

This report summarizes deaths of individuals experiencing homelessness reported to the BC Coroners Service (BCCS) between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2023. The report does not include the deaths of individuals experiencing homelessness that did not meet the legal criteria of the [Coroners Act](#) for reporting.

Caveats: As the BCCS operates in a live database environment, the data are considered preliminary and subject to change as coroners' investigations conclude. These data were compiled by date of death, which may differ from the date of injury. In some cases, the death may occur days or weeks after injury. The data may be underreported as it is not always possible to determine a person's housing status. These statistics may vary from those reported by other agencies because of differences in data definitions or reporting standards.

Inclusion Criteria: The data presented in this report are based on suspected homelessness where: 'no fixed address' was given as the decedent's home address; the injury premise was identified as a homeless shelter; or the preliminary circumstances of death suggested homelessness based on the definition below.

Definition: An individual experiencing homelessness is defined as:

- **Unsheltered:** A person living outdoors, in a make-shift shelter, a parked vehicle, a vacant home, or any other structure not intended for habitation.
- **Sheltered:** A person staying at an emergency shelter (overnight) or who is temporarily sheltered (suspected to be for less than 30 days) by friends or family, in a short-term shelter, safe house for youth, or transition house for women and children fleeing violence. Persons residing in short-term shelters, safe houses, or transition houses for an unknown length of time were also included.

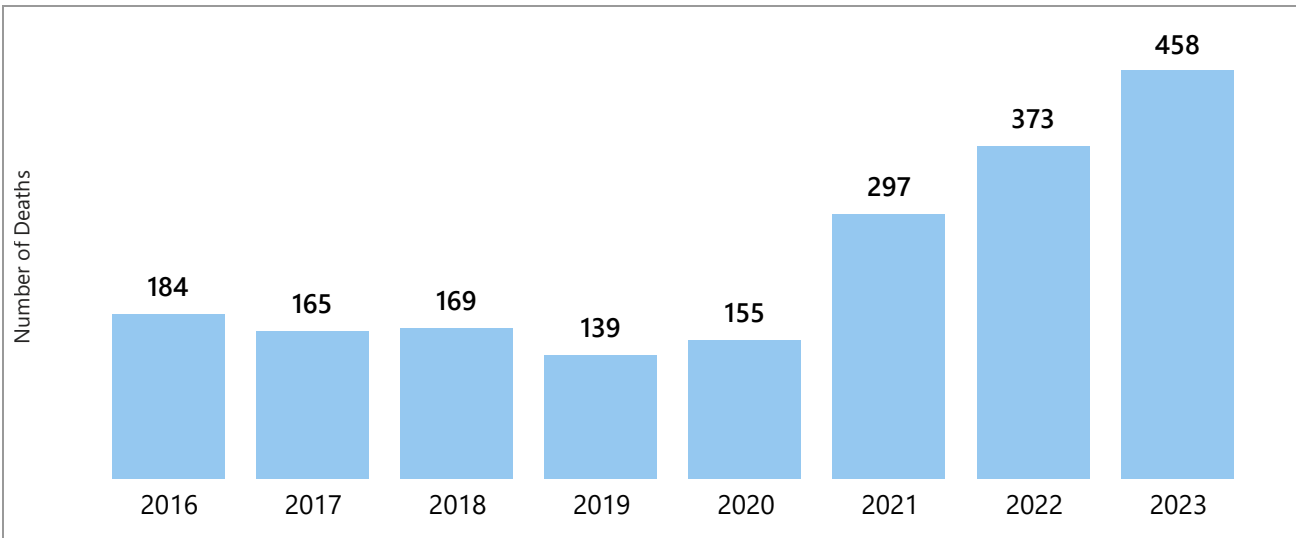
Some individuals who do not meet the above definitions of homelessness may be considered homeless under other definitions. Examples of individuals who were not considered homeless for the purposes of this report include:

- People in correctional institutions, hospitals, or residential drug or alcohol treatment facilities.
- People who have permanent residences but are considered at high risk of homelessness because of unemployment, domestic violence, natural disaster, or other factors.
- People who do not have a permanent residence, but is temporarily residing and paying rent in a motel, hotel, or another form of rental accommodation.

2023 Summary:

- In 2023, there were 458 reported deaths among individuals experiencing homelessness (*Fig. 1*).
- The number of deaths reported in 2023 equates to a 23% increase from 2022 (373 deaths) and 54% increase from 2021 (297 deaths).
- About 46% of individuals met the criteria for unsheltered homelessness and 35% for sheltered homelessness in 2023. The proportion of unsheltered vs. sheltered individuals has remained relatively consistent over the years (*Fig. 2*).
- In 2023, winter (Dec-Feb) accounted for the highest proportion of deaths at 28%, followed by spring (Mar-May) at 27% (*Fig. 3*).
- 79% of the decedents in 2023 were male. 47% of males were unsheltered, compared to 39% of females (*Fig. 4*).
- Individuals aged 30 to 59 accounted for 75% of deaths in 2023 (*Fig. 5*).
- Fraser Health region had the highest number of deaths (117), followed by Island Health region (114) (*Table 6*).
- Island Health region saw the largest increase in deaths, rising by 54% from 74 in 2022 to 114 in 2023.
- The health service delivery areas with the highest number of deaths were Vancouver (77), Central Vancouver Island (55), and Fraser East (50) (*Table 7*).
- In 2023, the cause of death in 394 deaths was due to accidental unregulated drug toxicity (*Table 8*). This represented 86% of the deaths for the year (*Fig. 8*).

Figure 1. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Death Year, 2016-2023



Mortality rates were calculated using the population estimates provided through the [‘Preventing and Reducing Homelessness: An Integrated Data Project.’](#) The project provides an estimate of the population experiencing homelessness in B.C. by integrating datasets from the Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) BC Employment and Assistance program, BC Housing Emergency Shelter Program, and the Ministry of Health Medical Services Plan (MSP) client registry. Annual population estimates are available for 2019-2022.

Mortality rates should be interpreted with caution as the BC Coroners Service does not investigate all deaths of individuals experiencing homelessness. The number of deaths in this report excludes individuals experiencing homelessness that did not meet the legal criteria of the Coroners Act for reporting. Furthermore, the population estimates do not account for individuals that did not access shelter services or BC Employment and Assistance services, for which data is not available. For more details on methodology and other limitations, please refer to the [Preventing and Reducing Homelessness: An Integrated Data Project](#) website.

Table 1. Death Rate per 1,000 Individuals Experiencing Homelessness, 2019-2022^[1]

Year	Number of Deaths	Homelessness Cohort Estimates	Death Rate per 1,000 Individuals Experiencing Homelessness
2019	139	24,717	5.6
2020	155	24,506	6.3
2021	297	26,376	11.3
2022	373	28,710	13.0

Note: Mortality rates are calculated using annual population estimates of individuals experiencing homelessness, which are available for 2019-2022. Estimates for 2023 are not yet available.

Table 2. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Type, 2016-2023

Type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Unsheltered	92	73	82	67	90	139	185	209
Sheltered	70	53	42	46	46	109	118	162
Unknown	22	39	45	26	19	49	70	87
Total	184	165	169	139	155	297	373	458

Figure 2. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Type of Homelessness as %, 2016-2023

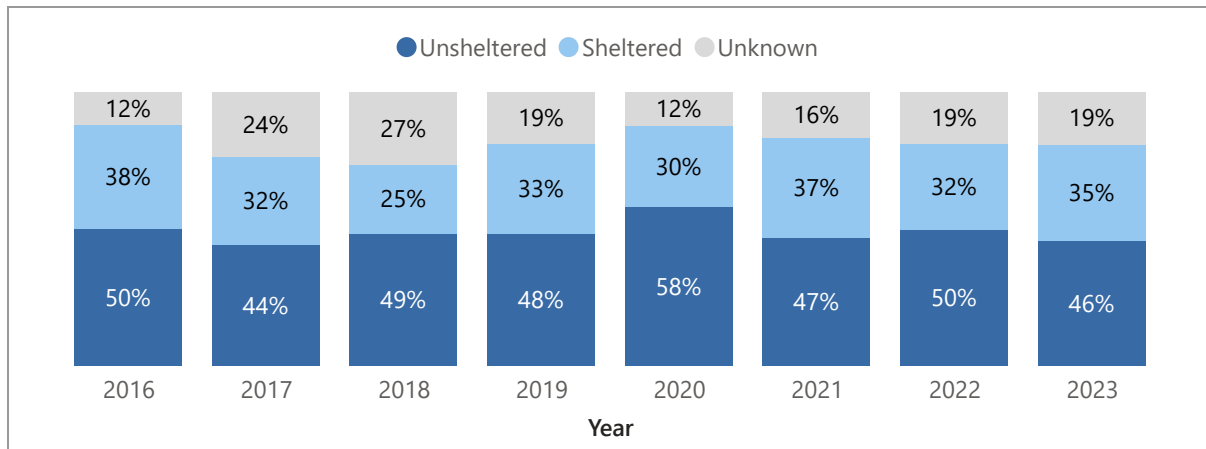


Table 3. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Month, 2016-2023

Month	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
January	14	21	10	16	11	23	41	47
February	13	10	16	12	9	11	27	29
March	12	9	11	18	17	16	33	40
April	12	16	12	15	17	18	28	49
May	14	13	9	11	12	15	23	33
June	12	21	16	12	21	23	24	34
July	8	10	14	7	11	27	27	37
August	17	15	24	7	7	28	32	29
September	10	15	16	6	12	28	27	30
October	23	10	17	13	8	39	37	40
November	26	15	17	11	18	33	30	37
December	23	10	7	11	12	36	44	53
Total	184	165	169	139	155	297	373	458

Figure 3. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Season as %, 2023

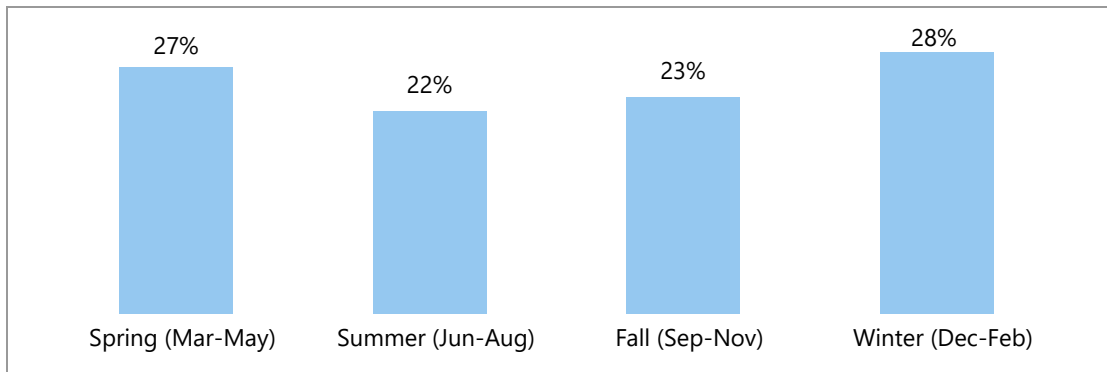


Table 4. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Sex, 2016-2023

Sex	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Female	30	36	31	17	24	64	83	97
Male	154	129	138	121	131	233	290	361
Unknown	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	184	165	169	139	155	297	373	458

Figure 4. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Type of Homelessness and Sex as %, 2023

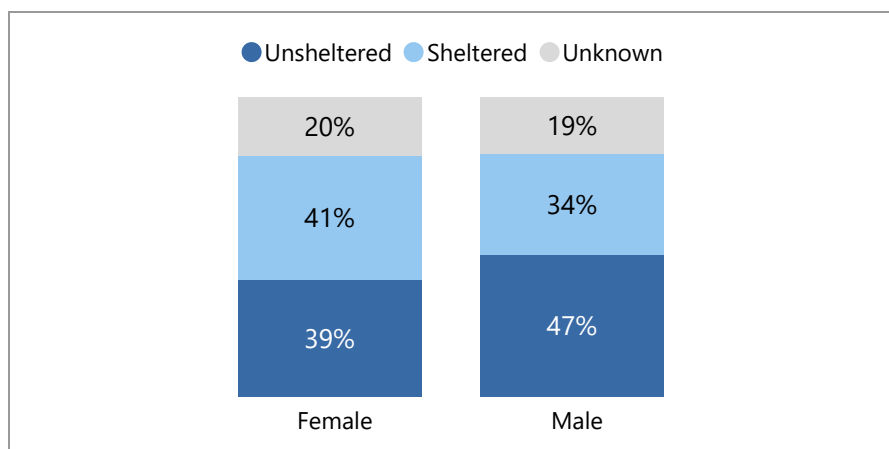


Table 5. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Age Group, 2016-2023

Age Group	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<19	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	1
19-29	36	27	28	18	26	40	50	58
30-39	30	36	34	28	38	96	118	128
40-49	38	58	35	37	32	57	79	109
50-59	57	38	52	33	39	63	86	107
60-69	19	4	19	20	14	31	35	47
70+	3	1	1	2	5	8	4	8
Total	184	165	169	139	155	297	373	458

Figure 5. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Age Group as %, 2023

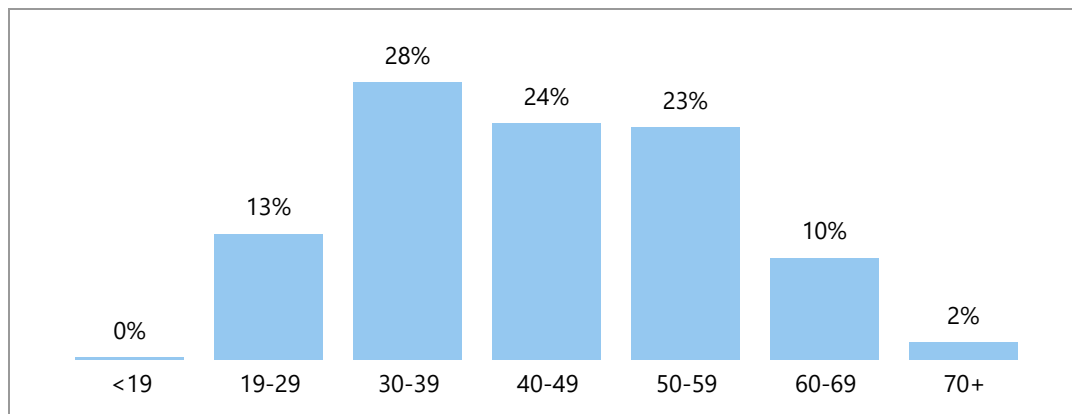


Table 6. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Health Authority (HA) of Injury, 2016-2023^[2,3]

Injury HA	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Interior	35	31	29	24	27	50	77	86
Fraser	60	54	50	44	51	98	108	117
Vancouver Coastal	52	39	41	30	39	73	82	95
Island	28	29	35	32	26	49	74	114
Northern	9	12	14	9	12	27	32	46
Total	184	165	169	139	155	297	373	458

Figure 6. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Health Authority of Injury as %, 2023^[2,3]

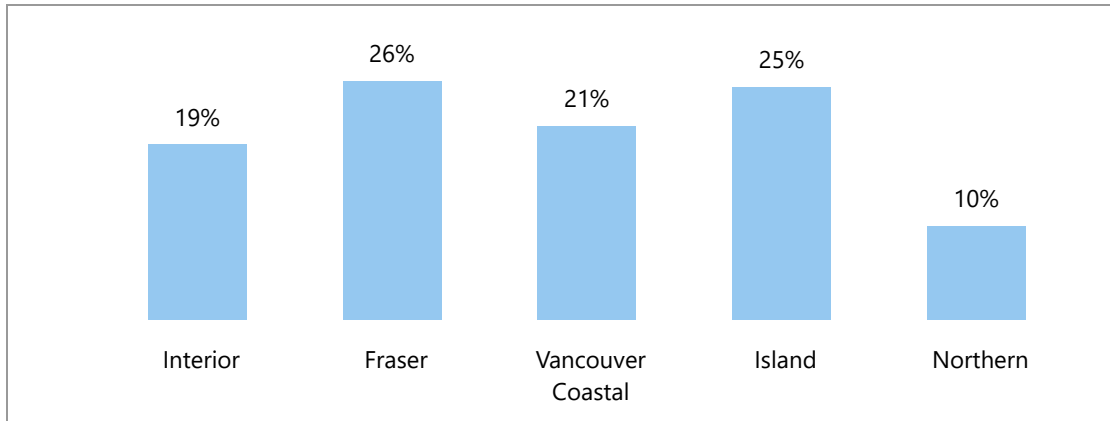


Table 7. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA) of Injury, 2016-2023^[2,3]

Injury HSDA	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
East Kootenay	1	0	0	0	2	6	7	5
Kootenay Boundary	3	2	1	1	3	4	7	6
Okanagan	20	18	20	12	9	32	35	42
Thompson Cariboo Shuswap	11	11	8	11	13	8	28	33
Fraser East	19	22	14	18	21	32	43	50
Fraser North	16	8	12	10	11	26	26	20
Fraser South	25	24	24	16	19	40	39	47
Richmond	0	2	0	0	1	4	3	7
Vancouver	45	33	39	26	34	61	76	77
North Shore/Coast Garibaldi	7	4	2	4	4	8	3	11
South Vancouver Island	20	17	12	17	14	22	34	40
Central Vancouver Island	4	8	16	10	8	17	27	55
North Vancouver Island	4	4	7	5	4	10	13	19
Northwest	0	0	0	3	0	6	10	10
Northern Interior	6	10	14	5	11	17	19	28
Northeast	3	2	0	1	1	4	3	8
Total	184	165	169	139	155	297	373	458

Table 8. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Classification of Death, 2016-2023

Classification	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Accidental	114	138	139	94	129	261	333	419
Accidental Unregulated Drug Toxicity	95	129	122	78	118	240	310	394
Other Accidental	19	9	17	16	11	21	23	25
Natural	31	11	20	29	10	23	23	24
Suicide	20	10	5	11	5	8	7	7
Undetermined	14	6	4	2	8	4	2	6
Homicide	5	0	1	3	3	1	8	2
Total	184	165	169	139	155	297	373	458

Figure 7. Deaths of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Year and Classification, 2016-2023

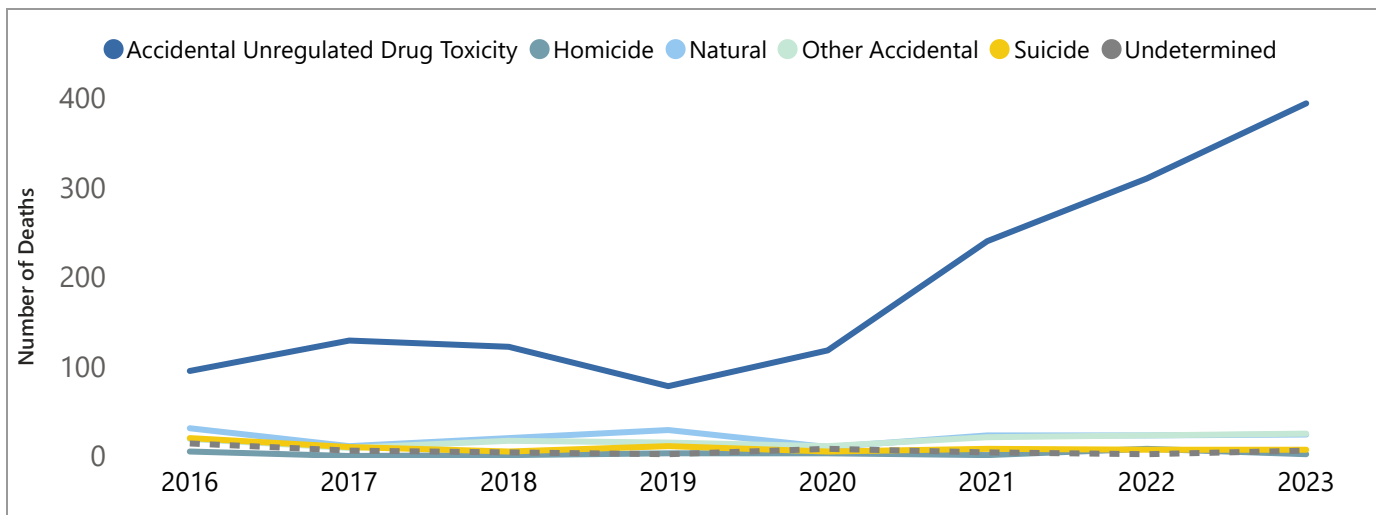
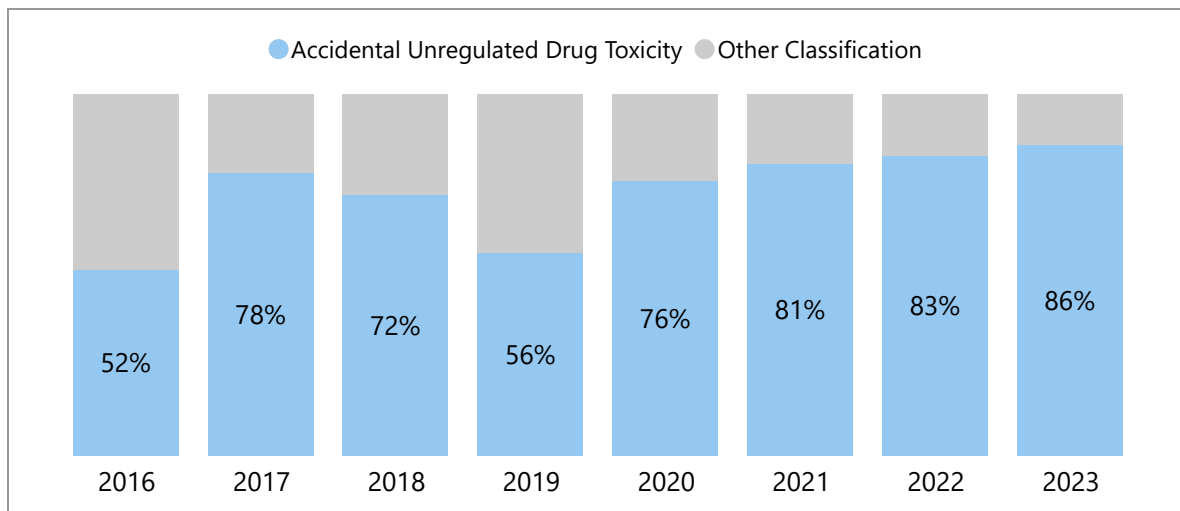


Figure 8. Accidental Unregulated Drug Toxicity Deaths among Individuals Experiencing Homelessness by Classification as %, 2016-2023



Notes:

1. Population estimates of individuals experiencing homelessness in British Columbia can be found at: [Preventing and reducing homelessness: An integrated data project - Province of British Columbia](#)
2. Health Region breakdowns can be found at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners/health-authorities/health-boundary-maps>
3. Health authority is derived from injury township. Death township is used in cases of unknown or out-of-province injury township.