

# Serious crimes up in Halifax: report

Last Updated: Thursday, July 20, 2006 | 5:31 PM ET

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Halifax remains one of the most violent cities in Canada, a Statistics Canada report released Thursday shows.

The latest numbers show the overall crime rate in the Nova Scotia capital was down by about seven per cent in 2005 from 2004, and violent crime was down by four per cent.

But the most serious kinds of violent crimes — homicide, attempted murder and aggravated assault — were up.

There were 10 homicides in Halifax in 2005, up from nine the year before. The number of attempted murders jumped to 21 from five, while aggravated assaults climbed to 50 from 15.

If people don't feel safe walking the city streets, eye-catching headlines about certain crimes may be the reason, Police Chief Frank Beazley said.

"It seems like we spend so much time and activity looking at something that happens really so little," he said.

Police spokesman Const. Jeff Carr said the change in the number of attempted murders may be a result of a shift in the department's interpretation of the charge in the Criminal Code.

With the latest numbers, Halifax maintains its spot among the top 10 Canadian cities when it comes to violent crimes.

Halifax has the third highest overall violent crime rate among 27 cities, behind Regina and Saskatoon. In addition, it ranks:

- Ninth in homicides.
- Second in sexual assaults.
- Fourth in total assaults.
- Fourth in robberies.

Across Canada, the national crime rate dropped five per cent in 2005, the Statistics Canada report said.