

# Female offenders in Canada, 2017

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Overall, females account for a smaller proportion of offenders in Canada and the types of offences they commit are often less serious in nature relative to their male counterparts. For example, females are more often accused of property crime than violent crime. A greater understanding of crimes committed by females can inform criminal justice policies and programs.

New data from the *Juristat* article released today, "Female offenders in Canada, 2017," provide insights into the kinds of crimes of which females are accused, the age of offenders, case outcomes, and the rate for female offenders by province and territory.

## Females account for one in four people accused of police-reported crime

In 2017, there were more than 942,000 accused identified in a criminal offence, according to police-reported data (this number could include individuals who were accused in more than one incident). Of this number, one in four (25%) was a woman or girl—a proportion that did not vary much between the provinces and territories.

Similar to males, the territories recorded the highest rates for female offenders in the country: Nunavut (26,009 per 100,000 females), the Northwest Territories (21,847 per 100,000) and Yukon (10,375 per 100,000). Among the provinces, rates were highest in Saskatchewan (4,763 per 100,000 females) and Manitoba (3,426 per 100,000).

## Property crime is the most common offence committed by females, especially youth

About 211,000 females were accused of committing a *Criminal Code* offence (excluding drug violations and other federal statute violations) in 2017, with almost 4 in 10 (39%) accused of a property crime. Among females, the rate of property crime offences was highest for girls aged 12 to 17, and declined as age increased.

For property offences, females were most often accused of shoplifting \$5,000 and under; mischief; and theft of \$5,000 and under—relatively minor crimes. Of note, the same was true for their male counterparts.

## Violent crime less prevalent among females, physical assault most common violent offence

Among females accused of a crime in 2017, nearly one-quarter (24%) were accused of a violent crime, with the majority (70%) of these related to physical assault (levels 1, 2 and 3). In comparison, the proportion of males accused of a violent offence was slightly higher (28%).

Fewer females were accused of sexual offences, accounting for 3% of people accused of sexual assault and 4% of those accused of a sexual violation against a child.

When it came to the relationship between the victim and accused, the victims of female violent crime were most often an intimate partner (36%) or a casual acquaintance (22%). Fewer victims were strangers (12%), a proportion slightly lower than for victims of male offenders (15%).

## Relatively few completed adult criminal court cases involve a female accused

About one-fifth of cases completed in adult criminal court in 2015/2016 involved a female accused, similar to youth court cases (19%).

About half of property crime cases involving an adult female accused resulted in a guilty decision, compared with about two-thirds (65%) of cases involving a male accused. For females, court cases involving fraud were the most likely to result in a guilty verdict (61%).



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Violent crime cases involving a female accused were more likely to be stayed or withdrawn (51%) than to receive a guilty verdict (40%). By comparison, over half of cases involving a male accused resulted in a guilty decision (52%), while a smaller percentage (38%) were stayed or withdrawn.

While violent offence cases involving an adult male accused more often resulted in a guilty verdict than cases involving a female accused, this was not the case for sexual assaults, where females (45%) were slightly more likely to be found guilty than males (44%).

Females were about half as likely (22%) as males (39%) to be sentenced to custody for violent crimes. Instead, they were more likely to receive a monetary fine or another type of sentence such as absolute or conditional discharge, a suspended sentence or community service.

#### **Note to readers**

*The Juristat article "[Female offenders in Canada, 2017](#)" uses data from the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, the Homicide Survey, the General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) and the Integrated Criminal Courts Survey. It presents the most current data on the nature and extent of female offending in Canada, as well as trends over time.*

#### **Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3302](#), [3312](#), [3315](#) and [4504](#).**

The article "[Female offenders in Canada, 2017](#)" is now available as part of the publication *Juristat* ([85-002-X](#)).

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; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).