

# Adult criminal court statistics, 2010/2011

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Adult criminal courts in Canada completed nearly 403,000 cases in 2010/2011, involving about 1.2 million charges. The caseload was virtually the same as the previous year following three consecutive annual increases.

Provincially, the number of cases completed in adult courts declined in British Columbia (-7%), Alberta (-6%) and Quebec (-6%). These declines were offset by increases elsewhere, including Saskatchewan (+5%) and Ontario (+2%).

Most cases completed in adult criminal courts involve non-violent offences, mirroring crime trends in general. In 2010/2011, 77% of all cases completed involved property, administration of justice, traffic or other non-violent *Criminal Code* offences, or federal statute offences such as drug offences. Violent offences accounted for the remaining 23%.

Among completed cases, the most commonly occurring offences were impaired driving, which represented 12% of the total, theft (11%), common assault (9%), failure to comply with a court order (9%), and breach of probation (8%).

Cases in adult criminal court tend to involve a disproportionate number of young adults. While those aged 18 to 24 represented 12% of the adult population in Canada, this age group accounted for 30% of all those accused in adult criminal court.

About two-thirds of adult criminal court cases completed in 2010/2011 resulted in a finding of guilt, consistent with previous years.

The most common type of sentence imposed in adult criminal courts was probation, handed down in 45% of all guilty cases. The median length of probation in 2010/2011 was 365 days in nearly every province and territory.

In 2010/2011, one-third (33%) of guilty adult criminal court cases resulted in a sentence to custody, which has generally been the case for the past decade. Sentences to custody were most often imposed by courts in Prince Edward Island (63%) and least often in Nunavut (23%).

The majority (86%) of custodial sentences were for a term of six months or less. About 4% of guilty cases in 2010/2011 resulted in a sentence to federal custody of two years or more.

The median length of time taken to complete an adult criminal court case in 2010/2011 fell for the second year in a row. The median time to case completion dropped to 118 days, down from the peak of 128 days in 2004/2005, though still higher than a decade earlier when it was 101 days.

## Note to readers

*The data presented in this article are drawn from the adult portion (people 18 years and older) of the Integrated Criminal Court Survey and represent approximately 95% of the caseload completed in Canadian adult criminal courts. In 2010/2011, information was unavailable from superior courts in Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan as well as municipal courts in Quebec (which accounted for about one-quarter of all Criminal Code charges in that province). Adult criminal court cases that involve more than one charge are represented by the most serious offence.*



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**Available without charge in CANSIM: tables 252-0053, 252-0056, 252-0059, 252-0061 and 252-0063.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3312.**

The *Juristat* article "[Adult criminal court statistics in Canada, 2010/2011](#)" (85-002-X, free) is now available. From the *Key resource* module of our website under *Publications*, choose *All subjects*, then *Crime and justice*, and *Juristat*.

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