



Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Policing and Security Branch

Crime Statistics in British Columbia, 2016

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Highlights

- In 2016, after two years of consecutive increases, B.C.'s **crime rate** decreased; it went down by 0.9% in 2016, from 78.1 to 77.4 offences per 1,000 population.
- B.C.'s overall **Crime Severity Index (CSI)** value for 2016 is 93.6, 0.7% lower than B.C.'s 2015 CSI of 94.3, but 31.9% higher than the national CSI of 71.0 (+1.2%). This decrease in B.C.'s overall CSI was driven primarily by decreases in the number of breaking and entering offences (-315) and robbery offences (-689).
- The number of **violent offences** in B.C. decreased by 4.9% in 2016, with a 6.1% decrease in the violent **crime rate** (from 12.1 violent offences per 1,000 population in 2015 to 11.4 in 2016); this is the lowest B.C.'s violent crime rate has been since at least 1998.
- There were 2,786 fewer **violent offences** recorded in B.C. in 2016, with the largest decreases being physical assaults (-1,660), uttering threats (-764), robbery (-689), and criminal harassment (-334), and the largest increase being indecent or harassing communications (+568).
- The **violent CSI** lists a value of 74.9 for B.C. in 2016, 9.8% lower than 83.0 the previous year and lower than the national violent CSI (75.3, +0.3%) for the first time on record. The drop in B.C.'s violent CSI in 2016 was driven primarily by changes in its robbery rate, which decreased 19.9%.
- A total of 87 **homicides** were reported in B.C. in 2016, 10 fewer than the 97 reported the previous year, resulting in an 11.4% decrease in the homicide rate. There were also 114 **attempted murders**, 15 fewer than in 2015, resulting in a 12.7% decrease in the attempted-murder rate. In contrast, there were 181 more sexual-assault offences (including sexual violations against children) in 2016, for a total of 3,125, resulting in a 4.8% increase in B.C.'s sexual-assault rate.
- **Property offences** in B.C. increased by 2.1% in 2016, resulting in a 0.9% increase in the property **crime rate**, from 49.6 property offences per 1,000 population in 2015 to 50.0 in 2016.
- The **non-violent CSI** lists a value of 100.3 for B.C. in 2016, a 2.1% increase from 98.2 the previous year and 44.8% higher than the national non-violent CSI of 69.3 (+1.6%).
- There was a 1.3% decrease in B.C.'s total number of **other offences** in 2016, resulting in a 2.5% decrease in the other **crime rate** to 16.0 offences per 1,000 population. While B.C. recorded a 71.4% (+1,148) increase in the possession or distribution of child pornography in 2016, this can at least partially be attributed to the proactive efforts of B.C.'s Integrated Child Exploitation (ICE) Unit, which targets people accessing child pornography online.
- The number of **drug offences** in B.C. decreased by 2.8% in 2016, driven primarily by an 11.5% decrease in the number of *CDSA* offences related to cannabis and a 3% 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 18.6%.
- The B.C. **youth CSI** dropped 9.2% in 2016 to 35.7 from 39.3 in 2015, 40.6% lower than the national youth CSI of 60.1 (-2.0%).
- Police in B.C. reported having cleared 27.6% of all offences in 2016; 57.8% of all **violent offences** were **cleared**, as were 13.5% of all **property offences** and 50% of all **other offences**. All of these clearance rates increased when compared to 2015, but all are also still below the national averages.

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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		
	2015	2016	% Chg	2015	2016	% Chg	2015	2016	% Chg	2015	2016	% Chg
CRIMINAL CODE OFFENCES**												
Homicide ^{1,2}	97	87	-10.3%	2.1	1.8	-11.4%	60	40	-33.3%	62	38	-38.7%
Attempted Murder ¹	129	114	-11.6%	2.7	2.4	-12.7%	64	59	-7.8%	68	68	0.0%
Sexual Assault Offences ³	2,944	3,125	6.1%	0.6	0.7	4.8%	1,774	1,744	-1.7%	1,364	1,443	5.8%
Commodification of Sexual Activity Violations ⁴	73	72	-1.4%	0.0	0.0	-2.6%	26	29	11.5%	4	10	150.0%
Assault Offences ⁵	31,136	29,476	-5.3%	6.6	6.2	-6.5%	21,277	20,874	-1.9%	14,283	13,821	-3.2%
Firearms	302	259	-14.2%	0.1	0.1	-15.3%	113	118	4.4%	89	87	-2.2%
Robbery ⁶	3,645	2,956	-18.9%	0.8	0.6	-19.9%	1,320	1,178	-10.8%	1,212	1,114	-8.1%
Forcible Confinement/ Kidnapping	367	333	-9.3%	0.1	0.1	-10.4%	312	285	-8.7%	312	272	-12.8%
Abduction	57	53	-7.0%	0.0	0.0	-8.2%	32	22	-31.3%	18	15	-16.7%
Extortion	496	538	8.5%	0.1	0.1	7.1%	124	107	-13.7%	88	58	-34.1%
Criminal Harassment ⁷	1,991	1,657	-16.8%	0.4	0.3	-17.8%	995	901	-9.4%	547	520	-4.9%
Uttering Threats	10,282	9,518	-7.4%	2.2	2.0	-8.6%	4,869	4,876	0.1%	2,313	2,245	-2.9%
Indecent/Harassing Phone Calls	4,901	5,469	11.6%	1.0	1.2	10.2%	585	783	33.8%	55	82	49.1%
Other Violent Offences ⁸	503	480	-4.6%	0.1	0.1	-5.8%	281	264	-6.0%	170	160	-5.9%
Total Violent Offences	56,923	54,137	-4.9%	12.1	11.4	-6.1%	31,832	31,280	-1.7%	20,585	19,933	-3.2%
Breaking and Entering	30,156	29,841	-1.0%	6.4	6.3	-2.3%	2,898	2,711	-6.5%	2,527	2,385	-5.6%
Possess Stolen Property	3,106	3,182	2.4%	0.7	0.7	1.2%	1,816	1,852	2.0%	1,507	1,521	0.9%
Trafficking Stolen Goods ⁹	27	48	77.8%	0.0	0.0	75.6%	20	27	35.0%	12	22	83.3%
MV Theft ¹⁰	14,720	14,006	-4.9%	3.1	2.9	-6.0%	949	834	-12.1%	580	499	-14.0%
Theft ¹¹	119,747	125,309	4.6%	25.5	26.4	3.4%	15,572	16,019	2.9%	8,160	7,838	-3.9%
Fraud ¹²	18,460	20,517	11.1%	3.9	4.3	9.8%	2,677	3,148	17.6%	1,873	2,228	19.0%
Mischief	45,036	43,391	-3.7%	9.6	9.1	-4.8%	7,011	7,439	6.1%	1,485	1,535	3.4%
Arson	1,411	1,349	-4.4%	0.3	0.3	-5.6%	125	156	24.8%	98	109	11.2%
Alter/Remove/Destroy VIN ¹³	1	6	500.0%	0.0	0.0	492.6%	0	1	N/A	0	1	N/A
Total Property Offences	232,664	237,649	2.1%	49.6	50.0	0.9%	31,068	32,187	3.6%	16,242	16,138	-0.6%
Counterfeiting ¹⁴	102	120	17.6%	0.0	0.0	16.2%	102	120	17.6%	82	115	40.2%
Weapons	2,828	2,899	2.5%	0.6	0.6	1.2%	1,961	1,952	-0.5%	1,053	1,080	2.6%
Child Pornography ¹⁵	1,608	2,756	71.4%	0.3	0.6	69.3%	169	137	-18.9%	132	109	-17.4%
Prostitution ^{4,16}	35	43	22.9%	0.0	0.0	21.3%	4	8	100.0%	3	0	-100%
Disturbing the Peace ¹⁷	46,009	42,826	-6.9%	9.8	9.0	-8.1%	13,110	13,525	3.2%	1,132	885	-21.8%
Administration of Justice ¹⁸	19,194	20,542	7.0%	4.1	4.3	5.7%	17,467	18,980	8.7%	13,985	15,048	7.6%
Other Offences ¹⁹	7,116	6,715	-5.6%	1.5	1.4	-6.8%	3,288	3,240	-1.5%	1,806	1,795	-0.6%
Total Other Criminal Code Offences	76,892	75,901	-1.3%	16.4	16.0	-2.5%	36,101	37,962	5.2%	18,193	19,032	4.6%
TOTAL CRIMINAL CODE OFFENCES**	366,479	367,687	0.3%	78.1	77.4	-0.9%	99,001	101,429	2.5%	55,020	55,103	0.2%

* 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		
	2015	2016	% Chg	2015	2016	% Chg	2015	2016	% Chg	2015	2016	% Chg
Cannabis	13,521	11,970	-11.5%	2.9	2.5	-12.6%	10,176	9,232	-9.3%	3,070	2,809	-8.5%
Cocaine	3,133	3,038	-3.0%	0.7	0.6	-4.2%	2,327	2,222	-4.5%	1,603	1,579	-1.5%
Other ²⁰	5,478	6,499	18.6%	1.2	1.4	17.2%	4,027	4,672	16.0%	2,141	2,438	13.9%
Total CDSA offences	22,132	21,507	-2.8%	4.7	4.5	-4.0%	16,530	16,126	-2.4%	6,814	6,826	0.2%

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

Table 2: Crime Rate (BC and Canada)

Crime rate	BC			Canada		
	2015	2016	% Chg	2015	2016	% Chg
Violent crime rate	12.1	11.4	-6.1%	10.7	10.5	-1.3%
Property crime rate	49.6	50.0	0.9%	32.2	32.1	-0.4%
Other crime rate	16.4	16.0	-2.5%	9.3	9.7	4.2%
Overall <i>Criminal Code</i> crime rate	78.1	77.4	-0.9%	52.1	52.2	0.3%

Table 3: Clearance Rate (BC and Canada)

Clearance rate	BC			Canada		
	2015	2016	% Chg	2015	2016	% Chg
Violent crime clearance rate	55.9%	57.8%	3.3%	70.6%	70.9%	0.4%
Property crime clearance rate	13.4%	13.5%	1.4%	22.5%	21.2%	-5.9%
Other crime clearance rate	47.0%	50.0%	6.5%	74.7%	76.4%	2.2%
Overall <i>Criminal Code</i> clearance rate	27.0%	27.6%	2.1%	41.6%	41.4%	-0.6%

Table 4: Crime Severity Index (BC and Canada)

Crime severity index	BC			Canada		
	2015	2016	% Chg	2015	2016	% Chg
Violent crime severity index	83.0	74.9	-9.8%	75.0	75.3	0.3%
Non-violent crime severity index	98.2	100.3	2.1%	68.2	69.3	1.6%
Youth crime severity index	39.3	35.7	-9.2%	61.3	60.1	-2.0%
Overall crime severity index	94.3	93.6	-0.7%	70.1	71.0	1.2%

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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 category created in December 2014 by the passage of *Bill C-36, the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*. It is classified as a violent offence and 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 all this, comparisons between prostitution-related offences before December 2014 and after December 2014 should be made with caution and take these changes into account.
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, corrupting morals of a child, bestiality, voyeurism, non-consensual distribution of intimate images, trap likely to or cause bodily harm, hostage taking, trafficking in persons, intimidation of a (non)justice system participant or a journalist, explosives causing death or bodily harm, arson (disregard for human life), criminal negligence causing death and other 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. The British Columbia Integrated Child Exploitation Unit (BC ICE) takes a proactive approach to tracking Internet Protocol (IP) addresses in possession of, and possibly sharing child pornography. This results in an increase in reported child pornography violations in different parts of the province in different years (e.g. Surrey starting in 2014, Victoria in 2015, and Vancouver in 2016). Notably, due to the online nature of the offences, the incidents and/or offenders are not necessarily limited to the geographic area targeted.

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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 the 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, comparisons between prostitution-related offences before December 2014 and after December 2014 should be made with caution and take these changes into account.
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, 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), the illicit use of prescription drugs including fentanyl, and other drugs.

Definitions and Data Qualifiers

1. **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.

2. **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.
3. **Total *Criminal Code* offences** (excluding traffic) includes property, violent and other crimes.
4. **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, indecent or harassing communications, and other violent offences.
5. **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.
6. **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, the possession and/or distribution of child pornography, etc.
7. **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.
8. **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.
9. **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.
 - The CSI weights are periodically updated, and CSI values have been calculated back to 1998.
 - 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. 2017. *Table 252-0081 Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violation and police services, British Columbia, annual, 1998 to 2016*. CANSIM database. Last updated July 24, 2017.

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<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&retrLang=eng&id=2520089> (accessed July 24, 2017).

Population Data

BC Stats, Ministry Citizens' Services, Province of British Columbia. Last updated March 2017.