

# Homicide in Canada, 2015

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Canadian police services reported 604 homicides in 2015, 83 more than the previous year. The homicide rate increased by 15% in 2015 to 1.68 per 100,000 population, the highest rate since 2011.

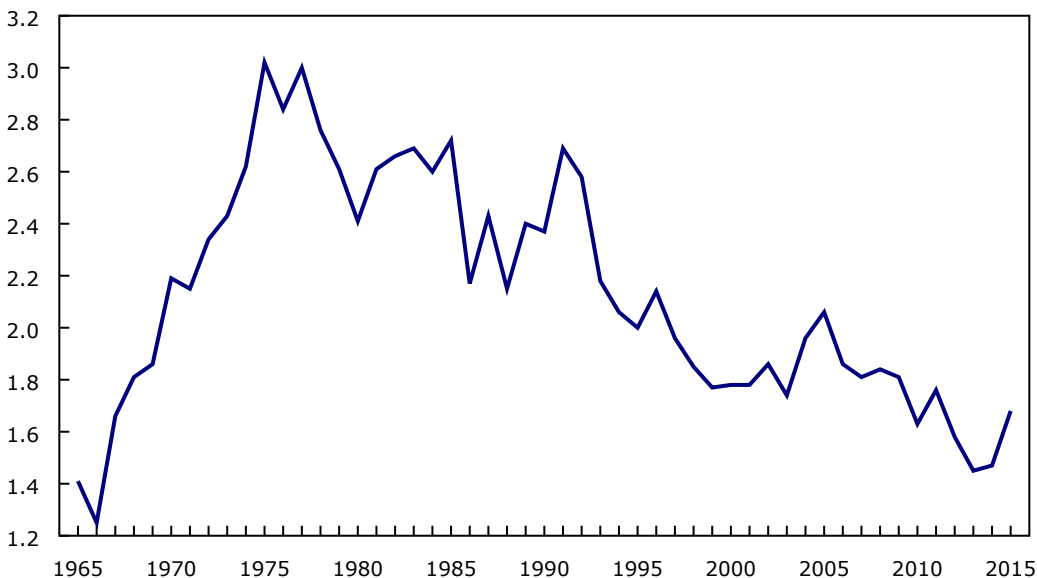
The higher number of homicides for 2015 was primarily due to increases in Alberta (+27 homicides), Saskatchewan (+19) and Ontario (+18).

One-quarter (25%) of the 604 homicide victims were reported by police as an Aboriginal person. As well, 33% of accused persons identified in solved cases were reported as an Aboriginal person. Overall, Aboriginal people accounted for about 5% of Canada's population in 2015.

These findings are included in a new *Juristat* article released today, titled "[Homicide in Canada, 2015](#)," which analyzes data from the Homicide Survey database for 2015.

## Chart 1 Homicides

rate per 100,000 population



**Note(s):** Excludes 329 victims killed in the Air India incident in 1985.

**Source(s):** Data on homicide are available back to 1961 in CANSIM table [253-0001](#).

## Saskatchewan reports the highest homicide rate among the provinces

Among the provinces, Saskatchewan recorded the highest homicide rate at 3.79 homicides per 100,000 population, followed by Manitoba (3.63 per 100,000 population) and Alberta (3.17 per 100,000).

The lowest provincial rates were recorded in Newfoundland and Labrador (0.57 per 100,000 population), Prince Edward Island (0.68 per 100,000 population) and Quebec (0.93 per 100,000 population).

Historically, the territories have had higher and more variable homicide rates given their smaller number of reported homicides and smaller populations. In 2015, with five homicides, the Northwest Territories reported the highest homicide rate among Canadian jurisdictions with 11.34 victims per 100,000 population. This was followed by



Nunavut with two homicides (5.42 per 100,000 population). The 2015 homicide rate in Nunavut was the lowest reported rate since it became a territory in 1999. With one homicide, Yukon's rate stood at 2.67 homicides per 100,000 population.

### **Regina reports the highest homicide rate among the census metropolitan areas**

With eight homicides in 2015, Regina (3.30 homicides per 100,000 population) recorded the highest homicide rate among the country's 33 census metropolitan areas (CMAs).

Saskatoon reported the second highest homicide rate among the CMAs with 3.22 victims per 100,000 population and 10 homicides. This was followed by the Edmonton CMA, with a rate of 2.87 victims per 100,000 or 39 homicides in 2015.

Brantford was the only CMA to report no homicides in 2015.

### **Firearm-related and gang-related homicides increase**

There were 178 firearm-related homicides in 2015, 23 more than the previous year. The rate of firearm-related homicides increased by 14% to 0.50 per 100,000 population, compared with 0.44 in 2014. The 2015 firearm-related homicide rate was the highest reported since 2010 (0.51 per 100,000).

Police services recorded 98 homicides related to gangs, up 16 from the previous year. The rate of gang-related homicides increased by 18% to 0.27 per 100,000 population (from 0.23 in 2014). Gang-related homicides declined from 2011 to 2014.

### **Most homicide victims knew the accused**

Decades of information on the relationship between the victim and the accused indicates that homicides are most frequently committed by someone known to the victim. In 2015, 87% of solved homicides were committed by a person who was known to the victim. This was up from 2014 when 82% of the victims knew the accused. Homicide victims were most frequently killed by family members other than a spouse (22%), casual acquaintances (22%) or current or former spouses (14%).

There were 83 intimate-partner homicides in Canada in 2015, 3 less than in 2014. Intimate-partner homicides include those committed by a current or former legally married or common-law spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend or other intimate relationship.

At the same time, police reported fewer homicides by a stranger in 2015. The number of victims killed by a stranger declined from 73 in 2014 to 58 in 2015. Homicides committed by strangers accounted for 13% of all homicides in 2015, compared with 18% the year before.

Police reported a notable increase in the number of homicides committed by a person with whom the victim had a criminal relationship, with 54 in 2015 compared with 29 in 2014.

### **One-quarter of homicide victims and one-third of accused persons identified as Aboriginal people**

Beginning in 2014, police-reported information on the Aboriginal identity of both homicide victims and those accused of homicide became available. Data also became available on the Aboriginal identity of female victims dating back to 1980.

In 2015, 148 of the 604 homicide victims, or 25%, were reported by police as Aboriginal people. In contrast, Aboriginal people accounted for about 5% of the Canadian population.

Aboriginal people were victims of homicide at a rate that was about seven times higher than that of non-Aboriginal people, with 8.77 victims per 100,000 Aboriginal population versus 1.31 victims per 100,000 non-Aboriginal population.

Aboriginal males were at the greatest risk of being victims of homicide. In 2015, they were seven times more likely to be the victim of a homicide compared with non-Aboriginal males (12.85 per 100,000 population versus 1.87). They were also three times more likely to be a victim than Aboriginal females (4.80 per 100,000).

The homicide rate for Aboriginal females was six times higher than for their non-Aboriginal counterparts (4.80 per 100,000 versus 0.77).

Of the 525 persons accused of homicide in 2015, one-third (33%) were identified as an Aboriginal person. The rate of Aboriginal persons accused of homicide in Canada was close to 10 times higher than the rate for non-Aboriginal persons, with 10.13 Aboriginal accused per 100,000 population compared with 1.10 per 100,000 for non-Aboriginals.

Aboriginal people accounted for 61% of females accused of homicide in 2015, and 29% of males accused of homicide.

Differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal rates for victims and accused persons of homicide were similar to those observed in 2014.

### **Greater proportion of Aboriginal female homicide victims killed by a casual acquaintance**

Between 1980 and 2015, a higher proportion of Aboriginal female homicide victims were killed by a casual acquaintance (18% compared with 11% of non-Aboriginal female victims). A special analysis of police-reported narratives documenting these homicides was conducted to better understand the nature of this casual acquaintance relationship.

A 'co-substance user' relationship was three times more common among Aboriginal females killed by a casual acquaintance (38%) than among non-Aboriginal females (12%). This means that the casual acquaintance relationship was based solely on the co-consumption of alcohol, drugs or other intoxicating substances immediately prior to the homicide.

Other types of casual acquaintance relationships were less common among Aboriginal female victims compared with non-Aboriginal female victims. These included 'other' non-family household members (such as roommates, boarders not paying rent, or couch-surfers; 3% compared with 6%), fellow residents in an institutional setting (such as a hospital or nursing home; 1% compared with 5%), and neighbours (1% compared with 6%).

### **Female homicide victims more often reported as missing persons**

Compared with their male counterparts, female victims were two and a half times more likely to be listed as a missing person at the time the homicide was discovered. In 2015, the first year data became available, almost one-fifth of female victims were considered missing persons prior to their death, compared with 7% of male victims.

Similar proportions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal homicide victims were reported as missing persons. Among all Aboriginal homicide victims, 10% were reported as missing persons compared with 11% of non-Aboriginal victims.

For Aboriginal female victims, 17% had been reported as missing compared with 18% of non-Aboriginal female victims. For male victims, 7% of Aboriginal male victims were on record as a missing person compared with 8% of non-Aboriginal male victims.

**Table 1**  
**Homicides, by province and territory**

|                           | 2014              |                   | 2015              |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                           | number of victims | rate <sup>1</sup> | number of victims | rate <sup>1</sup> |
| <b>Canada</b>             | <b>521</b>        | <b>1.47</b>       | <b>604</b>        | <b>1.68</b>       |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 2                 | 0.38              | 3                 | 0.57              |
| Prince Edward Island      | 3                 | 2.05              | 1                 | 0.68              |
| Nova Scotia               | 6                 | 0.64              | 12                | 1.27              |
| New Brunswick             | 10                | 1.33              | 11                | 1.46              |
| Quebec                    | 70                | 0.85              | 77                | 0.93              |
| Ontario                   | 156               | 1.14              | 174               | 1.26              |
| Manitoba                  | 45                | 3.51              | 47                | 3.63              |
| Saskatchewan              | 24                | 2.14              | 43                | 3.79              |
| Alberta                   | 106               | 2.57              | 133               | 3.17              |
| British Columbia          | 89                | 1.92              | 95                | 2.03              |
| Yukon                     | 3                 | 8.11              | 1                 | 2.67              |
| Northwest Territories     | 3                 | 6.82              | 5                 | 11.34             |
| Nunavut                   | 4                 | 11.09             | 2                 | 5.42              |

1. Rates are calculated per 100,000 population using revised July 1 population estimates.

**Note(s):** There may be a small number of homicides in a given year's total that occurred in previous years. Homicides are counted according to the year in which they are reported to Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** CANSIM table [253-0001](#).

**Table 2**  
**Homicides, by census metropolitan area**

|  | 2014 <sup>r</sup> |                   | 2015              |                   |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|  | number of victims | rate <sup>1</sup> | number of victims | rate <sup>1</sup> |
| <b>Canada</b>                                    | <b>521</b>        | <b>1.47</b>       | <b>604</b>        | <b>1.68</b>       |
| Census metropolitan area, total                  | 360               | 1.45              | 387               | 1.54              |
| Non-census metropolitan area, total <sup>2</sup> | 161               | 1.51              | 217               | 2.03              |
| <b>Census metropolitan area<sup>3</sup></b>      |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Regina   | 5                 | 2.09              | 8                 | 3.30              |
| Saskatoon  | 8                 | 2.62              | 10                | 3.22              |
| Edmonton   | 40                | 3.00              | 39                | 2.87              |
| Winnipeg   | 27                | 3.42              | 22                | 2.72              |
| Calgary  | 32                | 2.26              | 39                | 2.70              |
| Thunder Bay                                      | 11                | 9.05              | 3                 | 2.48              |
| Saint John                                       | 3                 | 2.35              | 3                 | 2.36              |
| Victoria   | 4                 | 1.11              | 8                 | 2.19              |
| Halifax  | 5                 | 1.21              | 8                 | 1.91              |
| Vancouver  | 46                | 1.86              | 47                | 1.88              |
| Windsor  | 3                 | 0.91              | 6                 | 1.81              |
| Kingston   | 0                 | 0.00              | 3                 | 1.80              |
| Abbotsford–Mission                               | 4                 | 2.22              | 3                 | 1.63              |
| London   | 4                 | 0.79              | 8                 | 1.57              |
| St. Catharines–Niagara                           | 4                 | 0.89              | 7                 | 1.56              |
| Guelph   | 3                 | 2.32              | 2                 | 1.53              |
| Kelowna  | 3                 | 1.58              | 3                 | 1.53              |
| Barrie   | 1                 | 0.47              | 3                 | 1.41              |
| Toronto  | 82                | 1.37              | 82                | 1.35              |
| Trois-Rivières                                   | 3                 | 1.94              | 2                 | 1.29              |
| Moncton  | 3                 | 1.94              | 2                 | 1.28              |
| Greater Sudbury                                  | 1                 | 0.61              | 2                 | 1.22              |
| Montréal   | 38                | 0.94              | 47                | 1.16              |
| Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo                     | 3                 | 0.56              | 6                 | 1.11              |
| St. John's                                       | 1                 | 0.49              | 2                 | 0.97              |
| Hamilton   | 10                | 1.34              | 7                 | 0.93              |
| Peterborough                                     | 1                 | 0.82              | 1                 | 0.82              |
| Ottawa <sup>4</sup>                              | 7                 | 0.71              | 7                 | 0.70              |
| Saguenay   | 0                 | 0.00              | 1                 | 0.60              |
| Sherbrooke                                       | 0                 | 0.00              | 1                 | 0.50              |
| Oshawa   | 0                 | 0.00              | 2                 | 0.47              |
| Gatineau <sup>5</sup>                            | 4                 | 1.23              | 1                 | 0.30              |
| Québec   | 4                 | 0.50              | 2                 | 0.25              |
| Brantford  | 0                 | 0.00              | 0                 | 0.00              |

<sup>r</sup> revised

1. Rates are calculated per 100,000 population using revised July 1 population estimates.

2. Includes three homicides committed in a correctional institution in 2014 and 2015.

3. A census metropolitan area (CMA) consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the central urban area, as measured by commuting flows derived from census data. A CMA typically includes more than one police service.

4. Ottawa refers to the Ontario part of the Ottawa–Gatineau CMA.

5. Gatineau refers to the Quebec part of the Ottawa–Gatineau CMA.

**Note(s):** There may be a small number of homicides included in a given year's total that occurred in previous years. Homicides are counted according to the year in which they are reported to Statistics Canada.

**Source(s):** CANSIM table [253-0004](#).

**Table 3  
Homicide victims and accused persons, by Aboriginal identity and sex, 2015**

|                               | Aboriginal |             |                   | Non-Aboriginal |             |                   | Unknown <sup>1</sup> |            |                   | Total      | Ratio between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal rates |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|---|
|                               | number     | %           | rate <sup>2</sup> | number         | %           | rate <sup>3</sup> | number               | %          | rate <sup>4</sup> |            |   |
| <b>Total homicide victims</b> | <b>148</b> | <b>24.5</b> | <b>8.77</b>       | <b>449</b>     | <b>74.3</b> | <b>1.31</b>       | <b>7</b>             | <b>1.2</b> | <b>..</b>         | <b>604</b> | <b>6.7</b>  |
| Male                          | 107        | 24.9        | 12.85             | 317            | 73.9        | 1.87              | 5                    | 1.2        | ..                | 429        | 6.9   |
| Female                        | 41         | 23.4        | 4.80              | 132            | 75.4        | 0.77              | 2                    | 1.1        | ..                | 175        | 6.3   |
| <b>Total accused persons</b>  | <b>171</b> | <b>32.6</b> | <b>10.13</b>      | <b>345</b>     | <b>65.7</b> | <b>1.01</b>       | <b>9</b>             | <b>1.7</b> | <b>..</b>         | <b>525</b> | <b>10.0</b>   |
| Male                          | 134        | 28.9        | 16.09             | 321            | 69.2        | 1.90              | 9                    | 1.9        | ..                | 464        | 8.5   |
| Female                        | 37         | 60.7        | 4.33              | 24             | 39.3        | 0.14              | 0                    | 0.0        | ..                | 61         | 31.1  |

.. not available for a specific reference period

1. The "unknown" category includes cases where the Aboriginal identity of victims and persons accused of homicide was reported as unknown, or not collected or released by police service.

2. Rates are calculated per 100,000 Aboriginal population.

3. Rates are calculated per 100,000 non-Aboriginal population.

4. Rate calculations for unknown Aboriginal identity are not available.

Source(s): CANSIM table [253-0009](#) and CANSIM table [253-0010](#).

### Note to readers

The data presented in this release are drawn from the 2015 Homicide Survey, which collects police-reported information on the characteristics of all homicide incidents, victims and accused persons in Canada. The Homicide Survey began collecting information on all murders in 1961 and was expanded in 1974 to include all incidents of manslaughter and infanticide. Although details on these incidents are not available prior to 1974, counts are available from the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey and have been included in the historical aggregate totals.

There are cases where homicides become known to police months or years after they occurred. These incidents are counted in the year in which they become known to police. New information pertaining to the detailed information on homicides that have already been reported to Statistics Canada is updated annually as is information on accused persons.

Due to revisions to the Homicide Survey database, annual data reported by the Homicide Survey prior to 2014 may not match the annual homicide counts reported by the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR). Data from the Homicide Survey is appended to the UCR database each year for the reporting of annual police reported crime statistics.

Information on persons accused of homicide are only available for solved incidents (that is, where at least one accused has been identified). For incidents involving more than one accused, only the relationship between the victim and the closest accused is recorded.

For the purposes of the Homicide Survey, Aboriginal identity includes those identified as First Nations persons (either status or non-status), Métis, Inuit, or an Aboriginal identity where the Aboriginal group is not known to police. Non-Aboriginal identity refers to instances where the police have confirmed that a victim or accused person is not identified as an Aboriginal person.

As of the 2015 reporting year, police are asked to report whether victims were previously reported as missing persons prior to the discovery of their homicides. Therefore, these data are not available for homicides reported to the Homicide Survey prior to 2015.

Available in CANSIM: tables [253-0001 to 253-0010](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3315](#).

The *Juristat* article "[Homicide in Canada, 2015](#)" ([85-002-X](#)) and the infographic, "[Homicide in Canada 2015](#)" are now available. From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*, choose *All subjects*, then *Crime and justice* and *Juristat*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).