

Dangerous Offenders under Federal Supervision: 2014-15 to 2019-20

Indigenous and non-Indigenous designated as Dangerous Offenders are increasing under federal supervision.

Why we are doing this study

After conviction, the court can designate an individual as a Dangerous Offender (DO). The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) then receives these cases with a Dangerous Offender designation to manage. Historical time series data on the number of Dangerous Offenders serving time in federal custody and under supervision in the community can help place the situation in a broader sentence management context. Moreover, exploring disaggregated data can assist in the development of various strategies for effectively managing these higher risk offenders.

What we did

At admission, CSC routinely collects information on sentence administration and demographics for offenders under federal jurisdiction. Statistical data were compiled for federal offenders with a DO status. Variables such as current regional location and type of sentence were examined. 2014-15 and 2019-20 year-end figures reflect the prevalence of those who were designated a Dangerous Offender and were serving either an indeterminate or a determinate sentence in custody or on conditional release in the community.

What we found

In Table 1, statistics show that the number of Dangerous Offender designations under federal supervision has increased over the past five years from 643 (30.6% Indigenous) in 2014-15 to and 874 (35.7% Indigenous) in 2019-20. Overall, the relative growth in the number of Dangerous Offenders over this time has increased by 231 (or 35.9%). The great majority of Dangerous Offenders are in federal custody, as opposed to in the community. Furthermore, it is observed that the number of Indigenous Dangerous Offender designations has increased over time by 115 (or 58%) whereas non-Indigenous it has increased by 116 (or 26.0%).

Table 1: Dangerous Offenders: 2014-15 to 2019-20

DOs	(Indigenous)		(Non-Indigenous)	
	2014-15	2019-20	2014-15	2019-20
Custody	183	252	414	491
Community	14	60	32	71
Total	197	312	446	562

Table 2 displays the regional distribution of Dangerous Offenders. While all regions have experienced a growth in the number of Dangerous Offenders they manage, it is notable that the number of Dangerous Offenders in the Ontario region has substantially increased by 106 (or 53.8%) over the past five years. Moreover, the Ontario region accounts for the largest share of the overall growth at 45.8% followed next by the Pacific region at 29.0%. Although the Prairie region presents the largest number of Indigenous Dangerous Offenders (114 in 2019-20), the number has more than doubled in the Ontario region from 33 in 2014-15 to 72 in 2019-20.

Table 2: Dangerous Offenders: 2014-15 to 2019-20

Region	(Indigenous)		(Non-Indigenous)	
	2014-15	2019-20	2014-15	2019-20
Atlantic	8	15	34	31
Quebec	17	33	87	109
Ontario	33	72	164	231
Prairies	83	114	53	57
Pacific	56	78	108	134
Total	197	312	446	562

What it means

A Dangerous Offender designation carries with it a label that has some serious resource and case management implications. The increasing number and relatively high proportion of the Dangerous Offender population who are Indigenous requires continued efforts to deliver a range of strategies that offer variation in security, programming and supervision. Perhaps, the development of alternative sentencing options at the front end of the criminal justice system should also be a consideration.

For more information

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