



Statistics
Canada Statistique
Canada

Impaired driving statistics



Telling Canada's
story in numbers

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Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

Standing Senate Committee on Legal
and Constitutional Affairs
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Canada



Key points

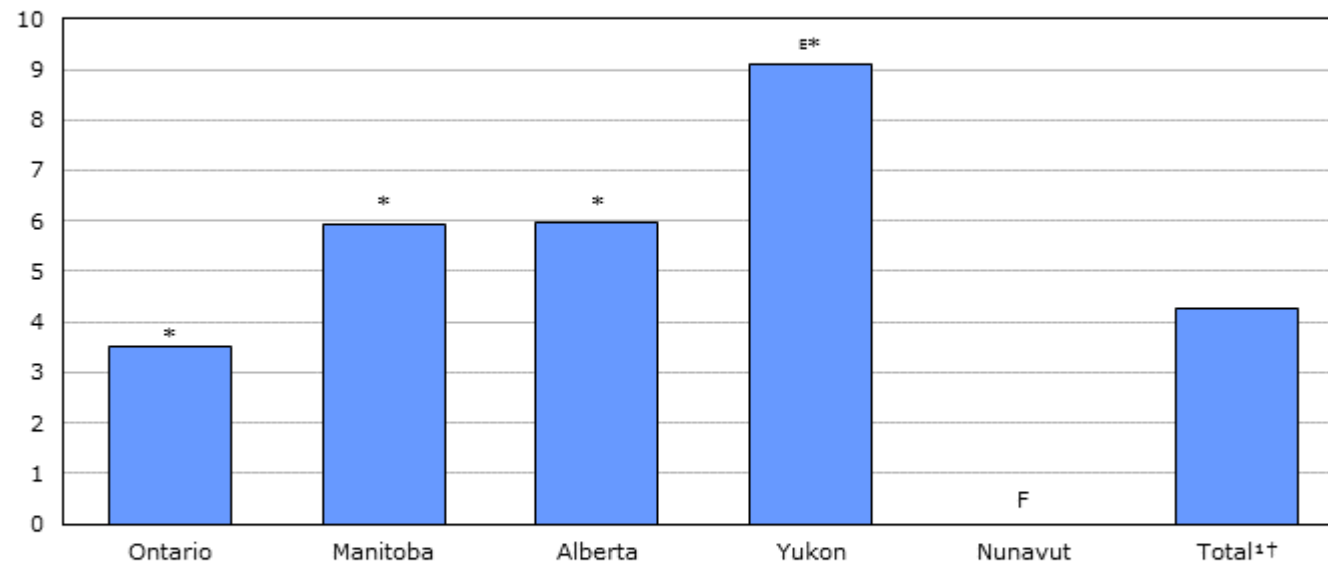
- While a very small proportion (4 %) of drivers' report that they drive while impaired, the majority of them are repeat offenders, and many report other at-risk driving behaviours, such as:
 - being the passenger of an impaired driver,
 - driving faster or more aggressively than average,
 - not using seatbelt, and
 - using a cell-phone while driving.
- Police-reported impaired driving rate decreased sharply, but it is still one of the most frequent crimes. Declines in recent years were more pronounced among young drivers, males and during the night; categories which are frequently targeted by campaigns and policies (e.g. zero-tolerance for young drivers).
- Drug-impaired drivers are less likely than alcohol-impaired drivers to be charged by police. When going to court, their cases take more than twice the time as alcohol-impaired to be completed and they are less likely to get a guilty verdict.



About 1 in 20 drivers report having driven while impaired in the past year

Proportion of drivers who reported having driven an on-road vehicle after consuming two drinks in the preceding hour, in the previous 12 months, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, Yukon and Nunavut, 2014

percent



E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

* value significantly different from the reference category estimate ($p < 0.05$)

† reference category

1. Includes all provinces and territories that participated in the Canadian Community Health Survey driving module.

Note: Calculation of percentages is based on persons who reported having driven an on-road vehicle at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey.

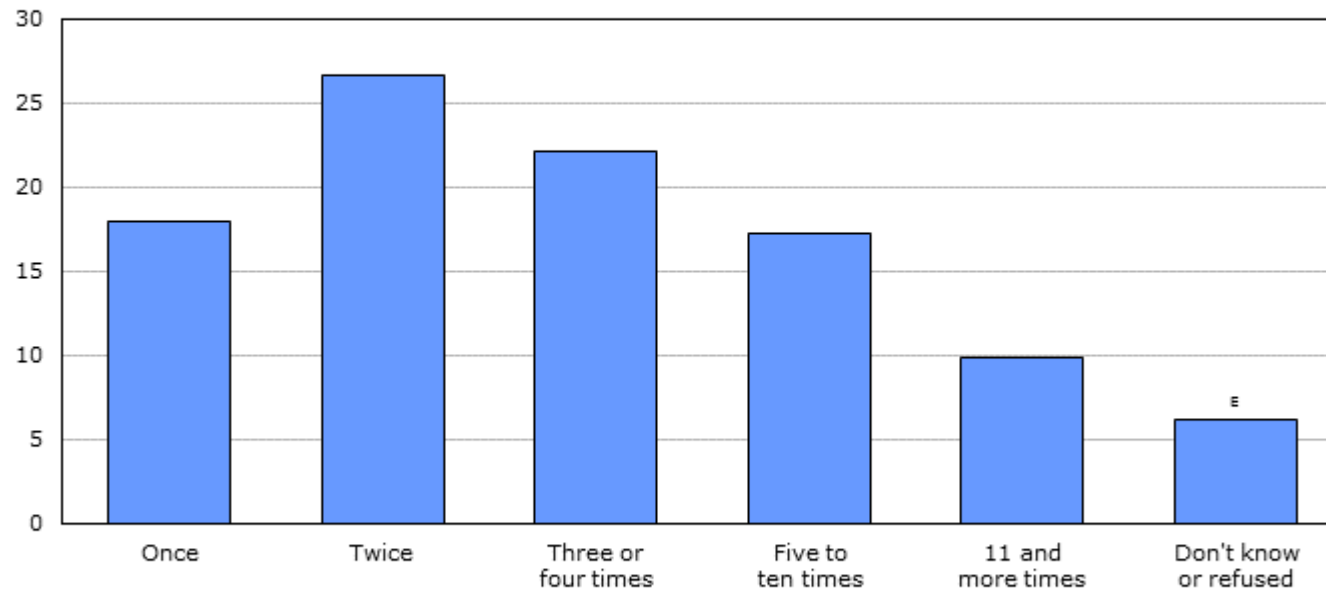
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, 2014.



Vast majority of persons who drove while impaired did so more than once in the past year

Proportion of drivers who reported having driven an on-road vehicle after consuming two drinks in the preceding hour, by the number of times in the previous 12 months, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, Yukon and Nunavut, 2014

percent



^E use with caution

Note: Calculation of percentages is based on persons who reported having driven an on-road vehicle at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey.

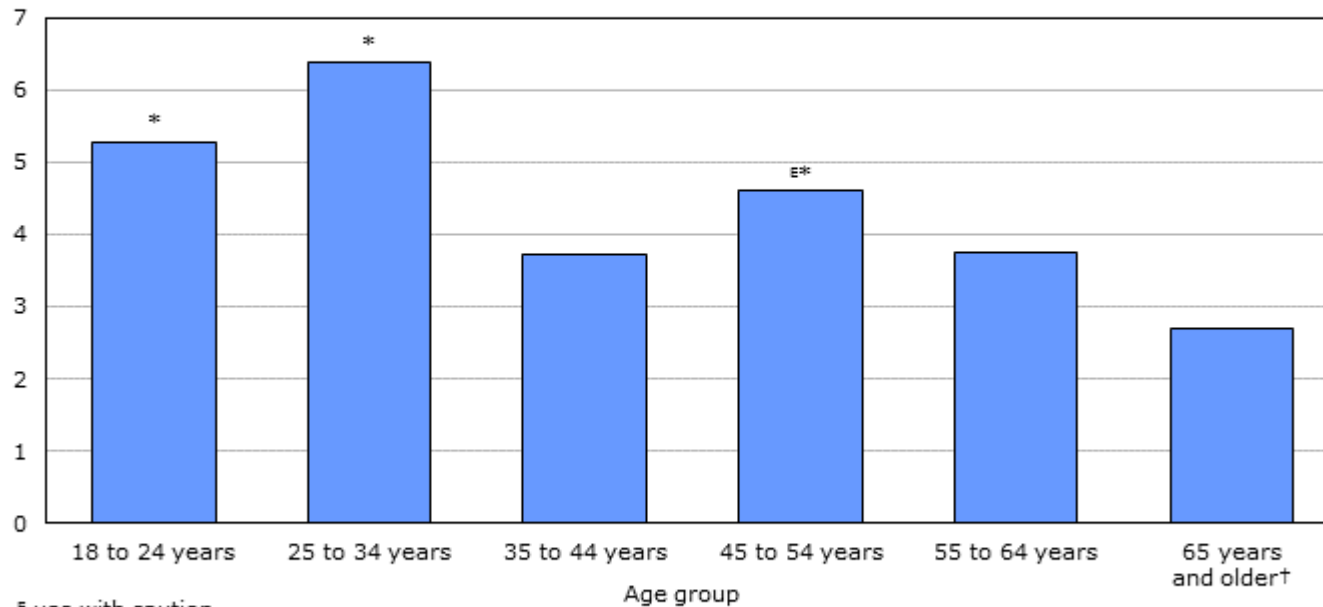
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, 2014.



Impaired driving associated with other at-risk driving behaviours

Proportion of drivers who reported having driven an on-road vehicle after consuming two drinks in the preceding hour, in the previous 12 months, by age group, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, Yukon and Nunavut, 2014

percent



‡ use with caution

* value significantly different from the reference category estimate ($p < 0.05$)

† reference category

Note: Calculation of percentages is based on persons who reported having driven an on-road vehicle at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey.

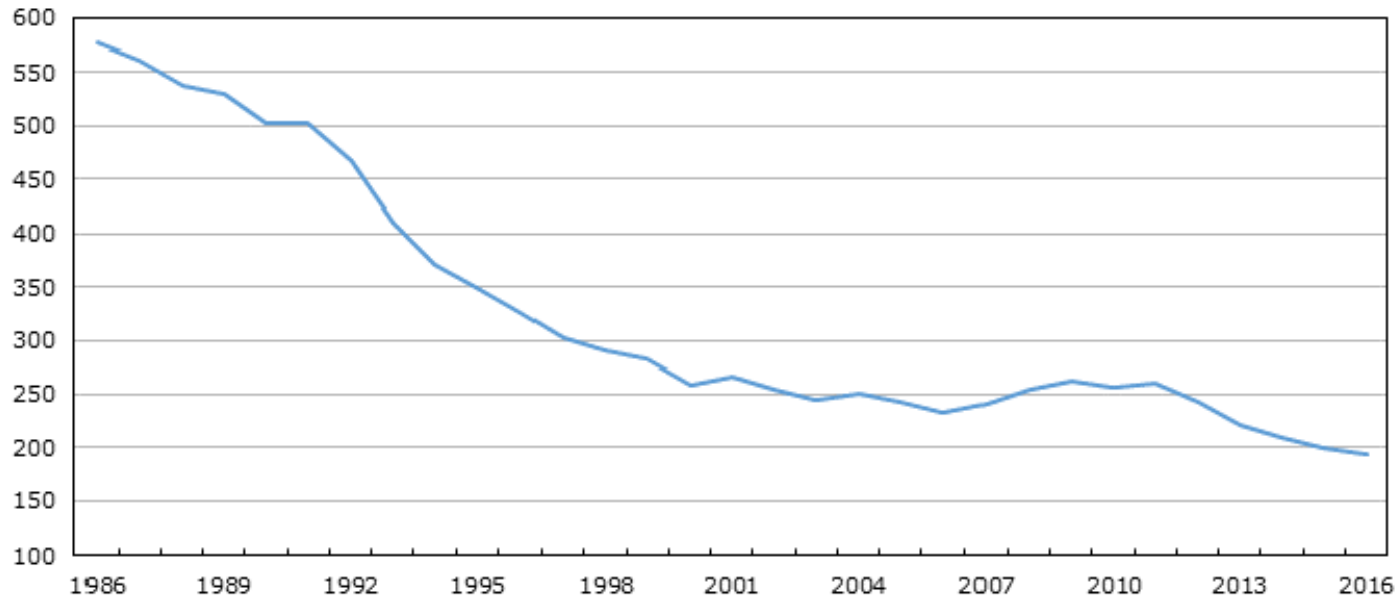
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, 2014.



Police-reported impaired driving rates declined sharply over the past 30 years

Impaired driving rate, Canada, 1986 to 2016

rate per 100,000 population



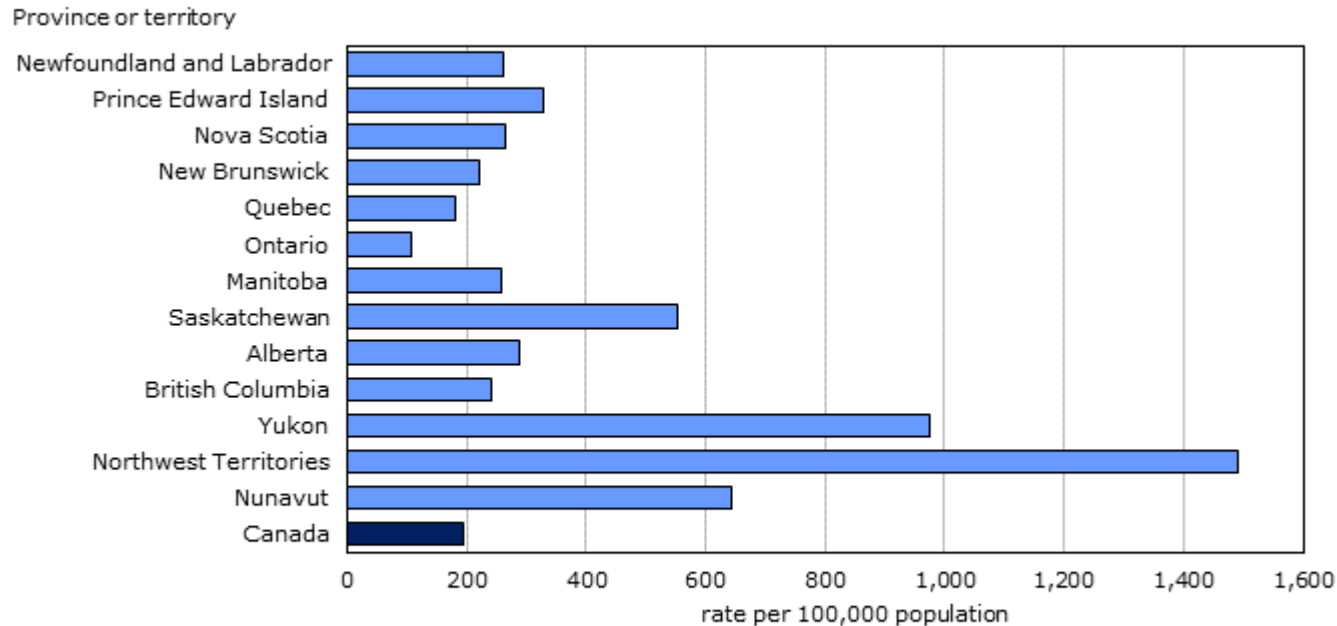
Note: The different ways in which police services deal with traffic violations can impact police-reported statistics. Counts are based on the most serious offence in the incident. One incident can involve more than one traffic violation under the *Criminal Code*. Populations are based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.



Police-reported impaired driving rate highest in the territories and Saskatchewan, lowest in Ontario and Quebec

Impaired driving rate, by province or territory, 2016



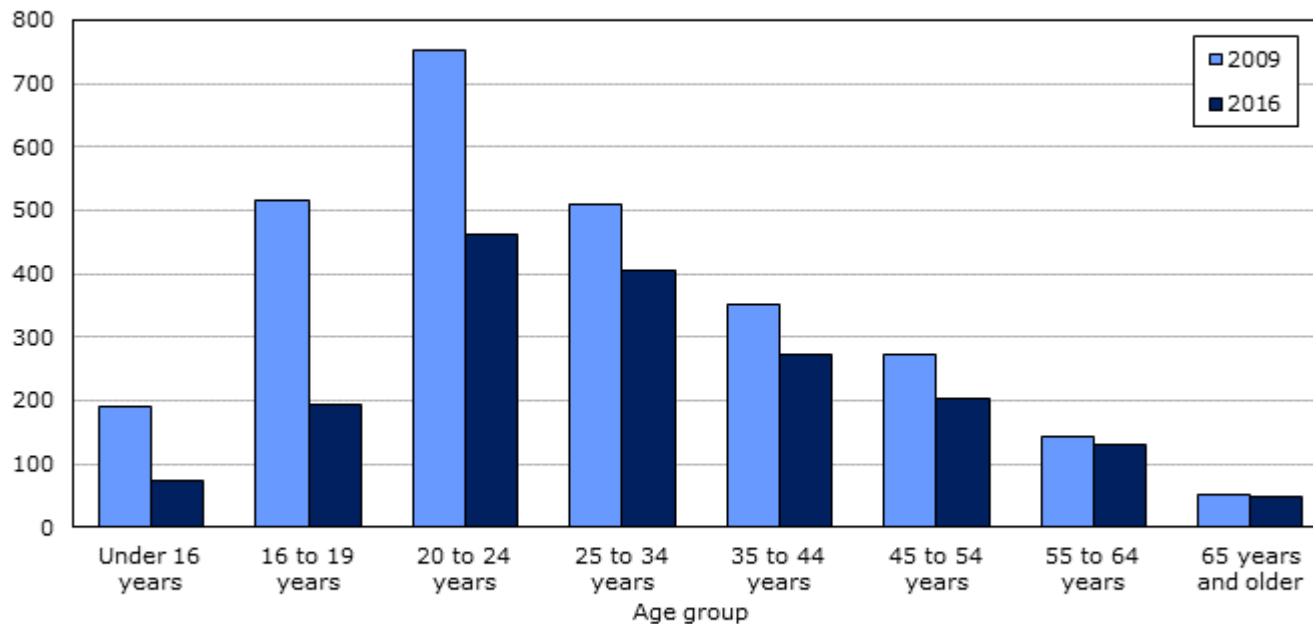
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Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.



Police-reported impaired driving rates decreased for all age groups, with those under 20 showing largest decrease

Impaired driving accused, by age group, Canada, 2009 and 2016

rate per 100,000
licensed drivers



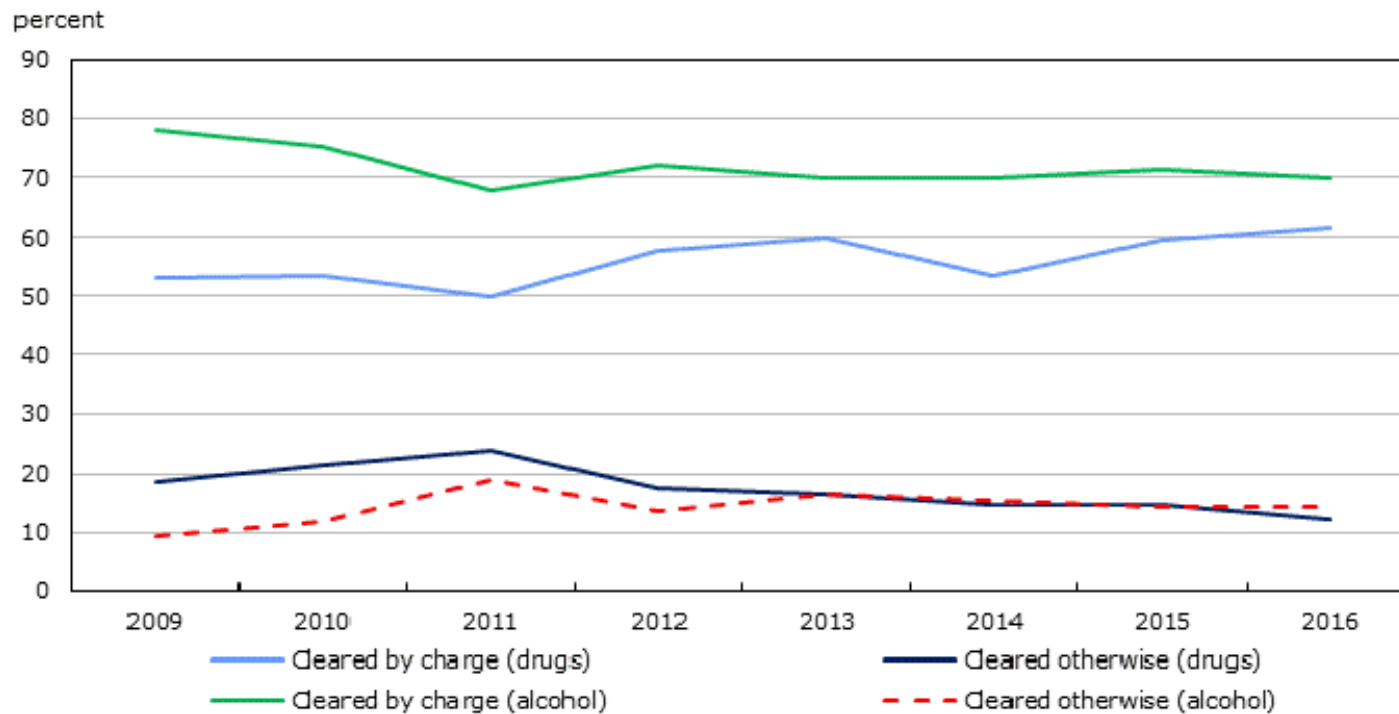
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Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.



Alcohol-impaired drivers more likely to be charged than drug-impaired drivers

Proportion of impaired driving incidents, by clearance status and substance causing impairment, 2009 to 2016

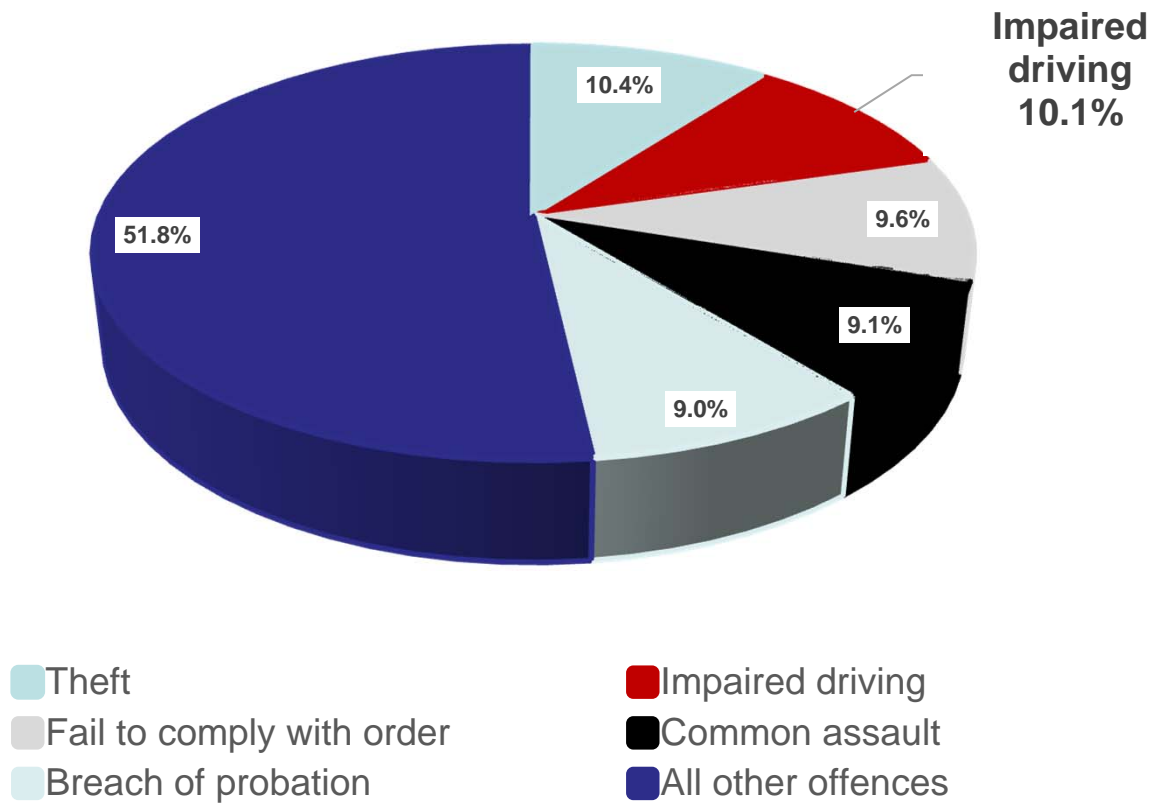


Note: The different ways in which police services deal with traffic violations can impact police-reported statistics. Counts are based on the most serious offence in the incident. One incident can involve more than one traffic violation under the *Criminal Code*. Undeclared incidents are included in the calculation of percentages but do not appear on the chart.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.



Impaired driving is one of the most frequent offences in court cases



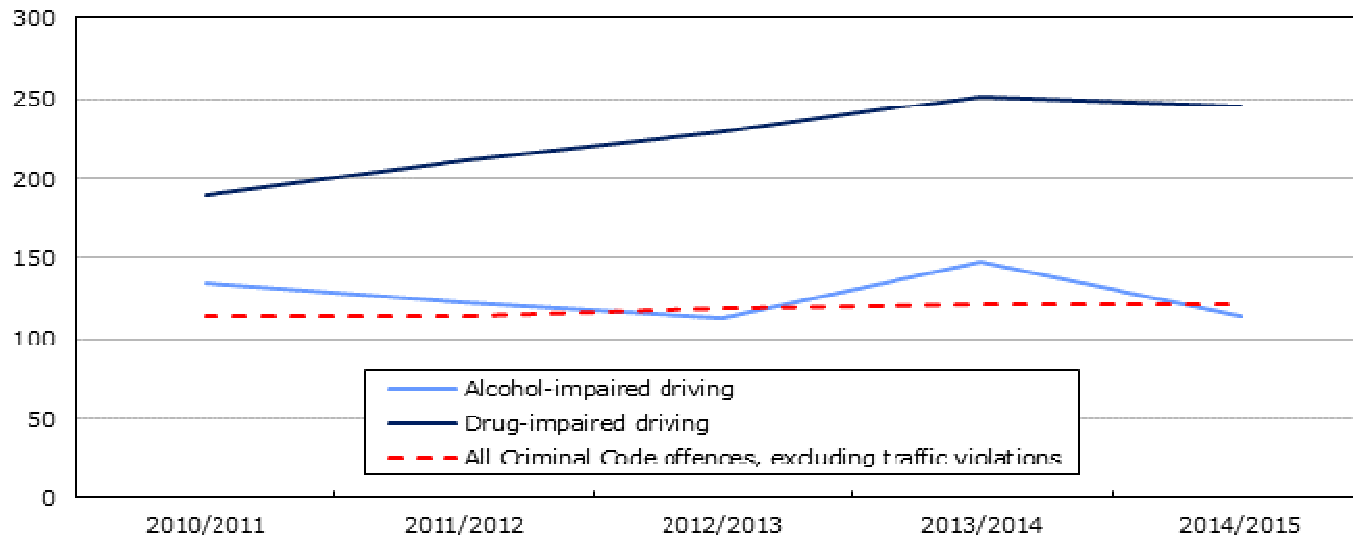


Compared to alcohol-impaired driving cases, drug-impaired cases take more than twice as long to complete

- Drug impaired cases require more appearances on average (7) than alcohol impaired cases (5)

Median length of cases completed in criminal courts, by most serious charge, Canada, 2010/2011 to 2014/2015

median length (in days)



Note: A case is defined as one or more charges against an accused person that were processed at the same time and received a final decision. Cases with more than one charge are represented by the most serious offence. The data exclude information from the superior courts of Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan and the municipal courts of Quebec due to the unavailability of data.

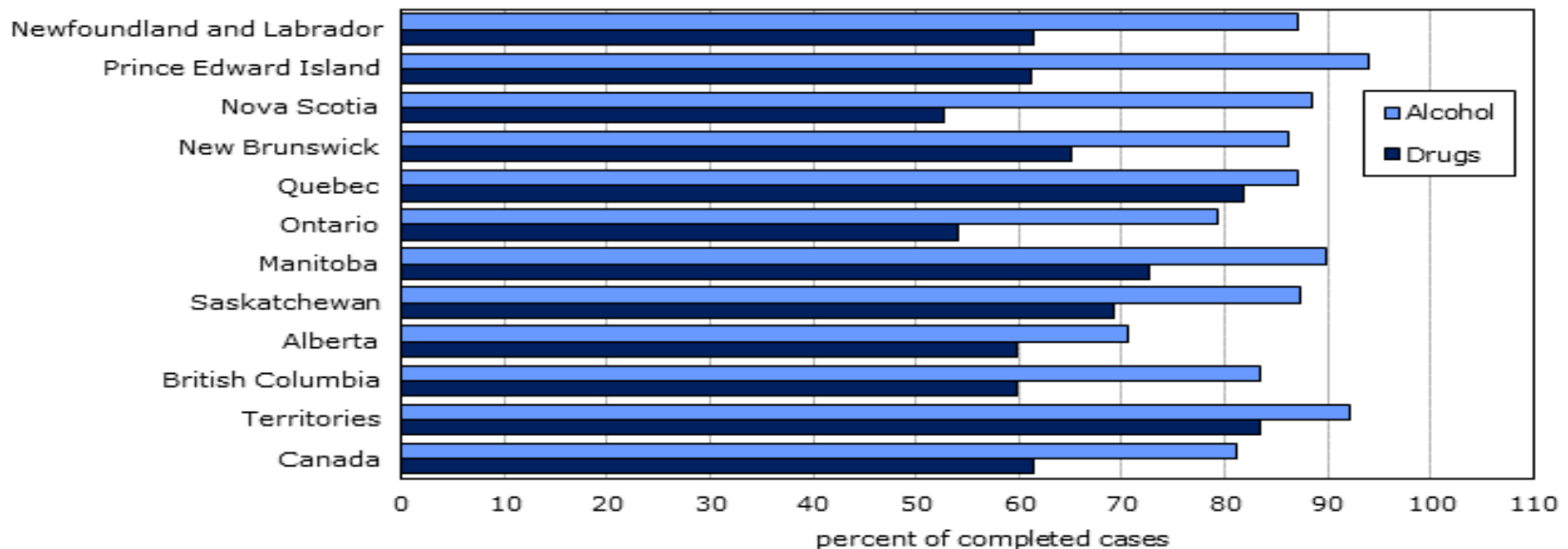
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey and Integrated Criminal Court Survey combined file (impaired driving cases) and Integrated Criminal Court Survey (all *Criminal Code* offences).

Drug-impaired cases less likely to receive a guilty verdict

- Observed differences could have been related to detection technology for drugs being in development

Proportion of impaired driving cases that resulted in a guilty decision, by substance causing impairment and jurisdiction, 2010/2011 to 2014/2015

Province or territory



Note: A case is defined as one or more charges against an accused person that were processed at the same time and received a final decision. Cases with more than one charge are represented by the most serious offence. The data exclude information from the superior courts of Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan and the municipal courts of Quebec due to the unavailability of data. Given the small number of drug-impaired cases in the territories, data from the territories were combined.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey and Integrated Criminal Court Survey (combined file).

Summary

- While a very small proportion of drivers' report that they drive while impaired, the majority of them are repeat offenders
- Impaired driving is associated with other at-risk driving behaviours
- Overall, impaired driving rate decreased sharply, but it is still one of the most frequent crimes
- Largest declines were recorded among drivers under 25—mostly in provinces that implemented a zero tolerance for young drivers—and among males
- Drug-impaired driving incidents are less likely to result in a charge than alcohol-impaired incidents, but the difference is narrowing
- While there is a peak period when alcohol impaired driving occurs—this is not the case for drug impaired driving and as such making police prevention programs more difficult
- Compared to alcohol-impaired driving cases, drug-impaired cases take more than twice as long to complete



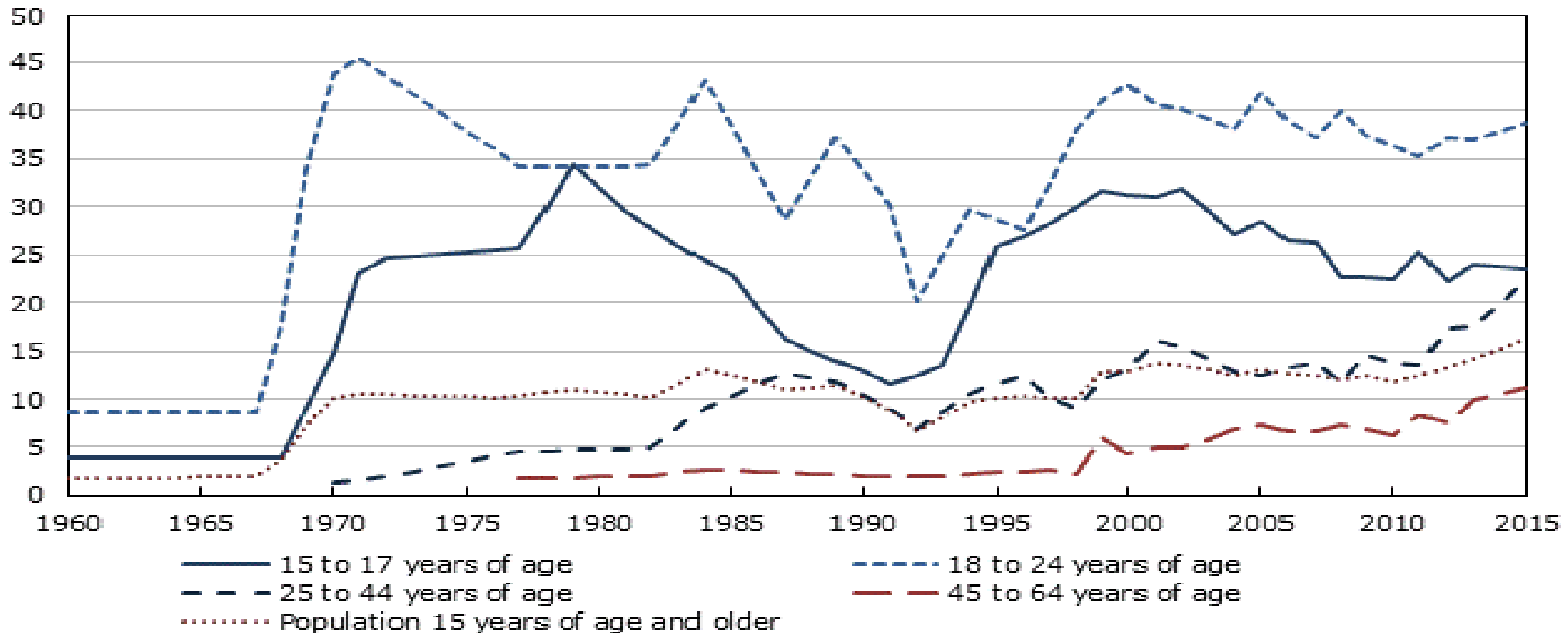
Appendix

Cannabis consumption increasing for adults

- By 2015, two thirds of cannabis consumers were 25 years of age and older

Benchmarked and adjusted rate of cannabis consumption by age group, 1960 to 2015

percent

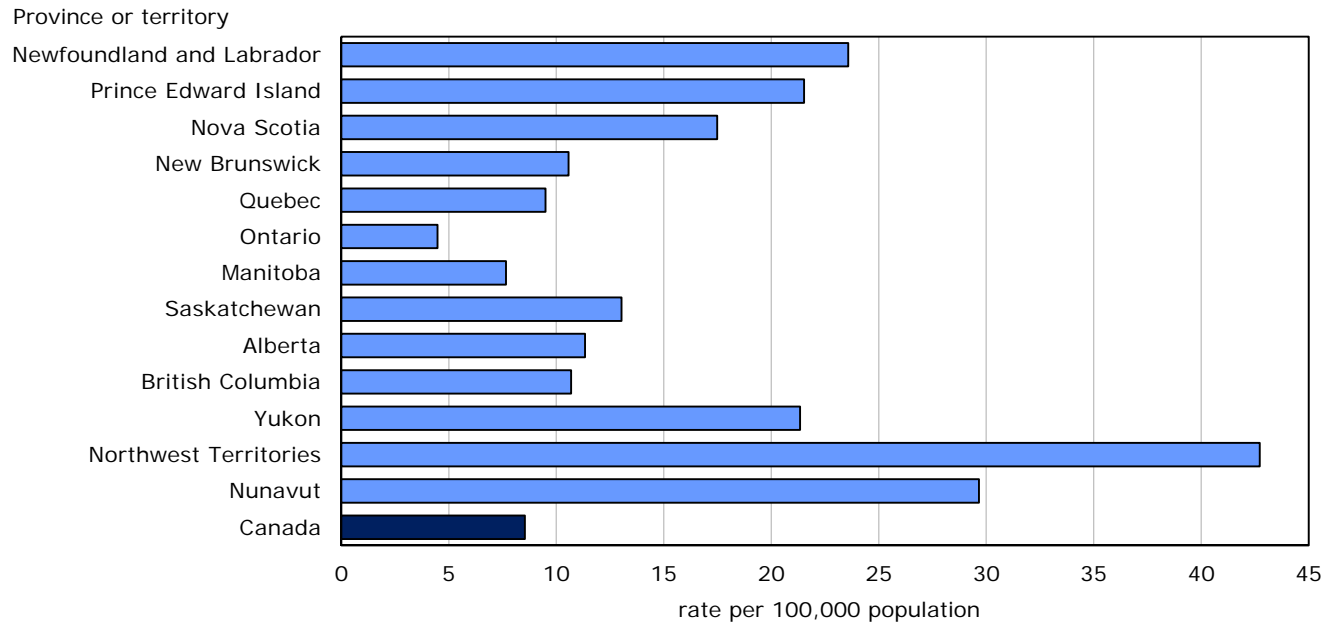


Note: The benchmarked rate of cannabis consumption estimates are based on a methodology that incorporates growth rates between modern and historical data sources with level estimates from the Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health.

Source: Statistics Canada, authors' calculations.

Police-reported drug-impaired rates highest in the territories and Atlantic Provinces

Rate of police-reported drug-impaired driving incidents, by province or territory, 2016



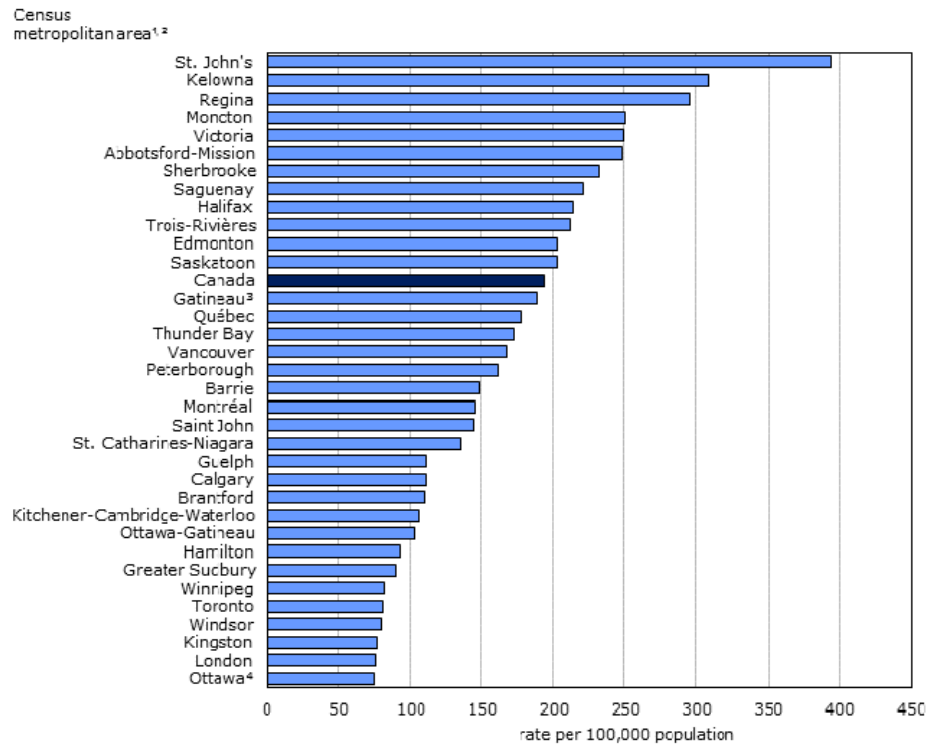
Note: The different ways in which police services deal with traffic violations can impact police-reported statistics. Counts are based on the most serious offence in the incident. One incident can involve more than one traffic violation under the *Criminal Code*. Populations are based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.



Impaired driving rates in most metropolitan areas lower than the national average

Rate of police-reported impaired driving incidents, by census metropolitan area, 2016



1. A census metropolitan area (CMA) consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a core. A census metropolitan area must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from previous census data. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service.

2. CMA populations have been adjusted to follow policing boundaries.

3. Gatineau represents the Quebec part of the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA.

4. Ottawa represents the Ontario part of the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA.

Note: The different ways in which police services deal with traffic violations can impact police-reported statistics. Counts are based on the most serious offence in the incident. One incident can involve more than one traffic violation under the *Criminal Code*. Populations are based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division. The Oshawa CMA is excluded from this chart due to the incongruity between the police service jurisdictional boundaries and the CMA boundaries.

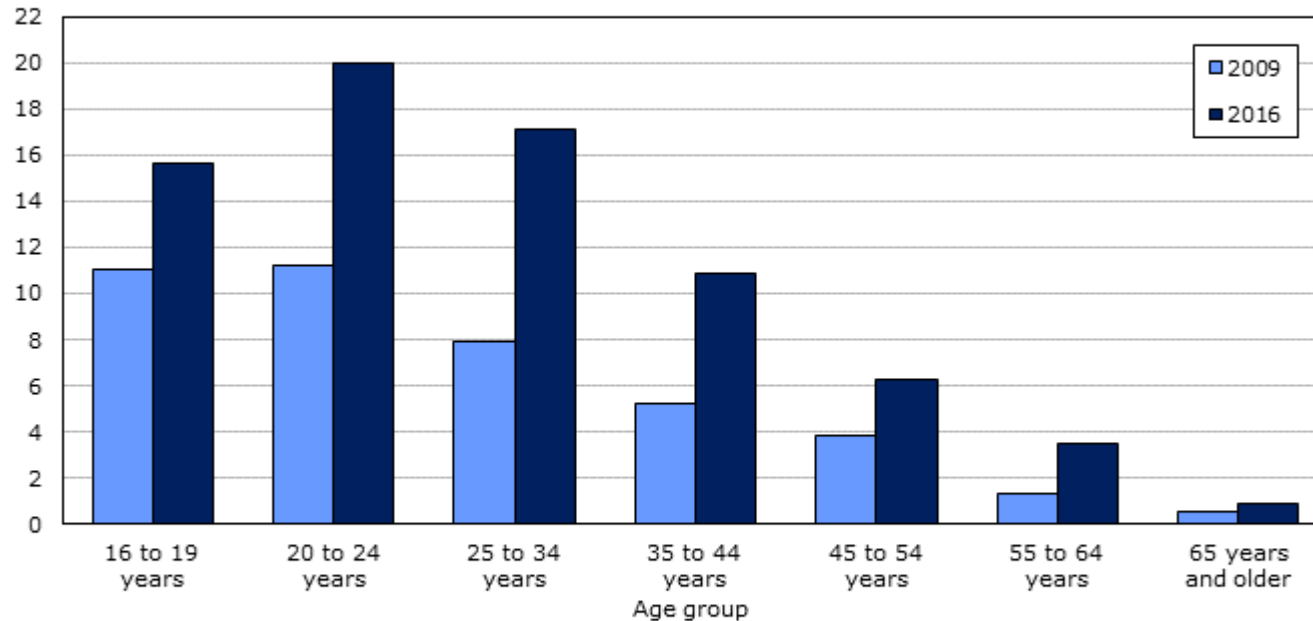
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.



Rates of drug-impaired driving increased among all age groups

Drug-impaired driving accused, by age group, 2009 and 2016

rate per 100,000 licensed drivers



Note: The different ways in which police services deal with traffic violations can impact police-reported statistics. Counts are based on the most serious offence in the incident. One incident can involve more than one traffic violation under the *Criminal Code*. The number of drug-impaired driving accused under 16 years of age was too small to be published. Data on licensed drivers are taken from the report *Canadian Motor Vehicle Traffic Collision Statistics, 2014*, published by Transport Canada. Rates for 2015 were calculated based on the number of licensed drivers in 2014, as 2015 data on licensed drivers were not yet available.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.



Alcohol- or drug-impaired driving incidents, by census metropolitan area, 2016

Census metropolitan area	Alcohol-impaired driving			Drug-impaired driving			Total impaired driving		
	number	rate	percent change in rate from 2015	number	rate	percent change in rate from 2015	number	rate	percent change in rate from 2015
St. John's	729	351	-5	90	43	0	819	394	-4
Halifax	871	204	-2	43	10	17	914	215	-1
Moncton	364	231	-6	30	19	6	394	250	-5
Saint John	182	142	-14	3	2	0	185	145	-14
Saguenay	354	212	3	15	9	-21	369	221	2
Québec	1,343	168	9	82	10	-21	1,425	178	7
Sherbrooke	446	224	32	16	8	-39	462	232	27
Trois-Rivières	297	190	0	35	22	93	332	212	5
Montréal	5,673	138	0	315	8	13	5,988	146	1
Gatineau ¹	570	172	2	55	17	24	625	189	4
Ottawa–Gatineau	1,288	96	-6	99	7	32	1,387	103	-4
Ottawa ²	718	71	-11	44	4	44	762	75	-9
Kingston	123	73	21	6	4	197	129	77	24
Peterborough	195	158	2	4	3	-1	199	161	1
Toronto	4,771	77	-9	274	4	67	5,045	82	-6
Hamilton	687	90	-12	21	3	-10	708	93	-12
St. Catharines–Niagara	612	135	8	1	0	0	613	135	8
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	573	104	5	8	1	58	581	106	6
Brantford	160	109	1	2	1	0	162	111	2
Guelph	148	112	-4	0	0	-100	148	112	-5
London	373	72	-17	23	4	42	396	77	-15
Windsor	261	78	-7	9	3	27	270	81	-6
Barrie	304	140	5	18	8	11	322	149	5
Greater Sudbury	145	88	-5	3	2	-67	148	90	-8
Thunder Bay	195	162	42	13	11	335	208	173	48
Winnipeg	645	81	-12	11	1	-59	656	82	-14
Regina	712	288	-6	19	8	24	731	295	-6
Saskatoon	640	200	-11	9	3	-3	649	202	-11
Calgary	1,604	109	-16	44	3	-2	1,648	112	-16
Edmonton	2,658	192	-12	154	11	23	2,812	203	-11
Kelowna	554	281	-8	54	27	27	608	309	-6
Abbotsford–Mission	453	243	14	11	6	21	464	249	14
Vancouver	4,116	161	2	164	6	11	4,280	168	2
Victoria	874	236	-5	51	14	-1	925	249	-5

... not applicable

1. Gatineau represents the Quebec part of the Ottawa–Gatineau CMA.

2. Ottawa represents the Ontario part of the Ottawa–Gatineau CMA.

Note: A census metropolitan area (CMA) consists of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a core. A census metropolitan area must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from previous census data. A CMA is normally served by more than one police service. The Oshawa CMA is excluded from this table due to the incongruity between the police service jurisdictional boundaries and the CMA boundaries. The different ways in which police services deal with traffic violations can impact police-reported statistics. Counts are based on the most serious offence in the incident. One incident can involve more than one traffic violation under the *Criminal Code*. The change in percentage is based on unrounded rates. Population counts are based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.



Impaired driving incidents, by type of offence and by province or territory, 2016

Province or territory	Alcohol-impaired					Drug-impaired					Alcohol- or drug-impaired					Total impaired driving
	Impaired driving causing death	Impaired driving causing bodily harm	Impaired operation of a vehicle	Failure to submit to a test ¹	Total	Impaired driving causing death	Impaired driving causing bodily harm	Impaired operation of a vehicle	Failure to submit to a test ¹	Total	Impaired driving causing death	Impaired driving causing bodily harm	Impaired operation of a vehicle	Failure to submit to a test ¹		
	number															
Newfoundland and Labrador	5	8	1,201	37	1,251	0	1	123	1	125	5	9	1,324	38	1,376	
Prince Edward Island	0	0	443	13	456	0	0	31	1	32	0	0	474	14	488	
Nova Scotia	0	15	2,236	84	2,335	0	1	163	2	166	0	16	2,399	86	2,501	
New Brunswick	5	13	1,421	157	1,596	0	0	78	2	80	5	13	1,499	159	1,676	
Quebec	11	205	13,901	117	14,234	1	11	776	3	791	12	216	14,677	120	15,025	
Ontario	25	75	13,300	740	14,140	3	2	605	15	625	28	77	13,905	755	14,765	
Manitoba	10	46	3,114	120	3,290	1	1	98	1	101	11	47	3,212	121	3,391	
Saskatchewan	12	64	6,019	132	6,227	0	0	148	2	150	12	64	6,167	134	6,377	
Alberta	20	54	11,000	635	11,709	2	2	477	1	482	22	56	11,477	636	12,191	
British Columbia	11	45	9,440	1,447	10,943	1	4	501	2	508	12	49	9,941	1,449	11,451	
Yukon	0	5	336	17	358	0	0	8	0	8	0	5	344	17	366	
Northwest Territories	1	5	619	19	644	0	0	19	0	19	1	5	638	19	663	
Nunavut	0	6	222	0	228	0	0	11	0	11	0	6	233	0	239	
Canada	100	541	63,252	3,518	67,411	8	22	3,038	30	3,098	108	563	66,290	3,548	70,509	

Province or territory	Alcohol-impaired					Drug-impaired					Alcohol- or drug-impaired					Total impaired driving
	Impaired driving causing death	Impaired driving causing bodily harm	Impaired operation of a vehicle	Failure to submit to a test ¹	Total	Impaired driving causing death	Impaired driving causing bodily harm	Impaired operation of a vehicle	Failure to submit to a test ¹	Total	Impaired driving causing death	Impaired driving causing bodily harm	Impaired operation of a vehicle	Failure to submit to a test ¹		
	rate per 100,000 population															
Newfoundland and Labrador	0.9	1.5	227	7.0	236	0.0	0.2	23.2	0.2	23.6	0.9	1.7	250	7.2	260	
Prince Edward Island	0.0	0.0	298	8.7	307	0.0	0.0	20.9	0.7	21.5	0.0	0.0	319	9.4	328	
Nova Scotia	0.0	1.6	235	8.8	246	0.0	0.1	17.2	0.2	17.5	0.0	1.7	253	9.1	263	
New Brunswick	0.7	1.7	188	20.7	211	0.0	0.0	10.3	0.3	10.6	0.7	1.7	198	21.0	221	
Quebec	0.1	2.5	167	1.4	171	0.0	0.1	9.3	0.0	9.5	0.1	2.6	176	1.4	180	
Ontario	0.2	0.5	95	5.3	101	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.1	4.5	0.2	0.6	99	5.4	106	
Manitoba	0.8	3.5	236	9.1	250	0.1	0.1	7.4	0.1	7.7	0.8	3.6	244	9.2	257	
Saskatchewan	1.0	5.6	523	11.5	541	0.0	0.0	12.9	0.2	13.0	1.0	5.6	536	11.6	554	
Alberta	0.5	1.3	259	14.9	275	0.0	0.0	11.2	0.0	11.3	0.5	1.3	270	15.0	287	
British Columbia	0.2	0.9	199	30.5	230	0.0	0.1	10.5	0.0	10.7	0.3	1.0	209	30.5	241	
Yukon	0.0	13.3	896	45.3	955	0.0	0.0	21.3	0.0	21.3	0.0	13.3	918	45.3	976	
Northwest Territories	2.2	11.2	1,392	42.7	1,448	0.0	0.0	42.7	0.0	42.7	2.2	11.2	1,435	42.7	1,491	
Nunavut	0.0	16.2	599	0.0	615	0.0	0.0	29.7	0.0	29.7	0.0	16.2	628	0.0	645	
Canada	0.3	1.5	174	9.7	186	0.0	0.1	8.4	0.1	8.5	0.3	1.6	183	9.8	194	

¹ Includes offences of failure or refusal to provide a breath, blood or other bodily substance sample (C.C. 253(5)).

Note: The different ways in which police services deal with traffic violations may impact police-reported statistics. Counts are based on the most serious offence in the incident. One incident may involve more than one traffic violation under the *Criminal Code*.

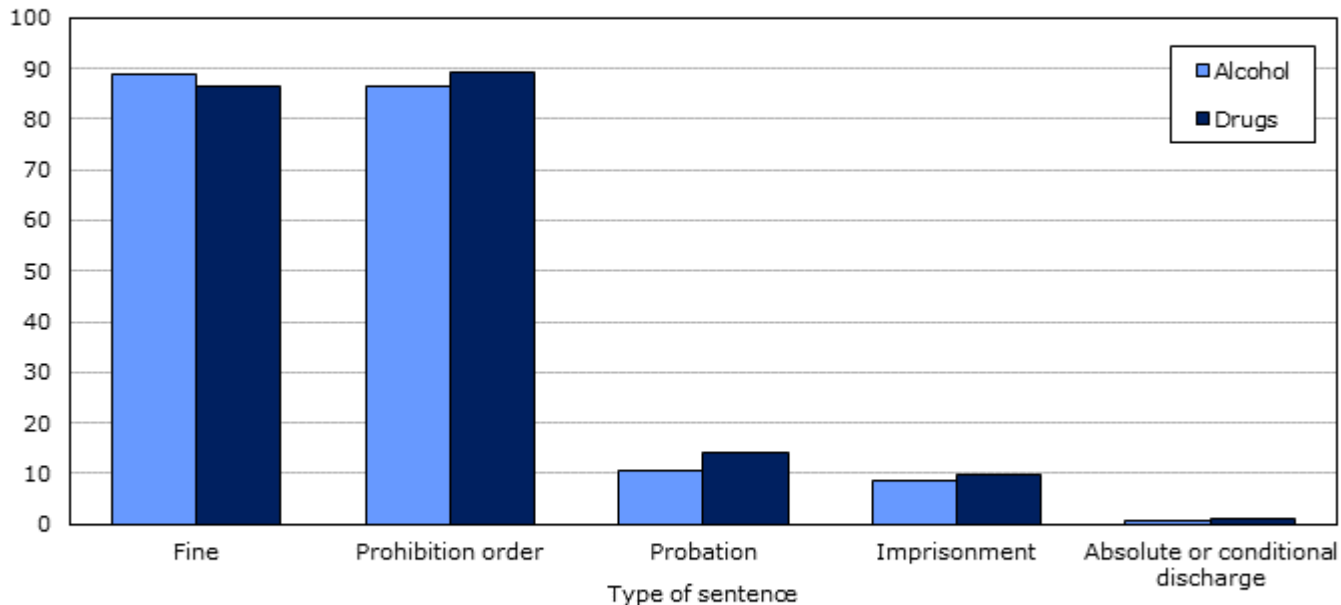
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Those found guilty of drug-impaired driving received sentences similar to those found guilty of alcohol-impaired driving

- Minimum fine of \$1,000 and probationary order of a one year ban on driving most often types of sentencing

Impaired driving guilty cases, by selected sentences and substance causing impairment, Canada, 2010/2011 to 2014/2015

percent of guilty cases



Note: A case is defined as one or more charges against an accused person that were processed at the same time and received a final decision. Cases with more than one charge are represented by the most serious offence. The data exclude information from the superior courts of Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan and the municipal courts of Quebec due to the unavailability of data.

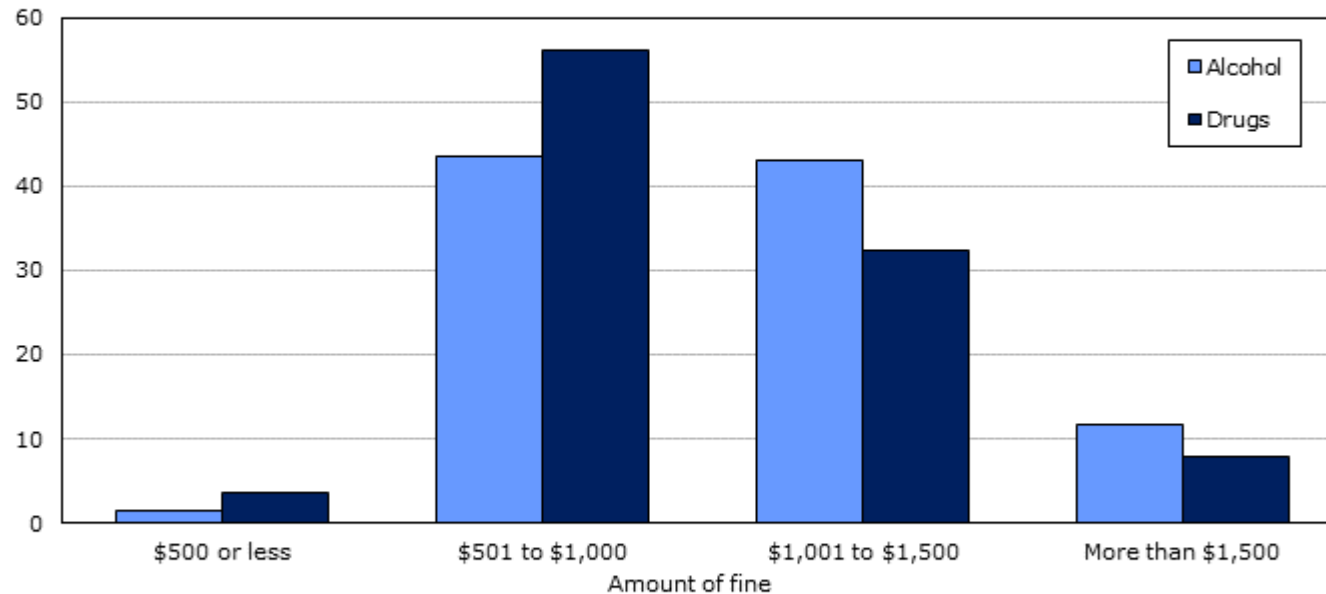
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey and Integrated Criminal Court Survey (combined file).



Most fines for cases of impaired driving are above \$500

Impaired driving guilty cases and sentenced to a fine, by amount of fine and substance causing impairment, Canada, 2010/2011 to 2014/2015

percent of cases with a fine imposed



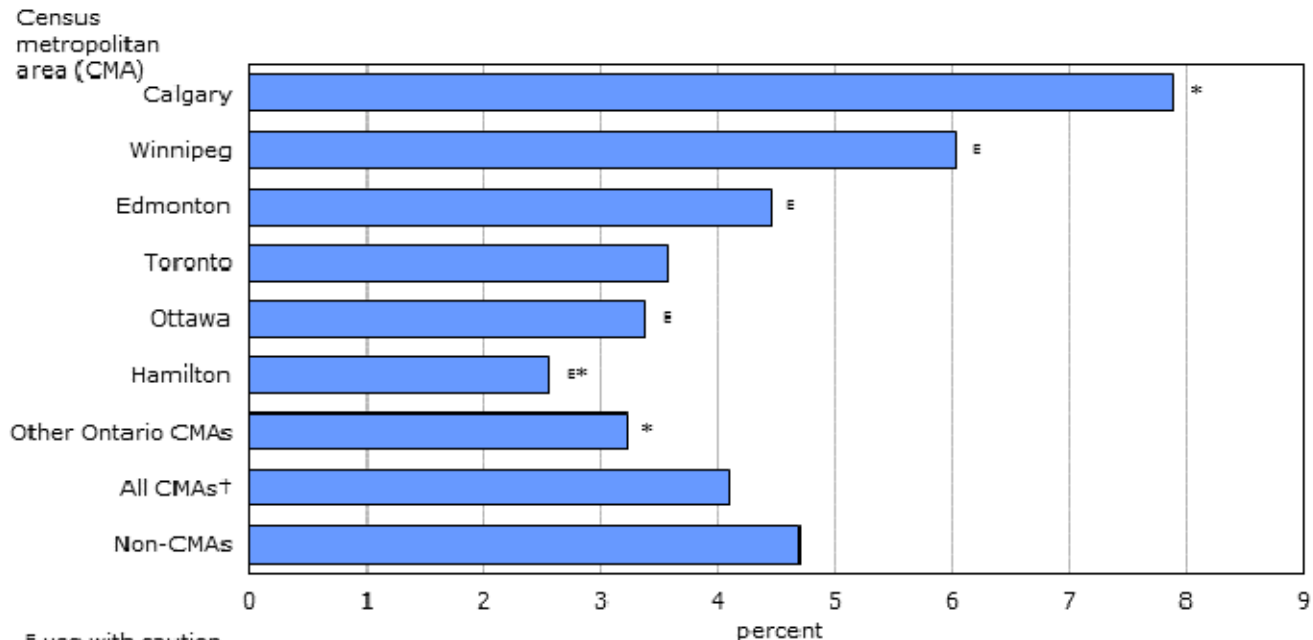
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Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey and Integrated Criminal Court Survey (combined file).



Calgary reported the highest self-report impaired driving rate

Proportion of drivers who drove an on-road vehicle after consuming two drinks in the preceding hour, in the previous 12 months, by selected census metropolitan areas, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, Yukon and Nunavut, 2014



E use with caution

* value significantly different from the reference category estimate ($p < 0.05$)

† reference category

Note: Calculation of percentages is based on persons who reported having driven an on-road vehicle at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey.

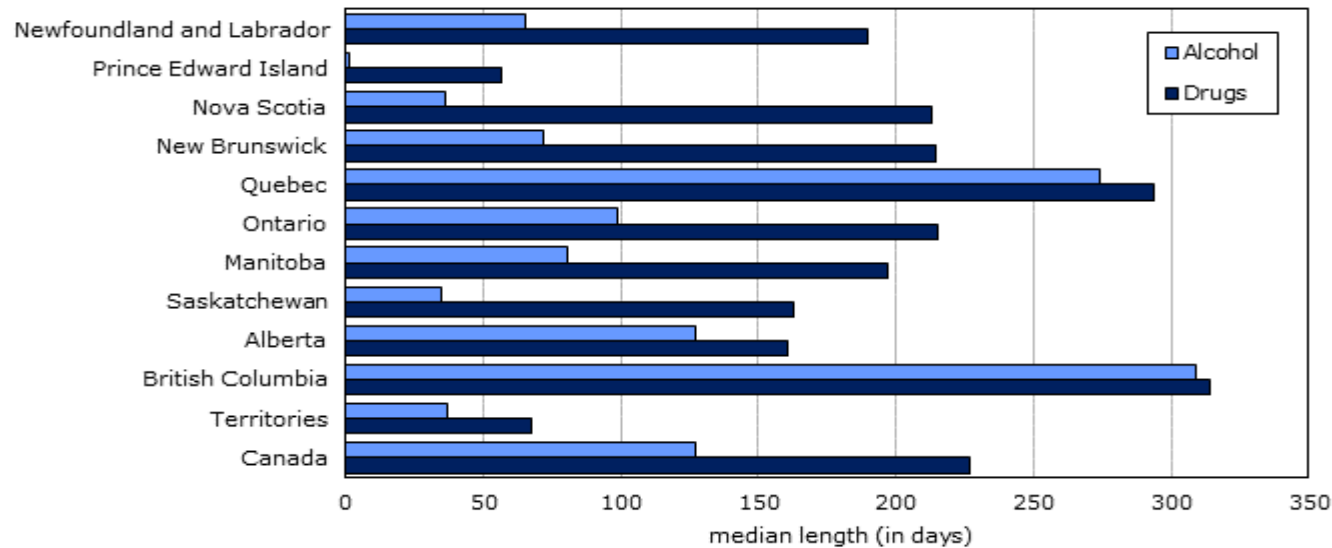
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, 2014.



Drug-impaired cases take longer to complete in all jurisdictions

Median length of impaired driving cases in criminal courts, by substance causing impairment and jurisdiction, 2010/2011 to 2014/2015

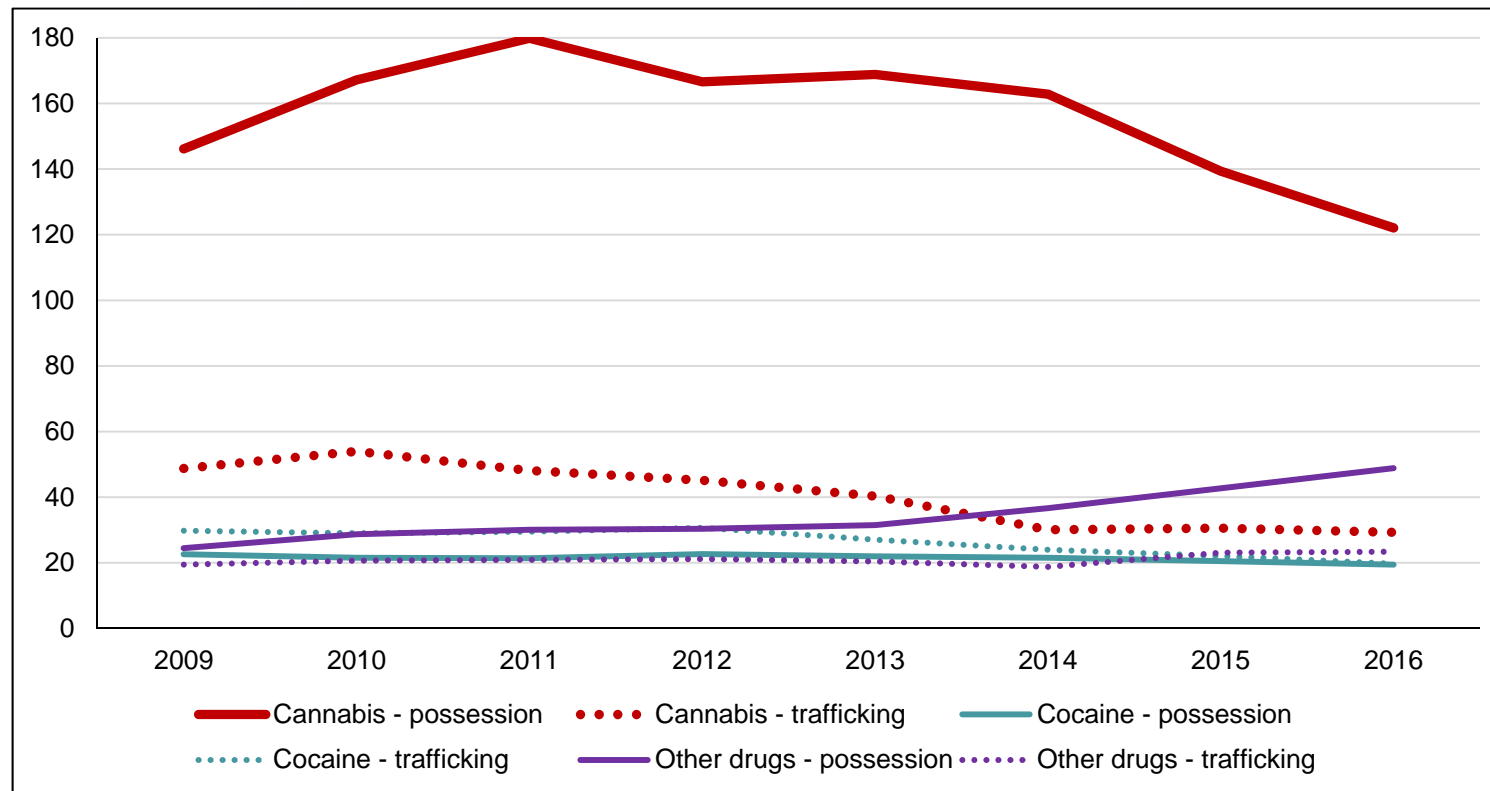
Province or territory



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Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey and Integrated Criminal Court Survey (combined file).

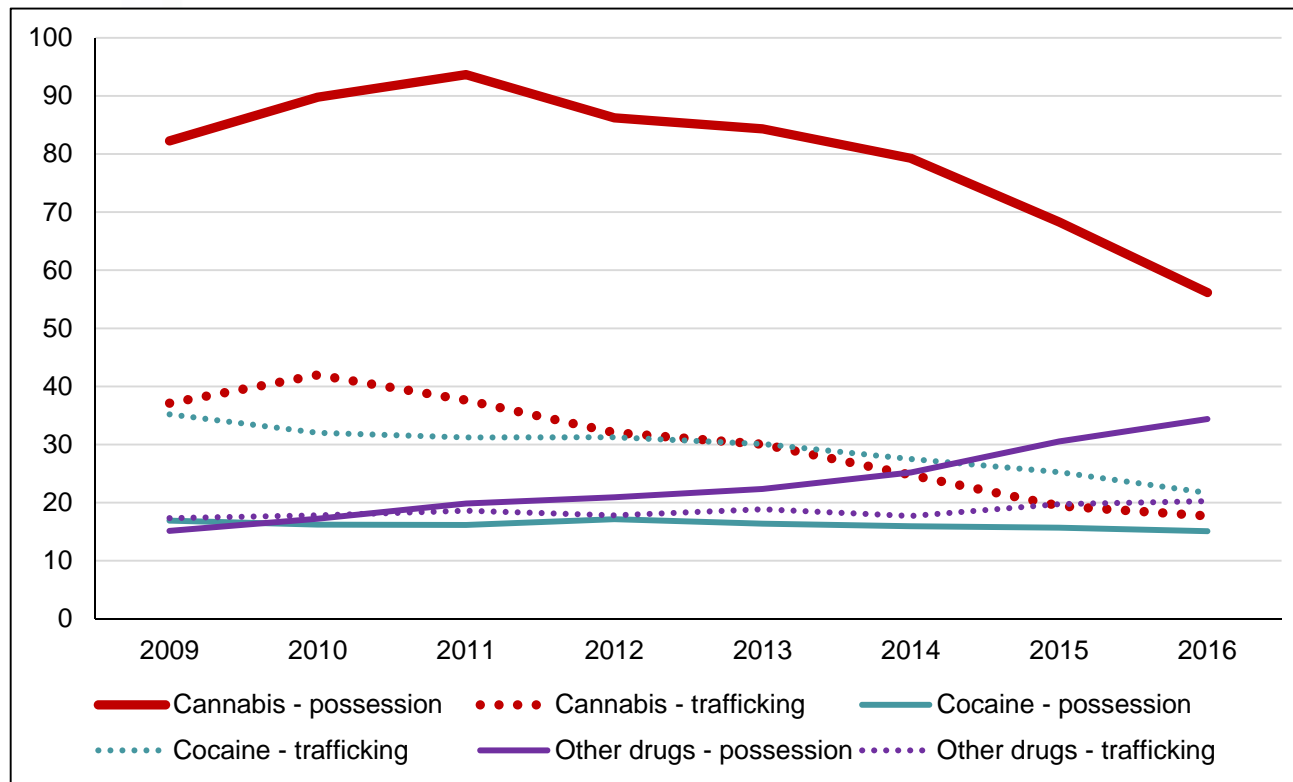
Rates for both cannabis possession and trafficking are on the decline



Note: The different ways in which police services deal with traffic violations can impact police-reported statistics. Counts are based on the most serious offence in the incident. One incident can involve more than one traffic violation under the Criminal Code. Populations are based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

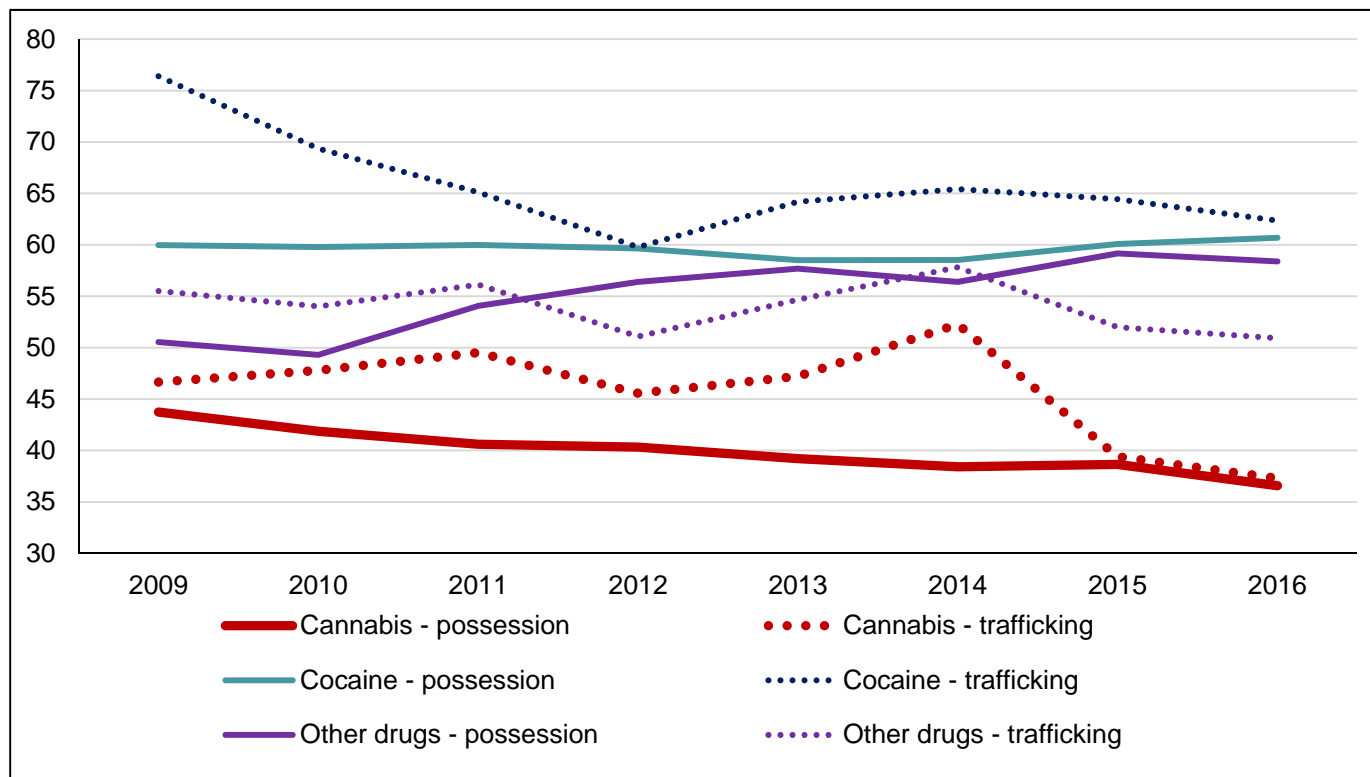
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Rates of persons charged follow a similar pattern



Note: The different ways in which police services deal with traffic violations can impact police-reported statistics. Counts are based on the most serious offence in the incident. One incident can involve more than one traffic violation under the Criminal Code. Populations are based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Just over one-third of cannabis incidents (possession or trafficking) are cleared by charge



Note: The different ways in which police services deal with traffic violations can impact police-reported statistics. Counts are based on the most serious offence in the incident. One incident can involve more than one traffic violation under the Criminal Code. Populations are based on July 1st estimates from Statistics Canada, Demography Division.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.