

Firearms and violent crime in Canada, 2016

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Thursday, June 28, 2018

Violent *Criminal Code* offences accounted for about one in every five crimes that came to the attention of police in 2016; of these, a firearm was present in about 3% of incidents. In recent years, firearm-related crime has been increasing—while most other types of crime have been on the decline.

A *Juristat Bulletin—Quick Fact* "[Firearms and violent crime in Canada, 2016](#)" is now available, and provides information on recent trends in police-reported violent crime involving firearms.

Rate of police-reported firearm-related violent crime down from 2009, but up by one-third since 2013

Firearm-related crime has been increasing over the past three years, while other types of crime have been on the decline. In 2016, there were about 7,100 victims of violent crime where a firearm was present. This resulted in a rate of 25 victims of firearm-related violent crime for every 100,000 Canadians, a rate 33% higher than that reported in 2013 (19 per 100,000). Over the same period, the rate of overall police-reported violent crime declined by 4%.

Since 2013, every reporting jurisdiction except Nova Scotia, Nunavut and British Columbia saw an increase in the number and rate of victims of firearm-related violent crime.

Despite the increases since 2013, the rate of firearm-related violent crime in 2016 was slightly lower than that reported by police in 2009. In 2009, police reported about 7,300 victims of violent crime involving a firearm, resulting in a rate of 29 victims per 100,000 population.

Most firearm-related violent crime involves handguns

More than half (60%) of firearm-related violent crimes involved handguns in 2016, followed by rifles or shotguns (18%) and other types of firearms (4%), such as fully automatic firearms or sawed-off rifles or shotguns. The remaining 18% involved a firearm-like weapon (such as a pellet gun or a flare gun) or an unknown type of firearm.

Rates of firearm-related violent crime similar in rural areas and urban areas

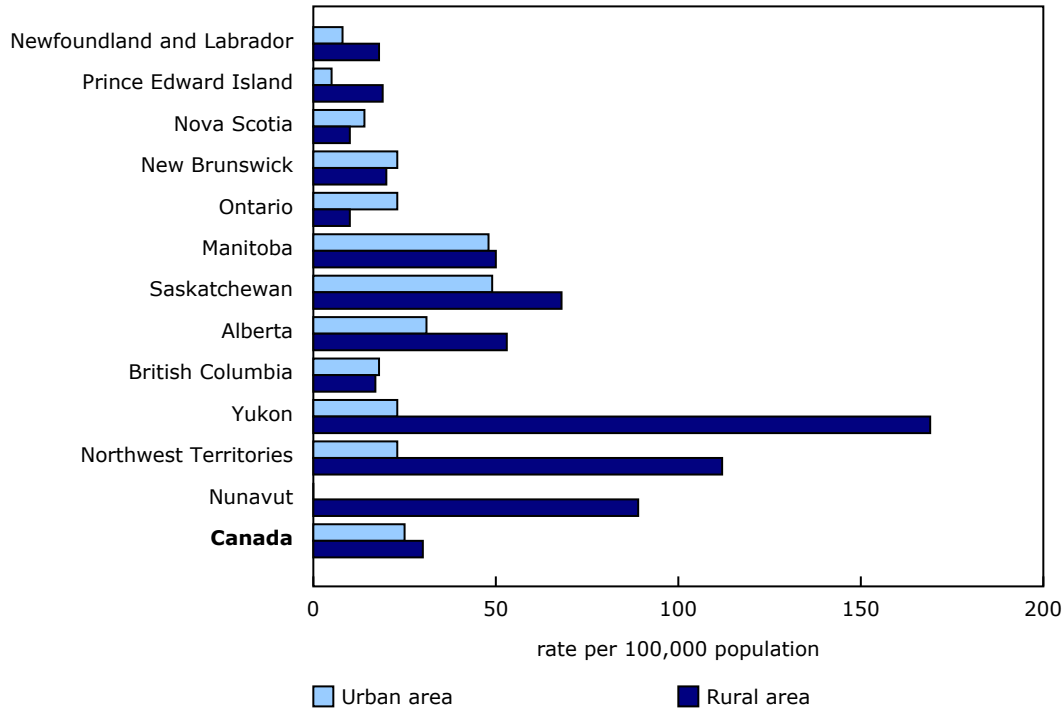
Rates of firearm-related violent crime are similar between urban and rural areas. There were 30 victims of firearm-related violent crime for every 100,000 residents of a rural area in Canada, compared with 25 per 100,000 residents living in an urban area. While the rates were comparable, in terms of volume, 8 in 10 victims of firearm-related violent crime in 2016 lived in an urban area.

Ontario, New Brunswick, British Columbia and Nova Scotia had higher rates of firearm-related violent crime in their urban areas than in their rural areas, while the rates were virtually equal in Manitoba. Among the provinces, Saskatchewan (68 victims per 100,000 population) and Alberta (53 per 100,000) had the highest rates in rural areas.



Chart 1

Victims of police-reported firearm-related violent crime, by province and territory and urban-rural area, 2016



Note(s): There are no urban areas in Nunavut. Excludes Quebec due to a large proportion of cases where the most serious weapon present was reported as unknown. Urban areas include police services where at least half of the population policed is located within a census metropolitan area (CMA) or a census agglomeration (CA). All police services which do not meet this criteria are coded as rural. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000. A census agglomeration must have a core population of at least 10,000.

Source(s): Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Overall, violent crime tends to be higher in Canada's northern regions, a trend which was also evident for firearm-related crime. The rate of firearm-related violent crime in the provincial north and the territories was close to double what was reported in the south (46 victims per 100,000 compared with 24 per 100,000).

Note to readers

This release is based on a Juristat Bulletin—Quick Fact that presents information on police-reported firearm-related violent crime in Canada. This report is based on data drawn from the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey, an annual census of all crime known to and substantiated by police services.

This report includes information on firearm-related violent crime reported by police services through the UCR Survey. All results exclude the province of Quebec due to a large proportion of incidents where the most serious weapon present was reported as unknown.

In the UCR Survey, firearms are categorized into five groups: fully automatic firearms, sawed-off rifles or shotguns, handguns, rifles or shotguns, and firearm-like weapons or unknown types of firearm. Firearm-like weapons include all weapons that do not meet the Criminal Code definition of a firearm and that are capable of propelling any object through a barrel by means of gunpowder, CO2 (compressed carbon dioxide), or pumped air, such as flare guns, pellet guns, or starter's pistols.

Information on short- and long-term trends in homicides committed with the use of a firearm was previously released in "[Homicide in Canada, 2016](#)."

For information on Canada's justice system, see "[Overview of the Adult Criminal Justice System](#)."

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers 3302, 3312 and 3315.

The *Juristat Bulletin—Quick Fact* article "[Firearms and violent crime in Canada, 2016](#)" ([85-005-X](#)) is now available.

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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca).