

CANADIAN PRESS / LEGER MARKETING

Canadian Attitudes Towards Drinking Water

Report

January 2003



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1.0 Study Highlights

- Six out of ten Canadians are concerned about drinking water supplies in Canada.

Question : *Are you concerned about drinking water supplies in Canada?*

n=1500	YES	NO	Don't know / Refusal
Canada	60%	39%	1%

- Many Canadian households are acting on these concerns.

Question : *In your household, do you take any of the following measures to conserve drinking water?*

n=1500	
... not letting the tap water run unnecessarily	78%
... not watering the lawn	45%
... not washing your vehicle	44%
... taking fewer showers or baths	39%
... not flushing the toilet after each use	34%
None of the above	12%
Don't know / Refusal	3%

- Canadians are in favour of municipal authorities placing water meters in every home

Question : *Do you think cities and towns should install water meters in every home?*

n=1500	YES	NO	Already have a meter	Don't know / Refusal
Canada	53%	31%	9%	7%

- Canadians don't think we have unlimited supplies of drinking water in Canada.

Question : *Do you think we have enough water reserves in Canada to sell water to foreign countries?*

n=1500	YES	NO	Don't know / Refusal
	21%	64%	15%

Do you think Canada might one day experience water shortages?

	69%	25%	6%
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2. Results

2.1 Six out of ten Canadians are concerned about fresh water supplies in Canada

The majority of Canadians (60%) say they are worried about fresh water supplies in Canada, while 39% say they are unconcerned about the issue.

There is no significant difference from one area of the country to another. However, there were differences in relation to gender and age. Women (65%) are more concerned about drinking water supplies than men (54%), while 45-64 year olds (68%) are more worried than 18-24 year olds (37%).

Question : *Are you concerned about drinking water supplies in Canada?*

n=1500	YES	NO	Don't know/ Refusal
Men	54%	44%	1%
Women	65%	35%	1%
18-24 year olds	37%	63%	0%
25-34 year olds	50%	49%	0%
35-44 year olds	63%	35%	2%
45-54 year olds	68%	32%	0%
55-64 year olds	69%	29%	2%
65 years and over	64%	35%	1%
Canada	60%	39%	1%

2.2 Canadians are acting on these concerns

A large number of Canadians are taking measures to conserve drinking water. Nearly eight out of ten Canadians (78%) are careful not to let tap water run unnecessarily, 45% do not water the lawn, 44% do not wash their car, 39% take fewer showers and baths, and 34% do not flush the toilet after each use.

Compared to other Canadians, Quebecers are more likely to take measures like not letting the tap run unnecessarily (89%), taking fewer showers or baths (59%), not watering the lawn (55%), and not flushing the toilet (43%).

Question : *In your household, do you take any of the following measures to conserve drinking water?*

n=1500	Not letting the tap water run unnecessarily	Not watering the lawn	Not washing your vehicle	Taking fewer showers or baths	Not flushing the toilet after each use	None of the above
Atlantic Provinces	68%	45%	42%	33%	29%	21%
Quebec	89%	55%	47%	59%	43%	1%
Ontario	74%	44%	44%	32%	30%	16%
Prairies	77%	41%	42%	37%	33%	13%
Alberta	75%	37%	42%	39%	35%	17%
British Columbia	76%	38%	45%	29%	32%	15%
Canada	78%	45%	44%	39%	34%	12%

Within this perspective, nearly half of Canadians (47%) think that municipal authorities should not use water to clean roads, 44% disagree, and 9% do not have an opinion.

2.3 Yes to every home being equipped with a water meter

Over half the population (53%) is in favour of municipal authorities installing water meters in every home. 31% of Canadians are against this measure, and 7% don't have an opinion. Interestingly enough, 9% of those interviewed already had a water meter.

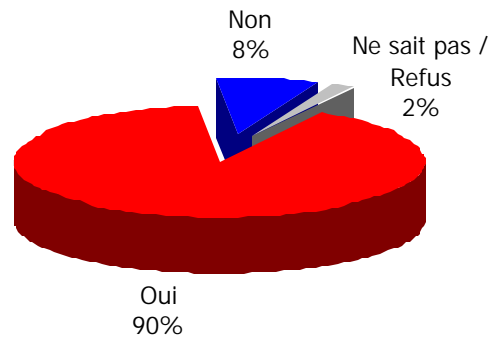
Manual workers (39%), francophones (37%), residents of the Atlantic Provinces (41%), of Quebec (40%) and of British Columbia (39%) are more likely to disapprove of water meters being installed in every home.

It should be noted that a strong majority (91%) of those who are in favour of water meters would like to be billed according to the water they consume.

Question : *Do you think towns and cities should install water meters in every home?*

n=1500	YES	NO	Already has a meter	Don't know / Refusal
Atlantic Provinces	40%	41%	11%	8%
Quebec	53%	40%	2%	4%
Ontario	53%	26%	12%	9%
Prairies	64%	11%	18%	7%
Alberta	57%	25%	12%	6%
British Columbia	52%	39%	3%	6%
Canada	53%	31%	9%	7%

If so, do you think people should be billed according to how much water they use?
(n=795, who are for the installation of water meters in every home)



2.4 Canada does not have an unlimited supply of drinking water

Many Canadians (69%) feel we could one day have water shortages in Canada. A quarter of the population (25%) does not agree, and 6% do not have an opinion. Women (73%) and anglophones (72%) are more likely than men (64%) and francophones (63%) to think there might one day be a water shortage in Canada.

Question : *Do you think Canada might one day experience water shortages?*

n=1500	YES	NO	Don't know / Refusal
Men	64%	31%	5%
Women	73%	20%	7%
Mother Tongue :			
French	63%	31%	6%
English	72%	22%	5%
Other	60%	30%	10%
Canada	69%	25%	6%

In addition, the majority of Canadians (64%) do not believe that we have enough water reserves in Canada to sell water abroad. 21% think the contrary and 15% do not know or refuse to answer. Those aged over (75%), retirees (71%), Albertans (72%) and college graduates (69%) are more likely to doubt that Canada has enough water reserves to sell water abroad.

Question : *Do you think we have enough water reserves in Canada to sell water to foreign countries?*

n=1500	YES	NO	Do not know / Refusal
Men	28%	62%	10%
Women	15%	65%	20%
Mother Tongue:			
French	26%	62%	12%
English	18%	66%	16%
Other	25%	58%	17%
Canada	21%	64%	15%

3.0 Methodology

This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1500 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal and Winnipeg call centres between January 7 and January 12, 2003. Up to ten call-backs were made in the case of non-response.

Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to geographic location, gender and language spoken at home to ensure a sample representative of the entire Canadian adult population. In the end, the maximum margin of error obtained for a sample of 1500 respondents is of ± 2.5 , 19 times out of 20.