



PRESS RELEASE | British Columbia

Methodology:

Results are based on an online study conducted from May 14 to May 16, 2023, among 800 adults in British Columbia. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region in Canada. The margin of error—which measures sample variability—is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Would you say the level of criminal activity in your community has increased, stayed the same, or decreased in the past four years?

Increased – 59% (+8)
Remained the same – 33% (-2)
Decreased – 4% (-1)
Not sure – 4% (-6)

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 – 18% (=)
No – 82% (=)

Almost Three-in-Five British Columbians Say Crime is Rising

The proportion of residents who have been the victims of a crime that merited a call to the police has been stable since 2018.

Vancouver, BC [May 24, 2023] – The proportion of British Columbians who hold negative perceptions about public safety has risen markedly, a new Research Co. poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative provincial sample, 59% of British Columbians say the level of criminal activity in their community has increased in the past four years, up eight points since a similar Research Co. poll [conducted in July 2022](#).

Just under one-in-five British Columbians (18%, =) say they have been victims of a crime involving the police (such as an assault or a car break-in) in their community.

“The perceptions of British Columbians on criminal activity have [worsened every year](#) since we started asking these questions in 2018,” says Mario Canseco, President of Research Co. “During the same period, [there has been little movement](#) when residents of the province are asked if they were victims of a crime that merited a police report.”

When asked about which factors are to blame “a great deal” for the current situation regarding crime and public safety in their community, a majority of British Columbians mention addiction and mental health issues (59%, +8).

Other factors that British Columbians blame “a great deal” are gangs and the illegal drug trade (41%, +4), an inadequate court system (39%, +7), poverty and inequality (34%, +2), lack of values and improper education for youth (28%, +1), a bad economy and unemployment (22%, -2), insufficient policing and a lack of resources to combat crime (also 22%, =) and immigrants and minorities (11%, +3).

More than half of British Columbians (52%, +4) say they fear becoming victims of crime in their community “a great deal” or “a fair amount”—a proportion that rises to 72% among those aged 18-to-34.

More than a third of British Columbians (36%, +2) say they would feel “moderately unsafe” or “very unsafe” walking alone in their own neighbourhood after dark, including 47% in the Fraser Valley and 45% in Northern BC.



Support for establishing a provincewide police force in British Columbia is up significantly, going from 39% in June 2022 to 51% in May 2023.

More than half of residents of Northern BC (54%) and Metro Vancouver (also 54%) favour the creation of a provincewide police force. Support is lower in the Fraser Valley (49%), Vancouver Island (45%) and Southern BC (43%).

At least four-in-five British Columbians voice support for banning military-style assault weapons (82%, =) and handguns (80%, +5) in their municipality.

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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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