

**Yukon
Coroner's
Service**

News Release

Update from the Chief Coroner regarding toxic substance deaths in Yukon

October 19, 2026 – Yukon's Chief Coroner is providing an update regarding recent deaths related to toxic substances in Yukon.

Since early July 2026, Yukon Coroner's Service has investigated eight deaths confirmed to have resulted from toxic substances. Toxicology results are still pending in two additional deaths suspected to be related to toxic substance use. All the deaths have occurred in Whitehorse.

Prior to July, the last confirmed toxic substance death investigated by Yukon Coroner's Service occurred in October 2025.

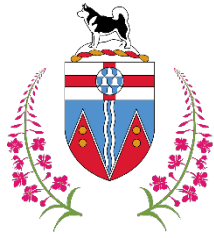
When concerns regarding the toxic illicit drug supply emerged across Canada and British Columbia in April 2016, a public health emergency was declared in response to rising opioid-related deaths. Since then, the Yukon Coroner's Service has investigated 157 confirmed substance-related deaths. Of those deaths, 133 involved opioids, including 117 in which fentanyl was identified.

The number of substance-related deaths in the Yukon has fluctuated over the past decade. Annual totals peaked in 2021, with 25 deaths reported, followed by 24 deaths in 2022, 23 deaths in 2023, 16 deaths in 2024, and 18 deaths in 2025.

While substance-related deaths have remained a significant concern in the Yukon, the recent concentration of deaths within a short period of time is alarming and highlights the ongoing dangers associated with the unregulated drug supply.

Preliminary investigative findings indicate that cocaine has been present in all eight confirmed deaths this year. In addition, fluorofentanyl (a highly potent synthetic opioid related to fentanyl) has been detected in five of the deaths. These findings reinforce concerns about the increasing unpredictability and toxicity of the unregulated drug supply.

While the Yukon has experienced substance-related deaths for many years, the eight confirmed deaths investigated since July, along with two additional deaths awaiting toxicology results, are deeply concerning. These deaths underscore the continued presence of a



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dangerous and unpredictable drug supply in our community and the devastating impact it has on individuals, families, and friends.

By sharing this information, the hope is to increase awareness, encourage people to take precautions, and help prevent further loss of life. These deaths are a tragic reminder that substance use continues to affect individuals, families, and communities across Yukon

Quote:

Each of these deaths represents a person whose loss is deeply felt by family, friends, and community members. On behalf of Yukon Coroner Services, I extend my sincere condolences to everyone who is grieving. Yukoners are encouraged to support one another with compassion, continue to reduce stigma, and seek help when needed. Every life lost is profound, and every preventable death leaves a lasting impact on those left behind.

Chief Coroner Heather Jones

Contact: For media inquiries contact the chief coroner [email heather.jones@yukon.ca, or phone 867-667-5317; toll free 1-800-661-0408, extension 5317].