

# A PROFILE OF YOUTH OFFENDERS IN CALGARY

## A Study of Youth Offending Patterns, Serious Habitual Offenders and System Response

Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family  
Highlights from the Interim Report - March 2008

A summary of the findings from the first year of a three-year study, this report establishes the foundation of a model to predict why some youth become more seriously involved in crime than others.

### Research Questions

1. What are the contemporary trends of youth crime in Calgary?
2. How do the criminal histories of Serious Habitual Offenders (SHOs) in Calgary differ from those of non-SHOs?
3. What characteristics (i.e., demographic, familial, educational, community, interpersonal) and experiences (i.e., delinquency, substance use, gang involvement) differentiate youth in Calgary with various levels of involvement with the law?

### Research Methods

1. An examination of the characteristics of youth crime in Calgary in 2006 using data from the Calgary Police Service Police Information Management System (PIMS).
2. An examination of the criminal histories of SHOs compared to non-SHOs using data from PIMS.
3. In-depth reviews of probation files and interviews with youth offenders who ranged from having minimal criminal involvement to serious criminal involvement.

**Full Report Available:** [www.ucalgary.ca/~criif/sub/research.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/~criif/sub/research.html)

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Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family



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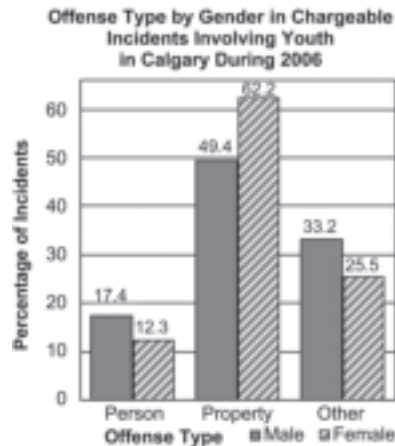
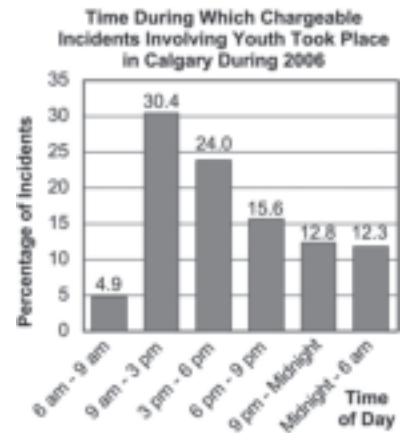
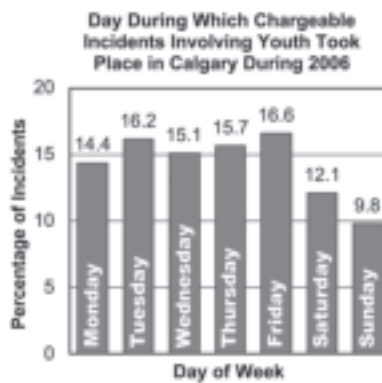
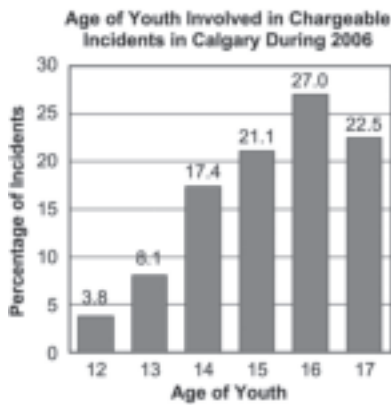


**CALGARY  
POLICE  
SERVICE**

**Total Youth Population  
in Calgary (12-17 yrs.)  
2006 - 76,862**

← Youth Charged with Crime - 2,040 (2.7%)

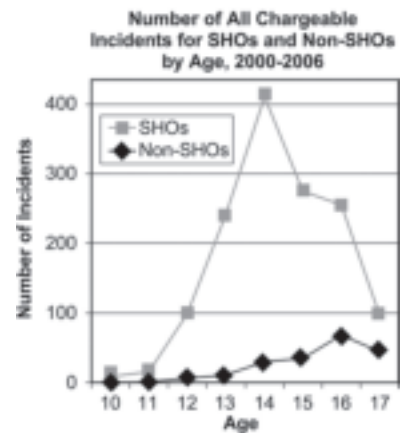
# CONTEMPORARY TRENDS 2006



- Almost three-quarters (73.0%) of the incidents involved males.
- Co-offenders were involved in 40.3% of incidents.
- Charges were laid in almost two-thirds of incidents (61.5%).
- The most common reasons for not laying a charge were extrajudicial measures (54.4%) & extrajudicial sanctions (27.0%).

## SHO (N=42)/NON-SHO (N=42) CRIMINAL HISTORY COMPARISON 2000-2006

- Reported chargeable incidents
  - SHOs: 1,402 (average 33.4 per youth)
  - Non-SHOs: 196 (average 4.7 per youth)
- Reported chargeable incidents involving weapons
  - SHOs: 69 (4.9%)
  - Non-SHOs: 5 (2.6%)
- 92.9% of identified youth SHOs were male.
- SHOs had an earlier onset of recorded criminal contact than non-SHOs.



# PROFILE OF 123 YOUTH OFFENDERS

Study Groups	n	Gender		Avg. Age	Description
		M	F		
Gateway Participants	20	45%	55%	15.6	Youth who have participated in Gateway, a pre-charge extrajudicial measures program administered by the City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services and the Calgary Police Service.
One-time Offenders	42	83%	17%	16.4	Youth who have one substantive criminal finding of guilt (with no subsequent charges pending).
Chronic Offenders	41	93%	7%	16.8	Youth who have five or more substantive criminal findings of guilt (not including SHOs).
Serious Habitual Offenders (SHOs)	20	100%	0%	17.0	Youth designated as SHOs by the Alberta Solicitor General, as recommended by the Multi-Disciplinary Resource Team and the Calgary Police Service.

All percentages are based on the number of valid responses.

	Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		Serious Habitual Offenders	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Home Life</b>								
Live with both parents/siblings at time of interview	10	50.0%	14	33.0%	5	12.2%	5	25.0%
Live with one parent/siblings at time of interview	10	50.0%	19	45.2%	14	34.1%	11	55.0%
Have run away from home at least once	4	20.0%	20	47.6%	35	85.4%	16	80.0%
History of family violence (based on Probation file)	NA	NA	18	45.0%	29	74.4%	11	68.8%
Parents approve of friends	17	85.0%	22	52.4%	12	30.8%	5	25.0%
Engage in social or leisure activities with their families at least 1x/wk	12	75.0%	12	30.0%	13	35.1%	5	26.3%
Never engage in social or leisure activities with their families	2	12.5%	19	47.5%	19	51.4%	10	52.6%
<b>Involvement with Children's Services</b>								
Have had contact with Children's Services	3	15.0%	15	35.7%	34	82.9%	15	75.0%
Have ever lived in a foster care	2	10.0%	7	16.7%	15	36.6%	10	50.0%
Have ever lived in a group home	0	0.0%	10	23.8%	29	70.7%	13	65.0%
<b>School Involvement</b>								
Currently attending school	20	100.0%	28	66.7%	28	68.3%	9	45.0%
If currently attending: Expect to complete high school	19	100.0%	27	100.0%	27	96.4%	7	77.8%
Ever skipped classes	10	50.0%	16	59.3%	21	77.8%	7	77.8%
Ever been suspended	8	40.0%	23	82.1%	23	82.1%	8	88.9%
Ever considered dropping out	6	30.0%	16	57.1%	19	67.9%	7	77.8%
Ever been bullied	9	45.0%	24	57.1%	16	39.0%	6	30.0%
Ever been in fights at school	11	57.9%	34	81.0%	37	90.2%	20	100.0%
<b>Involvement in Community/Leisure Activities</b>								
Involved in organized activities after school	15	75.0%	13	31.0%	9	22.0%	2	10.0%
Involved in adult-coached sports	11	65.0%	9	21.4%	4	9.8%	0	0.0%
Involved in organized non-sport activities	7	35.0%	3	7.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Calgary Transit Use and Experiences</b>								
Use Calgary Transit bus more than once per week	14	70.0%	29	69.0%	32	78.0%	15	75.0%
Feel generally safe waiting or riding bus after dark	14	82.4%	26	81.3%	32	88.9%	17	100.0%
Use Calgary Transit LRT more than once per week	11	55.0%	26	61.9%	27	67.5%	12	60.0%
Feel generally safe waiting or riding LRT after dark	15	88.2%	31	83.8%	31	86.1%	17	94.4%
Ever ridden without a valid ticket	13	65.0%	34	81.0%	34	82.9%	18	90.0%
Ever damaged/vandalized/tagged Transit property	0	0.0%	15	35.7%	9	22.0%	7	35.0%

All percentages are based on the number of valid responses.

	Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		Serious Habitual Offenders	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Self-Reported Weapon Possession</b>								
Ever taken a weapon to school	1	5.0%	15	35.7%	20	48.8%	15	75.0%
Ever carried a weapon in the community	3	15.0%	13	31.0%	23	56.1%	11	55.0%
<b>Self Reported Alcohol and Drug Use</b>								
Ever consumed 5 or more drinks of alcohol on one occasion	15	75.0%	37	88.1%	41	100.0%	20	100.0%
Ever used illegal drugs	12	60.0%	35	83.3%	41	100.0%	20	100.0%
If yes, marijuana	12	100.0%	35	100.0%	41	100.0%	20	100.0%
mushrooms	6	50.0%	25	73.5%	35	85.4%	16	80.0%
ecstasy	5	41.7%	26	76.5%	36	87.8%	18	90.0%
methamphetamine	2	16.7%	5	14.7%	6	14.6%	6	30.0%
crack	1	8.3%	6	17.6%	17	41.5%	10	50.0%
cocaine	3	25.0%	18	52.9%	31	75.6%	13	65.0%
Know where to find drugs	11	55.0%	31	73.8%	39	95.1%	17	85.0%
Ever bought illegal drugs	6	30.0%	30	71.4%	38	92.7%	18	90.0%
Ever sold illegal drugs	7	35.0%	20	47.6%	28	68.3%	14	70.0%
<b>Self-Reported Knowledge of and Experience with Gangs</b>								
Presence of gangs at their school	9	45.0%	20	50.0%	19	47.5%	7	36.8%
Presence of gangs in their community	6	30.0%	15	37.5%	23	57.5%	12	60.0%
Have friends that belonged to gangs	3	15.8%	15	36.6%	22	55.0%	14	70.0%
Gang tried to recruit respondent	3	15.0%	14	34.1%	24	60.0%	13	65.0%
Ever been a member of a gang	2	10.0%	7	17.1%	22	55.0%	10	52.6%
<b>Self-Reported Person Crimes</b>								
Ever assaulted or hurt someone	5	25.0%	34	81.0%	37	90.2%	20	100.0%
If yes: With a weapon	0	0.0%	16	48.5%	22	59.5%	18	90.0%
With friends	3	60.0%	18	52.9%	26	70.3%	17	85.0%
Ever taken (or tried) something by force or threat of force	0	0.0%	11	32.4%	25	61.0%	13	72.2%
Ever harassed, threatened or bullied someone	12	60.0%	36	85.7%	33	80.5%	17	85.0%
If yes: With a weapon	1	8.3%	17	47.2%	20	60.6%	14	82.4%
Ever had or tried to have any kind of sexual contact with someone against their will (including kissing or sexual touching)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.4%	1	5.0%
<b>Self-Reported Property Crimes</b>								
Ever broken into a house	1	5.0%	13	31.0%	25	61.0%	16	80.0%
Ever stolen anything	17	85.0%	34	81.0%	41	100.0%	19	95.0%
If yes: Something worth less than \$50	15	88.2%	27	79.4%	26	63.4%	15	83.3%
Something worth more than \$50	8	47.1%	20	58.8%	37	90.2%	15	83.3%
Car/motorcycle	3	18.8%	11	32.4%	29	70.7%	14	77.8%
With a group of friends	9	56.3%	23	67.6%	30	73.2%	16	82.2%
<b>Charges</b>								
Average number of property-related charges	NA	NA	20	6.3	41	8.1	19	12.5
Average number of person crime charges	NA	NA	21	1.5	37	5.1	19	6.7
Average number of drug-related charges	NA	NA	7	1.1	10	1.4	11	2.2
Average number of administration of justice charges	NA	NA	9	2.2	39	14.5	19	21.1