

### Definition of Homeless

For the purpose of these statistics, an individual is considered homeless if they were known to be living 'rough' or on the street (street homeless), or were in an emergency shelter or being provided temporary shelter by friends or family (less than 30 days; sheltered homeless). Individuals staying with friends or family on a long-term or indefinite basis were excluded from this report. This definition was adopted from the City of Vancouver's Greater Vancouver Homeless Count. More information regarding this definition can be found at:

[www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commstvcs/housing/homelessness.htm](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commstvcs/housing/homelessness.htm).

Cases were retrieved from the BC Coroners Service database if 'no fixed address' was given as the home address, or if the word 'homeless' appeared in the case circumstance notes. Each case was reviewed and only those found to meet this definition of homeless were included in this report.

According to a report commissioned by the BC Ministry of Health – Mental Health and Addictions Branch and released in February 2008 by the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction (CARMHA) at Simon Fraser University, there are 11,750 homeless people in British Columbia. This report can be viewed at: [www.carmha.ca/publications/resources/pub\\_hsami/Housing\\_SAMI\\_BC\\_FINAL\\_\(pre-desk\).pdf](http://www.carmha.ca/publications/resources/pub_hsami/Housing_SAMI_BC_FINAL_(pre-desk).pdf)

### Summary of Trends and Statistics

- The death rate among homeless persons in 2007<sup>1</sup> was 21.3 per 10,000 people. The death rate in the general population for 2006 (2007 statistics not yet available) was 17.9 per 10,000 people<sup>2</sup>. Note that natural/expected deaths are not included in these estimates. Approximately 25% of deaths occurring in the general population are reported to the BC Coroners Service, falling into five categories: accidental, homicide, suicide, natural/unexpected, and undetermined.
- 33.9% of deaths were among sheltered homeless, and 66.1% were among street homeless.
- Aboriginals are overrepresented at 14.3% of total, while comprising just 4.4% of BC's population<sup>3</sup>.
- The top four leading causes of death were: natural disease, 23.2%; illicit drug poisoning (overdose), 23.2%; blunt injuries (e.g. hit by car), 10.1%; and hanging, 7.1%.

### Total Deaths Among Homeless Individuals in BC, 2006 - 2007

Year	2007	2006	TOTAL
Sheltered	9	10	19
Street	16	21	37
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>56</b>

<sup>1</sup> Based on the population estimate from the CARMHA report.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the final quarter population estimate from the BC Statistics Agency, and total deaths from the 2006 BC Coroners Service Annual Report.

<sup>3</sup> From the 2001 Census of Canada.



## Deaths Among Homeless Individuals 2006-2007

### Demographic Information

Ethnicity	TOTAL
Non-Aboriginal	48
Aboriginal	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56</b>

Gender	TOTAL
Male	46
Female	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56</b>

Age Group (years)	2007	2006	TOTAL
≤19	0	0	0
20-29	4	4	8
30-39	2	7	9
40-49	9	10	19
50-59	7	9	16
60-69	2	1	3
70-79	1	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>56</b>

BCCS Region	2007	2006	TOTAL
Island	8	8	16
Fraser	5	11	16
Vancouver Metro	8	7	15
Interior	4	4	8
Northern	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>56</b>

Township of Death (> 1 deaths)	2007	2006	TOTAL
Vancouver	8	5	13
Victoria	5	6	11
New Westminster	0	4	4
North Vancouver	1	2	3
Surrey	2	1	3
Chilliwack	0	2	2
Kelowna	2	0	2
Nanaimo	1	1	2

## Deaths Among Homeless Individuals 2006-2007

### Circumstances/Causes of Death

Classification of Death	2007	2006	TOTAL
Accident	10	12	22
Natural	5	10	15
Suicide	3	4	7
Undetermined	3	1	4
Homicide	0	3	3
Still under investigation	4	1	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>56</b>

Causes of Death	TOTAL
Natural disease processes	13
Poisoning: Illicit drugs	13
Blunt injuries	6
Hanging	4
Undetermined deaths	4
Poisoning: Alcohol +/- or drugs	3
Head injuries	2
Poisoning: Other	2
Stabbing	2
Drowning	1
Smoke inhalation	1
Still under investigation	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56</b>

**Note.** The BCCS operates in a live database environment. The data are considered preliminary until all investigations have been completed. Data are subject to change.