

# Digital Overdose Response System (DORS)

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**Mental Health and Addiction**  
April 2025



# Purpose

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Provide information about use of the Digital Overdose Response System (DORS)

Why the Digital Overdoes Response System (DORS) is needed

# Opioid-Related Overdose Fatality Data



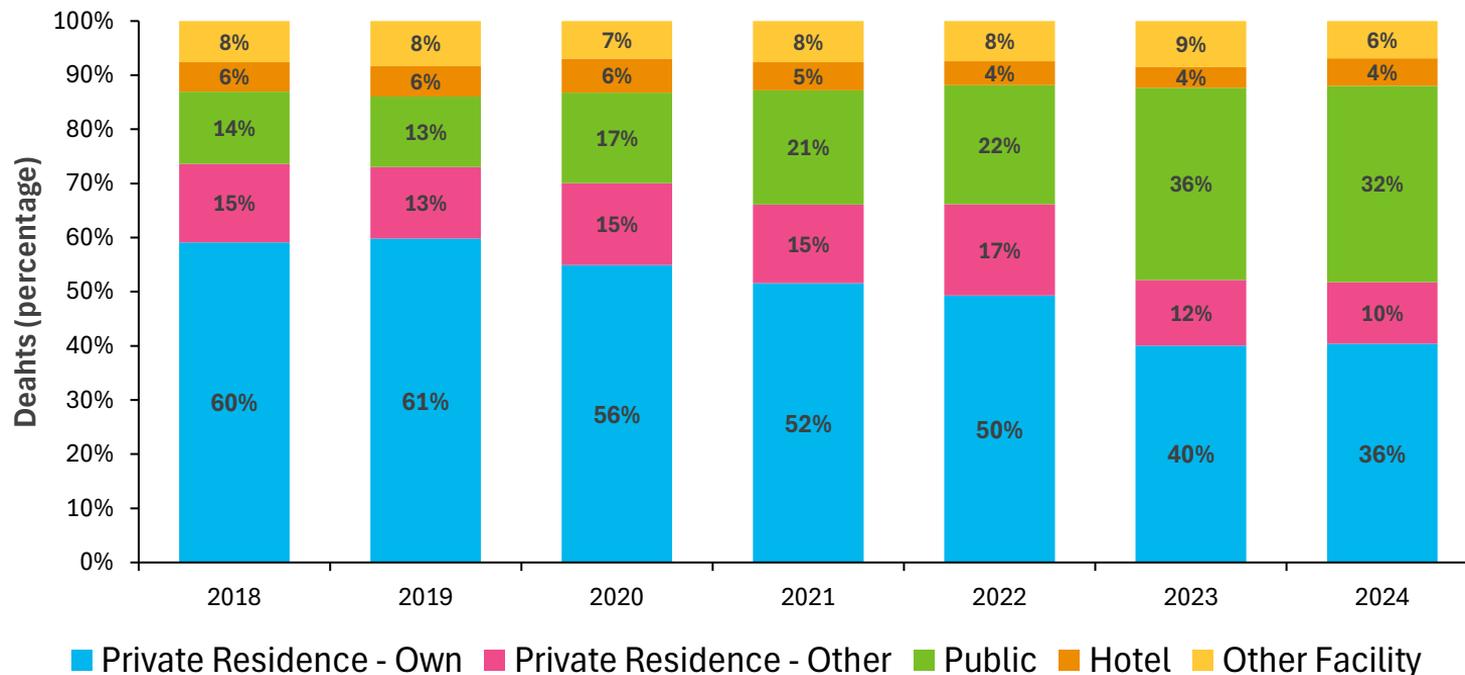
- Most Albertans who die as a result of an unintentional opioid overdose do so while in a private residence
  - Over the past five years, 50-80% occurred in private residences
- As part of Alberta Recovery Model, the DORS was a support initiative to help curb the number of opioid related overdoses
- DORS provides safety and security to individuals using substances while alone
- Opioid deaths have dramatically increased across the province since the onset of the pandemic, but have shown some decline in 2024

2021	2022	2023*	2024*
<b>1,642</b> 38% higher than previous year (1,192)	<b>1,524</b> 7% lower than previous year	<b>1,874</b> 23% increase over previous year	<b>1,182</b> 37% lower than previous year

\*Investigations by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner can take up to six to nine months to complete and, as new information is available, these statistics may change.

# Location of opioid deaths

Location of unintentional opioid poisoning deaths per year



# Overview

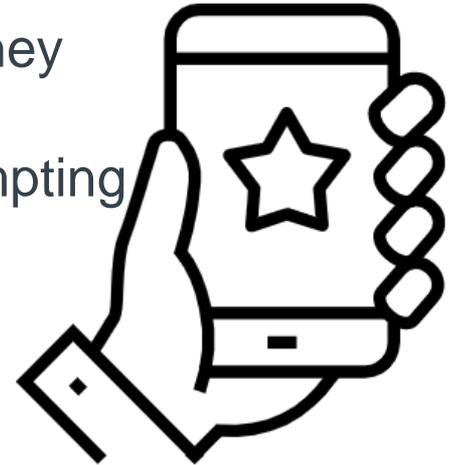
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How DORS works

# Overview of DORS

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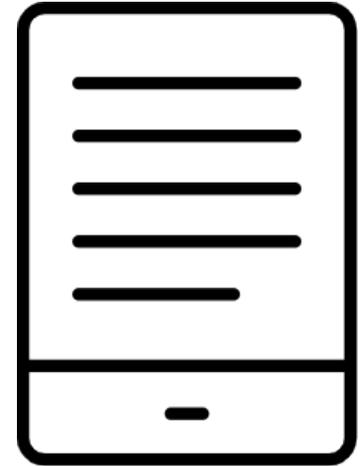
- DORS is a mobile app which can connect users to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in the event they become unresponsive while using drugs alone
- The App is configured with a timer and alarm, prompting a response to either “end” or “extend” a session
- If unresponsive, a third-party response-center (STARS) will call the user to ensure safety and consciousness
- If a user remains unresponsive, EMS will be immediately dispatched to the location entered into the App
- More information and tutorials are available at [DORSapp.ca](https://DORSapp.ca)



# How to download/register for DORS

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- Visit [DORSapp.ca](https://DORSapp.ca) and find information and a link to download DORS in the App Stores (Apple Store or Google Play)
  - The website also includes information FAQs, links to resources and tutorials
- DORS can also be accessed directly through the app stores
- QR codes on materials in communities
- Mobile phone number will need to be provided to register the app
  - No name or username will be required



# How to use DORS

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1. Agree to an End-User License Agreement
2. Prompt - phone must be charged at least 15%, volume at maximum
3. Users must allow for approval of:
  1. Location Services and Push Notifications
  2. Access to mobile phone #
  3. Call back for assistance if app indicates user is in need
4. Confirmation of phone # by entering code
5. Information on type of substance being used will **not** be requested
6. Initial timer is set to 1 minute, with option to “extend” or “end”
  1. Maximum extension: 15 minutes via 1 minute intervals



# Emergency Circumstances

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- If the user does not press “end” or “extend” in the app when any of the countdown timers run out:
  - Third-party response centre (STARS) calls the client
  - If user is still unresponsive, STARS will contact Alberta Health Services EMS and have an ambulance dispatched to the client’s location



# Other Features

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- Immediate access to STARS through a noticeable icon
- If users are interested in recovery, a list of resources is readily available through the DORS app, including supports such as the Addiction Helpline and information on where to access treatment or services.
  - At later stages of development, targeted local supports will be included based on location

# Limitations

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- Risk of overdose, even when using the app
- Requires access to a smartphone
- Access to cellular data or Wi-Fi



# Utilization

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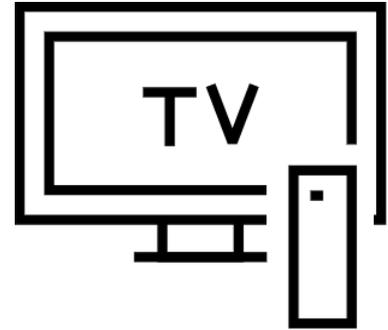
- The App is available in **all five health zones**
- As of today:
  - More than 8,000 downloads
  - More than 3,000 registered users
  - Hundreds of unique use-session initiations
  - Numerous successful EMS dispatches
  - Thousands of website visits



# Promotion

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- **Upcoming:**
  - Continued sharing of promotional materials
- **Completed:**
  - Province-wide advertising campaign  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzQSb6mSIZU>
  - Advertisements in bars/pubs (through AGLC)
  - Newspaper ads (Edmonton & Calgary)
  - Various news releases/news conferences (Minister led)
  - Distribution of material to health and community partners
  - Social media advertisements
  - Presentations to various sectors (housing management bodies, emergency department staff, police, etc.)



# TV Spot

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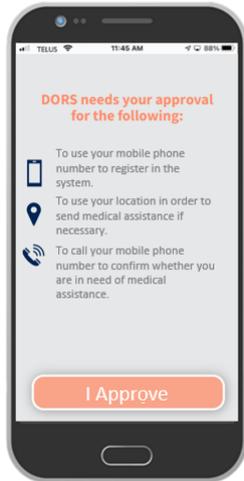
# Demo

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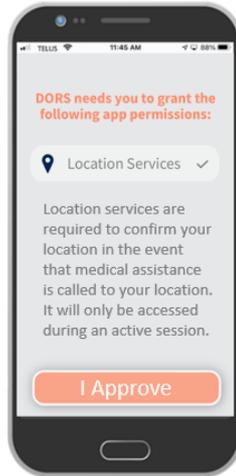
# Registration



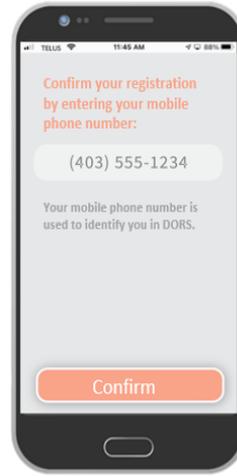
- 1** Read and accept the End User License Agreement (EULA). Available also at [dorsapp.ca/dorseula](https://dorsapp.ca/dorseula)



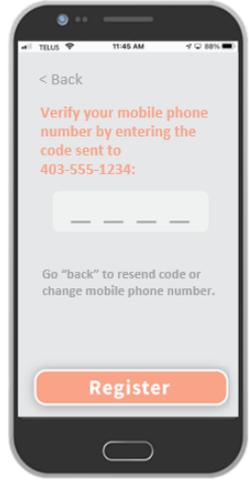
- 2** Agree to the use of your personal information to keep you safe.



- 3** Allow the app to access Location Services and Notification Services.

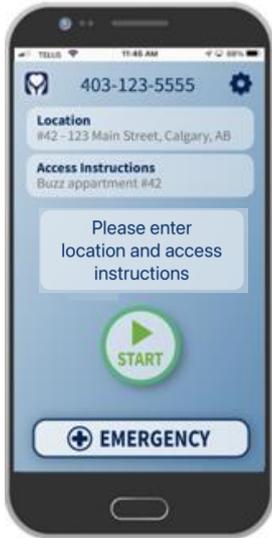


- 4** Enter your mobile phone number.



- 5** Confirm your number by entering a four digit code sent to your phone by SMS.

# Initiating a Request for Monitoring



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Enter your location and access instructions. This information is necessary to find you in an emergency.



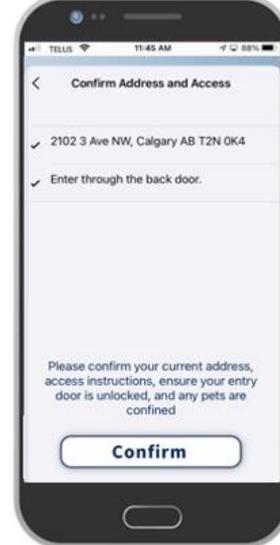
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Press "Start" to initiate a request for monitoring. The timer will start at one minute.



8

If your battery is low, the app will ask you to charge your phone to continue.



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Confirm your location and access instructions. Also, if you have pets they should be confined.



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Ensure your phone volume is turned all the way up, so that you can hear the app alarm.

# Timer Countdown and Emergency



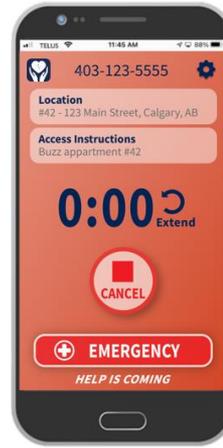
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The timer will countdown from 1:00 min. At 30s, an increasing alarm will sound. At this point, the timer can be extended by one minute intervals to a maximum of five minutes. The maximum session length is 15 minutes. You cancel at any time by pressing the “Cancel” button.



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If the timer reaches zero, an emergency will be declared and the app will inform STARS that help is requested. You can also request help at any time by pressing the “Emergency” button.



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When a STARS agent responds to the emergency, the app will display “Help is Coming”. At this point you should receive a phone call from the STARS agent. If you need help, or if you don’t answer, STARS will call an ambulance for you to respond to your location.



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Under “Settings”, you can find resources including the online tutorial, answers to frequently asked questions, online and telephone counseling resources, and license and privacy information.

# Questions?

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