Reading the 2022 Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview (CCRSO)

A Data Literacy Companion

While the format of the HTML and PDF versions of the CCRSO Data Literacy Companion may differ in some areas in order to meet different access needs, the content is the same.

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Introduction

This resource is designed to provide some context and clarity around select key data literacy topics and terminology relevant to the **2022 Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview** (CCRSO). It is by no means exhaustive in its coverage, but is intended as a guide to facilitate an accurate and more critical interpretation of some of the data presented in the CCRSO.
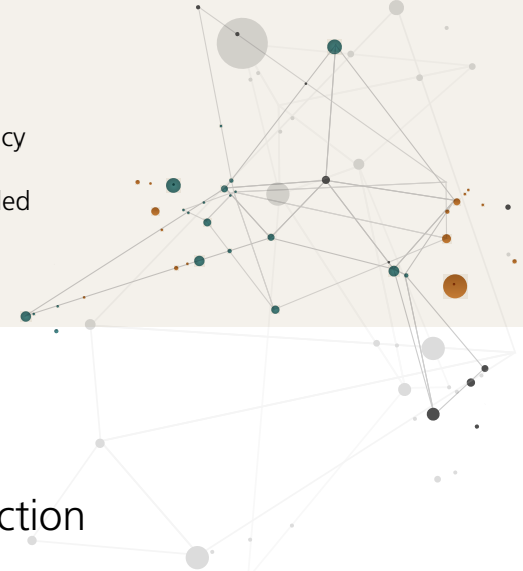
Data Literacy Concepts

Victimization vs. Incident vs. Arrest vs. Charge vs. Conviction

1. Victimization:
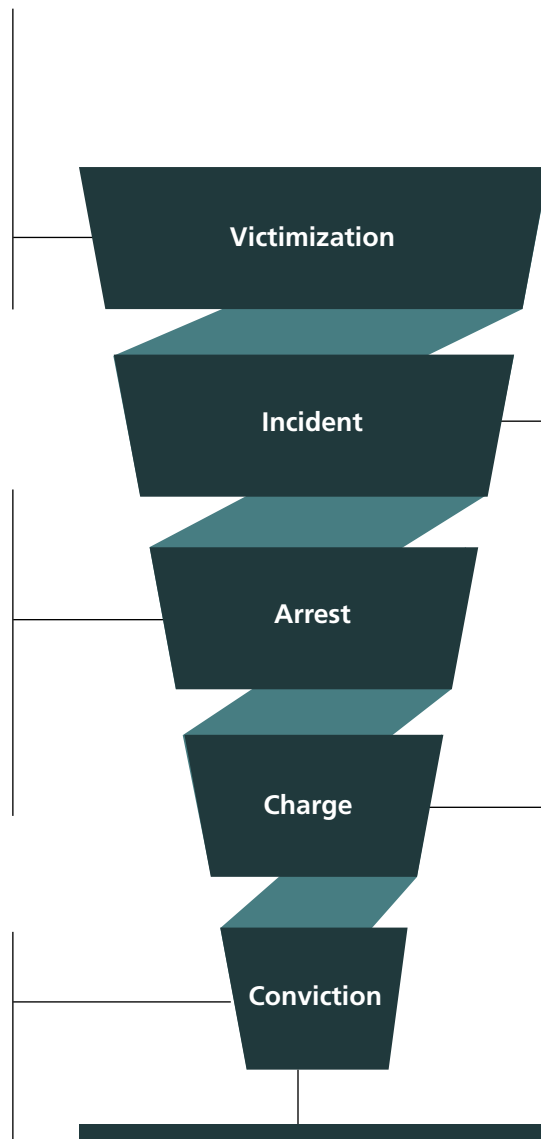
Refers to the **self-assessment** by a person under Canadian legal jurisdiction that they have experienced an **incident that should be considered to be a crime**. Not all criminal victimizations are reported to police. In the CCRSO, information on self-assessed victimization is captured in the General Social Survey (GSS).

2. Incident:

Refers to the **total number of incidents reported to police, or discovered by police, which police classify as being potential crimes**. Not all criminal incidents will result in an arrest because of reasons such as a lack of evidence or due to the incident not being a crime. As such, the total number of incidents reported to police will be greater than the number of arrests, charges, or convictions. In the CCRSO, information on police-reported crime is captured in the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey.

3. Arrest:

Occurs when police detain an individual based on evidence of **potential involvement in criminal activity**. Arrest data show the number of individuals who are **apprehended by police** for various types of crime **during a given time period**. Not all arrests lead to charges.

4. Charge:

Occurs when there is a **formal accusation that an individual has committed a crime**, and is laid by the police or counsel, depending on jurisdiction. Only a subset of those individuals arrested for a crime will formally be charged, and only a subset of charges lead to convictions.

5. Conviction:

Occurs when the **court finds a person who has been charged with a crime guilty of a criminal offence** based on evidence provided in court or through a guilty plea.

Victimization

Incident

Arrest

Charge

Conviction

Remember!

Not all victimizations are reported, not all reported criminal incidents are crimes or can be solved, not all arrests lead to charges, and **not all charges result in convictions!** Understanding these differences and examining data related to each of these concepts can lead to a better understanding of the resource needs at each level of criminal justice processing.

Types of Conditional Release[1] from Federal Custody:
Day Parole vs. Full Parole vs. Statutory Release[2]

Day Parole:

A form of conditional release, day parole allows an offender to **participate in daytime community-based activities in preparation for full parole or statutory release**. The individual must generally return to a community-based residential facility, halfway house or other location[3] each night, or at another specified interval. In addition to the standard conditions of day parole, other special conditions may also be imposed by the Parole Board of Canada.

Generally, an individual is eligible for day parole 6 months before the full parole eligibility date (PED) or 6 months into their sentence – whichever is later. Eligibility for offenders serving life sentences is 3 years before their PED.

2021–22 Day parole

3,302

2021–22 Full parole

1,072

In 2021–22, 3,302 federal offenders were granted day parole (75.8% of eligible applicants who had reached day parole eligibility date) and 1,072 federal offenders were granted full parole (30.4% of those eligible applicants who had reached full parole eligibility date).

Full Parole:

A form of conditional release, full parole allows an offender to **serve a portion of their sentence under community supervision, generally staying at a private residence**, with **certain conditions imposed**. Full parole typically follows the successful completion of day parole and facilitates the process of community reintegration.

Generally, an individual is eligible for full parole after completing one-third of their sentence or after serving 7 years (whichever comes first). In life sentences, the court sets a parole eligibility date at the time of sentencing. Parole eligibility for first-degree murder is automatically 25 years and may range between 10–25 years for second-degree murder.

2012–13

10 years

2021–22

Over the past 10 years (2012–13 to 2021–22) successful completion of both DP and FP has been approximately

90%

(i.e., completion without a return to custody for breach of conditions or a new offence).

2021–22

2017–18

5 years

Over the past 5 years (2017–18 to 2021–22), the percentages of violent recidivism for federal offenders on day parole and full parole are particularly low, averaging

0.2% **and** **0.6**%,

respectively (during the community supervision period).

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[1] Parole and statutory release should not be confused with bail. Bail is a legal process that allows someone who has been charged with a crime to be released from custody while awaiting trial. Parole, in contrast, is a form of conditional release for offenders who have been found guilty, convicted, and sentenced to custody. Parole may be granted by the Parole Board of Canada with or without special conditions, such as restrictions on travel or refraining from contacting certain individuals. Note that offenders on parole are always subject to standard conditions.

[2] These data are presented in Section D of the CCRSO.

[3] Day parole to another location may be permitted wherein a location provides accommodation to an offender on day parole, other than a penitentiary, community-based residential facility or provincial institution. This includes a private home or private facility, which has not been designated as a community-based residential facility.

Statutory Release:

Unlike parole, which is granted discretionarily based on an assessment of the offender's level of risk, statutory release (SR) is **mandated by law after an offender has served two-thirds of their sentence**, except for those serving life or indeterminate sentences or those who have been deemed to have met the criteria to be detained past their statutory release date.[4] Offenders on SR are subject to standard conditions of release, and the Parole Board of Canada may impose special conditions on the SR.

Offenders on SR may be returned to custody if they violate a condition of their release (as with day or full parole), or if their level of risk increases.

68.4%

of all releases from federal institutions were statutory releases (total of 4,383 SRs) in 2021–22.

1.4%

The average percentage of revocation for a violent offence among those on SR has been 1.4% over the past 5 years (2017–18 to 2021–22).

Remember!

The goal of conditional release is to **facilitate community reintegration in a gradual, structured, and supportive manner** and to optimize an individual's chances of **remaining crime-free** once their sentence is complete.

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[4] Detention is intended for offenders serving a determinate sentence who are considered likely to commit an offence causing death or serious harm, a sex offence against a child, or a serious drug offence, before their sentence expires. Detaining an offender past their statutory release is intended only for the highest risk offenders.

Frequency (count or absolute number) vs. Rate

Frequency:

Tells us about the absolute **number of crimes** that take place in a given period of time. This **count** helps researchers and policy-makers understand the **capacity of the systems** (e.g., police, courts, correctional facilities) needed to **respond to the crimes** committed in a specific population. Although understanding frequencies is important, these can sometimes be **misleading in the context of making comparisons**.

In the CCRSO, figures or tables denoted as *"Number of…"* depict frequency data (i.e., absolute numbers).

Rate:

Tells us about the **intensity of a crime problem**. Rates are created by calculating a ratio of the crime count against the size of a specific population (typically **per 100,000 population**) and as such, rates can sometimes be more **helpful for comparison purposes, particularly as related to risk**. 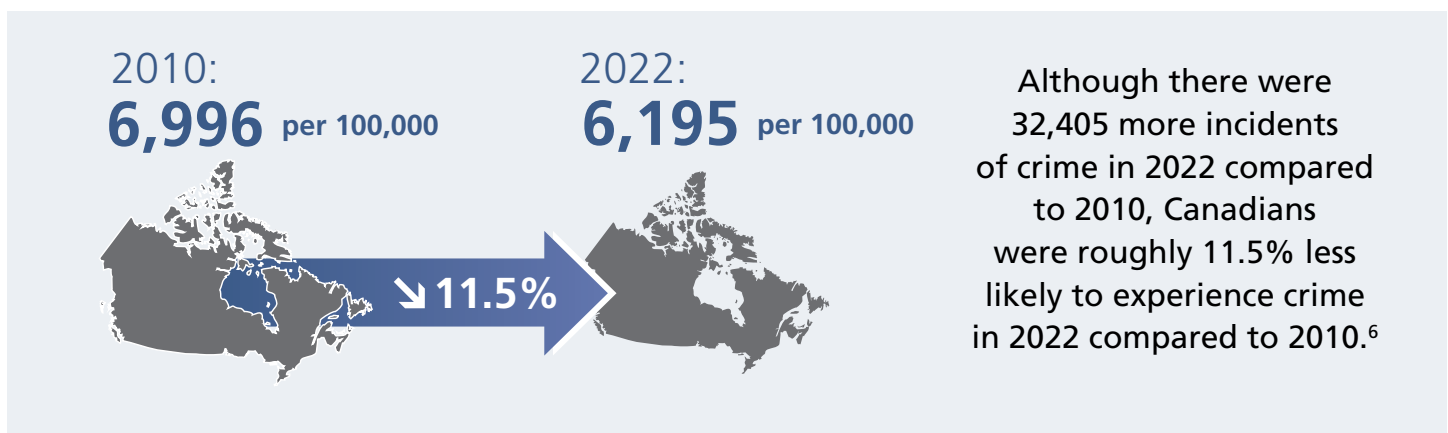Indeed, rates describe the **risk** that a member of that population group might be **victimized by a crime** or **commit a crime**.

In the CCRSO, figures or tables denoted as "*Rate per…*" depict population adjusted rate-based data.

Frequency (number) of crimes in Canada in 2010 vs. 2022

2010:
2,379,130

2022:
2,411,535

↗ **32,405**

This represents 32,405 more incidents of crime in 2022, compared to 2010.[5]

Rate (risk) of crimes in Canada in 2010 vs. 2022

2010:
6,996 per 100,000

2022:
6,195 per 100,000

↘ **11.5%**

Although there were 32,405 more incidents of crime in 2022 compared to 2010, Canadians were roughly 11.5% less likely to experience crime in 2022 compared to 2010.[6]

Remember!

Frequency and rate data **answer different policy questions** and so **inform policy and program responses to crime in different ways**.

[5] Statistics Canada (2023). Table 35-10-0177-01 Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, Canada, provinces, territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Canadian Forces Military Police. https://doi.org/10.25318/3510017701-eng

[6] Ibid.

Percentage Change:
Interpretation is Dependent on Event Frequency

Percentage Change:

Measures the **relative difference between two values in terms of percentage**. It is a statistical method commonly used to quantify the extent of change between one value and another. It can be **applied** to any **trend or event measured over time**. The formula for percentage change is:

$$\text{Percentage Change} = \frac{(\text{Value at Time 2} - \text{Value at Time 1})}{\text{Value at Time 1}} \times 100$$

Here is the formula applied to figure A3 of the CCRSO:

Number of police-reported non-sexual assaults in 2017 (225,350) vs. 2021 (266,020):

$$\text{Percentage Change} = \frac{(266,020 - 225,350)}{225,350} = \frac{40,670}{225,350} \times 100 = 18.0\%$$

Versus

Number of police-reported sexual assaults in 2017 (23,905) vs. 2021 (33,091):

$$\text{Percentage Change} = \frac{(33,091 - 23,905)}{23,905} = \frac{9,186}{23,905} \times 100 = 38.4\%$$

The interpretation of percentage change depends on context, and specifically, on the frequency of a particular event. Although the percentage increase of police-reported non-sexual assaults is **20.4% less** than the percentage increase of police-reported sexual assaults over the 5 years, the **increase of the absolute number of non-sexual assaults is 31,484 greater than sexual assaults:**

Because percentage change is heavily dependent on the absolute frequency of the respective event type (e.g., non-sexual assault vs. sexual assault), a comparison that is restricted to percentage increase may artificially bias interpretation of the actual magnitude of change – particularly in cases where there is a large discrepancy between the frequency of the respective events.

40,670
NON-SEXUAL
ASSAULTS

9,186
SEXUAL
ASSAULTS

Remember!

Be cautious when comparing differences in percentage change! With **high-frequency incidents**, even a substantial increase in absolute numbers may only lead to a **slight percentage increase**; conversely, a **lower-frequency incident** can lead to a more **significant percentage increase**. In other words, a given increase of X in the number of events will lead to a higher percentage increase in a low-frequency event than in a high-frequency event.

Trend Lines and Time Anchor Points

A **trend line** is a **visual representation of a dataset's underlying pattern or trend over time**.

A **time anchor** is a specific point that acts as a **reference or starting point for a trend analysis**. It can help assess changes or patterns in a dataset relative to that anchor point.

The choice of the anchor point depends on the goals of the analysis and the characteristics of the data.

The time anchor points that are chosen to be included in a trend line **affects how the data is understood**. Take for example, the following crime trend data interpretations, which use different **time anchor points**.

2000
1,494
2021
▼ **1,323**
-11.4%
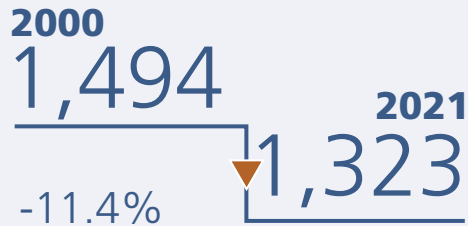
Between 2000 and 2021, the violent crime rate **decreased** (1,494 vs. 1,323 = 11.4% decrease).

2021
1,323
2014
1,044 ▲
+26.7%

Between 2014 and 2021, the violent crime rate **increased** (1,044 vs. 1,323 = 26.7% increase).

2008   **2021**
1,334 ▶ **1,323**
-0.8%
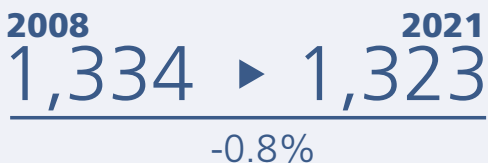
Between 2008 and 2021, the violent crime rate remained **relatively stable** (1,334 vs. 1,323 = 0.8% decrease – not a statistically significant change).

Remember!
All three statements above are accurate. However, they present very different conclusions about violent crime trends. Remember to **take note of the time anchor points for the data when interpreting a trend**.

Conclusion

We welcome your feedback on this product, which is a reflection of data contributions and insights of our valued partners including Correctional Service of Canada, Parole Board of Canada, the Office of the Correctional Investigator, and the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (Statistics Canada). Please reach out to the Research Division, Crime Prevention Branch, Public Safety Canada with any questions or comments that you might have, including suggestions for new CCRSO data literacy products!