

This report summarizes deaths between 2007 and 2016 that were reported to the Coroners Service and where the deceased met the BC Coroners Service definition of homeless. Deaths that must be reported to the coroner include all non-natural deaths, and all sudden and unexpected deaths where the person was not under the care of a physician. The report does not include the deaths of homeless individuals that did not meet the legal criteria of the Coroners Act for reporting.

Inclusion Criteria: The data used for this report was retrieved from the BC Coroners Service database by year of death. Cases were included if 'no fixed address' was given as the home address, the injury premise was a 'homeless shelter' or if the circumstances of death suggested homelessness. Each case was reviewed and only those that could be confirmed, from the information available, as meeting the definition of homelessness described below were included in this report.

The BCCS operates in a live database environment. The data are considered preliminary until all investigations have been completed. Data are subject to change and are not directly comparable to published counts from previous years.

Definitions & Limitations:

Street homeless: persons living outdoors, in a make-shift shelter, a parked vehicle, or any other structure not intended for habitation.

Sheltered homeless: persons staying at an emergency shelter (overnight) or temporarily sheltered (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 included.

There are many definitions of homelessness. 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 who do not have a permanent residence, but are temporarily residing and paying rent in a motel, a hotel, or other form of rental accommodation.
- People in correctional institutions, hospitals, or residential drug or alcohol treatment facilities
- People who have a permanent residence, but are considered at high risk of homelessness because of unemployment, domestic violence, or other factors.
- It is not always possible to determine a person's housing status. As such data may be under-reported.

Summary:

- In 2016, there were 175 deaths of homeless individuals in British Columbia. This is a 140% increase over the number of deaths in 2015 (73).
- From 2007 to 2016, there were 55 deaths of homeless individuals per year on average.
- 53% of individuals met the criteria for street homelessness and 36% for sheltered homelessness. Males were more likely than females to meet criteria for street homelessness (55% vs. 40%).
- Overall, 85% of those who died were male. The percentage of females trended downwards with age. The highest proportion of females was in the 30-39 year old age group (27%), and the lowest in the 60+ age group (0%).
- 54% of individuals were aged 40-59.
- 56% of deaths were accidental. Twenty-three percent were classified as natural, and 11% resulted from suicide.
- In 2016, 86% of accidental deaths and 53% of all deaths resulted from unintentional drug and/or alcohol poisoning. In previous years (2007-2015), this category accounted for 63% of accidental deaths and 34% of all deaths on average. Motor vehicle accidents caused the next highest percentage of accidental deaths from 2007-2016 (7%), followed by cold exposure and falls/jumps (both 4%).
- Deaths occurred more often in the later months of the year. From August to December, the average number of deaths per month was 60. From January to July, it was 36.
- Together, Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health accounted for 59% of deaths from 2007 to 2016.
- The townships with the most deaths in 2016 were Vancouver (43), Surrey (17), Victoria (16), and Kelowna (10).

Statistics

Deaths of Homeless Individuals by Type of Homelessness											
Type	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Tot. %
Street	26	30	32	18	10	16	11	23	36	89	53%
Sheltered	16	13	10	11	6	9	16	21	26	68	36%
Unknown	1	7	1	4	8	5	3	5	11	18	11%
Total	43	50	43	33	24	30	30	49	73	175	100%

Deaths of Homeless Individuals by Sex											
Sex	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Tot. %
Female	8	7	6	4	3	7	5	6	9	28	15%
Male	35	43	37	29	21	23	25	43	64	147	85%
Total	43	50	43	33	24	30	30	49	73	175	100%

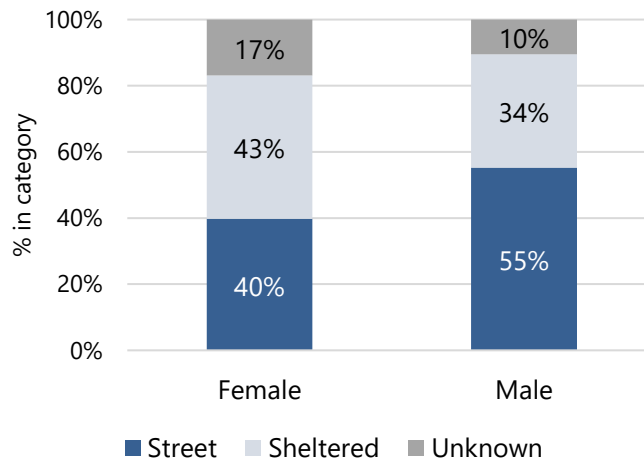


Fig. 1. Type of Homelessness by Sex, 2007-2016

Deaths of Homeless Individuals by Age Group											
Age	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Tot. %
<19	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1%
19-29	5	7	1	5	3	5	3	6	11	34	15%
30-39	6	9	6	11	4	7	10	9	13	30	19%
40-49	17	14	19	8	5	10	7	10	24	35	27%
50-59	12	16	14	6	7	4	4	17	16	54	27%
60-69	2	4	2	2	5	2	5	4	6	18	9%
70+	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	2	3	3	2%
Total	43	50	43	33	24	30	30	49	73	175	100%

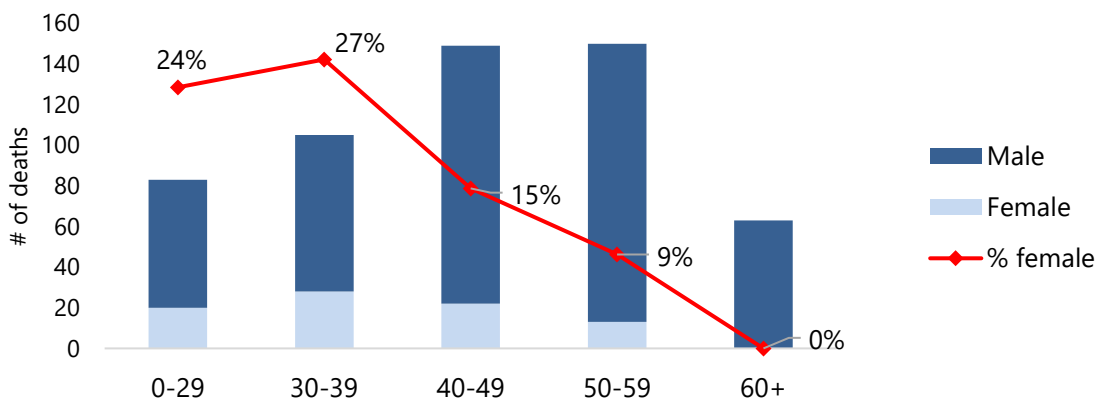


Fig. 2. Sex Distribution by Age Group, 2007-2016

Deaths of Homeless Individuals by Month											
Month	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Tot. %
January	2	4	2	1	2	3	1	5	1	13	6%
February	3	4	6	1	3	3	2	1	6	13	8%
March	3	4	0	2	2	2	2	2	7	11	6%
April	4	7	3	2	2	1	2	5	4	10	7%
May	6	4	2	3	1	1	2	3	3	13	7%
June	1	1	0	5	3	1	2	5	4	12	6%
July	3	3	3	2	1	0	1	4	5	7	5%
August	5	1	4	6	1	3	3	9	9	17	11%
September	4	5	1	3	3	6	2	4	11	8	9%
October	5	8	10	5	3	3	4	4	3	23	12%
November	3	4	6	1	1	3	6	3	7	25	11%
December	4	5	6	2	2	4	3	4	13	23	12%
Total	43	50	43	33	24	30	30	49	73	175	100%

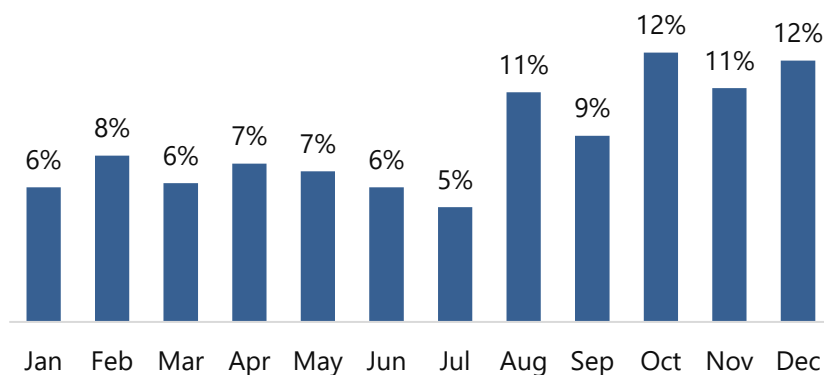


Fig. 3. Deaths of Homeless Individuals as % by Month, 2007-2016

Deaths of Homeless Individuals by Classification of Death											
Age	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Tot. %
Accidental	26	25	22	17	10	13	18	27	43	108	56%
Natural	10	16	9	5	10	6	8	13	20	29	23%
Suicide	3	4	7	6	3	5	3	6	7	19	11%
Undetermined	4	2	3	4	0	6	0	1	1	15	7%
Homicide	0	3	2	1	1	0	1	2	2	4	3%
Total	43	50	43	33	24	30	30	49	73	175	100%

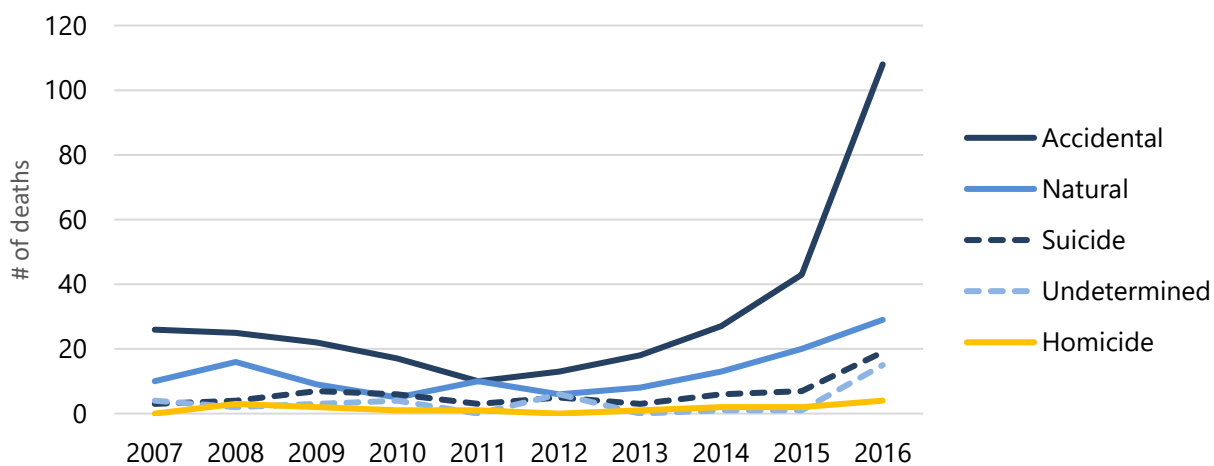


Fig. 4. Deaths of Homeless Individuals by Year and Classification, 2007-2016

Deaths of Homeless Individuals by Health Authority											
HA	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Tot. %
Fraser	9	11	9	10	7	7	9	15	32	59	31%
Van. Coastal	10	17	15	10	7	12	6	10	17	50	28%
Island	14	12	10	7	5	7	9	9	13	25	20%
Interior	8	7	6	3	5	1	3	8	7	33	15%
Northern	2	3	3	3	0	3	3	7	4	8	7%
Total	43	50	43	33	24	30	30	49	73	175	100%

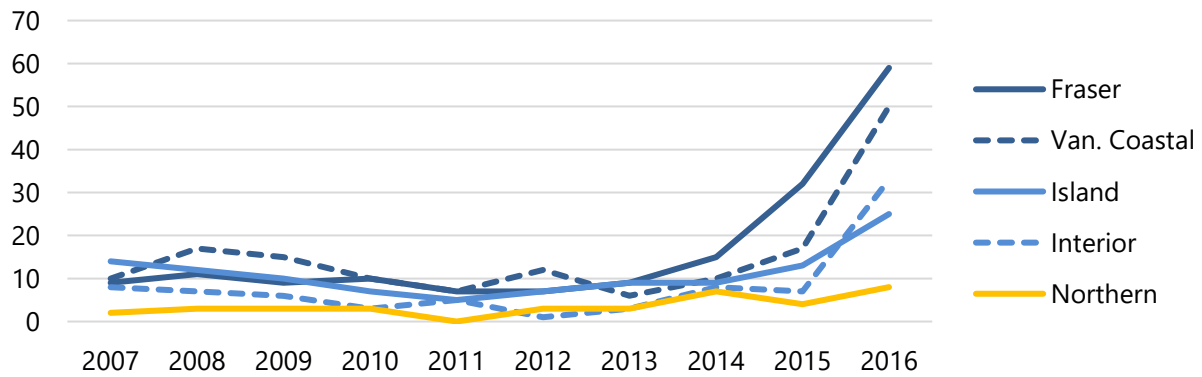


Fig. 5. Deaths of Homeless Individuals by Health Authority, 2007-2016

Deaths of Homeless Individuals : Top Ten Injury Townships												
Rank	Township	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Tot. %
1	Vancouver	9	15	12	8	7	7	5	8	12	43	23%
2	Victoria	9	9	5	3	0	4	3	4	4	16	10%
3	Surrey	4	4	4	3	2	2	2	5	12	17	10%
4	Kelowna	3	3	2	1	1	1	0	1	3	10	5%
5	Maple Ridge	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	9	5	3%
6	Prince George	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	3	2	5	3%
7	Abbotsford	0	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	3	8	3%
7	North Van.	1	2	0	1	0	5	1	1	1	4	3%
9	Kamloops	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	3	1	7	3%
10	Campbell River	0	0	2	1	3	1	0	2	2	3	3%
10	Chilliwack	0	1	1	1	0	1	3	0	1	6	3%

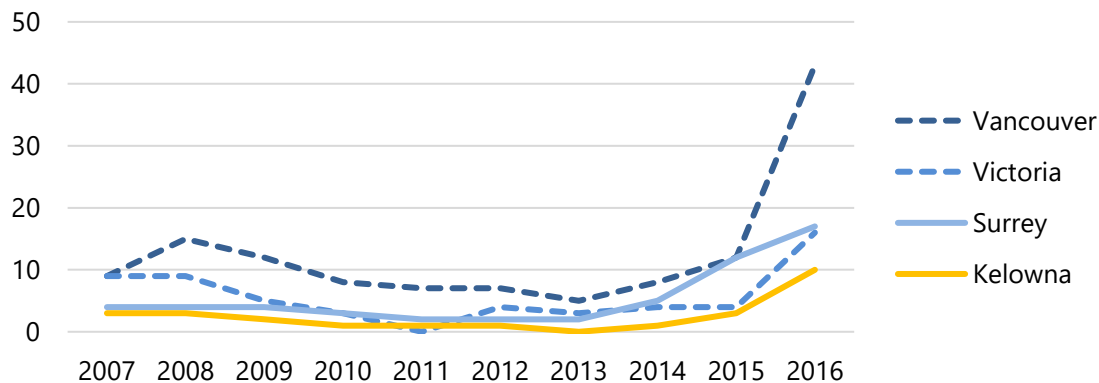


Fig. 6. Deaths of Homeless Individuals by Year: Top Four Injury Townships, 2007-2016

Accidental Deaths of Homeless Individuals by Means of Death											
Means	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Tot. %
Poisoning: Drugs/Alcohol	15	10	10	14	6	7	14	17	38	93	72%
Motor Vehicle Accident	5	5	2	0	2	1	1	2	1	4	7%
Exposure: Cold	1	1	2	1	2	0	2	1	1	1	4%
Fall/Jump	3	5	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	4%
Drowning ^a	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	4	3%
Fire	0	2	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2%
Other ^b	1	1	4	2	0	2	1	3	2	5	7%
Total	26	25	22	17	10	13	18	27	43	108	100%

^a 'Drowning' does not include deaths where drowning was secondary to a fall or motor vehicle incident.

^b 'Other' includes categories accounting for <2% of accidental deaths and cases still under investigation.

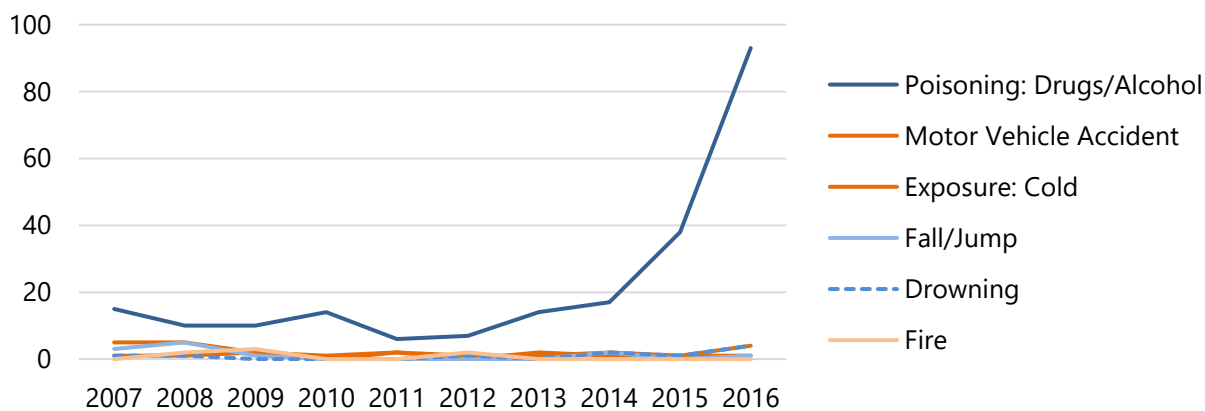
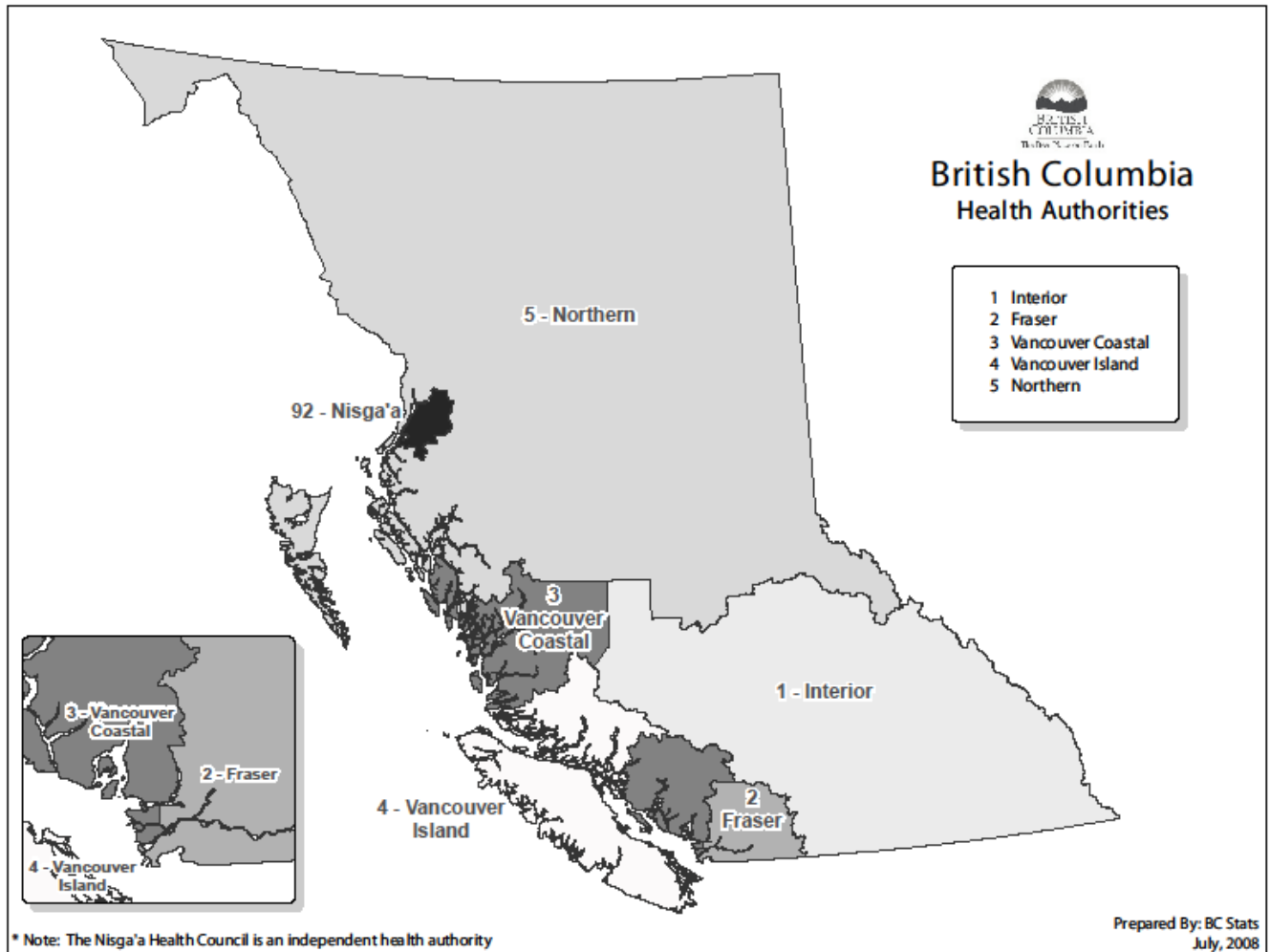


Fig. 7. Accidental Deaths of Homeless Individuals by Means of Death, 2007-2016

Appendix



More information about the health regions can be found at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/geographic-data-services/land-use/administrative-boundaries/health-boundaries>