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Juristat

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics



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HOMICIDE IN CANADA, 2001

by Mia Dauvergne

Highlights

- There were 554 homicides in Canada in 2001, 8 more than the previous year. The national homicide rate remained relatively stable for the third consecutive year at 1.78 homicides per 100,000 population. This rate has gradually been decreasing since the mid-1970s.
- As has generally been the case historically, homicide rates were higher in the west than in the east in 2001. Among the provinces, Manitoba recorded the highest rate (2.96 homicides per 100,000 population) followed by Saskatchewan (2.66). The lowest rates were found in Newfoundland & Labrador (0.19), Nova Scotia (0.95) and New Brunswick (1.06).
- Among the nine largest metropolitan areas, Winnipeg (2.77) reported the highest homicide rate followed by Edmonton (2.61), while Ottawa (0.36) and Québec (0.72) reported the lowest rates. For the 17 midsize and smaller metropolitan areas, Regina (3.53) and Sudbury (3.19) recorded the highest rates, while Sherbrooke, with zero homicides, had the lowest.
- Most homicides are committed by someone known to the victim. In 2001, 87% of solved homicides were committed by an acquaintance or a family member, while the remaining 13% were committed by a stranger. Almost two-thirds of multiple-victim homicides, as well as 9 in 10 murder-suicides, were family-related.
- Although family-related homicides, including spousal homicides, rose in 2001, the numbers remained similar to the average over the previous ten years. The largest increase was among victims who were killed by their husbands – 69 wives were killed in 2001, 17 more than in 2000.
- Among solved homicides in 2001, almost one in four victims were killed by a person with whom they had an intimate relationship at one point in time, either through marriage or dating. Intimate partners killed 52% of all female victims and 8% of all male victims.
- There were 30 youths accused of committing homicide in 2001, 22 fewer than the average over the past decade. This figure represents the lowest number of youths accused since 1969 and the lowest rate since 1971.
- Gang-related killings (62) declined in 2001 from the previous year, yet continued to account for one in nine homicide victims. The number of gang-related murders had more than tripled from 22 in 1991 to the peak of 72 in 2000.
- Firearms continued to be the weapon used in about one-third of all homicides in 2001, with handguns used in almost two-thirds of all shootings. Stabbings comprised the same proportion of homicides as firearms, while beatings were the cause of death in 22% of homicides.
- In 2001, two-thirds of persons accused of homicide and half of all homicide victims 12 years and over had a Canadian criminal record. The majority of these persons had been previously convicted of a violent offence.



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INTRODUCTION

Results from recent studies such as the 2000 International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS)¹ suggest that, relative to other countries, most Canadians feel safe from being a victim of crime. A high proportion of Canadians (83%) reported that they felt safe when walking alone in their area after dark or when home alone at night. Findings from the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS)² indicate that many Canadians perceive crime as having stabilized over the past five years and feel less fearful of being a victim of crime in their neighbourhoods compared to 1993, lending further support to the results from the ICVS. Police-reported crime statistics are consistent with these survey results, reflecting nine consecutive years of decline between 1992 and 2000. However, data for 2001 indicate that the overall crime rate in Canada, as well as the violent crime rate, increased by 1% from the previous year.³

Using data collected from the Homicide Survey,⁴ this *Juristat* examines long and short-term trends for the most serious violent crime – homicide. Detailed information is reported on the characteristics of homicide incidents, victims and accused. Homicide statistics are presented at the national, provincial/territorial and census metropolitan area levels.

In Canada, criminal homicide is classified as first degree murder, second degree murder, manslaughter or infanticide (see Glossary section for definitions). Deaths caused by criminal negligence, suicide, and accidental or justifiable homicide are not included in this classification.

GENERAL TRENDS

Homicide rate remains stable in 2001

Homicide is a relatively rare occurrence in Canada. The 554 homicides reported in 2001 (eight more than the previous year) accounted for 0.02% of the 2.5 million *Criminal Code* incidents reported to police. By comparison, there were approximately 700 attempted murders, 27,000 robberies, 250,000 assaults and over one million property offences.

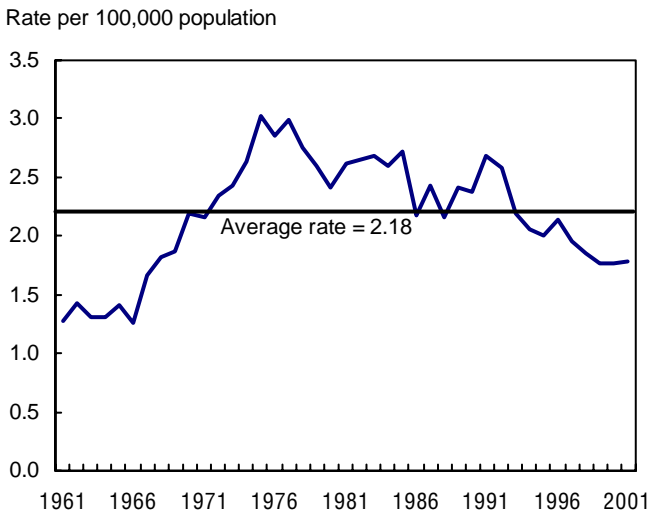
Since 1961, when national homicide statistics were first collected, there have been two distinct trends. After several years of stability, the homicide rate more than doubled, from 1.25 per 100,000 population in 1966 to a peak of 3.03 in 1975. Since 1975, despite yearly fluctuations, the homicide rate gradually declined until the late 1990s when the rate showed signs of stabilization at 1.8 homicides per 100,000 population. In 2001, the homicide rate was 1.78, 41% lower than in 1975 (Figure 1).

The number of homicide incidents reported in 2001 also remained stable from the previous year. There were a total of 515 incidents, one less than in 2000 and considerably lower than the preceding 10-year average of 575. As has been the case historically, the incident count in 2001 was lower than the victim count due to cases that involved more than one victim.

¹ For more information on results from the International Crime Victimization Survey, see Besserer, S. (2002). "Criminal Victimization: An International Perspective". *Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE. Vol. 22, no. 4. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.*
² For more information on results from the General Social Survey, see Besserer, S. and C. Trainor. (2000). "Criminal Victimization in Canada, 1999". *Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE. Vol. 20, no. 10. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.*
³ Savoie, J. (2002). "Canadian Crime Statistics – 2001". *Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE. Vol. 22, no. 6. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.*
⁴ For more information on the Homicide Survey see the Methodology section at the end of this report.

Figure 1

 **Homicide Rate, 1961-2001**



Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Homicides rise in the United States

During the 90s, the crime rate as well as the homicide rate decreased in both Canada and the United States.⁵ However, according to preliminary figures for 2001, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported that the number of major crimes in the United States rose by 2.0% from the previous year, ending a decline in violence that had resulted in the lowest crime levels in a generation.⁶ The increase included a 3.1% rise in the number of homicides reported by police departments nationwide. There were about 16,000 homicides reported in 2001 (excluding the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks), representing a rate of about 5.6 per 100,000 population. Had the deaths resulting from the terrorist attacks been included, the number of homicides would have increased by 26% from 2000.

Although the 2001 homicide rate in Canada was three times lower than the U.S. rate, it was still higher than some European countries, such as Norway and Germany (Table 1). In 2001, Canada's homicide rate was the same as the rate in France.⁷

GEOGRAPHICAL PATTERNS IN HOMICIDE

Provincial homicide rates decline or remain stable

The overall decline in the national homicide rate since the mid-1970s reflects general declines experienced in many provinces during that period. However, rates in the Atlantic provinces have remained relatively constant over the past 25 years. Rates in the western provinces, while generally higher than the national rate, have been gradually declining.

Table 1

 **Homicide Rates for Selected Countries, 2001**

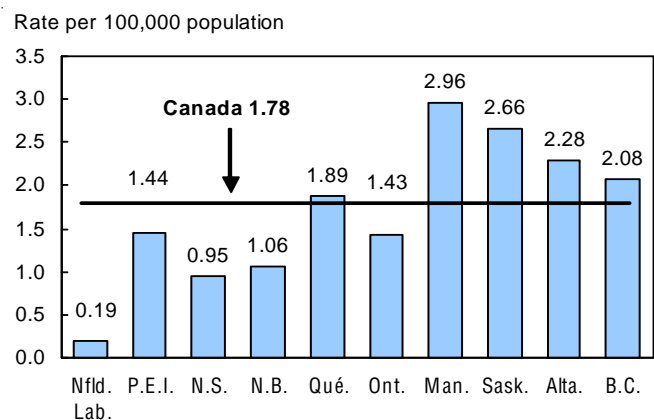
Country	Homicide rate per 100,000 population
Russia	21.13
United States	5.64
Finland	2.98
Hungary	2.48
Austria	1.93
Sweden	1.87
France	1.78
Canada	1.78
England & Wales	1.66
Ireland	1.60
Germany	1.05
Norway	0.81

Source: National Central Bureau - Interpol Ottawa.

Historically, homicide rates in the western provinces have been consistently higher than rates in the east. This continued to be the case in 2001 (Figure 2). Among the provinces, Manitoba recorded the highest rate (2.96 homicides per 100,000 population), followed by Saskatchewan (2.66). The lowest rates were reported in Newfoundland and Labrador (0.19), Nova Scotia (0.95) and New Brunswick (1.06).

Figure 2

 **Homicide Rates by Province, 2001**



Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

⁵ For more information on crime comparisons between Canada and the U.S., see Gannon, M. (2001). "Crime comparisons between Canada and the U.S." Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol. 21, No. 11. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

⁶ U.S. Department of Justice. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Press Release. June 24, 2002.

⁷ Information provided by the National Central Bureau - Interpol Ottawa.

Half of the provinces reported decreases in the number of homicides in 2001 – Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Québec (Table 2). The largest decline was reported in Québec, where there were 10 fewer homicides compared to 2000. The decrease in Nova Scotia from 15 homicides in 2000 to 9 in 2001 resulted in the lowest rate (0.95) in that province since 1963. The number of homicides reported in British Columbia⁸ remained unchanged from the previous year, and the rates in

2000 and 2001 were the lowest since 1964. The largest increase in the number of reported homicides was in Ontario (up by 14 from 2000), resulting in a 7% rise in the rate compared to 2000, but still lower than the previous ten-year average. The number of homicides reported in Alberta also rose (up by 11 from 2000) with a rate increase of nearly 17% between 2000 and 2001.

⁸ Homicide investigations in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia are on-going and have yet to be reported by police to CCJS.

Table 2

Province/Territory	2001 ¹		2000 ^{2r}		Average 1991-2000	
	Number	Rate ³	Number	Rate ³	Number	Rate ³
Newfoundland and Labrador	1	0.19	6	1.12	6	1.01
Prince Edward Island	2	1.44	3	2.17	1	0.89
Nova Scotia	9	0.95	15	1.59	19	2.06
New Brunswick	8	1.06	10	1.32	11	1.45
Québec	140	1.89	150	2.03	148	2.04
Ontario	170	1.43	156	1.34	189	1.72
Manitoba	34	2.96	30	2.62	32	2.86
Saskatchewan	27	2.66	26	2.54	26	2.53
Alberta	70	2.28	59	1.96	65	2.35
British Columbia	85	2.08	85	2.09	113	3.01
Yukon	1	3.35	2	6.54	2	5.19
Northwest Territories	4	9.79	1	2.44	4	8.76
Nunavut	3	10.65	3	10.94	...	...
CANADA	554	1.78	546	1.77	616	2.10

... figures not appropriate or not applicable

^r revised

¹ The following number of homicides were reported and included in 2001 but occurred in previous years: Québec - 3; Ontario - 7; Manitoba - 2; TOTAL - 12.

² The following number of homicides were reported and included in 2000 but occurred in previous years: Nova Scotia - 1; New Brunswick - 1; Ontario - 3; Saskatchewan - 1; TOTAL - 6.

³ Rates are calculated per 100,000 population.

Population estimates at July 1st, provided by Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Territories: a homicide profile

Although the actual number of homicides in the territories each year is very low, the corresponding rate can be quite high due to the relatively small populations in these areas. As such, minor changes in the actual number of homicides can result in large fluctuations in the rate. Homicide rates in the Territories have usually been higher than those in the provinces (Tables 10 and 11).

On April 1st, 1999, Nunavut officially became a Canadian territory. The table below shows homicide statistics for the period 1992 to 2001 according to the current boundaries. Although populations in the three territories are lower than 100,000, rates are based on this number for comparability purposes with provincial figures.

Homicide Numbers and Rates¹ in Territories, 1992-2001

Territory	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	number									
Nunavut	2	3	3	1	2	1	4	2	3	3
NWT (excludes Nunavut)	11	4	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	4
Yukon	2	0	3	4	0	1	3	1	2	1
	rate									
Nunavut	8.71	12.68	12.25	3.99	7.77	3.85	15.14	7.45	10.94	10.65
NWT (excludes Nunavut)	27.89	10.03	2.46	4.82	4.78	4.79	2.44	2.44	2.44	9.79
Yukon	6.61	0.00	9.98	12.95	0.00	3.10	9.52	3.22	6.54	3.35

Note: Rates for 1997-2000 have been revised.

¹ Rates per 100,000 population.

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Homicide is not only an urban phenomenon

Crime, particularly homicide, is often considered to be an urban phenomenon. In 2001, however, the homicide rate for areas of less than 100,000 population was 1.95, higher than the rate for Canada's census metropolitan areas (CMAs) as a whole (1.69). Historical data show that the homicide rate for non-CMA areas has typically been similar to, or lower than, the rate for CMAs.

Table 3 divides the CMAs into three population categories. The first category includes the largest CMAs, with populations of 500,000 and over. Historically, these CMAs have tended to show the highest homicide rates. This trend held true in 2001, with the nine CMAs having a combined rate of 1.83. Winnipeg reported the highest rate (2.77), followed by Edmonton (2.61), Montreal (2.22) and Vancouver (2.12). Ottawa, with only 3 homicides in 2001, reported its lowest rate (0.36) since 1984, followed by Québec with 5 homicides (0.72). Toronto, Canada's largest metropolitan area, recorded a rate (1.60) that was below the national rate and its previous 10-year average.

Table 3

Census Metropolitan Area	2001 ¹			2000 ^{2r}			Average 1991-2000 ³	
	Population	Number	Rate ⁴	Population	Number	Rate ⁴	Number	Rate ⁴
500,000+ population								
Toronto	4,881,392	78	1.60	4,763,232	81	1.70	80	1.84
Montreal	3,511,845	78	2.22	3,474,915	75	2.16	83	2.45
Vancouver	2,078,824	44	2.12	2,058,736	42	2.04	55	2.95
Calgary	971,532	15	1.54	947,344	16	1.69	17	2.00
Edmonton	956,805	25	2.61	941,788	19	2.02	24	2.66
Ottawa ⁵	844,969	3	0.36	828,557	8	0.97	12	1.53
Québec	693,064	5	0.72	690,521	12	1.74	11	1.57
Winnipeg	684,778	19	2.77	682,090	17	2.49	18	2.64
Hamilton	680,561	13	1.91	672,173	10	1.49	12	1.85
Total	15,303,770	280	1.83	15,059,356	280	1.86	311	2.20
250,000 - 499,999 population								
Kitchener	431,696	6	1.39	423,200	8	1.89	6	1.49
St. Catharines-Niagara	393,083	5	1.27	390,874	4	1.02	7	1.70
London	426,307	6	1.41	422,131	2	0.47	5	1.18
Halifax	359,186	3	0.84	355,874	8	2.25	8	2.44
Victoria	318,796	4	1.25	317,145	7	2.21	6	2.06
Windsor	313,838	3	0.96	306,795	6	1.96	7	2.38
Oshawa	305,308	1	0.33	298,893	2	0.67	4	1.35
Hull ⁶	261,981	2	0.76	257,514	2	0.78	4	1.41
Total	2,810,195	30	1.07	2,772,426	39	1.41	46	1.73
100,000 - 249,999 population								
Saskatoon	230,517	1	0.43	230,979	7	3.03	6	2.82
Regina	198,125	7	3.53	199,276	7	3.51	5	2.42
St. John's	176,163	1	0.57	175,817	3	1.71	3	1.42
Sudbury	156,714	5	3.19	158,126	1	0.63	4	2.27
Sherbrooke	154,865	0	0.00	153,623	4	2.60	2	1.34
Chicoutimi-Jonquière	158,740	1	0.63	160,486	4	2.49	1	0.73
Saint John	128,058	1	0.78	127,730	1	0.78	2	1.87
Trois-Rivières	141,535	1	0.71	141,644	4	2.82	2	1.41
Thunder Bay	124,581	3	2.41	125,833	1	0.79	4	2.88
Total	1,469,298	20	1.36	1,473,514	32	2.17	29	1.94
CMA TOTALS	19,583,263	330	1.69	19,305,296	351	1.82	386	2.11
< 100,000 population	11,498,624	224	1.95	11,464,373	195	1.70	230	2.06
CANADA	31,081,887	554	1.78	30,769,669	546	1.77	616	2.09

^r revised

¹ The following number of homicides were reported and included in 2001 but occurred in previous years: Québec - 1; Trois-Rivières - 1; Toronto - 1; Hamilton - 2; Winnipeg - 1; Areas < 100,000 6; TOTAL - 12.

² The following number of homicides were reported and included in 2000 but occurred in previous years: St. John - 1; Toronto - 1; Hamilton - 1; St. Catharines-Niagara - 1; Areas < 100,000 2; TOTAL - 6.

³ The CMA boundaries change at each census as the population increases and the commuting patterns expand from the urban core. Data presented in this CMA table represent more than one census period. Data from 1991 to 1995 are based on 1991 census boundaries. Data from 1996 to the most current year are based on 1996 census boundaries.

⁴ Rates are calculated per 100,000 population.

Population estimates at July 1st, provided by Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.

⁵ Ottawa refers to the Ontario part of the Ottawa-Hull CMA.

⁶ Hull refers to the Quebec part of the Ottawa-Hull CMA.

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) are large urban cores (population of 100,000 and over) together with adjacent urban and rural areas which have a high degree of economic and social integration. The areas that police forces serve may differ in their mix of urban/suburban populations, making the comparability of crime rates among these forces difficult. This lack of comparability is addressed by analyzing crime rates by CMA. Usually, more than one police force is responsible for enforcing the law within the boundaries of a CMA.

The second CMA category is comprised of the midsize CMAs with populations of 250,000 to 499,999. For the year 2001, the eight mid-sized CMAs had the lowest combined rate (1.07). London reported the highest homicide rate (1.41), followed closely by Kitchener (1.39), while Oshawa, with only one homicide, reported the lowest rate (0.33). The rate in Halifax (0.84) was at its lowest point since 1983 and Victoria (1.25) reported its lowest rate since 1991.

The third CMA category, comprised of the nine smallest metropolitan areas with populations from 100,000 to 249,999, reported a combined rate of 1.36. Regina (3.53) reported the highest rate followed by Sudbury (3.19) and Thunder Bay (2.41). All other CMAs in this group reported rates below 1.00 per 100,000 population. The lowest rates were reported in Sherbrooke, which had zero homicides, followed by Saskatoon (0.43), which reported its lowest rate since 1981 when CMA data were first tabulated. It should be noted that because of their small populations, even minor fluctuations in the number of homicides for the cities in this CMA group can greatly affect their homicide rates.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMICIDE INCIDENTS

Half of all homicides are first degree murders

With the abolition of capital punishment in 1976 (Bill C-105), murder was categorized into first and second-degree. In 2001, half (50%) of all homicides were classified by police as first degree murder, 41% as second degree murder, 8% as manslaughter, and less than 1% (3 cases) as infanticide.⁹

The classification of homicide offences in this report is based upon initial police investigation. In the transition period from initial police investigation of the accused to final court disposition, the legal classification of an incident may change; however, this change may not be reflected in this report.

Most multiple-victim homicides are family-related

Multiple-victim homicides tend to receive more attention from the media and public than single-victim homicides. In 2001, the vast majority (94%) of the 515 homicide incidents involved a single victim, while the remaining 6% (31) were multiple-victim incidents. The number of multiple-victim incidents was up by 7 from 2000 but identical to the previous ten-year average. There were 26 incidents involving two victims, three incidents with three victims, one incident with four victims and one incident with five victims, culminating in a total of 70 victims. Among those multiple-victim incidents where an accused was identified (24 of the 31 incidents), most (63%) involved the killing of at least one family member (i.e., an immediate or extended family member related by blood, marriage or

adoption). The majority of both victims (63%) and accused persons (88%) involved in multiple-victim homicides were male. A disproportionate number of multiple-victim homicides occurred in the province of Québec in 2001 (42% compared to 24% of total incidents).

Most murder-suicides are family-related

In 2001, 41 incidents (representing 8% of all homicide incidents) involving 54 victims were murder-suicides, up by 12 incidents from the previous year but close to the average number of 42 incidents over the past decade. All but two of the accused who committed suicide at the time of the incident in 2001 were male, and all but one incident involved a lone accused.

The vast majority of murder-suicide incidents in 2001 (85% or 35 incidents) involved the killing of at least one family member (i.e., an immediate or extended family member related by blood, marriage or adoption). Of those that were family-related, 83% (29 incidents) involved a man killing one or more family members (either his spouse and/or children). Four incidents involved a son killing his parent(s); one incident involved a mother killing her child; and, one incident involved both a mother and father killing their child.

The six murder-suicide incidents that were non-family related occurred as a result of a dispute or an angry or jealous episode between lovers, neighbours or friends/acquaintances.

It is important to point out that there is some overlap between incidents of murder-suicide and those that involve multiple victims. In 2001, there were nine multiple-victim homicides where the accused person subsequently committed suicide.

Gang-related homicides decline in 2001 but remain much higher than the early 1990s


In recent years, investigations by the police and the justice community on the involvement of organized criminal groups in crime (e.g. homicides perpetrated by motorcycle gang members fighting over control of the drug market) have gained widespread attention by the media and the public. Between 1991 and 1997, police reported an average of 22 gang-related homicides¹⁰ each year. Between 1998 and 2001, the number of such homicides almost tripled, to an average of 58 victims each year (Table 4). Although gang-related murders decreased from 72 in 2000 to 62 in 2001, they still accounted for one out of every nine homicide victims. Since 1991, Québec has accounted for half to two-thirds of the national volume of gang-related incidents; however, in 2001, this proportion decreased to just over one-third (37%) due to a rise in the number of incidents in Ontario (Table 5).

In 2001, two-thirds (67%) of all gang-related incidents involved drug trafficking or the settling of accounts (e.g. debts owing or "turf wars"). The remainder primarily involved disputes or vengeful acts between gang members or rivals. Firearms were used as the method of homicide in about three-quarters (74%) of all gang killings.

⁹ See *Glossary of Terms* for definitions of criminal homicide.

¹⁰ *Gang-related homicides include those that are reported by police to have occurred as a result of gang activities and/or gang membership (e.g. motorcycle gangs, street gangs, youth gangs or organized crime families/groups).*

Table 4




Gang-related Homicides, by Type, Canada, 1991-2001

Year	Gang-related incidents			Total number of incidents	Total number of victims	Gang-related incidents as a % of all homicide incidents
	Drug-related	Settling of accounts	Other motives			
	number					
1991	9	4	7	20	22	2.8
1992	9	6	4	19	19	2.8
1993	8	2	2	12	13	2.0
1994	15	6	2	23	24	4.1
1995	8	2	9	19	21	3.4
1996	21	3	2	26	29	4.5
1997 ^r	8	7	13	28	29	5.2
1998 ^r	18	17	13	48	51	9.1
1999 ^r	19	13	12	44	45	8.7
2000 ^r	34	22	9	65	72	12.6
2001	24	16	20	60	62	11.7
Average 1991-1997	11	4	6	21	22	3.6
Average 1998-2001	24	17	14	54	58	10.5

^r revised

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Table 5



Gang-related Incidents, by Region, 1991-2001

Region	Year										
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	number										
Atlantic	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	3	0
Québec	12	10	7	13	11	13	16	29	30	35	22
Ontario	4	3	3	4	0	3	2	5	5	9	18
Prairies	2	0	1	1	4	4	3	6	5	9	9
British Columbia	2	6	1	4	4	5	6	7	4	9	11
Territories	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CANADA	20	19	12	23	19	26	28	48	44	65	60

^r revised

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Drug-related homicides remain stable

Many homicides are motivated by drugs or drug dealing, not just gang-related homicides. Excluding gang-related incidents in 2001, 45 incidents (10%) were related to the illegal drug business, about the same number as the previous year and similar to the average of 47 between 1991 and 2000. Of the 50 victims of drug-related (non-gang-related) homicides in 2001, 27 were reported by the police to be drug dealers.

Three in four homicide incidents solved by police

During 2001, the police solved 77% of the 515 reported homicide incidents through the identification of at least one accused. Over the past ten years, this proportion has fluctuated between 75% and 85%. Since the process of solving a homicide can sometimes be complex and time-consuming, an incident may not be solved until after the year in which it was initially recorded. Therefore, these data for 2001 may underestimate final police clearance rates.

Of those homicide incidents cleared by police in 2001, 89% were cleared by a charge being laid or recommended and 10% by the accused having committed suicide immediately following the offence. The remaining 1% (3 cases) were cleared for the following reasons: the police exercised departmental discretion due to the unique circumstances of the incident; the Crown chose not to proceed due to the mental condition of the accused; and, the accused person died in police custody.

Six in ten homicides occur in residences

Of the 510 homicide incidents with a known location (5 were unknown) in 2001, six in ten (59%) took place in a private residence, three-quarters (73%) of which were in a residence occupied by the victim (either solely or jointly with the accused). Not surprisingly, the vast majority (89%) of family-related homicides, including spousal homicides, occurred in a private residence, most commonly the victim and offender's joint home.

The remaining locations were distributed as follows: 30% in an open area (e.g., a parking lot, street or field); 7% in a commercial area (e.g., bar, restaurant, convenience store); 3% in a private vehicle or taxi; and the remaining 1% (7 incidents) in the following public institutions: a correctional facility, a community group home/halfway house, a public transportation facility, a hospital and a university.

FIREARMS

Firearms continue to be used in about one-third of all homicides

Over the past 20 years, firearms have typically been used in about one-third of all homicides. While this trend continued in 2001 (accounting for 31% of all homicides), stabbings comprised an equal amount (31%) of all killings. Beatings were the cause of death among 22% of victims, strangulation/suffocation 9%, and shaking (Shaken Baby Syndrome), fire (burns/suffocation), poisoning and homicides involving vehicles each accounted for 1% of all homicides (Table 6, Figure 3).

Homicides account for a relatively small portion of all firearm-related deaths. Of the 1,006 deaths in Canada involving firearms in 1999 (the latest year for which figures are available), the largest proportion of these deaths were due to suicide (80%), followed by homicide (15%), and accidents (4%).¹¹

¹¹ Health Statistics Division (2002). Causes of Death, 1999. Catalogue 84-208-XPB, Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Table 6

Year	Homicides by Cause of Death, Canada, 1991-2001											
	Shooting		Stabbing		Beating		Strangulation/ Suffocation		Shaken Baby Syndrome		Fire (smoke inhalation, burns)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1991	271	35.9	224	29.7	142	18.8	77	10.2	...	...	20	2.7
1992	247	33.7	211	28.8	151	20.6	61	8.3	...	...	35	4.8
1993	195	31.1	191	30.5	116	18.5	77	12.3	...	...	17	2.7
1994	196	32.9	154	25.8	106	17.8	84	14.1	...	...	17	2.9
1995	176	29.9	183	31.1	121	20.6	70	11.9	...	...	20	3.4
1996	212	33.4	195	30.7	132	20.8	59	9.3	...	...	8	1.3
1997	193	32.9	168	28.7	115	19.6	53	9.0	6	1.0	30	5.1
1998	151	27.1	186	33.3	125	22.4	61	10.9	6	1.1	12	2.2
1999	165	30.7	143	26.6	125	23.2	55	10.2	7	1.3	11	2.0
2000 ^r	184	33.7	149	27.3	128	23.4	39	7.1	13	2.4	4	0.7
2001	171	30.9	171	30.9	123	22.2	47	8.5	8	1.4	8	1.4
	Poisoning		Vehicle		Other ¹		Unknown		Total			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1991	6	0.8	...	...	8	1.1	6	0.8	754	100.0		
1992	9	1.2	...	...	12	1.6	6	0.8	732	100.0		
1993	6	1.0	...	...	21	3.3	4	0.6	627	100.0		
1994	11	1.8	...	...	22	3.7	6	1.0	596	100.0		
1995	6	1.0	...	...	6	1.0	6	1.0	588	100.0		
1996	6	0.9	...	...	12	1.9	11	1.7	635	100.0		
1997	8	1.4	6	1.0	2	0.3	5	0.9	586	100.0		
1998	6	1.1	3	0.5	2	0.4	6	1.1	558	100.0		
1999	5	0.9	13	2.4	6	1.1	8	1.5	538	100.0		
2000 ^r	4	0.7	14	2.6	4	0.7	7	1.3	546	100.0		
2001	8	1.4	5	0.9	5	0.9	8	1.4	554	100.0		

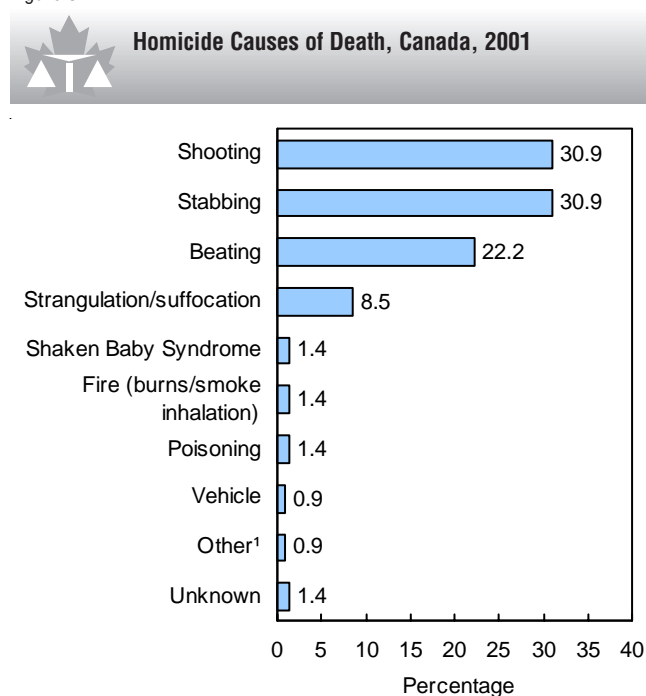
... figures not applicable or not appropriate

^r revised

¹ Other includes heart attacks, exposure / hypothermia and, prior to 1997, Shaken Baby Syndrome and deaths caused by vehicles.

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Figure 3




¹ Other includes exposure, hypothermia and heart attack.
 Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Among the 171 shootings in 2001, handguns were the most common type of firearm used to kill. There were 110 (64%) homicides with a handgun, 46 (27%) with a rifle/shotgun, 7 (4%) with a sawed-off rifle/shotgun, 3 (2%) with a fully-automatic firearm, and 5 (3%) with other or unknown types of firearms (Table 7). Prior to 1990, handguns were used in about 3 in 10 firearm-related homicides. Between 1991 and 1998, the proportion rose to about half of all firearm-related homicides. Since then the proportion has steadily risen, with handguns now accounting for almost two-thirds of all firearm-related homicides. This rise has been driven by a steady decline in the number of rifle/shotguns (including sawed-off), from nearly half of all firearm-related homicides in 1991 to less than one-third in 2001 (Figure 4).

Three in four recovered handguns not registered

In 1997, the Homicide Survey began collecting the following supplementary information on firearms: firearm registration, ownership, possession of a valid FAC or Firearms Licence by the accused, firearm status, and classification of the firearm (whether restricted or prohibited). Analysis of these data focus on handguns used in homicides, as police have been required for some time to record this information as part of their investigations. However, it is important to note that a substantial portion of this information was either unknown to police at the time of the investigation, or the handgun was never recovered and the information is therefore unavailable. This analysis refers to cases where firearm registration, ownership and licensing information were known.

Table 7



Homicides Involving Firearms, Canada, 1991-2001

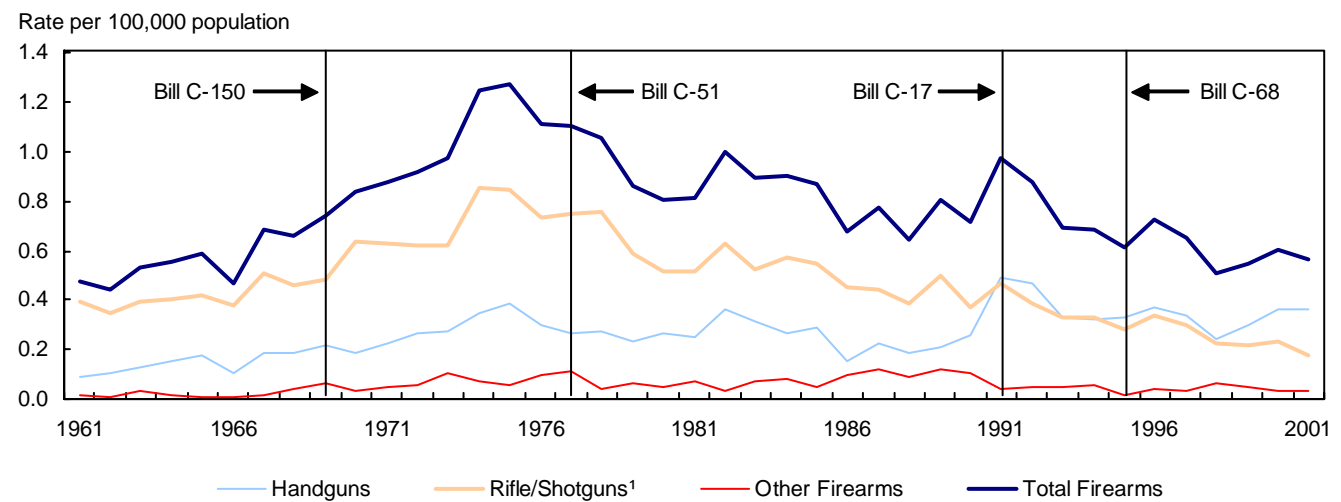
Year	Firearm										Total	Homicides involving firearms as a % of total homicides
	Handgun		Rifle/Shotgun		Fully automatic firearm		Sawed-off rifle/shotgun		Other firearms			
	#	% of firearm homicides	#	% of firearm homicides	#	% of firearm homicides	#	% of firearm homicides	#	% of firearm homicides		
1991	135	49.8	103	38.0	6	2.2	25	9.2	2	0.7	271	35.9
1992 ^r	129	52.2	91	36.8	12	4.9	15	6.1	0	0.0	247	33.7
1993 ^r	91	46.7	75	38.5	11	5.6	17	8.7	1	0.5	195	31.1
1994	90	45.9	66	33.7	14	7.1	26	13.3	0	0.0	196	32.9
1995 ^r	95	54.0	64	36.4	2	1.1	15	8.5	0	0.0	176	29.9
1996	107	50.5	81	38.2	8	3.8	16	7.5	0	0.0	212	33.4
1997	99	51.3	77	39.9	2	1.0	10	5.2	5	2.6	193	32.9
1998	70	46.4	51	33.8	12	7.9	14	9.3	4	2.6	151	27.1
1999	89	53.9	58	35.2	6	3.6	6	3.6	6	3.6	165	30.7
2000 ^r	108	58.7	57	31.0	4	2.2	11	6.0	4	2.2	184	33.7
2001	110	64.3	46	26.9	3	1.8	7	4.1	5	2.9	171	30.9
Average 1991-2000	101	50.9	72	36.1	8	4.0	16	7.7	2	1.2	199	32.1

... figures not applicable or not appropriate
^r revised

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Figure 4

 **Rate of Firearm Homicides, 1961-2001**



Note: See Firearm Legislation textbox for details of Bills.

¹ Includes sawed-off rifles/shotguns.

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Firearm Legislation

In 1969, Parliament amended the *Criminal Code* (Bill C-150), which for the first time made it illegal to provide firearms to persons of “unsound mind” or criminals under prohibition orders. The legislation also expanded the definition of a “firearm,” which, prior to 1969, only included handguns and automatic firearms, and introduced non-restricted, restricted, and prohibited firearm categories.

In 1977, Parliament again amended the *Criminal Code* (Bill C-51), requiring individuals to obtain a Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC). The legislation also introduced a variety of provisions including regulations on safe storage and display of firearms for businesses and bona-fide gun collectors, and mandatory minimum sentences to deter the criminal use of firearms.

In 1991, Parliament strengthened the screening provisions for FAC applicants by introducing new legislation (Bill C-17). A multi-page form with a variety of questions concerning the applicant’s personal and criminal history, personal references, picture, and a mandatory 28-day waiting period for approved FAC applicants was incorporated.

In 1995, Parliament passed Bill C-68 which created strict new penalties for the trafficking and smuggling of firearms, and tougher mandatory minimum sentences for 10 serious offences involving firearms. All firearm owners and users are now required to obtain a firearm licence, and all firearms will have to be registered by January 2003 (including non-restricted rifles and shotguns).

Figure 4 shows the firearm-related homicide rate between 1961 and 2001, indicating where legislative changes have been enacted. The information is not intended to establish a definitive cause-and-effect relationship between gun-control legislation and crime rates.

Between 1997 and 2001, there were 476 homicides committed with handguns. Among the 30% (143) of homicides where the handgun was recovered, about three-quarters (74%) of the handguns were not registered. Where ownership of the handgun could be determined by police (113 cases), it was reported that the accused owned the handgun in almost half (47%) of these homicides, compared to 4% owned by the victim. Someone other than the accused or victim owned the handgun in the remaining 50% of homicides. In addition, about 4 in 5 (81%) accused persons did not possess a valid FAC or Firearms Licence.

ACCUSED-VICTIM RELATIONSHIP

The Homicide Survey collects data on the relationships between persons accused of homicide and their victims. Unless noted otherwise, these and other related distributions exclude “unsolved” homicide incidents where there was no accused identified (23% of all incidents in 2001).

The data collected through the Homicide Survey consistently indicate that homicides are far more likely to be committed by someone known to the victim than by a stranger. In 2001, persons known to the victim accounted for 87% of all solved homicides — 45% were committed by an acquaintance (i.e., non-family) of the victim and 43% by a family member

The available data suggest that most firearms used in handgun-related homicides were not registered and the accused were not licensed firearm users. Studies in other countries on firearm use in homicides have reached similar conclusions.^{12, 13}

¹² Home Office. (1998). “Criminal Statistics England and Wales 1997”. Research Development and Statistics Directorate, The Stationery Office, London.

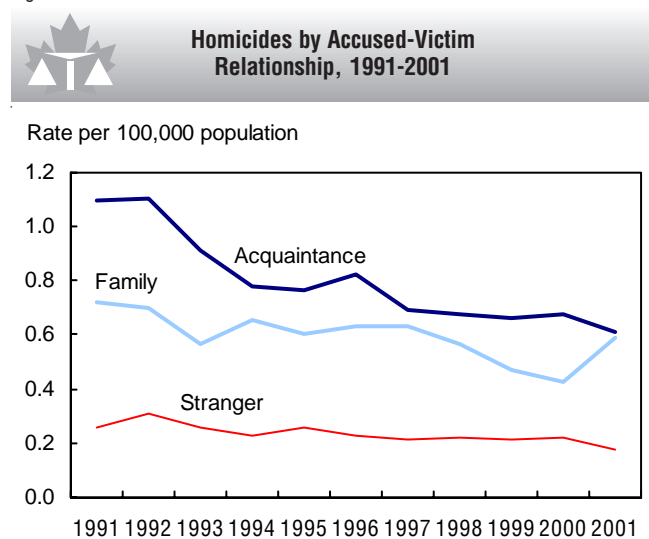
¹³ Mouzos, J. (2000). “The Licensing and Registration Status of Firearms Used in Homicide”. Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice, No. 151. Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.

(Table 8). Strangers killed the remaining 13% of victims. Of the 191 victims in acquaintance homicides, 90 were killed by a casual acquaintance, a further 28 were killed by a close friend, 12 by a current or ex-boyfriend/girlfriend, and 25 by someone with whom the victim had a criminal relationship (includes prostitutes, drug dealers and their clients).

The proportion of stranger homicides has remained relatively stable over the past ten years, ranging from 12% to 17% of all homicides (Figure 5). Six in ten victims who were killed by strangers in 2001 were murdered during the commission of another criminal offence, usually an assault or a robbery. Of the total number of solved homicides, male victims were about four times more likely to be killed by strangers (17%) than were female victims (4%).¹⁴

¹⁴ For more information on homicides committed by strangers, see Janhevich, D. (1998). "Violence Committed by Strangers". Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XIE, Vol. 18, No. 9. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Figure 5



Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Table 8

Relationship Type	2001		2000 ^r		Average 1991-2000	
	Number of victims	Percent	Number of victims	Percent	Number of victims	Percent
<i>Family Relationship</i>						
<i>Spousal Relationship</i>						
Husband (legal and common-law)	52	12.1	38	9.3	49	9.9
Husband (separated and divorced)	17	4.0	14	3.4	18	3.7
Wife (legal and common-law)	13	3.0	13	3.2	16	3.3
Wife (separated and divorced)	3	0.7	3	0.7	2	0.4
(Ex) Same sex spouse ²	1	0.2	0	0.0	...	...
Total Spousal	86	20.0	68	16.7	85	17.4
<i>Non-Spousal Relationship</i>						
Father	26	6.1	21	5.1	27	5.4
Mother	17	4.0	10	2.5	16	3.3
Child	25	5.8	18	4.4	19	3.9
Sibling	8	1.9	6	1.5	10	2.1
Other family relation	21	4.9	8	2.0	18	3.7
Total Non-Spousal	97	22.6	63	15.4	90	18.5
Total Family	183	42.7	131	32.1	175	35.8
<i>Acquaintance</i>						
(Ex) Boyfriend/girlfriend/other intimate	12	2.8	23	5.6	24	5.0
Close friend	28	6.5	31	7.6	31	6.3
Authority figure ²	1	0.2	5	1.2	...	...
Business associate (legal)	11	2.6	7	1.7	14	2.9
Criminal relationships ³	25	5.8	27	6.6	36	7.3
Neighbour	24	5.6	10	2.5	21	4.4
Casual acquaintance	90	21.0	105	25.7	112	22.9
Total Acquaintance	191	44.5	208	51.0	240	49.0
<i>Stranger</i>	54	12.6	68	16.7	71	14.4
<i>Unknown relationship</i>	1	0.2	1	0.2	5	0.9
TOTAL SOLVED HOMICIDES	429	100.0	408	100.0	489	100.0

... figures not appropriate or not applicable

^r revised

¹ Includes only those homicides in which there were known accused. If there were more than one accused, only the closest relationship to the victim was recorded.

² Authority figure and same sex spouse were added to the survey in 1997; therefore, ten-year average cannot be calculated.

³ Criminal relationships include prostitutes, drug dealers and their clients.

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Family homicides rise

Family homicides involve spouses, parents, children, siblings or other members related either by blood, marriage or adoption. In recent years, data have shown family homicides to be declining. However, this trend did not continue in 2001. Of solved cases, there were 183 victims of family homicide in 2001, 52 more than the year before and 8 more than the previous ten-year average. In fact, between 2000 and 2001, every category of family member accused of homicide either stayed the same or rose, with husbands (either legal or common-law) and other family members accounting for the largest increases (up by 14 and 13 victims, respectively). Substantial increases were also evident in the number of children killed by a parent (up by 12 victims) and parents killed by their children (up by 7 victims)¹⁵ (Table 8).

Spousal homicides rise

Spousal homicides include persons in legal marriages, those separated or divorced from such unions and those in common-law relationships (including same sex spouse). Notwithstanding annual fluctuations, between 1974 and 2000 spousal homicide rates for both men and women generally declined. Several societal changes have been suggested to explain the decline including the changing nature of intimate relationships; increasing gender equality; criminal and civil legislative changes; policy and procedural changes (such as specialized domestic violence courts); training of criminal justice personnel; and increasing availability of resources for victims of domestic violence.¹⁶ However, in 2001 the number of spousal homicides rose (Figure 6), accounting for one out of every five solved homicides and almost half (47%) of all family homicides (Table 8). In 2001, 86 persons were killed by a spouse, up by 18 victims from 2000 but similar to the previous ten-year average. The rise in the number of spousal homicides over the past year can largely be attributed to the increase in homicides committed by legally married husbands. Ontario reported the greatest increase in the number of spousal homicides – 16 more in 2001 than in 2000.

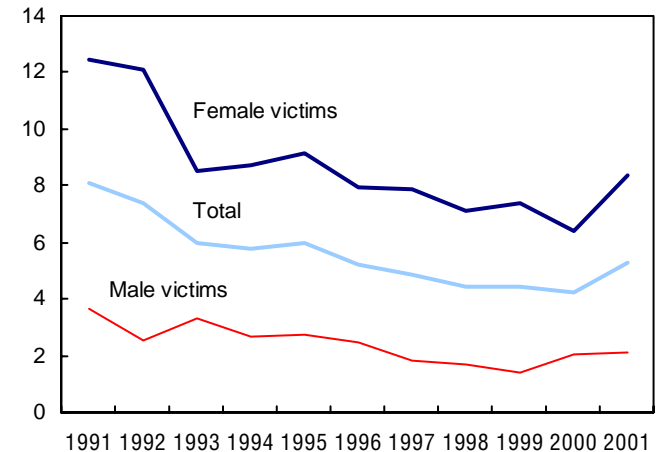
The methods used to commit spousal homicide differed between men and women. Out of the 17 spousal homicides perpetrated against men in 2001, 16 were the result of stabbing and one from shooting. On the other hand, female victims were killed most commonly by stabbing (29%), shooting (26%), beating (19%) and strangulation (17%). Police reported a history of domestic violence in about half (53%) of all spousal homicides. This was more frequently the case when the victim was male (87%), compared to 45% for female victims.

Although the number of spousal homicides increased in 2001, homicides among other types of intimate relationships (current/ex-boyfriend or girlfriend, extra marital or estranged lover or same sex relationship) declined. There were 12 homicides committed by an intimate non-spousal partner in 2001, 11 fewer than in 2000 and half the average number of victims for the previous ten-year period. Six victims were female and six were male. Among all solved homicides, 52% of all female victims and 8% of all male victims in 2001 were killed by a person with whom they had an intimate relationship at one point in time, either through marriage or dating.

Figure 6



Rate per 1,000,000 spouses



Source: *Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.*

Three-quarters of murdered children killed by a parent

There were 39 children (under the age of 12) murdered in 2001, 24% fewer than the average of 51 for the 1991 to 2000 period. More than three-quarters of these children were killed by their parents – there were 25 parent-child homicide incidents involving 30 child victims (Table 9). Six children were killed by other family members or family friends, most of whom were taking care of the child at the time of the incident. Three children were killed by a stranger.

Taking into account that some of these incidents involve multiple-accused and multiple-victims, the actual number of accused parents in 2001 were 14 fathers (12 fathers and 2 step-fathers) and 12 mothers (11 mothers and 1 step-mother).

The number of infants under one year of age who were killed decreased from 20 in 2000 to 12 in 2001, dropping below the previous ten-year average of 18. However, compared to other children under 12 years old, infants under one year of age were still at the highest risk of being a victim of homicide with a rate of about 4 victims for every 100,000 infants under one year. In 2001, parents were responsible for all of the infant homicides – 8 mothers and 4 fathers – most commonly by shaking (Shaken Baby Syndrome) and beating.

¹⁵ For more information on family homicide, see Trainor, C. (2002). "Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2001". Catalogue 85-224-XPE, Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

¹⁶ Pottie-Bunge, V. (2002). "National Trends in Intimate Partner Homicides, 1974-2000". Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol. 22, no. 5. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Table 9

 **Children (<12 years) Killed by Parents, Canada, 1991-2001**

Year	Number of incidents	Number of victims	Parent-child homicides as a % of all homicide incidents	Actual Number of Accused in Parent-Child Homicides				Ratio of accused (step) fathers to (step) mothers
				Father	Step-Father	Mother	Step-Mother	
1991 ^r	24	29	3.4	8	1	13	2	0.6
1992	28	32	4.2	10	1	17	0	0.6
1993	32	32	5.4	13	4	15	0	1.1
1994	40	43	7.2	20	4	16	0	1.5
1995	32	36	5.7	18	2	11	1	1.7
1996	37	41	6.4	19	6	12	0	2.1
1997	45	53	8.4	18	3	23	1	0.9
1998	41	47	7.7	22	3	15	1	1.6
1999	23	26	4.6	13	3	7	0	2.3
2000 ^r	24	27	4.7	11	4	9	0	1.7
2001	25	30	4.9	12	2	11	1	1.2
Average 1991-2000	32	36	5.7	15	3	14	1	1.4

^r revised

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

It is important to note that the figure for infant homicides may be under-reported since some claims of accidental deaths such as falls or “sudden infant deaths” could actually be due to child abuse. Since 1995, most provinces have legislated mandatory coroner inquests into the deaths of children less than two years of age; however, it is still possible that some cases would fail to be reported to, or be classified by, police as homicide.

AGE AND SEX OF VICTIMS AND ACCUSED

Males account for the majority of victims and accused

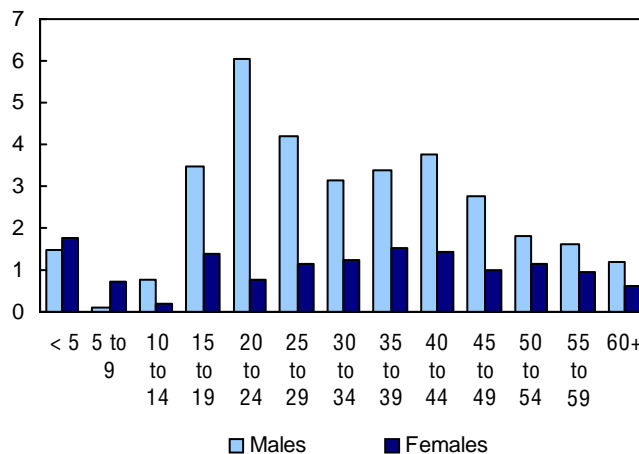
Historically, about two-thirds of homicide victims have been male. However, similar to the previous year, a higher than usual proportion of victims (71%) in 2001 were male. The median¹⁷ age for male victims of homicide was 33 years of age whereas the median age for female victims was a little older – 37 years of age. Nearly half (44%) of all victims in 2001 were between 20 and 39 years of age (Figure 7), with 22 year-olds having the highest single-age rate for victims. The risk for becoming a victim of homicide tends to decline with age, particularly after age 60. Victims 60 years or older comprised less than one in ten (8%) of the total number of homicide victims in 2001. As with homicide victims in general, older adults were most often killed by someone known to them (93%). Strangers were responsible for 3 of the 44 homicides (where relationship was known) committed against older adults in 2001.

Males accounted for the vast majority of all those accused of homicide in 2001 (87%), consistent with the average for the previous ten years. The median age for males and females accused of homicides was similar – 29 years of age for men and 28 years of age for women.

Figure 7

 **Victim homicide rates by age groups and sex, 2001**

Rate per 100,000 population



Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

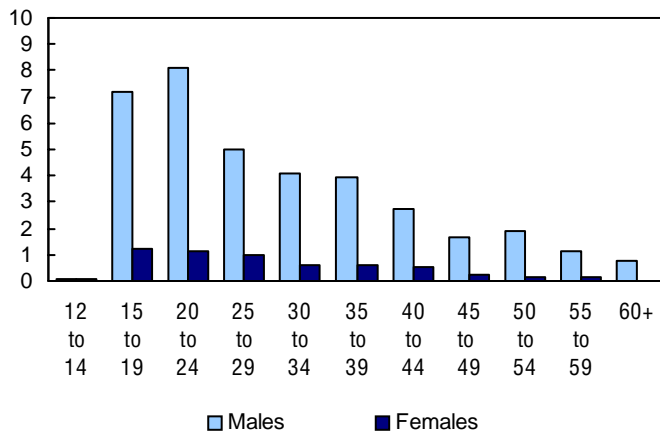
¹⁷ Median refers to the middle value in a set of values ordered from lowest to highest.

Those aged 18 years old had the highest single-age rate for accused in 2001. Beginning in the late 20s, the risk of being accused of homicide starts to decline with age (Figure 8). Whereas those aged 60 years or older comprised almost 17% of the Canadian population, they accounted for only 4% of those accused of homicide in 2001.

Figure 8

 **Accused homicide rates by age groups and sex, 2001**

Rate per 100,000 population



Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

YOUTH HOMICIDE

Homicides committed by youths lowest since 1969¹⁸

In 2001, 30 youths (persons 12 to 17 years of age) were accused of homicide, representing the third consecutive annual decline. This figure represented the lowest number of youths accused since 1969 and the lowest youth homicide rate since 1971. This number is considerably lower than the previous ten-year average of 52 youths accused of homicide each year (Table 10). Moreover, during the same ten-year time period, youths accounted for 9% of the total number of persons accused of homicide, compared to only 6% in 2001. The sharp decline in the total number of youth accused in 2001 was driven by a decrease in the number of males accused of homicide (Figure 9). Twenty-five young males were accused, 20 fewer than the previous ten-year average. Despite their lower numbers, males still continue to account for most homicides committed by youth (83%).

As is the case historically, youths (12 to 17 years) were more likely than adults to kill other youths and young adults. Among solved homicides in 2001, youths accused of homicide were responsible for killing 21 victims, 43% of whom were aged 12 to 24 years. Of the homicides committed by adults, 19% of victims were 12 to 24 years of age.

¹⁸ Prior to 1974, manslaughter was not included in the Homicide Survey; therefore, the number and rate of youth accused of homicide prior to 1974 may be slightly underestimated.

Table 10

 **Youths (12-17 years) Accused of Homicide, Canada, 1991-2001**

Year	Youths Accused of Homicide							Total youth as % of total accused
	Number			Rate per 100,000 youth population ¹				
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		
1991 ^r	42	7	49	3.60	0.63	2.15	7.6	
1992 ^r	52	5	57	4.39	0.45	2.47	8.6	
1993 ^r	34	3	37	2.84	0.26	1.59	6.7	
1994 ^r	53	6	59	4.37	0.52	2.50	10.2	
1995	53	15	68	4.32	1.29	2.85	11.8	
1996 ^r	48	3	51	3.87	0.26	2.11	9.2	
1997	44	11	55	3.51	0.93	2.25	10.7	
1998	54	3	57	4.29	0.25	2.33	10.8	
1999	36	9	45	2.86	0.76	1.84	9.3	
2000 ^r	38	5	43	3.02	0.42	1.75	9.2	
2001	25	5	30	1.97	0.42	1.21	6.2	
Average 1991-2000	45	7	52	3.71	0.58	2.18	9.4	

^r revised

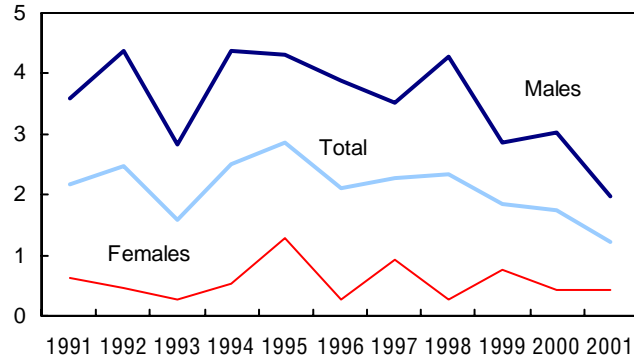
¹ Population estimates at July 1st, provided by Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Figure 9

Youths (12-17 Years) Accused of Homicide, 1991-2001

Rate per 100,000 Youths



Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES ARE OVER-REPRESENTED IN HOMICIDES

It has been widely documented that Aboriginal people are over-represented in the justice system.¹⁹ This also appears to hold true for their involvement in homicide. While Aboriginal people account for approximately 3% of the Canadian population, they comprised one-quarter (25%) of all persons accused of committing homicide in 2001 and 15% of all homicide victims. It is important to note that this information excludes those victims and accused where police services did not collect or report information on Aboriginal status – 42% of victims and 39% of accused in 2001.

TWO-THIRDS OF ACCUSED AND HALF OF VICTIMS HAVE A PREVIOUS CRIMINAL RECORD

In 2001, two-thirds (65%) of persons accused of homicide had a Canadian criminal record. Among those with a prior criminal history, the majority (58%) had been previously convicted of a violent offence: 4 for homicide, 48 for robbery and 128 for other violent offences. Among the four accused with a previous homicide conviction, three had completed their prison sentence and were living in the community and one was inside a correctional institution when the homicide occurred. At the same time, half (51%) of all homicide victims 12 years and over in 2001 had a Canadian criminal record, 54% of whom had been previously convicted of a violent crime: 2 for homicide, 29 for robbery, and 108 for other violent offences.

PRECIPITATING FACTORS

Most victims and accused had consumed alcohol and/or drugs at the time of the homicide

Alcohol, drugs and other intoxicants are known to play a role in the commission of many crimes including homicide.²⁰ In 2001, where alcohol/drug consumption was known, police reported that more than half (56%) of all homicide victims and three-quarters (75%) of accused persons had consumed alcohol and/or drugs at the time of the offence, similar to the pattern seen since 1991 when this information was first collected. As victims of homicide, males were almost twice as likely as females to have consumed alcohol and/or drugs, whereas female accused were slightly more likely than male accused to have been under the influence.

Half of homicide incidents motivated by anger and despair

As determined by police, the most common motive for committing homicide in 2001 was an argument, quarrel or incident inciting a vengeful or jealous reaction or an act of despair (58% of all homicide incidents). A further 20% were motivated by financial gain or the settling of accounts. There were three "random" killings (victim randomly selected) in 2001 and one homicide was motivated by hate. From 1991 to 2000, there were 13 homicide incidents that were motivated by hate, an average of just over one incident per year.

One in seven accused reported to have a psychological disorder

In 1997, the Homicide Survey began collecting information on any suspected mental or developmental disorders (such as schizophrenia, manic depression or developmental delays) among accused persons. It is important to note that this information is not intended to be diagnostic, and should be interpreted with some caution since it is not necessarily based upon a doctor's certification.

Excluding those cases in which mental status was unknown, police suspected the presence of a mental or developmental disorder among 14% of accused persons in 2001, similar to the percentage reported each year since 1997. No difference was found between the proportion of males and females reported to have a disorder.

¹⁹ Correctional Services Canada. Aboriginal Issues Branch. (1999). "Demographic Overview of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada and Aboriginal Offenders in Federal Corrections". Ottawa: Correctional Services Canada.

²⁰ Parker, R.N. & Auerhahn, K. (1999) "Drugs, alcohol and homicide: Issues in theory and research". Homicide: A Sourcebook of Social Research. Smith M.D. & Zahn, M.A. (eds). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. 176-191.

One-third of all homicides committed during commission of another offence

In 2001, more than one-third (37%) of all homicide incidents occurred during the commission of another criminal offence. Of these 190 incidents, 131 (69%) were committed at the same time as another violent offence: 64 during an assault, 30 during a robbery, 10 during a sexual assault, 7 during a kidnapping/abduction, 6 as a result of a stalking²¹ and 14 during other violent offences. Eight other homicides occurred as a result of arson, 13 were committed during other property offences, and 38 in combination with other types of criminal offences.

Most incidents occur in the late evening and early night

Not surprisingly, most homicides occur in the evening to early hours of the night. In 2001, more than half (55%) of all incidents where the time was known occurred between 8 p.m. and 4 a.m. Since 1991, when collection of this information first began, the pattern has been fairly consistent: the fewest number of incidents have tended to occur during the early morning and daytime hours, with the number of incidents steadily rising as the day progresses.

OCCUPATIONS AT RISK

Two police officers killed in the line of duty

Despite the obvious dangers inherent in police work, the number of police officers murdered in Canada in the line of duty is relatively low. Since 1961, there have been 117 police officers killed while on the job, an average of three police officers each year. In 2001, two police officers were victims of homicide, one in Manitoba and the other in Nunavut, representing the first time a police officer has been killed in any of the three Territories since recording began. By comparison, preliminary figures for 2001 from the United States, with a population about ten times greater than Canada's, reported 69 police officers feloniously killed in the line of duty (excluding 71 victims killed in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks).²²

One prostitute reported killed in 2001

Since 1991, 73 prostitutes have been killed while working, although only one of these homicides was reported for 2001²³. All but three were female and all but five were 18 years of age or older. The number of prostitutes killed within the most recent five-year period has generally been lower compared to the period from 1991 to 1996. From 1997 to 2001, 17 prostitutes have been killed, most of which occurred in the western provinces: 4 in British Columbia, 3 in Alberta, 3 in Manitoba and 1 in Saskatchewan. Another 5 have been killed in Ontario and one in Nova Scotia. It should be noted that the number of prostitutes reported killed as a result of their profession likely under-represents the actual figure as only those incidents where the police are certain that the victim was killed in the course of engaging in prostitution-related activities are counted.²⁴

There were 17 other persons who were victims of homicide while "on the job" in 2001 in Canada, including four taxi drivers, two security guards, and two business managers.

METHODOLOGY

The Homicide Survey began collecting police-reported data on homicide incidents, victims and accused persons in Canada in 1961. Until 1974, cases of manslaughter and infanticide were not included in the survey. Whenever a homicide becomes known to police, the investigating police department completes a survey questionnaire which is then forwarded to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. This questionnaire remained virtually unchanged from 1961 to 1990. In 1991 and later in 1997, in an effort to respond to changing information needs, the survey was revised and expanded.

Note that every effort is made to count homicides in the year in which they *occurred*. However, in some circumstances, homicides are counted in the year in which they are *reported* to police, regardless of the date they actually occurred. Where possible, such discrepancies are footnoted in the report. Also, socio-demographic and other information (e.g., history of domestic violence, alcohol/drug consumption) on persons accused of homicide are only available for solved incidents (i.e., where at least one accused has been identified). In incidents where there are multiple accused, only the *closest* relationship between the victim and any of the accused is recorded.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Homicide occurs when a person directly or indirectly, by any means, causes the death of a human being. Homicide is either culpable (murder, manslaughter or infanticide) or non-culpable (not an offence) (*Criminal Code of Canada*, sections 222 – 240).

Murder occurs when a person intentionally causes the death of another human being, or means to cause bodily harm that the person knows is likely to cause death.

First degree murder occurs when:

- a) it is planned and deliberate; or
- b) the victim is a person employed and acting in the course of his/her work for the preservation and maintenance of the public peace (e.g., police officer, correctional worker); or
- c) the death is caused by a person committing or attempting to commit certain serious offences (e.g., sexual assault, kidnapping, hijacking, criminal harassment).

Second degree murder is all murder that is not first degree.

²¹ For more information on criminal harassment, see Hackett, K. (2000). "Criminal Harassment". Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol. 20, No. 11. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

²² U.S. Department of Justice. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Press Release. May 15, 2002.

²³ Homicide investigations in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia are ongoing and have yet to be reported by police to CCJS.

²⁴ For more information on prostitution, see Duchesne, D. (1997). "Street Prostitution in Canada". Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE, Vol. 17 No. 2. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Manslaughter is culpable homicide that is not murder or infanticide. It is generally considered to be a homicide committed in the heat of passion caused by sudden provocation.


Infanticide occurs when a female causes the death of her newly-born child, if her mind is considered disturbed from the effects of giving birth or effects of lactation.

Incident - an incident is defined as the occurrence of one (or more) criminal offence(s) during one single, distinct event,

regardless of the number of victims. If there are multiple victims or multiple accused, the offences must occur at the same location and at the same time if they are to be included within the same incident. The incident count will normally be lower than the victim count due to incidents involving multiple victims.

Accused – is a person who has been identified as an offender in an incident and against whom a charge may be laid in connection with that incident.

Table 11



Number of Homicides, by Province/Territory, 1961-2001

Year	Nfld.Lab.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Yukon	N.W.T. ¹	Nvt.	Canada
1961	1	1	6	2	52	89	15	14	18	34	1	0	...	233
1962	0	1	10	8	62	76	19	13	18	55	3	0	...	265
1963	3	0	6	5	69	76	16	8	27	35	3	1	...	249
1964	5	0	13	5	52	81	16	20	25	32	1	3	...	253
1965	6	4	10	5	63	77	15	15	20	57	3	2	...	277
1966	3	1	9	6	56	71	17	12	27	48	0	0	...	250
1967	1	0	10	5	75	114	15	25	38	47	6	2	...	338
1968	5	0	9	5	102	104	28	23	25	73	1	0	...	375
1969	5	1	12	1	126	111	28	33	23	50	0	1	...	391
1970	1	1	15	8	141	115	29	24	42	78	6	7	...	467
1971	2	0	16	10	124	151	33	29	45	61	0	2	...	473
1972	2	2	14	11	157	141	36	28	37	88	3	2	...	521
1973	3	0	19	17	155	160	38	23	36	87	4	4	...	546
1974	3	2	8	21	169	160	42	31	44	107	5	8	...	600
1975	4	0	14	12	226	206	37	36	57	98	6	5	...	701
1976	6	2	25	14	205	183	31	34	68	88	4	8	...	668
1977	8	1	14	38	197	192	44	46	70	91	6	4	...	711
1978	9	4	13	27	180	182	39	32	84	85	2	4	...	661
1979	5	0	17	11	186	175	44	36	56	90	4	7	...	631
1980	3	1	12	9	181	158	31	31	55	105	2	4	...	592
1981	4	1	11	17	186	170	41	29	73	110	1	5	...	648
1982	6	0	12	13	190	184	35	39	70	109	2	7	...	667
1983	6	0	13	11	190	202	40	33	75	108	1	3	...	682
1984	6	0	15	14	198	190	43	30	54	110	2	5	...	667
1985 ²	5	1	26	14	219	193	26	28	63	113	6	10	...	704
1986	4	0	15	12	156	139	47	26	64	89	3	14	...	569
1987	5	0	14	20	174	204	44	30	73	78	0	2	...	644
1988	7	1	11	8	154	186	31	23	66	80	1	8	...	576
1989	5	1	16	18	215	175	43	22	67	86	2	7	...	657
1990	0	1	9	12	184	182	39	36	74	110	1	12	...	660
1991	10	2	21	17	181	245	42	21	84	128	0	3	...	754
1992	2	0	21	11	166	242	29	32	92	122	2	13	...	732
1993	7	2	19	11	159	192	31	30	49	120	0	7	...	627
1994	4	1	19	15	126	192	29	24	66	113	3	4	...	596
1995	5	1	17	14	135	181	27	21	60	120	4	3	...	588
1996	7	1	18	9	154	187	45	32	53	125	0	4	...	635
1997	7	0	24	8	132	178	31	25	61	116	1	3	...	586
1998	7	1	24	5	137	156	33	33	64	90	3	5	...	558
1999	2	1	13	9	137	162	26	13	61	110	1	1	2	538
2000 ^r	6	3	15	10	150	156	30	26	59	85	2	1	3	546
2001	1	2	9	8	140	170	34	27	70	85	1	4	3	554

... figures not appropriate or not applicable


^r revised

¹ Includes Nunavut before 1999. See textbox for further explanation.

² Excludes 329 victims killed in the Air India incident.

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Table 12



Homicide Rates¹, by Province/Territory, 1961-2001²

Year	Nfld.Lab.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Yukon	N.W.T. ³	Nvt.	Canada
1961	0.22	0.96	0.81	0.33	0.99	1.43	1.63	1.51	1.35	2.09	6.85	0.00	...	1.28
1962	0.00	0.93	1.38	1.32	1.15	1.20	2.03	1.40	1.31	3.31	20.00	0.00	...	1.43
1963	0.63	0.00	0.80	0.82	1.26	1.17	1.69	0.86	1.92	2.06	20.00	3.85	...	1.32
1964	1.04	0.00	1.72	0.82	0.93	1.22	1.67	2.12	1.75	1.83	6.67	11.11	...	1.31
1965	1.23	3.67	1.32	0.81	1.11	1.13	1.55	1.58	1.38	3.17	21.43	7.41	...	1.41
1966	0.61	0.92	1.19	0.97	0.97	1.02	1.77	1.26	1.85	2.56	0.00	0.00	...	1.25
1967	0.20	0.00	1.32	0.81	1.28	1.60	1.56	2.61	2.55	2.42	40.00	6.90	...	1.66
1968	0.99	0.00	1.17	0.80	1.72	1.43	2.88	2.40	1.64	3.64	6.67	0.00	...	1.81
1969	0.97	0.90	1.55	0.16	2.11	1.50	2.86	3.44	1.48	2.43	0.00	3.23	...	1.86
1970	0.19	0.91	1.92	1.28	2.34	1.52	2.95	2.55	2.63	3.67	35.29	21.21	...	2.19
1971	0.38	0.00	2.01	1.56	2.02	1.92	3.30	3.11	2.70	2.72	0.00	5.49	...	2.15
1972	0.37	1.76	1.75	1.70	2.54	1.77	3.59	3.04	2.18	3.82	14.89	5.16	...	2.34
1973	0.55	0.00	2.34	2.59	2.49	1.98	3.77	2.52	2.09	3.68	18.91	9.82	...	2.43
1974	0.55	1.72	0.98	3.16	2.70	1.95	4.12	3.41	2.51	4.38	23.73	19.45	...	2.63
1975	0.72	0.00	1.69	1.77	3.57	2.48	3.61	3.92	3.15	3.92	27.39	11.67	...	3.03
1976	1.07	1.69	2.99	2.03	3.20	2.17	3.00	3.65	3.64	3.47	17.80	18.05	...	2.85
1977	1.42	0.83	1.67	5.46	3.06	2.26	4.24	4.87	3.59	3.54	26.27	8.96	...	3.00
1978	1.59	3.29	1.54	3.86	2.79	2.12	3.75	3.36	4.15	3.25	8.42	8.84	...	2.76
1979	0.88	0.00	2.00	1.56	2.88	2.02	4.24	3.75	2.67	3.38	16.67	15.31	...	2.61
1980	0.52	0.81	1.41	1.27	2.78	1.81	3.00	3.20	2.51	3.83	8.22	8.64	...	2.41
1981	0.70	0.81	1.29	2.41	2.84	1.93	3.96	2.97	3.18	3.90	4.18	10.51	...	2.61
1982	1.04	0.00	1.40	1.84	2.89	2.06	3.34	3.95	2.96	3.79	8.17	14.14	...	2.66
1983	1.04	0.00	1.50	1.54	2.88	2.23	3.77	3.29	3.14	3.72	4.23	5.88	...	2.69
1984	1.03	0.00	1.71	1.94	2.99	2.07	4.01	2.95	2.26	3.73	8.36	9.51	...	2.60
1985 ⁴	0.86	0.78	2.94	1.93	3.29	2.08	2.40	2.73	2.62	3.80	24.63	18.38	...	2.72
1986	0.69	0.00	1.69	1.65	2.33	1.47	4.31	2.53	2.63	2.96	12.26	25.60	...	2.18
1987	0.87	0.00	1.57	2.75	2.57	2.12	4.01	2.90	3.00	2.56	0.00	3.63	...	2.43
1988	1.22	0.77	1.23	1.10	2.25	1.89	2.81	2.24	2.69	2.57	3.76	14.36	...	2.15
1989	0.87	0.77	1.77	2.45	3.10	1.73	3.90	2.16	2.68	2.69	7.37	12.28	...	2.41
1990	0.00	0.77	0.99	1.62	2.63	1.77	3.53	3.57	2.90	3.34	3.60	20.37	...	2.38
1991	1.73	1.53	2.29	2.28	2.56	2.35	3.79	2.09	3.24	3.79	0.00	4.92	...	2.69
1992	0.34	0.00	2.28	1.47	2.33	2.29	2.61	3.19	3.49	3.52	6.61	20.83	...	2.58
1993	1.21	1.51	2.06	1.47	2.22	1.80	2.77	2.98	1.83	3.36	0.00	11.02	...	2.18
1994	0.70	0.75	2.05	2.00	1.75	1.77	2.58	2.38	2.44	3.07	9.98	6.14	...	2.05
1995	0.88	0.74	1.83	1.86	1.86	1.65	2.39	2.07	2.19	3.17	12.95	4.51	...	2.00
1996	1.25	0.73	1.93	1.20	2.12	1.68	3.97	3.14	1.91	3.22	0.00	5.92	...	2.14
1997	1.26	0.00	2.57	1.06	1.81	1.58	2.73	2.45	2.15	2.93	3.10	4.43	...	1.95
1998	1.28	0.73	2.56	0.66	1.87	1.37	2.90	3.22	2.20	2.25	9.52	12.18	...	1.84
1999	0.37	0.73	1.38	1.19	1.86	1.41	2.28	1.27	2.06	2.73	3.22	2.44	7.45	1.76
2000 ⁵	1.12	2.17	1.59	1.32	2.03	1.34	2.62	2.54	1.96	2.09	6.54	2.44	10.94	1.77
2001	0.19	1.44	0.95	1.06	1.89	1.43	2.96	2.66	2.28	2.08	3.35	9.79	10.65	1.78

... figures not appropriate or not applicable.

^r revised

¹ Rates are calculated per 100,000 population. Population estimates at July 1st, provided by Statistics Canada, Census and Demographic Statistics, Demography Division.

Estimates of population used:

1961-1990: Revised intercensal estimates

1991-1995: Final intercensal estimates

1996-1997: Final postcensal estimates

1998-2000: Updated postcensal estimates

2001: Preliminary postcensal estimates

² As of 1971, population estimates were adjusted to reflect new methods of calculation.

³ Includes Nunavut until 1999. See textbox for further explanation.

⁴ Excludes 329 victims killed in the Air India incident.

Source: Homicide Survey, Policing Services Program, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, September 2002.

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

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