



January 2025

## Police-reported youth crime statistics in Canada, 2023

This fact sheet summarizes the latest available data on measures of police-reported youth crime from Statistics Canada's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey, which collects information on criminal incidents that have been reported to police services in Canada.

Measures of police-reported youth crime are based on the number of youth, aged 12 to 17, who came in contact with the police as a result of a reported criminal incident, and were either charged (or recommended for a charge), or were cleared by other means (including being diverted from the formal criminal justice system through the use of extrajudicial measures).<sup>1</sup> Two measures of police-reported youth crime were examined in this fact sheet:

- the police-reported youth crime rate (hereafter referred to as youth crime rate), which combines the per capita rate of youth charged with a criminal offence<sup>2</sup> by police (or recommended for a charge) and the rate of youth cleared by other means (i.e., not charged); and,
- the Youth Crime Severity Index (CSI), which measures both the volume and severity of crime involving youth who come in contact with the police (charged and not charged).

### Youth crime rate rises for the second year in a row

From 2022 to 2023, the youth crime rate increased 13%, from 2,571 per 100,000 youth population to 2,898 per 100,000. This is the second consecutive yearly increase in the youth crime rate, adding to a 19% increase in 2022, from 2,163 per 100,000 youth population in 2021. Prior to the increases in 2022 and 2023, the youth crime rate had been generally trending downwards for almost two decades, from a rate of 7,280 per 100,000 youth population in 2003 to 2,163 per 100,000 in 2021, representing a 70%

<sup>1</sup> Extrajudicial measures (EJMs) are alternate means to charging youth with a criminal offence and include: taking no further action (i.e., police officer decides no further response to an incident is required); verbal warnings; written cautions; referrals to community programs; and, referrals to an extrajudicial sanctions program (most formal type of EJM due to their potential legal consequences).

<sup>2</sup> *Criminal Code* offences excluding traffic.

decreased over this time period (see Figure 1). This longstanding decrease coincides with the implementation of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA) in 2003.

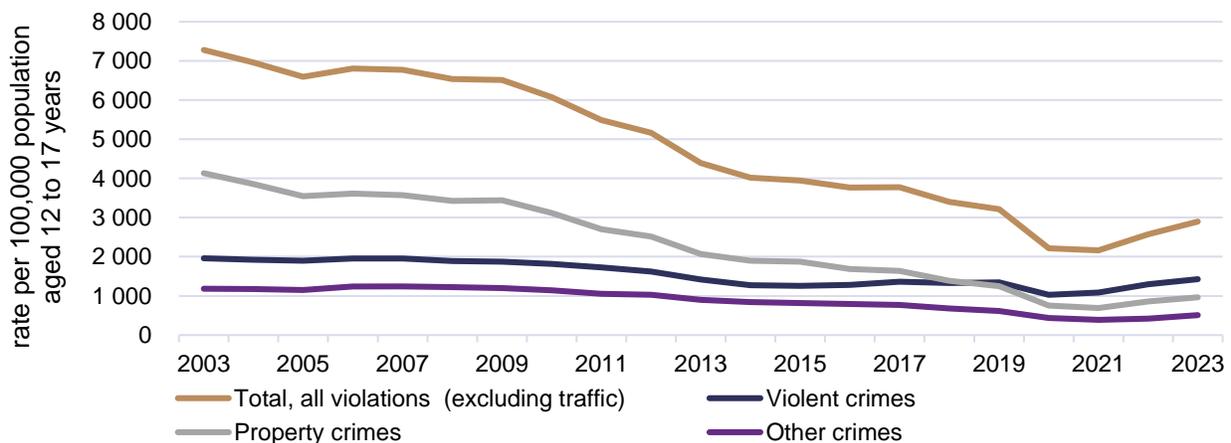
### Youth violent crimes, property crimes, and other *Criminal Code* offences all increased in 2023, while federal statute violations decreased

From 2022 to 2023, increases in the rate of youth crime were observed for most offence categories including violent crimes (+10%), property crime (+13%), and other *Criminal Code* offences (+20%). However, the rate of youth crime for federal statute violations<sup>3</sup> decreased 36%.

### Youth crime rate increased in almost all provinces and territories in 2023, with the exception of a decrease in the Northwest Territories

From 2022 to 2023, almost all provinces and territories saw increases in their respective youth crime rates; Prince Edward Island (+100%), Yukon (+51%), Newfoundland and Labrador (+21%), Ontario (+19%), Nunavut (+17%), Saskatchewan (+17%), and Nova Scotia (+16%) had some of the highest increases, while Quebec (+11%), Manitoba (+8%), British Columbia (+8%), New Brunswick (+5%) and Alberta (+4%) showed smaller increases. The Northwest Territories was the only jurisdiction that observed a decrease (-27%).

**Figure 1. Youth crime rate, Canada, 2003 to 2023**



**Source:** Statistics Canada. [Table 35-10-0177-01 Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, Canada, provinces, territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Canadian Forces Military Police](#)

<sup>3</sup> Other federal statute offences refer to offences against Canadian federal statutes, such as *Customs Act*, *Employment Insurance Act*, *Firearms Act*, *Food and Drugs Act* (FDA), *Income Tax Act*, *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA) and *Narcotic Control Act* (NCA).

## Youth CSI rises for the second year in a row

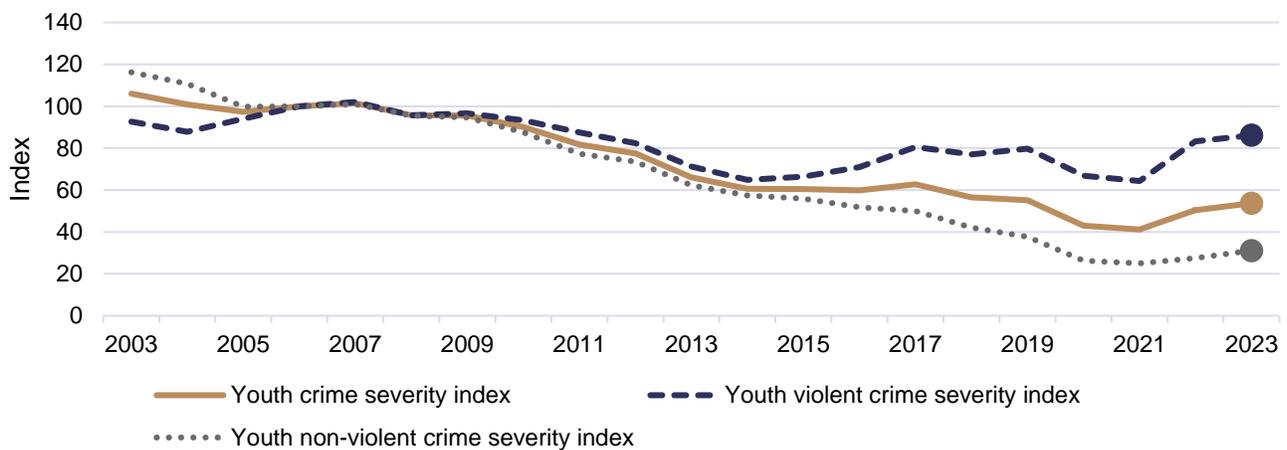
In 2023, the Youth CSI increased by 7%, from 50.40 in 2022 to 53.74 in 2023. Similar to the youth crime rate, this is the second consecutive yearly increase in Youth CSI, adding to a 22% increase in 2022, from 41.18 in 2021. Prior to these increases, the Youth CSI had generally been on a downward trajectory since 2003, when it was recorded at 106.03. The only exception to this decline occurred in 2017, when the index saw a 5% increase, rising from 59.89 in 2016 to 62.68 in 2017. This was followed by a return to a gradual decrease until the recent increases in 2022 and 2023 (see Figure 2).

## Rise in Youth CSI driven by increase in non-violent crimes

The 2023 increase in the Youth CSI was largely attributed to a 13% increase in the Youth Non-Violent CSI—from 27.53 in 2022 to 31.10 in 2023—which was driven by increases in motor vehicle theft (+30%), fraud (+16%) and breaking and entering (+8%).

Similarly, the Youth Violent CSI also saw a 4% increase, from 83.19 in 2022 to 86.18 in 2023, which was primarily attributed to increases in other assaults<sup>4</sup> (+46%), sexual assault level 2<sup>5</sup> (+41%), firearm offences<sup>6</sup> (+29%), and robbery<sup>7</sup> (+27%). Homicide, which is the most serious offence in Canada, was not a major contributor to the 2023 increase in Youth Violent CSI.

**Figure 2: Youth CSI, Youth Violent CSI and Youth Non-Violent CSI, Canada, 2003 to 2023**



**Source:** Statistics Canada. [Table 35-10-0026-01 Crime severity index and weighted clearance rates, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas](#)

<sup>4</sup> Other assault offences include assault unlawfully causing bodily harm, criminal negligence causing bodily harm, administering noxious thing, overcoming resistance to commission of offence, interfering with transportation facilities, torture, and assaulting a peace officer.

<sup>5</sup> Sexual assault level 2 includes sexual assault with a weapon, threats to a third party or causing bodily harm.

<sup>6</sup> Firearm offences include discharge of firearm with intent, using firearm in commission of offence, and pointing a firearm.

<sup>7</sup> Robbery offences include robbery to steal a firearm.

## All provinces and territories recorded increases in their respective Youth CSI in 2023; small decreases in the Youth Violent CSI were observed in Quebec and Saskatchewan, and Nunavut for the Non-Violent CSI

From 2022 to 2023, all provinces and territories saw increases in their respective Youth CSI; Prince Edward Island (+172%), the Yukon (+76%), Newfoundland and Labrador (+49%), New Brunswick (+17%) had some of the highest increases, while Nova Scotia (+10%), British Columbia (+9%), Northwest Territories (+9%), Nunavut (+7%), Ontario (+6%), Quebec (+5%), Alberta (+4%), Manitoba (+2%) and Saskatchewan (+2%) showed smaller increases.

Both the Youth Violent CSI and the Youth Non-Violent CSI also increased in most provinces and territories during this time. For the Youth Violent CSI, increases were observed in Prince Edward Island (+192%), Yukon (+115%), Newfoundland and Labrador (+70%), Nunavut (+21%), New Brunswick (+17%), Nova Scotia (+14%), British Columbia (+10%), Northwest Territories (+6%), Ontario (+4%), Manitoba (+1%) and Alberta (+1%). Small decreases were observed in Quebec (-1%) and Saskatchewan (-1%).

For the Youth Non-Violent CSI, increases were observed in Prince Edward Island (+143%), Yukon (+26%), Newfoundland and Labrador (+17%), New Brunswick (+16%), Quebec (+15%), Ontario (+14%), Alberta (+13%), Northwest Territories (+13%), Saskatchewan (+9%), British Columbia (+8%), Manitoba (+7%) and Nova Scotia (+3%). Only Nunavut observed a decrease in Youth Non-Violent CSI (-4%).

## Despite the 2022 and 2023 increases, the youth crime rate and the Youth CSI remain lower than pre-pandemic levels (2019)

Despite the increases in volume and severity of youth crime from 2022 to 2023, the youth crime rate and the Youth CSI remain lower than pre-pandemic levels. In 2019, the youth crime rate was 3,213 per 100,000 youth population compared to 2,898 per 100,000 in 2023 (see Figure 1). In 2019, the Youth CSI was 55.10 compared to 53.74 in 2023 (see Figure 2).

The changes in the volume and severity of crime in recent years may be partly explained by various factors such as social and economic contexts, events, and movements that may have impacted the number and types of crime being committed and/or reported. Ongoing monitoring of these data will be needed to determine if this is indicative of new emerging trend in youth crimes.