

CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY IN THE GTA

- **In the Wake of Toronto's Boxing Day Shooting, Majorities of GTA Residents Still Feel Safe in Downtown Toronto (54%; -3) and their Neighbourhoods (89%; +4)**
 - **No Significant Change in Feelings of Safety Since November**
- **Also, Violent Crime in Toronto Remains Mostly Seen as a Localized (61%; -3) Rather than Widespread (35%; +3) Phenomenon**
- **Even Though They Feel Safe, 76% Keep Their Doors Locked When at Home in Daytime and 42% Have an Alarm System**
 - **But Few Carry Panic Alarms (10%) or Protective Weapons (6%)**
- **Five Percent Have Been Victims of a Violent Crime, and 14% Have Been Victims of a Home Invasion**

From November 8 to 13, 2005, 2005, Leger Marketing – the Canadian representative of the Gallup International Association – conducted telephone interviews among a randomly selected, representative sample of 500 adult GTA residents. From January 3 to 9, 2006, we asked the questions on Safety and the Prevalence of Violent Crime (Localized vs. Widespread) again in order to track these attitudes and perceptions in the wake of the Boxing Day shooting in downtown Toronto. The margin of error for both total samples is $\pm 4.4\%$, 19 times out of 20. Across the GTA, sub-samples are as follows: Toronto (n=250; $\pm 6.2\%$) and 905 Belt (n=250; $\pm 6.2\%$). The suburban sub-segment comprises the regions of Durham, Halton, Peel, and York. Discrepancies between totals are due to rounding. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current regional, gender, and age Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of the province.

Founded in 1986, Leger Marketing is the largest independent full-service research firm in Canada, with more than 350 employees spread over its offices in Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Quebec City, New York City, and Shanghai. Leger conducts quantitative and qualitative research on behalf of an extensive array of public and private sector clients on a local, national, and global scale. Leger is the Canadian representative of the Gallup International Association, and is the polling Agency of Record for Sun Media, Marketing Magazine, and the Canadian Press news service.

Majority Continue to Feel Safe in Downtown Toronto (54%: -3)

- A majority (54%) of GTA residents feel safe in downtown Toronto, although much less so than in their own neighbourhood (89%).
- Those who live in the 416 (67%) are much likely to feel safe downtown than those who live in the 905 Belt (43%).
- Compared to November 2005, there is no significant change in overall feelings of safety in downtown Toronto.

Feeling Safe in Downtown Toronto							
Q1B. Overall, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe in the following locations: Downtown Toronto? Base: N=500.							
REGION		GTA		416		905	
DATE OF SURVEY		Nov 05	Jan 06	Nov 05	Jan 06	Nov 05	Jan 06
Safe	<u>NET CHANGE: - 3</u>	57%	54%	65%	67%	49%	43%
➤	Very safe	16%	16%	22%	26%	11%	7%
➤	Somewhat safe	40%	38%	43%	41%	38%	36%
Unsafe	<u>NET CHANGE: + 2</u>	34%	36%	29%	28%	39%	42%
➤	Somewhat unsafe	20%	20%	20%	18%	20%	21%
➤	Very unsafe	14%	16%	9%	10%	19%	21%
Don't know / Refused		9%	10%	6%	5%	13%	15%

GTA Residents Continue to Feel Safe in their Neighbourhoods (89%)

- Most GTA residents say they feel safe in their neighbourhood, with noticeably more 905-ers (93%) feeling this way than 416-ers (84%).
- Compared to November 2005, residents of both Toronto and the 905 Belt are slightly more likely to feel safe in their neighbourhoods.

Feeling Safe in Your Neighbourhood						
Q1A. Overall, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe in the following locations: Your neighbourhood? Base: N=500.						
REGION	GTA		416		905	
DATE OF SURVEY	Nov 05	Jan 06	Nov 05	Jan 06	Nov 05	Jan 06
Safe NET CHANGE: + 4	85%	89%	78%	84%	91%	93%
➤ Very safe	51%	56%	42%	51%	60%	61%
➤ Somewhat safe	34%	33%	37%	33%	32%	32%
Unsafe NET CHANGE: - 4	14%	10%	21%	15%	8%	6%
➤ Somewhat unsafe	10%	7%	16%	10%	4%	4%
➤ Very unsafe	4%	3%	5%	5%	4%	2%
Don't know / Refused	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Violent Crime in Toronto is Seen as Localized (61%) rather than Widespread

- As of January 2006, six-in-ten GTA residents say that violent crime in Toronto is “localized to certain areas of Toronto” rather than “widespread throughout Toronto” (35%). There is no significant change in these overall findings from November 2005 to January 2006.
- Notably, 905 residents (64%) are more likely than Torontonians (57%) to hold this localized/pocketed viewpoint.

Localized VS. Widespread Crime						
Q2. Now thinking about violent crime specifically in the City of Toronto. Overall, do you think that, for the most part...? Base: N=500.						
REGION	GTA		416		905	
DATE OF SURVEY	Nov 05	Jan 06	Nov 05	Jan 06	Nov 05	Jan 06
Violent crime is localized to certain areas of Toronto	64%	61%	62%	57%	65%	64%
Violent crime is widespread throughout Toronto	32%	35%	36%	39%	29%	32%
Don't know / Refused	4%	4%	2%	4%	6%	4%

Although GTA Residents Generally Feel Safe in their Neighbourhood, They Keep Their Doors Locked When They are Home (76%) and 42% Have an Alarm System

- Three-quarters of GTA residents say they usually keep their doors locked when they are home during the day, and more so in downtown Toronto (83%) than the 905 area (71%).
- Women and those earning less than \$40K are most likely to keep their doors locked (81% and 83%, respectively), as well as almost all of those who feel unsafe in their own neighbourhood (92%).
- Two in five residents say they have an alarm system at home (42%). These most likely live in the suburbs and earn over \$60K (46% each).
- Few say their home has been broken into or robbed (14%), although this is slightly higher in downtown Toronto (17%) than the suburbs (11%).
- Those who feel unsafe in their neighbourhood are most likely to say their home has been robbed (25%), as well as those over the age of 55 (19%).

Home Security			
Q2. Please tell me if you... with the following statements. (Those who said yes) Base: N=500.			
	GTA	416	905
When I am at home during the daytime, I usually keep the doors locked	76%	83%	71%
My home has an alarm system	42%	38%	46%
My home has been broken into and / or robbed	14%	17%	11%

Panic Alarms and Protective Weapons are not Popular

- Only one in ten GTA residents say they carry a whistle, panic alarm or some other device to draw attention to themselves. This is higher for women (15%) than men (4%).
- Mace, pepper spray or some other weapon to protect themselves is carried even less frequently.
- Those between 35 and 54 are more likely than older residents to carry such protective devices (8% vs. 3%, respectively).
- Only one percent say they carry a whistle or panic alarm AND mace or pepper spray.

Personal Security			
Q2. Please tell me if you... with the following statements. (Those who said yes) Base: N=500.			
	GTA	416	905
I carry a whistle, panic alarm, or some other device to draw attention to myself in case I am attacked	10%	9%	10%
I carry mace, pepper spray, or some other weapon to protect myself	6%	6%	5%

One-Quarter Know Someone Who has been a Victim of Violent Crime (23%)

- One in four GTA residents say they know someone who has been a victim of violent crime.
- While there is no difference between 905-ers and 416-ers, there is a significant difference for age groups. The younger the respondent, the more likely she or he is to know someone who has been a victim (35% of those under 35, 27% of those 35-54 and 11% of those over 55).
- More GTA residents who feel unsafe in their own neighbourhood (43%) and in downtown Toronto (33%) say they know someone who has been a victim of violent crime than those who feel safe in either location.
- One-third of those who they feel violent crime is widespread in downtown Toronto know someone who has been a victim of violent crime say (33%).
- However, very few say they themselves have been a victim of violent crime. Once again, there is a correlation between being a victim and age. One in ten of those under 35 say they have been a victim (10%), compared to five percent of those 35-54 and one percent of those over 55.

Victims of Violent Crime			
Q2. Please tell me if you... with the following statements. (Those who said yes) Base: N=500.			
	GTA	416	905
I know someone who has been a victim of a violent crime committed within the Greater Toronto Area	23%	24%	22%
I, myself, have been a victim of a violent crime committed within the Greater Toronto Area	5%	5%	5%

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For commentary on this poll, please see our back-page column in the March Issue of *Toronto Life* Magazine, or contact the Leger Marketing spokesperson listed in the footnote.

Copies of this poll are available on our website:
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