



Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Policing and Security Branch

Crime Statistics in British Columbia, 2015

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Highlights

- In 2015, for the second year in a row after ten years of consecutive annual decreases, B.C.'s **crime rate** increased; it went up by 3.5% in 2015, from 75.8 to 78.4 offences per 1,000 population.
- The **Crime Severity Index (CSI)** lists B.C.'s 2015 CSI value as 94.7, 35.9% higher than the national CSI value of 69.7, and 3.5% higher than B.C.'s 2014 CSI value of 91.5. This increase in B.C.'s overall CSI was largely driven by increases in total theft of \$5,000 or under (+4,278), fraud (+2,504), and robbery (+259) offences.
- The number of **violent offences** in B.C. increased by 7.1% in 2015, with a 6.1% increase in the violent **crime rate** (from 11.5 violent offences per 1,000 population in 2014 to 12.2 in 2015); this is the first time B.C.'s violent crime rate has increased since 2005.
- Of the additional 3,785 **violent offences** recorded in B.C. in 2015, 81.3% are accounted for by increases in the three offences of indecent or harassing communications (+1,413), assaults (+1,011), and uttering threats (+655).
- The **violent CSI** lists a value of 83.0 for B.C. in 2015, 7.4% higher than 77.3 the previous year and 11.4% higher than the national violent CSI value of 74.5. The increase in B.C.'s violent CSI was driven primarily by increases in robbery (+259), attempted murder (+37), and violent firearm (+90) offences.
- A total of 95 **homicides** were reported in B.C. in 2015, 6 (or 6.7%) more than the 89 reported the previous year. With 129 **attempted murders**, 2015 recorded a 40.2% increase over the 92 reported in 2014. The number of robberies increased 7.6%, non-sexual assaults increased by 3.4%, and sexual assaults increased by 2.3% from the previous year.
- **Property offences** in B.C. increased by 3.1% in 2015, resulting in a 2.1% increase in the property **crime rate**, which increased from 48.8 property offences per 1,000 population in 2014 to 49.8 in 2015.
- The **non-violent CSI** lists a value of 98.8 for B.C. in 2015, a 2.4% increase from 96.5 the previous year, and 45.7% higher than the national non-violent CSI of 67.8.
- There was a 6.9% increase in B.C.'s total number of **other offences** in 2015, resulting in a 5.9% increase in the other **crime rate**, which increased from 15.6 offences per 1,000 population in 2014 to 16.5 in 2015.
- The number of **drug offences** in B.C. decreased by 8.9% in 2015, driven primarily by a 16.3% decrease in the number of CDSA offences related to cannabis and a 15.7% decrease in cocaine-related offences. However, the number of other drug-related offences, a category which includes heroin, methamphetamines (e.g. "crystal meth"), and the illicit use of prescription drugs such as fentanyl, increased 22.4%.
- The B.C. **youth CSI** dropped 3.6% in 2015 to 38.6 from 40.0 in 2014, 36.3% lower than the national youth CSI of 60.6.
- Police in B.C. reported having cleared 26.7% of all offences in 2015; 55.2% of all **violent offences** were **cleared**, as were 13.3% of all **property offences** and 46.1% of all **other offences** were cleared.

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Table 1: Police-Reported *Criminal Code* and Drug Offences in BC

Crime Category	Number of Offences			Rate per Population*			Offences Cleared			Persons Charged		
	2014	2015	% Chg	2014	2015	% Chg	2014	2015	% Chg	2014	2015	% Chg
CRIMINAL CODE OFFENCES**												
Homicide ^{1,2}	89	95	6.7%	1.9	2.0	5.7%	60	58	-3.3%	56	59	5.4%
Attempted Murder ¹	92	129	40.2%	2.0	2.8	38.9%	65	64	-1.5%	54	68	25.9%
Sexual Assault Offences ³	2,959	3,028	2.3%	0.6	0.6	1.4%	1,680	1,754	4.4%	1,340	1,364	1.8%
Commodification of Sexual Activity Violations ⁴	6	82	1266.7%	0.0	0.0	1254%	3	27	800.0%	1	5	400.0%
Assault Offences ⁵	29,993	31,004	3.4%	6.5	6.6	2.4%	21,076	21,105	0.1%	13,624	14,235	4.5%
Firearms	205	295	43.9%	0.0	0.1	42.5%	87	106	21.8%	58	86	48.3%
Robbery ⁶	3,392	3,651	7.6%	0.7	0.8	6.6%	1,253	1,320	5.3%	1,132	1,209	6.8%
Forcible Confinement/ Kidnapping	312	365	17.0%	0.1	0.1	15.9%	261	308	18.0%	269	306	13.8%
Abduction	32	61	90.6%	0.0	0.0	88.8%	23	32	39.1%	16	18	12.5%
Extortion	370	487	31.6%	0.1	0.1	30.4%	112	108	-3.6%	78	89	14.1%
Criminal Harassment ⁷	2,098	1,997	-4.8%	0.5	0.4	-5.7%	1,071	971	-9.3%	503	536	6.6%
Uttering Threats	9,782	10,437	6.7%	2.1	2.2	5.7%	4,897	4,762	-2.8%	2,216	2,300	3.8%
Indecent/Harassing Phone Calls	3,472	4,885	40.7%	0.7	1.0	39.4%	416	569	36.8%	35	52	48.6%
Other Violent Offences ⁸	407	478	17.4%	0.1	0.1	16.3%	206	254	23.3%	143	164	14.7%
Total Violent Offences	53,209	56,994	7.1%	11.5	12.2	6.1%	31,210	31,438	0.7%	19,525	20,491	4.9%
Breaking and Entering	29,918	30,133	0.7%	6.5	6.4	-0.2%	2,714	2,833	4.4%	2,280	2,498	9.6%
Possess Stolen Property	2,817	3,120	10.8%	0.6	0.7	9.7%	1,730	1,821	5.3%	1,369	1,531	11.8%
Trafficking Stolen Goods ⁹	41	28	-31.7%	0.0	0.0	-32.4%	29	21	-27.6%	28	12	-57.1%
MV Theft ¹⁰	15,009	14,697	-2.1%	3.2	3.1	-3.0%	939	940	0.1%	573	583	1.7%
Theft ¹¹	115,593	120,136	3.9%	24.9	25.7	2.9%	16,093	15,684	-2.5%	7,810	8,439	8.1%
Fraud ¹²	16,016	18,520	15.6%	3.5	4.0	14.5%	2,767	2,639	-4.6%	1,829	1,869	2.2%
Mischief	45,348	45,108	-0.5%	9.8	9.6	-1.5%	6,751	6,997	3.6%	1,580	1,523	-3.6%
Arson	1,509	1,414	-6.3%	0.3	0.3	-7.2%	139	121	-12.9%	89	96	7.9%
Alter/Remove/Destroy VIN ¹³	3	3	0.0%	0.0	0.0	-1.0%	1	1	0.0%	0	1	N/A
Total Property Offences	226,254	233,159	3.1%	48.8	49.8	2.1%	31,163	31,057	-0.3%	15,558	16,552	6.4%
Counterfeiting ¹⁴	102	97	-4.9%	0.0	0.0	-5.8%	102	97	-4.9%	62	79	27.4%
Weapons	3,088	2,919	-5.5%	0.7	0.6	-6.4%	1,984	1,913	-3.6%	1,026	1,041	1.5%
Child Pornography ¹⁵	1,266	1,620	28.0%	0.3	0.3	26.7%	160	160	0.0%	110	129	17.3%
Prostitution ^{4,16}	198	49	-75.3%	0.0	0.0	-75.5%	48	4	-91.7%	15	3	-80.0%
Disturbing the Peace ¹⁷	43,794	46,228	5.6%	9.4	9.9	4.5%	14,189	13,082	-7.8%	1,442	1,133	-21.4%
Administration of Justice ¹⁸	16,732	18,913	13.0%	3.6	4.0	12.0%	15,491	17,064	10.2%	12,360	13,657	10.5%
Other Offences ¹⁹	7,006	7,375	5.3%	1.5	1.6	4.3%	3,295	3,292	-0.1%	1,880	1,823	-3.0%
Total Other Criminal Code Offences	72,186	77,201	6.9%	15.6	16.5	5.9%	35,269	35,612	1.0%	16,895	17,865	5.7%
TOTAL CRIMINAL CODE OFFENCES**	351,649	367,354	4.5%	75.8	78.4	3.5%	97,642	98,107	0.5%	51,978	54,908	5.6%

* Rates have been rounded to the nearest 0.1 which may affect calculations.

** Total *Criminal Code* Offences (excluding traffic offences).

Crime Category	Number of Offences			Rate per Population*			Offences Cleared			Persons Charged		
	2014	2015	% Chg	2014	2015	% Chg	2014	2015	% Chg	2014	2015	% Chg
Cannabis	16,033	13,420	-16.3%	3.5	2.9	-17.1%	12,420	9,871	-20.5%	3,868	3,016	-22.0%
Cocaine	3,699	3,117	-15.7%	0.8	0.7	-16.5%	2,740	2,259	-17.6%	1,850	1,570	-15.1%
Other ²⁰	4,589	5,619	22.4%	1.0	1.2	21.3%	3,494	3,944	12.9%	1,765	2,122	20.2%
Total CDSA offences	24,321	22,156	-8.9%	5.2	4.7	-9.8%	18,654	16,074	-13.8%	7,483	6,708	-10.4%

* Rates have been rounded to the nearest 0.1 which may affect calculations.

Table 2: Crime Rate (BC and Canada)

Crime rate	BC			Canada		
	2014	2015	% Chg	2014	2015	% Chg
Violent crime rate	11.5	12.2	6.1%	10.4	10.6	2.0%
Property crime rate	48.8	49.8	2.1%	30.9	32.2	4.2%
Other crime rate	15.6	16.5	5.9%	9.1	9.2	0.2%
Overall <i>Criminal Code</i> crime rate	75.8	78.4	3.5%	50.5	52.0	3.0%

Table 3: Clearance Rate (BC and Canada)

Clearance rate	BC			Canada		
	2014	2015	% Chg	2014	2015	% Chg
Violent crime clearance rate	58.7%	55.2%	-6.0%	72.0%	70.4%	-2.2%
Property crime clearance rate	13.8%	13.3%	-3.3%	23.5%	22.5%	-3.9%
Other crime clearance rate	48.9%	46.1%	-5.6%	76.2%	74.3%	-2.5%
Overall <i>Criminal Code</i> clearance rate	27.8%	26.7%	-3.8%	43.0%	41.5%	-3.7%

Table 4: Crime Severity Index (BC and Canada)

Crime severity index	BC			Canada		
	2014	2015	% Chg	2014	2015	% Chg
Violent crime severity index	77.3	83.0	7.4%	70.5	74.5	5.6%
Non-violent crime severity index	96.5	98.8	2.4%	65.2	67.8	4.1%
Youth crime severity index	40.0	38.6	-3.6%	61.0	60.6	-0.7%
Overall crime severity index	91.5	94.7	3.5%	66.7	69.7	4.5%

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Endnotes

1. The **crime rates** for homicides and attempted murders are calculated on a per 100,000 **population** basis due to the small number of homicide and attempted murder offences. All other **crime rates** are calculated on a per 1,000 **population** basis.
2. In general, the UCR2 Survey counts an adult or youth **charged** for the year in which the charge was recommended. The homicide totals, which come from the Homicide Survey, count an adult or youth **charged** with a homicide that occurred in the year the crime was reported to the police, regardless of the year in which the charge was recommended.
3. **Sexual offences** include sexual assault level 3 (aggravated), sexual assault level 2 (weapon or causing bodily harm), sexual assault level 1 (common sexual assault), and sexual violations against children.
4. **Commodification of sexual activity** is a new offence created in December 2014 by the passage of *Bill C-36, the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*. It includes: the purchasing of sexual services or communicating for that purpose; receiving a material benefit deriving from the purchase of sexual services; procuring of persons for the purpose of prostitution; and advertising sexual services offered for sale. Other prostitution-related offences continue to be considered non-violent offences, including: communicating to provide sexual services for consideration; and stopping or impeding traffic for the purpose of offering, providing or obtaining sexual services for consideration. As a result of these changes, comparisons between prostitution-related offences before December 2014 and after December 2014 should be made with caution. Similarly, because the number of offences in this category from 2014 are only from December 2014 the large year-over-year percent change in this offence's occurrence should be interpreted with caution.
5. **Non-sexual assault offences** include assault level 3 (aggravated), assault level 2 (weapon or causing bodily harm), assault level 1 (common assault), assaulting a peace officer, assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm to a peace officer, aggravated assault to a peace officer, and other assaults.
6. In 2009, a change was made to the scoring of **robbery** offences to be consistent with the way other violent crimes are counted. Prior to 2009, robbery offences were the only violent crime counted according to the number of incidents that had taken place. Now, with the changes to UCR2 data, the number of victims can be identified and each victim counts as one robbery offence. Robbery counts have been revised for the years 1998 to 2007. This change to robbery counts has resulted in an increase of approximately 12% annually in the number of police-reported robbery incidents for this time period. Use caution when comparing these data with prior years.
7. For the period from 1998 to 2007 UCR2 data on **criminal harassment offences** are not available for all respondents. In order to report this violation for police services still reporting to the aggregate UCR Survey over this time, a process of imputation was applied to derive counts using the distribution of 'other *Criminal Code* offences from existing UCR2 Survey respondents.
8. **Other violent offences** include conspiracy to commit murder, other sexual violations, sexual exploitation of a person with a disability, incest, anal intercourse, bestiality, voyeurism, trap likely to or cause bodily harm, hostage taking, trafficking in persons, intimidation of a justice system participant or a journalist, explosives causing death or bodily harm, arson (disregard for human life), criminal negligence causing death, other violent violations causing death and other violent violations.
9. In 2011, the *Criminal Code* was amended creating a new offence for **trafficking property obtained by crime**. The UCR introduced a new violation code for this offence. This new offence has led to a decrease in the number of possession of stolen property offences in 2011 as a result.
10. In 2011, a new UCR violation code for **motor vehicle theft** was created, replacing the current UCR violations of motor vehicle theft over \$5000 and motor vehicle theft \$5000 and under.
11. **Thefts** include theft over \$5,000 (non-motor vehicle) and theft under \$5,000 (non-motor vehicle).
12. **Fraud** offences include fraud, identity theft and identity fraud. Identity fraud and identity theft are new violation codes which were introduced in 2010. Some police services revised historical data, and as a result may have affected some of the 2009 data; therefore, these data should be interpreted with caution.
13. In 2011, the *Criminal Code* was amended to make it illegal for anyone to **alter, destroy or remove a vehicle identification number** (VIN). The UCR introduced a new violation code to collect this information.
14. **Counterfeiting** counts have been revised for the years 1998 to 2007. This change has resulted in a significant decrease in counterfeiting over this time period. Use caution when comparing these data with prior years.
15. Between April 1 and September 30 2014, the British Columbia Integrated Child Exploitation Unit (BC ICE) undertook a proactive project to record Internet Protocol (IP) addresses in possession of, and possibly sharing child pornography. This resulted in an increase in reported **child pornography** violations that year and all incidents detected by the BC ICE unit were recorded in the records management system used by Surrey Police Service. Therefore, while the incidents were reported through Surrey and appear in crime statistics for Surrey (and the Vancouver census metropolitan area [CMA] as Surrey is within this CMA's boundaries), neither the incidents themselves nor the offenders are limited to Surrey.

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16. On December 20, 2013 the Supreme Court of Canada found laws surrounding **prostitution** to be unconstitutional, and gave parliament 12 months to review and rewrite legislation. As a result of this, a large number of incidents of prostitution were no longer being reported, leading to a large decrease in the number of prostitution incidents in 2014. New legislation came into force December 6, 2014; as a result of these changes, comparisons between prostitution-related offences before December 2014 and after December 2014 should be made with caution.
17. Any increase in **disturbing the peace** offences may be, in part, due to a national data quality initiative undertaken by the RCMP to properly account for the types of offences that are aggregated under this offence.
18. **Administration of justice** includes the following offences: fail to comply with order, escape or helps to escape from lawful custody, prisoner unlawfully at large, fail to appear, breach of probation, other violations against the administration of law and justice.
19. **Other "other" offences** include gaming and betting related offences, indecent acts, corrupting morals, obstructing a peace officer, trespassing at night, uttering threats to property/animals, public incitement of hatred, advocating genocide, unauthorized recording of a movie, offences against public order, offences relating to terrorist activity, invasion of privacy, offences against person or reputation, offences against right of property, freezing of property/disclosure/audit, fraudulent transactions relating to contracts and trade, offences relating to currency, proceeds of crime, attempts/conspiracies/accessories, sexual offences/public morals/disorderly conduct, firearms and other offensive weapons, offences related to criminal organizations, and other offences.
20. **Other drugs** include heroin, methamphetamines (crystal meth), methylenedioxyamphetamines (ecstasy), and other drugs.

Definitions and Data Qualifiers

- Population figures** are estimates prepared annually by BC Stats, based on the results of the Canada Census which is conducted every five years. **Note:** In the 2011 Census, Statistics Canada adjusted the census boundary geographies and, as a result, the population estimates provided by BC Stats have been retroactively adjusted to reflect the updated census boundaries according to current police jurisdiction boundaries. Ten year population estimates may significantly differ from estimates included in Policing and Security Branch publication from prior years. This change affects crime rates.
 - Population figures** reflect only the permanent or resident population of a jurisdiction. Where a jurisdiction serves as a business and/or entertainment centre, it may have substantial “part-time” and “resident non-resident” populations relative to its resident or “late night” population, i.e., tourists, cabin owners, commuters, students, and seasonal staff. These temporary populations, whose permanent residence is within another jurisdiction, are excluded from a jurisdiction’s population figures.
- Number of offences** represents only those crimes reported to, or discovered by the police which, upon preliminary investigation, have been deemed to have occurred or been attempted; these data do not represent nor imply a count of the number of charges laid, prosecutions conducted, informations sworn or convictions obtained. The crime data contained in these reports have been recorded by the police utilizing the Uniform Crime Report 2 (UCR2) Survey scoring rules and guidelines. If a single criminal incident contains a number of violations of the law, then only the most serious violation is recorded for UCR2 purposes.
- Total *Criminal Code* offences** (excluding traffic) includes property, violent and other crimes.
- Violent crimes** include the offences of homicide, attempted murder, sexual and non-sexual assault, sexual offences against children, abduction, forcible confinement or kidnapping, firearms, robbery, criminal harassment, extortion, uttering threats, and threatening or harassing phone calls and other violent offences.
- Property crimes** include the offences of breaking and entering, theft, motor vehicle theft, possession of stolen property, trafficking in stolen goods, fraud, mischief, identity theft, identity fraud, arson and altering/removing/destroying a vehicle identification number.
- Other crimes** include *Criminal Code* offences not classified as either violent or property crimes, e.g. gaming and betting, offensive weapons, offences related to currency, offences against the administration of justice, offences against public order, etc.
- Drug offences** are crimes committed under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA). Drug offences include possession, trafficking, production, and distribution of cannabis, cocaine, and other drug offences. These are not included in the total *Criminal Code* offences.
- Crime rate** is the number of *Criminal Code* offences or crimes (excluding traffic) reported for every 1,000 persons. It is a better measure of trends in crime than the actual number of offences because it allows for **population** differences. Crime rate for the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA) are calculated per 1,000 population basis. Since the number of homicides and attempted murders reported is small, rates are calculated on a per 100,000 population basis.
- Offences cleared** represents the number of offences where the police have identified at least one offender in relation to an offence and have sufficient evidence to solve the offence.

10. **Clearance rate** is the number of crimes cleared by police during the year as a percentage of the number of crimes reported by police during that year. The process of solving crimes is often time-consuming and a crime may be solved months or years after it was reported to the police. This may result in the number of offences cleared in a year to be greater than the total number of offences reported to the police that year, which results in a clearance rate exceeding 100%.
11. **Persons charged** represents the number of people for whom charges were recommended, rather than the number of charges recommended (e.g.: several charges recommended for one person resulting from a single incident counts as one person charged). When an offence is cleared by charge, the number of persons recommended for charge by the police is recorded in the UCR2 Survey. The UCR2 Survey reporting rules dictate that offenders who are simultaneously recommended for charge on more than one offence are counted only once against the most serious offence. In addition, offenders are counted each time the police recommend charges against them for separate incidents. As a result, the correlation of persons charged data with court data is difficult because the UCR2 Survey does not contain information regarding the total number of recommended charges. Total persons charged is the total of adults charged and youth charged.

In general, the UCR2 Survey counts an adult or youth charged for the year in which the charge was recommended. The homicide totals, which come from The Homicide Survey, count an adult or youth charged with a homicide that occurred in the year the crime was reported to the police, regardless of the year in which the charge was recommended.

12. **Crime severity index (CSI)** is a tool developed by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS) in 2009 for measuring police reported crime in Canada. CSIs account for the change in the level of severity of crime in from year to year in comparison to other crimes. CSIs use weights which assign higher values to more serious crimes and lower values to less serious high volume crimes based on actual sentences handed down by the courts in all provinces and territories. The CSI includes all *Criminal Code* violations including traffic, as well as drug violations and all Federal Statutes. Each index has been standardized at 100 for the base year of 2006. A jurisdiction with a higher proportion of more serious crimes will have a higher CSI value while a jurisdiction with a higher proportion of less serious crimes will have a lower CSI value. The CSI is not available for police services with populations less than 1,000. Data for police services with populations less than 5,000 should be used with caution.
 - In 2013 the weights were updated for the first time since CSIs were introduced. The update reflects court data from 2006 to 2010, and was applied to 2011 and 2012 data.
 - There are four CSIs:
 - i. The **Overall CSI** is based on the total volume of police reported federal statute offences and measures the relative severity of overall crime.
 - ii. The **Violent CSI** is based on the total volume of police reported violent federal statute offences and measures the relative severity of violent crime.
 - iii. The **Non-violent CSI** is based on the total volume of police reported federal statute offences not considered violent in nature and measures the relative severity of non-violent crime.
 - iv. The **Youth CSI** is based on the same principles as the Overall CSI, which reflects the relative seriousness of different offences, but uses the number of youths accused instead of an incident count to measure the relative severity of crimes committed by youth.
13. Rates have been rounded to the nearest 0.1 which may affect calculations.
14. The data contained in this report may vary when compared with previous reports produced by Policing and Security Branch. Where variances occur, the report produced at the latest date will reflect the most current data available.

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15. The policing jurisdictions utilized in this report reflect operational policing in BC and may vary from those provided by Statistics Canada.
16. The population estimates reported in this document and used to calculate crime rates, are provided by BC Stats and may vary from that provided by Statistics Canada.



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Sources

Crime Data

Statistics Canada. 2016. *Table 252-0081 Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violation and police services, British Columbia, annual, 1998 to 2015*. CANSIM database. Last updated July 19, 2016.

<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&retrLang=eng&id=2520081&tabMode=dataTable&srchLan=-1&p1=-1&p2=9> (accessed August 4, 2016).

Statistics Canada. 2016. *Table 252-0089 Crime severity index and weighted clearance rates, by police service, British Columbia, 1998 to 2015*. CANSIM database. Last updated July 19, 2016.

<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&retrLang=eng&id=2520089&tabMode=dataTable&srchLan=-1&p1=-1&p2=9> (accessed August 4, 2016).

Population Data

BC Stats, Ministry of Technology, Innovation & Citizens' Services, Province of British Columbia. Last updated March 2016.