

# WHY IS CRIME SO HIGH IN WINNIPEG?

Winnipeg is facing a growing problem of crime. The city has been consistently ranked as one of the most dangerous cities in Canada, with high levels of property crime and violent crime.

In recent years, the problem has become more pronounced, leading people to question why crime is so high in Winnipeg.

Some contributing factors are poverty, population, substance abuse, street gangs, and the limited police force.

In this article, we will examine the mentioned factors that contribute to the high level of crime in Winnipeg.

## Reasons Why Crime Is So High in Winnipeg

There are several reasons why crime is so high in Winnipeg, including poverty, population, substance abuse, street gang, and limited police.

Now let's explore every reason.



## Poverty



Poverty is a major factor in the high crime rate in Winnipeg. According to a report by the Manitoba government, the poverty rate in Winnipeg is higher than the national average, with 11.1% of households living below the poverty line.

Canada had an average of 235,000 people living in poverty in 2021. Of this, Winnipeg accounted for about 30% (70,000+).

This means that many people in the city struggle to meet their basic needs, such as food, shelter, and healthcare. This can lead to desperation and frustration, which often result in criminal behavior.

One of the most obvious ways poverty affects crime in the city is the lack of stable housing. People who are homeless or living in unstable living situations are more likely to turn to crime as a means of survival.

Another way it contributes to the high crime rate is the lack of access to **mental health services**.

Mental health issues such as depression and anxiety are common among people living in poverty, but many cannot afford to seek help. These issues can lead to substance abuse and criminal behavior without proper treatment.

# Population



Winnipeg is one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, with its population increasing by nearly 12% between 2011 and 2016.

This rapid growth has placed pressure on the city's resources, including its police force, leading to increased crime.

As the largest city in Manitoba, Winnipeg has a population of over 700,000, and 50% of its population resides in urban areas. This high population affects crime through the number of people living close to each other.

When more people are living in an area, it creates more opportunities for criminal activity. This is especially true in urban areas with many high-traffic areas and a lot of foot traffic.

Additionally, the high population also creates challenges for law enforcement. With so many people in the city, it can be difficult for police to keep track of criminal activity and respond quickly to incidents.

This can make it easier for criminals to operate without fear of getting caught. In fact, one of the **cons of living in Winnipeg** is that the city has a low response to crime.

# Substance Abuse



Substance abuse is also a major problem in Winnipeg, with a high rate of drug and alcohol addiction. According to the Winnipeg Sun, there were over 7,631 substance abuse-related calls to the WFPS in 2020.

The impact of substance abuse is important when it comes to criminal behavior, as it is often linked to committing crimes. This contributes to the high crime rate of the city through the need to fund an addiction.

People addicted to drugs or alcohol often find themselves financially troubled, as they spend a large portion of their income on their addiction. As a result, this leads to criminal activities such as theft, burglary, and robbery.

Additionally, this can also lead to an increase in violent crime. This is especially true in cases where drugs such as methamphetamine and cocaine are involved, as they can cause users to become paranoid, aggressive, and violent.

Consequently, this leads to an increase in domestic violence, assault, and other violent crimes.

## Street Gang



Gang activity in Winnipeg has increased recently, with an estimated 17 active gangs operating in the city. Additionally, over 70 reported crime incidents were related to gangs in 2020.

The impact of street gangs is particularly significant in the city's crime rate. It often leads to an increase in violence and other criminal behavior.

Street gangs contribute primarily to the high crime rate in Winnipeg through drug trafficking. They often distribute illegal drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine.

This can lead to increased drug-related crimes, such as theft, robbery, and violence.

Another way in which street gangs contribute to crime is through the use of violence to maintain control of their territory.

They often engage in violent activities such as assault and homicide to protect their drug turf, settle disputes, or establish dominance. This can lead to an increase in violent crime, including homicides and shootings.

Additionally, street gangs recruit young people into their ranks. They often prey on vulnerable youth seeking a sense of belonging or protection.

Once recruited, young people are pressured into criminal activities, such as drug trafficking or theft. This can lead to an increase in juvenile/youth crime.

## Limited Police



Winnipeg has a lower police-to-population ratio (173 in every 100,000 people) than other major Canadian cities like Vancouver (189.1 in every 100,000 people) and Montreal (204.3 in every 100,000 people).

Winnipeg's police force faces several challenges, including a low budget and a shortage of officers. This can make it difficult for the police to patrol the city and respond to criminal activity promptly and effectively.

In turn, this has contributed to a range of issues when it comes to public **safety**.

With fewer police officers on patrol, criminals may feel proud to engage in criminal activities, as there is a lower chance of getting caught. This leads to increased crimes such as theft, burglary, and robbery.

Additionally, fewer officers are available to respond to calls, which can take longer for police to arrive on the scene.

The delay can give criminals more time to carry out their activities, leading to an increase in violent crimes such as assault and homicide.

Another way in which limited police can contribute to the high crime rate in Winnipeg is through a lack of resources for investigations.

Investigators may not have the proper resources to conduct thorough investigations, especially in complex cases, which can lead to unsolved cases, and criminals may continue to engage in criminal activities with little fear of being caught.

# Winnipeg's Crime Statistics

Unfortunately, the city is known for its high crime rate, which has been a concern for residents and officials for many years. Winnipeg's crime statistics show that the city has experienced a significant increase in crime over the past decade.

Let's take a look at the crime rate, crime frequency, and crime severity index of the city.

## Winnipeg's Crime Rate

Winnipeg has a crime rate of 7,004 incidents per 100,000 people, while the country's crime rate is 5,375 incidents per 100,000 people.

This means that Winnipeg experiences more crime than the rest of the country. Winnipeg's crime rate is also significantly higher than the provincial average of 5,904 incidents per 100,000 people.

## Winnipeg's Crime Frequency

According to Statistics Canada, Winnipeg's crime frequency was at its highest in 2022, with total crime incidents of 67,672. The year 2021 to 2022 also had the most significant increase, with about a 15,800 jump.

Year	\$2,018.00	2019	2020	2021	2022
Crime Frequency	57,717	63,549	60,400	51,774	67,672

## Winnipeg's Crime Severity Index

Winnipeg's crime severity index (CSI) in 2021 was 126.92, which was close to the city's average of 127.51 for the last five years.

It is safe to say that despite the high crime rate and frequency, the severity of the city's crime incidents was not as dangerous as it was in 2019 (139.65).

Additionally, the city's crime severity index in 2019 was a 10% increase from the previous year. It is considered to be the biggest increase of the decade.

Year	\$2,017.00	2018	2019	2020	2021
Crime Severity Index	119.03	126.15	139.65	125.84	126.92

## Most Common Crimes Committed in Winnipeg

The most common crimes committed in Winnipeg are theft and shoplifting, assault, break-and-enter, drug offenses, robbery, and other property crimes.

According to Numbeo, Winnipeg has a high level of crime, with a record of 70.39. Below are some of the crime categories that happen in Winnipeg and their respective occurrences rated by the residents.

Crime Category	Rate	Level
Worries of home being broken and things stolen	52.33	Moderate
Worries of being mugged or robbed	53.93	Moderate
Worries of car being stolen	49.15	Moderate
Worries of things from car being stolen	65.07	High
Worries of being attacked	53.14	Moderate
Worries of being insulted	52.58	Moderate
Worries of getting attacked because of your skin color, ethnic origin, gender, or religion	33.69	Low
Problem of people using or dealing drugs	75.23	High
Problem of property crimes such as vandalism and theft	68.75	High
Problem of violent crimes such as assault and armed robbery	62.3	High

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Worries of getting attacked because of your skin color, ethnic origin, gender, or religion	33.69	Low
Problem of people using or dealing drugs	75.23	High
Problem of property crimes such as vandalism and theft	68.75	High
Problem of violent crimes such as assault and armed robbery	62.3	High
Problem of corruption and bribery	42.62	Moderate

Winnipeg, like any other city, has its fair share of crime. Theft and shoplifting, assault, break and enter, drug offenses, property crimes, and robbery are some of the most commonly committed in the city.

Crime	Percentage
Theft and Shoplifting	27.9% - 19,725
Assault	12.1% - 8,534
Break-and-Enter	9.2%
Drug Offenses	1%

## 1. Theft and Shoplifting

Theft and shoplifting are some of the most common crimes committed in Winnipeg. Shoplifting is particularly prevalent in retail, with thieves often targeting stores in shopping malls and downtown areas.

There were over 19,700+ cases of various theft and shoplifting, which covers about 27.9% of Winnipeg's overall crime in 2022.

## 2. Assault

Assault is another prevalent crime in Winnipeg. It can take many forms, ranging from domestic violence to street fights.

According to Winnipeg Police, there were over 7,400 reported assaults in 2021, which is a 48% increase from the previous year (5,000+).

Over 12.1% of Winnipeg's overall crime in 2022 were assaults, which is over 8,500 incidents.

## 3. Break-and-Enter

Break-and-enter crimes involve gaining access to a property without permission, with the intention of committing theft or other crimes. These crimes can occur in both residential and commercial settings.

In 2022, there were over 6,400 reported break-and-enter incidents in Winnipeg. This covers about 9.2% of Winnipeg's overall crime.

## 4. Drug Offenses

Drug offenses, such as possession and trafficking, are also common in Winnipeg. The city is known to have a high number of methamphetamine users, which has increased related crimes.

Overall, Winnipeg has recorded over 400 different cases of drug-related offenses in 2022, which is about 0.6% of the total crimes in the same year.

## 5. Property Crime

Property crime is a broad category that includes offenses such as vandalism, theft, and arson. It is a significant problem in Winnipeg, with many residents reporting damage to their vehicles and homes.

Winnipeg's property crimes were recorded to be 73.6% of the total crimes in 2022. To include, theft and shoplifting accounted for about 38% of overall property crimes.

Below are some of the classes of property crime in the city and their respective percentage.

Property Crime Category	Percentage from Total Property Crime
Arson	0.74%
Break-and-Enter	12.5%
Possess Stolen Property	1.3%
Theft and Shoplifting	38%

## 6. Robbery

Robbery is a serious crime that involves the use of force or threat of force to take property from someone else. It is more prevalent in certain neighborhoods of the city, such as Downtown Winnipeg and North End.

In 2022, there were over 2,300 reported robberies in the city.



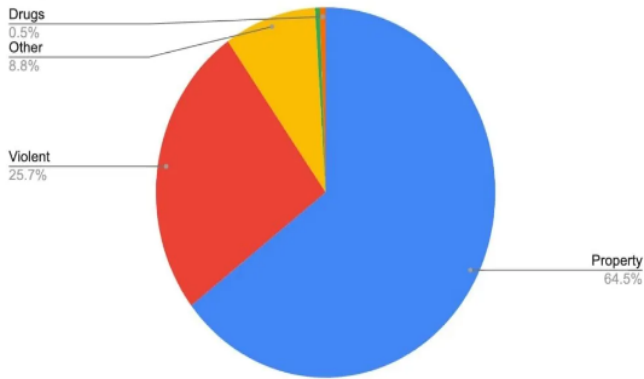
## Central Park

Central Park is an urban park located in the city center, with a population of 3,775. It has a high crime rate of 21,282 incidents per 100,000 people, which is three times higher than the city average.

There were over 1,095 reported crime incidents in 2022. Technically, about 1/3 of the population has experienced or reported a crime.

706 of the 1,095 reported crimes were property crimes involving mischief and motor vehicle thefts. 281 of the reported crimes were violent crimes, which consisted of assault and robbery.

### Reported Incidents



In 2021, Central Park also experienced its biggest crime frequency decrease, from 1,235 reported crimes in 2020 to 880.

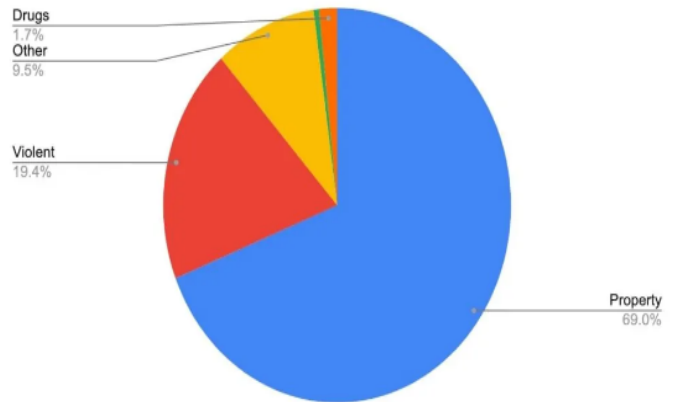
## Spence

Spence is located in the city center, beside South Portage. It is also known that Spence has one of the highest crime rates among most Downtown Winnipeg neighborhoods, with over 23,071 incidents per 100,000 people.

Spence had over 1,796 reported crime incidents in 2022, with 1,238 being property crimes like mischief and fraud, while 348 were violent crimes like assault and sexual assault.

Spence is also known for gun violence, with over 53 reported crime incidents.

### Reported Incidents



For the past four years, Spence's crime frequency has gone up, having the biggest increase from 2021 to 2022 of 29.49%.

## North Point Douglas

The North Point Douglas neighborhood, located in the north-central part of the city, has a population of around 2,026. The area is known for its high property crime rates, including break-ins and thefts.

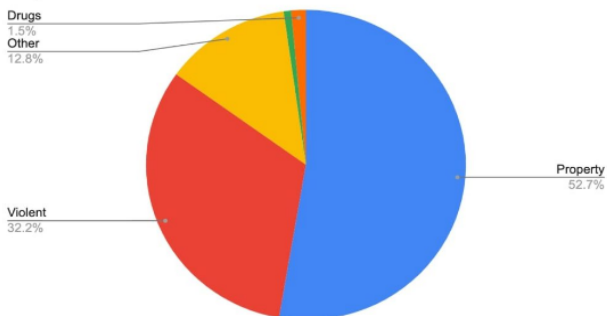
North Point Douglas has also been named the most dangerous neighborhood in Winnipeg.

According to the Winnipeg Police Service, the neighborhood's crime rate is four times higher than the city's, with 27,002 incidents per 100,000 people.

The reported crime incidents in 2022 have accumulated around 670 times.

Almost half of these incidents are property crimes (353) involving mischief, breaking and entering, and motor vehicle thefts. While 216 are violent crimes, which consist of assault, sexual assaults, and uttering threats.

### Reported Incidents



Over the years, the reported crime incidents in the neighborhood have not gone down nor gone high.

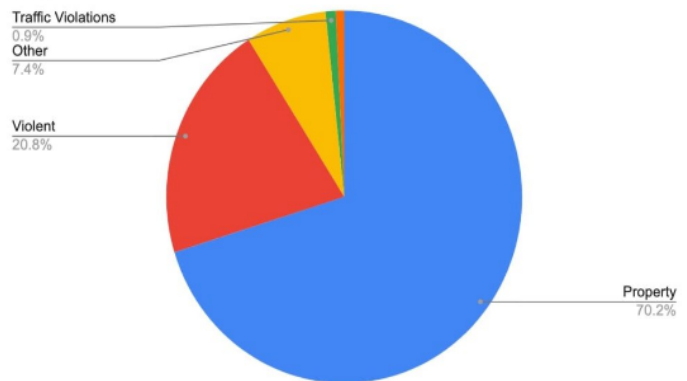
## Downtown Winnipeg

Downtown Winnipeg is at the center of the city, which covers a more extensive area and several neighborhoods like South Portage, Polo Park, Spence, St. Matthews, Central Park, and West Alexander, which are all included in the list.

Overall, Downtown Winnipeg has a crime rate of 35,837 incidents per 100,000 people. There were over 19,009 recorded crime incidents in 2022.

13,339 of these are property crimes that consist of mischief, shoplifting, and theft. At the same time, 3,947 of these are violent crimes, consisting of assault and firearms offenses.

### Reported Incidents



And in 2021, the crime frequency in the area went down to -23.36%, making it the biggest decrease in the last five years.