Crime Getting Worse for Almost Two-in-Five British Columbians

Most residents blame addiction and mental health issues for the current state of affairs.

What are the biggest factors to blame for current situation regarding crime and public safety in your community?

Addiction / Mental health issues – 51%
Gangs / The illegal drug trade – 40%
Inadequate court system – 36%
Lack of values / Improper education of youth – 33%

Over the past four years, have you been the victim of a crime involving the police (such as an assault or a car break-in) in your community?

Yes – 17%
No – 83%

All things considered, how much do you fear becoming a victim of a crime in your community?

A great deal – 9%
A fair amount – 20%
Not too much – 59%
Not at all – 11%

Vancouver, BC [July 13, 2018] – A sizeable proportion of British Columbians suggest public safety is a problem in their community, a new Research Co. poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative sample of British Columbians, almost two-in-five residents (38%) say the level of criminal activity in their community has increased in the past four years.

Women (41%) and British Columbians aged 55 and over (44%) are more likely to perceive a rise in criminal activity in their community.

On a regional basis, people who live in the Okanagan and the North (47%) and in Vancouver Island (46%) are also more likely to say that the public safety situation is worse now than it was four years ago, compared to 36% in the Lower Mainland.

Across the province, 17% of residents report having been a victim of a crime where the police was called in (such as an assault or a car break-in) in their community—a proportion that rises to 25% among whose aged 35-to-54 and 24% in the Okanagan and the North.

Almost three-in-ten British Columbians (29%) say they fear becoming a victim of a crime in their community "a great deal" or "a fair amount", including 33% of women, 33% of those aged 18-to-34 and 31% of Lower Mainland residents.

"There is a deep generational divide when it comes to perceptions of public safety in British Columbia," says Mario Canseco, President of Research Co. "Millennials are more likely to fear becoming victims, Generation Xers are more likely to actually have contacted the police, and Baby Boomers are more likely to say that crime is on the rise in their community."

When asked which factors deserve "a great deal" of the blame for the current situation regarding crime and public safety in their community, a majority of British Columbians (51%) select addiction and mental health issues, while two-in-five (40%) choose gangs and the illegal drug trade.

In addition, 36% think an inadequate court system is to blame, while 33% select lack of values and the improper education of youth, and 26% mention poverty and inequality.

The three lowest ranked factors are insufficient policing and lack of resources to combat crime (19%), bad economy and unemployment (13%) and immigrants and minorities (8%).

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About Research Co.

Simply put, we are curious about what people think and the decisions they will make. Some call it public opinion, others call it polling or public affairs. We never compromise facts for profit. Our agenda is the truth.

We have a global network of partners in the qualitative, data collection and data visualization specialities.

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Media contact:
Mario Canseco, President, Research Co.
[c] 778.929.0490
[e] mario.canseco@researchco.ca

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mario.canseco
@researchco.ca

mario_canseco

778.929.0490

Mario Canseco