

Opioid Harm Reduction Commission

Background on safe or supervised injection facilities (SIF) in other countries

- Approximately 100 safe or supervised injection facilities (SIF) are currently operating in at least 66 cities in ten countries, largely concentrated in Australia, Canada, and Europe:
 - Australia
 - Canada
 - Denmark
 - France
 - Germany
 - Luxembourg
 - The Netherlands
 - Norway
 - Spain
 - Switzerland
- In addition to SIF, facilities known under a variety of names, including “supervised consumption services,” “overdose prevention centers,” and “drug consumption rooms.”
- Majority designed to complement existing prevention, harm reduction, and treatment interventions, although some SIF are mobile clinics/vans.

Selected Country Experiences with SIF

Country	Summary
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First SIF, known as <i>medically supervised injecting centres</i> (MSICs), established in 2001 in an inner-city locality of Sydney called Kings Cross (pop. 20,000).• MSIC initially established on a trial basis, but in 2010, New South Wales Government introduced legislation to lift trial status of the Sydney MSIC allowing it to become a permanent health service.• After 16 years of operation, Sydney MSIC averages ~150 visits per day and has managed nearly 6,000 overdoses with no overdose fatality.• Evaluations of Sydney MSIC demonstrated reductions of up to 80% in overdose-related emergency medical service calls in surrounding area over 10-year period.• Two-year trial for MSIC in Melbourne approved in 2017, but currently on hold.
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are over 20 federally approved safe consumption sites in Canada and dozens of applications for sites from other cities currently under review.¹• In the past two years, SIFs have been opened in Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Ottawa, and smaller cities throughout Canada.• Canada’s first sanctioned SIF, known as Insite, opened in Vancouver in 2003 in response to epidemics of HIV infection and overdose in the mid-1990s and operation of several unsanctioned SIFs in the 1990s. In 2017, the site recorded 175,464 visits (an average of 415 injection room visits per day) by 7,301 unique users; 2,151 overdoses occurred with no fatalities, due to intervention by medical staff.• Community impact studies of Insite identified reduced overdose mortality by 35%, and conservative estimates from Vancouver suggest that a single SIF can prevent up to 35 new cases of HIV per year.• In June 2017, Montreal opened three SIFs and one mobile unit that circulates throughout the city. The sites are run in by Quebec’s healthcare and social services system (CIUSSS) in collaboration with four community outreach groups.• In the first year of operation, Montreal’s SIFs served a total of 876 individuals, for total of 21,265 visits.

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/supervised-consumption-sites/status-application.html>

Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known as <i>drug consumption rooms</i> (DCRs), first DCR opened in 2000 in Madrid. • There are currently seven operating in four different cities, including a mobile unit. • Drug policies in Spain are decentralized and it's the regional and local governments that are responsible for the development of drug services. • DCRs commonly belong to the local and regional Health Ministries and agencies and receive public funds from different public administrations.
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Key References

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