

BRITISH COLUMBIANS ON CRIME

While Residents Think Crime Is Becoming A More Serious Problem, They're Not More Personally Worried About Being A Victim



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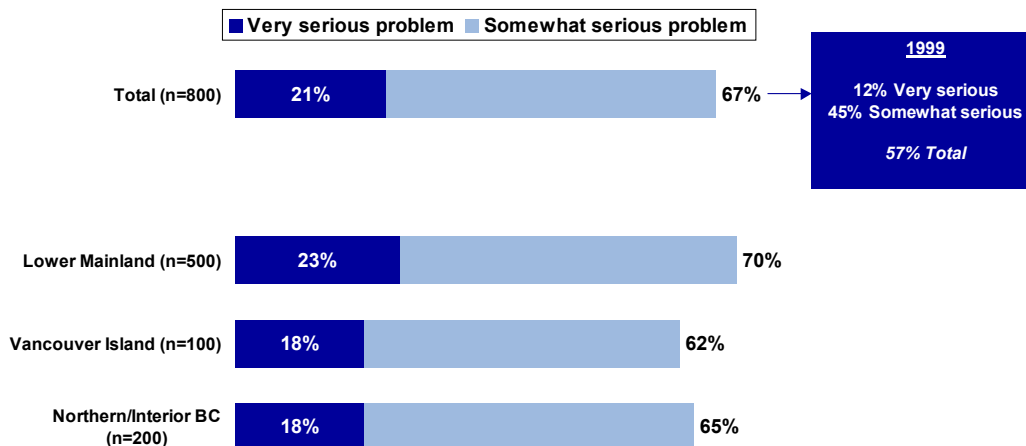
BRITISH COLUMBIANS ON CRIME

While Residents Think Crime Is Becoming A More Serious Problem, They're Not More Personally Worried About Being A Victim

Vancouver, BC – Despite the best efforts of public officials and police, crime remains a serious problem in the minds of British Columbians. According to a new study conducted by Ipsos-Reid, two-thirds (67%) of BC residents see crime as a very serious or somewhat serious problem in their community. In fact, the proportion of British Columbians who feel that crime is a serious concern in their community is up 10 points from 57% when Ipsos-Reid last asked this question in the spring of 1999. This belief that crime is a serious problem in the community is consistent across the province with no one region standing out above any others. However, older people (73% of those 55 years of age and over) and women (71%) are a little more likely to believe that crime is a serious problem in their community compared to younger Canadians (59% of those 18-34 years of age) and men (63%).

Seriousness of Crime Problem in Community

How serious is the crime problem in your community? Would you say it is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, not a very serious problem, or not at all a serious problem?



The Majority Believe That Crime is Increasing

Most British Columbians believe that crime is on the increase in their community. Fifty-five percent feel that there has been an increase in the amount of crime in their community compared to five years ago. Another 36% say that there has been no change while only 4% say that crime is decreasing. “Crime is a problem that is not going away in the minds of British Columbians,” says Rhys Gibb, Senior Research Manager.

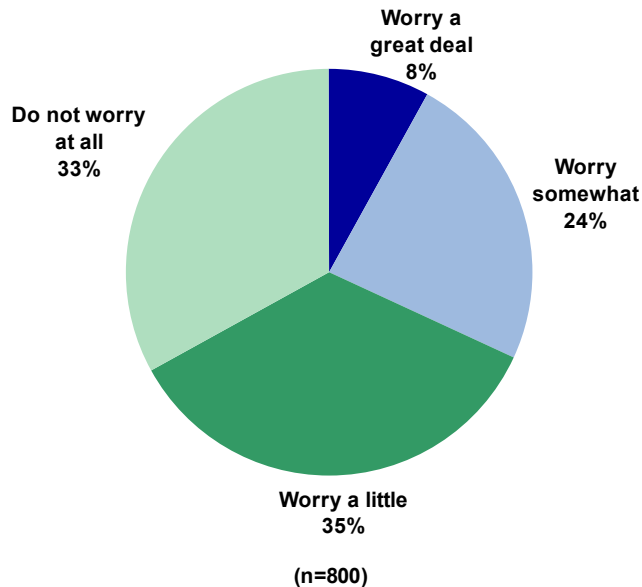
“Whether it be vehicle theft, home invasions, elderly women in Surrey having their purses snatched, or gang-related violence, the constant barrage of crime reported in the media leads people to think that things are getting worse.”

Worry About Crime Not on the Increase

Despite the widespread belief that crime is on the increase, only about one-third (32%) of British Columbians say that they are personally worried that they will be a victim of crime in their community, including 8% who say that they worry a great deal. Rather, 68% say that they only worry a little (35%) or don’t worry at all (33%) about crime. The proportion of British Columbians worrying about crime is up only marginally from 1999 when it stood at 29%. “Even though crime-related stories are in the news on a regular basis, most have not been personally affected. This likely reduces the worrying about it,” says Gibb. People in the Lower Mainland are a little more likely to worry about crime compared to elsewhere in the province. For example, 37% of Lower Mainland residents say they worry somewhat or a great deal about crime compared to only 19% of their counterparts on Vancouver Island. Older British Columbians are also a little more likely to worry about crime. Thirty-five percent of those 55 years of age or older say that they worry somewhat or a great deal about crime compared to 25% of those 18 to 34 years of age.

Worries About Being a Victim of Crime

*On a day-to-day basis, how worried are you personally that you will be a victim of crime in your community?
Would you say you worry a great deal, worry somewhat, worry a little, or do not worry at all?*



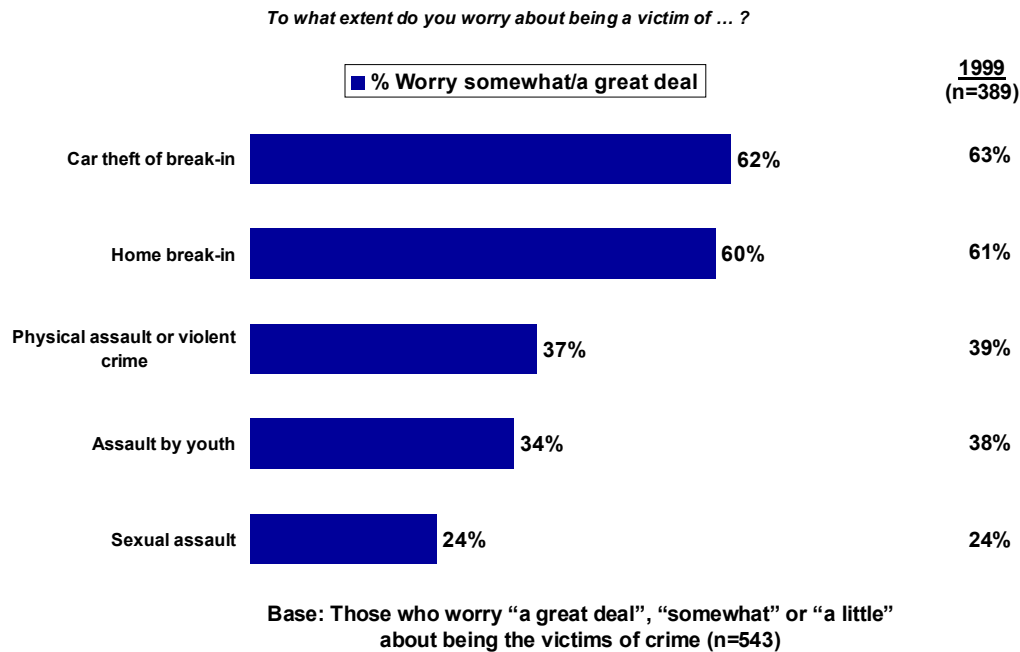
Property Crime Greatest Worry

Another finding that could be taken as a positive is that British Columbians tend to be more worried about property crimes rather than the more serious crimes of physical or sexual assault, or assault by youth. For example, 62% of those who are worried at least a little about crime say that they worry a great deal or somewhat about car thefts or car break-ins and 60% worry a great deal or somewhat about home break-ins. The proportion who worry about physical assault or violent crime is at 37%, while 34% worry about assault by youth. The proportion who worry a great deal or somewhat about sexual assault stands at 24%.

Again, worries about specific crimes tend to be much higher in the Lower Mainland compared to Vancouver Island, or the North and Interior regions of the province. For example, 63% of those who worry at least a little about crime in the Lower Mainland worry about home break-ins, compared to 53% on Vancouver Island and 54% in the North and Interior. Sixty-five percent in the Lower Mainland worry about car thefts or break-ins compared to 52% on Vancouver Island and 60% in the North and Interior of the province.

While people may believe that crime is up compared to five years ago, they are not becoming any more concerned about being a victim of specific crimes. In 1999, 63% of British Columbians were personally worried about car thefts or break-ins and 61% were worried about home break-ins. These figures are relatively unchanged, only dropping by 1% in 2004. The figures are also statistically unchanged for other crimes such as physical assault or violent crime, assault by youth and sexual assault.

Worries About Being a Victim of Specific Crime



This Ipsos-Reid study is based on 800 telephone interviews from the BC Reid Express omnibus survey. Interviews were conducted between February 3 and 9, 2004 with residents throughout British Columbia. These data are statistically weighted to reflect the actual age and gender of the British Columbia population and are balanced by region according to 2001 Census information.

With a provincial sample of 800, one can say with 95% certainty that the overall results are within ± 3.5 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire BC population been surveyed.



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