

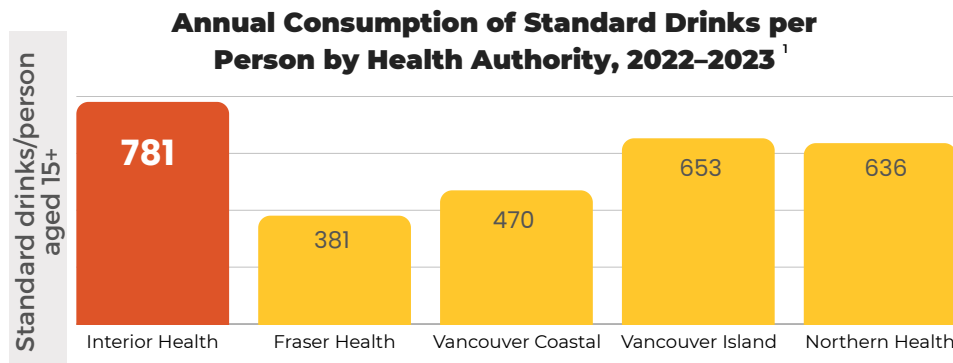
Reducing Alcohol-Related Harms

Toolkit for Local Governments

Local governments play a crucial role in building a healthy community by fostering healthy environments, cultures, and behaviours. This toolkit, with an overview of the health, safety, and economic implications of alcohol use, supports community conversations about ways to reduce consumption. It also offers recommendations for local governments to support a culture of moderation to lessen alcohol-related harms.

EVIDENCE

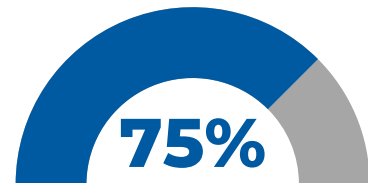
The Interior Health region of BC has had the highest alcohol consumption rates and related health costs in the province since 2002¹



CONSEQUENCES OF NORMALIZATION

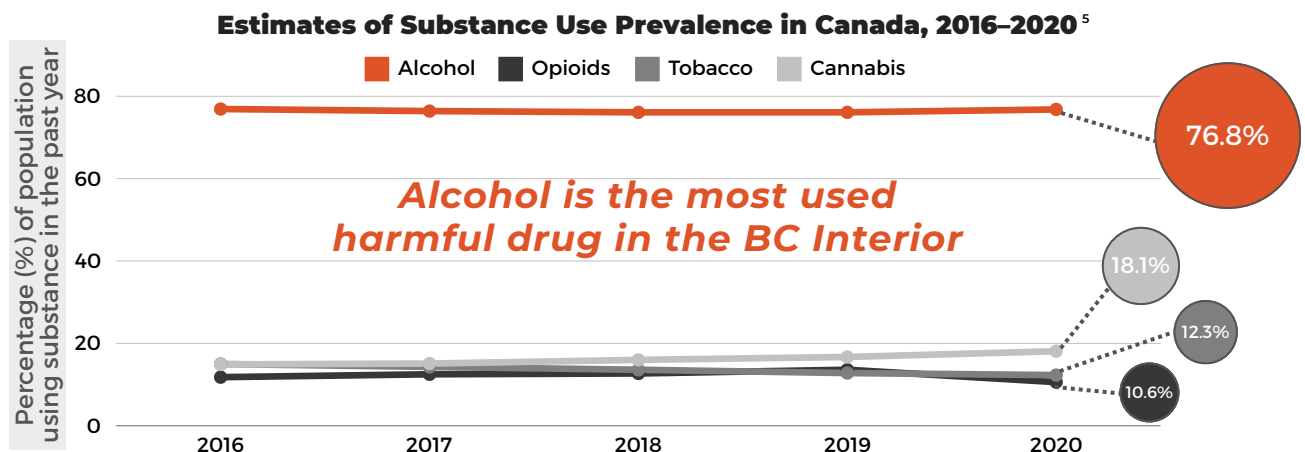
2, 3, 18, 19

Alcohol is the most commonly used harmful drug in the Interior Health region. Its consumption is widely normalized in our society. Despite previous guidance, new research shows that **any amount of alcohol carries health risks**, and the majority of people underestimate their consumption.



of men and women underestimate how much alcohol they consume⁴

The costs and harms to community are often overlooked when local government assess alcohol-related policies. Any reduction in use helps lower the risks to personal and community health and safety.



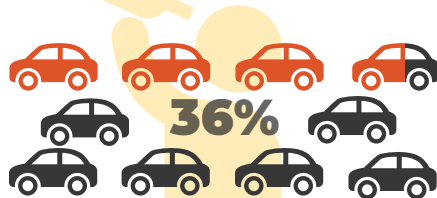
LEGAL YET HARMFUL

Alcohol is a legal and regulated psychoactive **drug**.

DRUG
/dræg/

A substance that has a physiological effect when ingested or otherwise introduced into the body ⁶

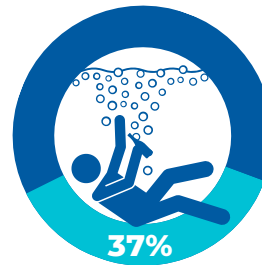
BC Fatal Vehicle Accidents Involving Alcohol, 2021⁷



RISKS TO HEALTH & WELLBEING^{2, 3, 8, 18, 19}

Alcohol is linked to more than 200 health and injury conditions. These include cancers, liver and cardiovascular diseases, mental illness, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, drownings, and suicides. Even those who do not drink can experience secondary harms through impaired driving, family violence, and public disturbances.

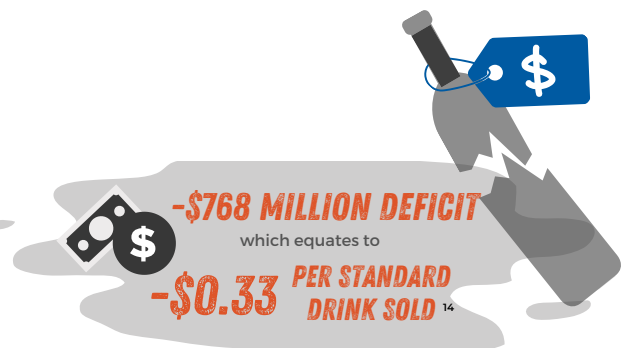
The Interior Health region has the **second-highest rate** of alcohol-related fatalities and hospitalizations in BC^{10, 11}



BC Fatal Drownings Involving Alcohol, 2020⁹

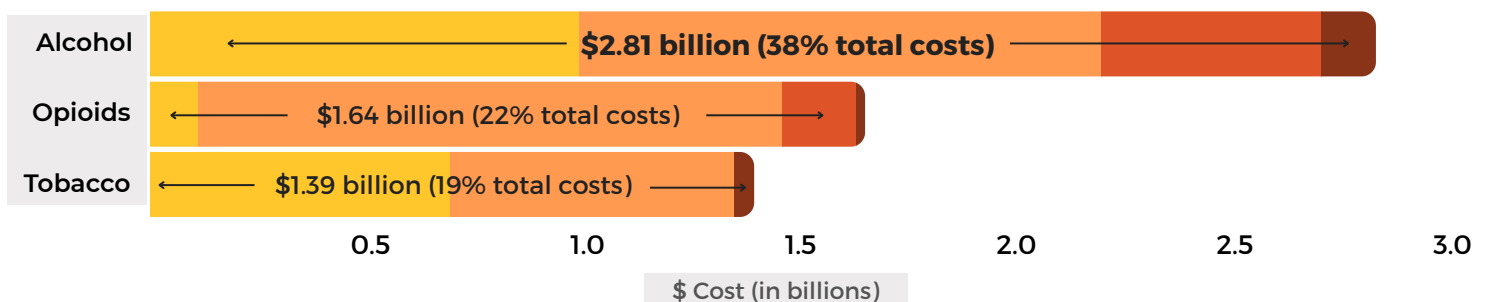
COSTS^{12, 13, 14}

While alcohol taxes and sales may seem like a revenue stream, the financial burden on our communities is far greater. In 2020, the BC Government reported \$2.04 billion in net alcohol revenues, but the **direct societal costs**—spanning healthcare, policing, and lost productivity—rose to over **\$2.81 billion**.



Substance Use-attributable Costs BC, 2020–2021¹²

Healthcare Lost Productivity Criminal Justice Other Direct



WHAT CAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DO?

Through healthy public policies and partnerships, it is possible to both support the economic and social benefits of alcohol, and reduce its harm. Here are some possible actions that local governments can take:

1 REGULATE ALCOHOL AT PUBLIC SPACES & EVENTS ^{15, 16, 17}

- Create a Municipal Alcohol Policy (MAP) to regulate, manage and evaluate alcohol consumption on municipally owned properties.
- Provide incentives to alcohol-free event organizers, like lower booking fees and priority dates.
- If alcohol is permitted at an event:
 - Provide alcohol-free spaces.
 - Enclose licensed areas and ensure they are not accessible to minors.
 - Establish clear consequences for non-compliance, like fines and loss of hosting or renting privileges.

Community example: City of Toronto

The [City of Toronto MAP](#) prohibits high alcohol beers (over 5.6%) on municipally owned or managed property. The policy also requires that at least one-third of alcohol volume available at events must be of low alcohol content.

Community example: District of Tofino

Tofino extended their oversight of local alcohol use by implementing a [MAP for Public Events](#). The community restricts the use of alcohol on all public beaches, parks, trail networks or municipally owned docks ^{24/7}.

When alcohol is served at events, consider following the [Government of BC's Public Health Guidelines on Major Planned Events Fact Sheet #5](#)

EXPLORE LAND USE PLANNING OPTIONS ² ^{16, 17, 19}

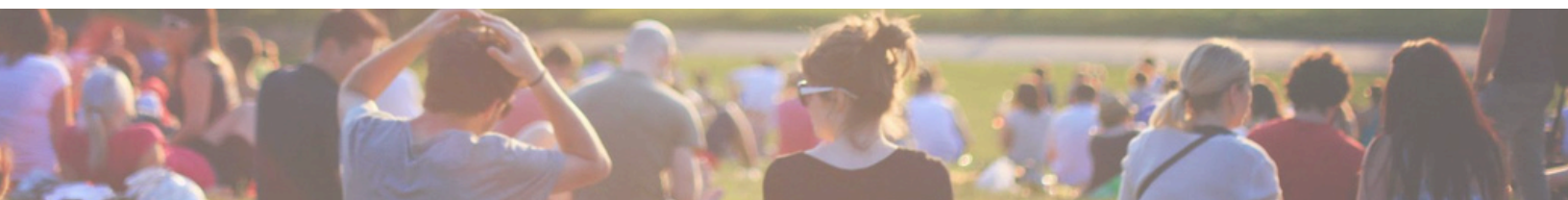
- Explore zoning options related to the location and density of alcohol retail locations:
 - Develop community policies that clearly establish where licensed alcohol establishments can be located.
 - Consider minimum separation distances between outlets that sell alcohol and sensitive land use areas, such as schools, daycares, treatment centers, parks and beaches.
- Invest in transit options, including pedestrian walkways, especially close to locations that serve alcohol.



Alcohol retail density contributes to overconsumption ^{16, 17, 19}

Community example: City of Edmonton

The City of Edmonton limits the density of alcohol establishments and regulates distance between alcohol establishments by using its [zoning bylaws](#).

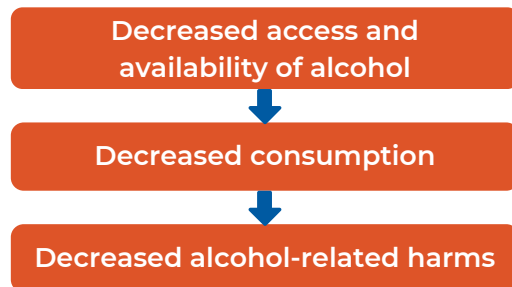


3 IMPLEMENT BUSINESS BYLAWS ^{15, 16, 17, 19}

- Create a business license bylaw to:
 - Reduce trading hours of on- and off-premise alcohol sales.
 - Prohibit the sale of alcohol less than \$3.00/standard serving and encourage responsible consumption.

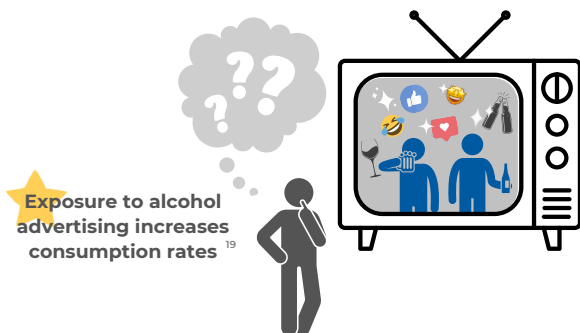
Community example: City of Kamloops

The City of Kamloops has a [business license and regulation bylaw](#) that requires all licensed liquor establishments to sell alcoholic beverages at a retail price of no less than \$3.00 per standard serving, inclusive of taxes.



4 STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY SAFETY ^{16, 17, 19}

- Ensure citizens know drinking in public is prohibited by provincial law.
- Restrict or prohibit alcohol imagery, marketing, and sponsorship through bylaws and policy (e.g., on public transit, in arenas, at outdoor special events, etc.).
- Require that alcohol selling and serving locations communicate the health harms of alcohol.
- Leverage partnerships with bylaw officers and police around enforcement and penalties for disorderly conduct and drinking and driving.
- Ensure equitable enforcement and penalties for non-compliance.



Community example: City of Saskatoon

The City of Saskatoon prohibits alcohol advertising on public transit through its [Transit Advertising Policy](#). Additionally, the city's [Advertising in Recreation Facilities Policy](#) limits and restricts alcohol advertising within municipally owned recreation facilities.

5 WORK WITH OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT ^{16, 17, 19}

- Advocate at the provincial and/or federal levels for:
 - Pricing structure that ensures alcohol costs deter high levels of consumption, keeps pace with inflation, and reflects alcohol content (including beer and cider).
 - Alcohol harm prevention policies.
 - The addition of nutrition and warning labelling on alcohol products.
 - Greater marketing restrictions for alcohol advertisers.

59% of Canadians believe that alcohol should come with warning labels ²⁰

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ALCOHOL IN SOCIETY

INFOGRAPHIC

A Standard Drink Means...¹⁸



Canada's Guidance on Weekly Consumption¹⁸



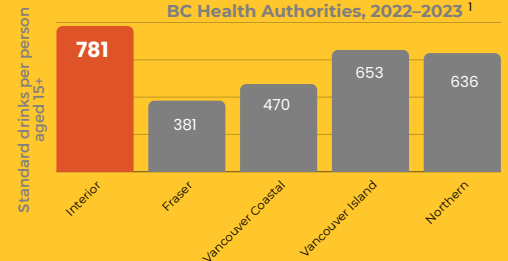
NORMALIZATION

Estimates of Substance Use Prevalence in Canada, 2016–2020⁵



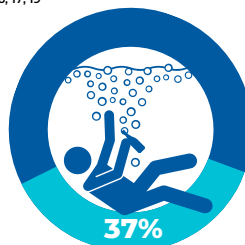
of men and women underestimate how much alcohol they consume⁴

Per Capita Annual Alcohol Consumption by BC Health Authorities, 2022–2023¹

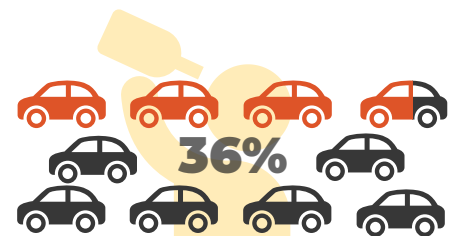


Alcohol retail density contributes to overconsumption^{16, 17, 19}

ALCOHOL-RELATED HARMS



BC Fatal Drownings Involving Alcohol, 2020⁹



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Substance Use-attributable Costs BC, 2020–2021¹²

