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Police-reported Crime in Rural and Urban Areas in the Canadian Provinces, 2017

- A disproportionate amount of crime occurred in rural areas in 2017. While police services serving a mostly rural population served 16% of the population in the provinces, they reported:
 - 23% of violent crimes;
 - 17% of property crimes;
 - 27% of Criminal Code traffic offences; and,
 - 23% of other Criminal Code violations.
- The police-reported crime rate in rural areas (6,210 incidents per 100,000 population) was 23% higher than the urban crime rate (5,051 incidents per 100,000 population).
- Overall, the rate of police-reported violent crimes was higher in rural areas than in urban areas and certain violent crimes were more likely in rural areas and others in urban areas.

Rural areas:

- **Physical assaults** - In both urban and rural areas, physical assaults - common assaults (level 1) - was most reported violent crime. However, the rates of physical assault were approximately twice as high in rural areas than in urban areas, for level 1,2 or 3 assaults as well as for assault against a peace officer.
- **Homicides** - From 2009 to 2017, rural police services reported 1,078 homicides (average annual rate of 2.02 homicides per 100,000 population) versus 4,068 homicides (a rate of 1.55 homicides per 100,000 population) for urban areas.
- **Sexual assault** - The rate of sexual assault in 2017 was slightly higher in rural areas than urban areas: 82 sexual assaults per 100,000 population to 63 sexual assaults per 100,000 population.
- **Sexual violations against children** - In 2017,

there were 37 incidents per 100,000 population in rural areas compared with the police-reported number in urban areas (18 incidents per 100,000 population).

- **Violent firearms offences** - the rate of violent firearms offences, such as discharge of a firearm or pointing a firearm, was more than twice as high in rural areas than in urban areas in 2017 (13 incidents per 100,000 population compared with 6 incidents per 100,000 population). Moreover, Violent firearms offences have risen sharply in rural areas, where the rate rose 60% between 2009 and 2017. Urban areas also saw a significant increase during this period, but on a smaller scale (+38%).
- **Indecent and harassing communications** - A rate of 62 in rural versus 40 in urban per 100,000 population.
- **Impaired driving** - The rate of impaired driving was about twice as high in rural areas as it was in urban areas.
- **Family violence** - Compared with urban rates in the provinces, rural rates were 1.9 times higher for child and youth victims of family violence, 1.7 times higher for victims of intimate partner violence, and 1.5 times higher for senior victims of family violence.

Urban areas:

- **Robberies** - Although common across the country, these crimes are relatively rare in rural areas. While the 71 robberies per 100,000 population made this offence the fourth most common violent urban crime, it ranked ninth in rural, where the rate was four times lower (18 robberies per 100,000 population)

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- **Commodification of sexual activity and human trafficking offences** – Also more prevalent in urban areas than in rural areas, proportionally these crimes were reported five times more often by urban police services than by rural police services.
- **Attempted murder** - The rate of attempted murder was lower in rural areas (2 versus 1.9 per 100,000 population)
- The crime rate in the Provincial North was more than double that observed in the South. Whereas in the South, the crime rate is lower in rural areas, the reverse is true in the North. The homicide rate in rural areas was especially high in the Provincial North, where the average rate from 2009 to 2017 was 5.34 homicides per 100,000 population. This rate is comparable to that recorded in the United States, i.e., 5.4 homicides per 100,000 population (FBI 2018). In the Provincial South, the homicide rate in rural areas was slightly below urban areas; averaging 1.41 homicides per 100,000 population from 2009 to 2017 compared with 1.52 in urban areas.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00009-eng.htm>
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/181205/dq181205a-eng.htm>

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