



NEW PROVINCE-WIDE SURVEY CONFIRMS PUBLIC SAFETY REMAINS A TOP CONCERN IN COMMUNITIES AROUND THE PROVINCE

Too many British Columbians living in fear and not reporting crimes

VANCOUVER, B.C. (Sept. 14, 2026) – As community leaders from around British Columbia meet in Vancouver for the annual Union of BC Municipalities convention this week, a new Research Co. survey by Save Our Streets (SOS) shows residents are continuing to live in fear in their communities, with 68 per cent saying **crime and violence is impacting their quality of life** and 37 per cent saying they've been the **victim of a recent crime**.

The result of the recent Research Co. survey shows little progress has been made since SOS first polled British Columbians two years ago, in September 2024. Notable results of the survey include:

- 48% **fear for the safety of their families** in their community;
- Over half of British Columbians (53%) say there are **areas in their community they actively avoid** for fear of their own safety;
- 87% say **addiction and mental illnesses are to blame** for much of the crime and public safety issues in their communities;
- 88% say they believe **crimes go unreported** in the province, with 66% saying it is because of a **lack of confidence in the judicial system**; and
- 81% believe **retail crime make the products they buy more expensive**.

“These results show that residents in B.C. communities, large and small, are begging for significant, measurable change,” says Jess Ketchum, Co-Founder of SOS. “Even if the numbers were cut in half, these results would still be appalling. British Columbians recognize the terrible impacts addiction and mental health issues are having on their community and only 31 per cent say the provincial government is doing enough to address those issues. As a result, it’s local governments that are increasingly having to respond to issues that fall outside their core responsibilities.”

Among the greatest source of agreement among British Columbians is the continued widespread support (75%-85%) for the following ideas: creating more spaces for drug rehabilitation; more effort in prevention regarding drug use; investing in new and enhanced facilities to care for people experiencing mental health problems; providing housing to individuals entering detox and recovery programs; and allowing people addicted to drugs to avoid incarceration and fines for minor crimes if they voluntarily enter and conclude a detoxification and recovery program.

“These survey results show that using the same old approaches to tackle these serious issues just doesn’t work,” says Clint Mahlman, Co-Founder, SOS. “If other jurisdictions around the world can make progress trying new evidenced-based approaches, why can’t we? The residents, families and business owners in B.C. communities deserve better and so do the thousands of British Columbians struggling with homelessness, poverty, addiction and mental health issues every day.”

The survey of 1,207 BC residents was conducted province-wide September 2-5 by Research Co. with a margin of error +/- 2.8% 19 times out of 20.

On Thursday, September 17, at a media event during the Union of BC Municipalities convention in Vancouver, mayors and councillors from around B.C. will sign a request calling for five actions by the provincial government to improve community safety, public confidence and quality of life.

About Save Our Streets

Save Our Streets is a coalition of 120-plus community and business organizations representing every corner of British Columbia. SOS members are committed to seeing governments bring order and public safety back to communities across British Columbia. Concerned citizen groups, and B.C. businesses interested in joining or supporting SOS are invited to submit online at SaveOurStreets.ca or contact info@saveourstreets.ca.

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