

Canadians' Water Conservation Habits

Go Down the Drain

While Most (78%) Think they try Reasonably Hard to Conserve Water, Many Admit to Water-Wasting Activities

Public Release Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2010, 6:00 AM EDT



Ipsos Reid

Ipsos Reid is Canada's market intelligence leader and the country's leading provider of public opinion research. With operations in eight cities, Ipsos Reid employs more than 300 research professionals and support staff in Canada. The company has the biggest network of telephone call centres in Canada, as well as the largest pre-recruited household and on-line panels. Ipsos Reid's Canadian marketing research and public affairs practices are staffed with seasoned research consultants with extensive industry-specific backgrounds, offering the premier suite of research vehicles in Canada—including the Ipsos Trend Report, the leading source of public opinion in the country—all of which provide clients with actionable and relevant information. Ipsos Reid is an Ipsos company, a leading global survey-based market research group. To learn more, visit www.ipsos.ca

*For copies of other news releases, please visit
<http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>*

© Ipsos Reid

*Washington λ New York λ Chicago λ Minneapolis λ Seattle λ San Francisco
Vancouver λ Edmonton λ Calgary λ Winnipeg λ Toronto λ Ottawa λ Montreal*



Canadians Water Conservation Habits

Go Down the Drain

While Most (78%) Think they try Reasonably Hard to Conserve Water, Many Admit to Water-Wasting Activities

Toronto, ON - Canadians water-conservation habits appear to be going down the drain, according to the third annual Canadian Water Attitudes Study commissioned by RBC and Unilever and endorsed by the Canadian Partnership Initiative of the United Nations Water for Life Decade.

While most (83%) say they are concerned (44% very/39% somewhat) about the declining state of the availability of Canada's fresh water, most (78%) Canadians believe they try hard (21% very hard/57% reasonably hard) to conserve freshwater in the course of their daily activities involving water use, despite knowingly engaging in water-wasting activities, such as: leaving the water on while brushing their teeth (46%) or when washing or rinsing the dishes (44%), hosing down their driveways (19%), watering their lawn when it has just rained, is raining, or is about to rain (2%), leaving a faucet running in a public place (2%), or using the hose to melt snow in the spring (1%).

Further, many admit to engaging in water-contaminating activities, including allowing soapy water to run down a storm drain (i.e. when washing car) (21%) and using soap or shampoo to bathe in a lake (16%). Canadians admit to these activities despite one half (49%) believing that fresh water is Canada's most important natural resources - more than forests (20%), agriculture (17%), oil (9%), fisheries (3%), metals (1%) or coal (0%).

Interestingly, Canadians appear to be more concerned about saving electricity than water, as nine in ten (87%) believe they try at least reasonably hard to conserve electricity in the course of their daily lives, more than the eight in ten (78%) who try at least reasonably hard to conserve water on a day-to-day basis. This discrepancy also translates into knowledge of what Canadians pay for these resources. Three in ten (29%) say they don't know what they pay for their water each month, three times the proportion (10%) who are in the dark about their electricity bill.

More Canadians this year (79%) than last year (72%) say they are 'confident' (21% very/58% somewhat) about the safety and quality of the drinking water in their region (Quebecers, however, are significantly less likely (68%) to express confidence in their drinking water). Perhaps as a result of the overall increase in confidence, one half (49%) of Canadians (up 8 points) now say they typically drink tap water in their home, but one quarter (25%) have no idea what the original source of tap water is in their home.

Awareness of local government initiatives to conserve water are low as only one in three (32%) say they're aware (6% very/26% somewhat) of these types of initiatives. Awareness is highest in British Columbia (47%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba, (38%), Ontario (35%) and Alberta (32%) and lower in Atlantic Canada (22%) and Quebec (21%).

With Cottage Season Approaching, Canadians Concerned About Quality of Lakes for Swimming...

As Canadians eagerly await the arrival of summer and cottage season, the results of the poll also reveal that most (82%) Canadians are concerned (39% very/44% somewhat) with the quality of water in the lakes in which they swim, with concern being highest in Quebec (87%)



and Ontario (87%), and lower in Alberta (80%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (78%), British Columbia (72%) and Atlantic Canada (71%)

Moreover, most (68%) believe the quality of these lakes is getting worse, not better (10%), while one quarter (22%) believe the quality has not changed.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between February 17 and 23, 2010, on behalf of RBC, Unilever and the UN Water for Life Decade. For this survey, a sample of 2,022 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

-30-

For more information on this news release, please contact:

*Sean Simpson
Research Manager
Ipsos Reid
Public Affairs
(416) 572-4474*

For full tabular results, please visit our website at www.ipsos.ca. News Releases are available at: <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>