

Drug Checking in British Columbia

February 2019

This report summarizes key indicators for Fourier Transform Infrared (FT-IR)/fentanyl test strip combination drug checking done in British Columbia in February 2019.

As the FT-IR spectrometer has a detection limit of 3-4% by weight (Sherman et al., 2018), unless otherwise stated, a drug check on any given sample consists of **both** Bruker ALPHA Fourier-Transform Infrared (FT-IR) spectrometer **and** BTNX fentanyl immunoassay test strip testing done in combination. When applicable, BTNX benzodiazepine or lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) immunoassay test strips are also used.

Please note that these data are not finalized and are subject to change.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the following partners:

- ANKORS
- ASK Wellness Society
- Lookout Society
- Fraser Health
- Interior Health
- Vancouver Coastal Health

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- In February 2019, 647 drug checks were completed on samples in British Columbia
 - 536 drug checks were completed in Vancouver Coastal Health region
 - 49 drug checks were completed in Fraser Health region
 - 62 drug checks were completed in Interior Health Region
 - The majority of samples tested were expected by clients to be either opioids (422 or 65.2%), stimulants (101 or 15.6%), or psychedelics (57 or 8.8%).

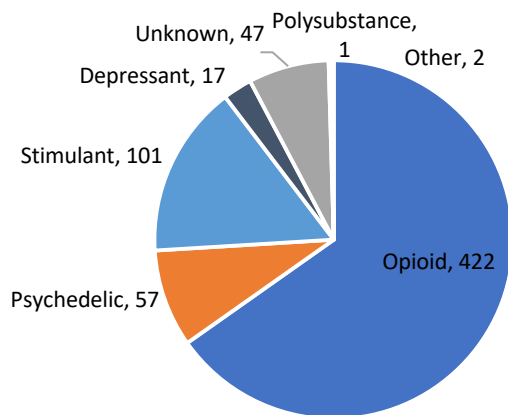


Figure 1. Number of drug checks performed in BC in February 2019, by expected drug category

<p>Depressant may include: benzodiazepines, GHB, zopiclone</p> <p>Opioid may include: “down,” heroin, fentanyl, fentanyl analogues, pharmaceutical opioids</p> <p>Polysubstance includes: cross-category mixtures</p> <p>Psychedelic may include: 2C-family, tryptamines, ketamine, MDMA, LSD, cannabis</p> <p>Stimulant may include: “speed”, crystal meth, cocaine, cathinones</p> <p>Unknown includes: all samples in which the client could not identify the expected substance</p>

Table 1. Number of samples that matched client expectation using FTIR/test strip drug checking in British Columbia in February 2019, by expected drug category

	Depressant	Opioid	Psychedelic	Stimulant	Other	Unknown	Total
True	12	379	44	101	1	0	537
False	5	41	10	0	1	0	57
N/A	0	2	3	0	1	47	53
Total	17	422	57	101	3	47	647

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents

Table 2. Number of opioid samples that matched client expectation using FTIR/test strip drug checking in British Columbia in February 2019, by expected drug

	Fentanyl	Heroin	Fentanyl & Heroin	Fentanyl analogue	Pharmaceutical	'Down'*	Total
True	272	19	14	3	1	70	379
False	7	17	7	0	0	9	40
N/A	0	1	0	0	1	1	3
Total	279	37	21	3	2	90	422

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents

**'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount*

- 260 opioid samples (61.6%) tested positive for fentanyl using the FT-IR spectrometer.
- **The total fentanyl positivity rate in opioid samples was 92.2%.**
- Of the 101 stimulant samples and 57 psychedelic samples, 0 (0.0%) tested positive for fentanyl

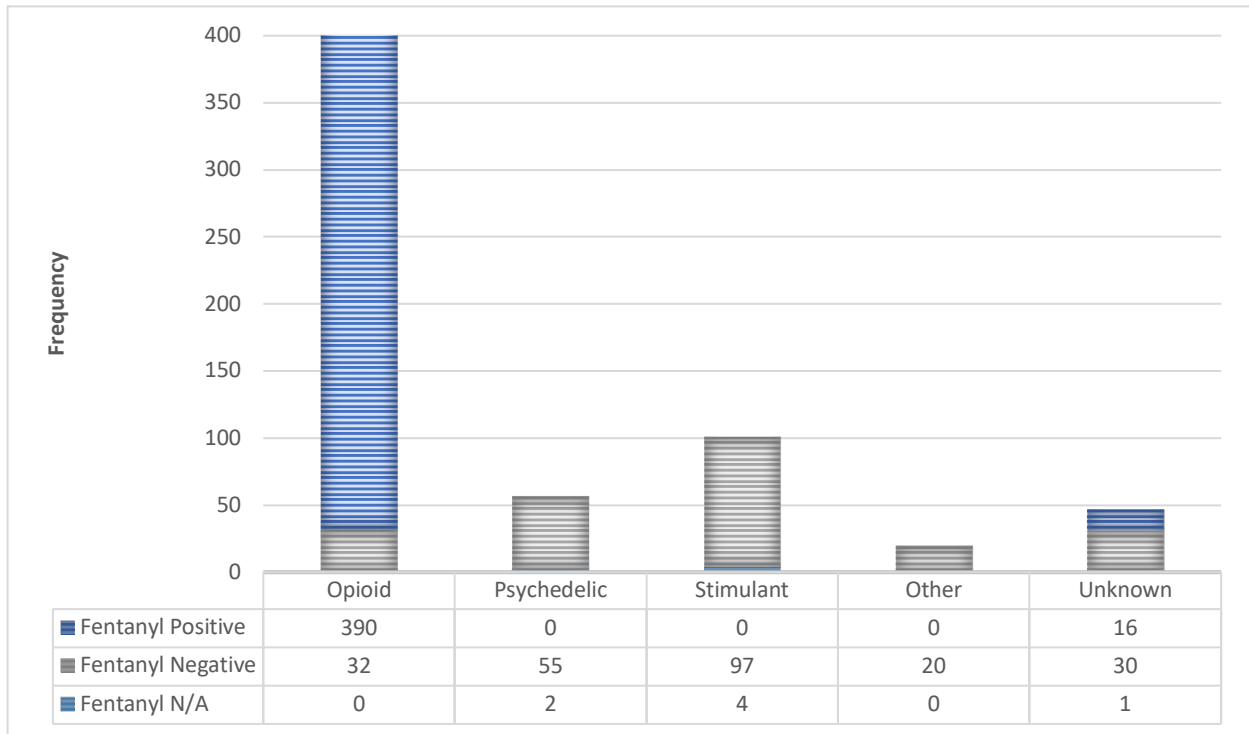


Figure 2. Number of drug checking samples that tested positive and negative for fentanyl in British Columbia, in February 2019, by expected drug category

Table 3. Public health notifications of drug checking results in British Columbia in February 2019

Date & Location	Expected Drug	FT-IR Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Lab Analysis	Outcome
8-Feb 2019 Vancouver	'Down'	AMB-FUBINACA	Positive	AMB-FUBINACA	RADAR alert
28-Feb 2019 Insite	'Down'	None	Negative	Carfentanil	RADAR alert
28-Feb 2019 Insite	'Down'	None	Positive	Etizolam	RADAR alert