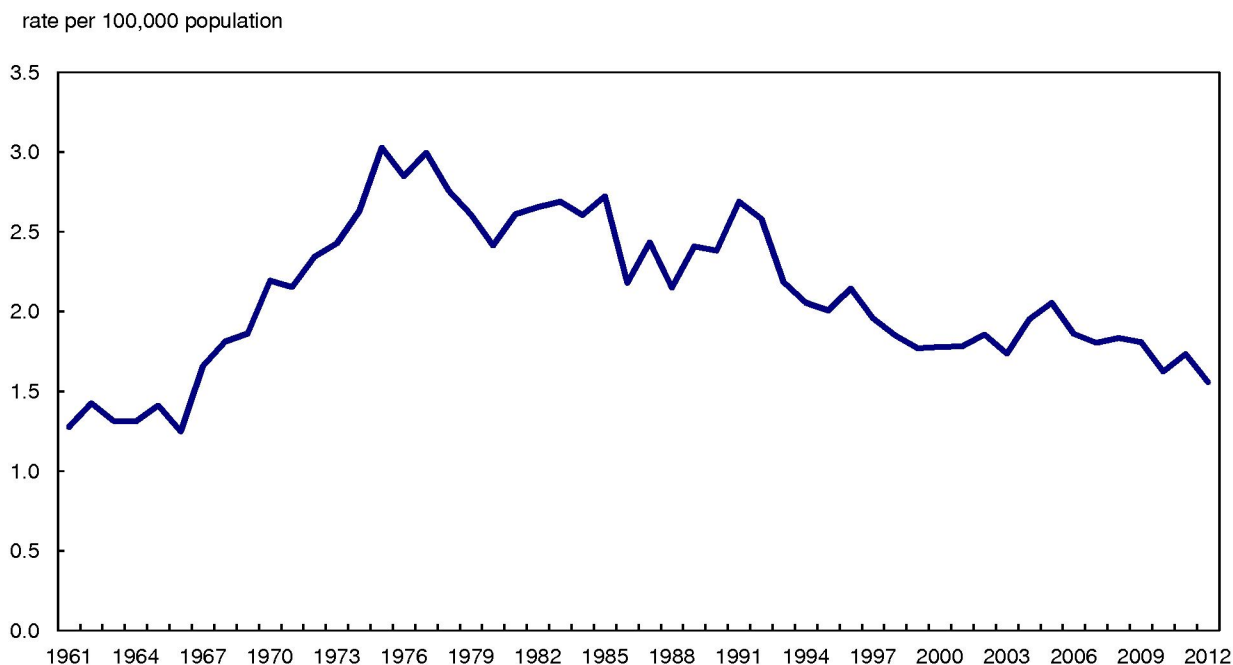


# Homicide in Canada, 2012

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Thursday, December 19, 2013

Police recorded 543 homicides in Canada in 2012, 55 fewer than the previous year. The homicide rate in 2012 was 1.56 victims per 100,000 population, down 10% from 2011 and the lowest homicide rate recorded since 1966.

**Chart 1**  
**Homicides, Canada, 1961 to 2012**



The majority of the decrease in homicides in 2012 was accounted for by three provinces: Alberta (-24), British Columbia (-16) and Saskatchewan (-9), which, combined, accounted for 49 fewer homicides. Quebec (+3), the Northwest Territories (+2) and Ontario (+1) were the only provinces and territory to report an increase in the number of homicides in 2012.

Despite declines, homicide rates were typically highest in the western and northern parts of the country. In 2012, the homicide rate was highest in Nunavut (14.84 per 100,000 population). Among the provinces, Manitoba continued to record the highest homicide rate at 4.10 per 100,000 population, followed by Saskatchewan (2.69 per 100,000 population). The homicide rate in British Columbia (1.54 per 100,000 population) was the lowest rate recorded in the province since data collection began in 1961, and for the first time, the province's rate was similar to the national rate.

Among census metropolitan areas (CMAs), Thunder Bay, with seven homicides in 2012, reported the highest homicide rate in 2012, followed by Winnipeg, Regina and Halifax. For the second year in a row, both Moncton and Kingston recorded no homicides; Guelph, Brantford and St. John's also had no homicides in 2012.



---

## Firearm-related homicides increase in 2012, despite overall decline

Despite an overall decrease in the number of homicides committed in 2012, fatal shootings increased from 158 victims in 2011 to 172 victims in 2012. Even though the number of shootings increased in 2012, the rate of firearm-related homicides remained among the lowest in almost 50 years. As has been the case for the past 20 years, handguns continued to account for the majority (65%) of homicides involving firearms in 2012.

In contrast, there were 40 fewer fatal stabbings in 2012, down from 204 victims in 2011 to 164 victims in 2012.

Shootings (33%) and stabbings (31%) were the most common methods used to commit homicide in 2012. For the first time since data became available in 1997, there were no homicides from Shaken Baby Syndrome in 2012.

## Gang-related homicides unchanged in 2012 from previous two years

Police considered 95 homicides to be gang-related in 2012, unchanged from the previous two years. The rate of gang-related homicide remained stable for the third year in a row at 0.27 victims per 100,000 population. Prior to this, gang-related homicides had generally been increasing since the early 1990s, until peaking in 2008.

Saskatchewan reported the highest rate of gang-related homicide in 2012, nearly triple the national rate. Among CMAs, the rate of gang-related homicide was highest in Saskatoon, followed by Thunder Bay and Regina.

In 2012, three-quarters of gang-related homicides were committed using a firearm. The majority (68%) of gang-related homicides in 2012 had ties to the illegal drug business, typically cocaine. Most gang-related homicides were motivated by a settling of accounts (70%) or financial gain (14%).

## Most victims knew their killer

Homicide victims typically knew their killer. Among solved homicides in 2012, 84% of homicide victims were killed by someone they knew, usually an acquaintance or a family member. The number of homicides committed by strangers decreased slightly from 2011 to 2012, resulting in the lowest rate of homicide committed by a stranger in more than 40 years.

## Intimate partner homicides stable in 2012

Police reported 82 intimate partner homicides in 2012, with the majority (83%) involving a female victim. The rate of intimate partner homicide in 2012 was consistent with rates recorded over the previous five years. Rates of intimate partner homicide continued to be higher for females than males, regardless of the age group.

Of the intimate partner homicides in 2012, just under one-half (46%) were committed by a current or former legally married spouse, while about one-quarter (27%) were committed by a current or former common-law partner. The remainder of intimate partner homicides were committed by either some other type of intimate partner such as a current or former dating partner (22%), or a same-sex partner (5%).

## Fewer youth accused of homicide

Of those accused of homicide in 2012, 7%, or 34 accused persons, were youth (12 to 17 years). There were fewer homicides committed by both male and female youth in 2012 than the previous year. The rate of youth accused of homicide decreased to 1.42 per 100,000 youth population in 2012, the lowest rate in over a decade.

In 2012, the rate of female youth accused of homicide reached its lowest point in more than 40 years, while the rate for male youth accused was at its lowest point in about a decade. The rate of youth accused of homicide remained higher for male youth than female youth.

**Note to readers**

The data presented in this article are drawn from the 2012 Homicide Survey, which collects police-reported information on the characteristics of all homicide incidents, victims and accused persons in Canada. The Homicide Survey began collecting information on all murders in 1961 and was expanded in 1974 to include all incidents of manslaughter and infanticide. Although details on these incidents are not available prior to 1974, counts are available from the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey and have been included in the historical aggregate totals.

There are cases where homicides become known to police months or years after they occurred. These incidents are counted in the year in which they become known to police.

Information on persons accused of homicide are only available for solved incidents (that is, where at least one accused has been identified). For incidents involving more than one accused, only the relationship between the victim and the closest accused is recorded.

Intimate partner homicides include solved homicides committed by spouses or dating partners, either in current or former relationships. The Homicide Survey does not currently collect information on the legal status of same-sex unions, therefore homicides committed by a same-sex partner include current and former legal spouses (married or common-law), as well as other intimate relationships.

**Table 1  
Homicides, by province and territory, 2011 and 2012**

	2011		2012	
	number	rate <sup>1</sup>	number	rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>1.73</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>1.56</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	4	0.78	3	0.59
Prince Edward Island	1	0.69	0	0.00
Nova Scotia	22	2.32	17	1.79
New Brunswick	8	1.06	6	0.79
Quebec	105	1.32	108	1.34
Ontario	161	1.20	162	1.20
Manitoba	53	4.23	52	4.10
Saskatchewan	38	3.59	29	2.69
Alberta	109	2.89	85	2.19
British Columbia	87	1.90	71	1.54
Yukon	0	0.00	0	0.00
Northwest Territories	3	6.79	5	11.53
Nunavut	7	20.86	5	14.84

1. Rates are calculated per 100,000 population.

**Table 2**  
**Homicides, by census metropolitan area, 2011 and 2012**

	2011		2012	
	number	rate <sup>1</sup>	number	rate <sup>1</sup>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>1.73</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>1.56</b>
Census metropolitan area, total	392	1.63	354	1.45
Non-census metropolitan area, total	206	1.96	189	1.79
<b>Census metropolitan area</b>				
Thunder Bay	4	3.32	7	5.81
Winnipeg	39	4.92	33	4.09
Regina	7	3.15	7	3.06
Halifax	18	4.40	12	2.90
Saguenay	1	0.69	4	2.74
Edmonton	50	4.17	33	2.68
Abbotsford–Mission	1	0.56	4	2.24
Saskatoon	6	2.16	6	2.08
Gatineau <sup>2</sup>	5	1.60	6	1.90
Peterborough	3	2.47	2	1.65
Kelowna	2	1.10	3	1.63
London	9	1.81	8	1.59
Vancouver	43	1.77	37	1.50
Calgary	14	1.10	19	1.45
Saint John	3	2.04	2	1.36
Toronto	86	1.48	80	1.36
Trois-Rivières	1	0.67	2	1.32
Montréal	54	1.38	47	1.19
Victoria	6	1.66	4	1.10
Oshawa	0	0.00	4	0.99
Barrie	1	0.50	2	0.99
Hamilton	7	0.95	7	0.94
Windsor	1	0.30	3	0.90
Québec	3	0.39	6	0.78
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	7	1.32	4	0.75
Ottawa <sup>3</sup>	11	1.16	7	0.73
St. Catharines–Niagara	2	0.45	3	0.67
Greater Sudbury	0	0.00	1	0.61
Sherbrooke	1	0.52	1	0.52
St. John's	4	2.11	0	0.00
Moncton	0	0.00	0	0.00
Kingston	0	0.00	0	0.00
Brantford	2	1.42	0	0.00
Guelph	1	0.79	0	0.00

1. Rates are calculated per 100,000 population.

2. Gatineau refers to the Quebec part of the Ottawa–Gatineau census metropolitan area.

3. Ottawa refers to the Ontario part of the Ottawa–Gatineau census metropolitan area.

**Available in CANSIM: tables 253-0001 to 253-0007.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3315.**

The *Juristat* article "Homicide in Canada, 2012" (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*.

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