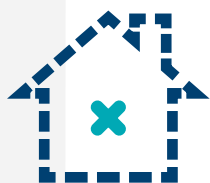# Inequities in the criminal justice system

Everyone has the right to **fair treatment by the criminal justice system**.

Bias, stereotypes and systemic racism contribute to differences in rates of police stops, arrests and detentions.

Indigenous people, Black people and people with mental health or substance use disorders are disproportionately impacted.
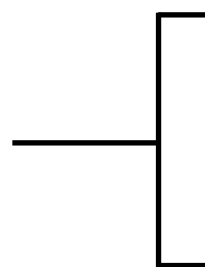
Lack of mental health services leads to increased police involvement.

Many formerly incarcerated people struggle with reintegration due to lack of housing and support.

Many people are jailed due to poverty—unable to afford bail or legal representation.

Jails are overcrowded in BC, and advocates have raised concerns about lack of hygiene and pest infestation.
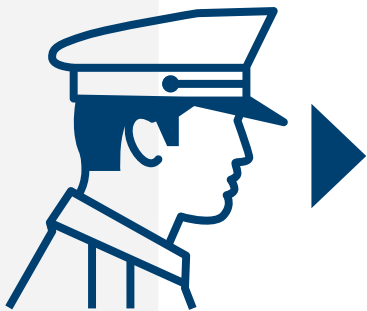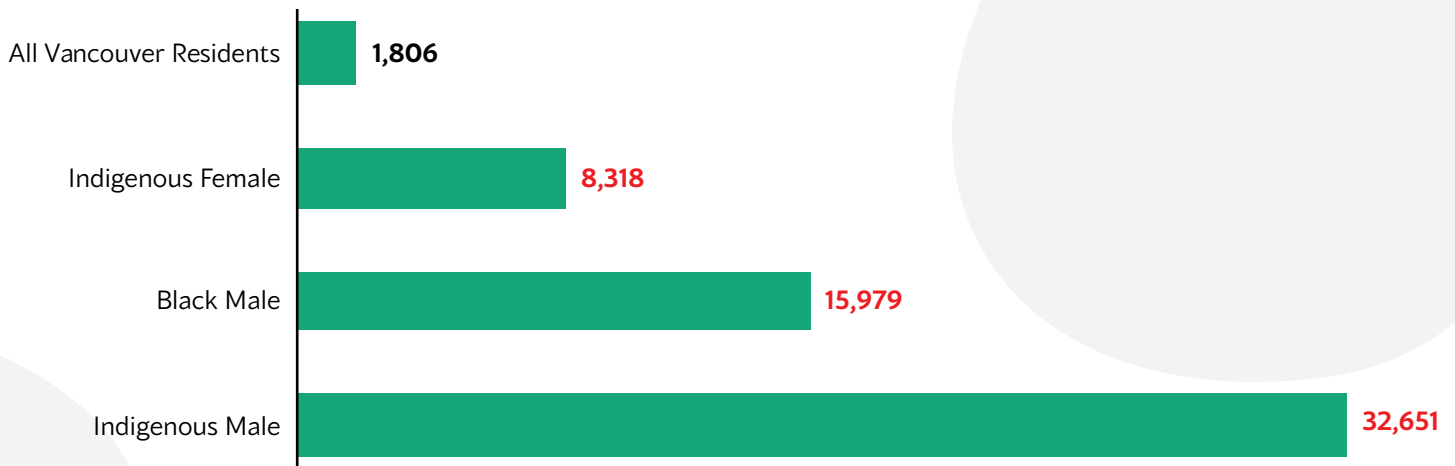
Impact on marginalized groups

Indigenous, Black and other racialized people are **overrepresented** in police stops, arrests and use-of-force incidents.

1 in 3

people in B.C. jails is Indigenous.

Average annual arrest rates (per 100,000) by race and gender, Vancouver Police Department, 2011–2020

All Vancouver Residents	**1,806**
Indigenous Female	**8,318**
Black Male	**15,979**
Indigenous Male	**32,651**

- **Indigenous women are much more likely** than non-Indigenous women to be incarcerated and face high rates of police mistreatment.
- **70% of inmates** have a mental health or substance use disorder, rising to **90% for Indigenous inmates**.
- **One in five police interactions** involve someone with a mental health or substance use disorder.
- **Over two-thirds** of people killed in police encounters were experiencing mental health crises.

About BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner

Under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*, B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner is responsible for promoting and protecting human rights in the province. Learn more about our Office at
bchumanrights.ca

10 key systems impacting human rights in B.C.

This fact sheet is based on the Commissioner's 2024 report, Rights in Focus: Lived Realities in B.C., which highlights significant inequities and injustices affecting B.C. residents across 10 key systems. These include inequities in housing, the social safety net, health care, education, employment, child welfare, criminal justice, public spaces and the family sphere, as well as in the effects of the environmental crisis. Exploring these systems is an important way to determine the state of human rights in British Columbia.

baseline.bchumanrights.ca/in-focus