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Toronto: Crime and Safety in the City

Over Eight in Ten (85%) Torontonians Satisfied with Local Police Services, Just as Many (84%) Approve of Police Chief Fantino

Eight in Ten (78%) Would Feel Safe Walking Alone in Their Neighbourhood After Dark

However, Four in Ten (43%) Very Concerned About Child Abduction in Their Neighbourhood

Category: [Regional / City Issues and Politics](#)

Location: [Canada](#)

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Public Release Date: *September 9, 2003*



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Toronto, ONTARIO – While there has been controversy during the last year on police issues such as racial profiling and car chases, a full majority (85%) of Toronto residents say they are satisfied with the overall quality of local police services according to the results of a poll of Toronto residents produced by Ipsos Reid on behalf of The Globe and Mail, CFTO, and Newstalk 1010 CFRB and released today.

Further boosting support for the police force is the fact that 84% of Torontonians express approval of the job being done by Julian Fantino as Chief of Police. That is up 6 points since the same question was asked in 2001 (78%) and is a full ten points ahead of where his predecessor, Chief David Boothby, was in 1998 (74%).

Despite a high level of satisfaction and approval of the police service and its chief, one in three (34%) Torontonians agree that if they were ‘pulled over by the police in this city and suspected of something, I would be frightened by how they might treat me.’ One in ten (11%) strongly agrees with this statement.

As for their own backyard, eight in ten (78%) Toronto residents indicate that they would feel safe walking alone in their own neighbourhood after dark. This sense of safety is greater now than it was in 1992 when the identical question was asked of Torontonians. At that time, 68% indicated that they would feel safe walking alone after dark in their neighbourhood.

However, when it comes to concerns as to specific issues of crime in their own neighbourhoods, some are intense. When asked if they are concerned about the number of different potential crime-related activities in their own neighbourhood, many say they are “very concerned”: four in ten (43%) say they are very concerned about child abductions in their neighbourhood, while almost as many are very

concerned about drugs and drug dealers (42%) in their neighbourhood. One in three is very concerned about sexual assault (36%), theft or vandalism (35%) break-ins (33%) in their neighbourhood, while slightly less, are very concerned about muggings (28%). Meanwhile, one in four (24%) say they are very concerned about police chases (24%) and racism (26%) in their neighbourhood.

As for actual incidents of crime in Toronto, 15% say they have themselves been victim of crime in the past two years. This compares to 19% who reported being victim of a crime in Toronto in polling done in 1992.

However, Torontonians appear to be less likely now than they were in 1992 to report the crime to the police. In 1992, three-quarters (76%) of those who indicated they had been a victim of crime during the previous two years said they had reported the crime to the police. In the current study, just two-thirds (65%) of victims indicate they reported the crime to the police.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CFTO/CFRB poll conducted between August 21st and August 24th, 2003. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 500 adult residents of the City of Toronto. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 4.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population of the City of Toronto been polled. The margin of error will be large for sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's age/sex/household income composition reflects that of the actual adult population of the City of Toronto according to the 2001 Census data.

Residents of Toronto appear satisfied (85%) with the overall quality of local police services. In fact, a plurality (41%) say they are very satisfied. Just 12% are dissatisfied.

- There are no statistical differences regarding this question within age, gender and household income groups.

Further boosting support for the police force is the fact that 84% of Torontonians express approval of the job being done by Julian Fantino as Chief of Police. That's up 6 points since the same question was asked in 2001 (78%) and is a full ten points ahead of where his predecessor, Chief David Boothby, was in 1998 (74%). A plurality (46%) strongly approves of the job Chief Fantino has been doing. In total, 14% say they disapprove of the job performance of Chief Fantino.

- Torontonians with a high school or less education (90%) are more likely to approve of Chief Fantino than are university graduates (78%).
- Despite the ongoing issue of possible racial profiling by Toronto police force, those not born in Canada (84%) are equally as likely as those born in Canada (83%) to approve of the job being done by Chief Fantino.

Despite a high level of satisfaction and approval of the police service and its chief, one in three (34%) Torontonians agrees that if they were 'pulled over by the police in this city and suspected of something, I would be frightened by how they might treat me.' One in ten (11%) strongly agrees with this statement. In total, two-thirds (65% - 41% strongly) disagrees with this statement.

- Those born outside of Canada (43%) are more likely than those born in Canada (26%) to agree that if they were pulled over by the police in Toronto, they would be frightened by how they might be treated.

- Newcomers (42%) are more likely to agree that this would be the case than longer-term residents (32%).
- Renters (43%) are more likely than homeowners (25%) to agree that if they were pulled over by the police in Toronto, they would be frightened by how they might be treated.
- Young adult Torontonians (43%) are more likely to agree with this sentiment than are their middle aged (31%) or older (26%) counterparts.

On another question, eight in ten (78%) Toronto residents indicate that they would feel safe walking alone in their own neighbourhood after dark, 39% “very safe” (10 points from 1992 (68%) when the identical question was asked. Currently, 21% say they would feel unsafe in this type of situation. This represents a decline of 10 points since 1992 (31%).

- Men (87%) are more likely than are women (70%) to say they would feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark, while 29% of women (versus 13% of men) say they would feel unsafe.
- Torontonians with post-secondary education /some university/university degree (81%) are more likely than are those with a high school education or less (61%) to say they would feel safe walking in their neighbourhood after dark.

When asked if they are concerned about a number of different criminal activities in their own neighbourhood, a majority indicate they are concerned regarding each of these. These were as follows:

- Theft and vandalism: 72%
- Sexual assault: 68%
- Break-ins: 66%
- Drugs and drug dealers: 66%
- Child abductions: 66%
- Mugging: 59%
- Racism: 56%
- Police chases: 54%

But most telling is the ranking based on the percentage of Torontonians who say they are “very concerned.” Four in ten (43%) Toronto residents say they are very concerned about child abductions in their neighbourhood, while almost as many are very concerned about drugs and drug dealers (42%) in their neighbourhood. One in three are very concerned about sexual assault (36%), theft or vandalism (35%) and break-ins (33%) in their neighbourhood, while slightly less, are very concerned about muggings (28%) in their community. Meanwhile, one in four (24%) say they are very concerned about police chases (24%) and racism (21%) in their neighbourhood.

- Those very concerned about child abductions in their neighbourhood are more likely to be Torontonians with a high school or less education (59% versus 38% of university graduates), those with children 17 and under living with them (55% versus 38% of those without children living with them), from lower income households (55% versus 33% in upper income households), and renters (43% versus 33% of homeowners).

versus 36% of homeowners).

- The demographics are similar regarding being very concerned about drugs drug dealers in their neighbourhood. Those most likely to be very concerned are those with a high school education or less (59% versus 29% of university graduates), from lower income households (54% versus 30% in upper income households), are older (52% versus 29% of young adults), and have lived in Toronto for at least 6 years (45% versus 29% of those who have lived in Toronto up to 5 years).
- Those very concerned about sexual assault in their neighbourhoods tend to be more likely to be women (41% versus 30% of men), and those with a high school education (45% versus 28% of university graduates).
- Those who are very concerned about theft and vandalism in their neighbourhood are more likely to be Torontonians with a high school education or less (46% versus 25% of university graduates) and long-term residents (37% versus 25% of newcomers).
- Being very concerned regarding break-ins in their neighbourhood are those with a high school education or less (50% versus 22% of university graduates), those in lower income households (43% versus 25% of upper income households) older (41% versus 25% of young adults) Torontonians, and those who have lived in the city the longest (37% versus 25% of newcomers).
- Those most likely to be very concerned about muggings in their neighbourhood are Torontonians with a high school or less education (42% versus 18% of university graduates), those from lower income households (37% versus 16% of upper income households), older (33% versus 22% of young adult) residents and those who have lived in the city the longest (31% versus 20% of newcomers).
- Torontonians from lower income households (34% versus 16% in upper income households), renters (31% versus 17% of owners) and those with a high school or less education (29% versus 18% of university graduates) are more likely to be very concerned about police chases in their neighbourhood.
- Renters (30%) are more likely to be very concerned about racism in their neighbourhood than are homeowners (20%). There is no statistically significant difference between those born in Canada (24%) and those born outside of Canada (27%) in the proportions who are very concerned about racism in their neighbourhoods.

As for actual incidents of crime, 15% of Torontonians say they have themselves been a victim of crime in the past two years—a similar proportion as reported in a survey of a victim of crime in Toronto in polling done in 1992 (19%). Most of those who were a victim of crime in the past 2 years say they experienced crime against their property (of the 15%, 84% of those, or 12% of all Torontonians), while one-quarter of crime victims were personally injured or assaulted (of the 15%, 25% of those, or 4% of all Torontonians). One in ten crime victims experienced both crimes against property and personal injury or assault (of the 15%, 10% of those, or 1% of all Torontonians). By comparison, in 1992, 83% of the 19% of Torontonians who were a victim of crime (16% of all Torontonians) said they had experienced crime against their property, 16% had been the victim of a personal assault or injury (3% of all Torontonians), and 5% had been the victim of both types of crime.

(1% of all Torontonians).

- There are no statistical differences within various demographic groups regarding this question.

While being a victim of crime appears to be in decline, Torontonians appear to be less likely than they were in 1992 to report the crime to the police. In 1992, three-quarters (76%) of those who indicated they had been a victim of crime in the past during the previous two years said they reported to crime to the police. In the current study, just two-thirds (65%) of victims indicate they reported the crime to the police.

- Older (73%) and middle aged (71%) victims of crime are more likely to have reported the crime to the police than are younger adults (53%).
- University graduates (72%) who have been victims of crime are more likely than those with a post-secondary education/some university (53%) to have reported the crime to the police.

Please open the attached PDF documents to view the release and detailed tables.
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