

# Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2010

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According to police-reported data, about 99,000 Canadians were victims of family violence in 2010. Of these, almost 50% were committed by their spouse.

An additional 17% were committed by a parent, 14% by an extended family member, 11% by a sibling and 9% by a child, usually a grown child.

Unlike other forms of violent crime, the risk of becoming a victim of family violence was more than twice as high for females as for males.

The main factor behind this increased risk was related to the higher representation of women as victims of spousal violence. In 2010, women aged 15 and older accounted for 81% of all victims of police-reported spousal violence.

## Rate of family violence lowest in Ontario

Family violence rates at the provincial and territorial level generally followed the same pattern as overall crime. Ontario recorded the lowest rate of police-reported family violence in 2010, followed by Prince Edward Island. The territories, Saskatchewan and Manitoba reported the highest rates.

Rates of police-reported family violence were available for the first time for census metropolitan areas. In 2010, rates were highest in Saint John, Saskatoon and Kelowna. The lowest rates were all reported in Ontario: Ottawa, Peterborough, St. Catharines–Niagara, Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo and Guelph.

## Dating violence more prevalent than spousal violence

In 2010, police reported approximately 48,700 victims of spousal violence.

Dating violence, while not included in a definition of family violence, is examined alongside spousal violence in the context of intimate partner violence. In 2010, police reported about 54,100 victims of dating violence aged 15 and over.

Including both spousal and dating violence, police reported almost 103,000 victims of intimate partner violence in 2010.

The rate per 100,000 population of dating violence was over 65% higher than the rate of spousal violence. This was the case for both men and women.

In 2010, there were 65 homicides committed by a spouse and 24 by a dating partner. The rate of intimate partner homicides has been dropping for the past 20 years. This decline was most pronounced for female victims.

According to results from the 2009 General Social Survey on Victimization, spousal victims of violent crime were more likely than other victims to report being first victimized as a child. This was true for both physical and sexual assault victims.

## Increase in children witnessing spousal violence

In 2009, over half (52%) of spousal victims with children reported that their children heard or saw assaults on them in the previous five years. This was up from 43% in 2004, the last time the General Social Survey on Victimization was conducted.

Children were more likely to witness violence when the spousal victim was female. The likelihood of children witnessing violence was also heightened when the spousal victim was estranged from their partner.



Spousal assaults witnessed by children also tended to be more severe compared with assaults where children were not present. For example, spousal victims reporting the presence of children were more than twice as likely as other spousal victims to state they had been injured.

The involvement of police was nearly four times higher when children had witnessed spousal violence. Further, the use of social services was more than twice as high among spousal violence victims who reported that children had seen or heard the violence.

**Note to readers**

*Each year since 1998, as part of the larger federal Family Violence Initiative, Statistics Canada has released a report on "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile."*

*Within this article, family violence includes violence committed by spouses, parents, children, siblings, and extended family members. Dating violence is not included in this definition of family violence but is examined alongside spousal violence in the context of intimate partner violence. Dating partners include current or former boyfriends or girlfriends and other intimate partners aged 15 years and older.*

*Results are based on police-reported data from the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey and the Homicide Survey, as well as self-reported data from the General Social Survey on Victimization.*

**Table 1**  
**Victims of police-reported family violence, by province and territory, 2010**

	Victims of family violence	
	number	rate per 100,000 population
<b>Canada</b>	<b>98,957</b>	<b>294</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	1,604	316
Prince Edward Island	330	234
Nova Scotia	2,472	264
New Brunswick	2,384	319
Quebec	26,037	333
Ontario	25,413	196
Manitoba	5,104	430
Saskatchewan	6,534	644
Alberta	13,010	351
British Columbia	13,574	302
Yukon	290	842
Northwest Territories	1,073	2,455
Nunavut	1,132	3,409

**Note(s):** Excludes incidents where the sex or age of the victim was unknown and where the relationship between the victim and the accused was unknown.

**Table 2**  
**Victims of police-reported family violence, by census metropolitan area, 2010**

Census metropolitan area (CMA)	Victims of family violence	
	number	rate per 100,000 population
<b>Canada</b>	<b>98,957</b>	<b>294</b>
Saint John	430	420
Saskatoon	945	351
Kelowna	613	346
Abbotsford–Mission	566	325
Gatineau <sup>1</sup>	977	320
Brantford	418	317
Regina	688	317
Montréal	12,083	315
Thunder Bay	369	311
Saguenay	436	301
Québec	2,148	288
Trois-Rivières	427	288
Edmonton	3,230	275
Moncton	348	257
St. John's	463	250
Greater Sudbury	404	247
Vancouver	5,292	223
Victoria	786	222
Halifax	876	218
Winnipeg	1,637	211
Calgary	2,596	209
Toronto	10,409	202
Kingston	314	197
Hamilton	1,003	189
Barrie	257	186
London	883	186
Windsor	554	184
Sherbrooke <sup>2</sup>	342	184
Guelph	225	182
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	930	179
St. Catharines–Niagara	775	176
Peterborough	206	172
Ottawa <sup>3</sup>	919	98

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

2. The 2010 data for the Sherbrooke CMA are estimates based on 2009 data because of the unavailability of data in 2010.

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

**Note(s):** Excludes incidents where the sex or age of the victim was unknown and where the relationship between the victim and the accused was unknown.

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers 3302, 3315 and 4504.**

The *Juristat* article "[Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2010](#)" (85-002-X, free) is now available. The focus of this article is the comparative analysis of family violence incidents and other forms of violent crime. It also includes analysis of family violence overall, intimate partner violence, family violence against children and youth, and family violence against seniors.

From the *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 Statistics Canada's National Contact Centre (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 613-951-8116; [infostats@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)) or the Media Hotline (613-951-4636; [mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca)).