



INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
BC Coroners Service

155 British Columbians lost to toxic-drug supply in October 2024

VICTORIA – Preliminary reporting released by the BC Coroners Service (BCCS) finds that 155 people died from unregulated toxic drugs in October 2024.

While this represents the lowest monthly number of deaths from drug toxicity since September 2020 in British Columbia, the risk of harm and death remains high. Throughout the province, 1,925 people have died from unregulated drug toxicity in 2024. This is a 9% decrease, representing a significant decline in the number of deaths, compared with the first 10 months of 2023 (2,107 deaths). October's data equates to about five deaths per day. The BC Coroners Service does not have the investigative data to suggest why this decrease has occurred, though it is consistent with reporting from other jurisdictions and BCCS is working with partners to understand this further.

Unregulated drug toxicity remains the leading cause of unnatural death for people in British Columbia aged 10 to 59, and accounts for more deaths than homicides, suicides, accidents and natural disease combined.

Additional findings from the latest report include:

- no deaths recorded in October due to unregulated drug toxicity for those under the age of 19;
- half of the deaths reported were people between the ages of 30 and 49;
- females accounted for 22% of deaths over the course of the month and in 2024, the rate of death among females is 20.6 per 100,000 people, more than double the rate of 9.2 five years ago (2019);
- males accounted for 78% of deaths in October, up from the year-to-date figure of 74%;
- the two primary drug types detected in decedents who underwent expedited toxicological testing in October were fentanyl (87.1%) and stimulants (80.7%);
- by health authority, Vancouver Coastal had the greatest number of unregulated drug deaths (48), followed by Fraser (43);
- Vancouver had the highest number of unregulated drug toxicity deaths during the month (39), followed by Surrey (16), then Greater Victoria (nine).

Note that the data is preliminary and subject to change as additional toxicology results are received and investigations are concluded.

Learn More:

October 2024 Unregulated Drug Toxicity Deaths: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoibM2Y5YzRjNzQtMzAyNS00NWFiLWl3MDktMzI5NWQ3YmVhNmZjliwidCI6IjZmZGI1MjAwLTNkMGQtNGE4YS1iMzI1MDM2LWQzNjg1ZTM1OWFkYyJ9>

Youth Unregulated Drug Toxicity Deaths, 2019-2023: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/statistical/youth_unregulated_drug_toxicity_deaths_in_bc_2019-2023.pdf

Unregulated Drug Toxicity Type of Drug Data (to Dec. 31, 2022): <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/statistical/illicit-drug-type.pdf>

BC Coroners Service Death Review Panel: An Urgent Response to a Continuing Crisis 2023: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/death-review-panel/an_urgent_response_to_a_continuing_crisis_report.pdf

BC Ministry of Health mental health and substance use supports: <https://helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca/>

Toward the Heart: <https://www.towardtheheart.com>

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

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