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Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics



Statistics Canada – Catalogue no. 85-002-XIE Vol. 21 no. 11

CRIME COMPARISONS BETWEEN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

by Maire Gannon

Highlights

- A comparison of police-reported crime rates between Canada and the United States for 2000 shows that the U.S. has much higher rates of violent crime, while Canada generally has higher rates of property crime. Despite differences in rates, trends in crime between the two countries have been quite similar over the past twenty years.
- In Canada, there were 542 homicides in 2000 resulting in a national rate of 1.8 homicides per 100,000 population. By comparison, there were 15,517 homicides in the U.S., resulting in a rate (5.5) three times higher than Canada's.
- Both countries have seen a decline in the number of homicides during the past decade, particularly in the U.S. Twenty years ago, the American homicide rate was about four times that of Canada.
- Similarly, the aggravated assault rate in the U.S. was more than double the Canadian rate in 2000. The U.S. also showed a higher rate of robbery (65% higher) than Canada. About 41% of robberies in the U.S. involved a firearm, compared to 16% in Canada.
- Canada reported higher rates for three of the four comparable property offences. There were about 30% more break-ins and motor vehicle thefts per capita in Canada than the U.S. in 2000. While Canada has had a higher rate of break-ins since the early 1980s, the motor vehicle theft rate has only surpassed the American rate over the last five years. The arson rate in Canada was 40% higher than in the U.S., while the U.S. reported 11% more thefts per capita than Canada.
- In examining arrest/charge data, the U.S. had much higher rates for drug offences, impaired driving and prostitution.
- The report also compares crime rates among the nine largest metropolitan areas in each country. With the exception of Boston, the remaining eight large American metropolitan areas had homicide rates much higher than any of the nine largest Canadian metropolitan areas. Conversely, Vancouver and Winnipeg reported higher rates of break-ins and motor vehicle thefts than any of the nine American metropolitan areas.



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