

The overdose public health emergency, declared on April 14 2016, has claimed the lives of almost 7,000 British Columbians. Since the declaration of the COVID-19 public health emergency on March 17, 2020, the rate of **overdose events and illicit drug toxicity deaths have increased** and surpassed historic highs.

Illicit drug toxicity deaths exceeded the combined deaths from motor vehicle, suicide, and homicide in 2020

Overdose Events

There were 17,159 paramedic attended* overdose events** in 2020 compared to 13,486 in 2019

*some overdoses go unreported
**fatal and non-fatal overdoses



Age



5 in 10 were aged 19-39 years

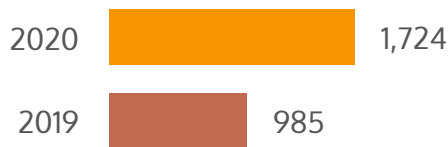
Sex



8 in 10 were male

Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths

1,724 people died from overdose in 2020 compared to 985 people in 2019



Age



4 in 10 were aged 19-39 years

Sex



8 in 10 were male

Drug Toxicity

Fentanyl and analogues‡ were relevant to over 8 in 10 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2020, followed by methamphetamine

‡Fentanyl increases the risk of overdose due to the variable potency within the illicit drug supply

↑ Increased number of **high fentanyl concentrations** in toxicology reports

↑ **Benzodiazepines** are increasingly being detected in the drug supply, which can increase the risk of overdose

The average age at death from overdose is 43 years. In 2020, an estimated almost 70,000 potential years of life have been lost to overdose in BC.

Decline in visits to Overdose Prevention Sites & Supervised Consumption Sites



‡‡Sites are operating at limited capacity due to COVID-19 orders. More people who use drugs are using alone, increasing risk for overdose death.

The highest shipment ever of **Take Home Naloxone** kits was in October 2020

34,000 kits were shipped

The highest number of **Opioid Agonist Therapy** prescriptions dispensed was in December 2020

OAT is used to treat substance use

23,735 prescriptions were filled