

Law and order situation in Hong Kong in 2024 (with photos)

The law and order situation in Hong Kong in 2024 is as follows:

1. Overall situation

In 2024, a total of 94 747 crimes were recorded in Hong Kong, representing an increase of 5% compared with 2023 (90 276 cases). There were 10 485 cases of violent crime, registering a rise of 3.6%. The overall detection rate was 30.4%, similar to that of 2023.

Leaving deception cases aside, the overall crime figure recorded a drop of 185 cases last year, while the detection rate rose by 1.7 percentage points to 47.9%, indicating that the rise in deception cases was the main reason for the increase in the overall crime figure and the decline in the overall detection rate. The increase in violent crimes was primarily driven by the rise in cases of “naked chat blackmail”. Apart from deception and blackmail, major crimes that recorded increases included rape.

A number of other traditional crimes such as homicide, robbery, burglary, wounding and serious assault, serious drug offences, theft, criminal damage, criminal intimidation and arson recorded declines. Last year, the figures for these traditional crimes remained at comparatively low levels and quite a number of them even reached new lows not seen in years or on record, while their detection rates were considerably high as well, with some even reaching the highest levels on record.

2. Deception

44 480 cases of deception were recorded, representing a rise of 4 656 cases or 11.7% compared with 2023 (39 824 cases). Among them, 61.8% were Internet-related (27 485 cases). Deception cases accounted for 46.9% of the overall number of crimes.

The rise in deception cases was mainly attributed to the emergence of the new modus operandi of telephone deception involving “Impersonating Customer Service” since early last year. A total of 5 575 cases of such modus operandi were reported in 2024, far exceeding the overall increase of 4 656 cases in deception. Over the past several months, Police have enhanced law enforcement and targeted publicity and education efforts, bringing the figure down by half from the peak of more than 1 100 cases in the single month of July last year to a monthly average of some 500 cases in the fourth quarter. However, the figure remained relatively high and Police will continue to take forward the relevant work.

When it comes to the trend of deception cases over the past few years, the increase of approximately 12% in 2024 was a marked slow-down compared with the consecutive rises of over 40% in 2022 and 2023, while the amount

involved (\$9.15 billion) dropped by \$30 million as well. This shows that Police's efforts to combat deception on various fronts and the multiple initiatives against deception launched in collaboration with stakeholders over the past three years are beginning to yield results.

Over the past year, Police have collaborated with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), the banking industry, the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) and telecommunications service providers to launch a series of enhanced measures with a view to fortifying defences against deception for members of the public.

Partnership with the HKMA and the banking industry

Police, together with the HKMA, announced in August 2024 that the scope of the Suspicious Account Alert mechanism had been extended from the Faster Payment System to cover internet banking and physical branch transactions, and it was further expanded in December to include transactions at Automated Teller Machines. The mechanism has covered the majority of the public's day-to-day transfers. If the recipient's account number is labelled as suspicious in the "Scameter" database, the system will send a high risk alert to the customer before confirming the transaction.

The Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) and the Anti-Deception Alliance continue to play a pivotal role. By collaborating with local banks, they proactively send alerts to potential victims. A total of 3 051 ongoing deception cases had been intervened successfully by the end of last year. Also, the ADCC successfully intercepted \$1.48 billion of fraudulent payments in 1 372 deception cases last year.

Collaboration with the OFCA and the telecommunications industry

As regards the enhanced measures implemented in collaboration with the OFCA and the telecommunications industry, starting from October 2024, Hong Kong residents must use the "iAM Smart" mobile application to verify identities for real-name registration for pre-paid SIM (PPS) cards, otherwise telecommunications service providers will conduct verification manually before activating the relevant PPS cards. Under the latest measure launched since December 31, 2024, when members of the public answer calls made from newly activated local PPS cards, they will first hear a voice alert message stating, "This call is made from a new PPS card", so as to raise public vigilance against phone scams.

In addition, Police continued to request telecommunications service providers to block and intercept telephone numbers and websites suspected to be involved in deception cases. By the end of last year, nearly 30 000 suspicious website links and over 8 300 suspicious phone numbers had been intercepted.

"Scameter+"

To better help members of the public identify scams and pitfalls, Police upgraded the self-developed "Scameter+" in February 2024 to include a public

reporting platform and issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites or receive suspicious calls. By the end of last year, "Scameter" had recorded about 6.95 million searches and issued 880 000 alerts to members of the public. To further promote the use of "Scameter+", Police launched the Anti-Scam Lucky Draw with the support from private organisations from October to November 2024. The event attracted 1.8 million participants and "Scameter+" recorded a significant rise of 300 000 downloads. By the end of the year, the application had accumulated 874 000 downloads.

Stepping up enforcement

As for enforcement, a total of 10 496 persons were arrested for being involved in various types of deception cases and money laundering offences in 2024, representing an increase of 13.6%. Among them, about 7 700 persons were stooze account holders. Police adopted approaches of concentrating resources, speeding up investigation and enhancing sentences to investigate cases with stooze accounts involved, including assigning cases involving the same stooze account holders to a single investigation team for follow-up enquiries, continuously applying technologies to assist frontline officers in enhancing investigation efficiency and expediting prosecution. Therefore, in 2024, 1 484 persons were prosecuted for the offence of money laundering, a 2.3-fold increase compared with 2023. Police also continued to apply to the court for enhanced sentencing for related cases. By the end of last year, the sentences of 47 stooze account holders had been increased by 10% to over 30% successfully, resulting in 21 to 75 months of imprisonment. Furthermore, Police stepped up publicity about the cases with successful application for enhanced sentences to increase the deterrent effect.

Joint efforts with the Mainland and overseas counterparts

To combat cross-border fraud syndicates using stooze accounts to collect fraudulent payments and launder money, Police mounted joint operations with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies last year. These operations included the one conducted with the Mainland Public Security Authorities from May to July leading to a total of 261 arrests and the other one executed with the Singapore Police Force in August resulting in seven arrests in Hong Kong, involving the laundering of over HK\$330 million and HK\$100 million respectively. Additionally, a joint operation was initiated with the police forces of Singapore and Malaysia in June, neutralising a transnational deception syndicate in Malaysia using malware to commit crimes, with 21 arrests made in Hong Kong. Police will continue to maintain close intelligence exchange with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to jointly combat cross-border deception.

The public is also concerned about the use of deepfake technology in scams. In October 2024 and January 2025, Police dismantled two criminal syndicates using deepfake technology to commit frauds and arrested a total of 58 persons, including the masterminds and core members of the two criminal syndicates, with a total amount of nearly \$400 million involved. The criminal syndicates used deepfake technology to engage in online dating to lure victims in various parts of Asia to invest in fraudulent cryptocurrency platforms. Such cases involving the establishment of fraud centres in Hong

Kong are not common, and Police are confident in detecting crimes of such kind.

Publicity and education

On publicity and education, over the past year, Police have brought anti-deception messages to various districts of the territory through the anti-deception ferry "Ping On", anti-deception minibuses, tram tours, a major logistics company's fleet, Anti-scam Promotional Truck and so on, while getting the anti-scam information across to households with the assistance of Care Teams. Last December, Police also held the large-scale Anti-Scam Carnival at the West Kowloon Cultural District and placed decorative lights and art installations of considerable size featuring "The Little Grape" in Tsim Sha Tsui East. In January this year, Police organised the "Anti-Money Laundering Month" again and launched a brand-new mini-movie titled "Your Life. Your Choice" together with the Correctional Services Department to remind members of the public not to rent, lend or sell their bank accounts.

Police will continue to adopt an extensive publicity strategy. This includes using traditional platforms, such as television programmes, as well as social media to disseminate anti-deception messages in various forms like short videos, audios and texts. Police have also received support from a number of government departments and various public and private organisations to promote anti-deception messages through diverse channels that could reach citizens from all walks of life and different backgrounds.

In October 2024, the Global Anti-Scam Summit Asia 2024 revealed data on the scam situation across Asia, indicating that quite a number of Hong Kong respondents had received suspected fraudulent messages from October 2023 to September 2024, but the average amount of losses recorded in the city was much lower than that of other regions. This shows that the anti-deception publicity and education efforts in Hong Kong could reach out to the community to a certain extent, thereby equipping most citizens with the general awareness of scam prevention, and the current mechanism against deception is effective in mitigating victims' losses. However, it was noted during the summit that global scam losses for the year reached as high as US\$1 trillion, reflecting the persistent severity of scams worldwide, and Police will continue to step up efforts to combat deception on various fronts.

3. Homicide

A total of 19 cases of homicide were recorded, a drop of 32.1% compared with 2023. Ten of the cases involved domestic or family violence, while the other nine cases involved dispute (five cases), dangerous driving causing death (one case) and industrial accident (three cases). All of them were detected.

The figure for homicide was the third lowest since records began in 1969. Excluding the case concerning the industrial accident that happened on Anderson Road in 2022 and were later reclassified as "manslaughter" and included in the figure for 2024 upon receipt of legal advice from the Department of Justice, the figure for homicide in 2024 was in fact the lowest

on record, and the detection rate reached 100%.

4. Wounding and serious assault

There were 3 614 cases of wounding and serious assault in total, registering a slight decrease of 0.6%, with 8.6% of the cases being triad-related. The number of cases was the lowest since 1973. The detection rate was 72.9%, the second highest since 1981.

5. Robbery

A total of 90 cases of robbery were registered, a drop of 7.2% compared with 2023 and the second lowest on record. The detection rate reached a record high of 92.2%. Over the past year, there were neither bank robbery cases nor robbery cases involving genuine firearms or stun guns. Two cases of watch and jewellery shop robbery were detected, one of which was resulted in an intelligence-led operation, with six persons arrested at the crime scene.

6. Burglary

There were 1 220 burglary cases in total, representing a decrease of 9.9% compared with 2023. The amount of losses also dropped by 25.5%. Similar to robbery, the number of burglary cases was the second lowest on record. The detection rate was 38%, which was the second highest on record.

The number of burglary cases experienced a dramatic reversal in 2024. In the first quarter of 2024, the number of burglary cases recorded an increase of 56%, with the amount of losses rising by 30.3%, while the burglary cases involving village houses, which were hardest hit, even saw a 1.8-fold increase, reflecting a rather unfavourable situation. Hence, Police have undertaken extensive efforts to combat burglaries for almost a year in the past. These measures included strengthening intelligence gathering, stepping up patrols in high-risk areas, especially those with village houses, sustaining efforts to launch various crime prevention campaigns and share with members of the public the tips on enhancing home security through various channels to raise the awareness of burglary prevention, utilising drones and the Government Flying Service's helicopters to carry out nighttime air patrols and search for burglars, as well as setting up roadblocks at different times and locations to stop and search suspicious vehicles or persons to increase the deterrent effect. As a result, the situation became better in the second half of 2024 and showed further improvement by the end of the year, with the full-year figure dropping by about 10% compared with 2023. Police will sustain efforts in this regard, and the Anti-crime Promotional Truck has just toured the whole city for two consecutive weeks before the Chinese New Year to educate members of the public about the importance and effective methods of burglary prevention.

7. Theft

There were 22 433 theft cases, representing a decrease of 3% compared with 2023. Among them, only shop theft recorded an increase (8 764 cases, +543 cases, +6.6%). Theft cases rose by 26.7% in 2023 and continued to

increase by 9.2% in the first quarter of 2024. However, the situation improved steadily in the second half of 2024. Similar to burglary, theft shifted from an upward trend to a decline for the year as well. Among them, the figures for snatching (64 cases), theft from vehicle (540 cases) and missing motor vehicles (389 vehicles) even reached their lowest levels on record.

8. Blackmail

There were 3 031 cases of blackmail, an increase of 372 cases (+14%), with the majority of the increase coming from “naked chat”, which recorded 2 434 cases in total, a rise of 317 cases (+15%). Students remained the largest group of victims, but their proportion among victims had continued to improve, dropping from 34.5% in 2021 to 18.7% in 2024. Police will continue to strengthen the work in prevention of youth crime.

9. Sexual offences

There were 77 rape cases, an increase of 10 cases (+14.9%). The detection rate was 97.4%. One case involved a stranger and it was detected.

A total of 1 185 cases of indecent assault were recorded, a slight increase of 2%. 58.2% of the cases occurred in public places and MTR premises. The detection rate was 77%.

10. Serious drug offences

There were 1 114 serious drug cases, a decrease of 3.4% (-39 cases). The number of youths arrested in connection with serious drug cases had dropped by 27.5% (-49 persons) to 129 persons, of whom 31 persons were students, a drop of 35.4% (-17 persons).

The number of youths involved in serious drug cases has been steadily declining since its peak in 2021 (430 persons). By the end of 2024, the cumulative decrease had reached 70%, with the decline in the number of students arrested being more significant than that of non-students arrested, showing a cumulative drop of 76.9%. However, there was a noticeable increase in the use of e-cigarettes for consumption of “space oil drug” in 2024. According to the provisional figures from the Government Laboratory, as at December 31, 2024, Police had detected 195 related cases and arrested 278 persons in total, including 61 youths.

To target “space oil drug” trafficking, particularly the drug trafficking on the Internet and social media, Police conducted a number of intelligence-led operations in the second half of 2024, including Operation AMBERFLOCK executed in November in which a total of 99 persons were arrested, including 12 youths with the youngest aged 12, while drugs of various kinds were also seized, including 1.7 litres of suspected liquid etomidate, 1.2 kilograms of suspected etomidate powder and nearly 10 000 suspected “space oil drug” capsules.

In response to the latest drug trends and the upcoming commencement of legislative amendments relating to “space oil drug”, Police have started

using Etomidate Rapid Test Kits since January 18 this year. This enables frontline officers who suspect individuals of possessing “space oil drug” to conduct on-site rapid tests using the test kits, thereby assisting officers in law enforcement.

In addition to enforcement actions, Police remain committed to the anti-drug education work. Apart from incorporating the information about “space oil drug” into school talks and the “interactive anti-drugs drama”, Police have also disseminated infographics and new short videos on “space oil drug” to all schools in Hong Kong for showing to their students. The fourth cohort of the Leadership Institute on Narcotics (L.I.O.N.) has also kicked off officially, with 100 new young anti-drug leaders recruited.

11. Triad-related crimes

A total of 2 325 triad-related crimes were recorded, representing a drop of 0.4% (-9 cases). Last year, the police authorities of Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao mounted the tripartite joint anti-crime operation codenamed “THUNDERBOLT 2024”, in which 8 303 persons in total were arrested in Hong Kong and a large quantity of illegal items were seized, including various types of drugs with a total market value of over \$840 million, as well as suspected crime proceeds worth \$41 million.

12. Youth crime

In 2024, a total of 2 840 youths were arrested for criminal offences, representing a decrease of 6.6% (-201 persons) compared with 2023. Apart from the aforementioned serious drugs, there was a downward trend in the number of youths involved in deception (525 persons, -64 persons, -10.9%), money laundering (60 persons, -46 persons, -43.4%), robbery (28 persons, -11 persons, -28.2%), and triad-related crimes (483 persons, -114 persons, -19.1%).

Police attach great importance to cultivating law-abiding awareness among young people and will continue to deepen collaboration with stakeholders, including enlisting the support of schools and parents to deliver crime prevention messages and organising various events and exchange programmes for youngsters in partnership with the Education Bureau and through the Junior Police Call, to realise the concept that crime prevention and combating work should “start from a young age with continuous and concerted efforts” and to help youngsters become law-abiding citizens.

In the last school year, Police held seminars for over 5 000 teachers on anti-drugs, digital literacy, anti-deception and child protection, and the goal for this school year is to reach even more teachers so as to provide them with the relevant training. Furthermore, Police have published the “Youth Crime Prevention Booklet” for the third year in a row and collaborated with the Education University of Hong Kong to devise lesson plans and teaching materials, while co-organising training camps with the Education Bureau from November last year to June in 2025 to provide training opportunities for more than 2 000 Secondary One students to help them enhance their self-discipline and resilience.

After the “black-clad violence”, Police and other stakeholders have strengthened efforts in youth work, and some positive results are now evident. Firstly, the recruitment of young people is encouraging. In the first nine months of this financial year, the number of tertiary students participating in the Police Mentorship Programme rose significantly by 50%, demonstrating that more university students are willing to further explore a career in policing. From September to October last year, Police visited 12 local universities to hold the Police University Recruitment Express, receiving a total of 897 applications, a significant increase of 33.3% compared to 673 applications from the previous year. Additionally, according to the results of the Force Public Opinion Survey conducted in 2024, the rating of police performance by young people, aged 18 to 29, also showed a significant increase (53.66 points, +14.75 points, +37.9%) compared with the survey conducted in 2021. Police will continue to work hard to take forward the relevant work.

13. Relevant situation of national security

Since the Hong Kong National Security Law and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance came into force, as at the end of December 2024, the National Security Department of Police had arrested a total of 316 persons. Among them, around 60% had been charged.

14. Latest situation of CCTV installation across Hong Kong

Since April 2024, Police have been installing CCTV cameras at various locations across the territory. By the end of last year, a total of 615 sets of CCTV cameras had been installed, and the first phase comprising 2 000 sets of CCTV cameras will be completed within this year. As at the end of December 2024, the CCTV system had assisted Police in detecting 122 cases, including serious crimes such as murder, robbery and burglary, resulting in 202 arrests.

Additionally, among the 28 cases of murder, robbery and burglary detected with the assistance of CCTV system, the average time for detection among 90% (25 cases) of the cases was two days. This demonstrates that the CCTV system not only makes investigations more effective but also significantly enhances the efficiency in detecting crime.

Apart from assisting in detecting crime, the CCTV system also serves as a deterrent to criminal acts. To understand the relevant figures, Police conducted a detailed analysis of the number of cases of various types of crimes that occurred on street and observed declines in the figures for these crimes after the installation of CCTVs, demonstrating the scheme’s significant positive impact on crime prevention and detection.

As most of the CCTV cameras were only installed in phases starting from the second half of 2024, it is believed that the effectiveness will become more pronounced as the yearly target of installing 2 000 to 2 500 sets of CCTV cameras is achieved in the future.

Regarding the application of video analytic technology, Police had

