



INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
BC Coroners Service

Updated illicit drug death reports released

VICTORIA – The BC Coroners Service has published an updated report on illicit drug toxicity deaths to the end of March 2020.

Key preliminary findings of these drug death reports are below. Data are subject to change:

- In March 2020, there were 113 suspected illicit drug toxicity deaths. Exceeding 100 deaths in a month has not occurred since March 2019. These 113 deaths represent a 3% decrease in the number of deaths seen in March 2019. This is a 61% increase over the number of deaths in February 2020.
- Compared to the January and February 2020 average, the increase in March occurred in every health authority, notably in Fraser (91% increase) and Island health (80% increase). The March 2019 average (117) was also higher than the January and February 2019 average (89).
- To date, males accounted for 76% of deaths in 2020, similar to 2019 with 76%, and slightly lower than in 2018 with 80%.
- In 2020, 73% of those dying were aged 19 to 49. In 2019 and 2018, 68% were in this age range.
- By health authority, Northern Health has the highest rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths, followed by Interior Health in 2020.
- From 2018 to March 2020, the rates of illicit drug toxicity deaths are highest in Hope, Fort Nelson, North Thompson, Lillooet and Arrow Lakes.
- No deaths have been reported at supervised consumption or drug overdose prevention sites.

Learn More:

For the latest report on Illicit Drug Overdose Deaths in B.C. (2009-20), visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-anddivorce/deaths/coroners-service/statistical/illicit-drug.pdf>

Stop Overdose BC: <https://www.stopoverdose.gov.bc.ca>

BC Centre on Substance Use: <http://www.bccsu.ca>

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