



INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
2024PSSG0047-000795
May 23, 2024

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
BC Coroners Service

Deaths in correctional facilities trend upward over 10 years: BC Coroners Service

VICTORIA – The deaths of 188 people in provincial and federal correctional facilities were reported to the BC Coroners Service between Jan. 1, 2013, and Dec. 31, 2023.

While the annual average over 10 years was 17 deaths, 25 inmates died in B.C. correctional institutions in 2023.

The preliminary data compiled by the BC Coroners Service shows that over a five-year period, between 2018 and 2023, the number of deaths in correctional facilities increased by 56%, from 14 deaths to 25.

Males accounted for the majority of deaths at both provincial and federal facilities. From 2013 to 2023, males made up 98% of deaths, while between 2018 and 2023, no female decedents were reported.

During the 10 years reviewed in the report, about 60% (114) of deaths reported were at federal correctional facilities, while provincial inmates accounted for 74 deaths. More than half of deaths at federal facilities were reported at Pacific Institution in Abbotsford. One-third of the deaths at provincial facilities were reported at Surrey Pretrial Services Centre.

While 18% of deaths (17) within the 10-year window were classified as accidental, two-thirds of the accidental deaths (12) were deemed to have been caused by unregulated drug toxicity. It's important to note that this includes only confirmed drug-toxicity cases on closed coroner investigations.

All data in the report is subject to change as individual investigations are completed and causes of death are confirmed.

Learn More:

BC Coroners Service updated statistical report into deaths of inmates in correctional facilities, January 2013 to December

2023: <http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Corrections%20Web%20Report%202013-2023.pdf>

Contact:

Amber Schinkel
Manager
Strategic Communications and Media
Relations
BC Coroners Service
amber.schinkel@gov.bc.ca
236 969-1759

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