



Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Policing and Security Branch

Crime Statistics in British Columbia, 2017

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Highlights

- In 2017, BC's **crime rate** decreased for the second consecutive year, down by 4.1% from 2016 to 2017, from 77.3 to 74.2 offences per 1,000 population.
- BC's overall **Crime Severity Index (CSI)** value for 2017 was 88.9, 5.1% lower than BC's 2016 CSI of 93.7, but 22.0% higher than the national CSI of 72.9 (+1.6%). This decrease in BC's overall CSI was driven by decreases in the number of offences for theft under \$5,000 (-5,450), breaking and entering (-3,345), and possession/distribution of child pornography (-928), offset by an increase in number of homicides (+30).
- The number of police-reported **violent offences** in BC decreased by 1.9% in 2017, with a 3.1% decrease in the **violent crime rate** (from 11.4 violent offences per 1,000 population in 2016 to 11.0 in 2017); this was the lowest BC violent crime rate since at least 1998.
- There were 1,047 fewer **violent offences** reported by police in BC in 2017, with the largest decreases being uttering threats (-851), robbery (-492), and physical assaults (-435), and the largest increase being sexual assaults (+483, including sexual violations against children). It should be noted that sexual assaults increased across Canada in 2017, a trend that the CCJS attributes in part to media attention on "unfounded" sexual assaults and social media campaigns that may have increased reporting.
- BC's **violent CSI** for 2017 was 75.5, 0.5% higher than BC's 2016 violent CSI of 75.1 and lower than the national violent CSI (80.3, +4.8%) for the second year in a row. BC's violent CSI for 2017 was driven primarily by increases in homicides and sexual assaults, offset by a decrease in robbery.
- In 2017, 118 **homicides** were reported in BC, 30 more than in 2016, resulting in a 32.4% increase in the homicide rate. There were 115 **attempted murders**, 4 fewer than in 2016, resulting in a 4.6% decrease in the attempted murder rate.
- **Property offences** in BC decreased by 2.4% in 2017, resulting in a 3.6% decrease in the **property crime rate**, from 50.0 property offences per 1,000 population in 2016 to 48.1 in 2017.
- BC's **non-violent CSI** for 2017 was 93.6, 6.6% lower than BC's 2016 non-violent CSI of 100.2 and 33.6% higher than the national non-violent CSI of 70.0 (+0.3%).
- There was a 4.9% decrease in BC's total number of **other offences** in 2017, resulting in a 6.1% decrease in the **other crime rate** to 15.0 offences per 1,000 population.
- **Drug offences** reported by police in BC decreased by 9.9% in 2017, driven by a 16.8% decrease in cannabis offences and a 15.3% decrease in cocaine offences. Of note, heroin possession decreased by 7.1%, but its trafficking, production, or distribution increased by 4.8%. Other drug offences, which include ecstasy and the illicit use of prescription drugs such as fentanyl, increased by 13.8%.
- The BC **youth CSI** increased by 2.0% in 2017 to 37.4 from 36.7 in 2016, 40.9% lower than the national youth CSI of 63.3 (+3.4%).
- Police in BC reported having cleared 27.4% of all offences in 2017; 57.1% of all **violent offences** were cleared, as were 13.4% of all **property offences** and 50.2% of all **other offences**. These clearance rates were similar to the 2016 rates, but are 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		
	2016	2017	% Chg	2016	2017	% Chg	2016	2017	% Chg	2016	2017	% Chg
CRIMINAL CODE OFFENCES**												
Homicide ^{1,2}	88	118	34.1%	1.8	2.4	32.4%	46	51	10.9%	46	46	0.0%
Attempted Murder ¹	119	115	-3.4%	2.5	2.4	-4.6%	60	70	16.7%	66	69	4.5%
Sexual Assault Offences ³	3,136	3,619	15.4%	0.7	0.8	14.0%	1,813	2,044	12.7%	1,484	1,600	7.8%
Commodification of Sexual Activity Violations ⁴	71	65	-8.5%	0.0	0.0	-9.6%	29	29	0.0%	10	11	10.0%
Assault Offences ⁵	29,574	29,139	-1.5%	6.2	6.0	-2.7%	21,008	20,385	-3.0%	13,894	13,473	-3.0%
Firearms	265	251	-5.3%	0.1	0.1	-6.5%	122	116	-4.9%	89	93	4.5%
Robbery	2,968	2,476	-16.6%	0.6	0.5	-17.6%	1,178	1,024	-13.1%	1,107	941	-15.0%
Forcible Confinement/ Kidnapping	338	365	8.0%	0.1	0.1	6.7%	291	299	2.7%	276	302	9.4%
Abduction	53	49	-7.5%	0.0	0.0	-8.7%	22	18	-18.2%	15	12	-20.0%
Extortion	539	548	1.7%	0.1	0.1	0.4%	112	98	-12.5%	60	68	13.3%
Criminal Harassment	1,651	1,637	-0.8%	0.3	0.3	-2.1%	920	888	-3.5%	530	515	-2.8%
Uttering Threats	9,497	8,646	-9.0%	2.0	1.8	-10.1%	4,934	4,355	-11.7%	2,265	2,085	-7.9%
Indecent/Harassing Phone Calls	5,448	5,652	3.7%	1.1	1.2	2.5%	789	750	-4.9%	82	91	11.0%
Other Violent Offences ⁶	499	519	4.0%	0.1	0.1	2.7%	272	238	-12.5%	162	147	-9.3%
Total Violent Offences	54,246	53,199	-1.9%	11.4	11.0	-3.1%	31,596	30,365	-3.9%	20,086	19,453	-3.2%
Breaking and Entering	29,874	26,529	-11.2%	6.3	5.5	-12.3%	2,761	2,658	-3.7%	2,417	2,256	-6.7%
Possess Stolen Property	3,206	3,458	7.9%	0.7	0.7	6.5%	1,872	2,009	7.3%	1,537	1,518	-1.2%
Trafficking Stolen Goods ⁷	48	99	106.3%	0.0	0.0	103.7%	27	54	100.0%	22	21	-4.5%
MV Theft ⁸	13,968	14,473	3.6%	2.9	3.0	2.3%	856	855	-0.1%	506	499	-1.4%
Theft ⁹	125,349	120,610	-3.8%	26.3	25.0	-5.0%	16,095	14,662	-8.9%	7,801	7,195	-7.8%
Fraud ¹⁰	20,541	21,322	3.8%	4.3	4.4	2.5%	3,213	2,885	-10.2%	2,271	2,013	-11.4%
Mischief	43,384	44,141	1.7%	9.1	9.2	0.5%	7,491	7,856	4.9%	1,537	1,460	-5.0%
Arson	1,348	1,284	-4.7%	0.3	0.3	-5.9%	163	139	-14.7%	112	95	-15.2%
Alter/Remove/Destroy VIN ¹¹	6	6	0.0%	0.0	0.0	-1.2%	1	3	200.0%	1	2	100.0%
Total Property Offences	237,724	231,922	-2.4%	50.0	48.1	-3.6%	32,479	31,121	-4.2%	16,204	15,059	-7.1%
Counterfeiting	120	146	21.7%	0.0	0.0	20.2%	120	146	21.7%	114	131	14.9%
Weapons	2,922	3,034	3.8%	0.6	0.6	2.6%	2,001	2,065	3.2%	1,105	1,075	-2.7%
Child Pornography ¹²	2,717	1,789	-34.2%	0.6	0.4	-35.0%	145	137	-5.5%	113	108	-4.4%
Prostitution ^{4,13}	42	33	-21.4%	0.0	0.0	-22.4%	8	8	0.0%	0	6	N/A
Disturbing the Peace ¹⁴	42,791	40,929	-4.4%	9.0	8.5	-5.5%	13,611	12,660	-7.0%	884	741	-16.2%
Administration of Justice ¹⁵	20,584	19,868	-3.5%	4.3	4.1	-4.7%	19,141	18,211	-4.9%	15,142	14,329	-5.4%
Other Offences ¹⁶	6,697	6,351	-5.2%	1.4	1.3	-6.3%	3,284	3,008	-8.4%	1,808	1,682	-7.0%
Total Other Criminal Code Offences	75,873	72,150	-4.9%	15.9	15.0	-6.1%	38,310	36,235	-5.4%	19,166	18,072	-5.7%
TOTAL CRIMINAL CODE OFFENCES**	367,843	357,271	-2.9%	77.3	74.2	-4.1%	102,385	97,721	-4.6%	55,456	52,584	-5.2%

* 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		
	2016	2017	% Chg	2016	2017	% Chg	2016	2017	% Chg	2016	2017	% Chg
Cannabis	12,156	10,114	-16.8%	2.6	2.1	-17.8%	9,570	7,499	-21.6%	2,870	2,139	-25.5%
Cocaine	3,072	2,603	-15.3%	0.6	0.5	-16.3%	2,291	1,930	-15.8%	1,600	1,181	-26.2%
Heroin	1,943	1,847	-4.9%	0.4	0.4	-6.1%	1,442	1,437	-0.3%	753	693	-8.0%
Methamphetamines	2,470	2,634	6.6%	0.5	0.5	5.3%	1,987	2,003	0.8%	1,033	1,011	-2.1%
Other ¹⁷	2,118	2,410	13.8%	0.4	0.5	12.4%	1,372	1,458	6.3%	688	903	31.3%
Total CDSA offences	21,759	19,608	-9.9%	4.6	4.1	-11.0%	16,662	14,327	-14.0%	6,944	5,927	-14.6%

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

Table 2: Crime Rate (BC and Canada)

Crime rate	BC			Canada		
	2016	2017	% Chg	2016	2017	% Chg
Violent crime rate	11.4	11.0	-3.1%	10.7	11.0	2.5%
Property crime rate	50.0	48.1	-3.6%	32.2	32.4	0.6%
Other crime rate	15.9	15.0	-6.1%	9.8	9.9	1.3%
Overall <i>Criminal Code</i> crime rate	77.3	74.2	-4.1%	52.7	53.3	1.1%

Table 3: Clearance Rate (BC and Canada)

Clearance rate	BC			Canada		
	2016	2017	% Chg	2016	2017	% Chg
Violent crime clearance rate	58.2%	57.1%	-2.0%	71.0%	69.9%	-1.6%
Property crime clearance rate	13.7%	13.4%	-1.8%	21.3%	20.9%	-1.5%
Other crime clearance rate	50.5%	50.2%	-0.5%	76.3%	77.0%	1.0%
Overall <i>Criminal Code</i> clearance rate	27.8%	27.4%	-1.7%	41.6%	41.4%	-0.3%

Table 4: Crime Severity Index (BC and Canada)

Crime severity index	BC			Canada		
	2016	2017	% Chg	2016	2017	% Chg
Violent crime severity index	75.1	75.5	0.5%	76.6	80.3	4.8%
Non-violent crime severity index	100.2	93.6	-6.6%	69.8	70.0	0.3%
Youth crime severity index	36.7	37.4	2.0%	61.2	63.3	3.4%
Overall crime severity index	93.7	88.9	-5.1%	71.7	72.9	1.6%

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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. **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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. **Thefts** include theft over \$5,000 (non-motor vehicle) and theft under \$5,000 (non-motor vehicle).
10. **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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. **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, and other violations against the administration of law and justice.



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16. **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.
17. **Other drugs** include 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 included in this document may significantly differ from estimates included in the Policing and Security Branch's publications 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** represent 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, information sworn or convictions obtained. The crime data contained in these reports have been recorded by the police utilizing the Uniform Crime Reporting 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) include 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, heroin, and methamphetamines (crystal meth), 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 drugs and 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 rates 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** represent 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** represent 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 are 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 those provided by Statistics Canada.



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Sources

Crime Data

Statistics Canada. 2018. *Table 35-10-0184-01 Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, police services in British Columbia*. Statistics Canada database. Last updated July 23, 2018.

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Statistics Canada. 2018. *Table 35-10-0063-01 Crime severity index and weighted clearance rates, police services in British Columbia*. Statistics Canada database. Last updated July 23, 2018.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006301> (accessed July 23, 2018).

Population Data

BC Stats, Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology, Province of British Columbia. Last updated February 2018.