

Self-reported victimization, 2014

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In 2014, one in five Canadians 15 years and older reported that in the 12 months preceding the survey they had been the victim of at least one of the eight crimes measured by the General Social Survey (GSS). This proportion was one in four 10 years earlier.

The rate of self-reported victimization decreases for all crimes except sexual assault

The violent victimization rate, which includes sexual assault, robbery and physical assault, was 76 incidents per 1,000 people in 2014, down 28% from 2004. The household victimization rate, which includes breaking and entering, theft of motor vehicles or parts, theft of household property and vandalism, was 143 incidents per 1,000 households, down 42% from 2004. A rate of 73 thefts of personal property per 1,000 people was recorded in 2014, a decline of 21% compared with 10 years earlier.

Despite significant methodological differences between self-reported victimization data collected through the GSS, and police-reported crime data collected through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, both show similar overall trends over this 10-year period.

Victimization rates declined for almost all crimes measured. The largest declines compared with 2004 were for theft of motor vehicles (-59%), vandalism (-49%) and robbery (-39%). Sexual assault, for which the rate remained stable over this period, was the lone crime measured where there was no decline.

Manitoba posts the highest victimization rates among the provinces

Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec recorded the lowest violent victimization rates among the provinces in 2014. The largest decreases compared with 2004 were in Alberta (-51%), Nova Scotia (-40%), British Columbia (-35%) and Ontario (-27%).

In contrast, the drop in the rate of violent victimization was not statistically significant in Manitoba, the province with the highest rate of violent victimization in 2014.

Every Atlantic province and Ontario had household victimization rates below the average of all the provinces in 2014. The provinces west of Ontario had above-average rates, with Manitoba posting the highest household victimization rate.

The household victimization rate of every province decreased compared with 2004, except for Prince Edward Island and Quebec, where rates were similar to those recorded 10 years earlier.

Violent victimization rate higher for women than for men

Contrary to previous results, women reported a higher violent victimization rate in 2014 than men (85 incidents per 1,000 women compared with 67 incidents per 1,000 men). This difference was mainly attributable to the relative stability in the rate of sexual assaults, an offence mostly involving female victims, along with a decrease in the rates of other violent crimes, which mostly involved male victims.

Youth, people who use drugs or binge drink have a higher risk of violent victimization

Age was the most significant factor associated with the risk of violent victimization. The rate of violent victimization was highest among youth aged 20 to 24 years and decreased gradually with age.

Youth were more likely to report activities that could expose them to a higher risk of violent victimization, such as going out every night, using drugs or binge drinking. Even after taking these factors into account, youth had a higher risk of violent victimization, though the risk decreased approximately 3% for each additional year of age.



Canadians who reported using drugs had a rate of violent victimization four times higher than non-users (256 per 1,000 people, compared with 62 per 1,000). The rate was 436 per 1,000 among those who reported using cannabis daily and 610 per 1,000 among those who used drugs other than cannabis in the previous month.

Binge drinking, that is, five or more drinks on a single occasion, was also associated with a higher risk of violent victimization. Those who reported at least one binge drinking episode in the preceding month recorded a rate of 127 incidents per 1,000 people. That compares with a rate of 58 per 1,000 for those who reported no binge drinking episode. However, there was no increased risk associated with frequent consumption of small amounts of alcohol.

Mental health and a history of victimization during childhood are associated with the risk of violent victimization

Mental health was another factor associated with violent victimization. Overall, the rate for those who reported having a mental health-related disability or learning disability, or who self-assessed their mental health as being poor or fair was more than four times higher than for those who assessed their mental health as being excellent or very good (230 per 1,000 people compared with 53 per 1,000).

People who had been abused by an adult during childhood, meaning being slapped, pushed, hit or sexually assaulted before the age of 15, reported a rate of violent victimization in 2014 that was more than double that of those who had not been abused in childhood.

Aboriginal women are at higher risk of violent victimization

As in the past, Aboriginal people as a whole had higher victimization rates than non-Aboriginal people. The difference was particularly pronounced among women. In 2014, Aboriginal women had a rate of 115 sexual assaults per 1,000 women, compared with 35 per 1,000 non-Aboriginal women.

Certain factors associated with the risk of violent victimization were more common among Aboriginal people than the non-Aboriginal population. For example, Aboriginal people were more likely to have been victims of violence in their childhood, to have had a mental health condition, to have used drugs, or to have a history of homelessness. Aboriginal people were also, on average, younger. While these factors explained the higher rates among Aboriginal men, they only partially explained the higher rates among Aboriginal women.

One in seven victims of violent crime report symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress

Most victims of violent crime had emotional reactions as a result of the incident, most often anger. In 2014, one in seven victims of violent crime reported experiencing long-term effects consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Among household crimes, robbery was the most likely to have an emotional or psychological impact. Nearly 1 in 10 victims of robbery reported experiencing long-term effects consistent with suspected post-traumatic stress disorder.

Financial loss was the most common consequence of household crime. Most incidents (81%) led to a loss and nearly one in five (19%) involved losses of \$1,000 or more.

One-third of criminal victimization incidents are reported to the police

Just under one-third (31%) of victimization incidents were brought to the attention of the police, a slightly smaller proportion than 10 years earlier (34%). Specifically, 28% of violent crimes, 36% of household crimes and 29% of thefts of personal property were reported to the police.

Overall, the more serious the incident or the greater the resulting loss, the more likely the police were notified. For example, incidents resulting in injury (45%), those involving a weapon (53%) or those resulting in a financial loss of \$1,000 or more (70%) were more likely to be reported to the police.

Sexual assault was an exception, however. Although it was the most serious crime measured by the survey, only 5% of sexual assaults were reported to the police, a proportion relatively similar to that posted in 2004.

Table 1
Victimization incidents reported by Canadians, by type of offence

	2004		2014	
	number in thousands	rate ¹	number in thousands	rate ¹
Total violent victimization	2,751	106	2,245	76
Sexual assault	546	21	633	22
Robbery	274	11	190	6
Physical assault	1,931	75	1,422	48
Total household victimization	3,206	248	2,029	143
Breaking and entering	505	39	441	31
Theft of motor vehicles / motor vehicle parts	571	44	261	18
Theft of household property	1,136	88	766	54
Vandalism	993	77	561	40
Theft of personal property	2,408	93	2,154	73

1. Rates of violent victimization and theft of personal property are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 years and older. Rates of household victimization are calculated per 1,000 households.

Source(s): General Social Survey on Victimization (4504).

Table 2
Victimization incidents reported by Canadians, by province

	Total violent victimization		Total household victimization	
	2004	2014	2004	2014
	rate ¹			
Canada	106	76	248	143
Newfoundland and Labrador	87	55	127	90
Prince Edward Island	78	93	158	110
Nova Scotia	157	94	232	111
New Brunswick	116	76	169	86
Quebec	59	59	147	135
Ontario	112	82	233	128
Manitoba	139	108	403	210
Saskatchewan	134	104	406	183
Alberta	160	79	331	177
British Columbia	108	71	376	167

1. Rates of violent victimization and theft of personal property are calculated per 1,000 population aged 15 years and older. Rates of household victimization are calculated per 1,000 households.

Source(s): General Social Survey on Victimization (4504).

Note to readers

The data on victimization presented in this Juristat article were collected in the General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, which aims to provide data on the personal experiences of Canadians with respect to eight types of crime.

The GSS is a household survey conducted every five years; the most recent cycle was conducted in 2014. The target population of the survey comprised people 15 years of age and older in the provinces, except people living full time in institutions. In 2014, 33,127 respondents took part in the survey. The GSS on Victimization was also conducted in the territories, and the results of that survey will be released at a later date.

Statistics Canada also collects information on crime in the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, which is an annual census of all violations of the Criminal Code and certain other federal laws that come to the attention of the police and that the police have substantiated. Although the two surveys cover similar themes, they have numerous differences in terms of survey type, scope, coverage and data sources.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [4504](#).

The Juristat article "[Criminal victimization in Canada, 2014](#)" ([85-002-X](#)) is now available. From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*, choose *All subjects*, then *Crime and justice* and *Juristat*.

Data for cycle 28 of the General Social Survey on Victimization are now available upon request.

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) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).