



STATEMENT

For Immediate Release
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July 2, 2021

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
BC Coroners Service

Chief coroner's updated statement on public safety during heat wave

VICTORIA – Lisa Lapointe, chief coroner, has released the following statement about public safety during the heat wave in British Columbia:

“Over the past week, the BC Coroners Service has received an unprecedented number of reports of sudden and unexpected death throughout the province. Over the seven days from Friday, June 25 through Thursday, July 1, 719 deaths have been reported to B.C.'s coroners. This number is preliminary and subject to increase as additional reported deaths are entered into our system. The 719 deaths reported is three times more than what would normally occur in the province during the same period.

“We are releasing this information as it is believed likely the extreme weather B.C. has experienced in the past week is a significant contributing factor to the increased number of deaths.

“Today, the coroners service is seeing a downward trend from the number of deaths reported over the past few days, and we are hopeful this trend will continue.

“Some parts of the province are continuing to experience unusually high temperatures, and it remains important that we all take extra care to avoid the dangerous effects of severe heat. Please look out for family, friends and neighbours, particularly those who live alone.

“Whenever possible, people are encouraged to visit cooler environments, such as cooling centres, malls, libraries and other air-conditioned community spaces for essential respite from the effects of severe heat. Many of the deaths experienced over the past week were among older individuals living alone in private residences with minimal ventilation.

“British Columbians are encouraged to visit this website for valuable advice on staying safe during extreme weather: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021PSSG0043-001226>

“On behalf of the BC Coroners Service, I extend my sincere condolences to all of those who have lost a loved one during this challenging period. The coroners service will carefully investigate the circumstances of each death to determine the role extreme heat may have played and will use the findings of these investigations to help prevent future deaths in similar circumstances.”

Learn More:

For more warm weather safety tips from the BC Centre for Disease Control, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/about/news-stories/stories/2020/warm-weather-safety-in-a-time-of-covid-19>

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