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**EDWARDSVILLE** - The Madison County Jail received a record number of inmates this week, with as many as 361 prisoners Tuesday.

That number has decreased to 311 as of Friday, Madison County Sheriff John Lakin said. For perspective, the maximum capacity of the Madison County Jail is 312. When that number is exceeded, Lakin said bed space is no longer available, and inmates have to be housed in areas such as "day rooms," and other available spaces. With 311 inmates Friday morning, however, Lakin said there was enough bed space for everyone interred.

"Right now, everybody has bed space, but in three hours, that number may be elevated again," Lakin said. "It has a devastating effect on our budgets, including medical, food and utilities. It's also a safety factor for our jail staff, and we also have to consider the safety and security of our inmates as well."

Lakin said the reason for the elevated levels is because of the amount of criminal activity occurring throughout Madison County, which Lakin blames on the opioid crisis that President Donald Trump recently declared as a national emergency.

"A drug crisis then allows for other criminal acts to be committed to support their habits," Lakin said. "The system is working the way it should with the state's attorney's involvements and the courts' involvements, but I like to say an old adage of: we're in charge of a bathtub full of water with no control over the drain or spigot. Right now we're at a manageable number, but that may increase over the weekend."

Besides an abundance of criminals, Lakin also said the effectiveness of law enforcement across the county is another contributing factor to the jails being overloaded. He said law enforcement in Madison County, outside of and including the Madison County Sheriff's Office, is extremely effective in apprehending criminals.

"There are bad people out there," he said. "And, some of them need to be in jail. Those bad people end up in the Madison County Jail."

While problems with overcrowding are arising, Lakin did not offer any solid solutions to the crisis. There are currently no plans to expand the capacity of the Madison County Jail, but Lakin said some infrastructure measures are being done at this time.