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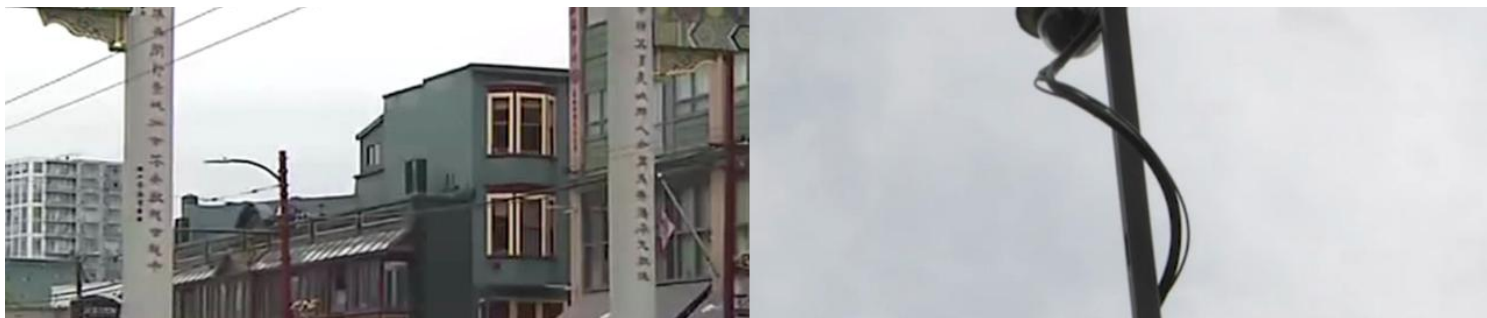
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Anti-Asian hate crimes on the rise in Vancouver; police say increase is 'disturbing'

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SUMMARY

Hate and anti-Asian crimes are on the rise in Vancouver, police say



There have been 77 hate-related police files opened in the city so far in 2020, up from 51 over the same time last year



Currently, 29 anti-Asian files are being investigated by the VPD, up from just four in the same time frame in 2019



VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – There’s been a “staggering” increase in the number of hate-related and anti-Asian crimes in Vancouver, police say.

According to the Vancouver Police Department, there have been 77 hate-related police files opened in the city so far this year, up from 51 over the same time in 2019.

“Earlier this year, after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we identified a disturbing trend: an increase in anti-Asian hate crimes and hate-related incidents,” Deputy Chief Constable Howard Chow says. “I’m saddened, disturbed, and disappointed to report that despite police efforts, despite engagement with community, and public concern and outrage, this trend continues in the city.”

Chow says of the 77 hate-related crimes, 29 anti-Asian files are being investigated, compared to just four over the same time period last year, data he refers to as “staggering.”

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Vancouver Police say despite efforts, there have been 77 hate-associated crimes in 2020, up from 51 over the same period last year. To date, 29 anti-Asian files being investigated.

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Since #COVID19, there have been many reports of anti-Asian incidents--these numbers back it up.



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On those 29 anti-Asian files, VPD says there were just four fitting that profile over same period last year.

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“That’s an eight-fold increase that we’re looking at,” he adds. “In addition to this, there are another 10 active files from April and May that we’re currently investigating or looking at that could eventually be classified as hate-related files in the coming days or weeks.”

In addition to violence against people, Chow says what also concerns him is the increase in “hateful graffiti” on landmarks associated with Chinese culture, such as the defacing of the two lions at the gates to Chinatown earlier this week.

Hate crimes are often under-reported, and police fear there are more incidents that have taken place than they’re aware of.

New measures to tackle increased crime

In an effort to fight back against hate-related incidents, the VPD has taken some steps.

They include increased contact with members of the Chinese community, so they are “aware of what constitutes a hate crime” and know how to get in touch with police, Chow explains, as well as new informational pamphlets.

Police resources have also been “poured into the Chinatown area.”

“Our officers are on foot, beat officers, they provide a very visible presence to deter crime. But more importantly, they’re there to reassure and support the community,” Chow adds.

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Cameras have also been installed in certain areas, which have been identified as “high crime.”

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In addition, the VPD is working to reduce barriers to reporting such crimes, Chow says.

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“I want to reassure the residents of this city and members of the Chinese community that combating this disturbing trend is a top priority for me and my investigators,” Deputy Chief Constable Laurence Rankin says.

Watch: VPD provides update on hate crimes in the city

Queenie Choo, CEO of S.U.C.C.E.S.S. — a multicultural, multi-service agency that assists newcomers to Canada — calls recent crimes “unacceptable,” adding it’s our job as people to fight bigotry and xenophobia.

She says hate against minorities is a growing concern in Canada, and notes racism toward minorities — including Asians — was an increasing issue even before the COVID-19 pandemic began.

“When COVID-19 began to spread, a rise in incidents of shameful behaviour blaming minorities did as well,” Choo explains.

She says recent examples, such as the attack on a 92-year-old Asian man, are “disgraceful.”

“This conduct is unwarranted. It is divisive, and it is unacceptable to how we define ourselves as Canadians. It also reminds us that much work needs to be done to further community understanding so that all Canadians will better recognize that a diverse community means it is resilient,” Choo adds.

Leaders at all levels, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, have condemned recent racist acts.



Cormac Mac Sweeney ✓

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PM Trudeau ends his remarks by denouncing the recent acts of racism against Asian Canadians, from attacks to graffiti. He

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