

TOXIC DRUG POISONING RESPONSE PUBLIC REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2024

UNREGULATED DRUG DEATHS

- According to BC Coroners Service, there were 40 unregulated drug deaths in Fraser Health in September 2024.
- This is a 25% decrease from the number of deaths reported in the previous month, with 53 deaths in August 2024.
- Compared to 2023, the greatest increases in (projected) drug toxicity deaths in 2024 have been seen in Burnaby (+8%) and Coquitlam (+8%) (Table 1).



Figure 1: Unregulated drug deaths within Fraser Health, January 2013 to September 2024

Toxic drug supply emergency declared on April 14, 2016 (red line).

COVID-19 emergency declared on March 18, 2020 (yellow line) and ended on June 30, 2021 (brown line).

An exemption to the federal Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (i.e. decriminalization) was in effect on January 31, 2023 (green line).

Request to exempt public spaces from BC's decriminalization policy was approved on May 7, 2024 (grey line).

Data source: BC Coroners Service. Preliminary data, numbers subject to change. Numbers include both open and closed cases.

Unregulated drug deaths reported by BC Coroners Service include those involving street drugs (heroin, cocaine, MDMA, methamphetamine, etc.), medications that were not prescribed to the deceased but obtained on the street, from unknown means, and where the origin of drug is unknown.

* To September 2024.



Community**	Jan-Sep 2024	Estimated Jan-Dec 2024	Jan-Dec 2023	% Change (2024* vs. 2023)
Fraser East				
Chilliwack	23	31	59	-47
Fraser North				
Burnaby	41	55	51	8
Coquitlam	20	27	25	8
New Westminster	20	27	38	-29
Fraser South				
Langley	29	39	45	-13
Surrey	178	237	236	0
Other Fraser Health Communities	155	207	245	-16
Fraser Health	466	621	699	-11

Table 1: Unregulated drug deaths within Fraser Health, January 2023 to September 2024

Data source: BC Coroners Service to Sep 30, 2024.

Preliminary data, numbers subject to change. Numbers include both open and closed cases.

Unregulated drug deaths reported by BC Coroners Service include those involving street drugs (heroin, cocaine, MDMA,

methamphetamine, etc.), medications that were not prescribed to the deceased, combinations of the above, with prescribed medications, and where the origin of drug is not known.

**Community assigned based on location of injury and if that is missing, location of death.

*Year to date; count annualized based on available months for 2024.



PARAMEDIC-ATTENDED TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS

- Paramedics responded to 540 suspected toxic drug poisoning events across Fraser Health in September 2024; this is a 11% decrease compared to the average of the previous 12 months (Table 2).
- Compared to 2023, the greatest increases in the projected rate of paramedic-attended toxic drug poisoning events in 2024 have occurred in Coquitlam (+29%), Port Coquitlam (+26%), and City of Langley (+25%) (Table 2).
- Compared to 2023, the largest decreases in the projected rate of paramedic-attended toxic drug poisoning events in 2024 have occurred in Pitt Meadows (-78%), Delta (-31%), and Hope*** (-27%) (Table 2).

Figure 2: Quarterly rate of suspected paramedic-attended drug poisoning events in Fraser Health, January 2015 to September 2024



Toxic drug supply emergency declared on April 14, 2016 (red line).

COVID-19 emergency declared on March 18, 2020 (yellow line) and ended on June 30, 2021 (brown line).

An exemption to the federal Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (i.e. decriminalization) was in effect on January 31, 2023 (green line).

Request to exempt public spaces from BC' s decriminalization policy was approved on May 7, 2024 (grey line).

Data source: Patient Care Record data from BC Emergency Health Services. Preliminary data, numbers subject to change.

Suspected toxic drug poisoning events include those associated with opioids or other drugs.

* To September 2024; rates for incomplete quarters are projected based on available months for 2024.



 Table 2: Suspected paramedic-attended toxic drug poisoning events within Fraser Health, January 2023 to

 September 2024

	2024*			20		
Community**	Sep (Avg. past 12 months~)	Jan-Sep	Rate per 100,000 Jan-Sep	Jan-Dec	Rate per 100,000 Jan-Dec	% Rate change 2024* vs. 2023
Fraser East						
Abbotsford	66 (91.6)	807	625	990	592	6
Agassiz / Harrison***	<5 (<5)	31	357	46	408	-13
Chilliwack	69 (63.9)	617	693	715	624	11
Hope***	9 (<5)	34	475	61	653	-27
Mission	16 (22.5)	207	529	266	523	1
Fraser North						
Burnaby	43 (44.9)	411	187	533	188	-1
Coquitlam	41 (31.7)	332	255	329	197	29
Maple Ridge	40 (38.8)	362	454	472	461	-1
New Westminster	33 (33.2)	284	417	469	530	-21
Pitt Meadows	<5 (<5)	6	37	35	165	-78
Port Coquitlam	9 (13.8)	142	277	147	219	26
Port Moody / Anmore / Belcarra	<5 (<5)	30	93	48	117	-20
Fraser South						
City of Langley	21 (19.7)	200	760	204	607	25
Delta	7 (9.8)	75	78	139	113	-31
South Surrey / White Rock	9 (11.8)	107	109	129	103	6
Surrey	160 (198.1)	1790	414	2203	399	4
Township of Langley	11 (17.5)	157	129	223	144	-11
Fraser Health	540 (609.6)	5592	340	7009	332	2

Data source: Patient Care Record data from BC Emergency Health Services to Sep 30, 2024.

Preliminary data, numbers subject to change. Numbers for the most recent month are likely an underestimate and will increase as entry of BC Ambulance Patient Care Form is completed. Numbers may change with data quality and analysis refinements and are not directly comparable to numbers reported previously.

Suspected toxic drug poisoning events include those associated with opioids or other drugs.

**Community assigned based on location where the paramedics attended the event.

*Rate annualized based on available months for 2024.

~Average of past 12 months, does not include the most recent month.

***Rates may fluctuate due to small population size.

Counts under five are reported as <5 as they are potentially identifiable.