

Concerns over crime climb to decade high; confidence in RCMP plummets below majority

Indigenous and visible minorities voice lower levels of confidence in RCMP

October 13, 2022 – As reported violent crimes continue to tick upward across the country, Canadians have taken notice, and their concern about community crime rates has hit its highest point in a decade of Angus Reid tracking.

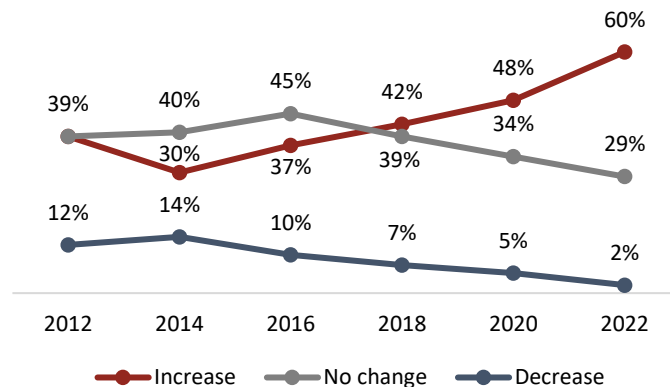
New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds three-in-five Canadians (60%) believe there has been more crime in their community over the last five years. That sentiment is twice as common as it was in 2014, when three-in-ten (30%) believed crime was increasing where they lived.

Notably, while violent crime has risen since 2014, other forms of crime have remained stable, or even dropped precipitously.

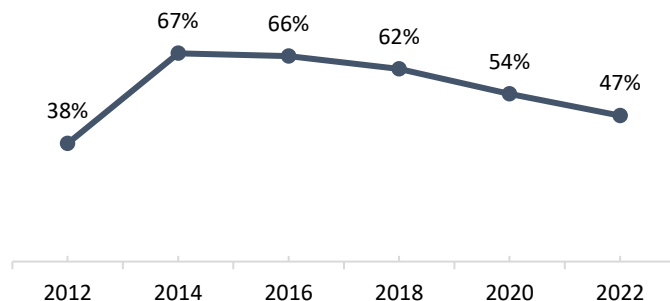
As concern over crime climbs, confidence is low in some of the country's key institutions of justice. A declining number of Canadians profess confidence in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Half (47%) say this, while as many do not (45%). As recently as 2014, two-thirds (67%) of Canadians said they had complete or a lot of confidence in that institution. Trust is even lower in the provincial criminal courts. More than half (55%) of Canadians say they do not trust the criminal courts in their home province.

However, a perception of increased crime around them stands in juxtaposition to Canadians' own experiences. Despite widespread belief that crime is increasing, the number of Canadians reporting being a victim of a crime over the past two years has not changed. Indeed, this number is the same now as it was in 2018 (13%).

Over the past five years or so, would you say there has been an increase, decrease, or no change in the amount of crime in your community?



Percentage who have "complete confidence" or "a lot of confidence" in RCMP



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from Sept. 19-22, 2022 among a representative randomized sample of 5,014 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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More Key Findings:

- Three-quarters of Canadians (74%) say their neighbourhood is a safe place to walk alone after dark. This rises to 86 per cent among rural Canadians and drops to 72 per cent among urbanites. Winnipeg residents feel least safe – two-in-five (41%) say they do not feel comfortable walking alone at night. Overall, this represents a seven-point decline from [2015](#), when four-in-five (81%) Canadians said they felt safe walking alone after dark in their neighbourhood.
- Three-in-five (57%) respondents who identify as Indigenous say they do not have confidence in the RCMP. Half (48%) of those who identify as visible minorities, and more than two-in-five (43%) non-visible minorities say the same.
- Confidence in local police detachments is much higher among those over the age of 54 (62%) than those aged 18- to 34-years-old (39%).

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

Note: Because its small population precludes drawing discrete samples over multiple waves, data on Prince Edward Island is not released.

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Part One: Perceptions of crime in Canadian communities

Perceptions of crime are oftentimes divorced from reality. High-profile incidents of horrific tragedy like the [mass killing](#) that took place on James Smith Cree Nation over Labour Day, or the shooting that [killed 22 people in Nova Scotia](#) in April 2020, may loom large in the minds of residents. For some, these are

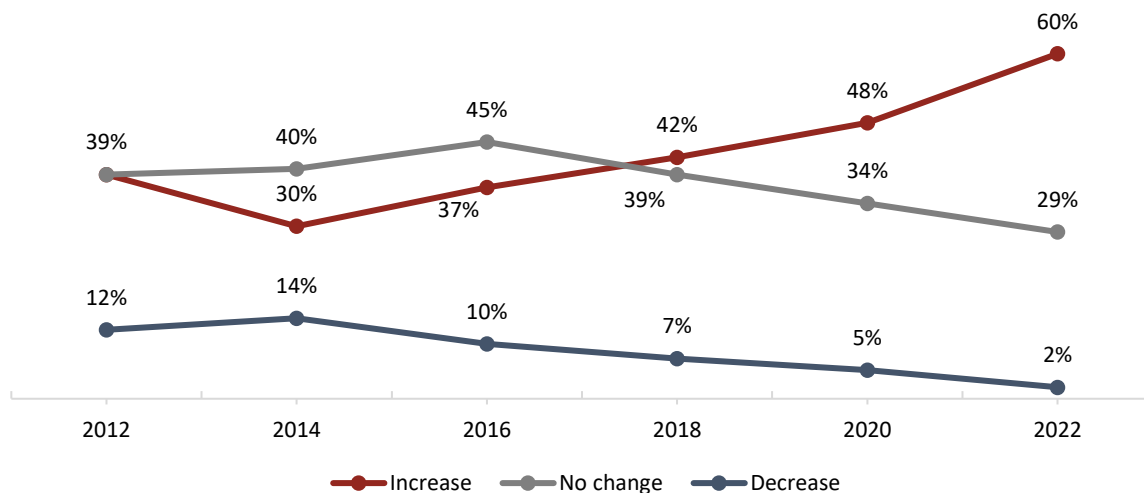
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isolated incidents of tragedy. For others, they are the most conspicuous stories in a country that is perceived as becoming more violent while law enforcement is unable to stop it.

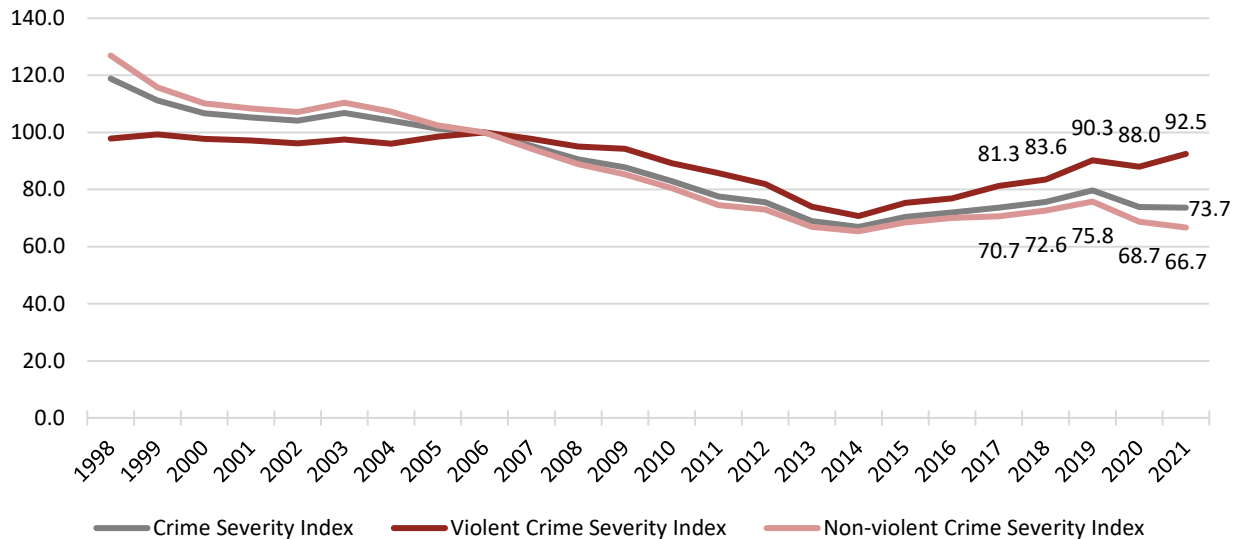
Perceptions can be a valuable tool in tracking the sentiment surrounding crime. While official reports indicate that crime rates are stable, most Canadians are perceiving an increase in crime. Three-in-five (60%) say that crime in their community has increased over the past five years, the highest level in a decade of tracking:

Over the past five years or so, would you say there has been an increase, decrease, or no change in the amount of crime in your community?



Statistics Canada's [Crime Severity Index](#) (CSI), which measures both the volume and severity of crimes in Canada that are reported to police, was stable from 2020 to 2021. The five-year trend finds violent crime up, and a slight increase in the CSI overall from 73.6 in 2017 to 73.7 in 2021. Notably, after dropping consistently from 1998 to 2014, violent crime has risen over the past eight years:

Crime Severity Index in Canada over time
Source: Statistics Canada



Reporting of crime is also a factor that can confound the true picture in Canada. Previous studies have confirmed that the vast majority of crimes are not, in fact, reported to the police:

“In 2019, about three in ten (29%) Canadians indicated that the victimization that they or their household experienced was reported to police. Reporting varied widely depending on the type of crime, from about half of all motor vehicle thefts, break and enters, and robberies, to 6% of sexual assaults.” – [Statistics Canada](#)

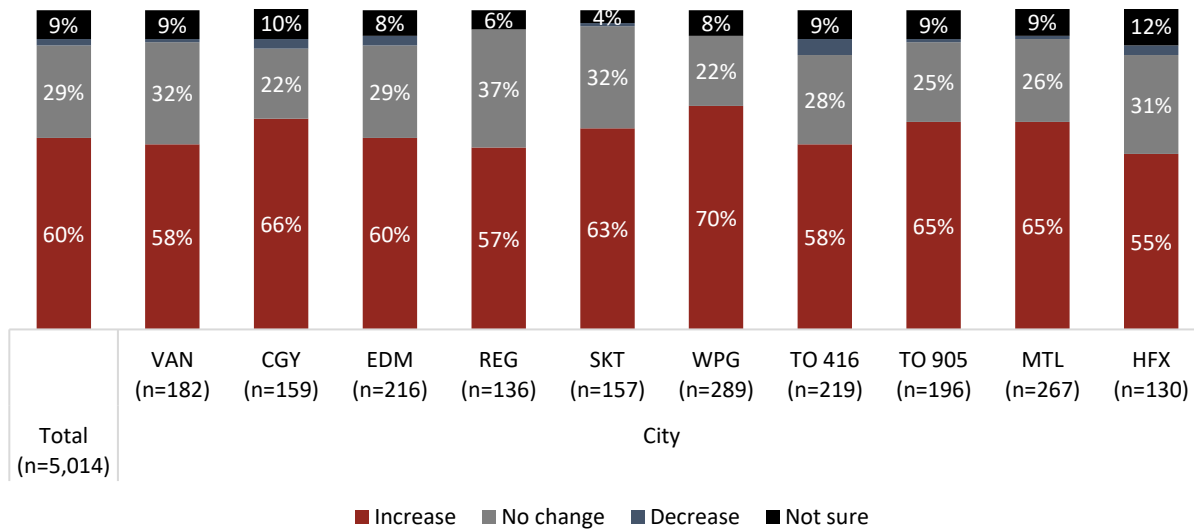
Crime in urban centres

Scanning across some of Canada’s largest metropolitan centres, most urbanites feel that crime in their community is rising. This is most pronounced in Winnipeg, where seven-in-ten say crime is increasing where they live. Aptly, that city **ranked highest** among those included in this study on the CSI. Only Kelowna, B.C. and Lethbridge, Alta. had higher crime rates in 2021.

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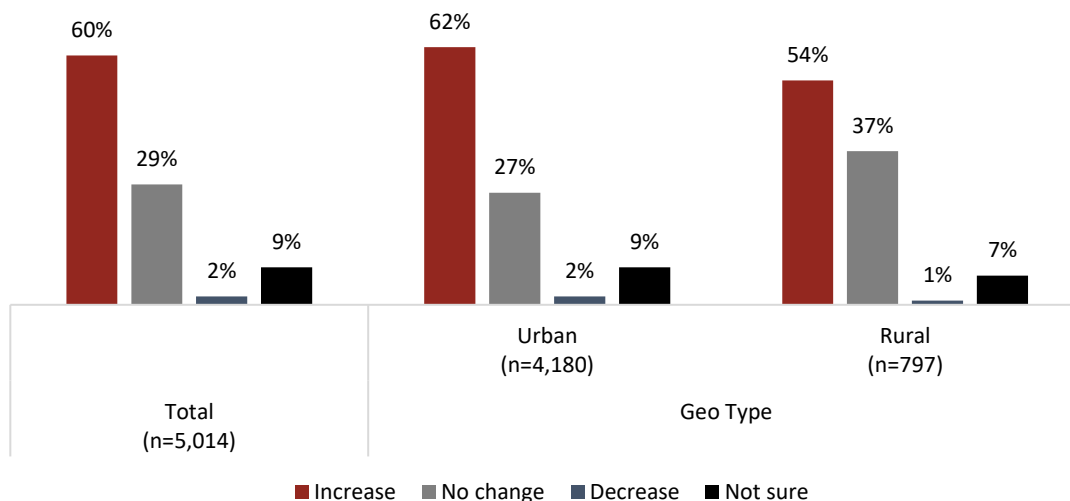
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Over the past five years or so, would you say there has been an increase, decrease, or no change in the amount of crime in your community?



Rural spaces in the country are not immune from this perception of rising crime, though respondents in these parts of the country are less likely to say crime is increasing in their community and more likely to say it is unchanged:

Over the past five years or so, would you say there has been an increase, decrease, or no change in the amount of crime in your community?



Provincial results

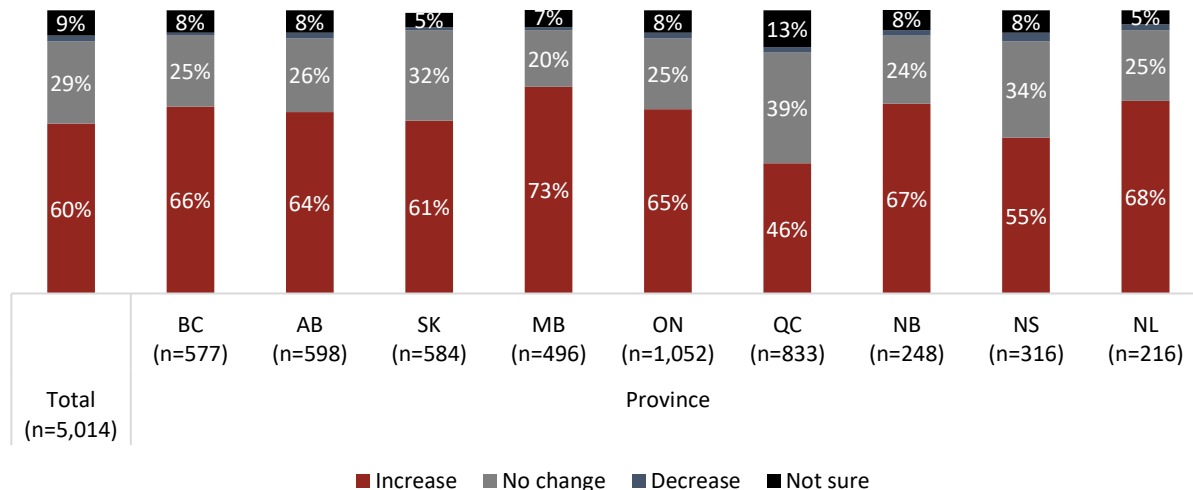
Across the country, more than half in every province except Quebec believe crime is rising in their community. Manitobans are the most likely to say this at nearly three-quarters (73%). While a plurality in

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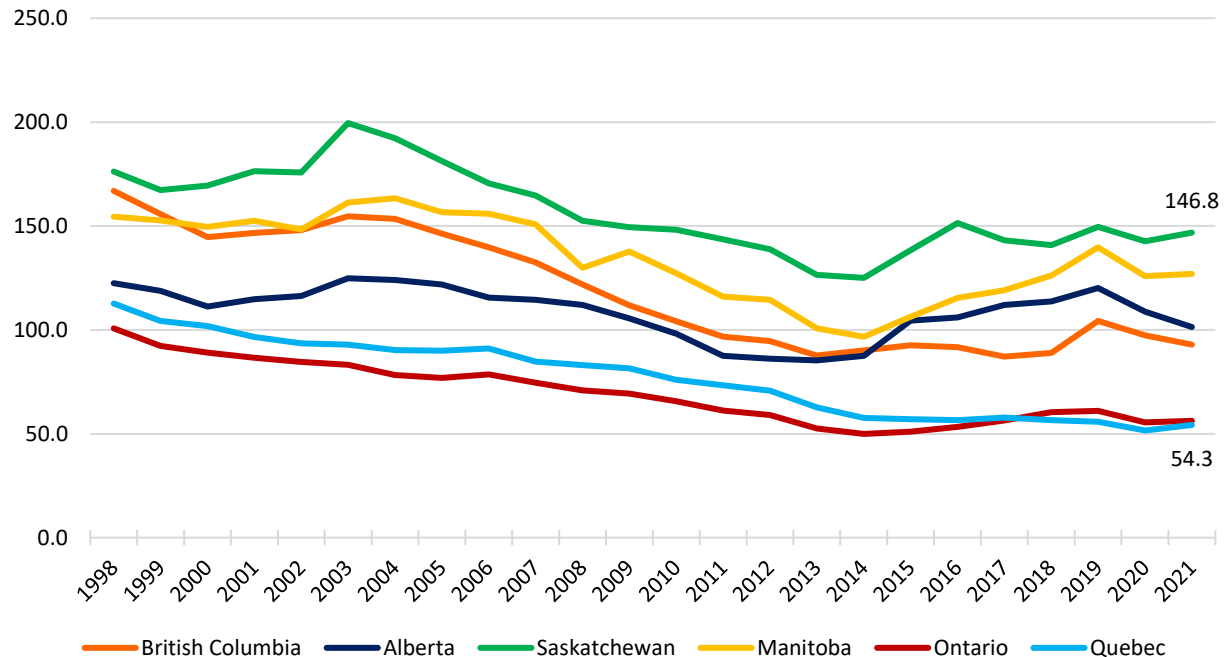
Quebec believe crime is increasing in their communities, two-in-five (39%) in that province believe the level of crime is stable, the most of any region in the country:

Over the past five years or so, would you say there has been an increase, decrease, or no change in the amount of crime in your community?



Indeed, by Statistics Canada’s Crime Severity Index, Quebec has some of the lowest levels of crime in the country, seeing consistent decline over the past 25 years. Manitoba, meanwhile, has the second highest rating on the index in the country behind Saskatchewan.

Crime Severity Index by province over time
Source: Statistics Canada

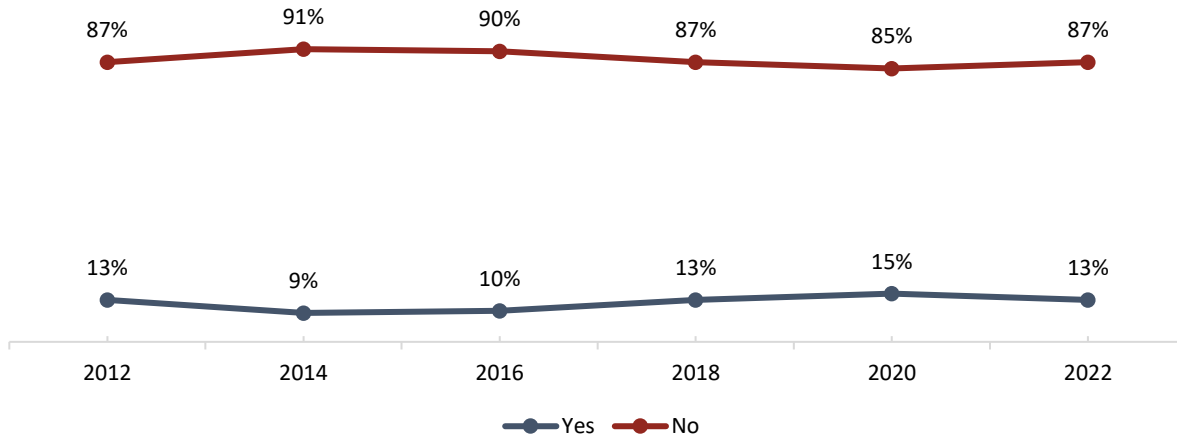


Concerns in both New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador are among the highest in the country. This is more of a reality in New Brunswick than in Newfoundland and Labrador, however. Moncton ranks fourth in the country behind only Lethbridge, Alta., Kelowna, B.C., and Winnipeg, Man. [in having the highest CSI rating.](#)

Part Two: Personal exposure to crime

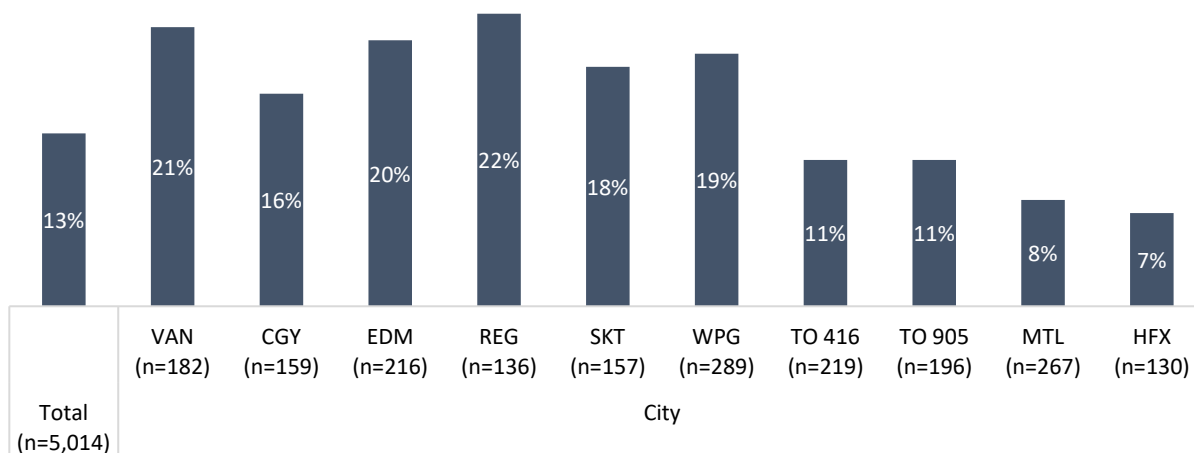
While Canadians are more likely to believe crime is increasing in their communities, personal levels of exposure to crime have remained stable. One-in-eight (13%) say they have been the victim of a crime which was reported to the police in the past two years, a figure consistent in the last six years. Notably, in Angus Reid [data from 1994](#), twice as many Canadians reported being victims of crime:

In the past two years, have you yourself been a victim of crime which involved the police, such as an assault, a break-in or some other type of crime?



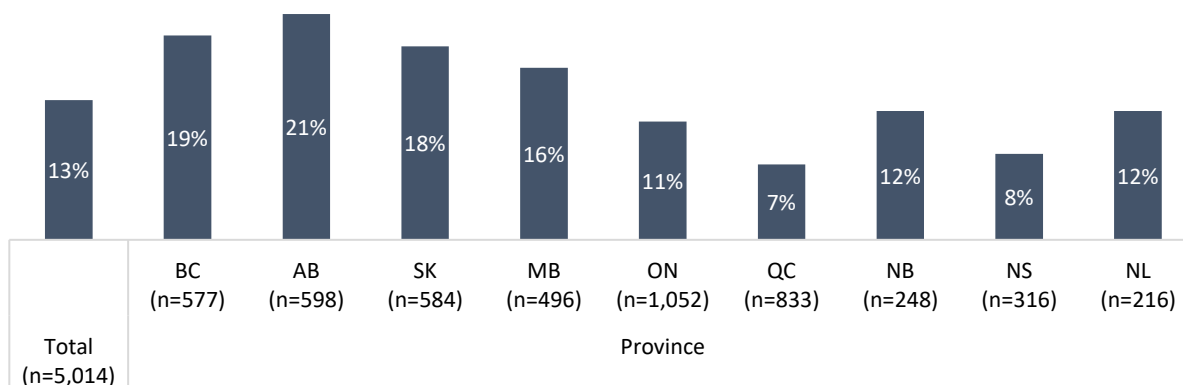
One-in-five who live in Vancouver (21%), Edmonton (20%), Regina (22%), Saskatoon (18%) and Winnipeg (19%) say they have been the victim of a police-reported crime in the past two years. This is double the rate of those who live in Toronto (11%), Montreal (8%) or Halifax (7%):

Percent who say they've been the victim of crime in past two years



The provincial picture is somewhat reflective of each province's urban centres. Notably, however, personal experience with crime appears to be more common in the western Canadian provinces than the eastern ones:

Percent who say they've been the victim of crime in past two years



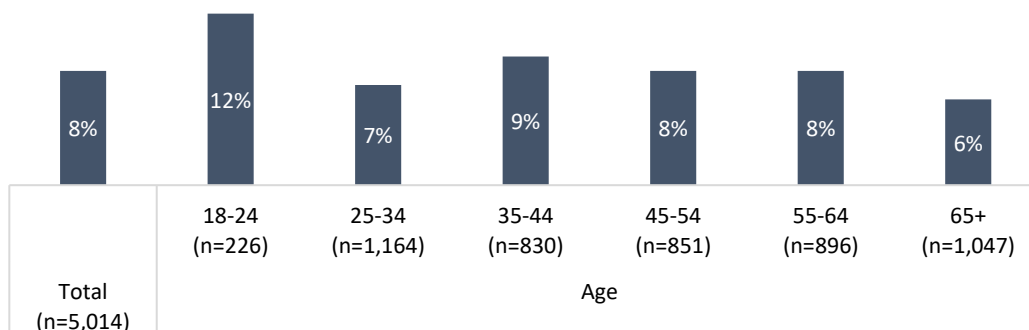
What about online crime?

Though crime overall may be relatively stable according to Statistics Canada, reported cybercrime has been increasing significantly in the last five years. According to Statistics Canada data, police-reported cybercrime has more than doubled since 2017. Among respondents to this survey, close to one-in-ten (8%) say they have been the victim of a police-reported cybercrime in the last two years.

Note: respondents were asked to consider online crime including criminal harassment or threats, hacking, ransomware, or some other type of crime that occurred in this environment.

There is significant variation of experience depending on the age of the respondent. Adults under the age of 25 are the most likely to report being the victim of cybercrime, at 12 per cent. Those over the age of 64 report cybercrime victimization at half the rate (6%):

Percent who say they have been a victim of cybercrime in the last two years



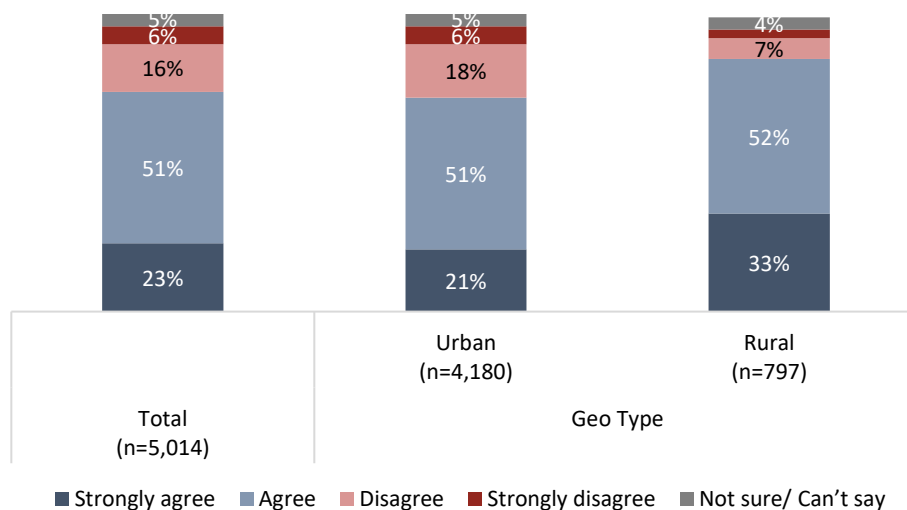
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Rural neighbourhoods viewed as much safer after dark

Perception of crime is one way to measure Canadians' thoughts around the safety of their community. Another is to ask them how safe they feel walking in the dark. On the latter, Canadians on balance feel their neighbourhoods are safe places for nighttime walks. Three-quarters (74%) say this, including seven-in-ten (72%) who live in urban areas. Canadians who live in rural areas are more comfortable in the dark in their neighbourhoods. Nearly nine-in-ten (86%) say it is safe to walk in their rural community alone at night:

Overall, do you agree or disagree that your neighbourhood is a safe place to walk around alone after dark?

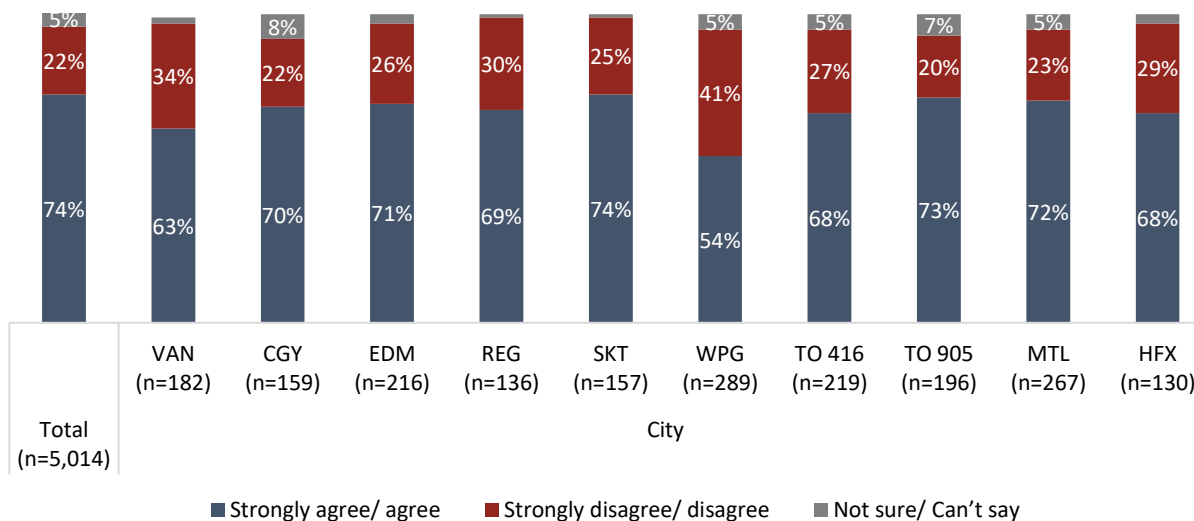


Winnipeggers are the least likely to feel safe walking in their communities alone at night, at two-in-five (41%). Still, more than half (54%) in that city believe the opposite. Those in Saskatoon (74%), the 905 area code of Toronto (73%) and Montreal (72%) are the most likely to feel safe alone in their city at night:

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Overall, do you agree or disagree that your neighbourhood is a safe place to walk around alone after dark?



Part Three: Confidence in justice system

In the last few years, police in Canada have been under increasing scrutiny as critics have pushed for the reallocation of police funds to other services.

Related: [Defend or Defund? One-in-four support cutting local police budgets](#)

The RCMP specifically has seen its reputation questioned in the wake of the 2020 Nova Scotia shootings. Ben Perryman, speaking at the public inquiry into the shootings on behalf of the BC Civil Liberties Association, said the RCMP [has repeatedly avoided](#) accountability for its mistakes in response to the mass shooting.

Meanwhile, Canada’s courts have not escaped criticism. After this year’s stabbings in Saskatchewan, many [asked questions](#) as to how individuals with a history of violence such as Myles Sanderson are allowed to be at large with [an active warrant](#). Alberta’s Justice Minister Tyler Shandro [called for](#) longer sentences for violent criminals, and a change to the bail system after the attack. However, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association [argued](#) that longer sentences do not in fact reduce crime.

Views of police

Canadians were asked to assess their personal confidence in five different elements of the justice system: the RCMP overall, provincial police (if applicable), the local police or RCMP detachment, provincial criminal courts and the Supreme Court of Canada. Approaching half (47%) say they have confidence in the RCMP overall, while nearly as many (45%) do not. Canadians’ confidence in their local police is higher (51%), though a significant proportion – two-in-five (41%) – do not trust that branch of justice.

Confidence also slightly outweighs the lack of it for the Supreme Court of Canada (48% confident, 43% not). The opposite is true of provincial courts – more than half (55%) say they aren’t confident in that element of Canadian justice, outweighing those who profess confidence (36%) in that institution:

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**How much confidence do you have in each of these elements of the Canadian justice system?
(Percent who have confidence shown)**

	Total (n=5,014)	Province								
		BC (577)	AB (598)	SK (584)	MB (496)	ON (1052)	QC (833)	NB (248)	NS (316)	NL (216)
The RCMP	47%	45%	42%	48%	42%	40%	62%	44%	34%	45%
Your provincial police force	56%	-	-	-	-	51%	65%	-	-	41%
Your local municipal police (or local RCMP detachment)	51%	50%	48%	53%	42%	48%	62%	51%	39%	42%
Criminal courts in your province	36%	24%	28%	31%	25%	34%	52%	34%	36%	25%
The Supreme Court of Canada	48%	39%	38%	41%	38%	48%	59%	46%	46%	46%

A decade ago, most Canadians expressed [a lack of confidence](#) in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This, after a number of scandals and investigations, including allegations that RCMP leadership had [covered up](#) pension fraud, as well as inquiries into police mismanagement of the case of serial killer Robert Pickton and abuse of power in other B.C. cases.

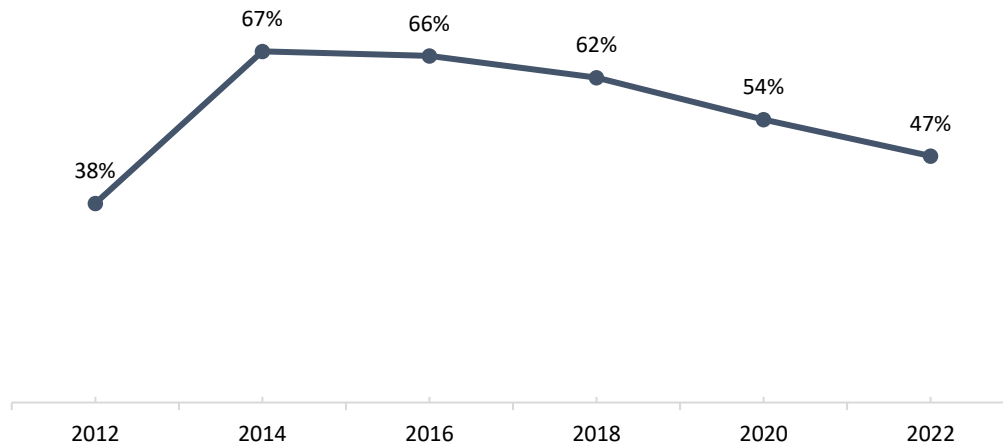
By 2014, however, Angus Reid found confidence in the RCMP to have improved significantly, to a level that remained consistent through 2016. Confidence has been diminishing precipitously since then. Claims of [“racism, misogyny, and homophobia”](#) in the ranks, \$200 million in [sexual assault claim settlements](#), and an inquiry into a mass shooting response in Nova Scotia which the RCMP’s lawyer argued was [“far from perfect”](#), have contributed to drive confidence in the force down 19 points over the past six years.

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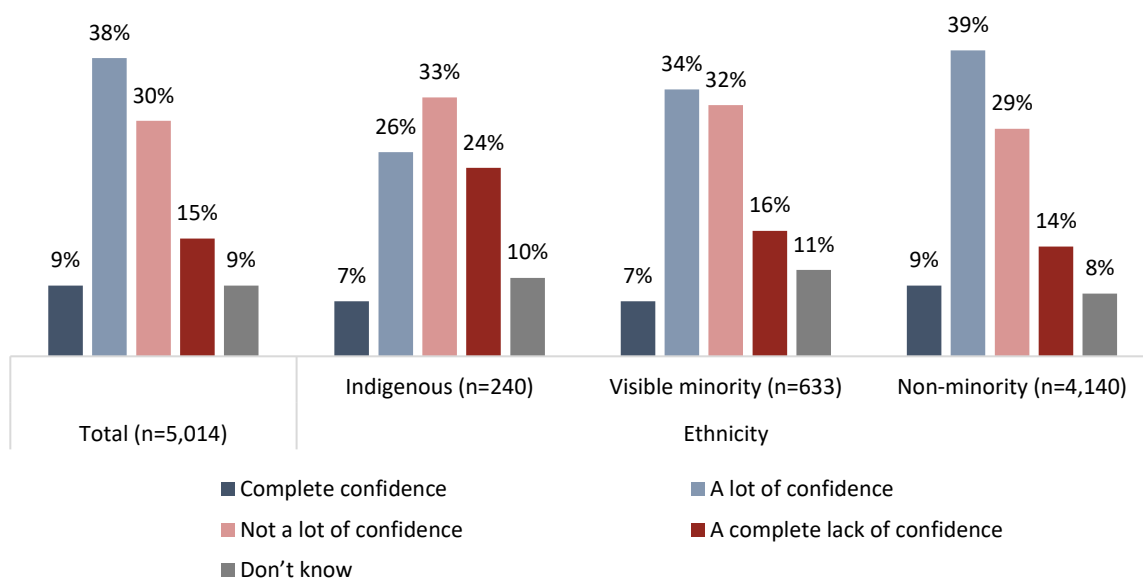
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How much confidence would you say you have in the RCMP? (those saying "complete confidence" or "a lot of confidence shown")



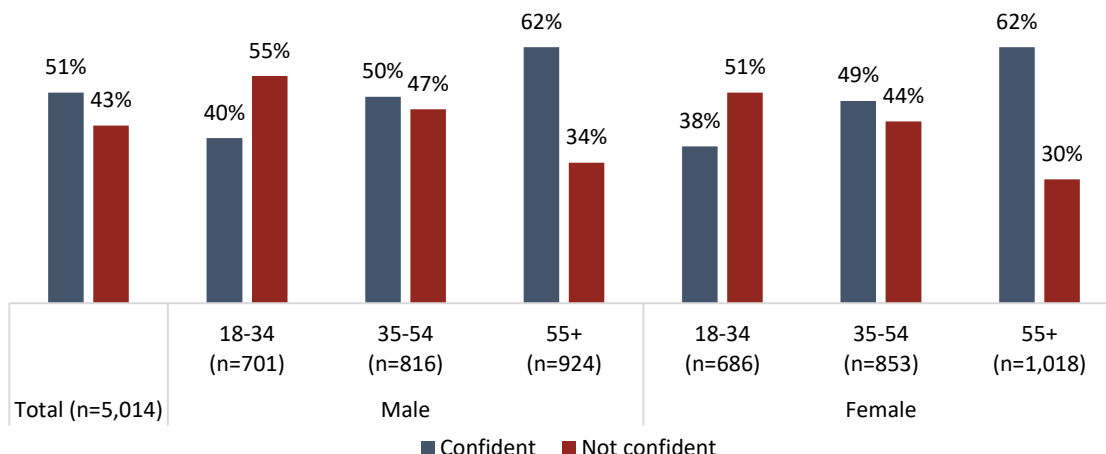
Confidence is even lower among Indigenous respondents than visible minorities and non minorities. One-in-three say they have confidence (33%) while 57 per cent do not. Canadians who do not identify as visible minorities are the only group who are more confident than not:

How much confidence do you have in the RCMP?



While confidence is higher for local detachments of the police, it varies significantly depending on the age of the respondent. Canadians over the age of 54 are much more likely to profess confidence in local police than those aged 18- to 34-years-old:

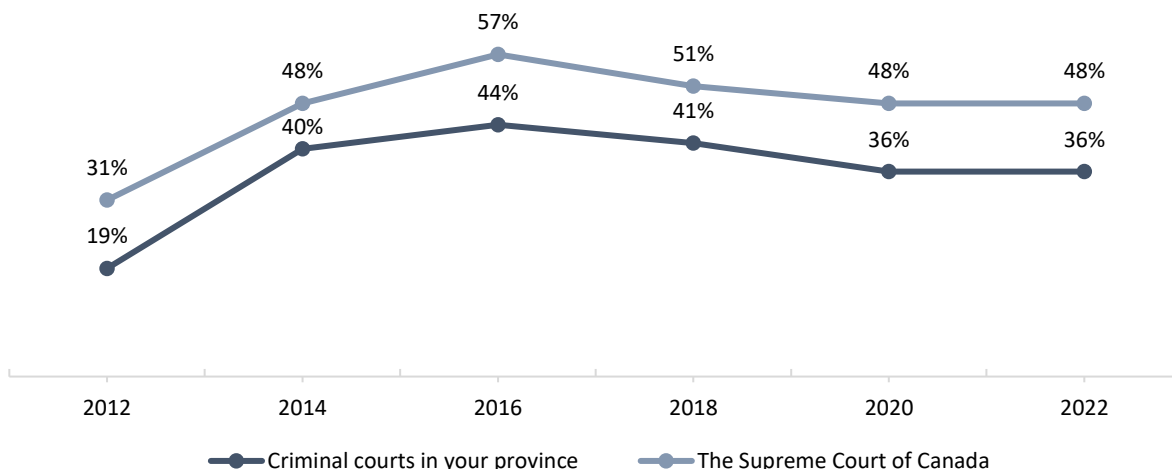
How much confidence do you have in your local municipal police (or local RCMP detachment)?



Views of courts

Confidence in the courts has stayed flat since 2020. However, this represents a decline from a high in 2016, when approaching three-in-five (57%) say they had confidence in the Supreme Court of Canada, and more than two-in-five (44%) said so of provincial courts:

**How much confidence do you have in each of these elements of the Canadian justice system?
(Percent who have confidence shown)**

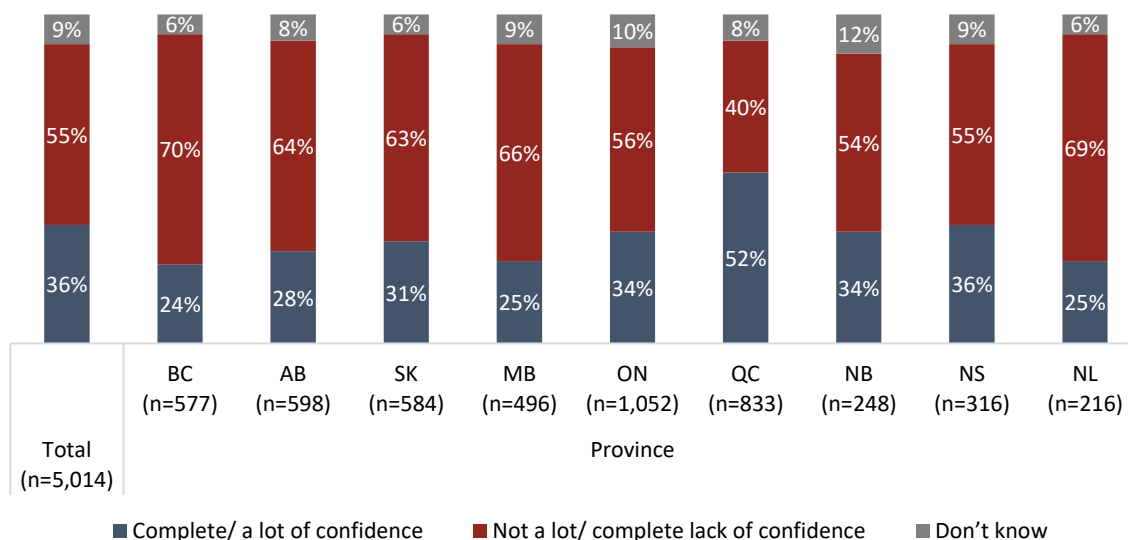


More than half of Quebecers say they have confidence in their provincial courts, the only province where this is the case. One-quarter in B.C. (24%), Manitoba (25%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (25%) would agree, the lowest measure in the country:

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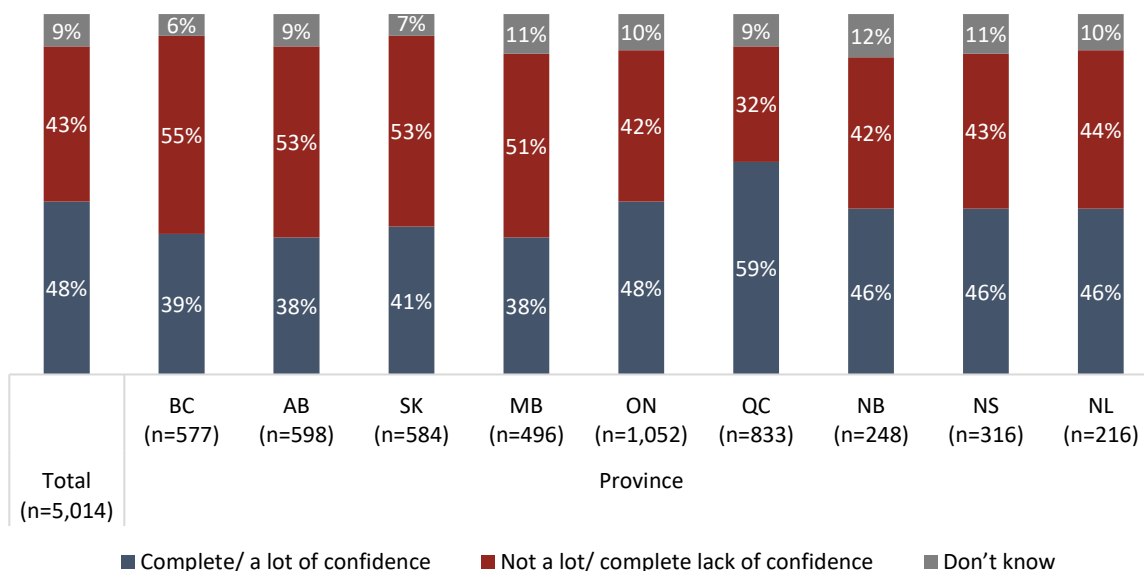
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How much confidence do you have in... criminal courts in your province?



Quebecers, too, lead the country in confidence in the highest court in Canada. Three-in-five (59%) in that province say they trust the Supreme Court of Canada:

How much confidence do you have in... the Supreme Court of Canada?



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

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