



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 was first gathered in 1962, while provincial-level data is available from 1977 forward.

The police-reported crime severity index is a new measure of crime. Introduced in 2009, 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. Three separate severity indexes have been created: one for overall police-reported crime; one for violent crime including only crimes against the person; and one for non-violent crime such as property and drug offences.

A youth crime severity index was introduced in 2010. It uses the same concept as the general crime severity index of weighing offences according to their seriousness. It begins in 1998 at the national and provincial/territorial levels, with 2006 as the base year (equal to 100).

Refer to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), "Measuring Crime in Canada: Introducing the Crime Severity Index and Improvements in the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey" (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, April 2009), and "Police-reported Crime Statistics in Canada, 2008," *Juristat*, vol 29 no. 3 (July 2009) for further details. Unless otherwise noted, all data in this Fact Sheet are drawn from the CCJS publication, "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2010," *Juristat* article (July 2011) and CCJS, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, from various years.

The national context

- Police-reported crime in Canada continued its downward trend in 2010. Both the rate of police-reported crime and its severity fell. Nationally, the crime rate dropped 5% to its lowest level since 1973, while the crime severity index (CSI) declined 6% to its lowest level since 1998, the first year CSI data became available.
- The Saskatchewan crime rate declined 2% in 2010, while the CSI was relatively stable.¹ This marks the sixth time in seven years that the Saskatchewan CSI and crime rate have fallen. Even so, the Saskatchewan crime rate continued to be more than double the national rate (12,578 versus 6,145 *Criminal Code* incidents per 100,000 population), while the Saskatchewan CSI was 1.8 times higher than the national CSI (148.2 versus 82.7).
- In 2010, both the volume and severity of crime declined or remained stable across most of the country. With the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador (3%), Nunavut (4%) and the Northwest Territories (11%), crime rates were stable or declined. The largest reductions were in the Yukon (-10%), BC (-6%) and Alberta (-6%). Saskatchewan continued to have the highest provincial crime rate (12,578), followed by Manitoba (10,187) and BC (8,404). As in previous years, Ontario had the lowest rate (4,458), followed by Quebec (4,770).
- Crime severity was stable or dropped across much of the country in 2010, with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador (10%), the Northwest Territories (6%) and Nunavut (3%). Ontario (65) had the lowest overall

¹ All rate/index changes of plus or minus one percent or less at the provincial or CMA level are characterized as an instance of "stability" or "relative stability".

Saskatchewan violent crime stable

- Police reported 131,515 *Criminal Code* incidents (excluding traffic) in Saskatchewan in 2010, with about one in five being a violent crime. See Table 1.
- Both the rate and severity of violent crime in Canada were down in 2010. The rate declined 3% to 1,282 per 100,000 population, while the violent CSI decreased by 6% to 88.9.
- The Saskatchewan violent crime rate and violent crime severity were relatively stable in 2010. All the same, Saskatchewan continued to have the highest provincial violent crime rate (2,550 per 100,000 population), followed by Manitoba (2,087), and the second highest provincial violent crime severity index after Manitoba (153.9 versus 162.3). As well, the Saskatchewan violent crime rate was double the national rate, and the Saskatchewan violent crime severity index was 1.7 times higher than the national violent CSI.
- The Saskatchewan rate of serious assaults (assaults level 2 and 3) declined 7% in 2010, while robberies were stable. The serious assault rate was 2.4 times the national rate (379 versus 161), and the robbery rate was 36% higher (121 versus 89). As well, the rate of sexual assaults declined 5% but was 1.7 times higher than the national rate (109 versus 65). Finally, the Saskatchewan rate for firearm offences (use of, discharge, pointing) rose 35% in 2010 and was more than double the national rate (14 versus 6).
- There were 34 homicides in Saskatchewan in 2010, two fewer than in the previous year, and 30 attempted murders, one more than in 2009. Even so, the Saskatchewan homicide rate was more than double the national rate (3.3 versus 1.6 homicides per 100,000 population).

Most Saskatchewan crime victims knew their assailant

- According to 2008 police-reported data, excluding cases where the relationship between the victim and the accused was unknown, three quarters of Saskatchewan victims of violent crime knew their assailant. Of these, 25% were victimized by a family member and 50% by friends and acquaintances, while 26% were victimized by a stranger. Females were more likely to be victimized by someone they knew (85%).

Saskatchewan property crime down 4%

- The Saskatchewan property crime rate declined 4% to 6,877 incidents per 100,000 population. The break and enter rate was stable and continued at its lowest level since provincial-level crime data were first gathered more than three decades ago (938), while the motor vehicle theft rate declined 8% to its lowest level since 1994 (477). All the same, Saskatchewan had the highest provincial break and enter and motor vehicle theft rates, 1.6 and 1.8 times comparable national rates, respectively.

Saskatchewan drug offence rates surge

- The Saskatchewan cannabis offence rate rose 29% in 2010, while cocaine offences increased 31% and other drug offences rose 19%. Consequently, Saskatchewan had the second highest provincial cannabis offence rate, the third highest provincial cocaine offence rate, and the fifth highest other drug offence rate.

Saskatchewan impaired driving up 3%

- The Saskatchewan impaired driving rate was up 3% in 2010 to 628 incidents per 100,000 population, while the national rate declined 6% to 247. As a result, Saskatchewan continued to have the highest provincial impaired driving rate in Canada, one that was more than double the national rate.

Regina and Saskatoon Census Metropolitan Area crime rates and CSIs continue to fall

- The volume and severity of crime fell or remained stable in all but a few Canadian Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) in 2010. The Regina and Saskatoon CMA crime rates both declined 8% in 2010, while the Regina crime severity index fell 8% and the Saskatchewan index declined 4%. Over the past decade, the Regina and Saskatoon CMA crime severity indexes decreased 38% and 31%, respectively.
- Regina (131.4) continued to report the highest CSI among all 33 CMAs, followed by Saskatoon (128.1), Winnipeg (122.3) and Kelowna (113.1). The lowest index values were reported in Guelph (50.4), Quebec City

(56.1) and Toronto (57.8). Similarly, the highest crime rates were reported in Regina (9,813), Kelowna (9,548) and Saskatoon (9,384), with the lowest rates in Toronto (3,563), Quebec City (3,898) and Guelph (4,241).

- The Saskatoon CMA recorded ten homicides in 2010, up from six in 2009. The Regina CMA recorded eight homicides, as compared to four the year before.
- The Regina CMA violent crime severity index fell 3% to 151.2 in 2010. Robberies were down 8% and break and enters fell 16%. As well, motor vehicle thefts decreased 2% and were at their lowest level since 1993. In the Saskatoon CMA, the violent crime severity index was stable at 155.7. Robberies declined 3%, while break and enters were down 2% and motor vehicle thefts fell 21%.
- Overall, the Regina CMA had the second highest CMA homicide rate (3.7), the third highest robbery rate (196), the ninth highest break and enter rate (719) and the highest motor vehicle theft rate (562). The Saskatoon CMA in turn ranked second in homicides (tied with Regina) (3.7), second in robberies (199), first in break and enters (845) and sixth in motor vehicle thefts (471).

Saskatchewan youth crime severity dropped 5% in 2010

- Youth crime severity at the national level has generally been in decline since 2001, and dropped another 6% in 2010 to 90.5. The national youth violent crime severity has decreased in two of the last three years, but was 5% higher than a decade ago.
- Saskatchewan continued to have the highest provincial youth crime severity index (235.2), even though Manitoba had a slightly higher youth violent crime severity index (200.5 versus 190.6). Youth crime severity in Saskatchewan peaked in 2007, and following a 5% decrease in 2010 was at about the same level as a decade earlier.
- In 2010, the national youth crime rate² was down 7% to 6,147 youth charged and youth cleared per 100,000 population aged 12 to 17. The Saskatchewan youth crime rate in turn declined 4% to 17,657, or 2.9 times the national rate. While the Saskatchewan youth violent crime rate was up 2% in 2010, the youth property crime rate decreased 7%. See Table 2.
- There were decreases in Saskatchewan rates for a number of offences including serious assaults (-4%), break and enters (-14%) and motor vehicle theft (-14%). Even so, the Saskatchewan youth violent crime rate was more than double the national rate (3,835 versus 1,838), and the Saskatchewan youth property crime rate was 2.9 times higher (9,210 versus 3,155).
- Among the provinces, the lowest youth crime rates were in Quebec (4,059), followed by Ontario (5,036) and BC (5,354). Saskatchewan continued to have the highest provincial youth crime rate (17,657), followed by Manitoba (10,522) and Nova Scotia (8,903). Although the way that youth crime is measured changed with the introduction of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* in 2003, Saskatchewan has had the highest provincial rate for at least a decade.
- Ten youth were accused of homicide in Saskatchewan in 2010, up from eight the year before.

² *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.

Table 1. Selected Violations*, by most serious offence, Saskatchewan and Canada, 2010

	Saskatchewan				Canada			
	number	rate	% change 2009 to 2010	% change 2000 to 2010	number	rate	% change 2009 to 2010	% change 2000 to 2010
Homicide	34	3.3	-7%	26%	554	1.6	-10%	-9%
Attempted murder	30	3	2%	-17%	693	2	-14%	-19%
Serious assault (levels 2 and 3)	3,966	379	-7%	27%	54,750	161	-5%	14%
Robbery	1,263	121	0%	17%	30,405	89	-7%	-11%
Sexual assault (levels 1, 2 and 3)	1,139	109	-5%	-28%	22,180	65	5%	-17%
Firearm offences	150	14	35%	3%	1,952	6	11%	-21%
Total violent crime	26,667	2,550	1%	-1%	437,316	1,282	-3%	-14%
Breaking and Entering	9,806	938	-1%	-40%	196,881	577	-6%	-40%
Motor Vehicle Theft	4,988	477	-8%	-37%	92,683	272	-15%	-48%
Total property crime	71,910	6,877	-4%	-13%	1,311,891	3,846	-6%	-26%
Total crime	131,515	12,578	-2%	-3%	2,095,921	6,145	-5%	-19%
Cannabis	2,631	252	29%	37%	75,126	220	13%	2%
Cocaine	663	63	31%	236%	16,985	50	-5%	19%
Other drugs	530	51	19%	70%	16,418	48	10%	65%
Impaired driving	6,566	628	3%	-2%	84,397	247	-6%	-4%

* per 100,000 population

Source: CCJS, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Table 2. Police-reported youth crime for selected offences*, Saskatchewan and Canada, 2010

	Saskatchewan		Canada	
	rate	% change 2009 to 2010	rate	% change 2009 to 2010
Total violent crime	3,835	2	1,838	-3
Homicide	11.9	-	2.3	-
Robbery	240	11	168	2
Serious assaults (levels 2 and 3)	627	-4	247	-12
Total property crime	9,210	-7	3,155	-9
Break and Enter	1,459	-14	397	-10
Motor Vehicle Theft	522	-14	131	-14
Total crime (youth crime rate)	17,657	-4	6,147	-7

* per 100,000 population aged 12 to 17

Refers to the number of youth aged 12 to 17 who were either charged (or recommended for charging) by police or diverted from the formal criminal justice system through the use of warnings, cautions, referrals to community programs, etc. Counts are based upon the most serious violation in the incident.

Source: CCJS, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.