

Decriminalization of People Who Use Drugs in BC

Adults 18+ in BC are allowed to possess ('hold') small amounts of certain illegal drugs for personal use (opioids, cocaine including crack and powder, methamphetamine, MDMA). Some exceptions apply.

Why

Substance use is a public health issue, not a criminal one. Shame and fear of criminalization can drive people to use drugs alone, and using toxic drugs alone can be fatal.

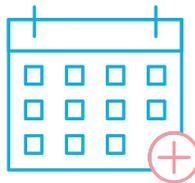
Decriminalization will help reduce stigma and encourage people who use drugs to seek lifesaving services and care.

Decriminalization is not legalization. These drugs remain illegal and unregulated and will not be sold in stores. Drug trafficking and related offences remain illegal.



Who

Adults 18+ in BC. It does not apply to people under the age of 18.



When

From January 31, 2023, until January 31, 2026.



Where

The Province of BC only.

What will change ...

Adults 18+ in BC can possess ('hold') a total amount equal to or less than 2.5 grams of these illegal drugs for personal use:

- Opioids (including heroin, morphine, and fentanyl)
- Cocaine (including crack and powder cocaine)
- Methamphetamine (meth)
- MDMA (ecstasy)

Adults in possession of up to 2.5 grams of these drugs for personal use will not be arrested, charged, fined, or have their drugs seized. Instead, information about voluntary health and social supports will be offered.

Municipal bylaws on public use may apply.

What remains illegal in BC ...

Any amount of any illegal drugs, including the four types listed, cannot be possessed:

- On the properties of elementary and secondary schools and childcare facilities;
- In airports or other ports of entry;
- Within reach of a person operating a motor vehicle or watercraft; or
- On playgrounds, skateparks, and wading pools and spray pools;

And cannot be

- Imported or exported;
- Produced or trafficked; or
- Taken across a domestic or international border.