



INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
BC Coroners Service

Spike in illicit drug deaths in March

VICTORIA – There were 161 suspected illicit drug overdose deaths in British Columbia in March 2018, the second-highest monthly total to date, based on the latest data provided by the BC Coroners Service.

This represents a 24% increase over the March 2017 total of 130 illicit drug overdose deaths, and a 58% increase over last month's suspected total of 102.

The March 2018 total almost equals the 162 illicit drug overdose deaths in December 2016.

Preliminary data indicate that through the first three months of 2018, fentanyl was detected in post-mortem testing in more than eight in every 10 deaths (83%). Seven in every 10 of those who died were aged 19 to 49 years.

Through the first three months of 2018, there have been 391 suspected illicit drug overdose deaths in B.C., on par with the 400 reported through the first three months of 2017.

The City of Vancouver has seen 102 suspected illicit drug overdose deaths so far in 2018, an average of 34 per month, which is up from the 2017 average of 30.5 per month.

The majority of decedents died indoors (90.5%). No deaths have been reported at supervised consumption sites, or drug overdose prevention sites.

The BC Coroners Service urgently reminds those using any illicit drugs not to use alone. Those using substances should have someone nearby equipped and trained to administer naloxone or able to call 911 immediately if an overdose occurs.

More than 1,400 British Columbians died due to suspected illicit drug overdoses in 2017.

Learn More:

Read the latest report on illicit drug deaths at: <http://ow.ly/GBZy30jULVf>
and the latest report on deaths in which fentanyl was detected at: <http://ow.ly/LxrH30jULXy>

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