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Here is what constitutes a 'hate crime' in Canada



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Photo: Police tape / Getty Images

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers reminds the public to contact police with any information about racist activity or any hate crime.

Amid anti-racism protests in the U.S. and around the globe, as well as recent news reports of violent anti-Asian crimes in Vancouver, the organization says that one in every five anonymous tips it received in April relate to hate crimes.

In May, VPD said they identified 77 hate-associated police files. This is an increase from the 51 files identified at the same time in 2019. In addition, there are 10 active files from

April and May that police are currently investigating that could potentially be classified as hate-related upon further investigation.

“When people cross the line to racism and other hate crimes, that’s when we have a responsibility to report it rather than ignore it,” says Linda Annis, Executive Director of Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers.

“There is no place for hate crime in Canada or anywhere else. If you’ve experienced it, or you’ve seen it happen, you can call Crime Stoppers. You will remain absolutely anonymous. All we need is the information to pass on to investigators who can do something about it.”

What exactly constitutes a hate crime?

A hate crime is defined as any criminal offence against a person or group or against property that is motivated by hatred or prejudice toward an identifiable group, as outlined in the Criminal Code of Canada:

Race, Colour, Ethnicity and Language

- The BC Hate Crimes Team notes about half of reported hate crimes in Canada are motivated by race (social categories based on characteristics including colour of skin, shape of eyes, hair texture and facial features) and ethnicity (common culture, history, language or nationhood)

Sex or Sexual Orientation

- Almost 20 per cent of hate crimes in Canada, often violent crimes, are motivated by sexual orientation and identity.

Religion

- Hate crimes against religious communities or individuals, based on perceived or misinterpreted religious attire or affiliation. These are often mischief such as vandalism, graffiti or destruction of property.

Age, Mental, or Physical Disability

- Offences against elderly individuals or those with mental or physical disabilities including developmental challenges, intelligence, physical and mental health disorders.

Any member of the public with information about racist activity or any hate crime, or who might be a witness, can:

- Directly call the local police department. They will investigate hate crimes including graffiti, vandalism and hate propaganda. For emergencies such as a racially-motivated assault, you can call 9-1-1-and state that you are reporting a hate crime.
- If you wish to remain anonymous when reporting a hate crime, report the details to Crime Stoppers at either 1-800-222-TIPS, or 1-855-448-TIPS. Calls to Crime Stoppers are answered 24/7 and are accepted in 115 different languages. Anonymous information can also be provided through the Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers website solvecrime.ca, or by using the downloadable “P3” Crime Stoppers reporting app.

Premier John Horgan released a statement regarding a surge in racist activity across British Columbia during the COVID-19 pandemic on Victoria Day.

"Everyone has a right to live without fear of violence or discrimination. Yet we are hearing disturbing stories of a rise in anti-Asian racist behaviour since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic," says Horgan.

Victims who need support or have non-emergency questions about these kinds of hate crime can contact the BC Hate Crimes Team for resources, training, or education at hatecrimebc.ca.

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