

CORE DEFINITIONS

Youth Custody and Community Services (YCCS) Survey

**To enquire about the enclosed concepts or definitions please contact the
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PURPOSE

This document is intended to assist aggregate data respondents in completing the standard data tables for the Youth Custody and Community Services (YCCS) survey.

The document contains a list of the basic concepts and definitions employed by the survey, most of which are based on the YCCS National Data Requirements (September 1990) developed and approved by the Liaison Officers Committee, National Justice Statistics Initiative.

The development of National Data Requirements for any survey is vital to establishing a uniform set of concepts that are comparable across jurisdictions as well as over time. The application of uniform definitions and maintenance of comparable data is part of the mandate of the National Justice Statistics Initiative.

Survey respondents providing aggregate data should inform the YCCS survey staff if they are unable to apply the core definitions to specific concepts (e.g., admission) and to what extent their data differ from the core definitions. Highlighting these variances will allow the survey to notify data users if such differences exist, and will help to facilitate the development and application of uniform definitions as the survey evolves.

CORE DEFINITIONS

Aboriginal Status: Indicates whether the youth is Aboriginal. Aboriginal status includes both individuals registered under the *Indian Act* and those that are non-registered.

Admission: Refers to the youth's commencement of an uninterrupted period of supervision by the Provincial/Territorial Director within a specific status (i.e., remand, secure and open custody and probation). For the YCCS survey, a new admission is counted each time a young offender changes status.

Age: Refers to the age of the offender at the time of admission into a youth facility or program.

Alternative Measures: Actions other than judicial proceedings used to deal with a young person alleged to have committed an offence. Participants in alternative measures may or may not have been charged by police. Information on alternative measures is not within scope of the YCCS survey.

Custody: A status that requires the young offender to spend time in a designated correctional facility, either in secure custody, open custody or remand as ordered by the youth court.

Disposition: A youth court orders a disposition upon finding a young person guilty of an offence. The type of dispositions include the following:

- a) Custodial dispositions: include secure custody and open custody; and
- b) Community service dispositions: include probation, community service order, personal service order, compensation, restitution, pay purchaser, fine, prohibition/seizure/forfeiture, other disposition deemed appropriate.

Initial Entry: Refers to the point or type of supervision that a youth first enters the youth corrections system regardless of supervision status.

Most Serious Offence: The YCCS survey categorizes “most serious offence” (MSO) according to the offence classification scheme currently being used by the Youth Court Survey. Offence types are categorized from most to least serious, as follows: violent, drug related, property, other *Criminal Code*, *YOA*, and provincial/municipal or other federal offences. Appendix A provides a breakdown of the specific offence categories and their corresponding offences. The MSO categories include the following:

1. ***Violent offences:*** include offences such as murder, attempted murder, sexual assault, aggravated assault, common assault, robbery, kidnapping, and extortion. Violent offences involve the use or threatened use of violence against a person. Robbery is considered a violent offence because unlike other theft offences, it involves the use or threat of violence.
2. ***Drug related offences:*** include offences such as importing/exporting narcotics, trafficking in narcotics, possession of narcotics, cultivation, trafficking in drugs, and possession of drugs.
3. ***Property offences:*** include offences such as break and enter, theft, arson, motor vehicle theft, fraud, possession of stolen property, and mischief. Property offences involve unlawful acts to gain property, but do not involve the use or threat of violence against the person.
4. ***Other Criminal Code offences:*** include offences such as prostitution, impaired operation of a motor vehicle, escape custody, failure to appear, disorderly conduct, soliciting, and offences against the administration of justice.
5. ***YOA offences:*** include offences such as failure to comply with a disposition, and contempt against youth court. The *YOA* is primarily concerned with the process for dealing with youth accused of crime. However, youth can be charged under the *YOA* usually when they fail to comply with a court-ordered disposition.
6. ***Provincial/Territorial, Municipal and Other Federal offences:*** include offences such as provincial liquor offences, provincial/territorial traffic violations, violations of

municipal by-laws, and violations of other federal statutes such as offences under the *Income Tax Act* and *Immigration Act*.

Open custody: The *Young Offenders Act* defines open custody as custody in (a) a community residential centre, group home, child care institution, or forest or wilderness camp or (b) any like place or facility. A facility is considered “open” when there is minimal use of security devices or perimeter security. The extent to which facilities are “open” varies across jurisdiction.

Probation: A common type of community-based disposition, where the youth is given a disposition of supervised or unsupervised probation.

Release: Refers to the completion of an uninterrupted period of supervision by the Provincial/Territorial Director within a specific status (i.e., remand, secure and open custody and probation). For the YCCS survey, a new release is counted each time an offender changes status.

Remand: To hold a young person temporarily in custody, pursuant to a Remand Warrant, while awaiting trial or sentencing, or prior to commencement of a custodial disposition. Data on admissions to remand should not include “police lock-ups.”

Reporting Period: The subject time period (i.e., fiscal year – April 1 to March 31) during which a youth must be active in order to be extracted for YCCS survey purposes. A youth is active if he/she is under the supervision of the Provincial/Territorial director of youth corrections (e.g., serving a disposition).

Secure Custody: Under the *Young Offenders Act* a facility is considered secure when youths are detained by security devices, including those which operate with full perimeter security features and/or where youths are under constant observation. The extent to which facilities are “secure” varies across jurisdiction.

Sentence Length: This refers to the aggregate sentence or total amount of days a young person is ordered to serve under the *Young Offenders Act*. The specific amount of days must be for an uninterrupted period of time during which the youth is under the authority of the Provincial/Territorial Director. For multiple **custodial sentences** (i.e., secure and open custody), if dispositions are concurrent then the sentence length is the longest sentence; if the dispositions are consecutive then the sentence length is the sum of all custodial sentences; and if dispositions are both concurrent and consecutive then the aggregate sentence is the sum of both types as calculated above.

Status of Supervision: The status in which the young offender is serving a sentenced disposition (i.e., secure custody, open custody, probation or other community service) as ordered by a youth court or is being held temporarily in remand before a court hearing.

Time Served: Refers to the aggregate time served or total amount of days a young person spent in custody or probation upon completion of an uninterrupted period of time during which time the youth was under the authority of the Provincial/Territorial Director.

Young Offender: A person who is twelve years of age or older, but less than eighteen years of age, at the time of committing an offence.

CALCULATIONS

Using the mock data table below, the following example describes how to calculate the mean and median length of time served for total male and female releases from custody.

Observation	Release by Length of Time Served (Days)	
	Male	Female
1	5	5
2	15	10
3	30	10
4	45	20
5	65	30
Total	160	75

Mean: The *mean* of a population is obtained by adding up the values of every observation in the population and then dividing the result by the number of observations in the population.

The formula for calculating the mean is as follows:

$$\text{mean} = \frac{\sum n}{n}$$

where: $\sum n$ is the sum of all of the observations; and,
 n is the number of observations.

From the above data, the mean length of time served for males is 32 days:

$$(5+15+30+45+65) \div \text{number of observations} = 160 \div 5 = 32$$

In the case of female releases from custody, the mean length of time served is 15 days:

$$(5+10+10+20+30) \div \text{number of observations} = 75 \div 5 = 15$$

The total mean length of time served for both male and female releases from custody is 23.5 days:

$$(5+5+10+10+15+20+30+30+45+65) \div \text{number of observations} = 235 \div 10 = 23.5$$

Median: The *median* of a population is referred to as the midpoint of a distribution (i.e., arranged from lowest to highest value) where an equal number of observations are above and below this point.

This point is obtained in two different ways, depending on whether the number of observations in the population is odd or even. If odd, the median is the value of the observation where an equal number of other observations are less than, and greater than, that value. If even, the median is the halfway point between the values of the two observations where an equal number of all the other observations are less than, and greater than, the halfway point.

The formula for calculating the median is as follows:

$$\text{median point} = \frac{n + 1}{2}$$

where: n is the number of observations

Odd observations

From the mock table above, the median length of time served for male and female releases from custody is 30 days and 10 days respectively.

$$\text{median point} = (5+1) \div 2 = 3 \text{ (3}^{\text{rd}} \text{ observation)}$$

Because the median point is 3, this means that the 3rd observation on the rank ordered distribution of releases by length of time served is the median. In this case, the median length of time served is 30 days which corresponds to the third observation. Because there are a similar amount of observations for female releases, the same results would be obtained. For female releases from custody the 3rd observation corresponds to 10 days.

Even observations

The median length of time served for both male and female releases from custody is 17.5 days.

$$\text{median point} = (10+1) \div 2 = 5.5^{\text{th}} \text{ observations}$$

$$5+5+10+10+15+20+30+30+45+65$$

Because there are an even number of observations, the median point will always fall between two observations. In this case, the median point falls between 15 and 20 (i.e., 5.5th observation). The following example shows how the median calculation would be completed.

$$(15+20) \div 2 = 17.5$$

Appendix A

Mapping of Offences to YCCS Most Serious Offence Categories

Column Heading for Tables	<i>Numcol</i>	Most Serious Offence <i>exmsso</i>	Description of Offence
Common assault	1	133	Assault
Sexual assault	2	120	Aggravated sexual assault
	2	121	Sexual assault with a weapon
	2	122	Sexual assault
	2	123	Rape/indecent assault
Robbery	3	140	Robbery
Violent other	4	100	Murder
	4	101	Manslaughter
	4	110	Attempted murder
	4	130	Aggravated assault
	4	131	Assault with a weapon
	4	132	Causing bodily harm with intent/firearm
	4	134	Unlawfully causing bodily harm
	4	135	Assaulting a police officer
	4	136	Other assaults
	4	150	Dangerous use of a weapon
	4	151	Possession of a weapon
	4	152	Other weapons offences
	4	160	Infanticide and other related
	4	161	Kidnapping/hostage taking
	4	162	Extortion
	4	163	Other sexual offence
4	164	Criminal negligence	
B & E	5	200	Breaking and entering
Theft < \$5000	6	240	Theft \$5000 and under
Theft > \$5000	7	230	Theft over \$5000
Possession stolen	8	270	Possession of stolen property
Property other	9	210	Arson
	9	220	Motor vehicle theft
	9	250	Theft unspecified
	9	251	Theft other
	9	260	False pretence
	9	261	Forgery
	9	262	Fraud
	9	263	Other fraudulent transactions
	9	280	Mischief/damage

Column Heading for Tables	<i>Numcol</i>	Most Serious Offence <i>exms0</i>	Description of Offence
Other CC	10	300	Impaired operation
	10	310	Escape custody
	10	311	Unlawfully at large
	10	312	Failure to appear
	10	313	Breach of recognizance
	10	314	Failure to comply with probation order
	10	320	Attempts, accessories, conspiracy
	10	330	Disorderly conduct/nuisances
	10	340	Abduction
	10	341	Procuring
	10	342	Bawdy house
	10	343	Soliciting
	10	344	Other motor vehicle offence
	10	345	Gaming and betting
	10	346	Against the administration of justice
	10	347	Currency offence
	10	348	Exposure/nudity
	10	349	Public morals
	10	350	Public order
	10	351	Offence against the person and reputation
10	352	Other criminal code	
Drug related	11	400	Importing/exporting narcotics
	11	401	Trafficking in narcotics
	11	410	Possession of a narcotic
	11	420	Failure to disclose previous prescriptions
	11	421	Cultivation
	11	500	Trafficking in drugs
	11	501	Possession of drugs
	11	502	Other FDA offence
YOA	12	600	Failure to comply with a disposition
	12	610	Failure to comply with an undertaking
	12	611	Contempt against youth court
	12	612	Assist/interfere/other
Provincial/municipal	13	800	Provincial statutes offence
	13	700	Other federal statutes offence
	13	900	Municipal statutes offence
Unknown	14		Offence group not found in library