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Police target drug addicts

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VANCOUVER -- After two years of looking the other way, Vancouver police will begin arresting addicts who shoot up in public, seizing their drugs as evidence and pursuing charges of narcotics possession.

Police say the crackdown is an effort to encourage drug addicts to use the Insite safe-injection site which opened two years ago.

"It's called enforcing the law," said Insp. John McKay of the city-wide enforcement team. "We're going to give (addicts) a legal reason to use (Insite). People are getting tired of tripping over 18,000 needles a month."

That many discarded needles are found littering the streets and alleys in a four-block radius around the injection site every month, McKay said. There are an estimated 7,500-8,000 intravenous drug users in the area and complaints about open drug use are coming thick and fast, he said.

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