



The Regional Municipality of York Police Service Board

Public Board Meeting
October 30, 2024
For Information

Report of the Chief of Police

2023 Crime Severity Index and Weighted Clearance Rate Overview

1. Recommendation

That the Board receive this annual report for information.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide highlights of 2023 crime statistics accessed from the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS), a division of Statistics Canada. The crime data released by Statistics Canada use two complementary methods of measuring crime: Crime Severity Indexes (CSI) and conventional incident-based crime rates. It also uses two complementary measures for case clearances: Weighted Clearance Rate (WCR) and conventional clearance rate. This report is focused on the Crime Severity Indexes (CSI) and the Weighted Clearance Rates (WCR). It includes an overview of York Region results and those of other select comparable provincial and national police services.

A detailed report of York Regional Police incident-based crime and clearance data for the year 2023 was presented to the Board in May 2024, reflecting the volume of crime reported to police. The CSI and WCR measures contained herein better reflect trends in more serious crimes as they take into account both the volume and relative seriousness of those offences. Examining these measures provides a broader understanding of the impact of crime and the level of community safety and well-being.

The Statistics Canada 2023 CSI and WCR measures indicate that crime severity indexes increased more in York Region in 2023 compared to other jurisdictions, but continues to be one of the safest communities in the country. The data analysis shows the following:

- York Region crime severity indexes of total crime, violent crime and non-violent crime had the highest increase in 2023 among the national and provincial comparators.

- Across Ontario and Canada, the increase on the indexes of total crime, violent crime and non-violent crime are very low, around 2 percent.
- In spite of the highest increase in 2023, the three CSI indexes of York Region are still 10 percent lower than Ontario and 30 percent lower than Canada.
- The weighted clearance rates in York Region decreased for all the three indicators of total crime, violent crime and non-violent crime. York Region clearance rates are lower than comparators in Ontario and Canada.
- Weighted clearance rates for total crime decreased more in the Greater Toronto Area police services compared to others in Ontario and Canada.

3. Background

Police services in Canada provide a range of safety and security services to the public including crime prevention, law enforcement, keeping public order, helping victims, responding to emergencies and building relationships with local communities. When responding to emergencies or crime scenes, police investigate incidents, present it to the court and report it to the CCJCSS. The criminal incidents reported to police by the public and those that come to the attention of police are submitted monthly to the CCJCSS.

CRIME REPORTING METHODOLOGY

To collect information on crime incidents reported to police, Statistics Canada in collaboration with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACCP) developed an incident-based uniform crime reporting survey methodology. The data collected on the crime incidents are analyzed and reported to the public every year by the CCJCSS of Statistics Canada.

Uniform Crime Reporting Methodology

The incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey, developed in 1962, is a census of all crimes reported to the police on all federal statute offences. An incident is considered to be the set of connected events which usually constitute an occurrence report and may contain one or more violations of the law along with their victims and accused.

The UCR survey methodology allows reporting of four serious offences in a criminal incident. To provide better comparability, the CCJCSS of Statistics Canada report only the most serious offence of each submitted incident. However, the York Regional Police Annual Statistics Report includes all four violations as a more accurate representation of crime volume. This 2023 Crime Severity Index and Weighted Clearance Rate overview report is based on all criminal incidents reported to Statistics Canada from January to December of 2023 by the municipal, provincial and federal police services across the country.

Crime Severity Index

The Crime Severity Index (CSI) was developed in 2009 as a complementary measure of conventional crime rate that reflects the relative seriousness of individual offences and tracks changes in crime severity over time. The CSI measures both the volume and severity of crimes reported to police. At the request of the policing community, the index was introduced by Statistics Canada in 2009 in collaboration with police services, the justice system and academics to address limitations of the conventional crime rate.

In the CSI computation process, each crime is assigned a weight depending on its seriousness. The weight is based on the incarceration rate and average prison sentence length from the criminal courts. The weights are updated every five years using court system outcomes. Changes made to the seriousness of a particular crime through introduction of a minimum sentence or other legislative change is reflected in the CSI.

Unlike the conventional crime rate, all *Criminal Code* offences including criminal traffic violations are included in the CSI. The CSI addresses the limitations of conventional crime statistics that are driven by high volume, but relatively less serious offences. It complements the volume-based method of reporting crime rates to give a broader picture of crime in our communities.

The CSI is available for three separate indexes: total crime, violent crime and non-violent crime. The violent CSI is comprised of all police-reported violent violations such as crimes against persons, and the non-violent CSI is comprised of all police-reported property violations, other *Criminal Code* violations, other federal statute violations, drug violations and *Criminal Code* traffic violations.

Crime Severity Indexes are standardized at 100 for 2006 for Canada to facilitate comparisons across police services and against the national and provincial averages. Data on crime severity indexes are available beginning from 1998. The CSI scores below 100 imply that the police service has a lower crime rate compared to other police services, and a CSI score above 100 indicates a more serious crime rate compared to other police services.

Weighted Clearance Rate

Statistics Canada also introduced Weighted Clearance Rate (WCR) measures in 2009 to enhance comparability of police clearance rates. The WCR measures the percentage of police-reported criminal incidents that are cleared, weighted by crime severity. Clearance rate weights are assigned based on the same principle as the CSI, where a more serious offence will have a higher 'weight' than less serious offences. The WCR measures are also available for total crime, violent crime and non-violent crime.

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT AND COMPARABILITY

The global COVID-19 pandemic which began in early 2020 continued throughout 2021 and also into the winter months of 2022 with varying levels of restrictions. Operating environments in police services changed substantially during the period as various policies were enacted to contain the spread of the virus, changing how people socialize, interact,

work and learn. In Spring 2022, the situation gradually became normal for people and businesses and most crime patterns in 2023 increased to or exceeded pre-pandemic levels.

The limitations of the data presented in this report should be acknowledged. Crime data from different police services, even collected through the standardized Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, should be compared and interpreted with caution because of differences in police service policies, procedures and enforcement practices. The CSI measure is not an indicator of overall police workload, and the WCR measure does not reflect overall police effectiveness. Various factors affect comparability and the findings of this report are only one component of assessing the overall crime picture in York Region.

Crime and clearance data for every police service can be influenced by:

- organizational priorities, procedures, available resources and allocation
- reporting practices of victims and/or complainants
- barrier free access for public in reporting a crime to police
- legal, offence definitions and interpretations
- statistical factors, such as Uniform Crime Reporting Survey methodology changes and internal counting rules
- reporting differences for less serious crimes both by the public and by the police service
- population composition, for example, racial and ethnic makeup, age and gender profile, and family structure
- internal practices such as investigator coding, report validation processes and case clearances
- crime type; for example, local or multi-jurisdictional such as motor vehicle theft in recent years and violent or non-violent
- crime complexity and solvability, such as organized or non-organized
- variances in service delivery models, such as in-person police response versus alternative service delivery options available
- economic conditions; for example, poverty, employment opportunities and affluent neighbourhoods.

4. Analysis

The 2023 Crime Severity Index and Weighted Clearance Rate overview report is prepared by comparing crime severity index and weighted clearance rate for total crime, violent crime and non-violent crime. The measures are analyzed with trends for other police services of similar size and backgrounds.

NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL COMPARATORS

The crime statistics measures of York Regional Police have been compared to eight select national police services and eight select provincial police services that serve the largest and most similar populations.

The eight largest national comparator police services that serve a population of more than 700,000 are Toronto, Montreal, Peel Region, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Winnipeg and Durham Region. Further, four additional provincial police services that serve around or over 500,000 population include, Waterloo, Halton Region, Hamilton and Niagara Region.

Crime Severity Index Results

Table 1 and appendices 1-3 show the crime severity indexes of total crime, violent crime and non-violent crime. In 2023, the violent CSI increased in York Region 6.7 percent and the non-violent CSI increased 20.6 percent. Across Ontario and Canada, the increases on the indexes of total crime, violent crime and non-violent crime increased around 2 percent (appendix 1).

Table 1
Crime Severity Index by Type, 2022-2023

Indicator	2022	2023	% Change
York Region			
CSI-Total	47.4	54.6	15.2
CSI-Violent	63.9	68.2	6.7
CSI-Non-Violent	41.2	49.7	20.6
Ontario			
CSI-Total	58.8	60.9	3.6
CSI-Violent	78.6	78.5	-0.1
CSI-Non-Violent	51.4	54.3	5.6
Canada			
CSI-Total	78.8	80.5	2.2
CSI-Violent	99.1	99.5	0.4
CSI-Non-Violent	71.3	73.5	3.1

Source: Statistics Canada – Police reported crime statistics in Canada, 2023.

The violent CSI increase in 2023 in York Region can be attributed to increases in crimes related to assaults, robbery, extortion, criminal harassment, harassing communications and uttering threats. The main contributors for the increase in non-violent CSI are raising volumes of property crimes such as auto theft, break and enter, fraud, other thefts and shoplifting, possession of stolen goods and mischief.

Appendix 2 provides details of the CSI values for the eight select national comparators for the years 2019-2023; as well as the one-year and five-year variances. Tables 2.1 and 2.3 demonstrate that Greater Toronto Area police services observed a significant increase in 2023 for total CSI and non-violent CSI. For violent CSI, York Region had the highest increase (6.6 percent) in 2023 among the national comparators. Despite these higher increases in York Region, among the national comparators, appendix 2 shows that York

Region has the third lowest score in 2023 for non-violent CSI and total CSI, and fourth lowest for violent CSI.

The details of the CSI values for the provincial comparators for years 2019-2023 and one-year and five-year variances are shown in the tables in appendix 3. Amongst these provincial comparators, York Region has the fourth lowest score in 2023 for non-violent CSI, fifth lowest score for the total CSI and sixth lowest score for the violent CSI.

In spite of the highest violent CSI and highest non-violent CSI increase in York Region in 2023, the three CSI indexes of York Region are 10 percent lower than the Ontario values and 30 percent lower than the Canada values.

Weighted Clearance Rate Results

Weighted clearance rates for York Region, Ontario and Canada are shown in Table 2. In 2023, the weighted clearance rates in York Region decreased for all three categories of total crime, violent crime and non-violent crime. The decrease was 4.2 percentage points for total crime, 3.9 percentage points for violent crime and 3.0 percentage points for non-violent crime.

Table 2
Weighted Clearance Rate by Type, 2022-2023

Indicator	2022	2023	Change
York Region			
WCR-Total	38.1	33.9	- 4.2
WCR-Violent	56.9	53.0	- 3.9
WCR-Non-Violent	26.3	23.3	- 3.0
Ontario			
WCR-Total	39.6	38.0	- 1.6
WCR-Violent	60.0	58.6	- 1.4
WCR-Non-Violent	27.2	26.1	- 1.1
Canada			
WCR-Total	36.0	34.6	- 1.4
WCR-Violent	55.8	53.8	- 2.0
WCR-Non-Violent	25.0	24.2	- 0.8

Source: Statistics Canada – Police reported crime statistics in Canada, 2023.

Appendices 1-3 show details of case clearances in the select national and provincial police services during the years 2019-2023. Weighted clearance rates for total crime decreased more in the Greater Toronto Area police services compared to others in Ontario and Canada.

For all three categories of total, violent and non-violent crime case clearances, York Region weighted clearance rates are lower than Ontario and Canada rates. However, York Region

clearance rates are higher than similarly sized and populated jurisdictions provincially and nationally.

Reporting Requirements

York Regional Police is required to prepare this annual report pursuant to the Board Policy No. 02/00-5 Crime, Call and Public Disorder Analysis.

5. Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications.

6. Local Impact

The CSI and WCR values are not available for individual municipalities in York Region. York Region municipalities are all unique in contexts of geography, population density, economic conditions, demographic composition, public perception and trust, incident reporting practice, technological advances, and local neighbourhood initiatives.

7. Conclusion and Next Steps

YRP will continue to review the annual crime statistics data released by the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS) of Statistics Canada in order to assist with the development and review of our policing priorities, crime prevention programs and operational strategies in cooperation with the provincial Inspector General of Police.

Alternative formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Approved for Submission:

Jim MacSween, M.O.M., B.A.A.
Chief of Police

JMS/SD

Attachment(s) (3)- 2023 CSI and WCR Overview – Appendix 1: York Region Results
- 2023 CSI and WCR Overview – Appendix 2: National Comparators
- 2023 CSI and WCR Overview – Appendix 3: Provincial Comparators