



Measuring Crime

The police-reported crime rate refers to the number of *Criminal Code* incidents (excluding *Criminal Code* traffic incidents) reported to the police per 100,000 population. These data reflect reported crime that has been substantiated through police investigation. Incidents are categorized according to the most serious offence in the incident, generally the offence that carries the longest maximum sentence under the *Criminal Code*. As a result, less serious offences are under-represented. National-level crime data were first gathered in 1962, provincial-level data are available for the period from 1977 forward.

The police-reported crime severity index is a new measure of crime. It tracks the relative seriousness of different offences, with more serious ones being assigned a higher weight based on the length and frequency of custodial sentences handed down by the courts. The base year is 2006, and equal to 100 at the national level. In contrast to the crime rate, the crime severity index includes all *Criminal Code* offences (non-traffic and traffic) as well as drug and other federal statute offences. See CCJS, *Measuring Crime in Canada: Introducing the Crime Severity Index and Improvements in the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey* (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply, April 2009), and "Police-reported Crime Statistics in Canada, 2008," *Juristat*, vol 29, no. 3 (July 2009) for details.

- According to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS) *Juristat* released on July 21 2009, crime in Canada continued to fall in 2008. Both the rate of police-reported crime and its overall severity dropped 5% in 2008. Nationally, the crime rate fell to its lowest level in more than 30 years to 6,588 *Criminal Code* incidents per 100,000 population, while the crime severity index was down for the fifth consecutive year to 90.0.
- In Saskatchewan, the crime rate fell 4% while the crime severity index decreased 5%. The crime rate stood at 12,892 *Criminal Code* incidents per 100,000 population, while the crime severity index value was 156.1. This marks the fifth consecutive year that both the Saskatchewan crime rate and crime severity index have fallen.
- Crime rates were in decline in much of the country in 2008 with the exception of PEI (2%), the Yukon (5%) and Nunavut (15%). The largest reductions were in Manitoba (-9%), BC (-8%) and Nova Scotia (-7%). Overall, Saskatchewan continued to have the highest provincial crime rate, followed by Manitoba (9,911) and BC (9,580). Ontario had the lowest rate (4,877), followed by Quebec (5,064).
- Crime severity also dropped across much of the country in 2008 with the exception of PEI and New Brunswick as well as two of the three territories. However, PEI (68.2) continued to have the lowest overall Crime Severity Index, followed closely by Ontario (70.6), Newfoundland and Labrador (71.2) and New Brunswick (71.3). Saskatchewan continued to have the highest overall Crime Severity Index (156.1) among the provinces, followed by Manitoba (128.7) and BC (120.9).
- Police services reported 130,978 *Criminal Code* incidents (excluding traffic) in Saskatchewan in 2008, of which about one in five was a violent crime.¹
- Both the rate of violent crime in Canada and its overall severity declined in 2008. The rate of violent crime was down 2% nationally, while its severity decreased 3%.
- In Saskatchewan, the violent crime rate fell 3% while the violent crime severity index was down 9%. Saskatchewan continued to have the highest violent crime rate (2,551 per 100,000), followed by Manitoba (2,013) and the second highest violent crime severity index value after Manitoba (155.6 versus 158.2).
- Not only were there fewer violent incidents in Saskatchewan in 2008, they were less serious. The rate of attempted murders was down 23%, serious assaults (assaults level 2 and 3) declined 7%, and robberies fell 18%. The most common violent offence, common assault, declined 2%, while sexual assaults fell 7%. There were 30 homicides in Saskatchewan in 2008, unchanged from the previous year.
- According to 2006 police-reported data, excluding cases where the relationship between the victim and the accused are unknown, more than 8 in 10 victims of violent crime in Saskatchewan know their assailant. Thirty-one percent were victimized by a family member and 51% were victimized by friends and acquaintances, while 18% were victimized by a stranger. Females were more likely to be victimized by someone they know (90%).

¹ The violent crime rate has been expanded to include a number of offences not previously included, such as uttering threats, criminal harassment and forcible confinement. Data using this definition of violent crime are available back to 1998.

- The Saskatchewan non-violent *Criminal Code* crime rate declined 4% in 2008 to 10,341 incidents per 100,000 population.² The break and enter rate (973) was down 15% to its lowest level in more than three decades, while the motor vehicle theft rate was relatively stable (-1% to 545). Nevertheless, Saskatchewan had the highest provincial break and enter rate, and the third highest motor vehicle theft rate.
- Cannabis offences were up 2% in Saskatchewan in 2008 (to 204 incidents per 100,000 population) and other drug offences were up 10% (to 43 per 100,000) while cocaine offences were down 2% (to 51 per 100,000).
- Impaired driving incidents increased 22% to 670 per 100,000 population and Saskatchewan continued to have the highest provincial impaired driving rate in Canada.

Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs):³

- The majority of Canadian CMAs reported drops in both crime rates and crime severity index values, including the Regina and Saskatoon CMAs. The Regina and Saskatoon CMA crime severity index values were both down 13% in 2008, while the crime rate fell by 7% in the Regina CMA and 10% in the Saskatoon CMA.
- Among the 33 CMAs in Canada, the highest crime severity index values were reported in Regina (163.1), Abbotsford (142.5), Saskatoon (137.8) and Kelowna (126.4). The lowest index values were reported in Guelph (57.7), Saguenay (59.2), Barrie (63.6) and Quebec City (63.8). Similarly, the highest crime rates were reported in Regina (10,998), Kelowna (10,971) and Saskatoon (10,701), while the lowest were reported in Toronto (3,998), Saguenay (4,168) and Quebec City (4,334).
- The Saskatoon CMA recorded 4 homicides in 2008, down from 9 in 2007. The Regina CMA recorded 8 homicides in 2008, up from 5 the year before.
- The Regina CMA crime rate fell 7% to 10,998 per 100,000 population while the Saskatoon rate dropped 10% to 10,701. Despite these declines, Regina continued to have the highest CMA crime rate in Canada in 2008, closely followed by Kelowna (10,971) and Saskatoon.
- Both the Regina CMA violent crime rate and violent crime severity index value fell 7% in 2008. Robberies were down 12% in the Regina CMA while break and enters fell sharply (-37%) and motor vehicle thefts were stable (up 1%). In the Saskatoon CMA, the violent crime rate fell 9% while the violent crime severity index value fell 21%. This reduction was mainly driven by a 29% decline in robberies. Break and enters declined 6% and motor vehicle thefts decreased 7%.
- Overall, the Regina CMA had the third highest CMA homicide rate (3.8), the second highest robbery rate (222), the second highest break and enter rate (1,015) and the fifth highest motor vehicle theft rate (735). The Saskatoon CMA in turn ranked eleventh in homicides (1.5), third in robberies (212), fifth in break and enters (844) and eighth in motor vehicle thefts (569).

Youth Crime:⁴

- In 2008, the national youth crime rate decreased 5% to 6,454 youth charged and youth cleared otherwise per 100,000 youth aged 12 to 17. The rate of youths formally charged by police declined 4%, while the rate of youths cleared by means other than a formal charge fell 5%.
- The Saskatchewan youth crime rate decreased 8% to 18,891 youth charged and cleared otherwise per 100,000 youth, 2.9 times the national rate. The rate of youth charged declined 7%, while the rate of youth cleared by other means was down 9%.
- Among the provinces, the lowest youth crime rates were in Quebec (3,754), followed by BC (5,289) and Ontario (5,556). Saskatchewan had the highest youth crime rate, followed by Manitoba (10,818) and Nova Scotia (9,778).
- The Saskatchewan youth violent crime rate was down 10% and the youth non-violent crime rate decreased 7%. Five youth were accused of homicide in Saskatchewan in 2008 compared to 16 in the previous year and 4 in 2006.

² The non-violent crime rate includes property and other *Criminal Code* offences excluding *Criminal Code* traffic offences. Examples include break and enters, motor vehicle theft, theft, mischief, fraud, disturbing the peace and administration of justice offences.

³ A CMA is an area consisting of one or more adjacent municipalities situated around a major urban core. To form a census metropolitan area, the urban core must have a population of at least 100,000.

⁴ The *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, implemented in 2003, requires that police consider extrajudicial measures, or alternatives to charging, for youth accused of committing less serious offences. The youth crime rate thus refers to the combined rate of youth charged and youth cleared by other means per 100,000 youth aged 12 to 17. Being cleared by other means includes police taking no further action, informal police warnings, referrals to community programs, formal police cautions, Crown cautions and referrals to extrajudicial sanctions programs.