



Crime Statistics in British Columbia 2008

Statistical Highlights

- In 2008 BC reached its lowest crime rate in over 30 years. Mirroring national trends BC's crime rate declined 8%, the fifth consecutive annual decrease.
- The new overall Crime Severity Index (CSI) lists BC's 2008 CSI value as 121, 34% higher than the national CSI value of 90, but 8% lower than the previous year.
- Decreases in overall crime were largely driven by substantial declines in the property crimes of theft (-13%), motor vehicle theft (-15%), and break and enter (-11%).
- Violent crimes decreased 4% in 2008, resulting in a 6% drop in the violent crime rate, BC's lowest violent crime rate in over 20 years.
- The new violent CSI lists a value of 115 for BC, 2% lower than the previous year but 21% higher than the national violent CSI value of 95.
- 117 homicides were reported, 29 more than the 88 recorded in 2007.
- Sexual assaults declined 11% in 2008.
- BC's robbery rate dropped 4%. One out of three weapons-related robberies involved a firearm.
- The property crime rate dropped 14%, its lowest point in over 20 years.
- In spite of increases in the high volume other crimes of vandalism (+5%) and disturb the peace (+1%), substantial drops in bail violations (-15%), and weapons offences (-17%) drove the 2008 other crime rate down by 2%.
- Following three years of stability, the number of youths charged decreased by 11% in 2008.
- Despite a 3% drop in drug crimes, BC continues to have the highest drug crime rate in Canada.
- One in two drug crimes is for possession and three out of five drug crimes is cannabis related.
- Impaired driving offences remained stable in BC, while increasing 6% nationally.
- Police solved one out of four crimes in 2008 with two out of five violent crimes resulting in charges.



Crime Statistics in British Columbia 2008

Police-Reported Data versus Victimization Data

This publication is based on police-reported crime data (see section on Crime Data Collection in BC). As such, this report pertains only to those crimes that come to the attention of the police and are reported by the police. Data presented do not reflect a count of all crimes in BC; some crimes are never detected, and some that are detected are never brought to the attention of the police. Although not discussed in this publication, victimization surveys, such as the General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization, are an alternative source of data on the prevalence of crime. Both GSS and police-reported crime data are susceptible to several reporting factors and biases and are not directly comparable; however, they may be used in a complementary manner to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the extent to which that population is exposed to crime.

Factors Impacting on Police-Reported Crime Rates

A multitude of factors are believed to affect the prevalence of crime and the reporting of crime. Examples of these factors include:

Demographics - Demographic shifts, or changes in the size and rate of the offenders group, are believed to have an impact on crime rates. For example, changes in the age and gender structure of a particular population, specifically males aged 16 to 24 years (the age group most likely to commit crimes), can influence crime rates.

Technological Change - Criminal activity has been changing rapidly over the past decade. With continual advances in technology, opportunities for new, more complex crimes have developed, creating new challenges for law enforcement.

Influences on Police Enforcement Practice - Policy decisions (such as the introduction of measures to deal with violence against women and children) or legislative changes (such as the introduction of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*) can impact the prevalence rates or the reporting of some types of crimes.

Victim Response to Crime - Some experts argue that victim responses to crime cause cyclical patterns in the crime rate. When crime rates are rising, potential victims take self-protective measures, causing crime rates to moderate. Conversely, when crime rates are stable or decreasing, self-protective measures also decline, creating opportunities for criminal behaviour to increase again.

Societal Response to Crime - The public's decrease in tolerance for criminal acts can lead to a rise in reporting rates to police. Experts also argue that community-based policing initiatives (i.e., police-community partnerships to solve local crime problems) encourage citizens to come forward and report more incidents to police, thus impacting on crime rates.

Reporting Structures of Police Services - Differences in the ease of public reporting of crimes to police, as well as internal police records management systems and processes, can impact on whether a criminal incident is collected by police and forwarded to the national Uniform Crime Reporting program.



Crime Statistics in British Columbia 2008

Other Factors - Factors such as inflation or economic hardship, and alcohol/drug consumption may also affect crime rates. Additionally, population density, changes in public attitude, and the level of income and education of either victim or offender may also affect the reporting of certain types of crimes.

It is unlikely that a single factor accounts for changes in crime rates. More likely a combination of factors accounts for changes in crime rate trends.

New Crime Severity Indices Complement Traditional Crime Rates

In 2009 the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics launched three Crime Severity Indices (CSIs). Complementary to traditional crime rates, these tools are designed to track volume changes as well as the severity or seriousness of crime.

Crime rates measure volumes and count all crimes equally. As a result, they are dominated by substantial volumes of less serious crimes. In addition, crime rate calculations are based solely on Criminal Code offence volumes and do not factor in other federal statute offences such as drug or traffic crimes.

The CSIs, on the other hand, are based on the total volume of federal statute reporting including Criminal Code, drug, traffic, and miscellaneous federal statute offences. They are designed to measure changes not only in year-to-year crime volumes but also changes in those volumes based on specific seriousness weights assigned to each offence.

These weights which are derived from incarceration rates and court sentencing data assign higher values to more serious crimes while less serious high volume crimes are assigned lower values. For example, the most serious crime of murder is weighted at a value several hundred times higher than the large volume but substantially less serious offence of disturb the peace. As a result, serious crimes have a greater impact on crime measurement than high volume less serious offences.

There are three CSIs: one to measure overall crime severity based on the total volume of police reported federal statute offences; the second, to measure police reported violent crime; and a third, the non-violent CSI, to measure all crimes not considered violent in nature. Each index has been standardized at 100 for the base year of 2006.

In 2008, the national CSI was 90 with BC's CSI value calculated at 121. Although the province's 2008 crime severity index was 34% higher than the national CSI, it was only 21% higher than the CSI base year of 2006.

BC's violent CSI was 115 in 2008, 21% higher than the national violent CSI of 95. While violent crime severity in 2008 was 21% higher than the national CSI, it is only 15% higher than the national violent CSI calculated for 2006.

Further discussions within this publication are limited to analyses of crime volumes and crime rates.

Overview of Crime – BC’s crime rate lowest in 30 years

In 2008, there were 419,767 *Criminal Code* offences (excluding traffic) in BC, more than 30,000 or 7% less than were reported in 2007. Fluctuations in specific crimes are shown in Table 1.

Mirroring trends at the national level, BC’s overall crime rate¹ was 96 offences per 1,000 population, a decrease of 8% from the previous year.

The 2008 crime rate was the fifth consecutive annual decrease and the lowest recorded crime rate in over 30 years. Figure 1 shows the yearly trend in crime rate and the total crimes² reported by police over the past ten years.

Figure 1: Criminal Code Offences & Crime Rate in BC, 1999 - 2008.

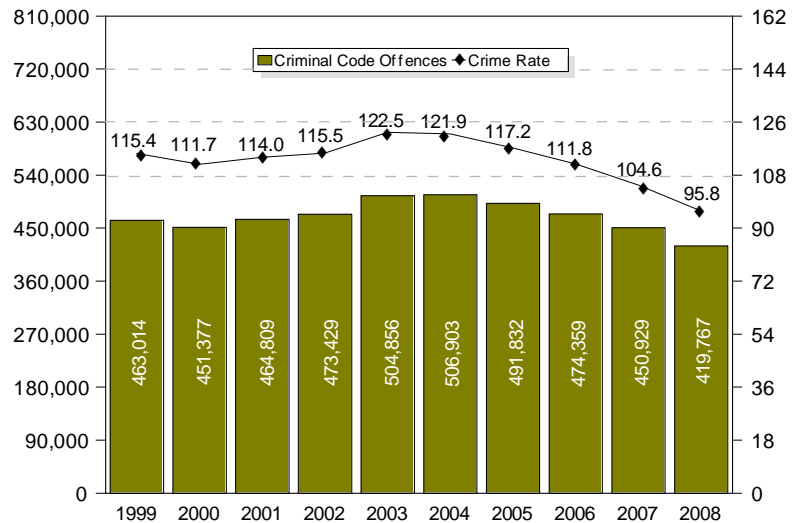
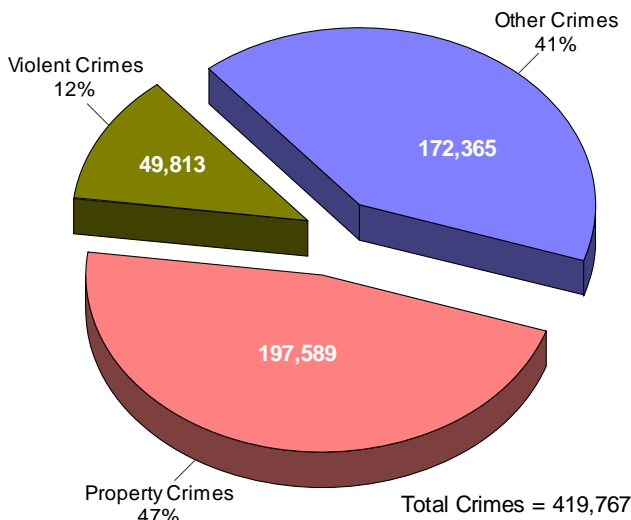


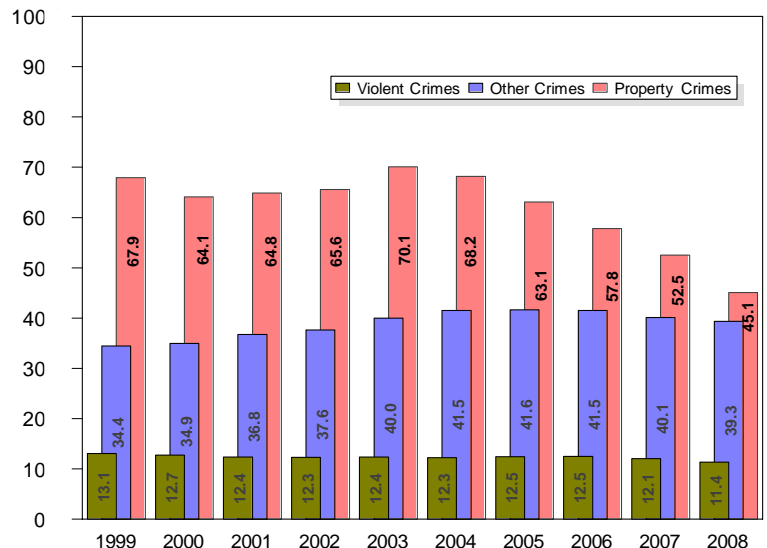
Figure 2: Criminal Code Offences in British Columbia, 2008.



As shown in Figure 2, violent crimes represented 12% of all *Criminal Code* offences reported, property crimes represented 47% and other crimes represented 41%.

Over the past decade, the proportion of property crimes declined as the proportion of other crimes increased. This is especially true between 2004 and 2006. The ten-year proportional trend in crime rates for the three major *Criminal Code* offence categories is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: BC Crime Rate by Category, 1999 - 2008.



While other crimes stabilized in 2008, decreases were recorded in violent crimes (-4%) and property crimes (-13%).

The 2008 drop in crime was largely a result of declines in the large volume, property crimes of theft (-13%), motor vehicle theft (-15%), and break & enter (-11%).

Violent Crimes – Common assault drop results in a new low for violent crime

Violent crimes include the offence categories of homicide, attempted murder, sexual offences, non-sexual assaults, robbery and abduction.

Over the last ten years, the number of violent crimes reported remained relatively stable averaging slightly more than 50,000 offences annually. During the same time, the violent crime rate also remained relatively stable, at approximately 12 violent crimes per 1,000 population.

In 2008, there were 49,813 violent offences reported in BC representing a 4% decrease (-2,131) from the 51,944 offences reported in 2007. This decline in the volume of violent offences led to a 6% drop in the violent crime rate. In 2008, the violent crime rate was 11.4 offences per 1,000 population, reaching a new low in almost 25 years.

With the exception of homicide which increased 33%, every major violent crime category recorded a decrease in 2008. Attempted murders dropped 9%, sexual assault dropped 11%, abductions declined 23%, and robberies dropped 2%.

The decline in overall violent crime was driven by a 6% decrease (-1,958 offences) in level 1 or common assaults, the least serious but most frequently reported form of violent crime.

Within some of the major violent crime categories, however, several lower volume crimes reported increases in 2008. Robberies not involving weapons rose 4%, aggravated assaults rose 2%, while miscellaneous assaults and sexual offences rose 29% and 69% respectively.

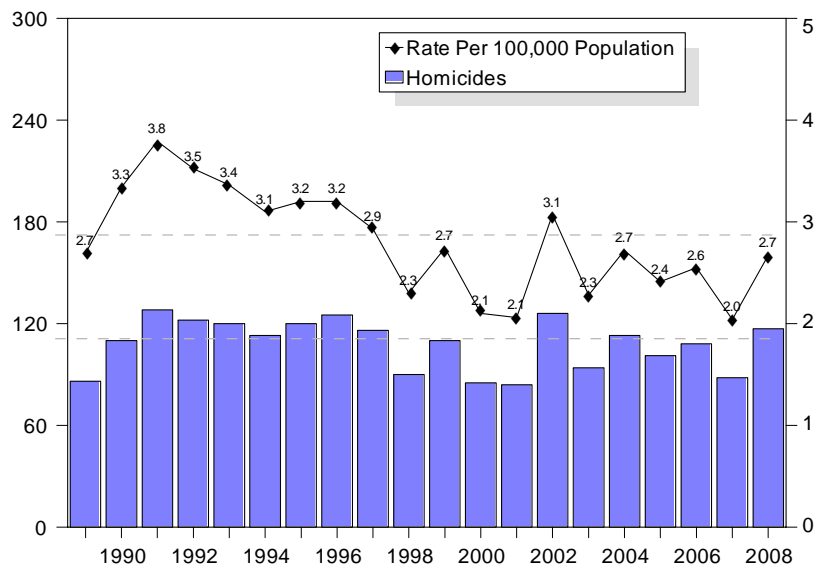
Homicide and Attempted Murder

Police reported 117 homicides in 2008, 29 more than the number reported in 2007. An average of 100 homicides have been reported each year over the past decade, ranging from a high of 126 recorded in 2002 to a low of 84 reported in 2001.

The 117 homicides reported in 2008 represented the second highest number recorded over the past decade. This increase was driven by a 34% increase in first and second degree murder offences.

In 2008, the homicide rate was 2.7 homicides per 100,000 population³. This rate was lower than the decade high rate of 3.1 recorded in 2002, but comparable to homicide rates recorded in 1999 and 2004. The twenty-year trend in homicide volumes and rates are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Number and Rate of Homicides, 1989 to 2008.





Crime Statistics in British Columbia 2008

Of the homicides reported in 2008, 53% (62) were first degree murder, 38% (44) were second degree murder, and 9% (11) were manslaughter.

In contrast to homicides, the number of attempted murders decreased 9%, from 109 offences reported in 2007 to 99 offences in 2008. This number was slightly above the decade average of 97 offences reported annually. Despite the above average volume recorded, the attempted murder rate for 2008 was comparable to the ten-year rate average of 2.3 offences per 100,000 population.

Property Crimes – Lowest rates in over 30 years but still highest in Canada

Property crimes include the offence categories of break and enter, theft including motor vehicle theft, possession of stolen property and fraud.

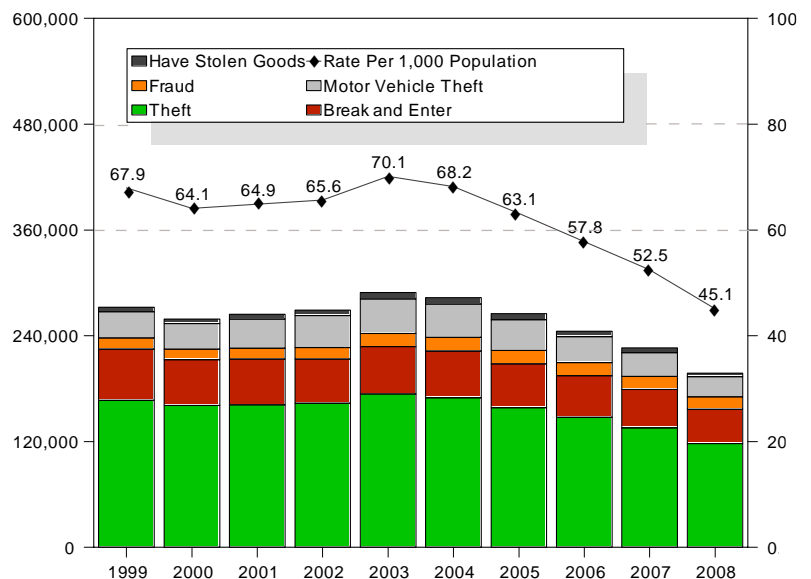
Over the past decade, property crimes in general have been decreasing. In 2008, there were 197,589 property offences reported in BC representing a 13% decrease (-28,575 offences) from the 226,164 recorded in 2007. The number of property crimes reported in 2008 is the lowest recorded number in almost 30 years.

The drop in volume resulted in a 14% decline in the property crime rate. In 2008 the property crime rate was 45 offences per 1,000 population, the lowest recorded rate in over 30 years. The ten-year trend in property crime are shown in Figure 5. Despite this overall decline, BC continues to have the highest property crime rate in Canada.

Although declines were reported in every major property crime category, substantial decreases in the high volume property crime categories of theft (-13%), break and enter (-11%) and motor vehicle theft (-15%) drove this downward trend. Combined, the declines reported in these three property crime categories accounted for over 80% of the total drop in reported *Criminal Code* crimes.

The largest of these decreases occurred in the theft category. Approximately one in three *Criminal Code* offences is a theft. As a result, increases or decreases in this offence category heavily influence the crime rate. In 2008, miscellaneous thefts combined with thefts from motor vehicle reported the largest property crime decrease, with almost 17,000 fewer offences recorded. Over the past decade, a 29% drop has been recorded in the number of thefts reported to police. Theft volume and rate trends are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 5: Number and Rate of Property Offences, 1999 to 2008.



Break and enters declined overall by 11% (-4,867 offences) in 2008. Residential break and enters with 2,246 fewer offences accounted for almost half of this decrease. This category recorded the largest volume decrease followed by a 33% decrease in miscellaneous break and enters (-1,541 offences) and a 7% decrease in commercial break and enters (-1,080).

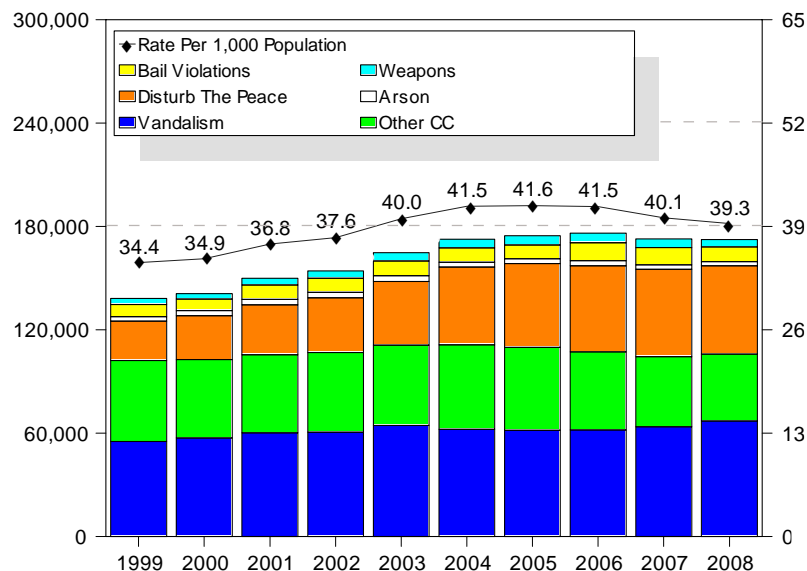
Motor vehicle theft has been decreasing since a thirty-year high of 39,491 offences was recorded in 2003. The 22,829 offences reported in 2008 is the lowest recorded number in almost 20 years. During the past five years alone, motor vehicle theft has decreased 40%.

Overall, frauds decreased 13% in 2008.

Decreases were recorded in credit card frauds (-1%) and miscellaneous or other frauds (-9%) while an increase of 2% was reported in cheque fraud. During the past ten years, while cheque and other frauds declined 11%, credit card frauds increased 82%. Despite these fluctuations, fraud reporting has remained relatively stable during this period averaging approximately 14,000 offences annually. The 14,092 offences reported in 2008 are comparable to the decade average.

Other Crimes – Weapons offences drop while Vandalism increases

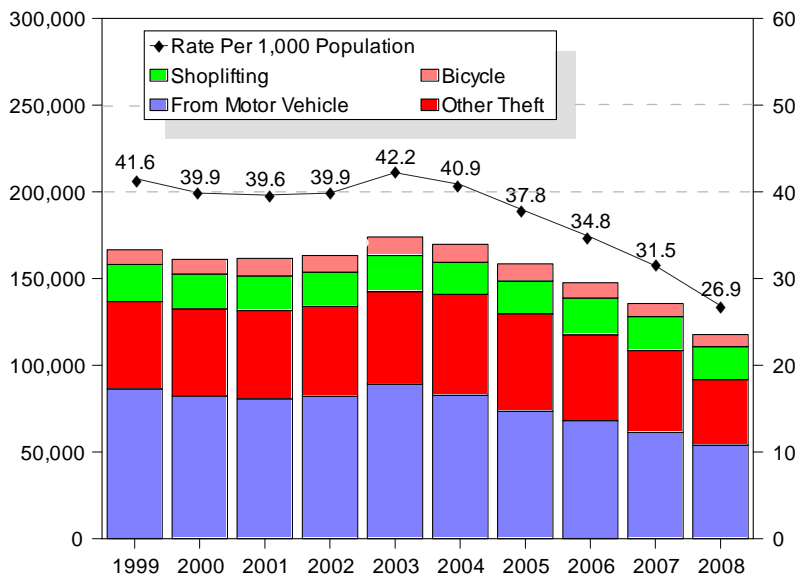
Figure 7: Number and Rate of Other Crimes, 1999 to 2008.



Offences which are not violent or property-related are classified as other crimes. These include vandalism, bail violations, arson, offensive weapons, and disturb the peace as well as miscellaneous offences relating to prostitution, obstruction of justice, counterfeit currency, gaming and betting, and other *Criminal Code* offences.

After having steadily increased over the past decade to a thirty-year high recorded in 2006, other crimes decreased in 2007 then stabilized in 2008. While the volume of other crimes peaked in 2006, the other crime rate rose to a thirteen-year high in 2005. From 2006 onward, however, it has decreased 2% annually.

Figure 6: Number and Rate of Thefts, 1999 to 2008.



In 2008, there were 172,365 other offences reported, -1% or 456 offences fewer than in 2007. This decrease resulted in a 2% drop in the other crime rate, from 40 to 39 offences per 1,000 population. The ten-year trends for other crime are shown in Figure 7.

Substantial decreases were reported in the other offence categories of bail violations (-15%, -1,471 offences), and other or miscellaneous *Criminal Code* offences (-4%, -1,502 offences).

Decreases in weapons offences were also reported in 2008. Overall, these types of offences decreased 17% with almost 900 fewer offences being recorded. Declines in weapons possession and firearms usage offences accounted for over two-thirds of this decrease.

Offsetting these declines were recorded increases in vandalism (+5%, +3,395 offences), and disturb the peace (+1%, +491 offences).

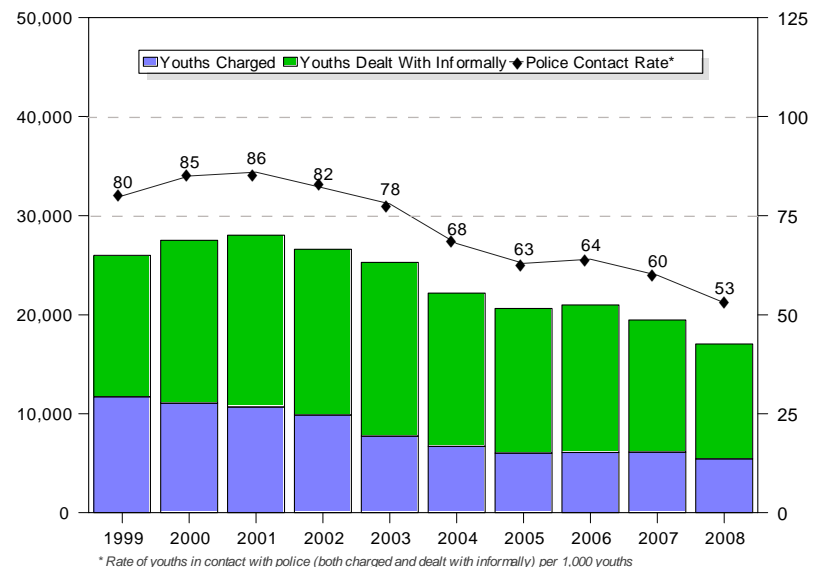
Youth Crime⁴ - After 3 years of relative stability, youth crime drops

In 2008, one out of ten persons charged in connection with a *Criminal Code* offence was a youth (persons aged 12 to 17 years). Between 2005 and 2007, the number of youths charged remained relatively stable averaging slightly more than 6,000 youths charged annually. In 2008, however, the number of youths charged decreased 11% with 679 fewer youths being charged.

Of the 5,434 youths charged in 2008, just over a third (38%) were charged with other crimes, 28% were charged with property crimes, and 33% were charged with violent crimes. Charges in connection with bail violations, disturb the peace, and vandalism accounted for one out of four youths charged in 2008. Youths charged in connection with weapons offences accounted for slightly less than 3% of youths charged.

After an increase in 2006, the number of youths charged with violent crime decreased 9% over the next two years. Of the 1,803 youths charged with violent crime in 2008, two-thirds (67%) were charged with Level 1 and Level 2 assaults. Notably, while one in four youths charged in 2008 was charged with assault, the total number of youths charged with assault has declined by almost 30% in the last ten years.

Figure 8: Number and Rate of Youths In Contact With Police, 1999 to 2008.





Crime Statistics in British Columbia 2008

Clearance⁵- Adult males continue to represent the majority of persons charged

Police consider an offence cleared (solved) when they have identified an offender and have sufficient evidence to charge that person. Over the past decade, overall *Criminal Code* clearance rates have ranged from a high of 31% to a low of 23%. Police cleared approximately one out of four *Criminal Code* offences in 2008.

A total of 56,670 persons were charged by police in 2008. Adults accounted for 90% of these while the remaining 10% of offenders charged were youths between the ages of 12 and 17. As noted above, the percentage of youths charged has declined over the past decade. Historically, adult males account for the largest proportion of individuals charged with *Criminal Code* offences. Between 1999 and 2008, adult males, on average, represented 72% of total persons charged.

Clearance rates for violent crimes differ from those reported for property and other crimes. Violent crimes have the highest clearance rates with police clearing over half of these crimes. Over the past decade, homicide and attempted murder have recorded the highest clearance rates, averaging between 65% and 70%, while the clearance rate for robberies never exceeded 33%.

Property crimes, on the other hand, recorded the lowest clearance rates with police, on average, clearing only 14% of these offences. Even though overall property clearance rates are low, rates are relatively high for offences such as possession of stolen property and fraud.

Over the past decade, large volume increases in difficult-to-solve crimes such as vandalism, and disturb the peace have driven clearance rates for other crimes downward from 47% to 29%. As with some property crimes, certain crimes within this category have high clearance rates. These include prostitution (over 50%) and offensive weapons (60%).

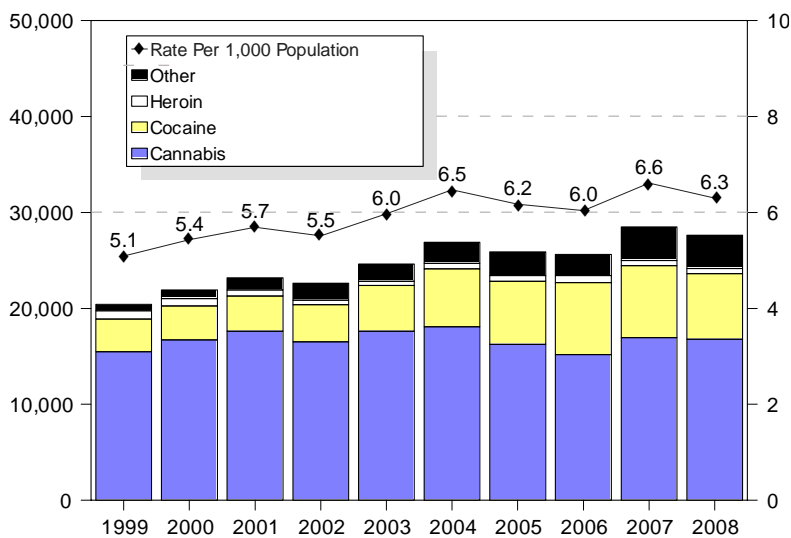
In 2008, police cleared 25% of *Criminal Code* offences reported. Of the total crimes reported, 56,722 or 14% were cleared by charge while 47,383 (11%) were cleared by other means. For violent crimes, 40% were cleared by charge while only 8% of property crimes and 13% of other crimes resulted in charges.

Drug Crimes - BC still leads with the highest drug crime rate in Canada

Drug crimes include possession, trafficking and importing/exporting and production related offences for heroin, cocaine, cannabis and other drugs. The authority for these offences is within the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* and, as a result, drug crimes are not included in the overall crime rate.

Drug crime rates are susceptible to police enforcement and charging practices that may vary from year-to-year and/or be dependent on available police resources.

Figure 9: Number and Rate of Drug Crimes, 1999 to 2008.



Overall, drug crimes have generally increased during the past decade, rising to a ten-year high of 28,472 offences reported in 2007. Similarly, the drug crime rate rose from 5.1 in 1999 to a decade high of 6.6 offences per 1,000 population in 2007. In 2008, however, the incidence of drug crimes decreased by 3% with 27,622 offences recorded while the rate dropped by 5% to 6.3 offences per 1,000 population (see Figure 9).

Consistent with rates since the 1980's, BC's drug crime rate is higher than any other province in Canada.

The overall drug crime rate is driven by possession offences, specifically possession of cannabis, which continues to represent the majority (50%) of all drug crimes reported. In 2008, police recorded 13,902 cannabis possession offences, an increase of 3% from the previous year. While cannabis possession rose in 2008, possession of drugs other than cannabis, declined 6% with 434 fewer offences being recorded.

Both heroin and cocaine related offences reported decreases in 2008. Cocaine offences driven by a substantial drop in possession offences declined 9% overall while heroin dropped 5%.

Offences relating to other drugs (those other than heroin, cocaine and cannabis) remained stable recording a less than 1% decrease. Within this drug category, possession and trafficking offences in total rose 3% in 2008 while importation offences dropped 38%.

Table 1: Police-Reported Criminal Code and Drug Offences

Crime Category	Number of Offences				Rate Per Population ¹			Offences Cleared				Total Persons Charged			
	2007	2008	Vol Chg	%	2007	2008	%	2007	2008	Vol Chg	%	2007	2008	Vol Chg	%
TOTAL CRIMINAL CODE	450,929	419,767	-31,162	-7%	104.6	95.8	-8%	111,300	104,105	-7,195	-6%	59,841	56,670	-3,171	-5%
Homicide	88	117	29	33%	2.0	2.7	31%	48	62	14	29%	41	63	22	54%
Attempted Murder	109	99	-10	-9%	2.5	2.3	-11%	72	63	-9	-13%	78	58	-20	-26%
Sexual Offences	3,370	3,141	-229	-7%	0.8	0.7	-8%	1,603	1,491	-112	-7%	1,244	1,104	-140	-11%
Non-sexual Assault	42,781	40,997	-1,784	-4%	9.9	9.4	-6%	25,369	24,389	-980	-4%	16,579	16,108	-471	-3%
Robbery	5,508	5,391	-117	-2%	1.28	1.23	-4%	1,736	1,738	2	0%	1,654	1,553	-101	-6%
Abduction	88	68	-20	-23%	2.04	1.55	-24%	25	20	-5	-20%	12	16	4	33%
VIOLENT CRIMES	51,944	49,813	-2,131	-4%	12.1	11.4	-6%	28,853	27,763	-1,090	-4%	19,608	18,902	-706	-4%
Break and Enter	43,582	38,715	-4,867	-11%	10.1	8.8	-13%	3,774	3,139	-635	-17%	2,988	2,586	-402	-13%
Motor Vehicle Theft	26,981	22,829	-4,152	-15%	6.3	5.2	-17%	1,789	1,523	-266	-15%	1,131	826	-305	-27%
Theft	135,673	117,794	-17,879	-13%	31.5	26.9	-15%	17,698	15,548	-2,150	-12%	9,903	8,524	-1,379	-14%
Have Stolen Goods	5,225	4,159	-1,066	-20%	1.2	0.9	-22%	3,782	3,085	-697	-18%	3,052	2,691	-361	-12%
Fraud	14,703	14,092	-611	-4%	3.4	3.2	-6%	3,194	2,996	-198	-6%	2,097	2,062	-35	-2%
PROPERTY CRIMES	226,164	197,589	-28,575	-13%	52.5	45.1	-14%	30,237	26,291	-3,946	-13%	19,171	16,689	-2,482	-13%
Prostitution	1,042	858	-184	-18%	0.24	0.20	-19%	589	417	-172	-29%	306	178	-128	-42%
Gaming and Betting	51	54	3	6%	0.012	0.012	4%	9	11	2	22%	17	9	-8	-47%
Offensive Weapons	5,130	4,255	-875	-17%	1.19	0.97	-18%	3,163	2,556	-607	-19%	1,540	1,251	-289	-19%
Arson	2,527	2,485	-42	-2%	0.59	0.57	-3%	257	250	-7	-3%	156	155	-1	-1%
Bail Violations	10,039	8,568	-1,471	-15%	2.3	2.0	-16%	9,272	7,741	-1,531	-17%	6,724	6,443	-281	-4%
Counterfeit Currency	124	96	-28	-23%	0.03	0.02	-24%	124	96	-28	-23%	91	73	-18	-20%
Disturb the Peace	50,633	51,124	491	1%	11.7	11.7	-1%	15,333	15,557	224	1%	1,324	1,513	189	14%
Indecent Acts	1,219	1,198	-21	-2%	0.28	0.27	-3%	297	298	1	0%	120	118	-2	-2%
Obstruction of Justice	2,335	2,174	-161	-7%	0.54	0.50	-8%	2,076	1,982	-94	-5%	1,105	1,197	92	8%
Kidnapping	420	436	16	4%	0.10	0.10	2%	255	306	51	20%	306	355	49	16%
Public Morals	372	344	-28	-8%	0.09	0.08	-9%	144	120	-24	-17%	102	93	-9	-9%
Trespass At Night	943	894	-49	-5%	0.22	0.20	-7%	150	131	-19	-13%	60	44	-16	-27%
Vandalism	63,692	67,087	3,395	5%	14.8	15.3	4%	6,781	7,199	418	6%	2,215	2,439	224	10%
Other Criminal Code	34,294	32,792	-1,502	-4%	8.0	7.5	-6%	13,760	13,387	-373	-3%	6,996	7,211	215	3%
OTHER CRIMES	172,821	172,365	-456	0%	40.1	39.3	-2%	52,210	50,051	-2,159	-4%	21,062	21,079	17	0%
DRUG CRIMES	28,472	27,622	-850	-3%	6.6	6.3	-5%	18,928	17,299	-1,629	-9%	9,919	9,054	-865	-9%
Heroin	535	509	-26	-5%	0.1	0.1	-6%	436	391	-45	-10%	326	242	-84	-26%
Cocaine	7,506	6,859	-647	-9%	1.7	1.6	-10%	5,786	4,974	-812	-14%	4,619	3,924	-695	-15%
Other Drugs	3,492	3,480	-12	0%	0.81	0.79	-2%	1,541	1,489	-52	-3%	847	795	-52	-6%
Cannabis	16,939	16,774	-165	-1%	3.9	3.8	-3%	11,165	10,445	-720	-6%	4,127	4,093	-34	-1%

¹ All rates with the exception of those calculated for homicide, attempted murder and abduction are based on the number of crimes per 1,000 population. Due to small volumes, rates for homicide, attempted murder and abduction have been calculated on a per 100,000 population basis.

² Obstruction of justice offences include escape custody, obstruct police and prisoner at large.



Crime Statistics in British Columbia 2008

Crime Data Collection in BC

Every police department within British Columbia participates in the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey. Managed nationally by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), the UCR Survey forms the basis of crime data collection within the provinces and across the country.

The UCR Survey is designed to collect aggregate data on the incidence of crime. It records three major components for each criminal incident: the most serious offence within the incident (by type and volume); clearance (by charge or other means); and persons charged in connection with the offence (by gender and adult/youth). Police agencies across BC reported to the UCR Survey according to nationally set scoring rules.

Police-reported crime is divided into three major categories of *Criminal Code* offences: crimes against persons (violent crime); crimes against property (property crimes); and other crimes. Offences under these three categories constitute total crimes, which is used to calculate the crime rate. *Criminal Code* offences pertaining to traffic as well as drug crimes (offences under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*) are discussed independent of total crimes or the crime rate.

This publication is limited to a discussion of offences under the *Criminal Code of Canada* and the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, it excludes traffic offences as well as less serious violations under other federal, provincial, or municipal statutes or bylaws.

Endnotes

- ¹ The 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.
- ² The dataset covering years 1999 to 2007 reflects two primary CCJS/UCR Survey adjustments: the first relates to counterfeit currency adjustments whereby the number of offences was made to equal the number of incidents police were able to clear (previously the count was based on the number of bills); and the second relates to robbery adjustments whereby the number of offences was made to equal the number of victims rather than the count of incidents. Both sets of adjustments are estimates based on UCR2 characteristics aggregated at the national level. On average, counterfeit currency adjustments reduced annual reporting by slightly more than 98%. The most significant reductions occurred between 2003 and 2006 where reporting decreased an average of 20,000 offences annually. Robbery adjustments resulted in annual increases of roughly 12% or 600 offences on average.
- ³ Since the number of homicides and attempted murders reported is small, rates are calculated on a per 100,000 population basis.
- ⁴ There is no offence specifically known as youth crime. An accused person is deemed to be a youth based on their age at the time an offence is committed. In BC, a youth is defined as any individual between the ages of 12 and 17.
- ⁵ Crimes are cleared when police consider offences solved. Police, once they have identified a suspect, can either clear an offence by charge or by other means. In BC, clearance by charge is reported when police have filed a Report to Crown counsel recommending charges be laid. Clearance by other means is recorded in situations where sufficient evidence exists to proceed with charges but police, given a certain set of circumstances, decide upon another course of action, e.g., diversion. Clearance rate is the number of crimes solved by police as a percentage of the number of crimes reported by police.

Additional information on police and crime statistics can be obtained from Police Services Division by contacting our Vancouver Office at Suite 405 - 815 Hornby Street, Vancouver BC V6Z 2E6, Telephone: (604) 660-2604, by Facsimile at (604) 660-2606 or through our Internet site (www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/police_services/publications/index.htm).