

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

CHANGING LIVES. PROTECTING CANADIANS.

## Sexual Coercion and Violence in Federal Custody: 2022-2023

*The reporting landscape around sexual victimization has changed following new CSC policy.*

**Why we did this study**

The implementation of [Commissioner's Directive \(CD\) 574 on Sexual Coercion and Violence](#) within the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC; 2022) established a zero tolerance strategy to prevent, identify, respond to, investigate, and monitor allegations of sexual coercion and violence (SCV) in federal custody.

An increase in reporting of SCV allegations has followed the implementation of CD 574. This increase reflects a context marked by an enhanced awareness of and access to reporting mechanisms and increased willingness to report SCV (tied to communication and awareness efforts deployed in as part of CD 574), as well as the expanded definitional scope of sexual victimization as per CD 574 (i.e., inclusion of sexual assault, sexual coercion, and sexual violence) and mandatory reporting requirements.

The reporting increase parallels the experience of the United States following the introduction the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). In the United States, a sharp increase in allegations of sexual victimization followed the implementation of national standards, though the rate of substantiated incidents remained largely stable (Rantala, 2018). The current analysis provides an overview of reported allegations of SCV incidents within federal institutions in fiscal year 2022-2023. All allegations were included, regardless of outcomes and whether the claims were substantiated.

**What we did**

Reported allegations of SCV in 2022-2023 were identified through an incident-level data extraction of CSC's computerized database, the Offender Management System (OMS), as well as a review of other incident-level materials (e.g., Warden Situation Reports, Duty Reports). Information was collected pertaining to the nature and circumstances of SCV and the profile of offenders involved. Although reported in 2022-2023, not all alleged incidents occurred in this period (i.e., some were historical cases).

**What we found**

In 2022-2023, there was a total of 132 reported allegations of offender-on-offender SCV. This represents a notable increase from the number reported in 2021-2022 (i.e., 39). Trends were influenced by the phenomenon of 'clustered reporting,' whereby multiple offenders came forward

reporting SCV simultaneously or in a short timeframe, or a single offender reported multiple allegations of SCV during one disclosure. The most reported assaultive action was unwanted touching. Incidents were most often reported by the victim to CSC staff members (e.g., correctional staff, healthcare staff, case management staff). Offenders involved in reported incidents were most often men, though a subset of cases involved women or gender diverse offenders (see Table 1). Among both alleged instigators and victims, there was overrepresentation of Indigenous offenders.

**Table 1. Gender and Race of Offenders Involved in Reported SCV Incidents in 2022-2023.**

Characteristic	Offender Group		In-Custody Comparison
	Instigators	Victims	
<b>Gender</b>			
Woman	37.9%	20.5%	4.7%
Man	51.5%	66.3%	94.5%
Gender Diverse	10.7%	13.3%	0.8%
<b>Race</b>			
White	43.7%	43.4%	47.2%
Indigenous	45.6%	43.4%	32.4%
Other	10.7%	13.2%	20.4%

*Note: Offender groups include unique offenders; offenders may have been involved in multiple incidents, and incidents may have involved more than one instigator or victim. Comparison data is drawn from the 2022-2023 year end snapshot. Comparison data for the gender diverse group was based upon offenders with an active gender accommodations flag.*

**What it means**

The implementation of CD 574 has corresponded with a notable increase in allegations of SCV. This parallels the experience in the United States following the implementation of national standards (Rantala, 2018), and reflects a changing reporting landscape intended to facilitate disclosure and standardization in staff responses to allegations of sexual victimization.

**For more information:** Please e-mail the [Research Branch](#). You can also visit the [Research Publications](#) section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries.

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**References:**

Rantala, R. (2018). Sexual Victimization Reported by Adult Correctional Authorities, 2012-15. *U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Bureau of Justice Statistics*. <<https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/svraca1215.pdf>>.

