

Police-reported crime in Canada's Provincial North and territories, 2013

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Police-reported crime statistics consistently show that levels of crime in the territories are higher than in the rest of Canada, but there has been little information available on police-reported crime in the Provincial North.

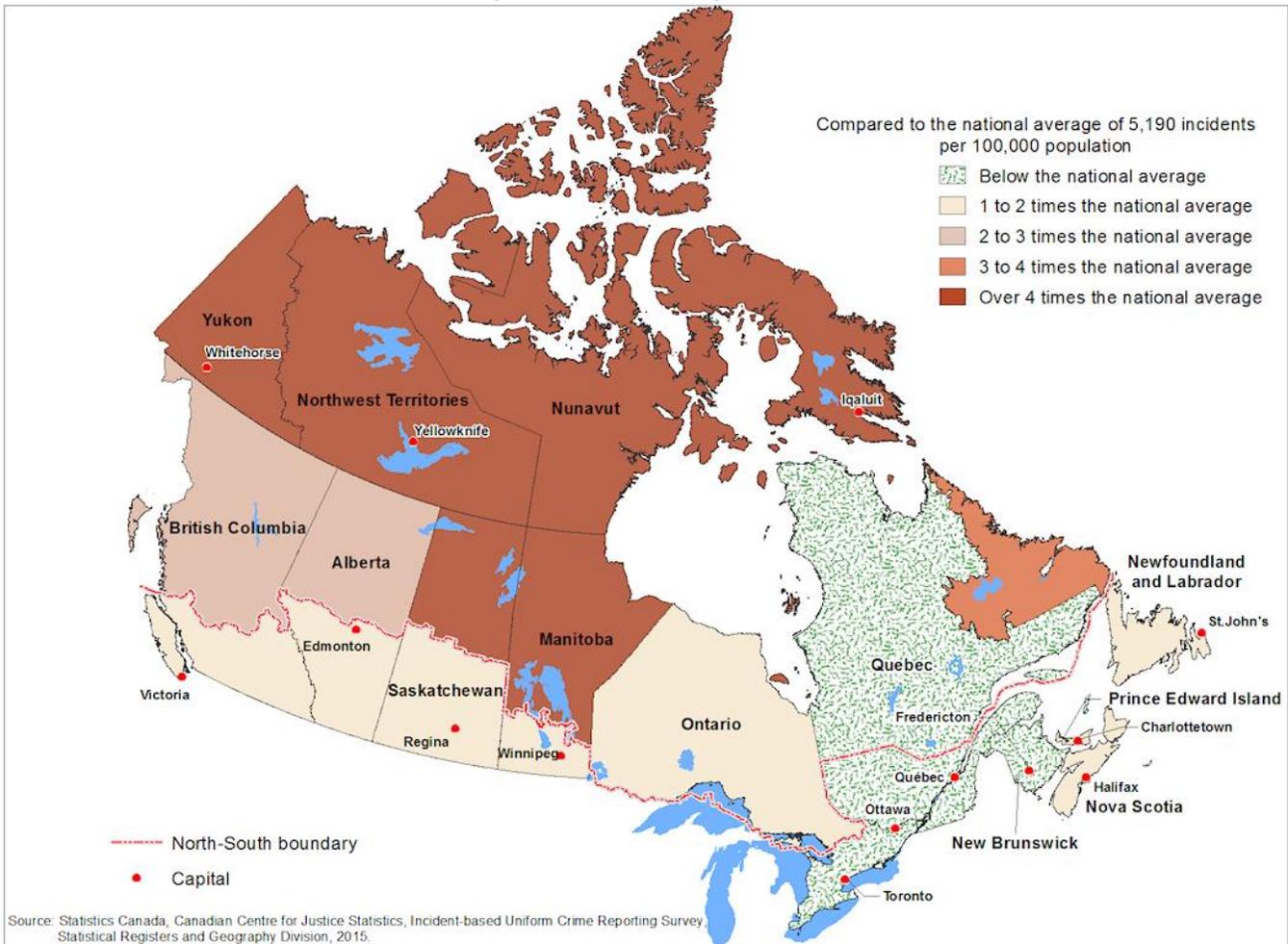
A new study examining police-reported crime in both the territories as well as in the Provincial North found that the northern regions of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador all report higher crime rates than their southern counterparts. The police-reported crime rate was twice as high in the Provincial North than in the South (10,425 incidents per 100,000 population). For the territories, the rate was seven times that of southern provincial regions (34,594 compared with 4,749 in the South).

Neither the territories nor the northern regions of the provinces are home to large proportions of Canada's population. For example, the territories account for 0.3% of the Canadian population, but reported 2% of all police-reported criminal incidents in 2013. About 6% of Canadians live in the northern provincial regions, but these areas accounted for 12% of police-reported criminal incidents in 2013.

In 2013, there was substantial variation in police-reported crime rates across the Provincial North and territories, and this variation in crime levels was greater than the variation among the southern regions. It is important to note that there is also substantial variation in various social, demographic and economic characteristics across the North.



Map 1 – Police-reported crime rate by north-south region



Northern Saskatchewan had the highest police-reported crime rate among the northern regions (54,978 incidents per 100,000 population). The Northwest Territories (45,763), Nunavut (32,345), and northern Manitoba (31,225) also had notably high levels of crime, followed by Yukon (23,523) and northern Newfoundland and Labrador (19,368).

Some northern regions had relatively low levels of police-reported crime. For example, the lowest level of police-reported crime was in northern Quebec (4,404 incidents per 100,000 population), where the crime rate was lower than the rate for Canada (5,190) overall. Northern Ontario (6,290) also reported a relatively low crime rate. In fact, both northern Ontario and northern Quebec reported crime rates at levels similar to or lower than those reported in the southern parts of the western provinces.

As in the South, the majority of police-reported criminal incidents in the Provincial North and territories were non-violent (about 80% in all three regions). However, the nature of non-violent crime in the Provincial North and territories was quite different from non-violent crime in the South.

Mischief and disturbing the peace were the most commonly reported offences in the Provincial North and territories, accounting for 36% of all police-reported crime in the Provincial North and 60% of crime in the territories. This compares with 18% in the South. Together, mischief and disturbing the peace explain much of the difference in overall police-reported crime rates between North and South.

With the exceptions of robbery and extortion, police-reported crime rates for all types of violent crime were higher in the Provincial North and the territories relative to the South.

As in the South, the most frequent violent offence reported by police in the Provincial North and territories was common assault, which represented 53% of all violent crime in the territories and 47% in the Provincial North in 2013. This compares with 40% of violent incidents in the South.

The rates of more serious levels of assault (assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm and aggravated assault) were also higher in the Provincial North (361 incidents per 100,000 population) and territories (844) relative to the South (122). Police-reported crime rates were also higher in the North for sexual assault and sexual violations against children, as well as for criminal harassment, uttering threats and threatening or harassing phone calls.

Northern populations tended, on average, to be slightly younger than in the South. In 2011, the proportion of the population less than 18 years old was 23% in the Provincial North and 28% in the territories compared with 20% in the South.

While youth in the Provincial North and territories (aged 12 to 17) were more likely to be accused of violent crime than in the South, the magnitude of the difference between the North and the South was not as great as it was for older age groups. Rates of youth accused of police-reported violent crime were four times higher in the territories and two times higher in the Provincial North relative to the South.

Rates of violent offending among all adult age groups between 19 and 54 were significantly greater in the North relative to the South, with adult rates of violent crimes per 100,000 population about nine times higher in the territories and about three times higher in the Provincial North than in the South.

Furthermore, a larger proportion of adults (25 and older) in the North were involved in offences typically attributed to youth in the South. For example, mischief, a crime frequently perpetrated by youth and young adults (under age 25) in the South, was more likely to be perpetrated by adults (over the age of 25) in the Provincial North and territories.

Table 1
Police-reported crime rate, by province and territory and by north-south region, 2013

	South	North	Total
	crime rate (total) per 100,000 population		
Canada	4,749	11,674	5,190
Total provinces	4,749	10,425	5,093
Newfoundland and Labrador	5,204	19,368	5,955
Prince Edward Island	5,854	...	5,854
Nova Scotia	5,632	...	5,632
New Brunswick	4,813	...	4,813
Quebec	3,833	4,404	3,861
Ontario	3,512	6,290	3,678
Manitoba	6,062	31,225	7,967
Saskatchewan	9,114	54,978	10,644
Alberta	6,300	13,140	7,018
British Columbia	7,050	12,711	7,454
Total territories	...	34,594	34,594
Yukon	...	23,523	23,523
Northwest Territories	...	45,763	45,763
Nunavut	...	32,345	32,345

... not applicable

Source(s): Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (3302).

Note to readers

This release is based on a Juristat article that uses data from the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey to examine the nature and extent of police-reported crime in the Provincial North and territories, compared with police-reported crime in the South. The analysis focuses on types of crime and characteristics of the accused and victims in these different regions.

For this analysis, the **North** is broadly defined as the three territories and the northern regions of Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia (the Provincial North). **South** refers to the southern regions of these provinces as well as Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

This definition of the North is defined as a variant of the 2011 Standard Geographical Classification (SGC). The definition of the North is the one used by the Conference Board of Canada's Centre for the North, based on the Northern Development Ministers Forum definition. In this definition, North is based on provincially determined definitions that generally reflect administrative regions.

For more information on the definition of the North and Provincial North, see [North and South – Variant of SGC 2011 – Definition of classes](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3302](#).

The Juristat article "Crime in the Provincial North and Territories, 2013" ([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*.

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