

January 2022

BCEHS consistently monitors the overdose call volumes in B.C. This is a snapshot of current data for paramedic-attended overdose calls across the province.

Since the public health emergency on toxic drugs was declared in B.C. in 2016, BCEHS has been consistently monitoring the overdose/poisoning call volumes and reporting out on the provincial data.

Key Findings in BCEHS 2022 Overdose/Poisoning Call Data

*(Data are subject to change as they may be updated following reviews)*

Since the public health emergency for toxic drugs was declared in 2016, BCEHS has seen a 75% total increase in annual overdose/poisoning events.

In 2022, BCEHS paramedics responded to a total of 33,654 overdose/poisoning patient events for the year, an average of 92 calls a day.

In 2022, BCEHS paramedics responded to more than 33,500 overdose/poisoning calls. The total number of responses to overdoses/poisonings (33,654) represented a decrease of 5% from the previous year. The average monthly calls are more than 2,800 per month.

BCEHS experienced two months with more than 3,000 overdose/poisoning calls in 2022, and on Jan. 19, 2022, a new daily record was set with BCEHS receiving 203 overdose/poisoning calls that day.

Overdose/poisoning calls in B.C.

- 2022: 33,654 (down 5% from previous year)
- 2021: 35,585 (up 31% over previous year)
- 2020: 27,067 (up 12% over the previous year)
- 2019: 24,166 (up 2% over the previous year)
- 2018: 23,662 (up 1% over the previous year)
- 2017: 23,441 (up 22% over the previous year)
- 2016: 19,275 (up 57% over the previous year)
- 2015: 12,263
- 2004 - 2015: Prior to 2016, overdose/poisoning calls in B.C. fluctuated from 10,000 to 15,000 calls a year.

Overdose/Poisoning Calls by Health Authority region in 2022

- Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health regions (which together represent about 50% of B.C.'s population) continue to record the highest number of overdose/poisoning calls.

- Despite a 5% drop in total overdose calls received by BCEHS provincially, three health authorities had an increase in overdose/poisoning calls in 2022:
  - Northern Health had the largest increase (+17%)
  - Interior Health (+9%) and Island Health (+6%) also reported increases.
- Two health authorities had a decrease in overdose/poisoning calls in 2022:
  - Vancouver Coastal Health had the largest decrease (-19%)
  - Fraser Health (-10%) also reported a decrease.

Here is the breakdown of overdose calls in each health authority:

- Vancouver Coastal Health: 9,071 (-19%)
- Fraser Health: 9,537 (-10%)
- Island Health: 6,277 (+6%)
- Interior Health: 5,931 (+9%)
- Northern Health: 2,838 (+17%)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
VCH	6,714	8,697	8,686	9,407	9,041	11,204	9,071
FH	5,927	6,554	6,513	6,478	7,272	10,573	9,537
ISLAND	3,122	3,821	4,102	3,852	4,446	5,917	6,277
IH	2,599	3,284	3,129	3,097	4,211	5,417	5,931
NH	913	1,085	1,232	1,332	2,077	2,414	2,838
<b>B.C.</b>	<b>19,275</b>	<b>23,441</b>	<b>23,662</b>	<b>24,116</b>	<b>27,067</b>	<b>35,585</b>	<b>33,654</b>

#### Top 5 Communities for overdose/poisoning calls

BCEHS receives the most calls for overdoses/poisonings from large metro centres: Vancouver, Surrey and Victoria.

The Top 5 communities for overdose/poisoning calls in 2022 are below, with the percentage increase over 2021:

1. Vancouver: 7,827 (-22%)
2. Surrey: 2,864 (-22%)
3. Victoria: 2,037 (+4%)
4. Kelowna: 1,824 (+15%)
5. Abbotsford: 1,641 (+20%)

#### Highest call volume days:

On Jan. 19, 2022, BCEHS recorded 203 calls for overdose/poisonings, the highest call volume day so far and the first over 200 to date.

#### Highest Overdose Months

In July 2021, paramedics in B.C. responded to the highest number of overdoses ever recorded in a single month: 3,606 overdose calls.

The summer of 2021 recorded the highest number of overdose calls, with June, July, August, and September each recording more than 3,000 overdoses in each month. The average monthly call volume, prior to the pandemic, had been about 2,000 overdose calls a month.