

# Public perceptions of the Canadian Coast Guard – Final report

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*Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.*

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## Narrative executive summary

Despite playing important roles with significant implications for the Canadian economy, Coast Guard is believed to be largely unknown to the majority of Canadians. As vessel traffic in Canadian waters increases, notably oil tankers on the west coast and cruise and container ships in the Arctic, pressures on Coast Guard are increasing. Initiatives under the federal government's Ocean Protection Plan (OPP) will strengthen Coast Guard's capabilities over the coming years, enabling it to meet growing public expectations, particularly with regard to protection of the marine environment. Knowledge of public awareness of Coast Guard, and attitudes towards it, will be important in building public confidence in the organization.

To understand current perspectives, a telephone survey with 2,002 Canadians was conducted using an omnibus survey April 5 to April 16, 2017. Participants were given the option of completing the survey in their official language of choice. The results can be considered accurate to within +/-2.2%, at the 95% confidence level.

The cost of this research was \$17,277.70 (HST included).

The following are the key findings from the research:

- Canadians have a relatively high degree of awareness of the Canadian Coast Guard on an unaided basis (51%). However, there is limited awareness of how Canadians would recognize a Canadian Coast Guard vessel. Fully three in four Canadians cite visuals outside of the red and white, or simply say they do not know.
- Impressions of the organization are quite positive, with over nine in ten having either a very positive (54%) or somewhat positive impression (40%). Canadians resoundingly feel that the Coast Guard plays an important role to Canada, including 79% who say it is a very important role.
- A majority of Canadians have trust and confidence in the Coast Guards' ability to protect the environment from oil spills (72% strongly agree or agree), and almost all Canadians have trust and confidence in the Coast Guard's ability to save lives of people on ships in distress (94% strongly agree or agree).
- The Canadian Coast Guard is seen as a career option for about one in four younger Canadians. A majority of older Canadians (over the age of 40) would encourage a family member to join the organization.
- Throughout the survey, Atlantic Canadians consistently display higher awareness and more

positive views about the organization than residents in other regions. Meanwhile, females and males between the ages of 18 and 34 consistently show lower awareness and impressions of the organization.

## **Political neutrality statement and contact information**

I hereby certify as a Senior Officer of Environics Research Group that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not contain any reference to electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leader.

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## **Background and objectives**

### **A. Research methodology**

Despite playing important roles with significant implications for the Canadian economy, Coast Guard is believed to be largely unknown to the majority of Canadians. As vessel traffic in Canadian waters increases, notably oil tankers on the west coast and cruise and container ships in the Arctic, pressures on Coast Guard are increasing. Initiatives under the federal government's Ocean Protection Plan (OPP) will strengthen Coast Guard's capabilities over the coming years, enabling it to meet growing public expectations, particularly with regard to protection of the marine environment. Knowledge of public awareness of Coast Guard, and attitudes towards it, will be important in building public confidence in the organization.

Data gathered in a 2006 study was very limited and is now irrelevant. Impressions of public perceptions of Coast Guard can only be inferred from media reports which originate largely in coastal areas so cannot be relied on for insights into awareness or attitudes in the rest of the country.

The research results will be used to inform the development of communications strategies aimed at elevating public awareness and understanding of Coast Guard and the relevance of its role to Canadian well-being, and build confidence in its ability to protect Canada's coastal waters and the

mariners who navigate them.

## B. Sample design

The regional distribution of the sample in this omnibus survey has been successfully used for other federal government assignments and is close to the actual population distribution by region. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is also provided.

Region	Sample	Margin of Error*
Atlantic Canada (7%)	200	+/- 6.9
Quebec (24%)	450	+/- 4.6
Ontario (38%)	700	+/- 3.7
Prairies (17%)	350	+/- 5.2
B.C. (13%)	300	+/- 5.7
CANADA (100%)	2,000	+/- 2.2

\* In percentage points, at the 95% confidence level

## C. Questionnaire design and pre-testing

Once the questionnaire was finalized and approved by the CCG, the questions were translated into French by the CCG. A copy of the English and French language versions of the questionnaire are attached as an appendix.

## D. Data collection

The sample was stratified across designated regions of the province to ensure coverage. Environics employed industry-standard random-digit-dialling (RDD) methods as a basis for drawing a national sampling frame for this survey. In addition, a 25 percent cell-phone sample was employed. The data are statistically weighted to ensure the sample is as representative of this population as possible per the most recently available Census information (2011).

The interviewing was conducted by Elemental Data Collection Inc. of Ottawa, ON, between April 5 and April 16, 2017, as part of a longer omnibus survey. Field supervisors were present at all times to ensure accurate interviewing and recording of responses. Ten percent of each interviewer's work was unobtrusively monitored for quality control in accordance with the standards set out by the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA).

Up to eight callbacks were made to reach each household selected in the sample, and such calls

were made at different times of the day and days of the week, to maximize the chances of catching someone at home. All surveys were conducted in respondents' official language of choice. This survey was registered with the MRIA's registration system.

## E. Completion results

A total of 56,101 phone numbers were dialled for this project, with a final number of 2,002 completions. The overall response rate achieved for this study is 7.2%.

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Landline</b>	<b>Cell</b>
Total Numbers Attempted	56101	26969	29132
Out-of-scope - Invalid	27302	8506	18796
Unresolved (U)	13949	7930	6019
No answer/Answering machine	13949	7930	6019
In-scope - Non-responding (IS)	1192	596	596
Language barrier	385	281	104
Incapable of completing (ill/deceased)	232	181	51
Callback (Respondent not available)	3379	2120	1259
Total Asked	13658	9937	3721
Refusal	11407	8254	3153
Termination	178	130	48
In-scope - Responding units (R)	2073	1553	520
Quota Full	9	8	1
NQ - Industry	62	45	17
Completed Interview	2002	1500	502
Refusal Rate	84.82	84.37	86.03
Response Rate	7.20	8.41	5.03
Incidence	96.58	96.59	96.54

*In this report, quantitative results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted. Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. Net results cited in the text may not exactly match individual results shown in the charts due to rounding.*

## Detailed Findings

### A. Awareness of the Canadian Coast Guard

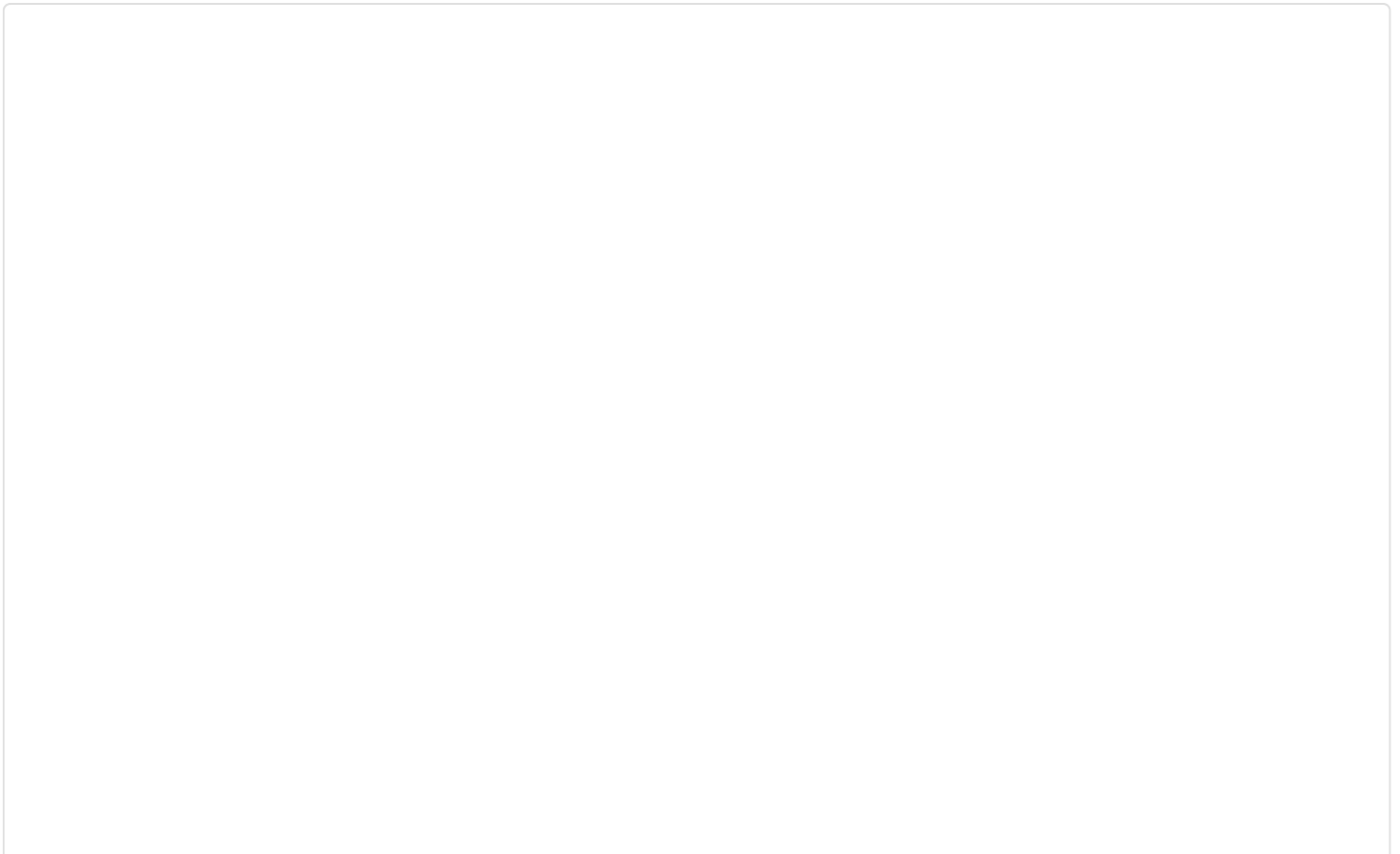
Half of Canadians are aware of the Canadian Coast Guard on an unaided basis.

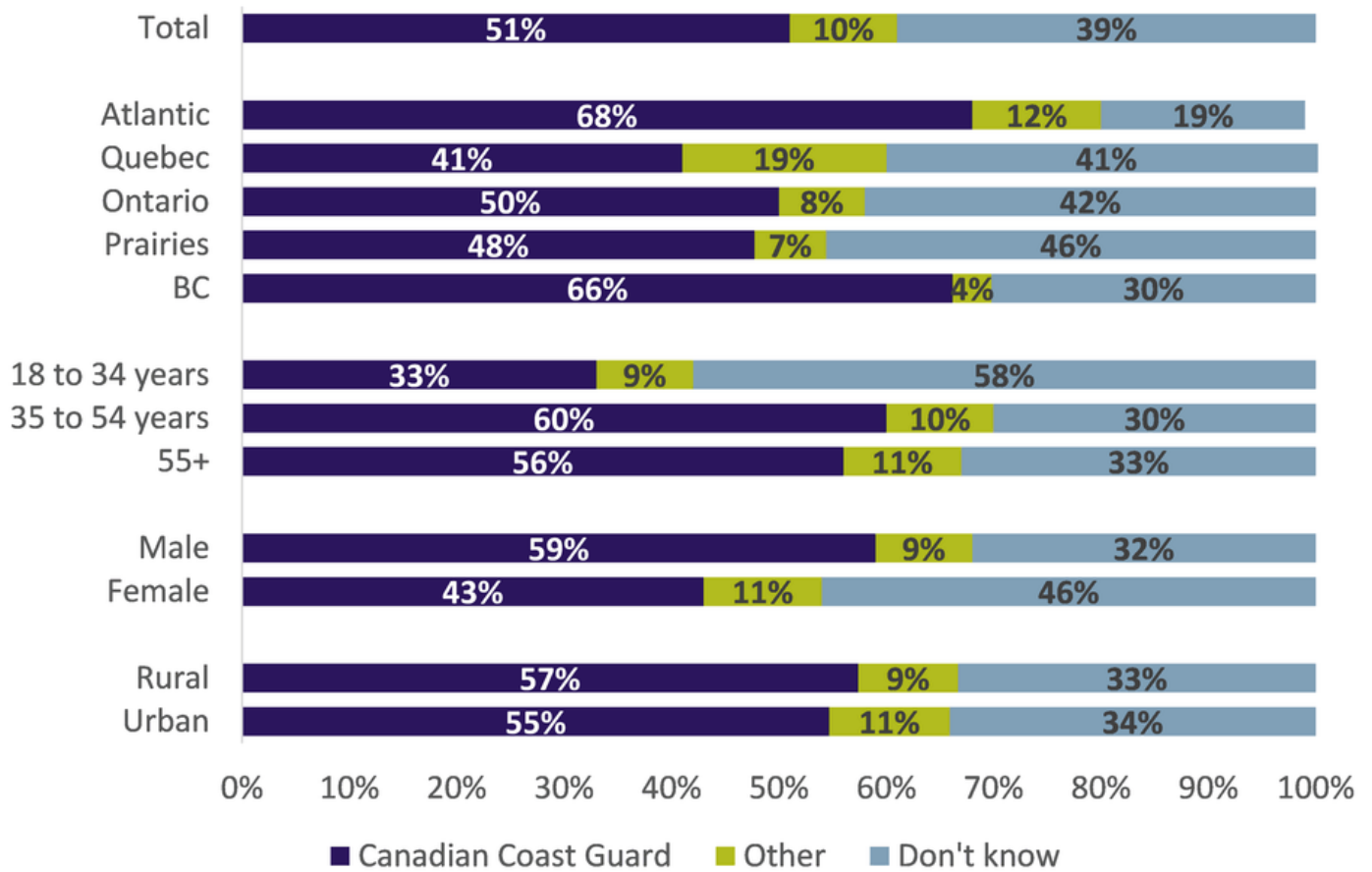
#### 1. Unaided awareness of the Canadian Coast Guard

Half (51%) of Canadians surveyed identify the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) as the organization that responds to vessels in distress off Canada's coasts. Four in ten (39%) are unable to identify any organization and an additional one in ten (10%) mention another organization.

There are some differences in unaided awareness across subgroups. Regionally, residents of Atlantic Canada (68%) and British Columbia (66%) are the most aware of the CCG whereas residents of Quebec are the least aware of the organization (41%). Findings also vary by age with lower awareness among Canadians under the age of 35 versus those over 35 years of age (33% vs. 58%). In addition, men have a higher degree of awareness as compared to women (59% vs. 43%).

#### Unaided awareness of the Canadian Coast Guard





Description

**Q1. Can you name an organization that responds to vessels in distress off Canada's coasts?**

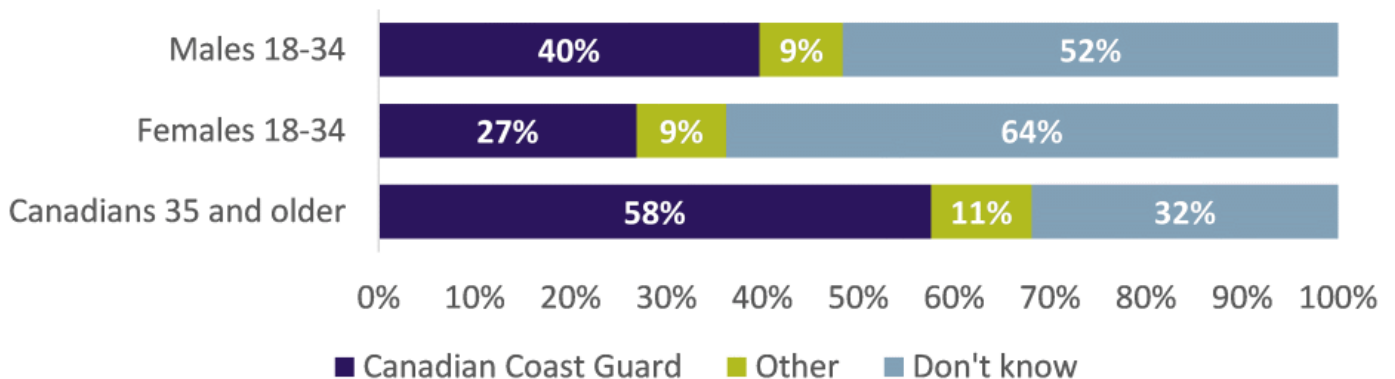
	Canadian Coast Guard	Other	Don't know
Urban	55%	11%	34%
Rural	57%	9%	33%
Female	43%	11%	46%
Male	59%	9%	32%
55+	56%	11%	33%
35 to 54 years	60%	10%	30%
18 to 34 years	33%	9%	58%
BC	66%	4%	30%
Prairies	48%	7%	46%

Ontario	50%	8%	42%
Quebec	41%	19%	41%
Atlantic	68%	12%	19%
Total	51%	10%	39%

Q1. Can you name an organization that responds to vessels in distress off Canada's coasts?  
 BASE: All respondents

The data highlights a difference in awareness of the Canadian Coast Guard among those under age 35 and across genders within this age group. Over half of males and over six in ten females under 35 years of age are unsure of the organization that responds to vessels in distress in comparison to other groups of Canadians.

## 2. Visual recognition of Canadian Coast Guard ships



Description

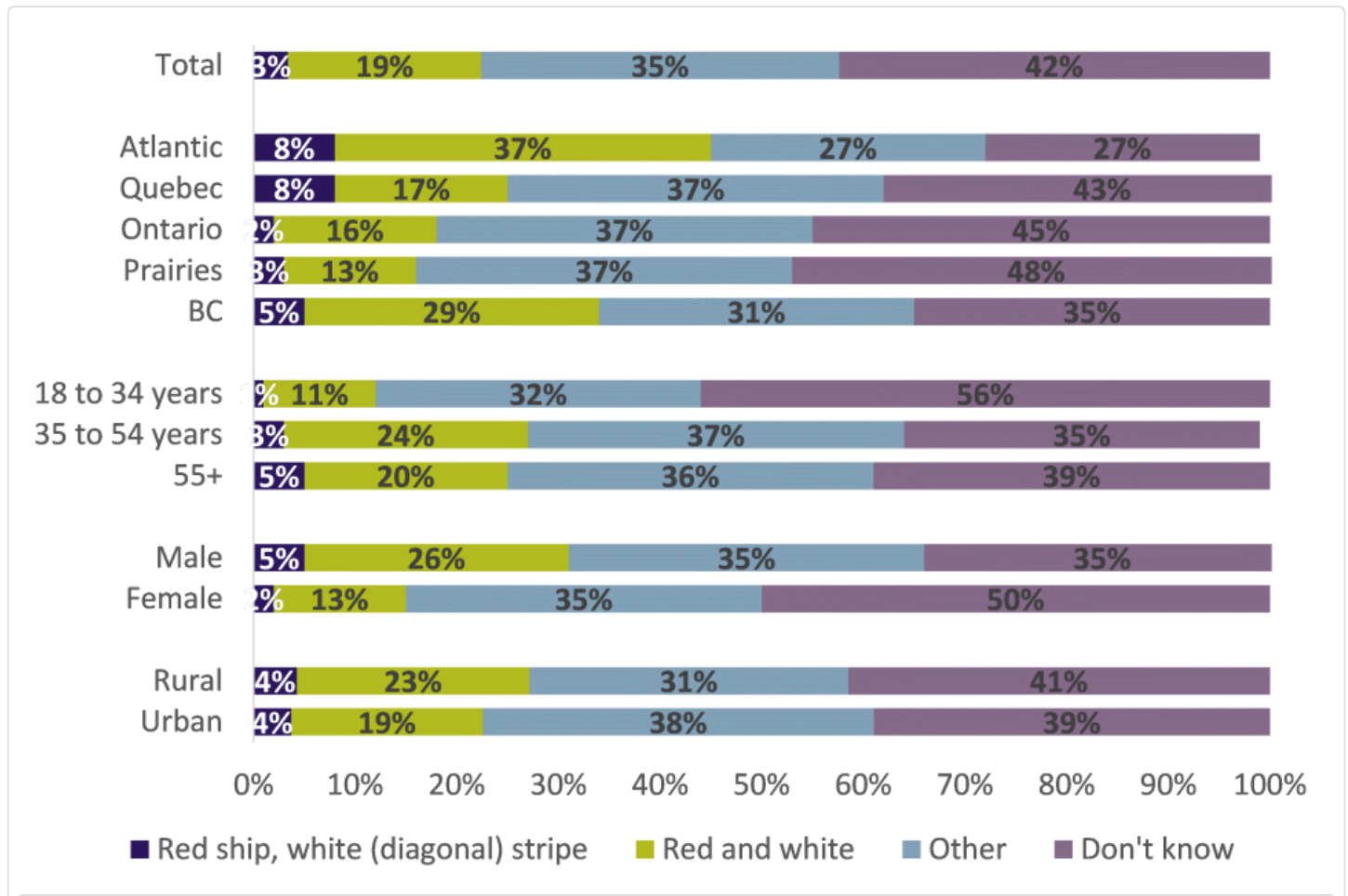
### Visual recognition of Canadian Coast Guard ships

	Canadian Coast Guard	Other	Don't know
Canadians 35 and older	58%	11%	32%
Females 18-34	27%	9%	64%
Males 18-34	40%	9%	52%



There is limited awareness of how to recognize a Canadian Coast Guard ship. One in five Canadians say they would recognize their ships as red and white (19%), and three percent specifically identify the white (diagonal) stripe on the vessel. The majority provide other descriptors (35%) or do not know how they would recognize a Canadian Coast Guard ship (42%).

### Recognition of a Canadian Coast Guard ship



#### Description

#### How would you recognize one of their ships?

	Red ship, white (diagonal) stripe	Red and white	Other	Don't know
Urban	4%	19%	38%	39%
Rural	4%	23%	31%	41%
Female	2%	13%	35%	50%
Male	5%	26%	35%	35%
55+	5%	20%	36%	39%

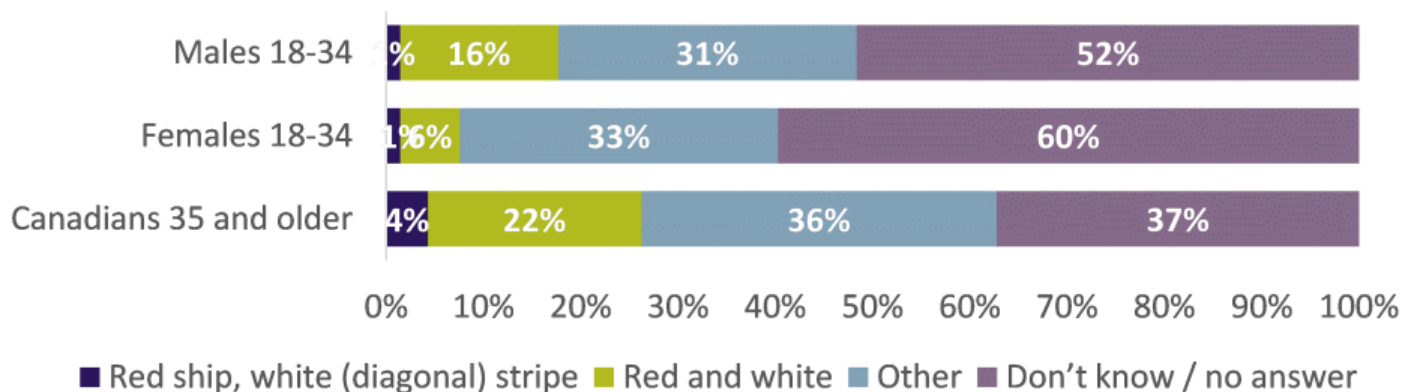
35 to 54 years	3%	24%	37%	35%
18 to 34 years	1%	11%	32%	56%
BC	5%	29%	31%	35%
Prairies	3%	13%	37%	48%
Ontario	2%	16%	37%	45%
Quebec	8%	17%	37%	43%
Atlantic	8%	37%	27%	27%
Total	3%	19%	35%	42%

*Q2. How would you recognize one of their ships?  
BASE: All respondents*

Differences in how to recognize a CCG vessel are noted across subgroups. Residents of Atlantic Canada and British Columbia are the most likely to identify the red ship with the white diagonal stripe or red and white in general in comparison to others. Moreover, men are more likely than women to recognize a CCG vessel with the white stripe or the red and white ship. By contrast, Canadians under the age of 35 are more apt to say they do not know how they would recognize a CCG ship.

Perhaps not surprising is that those with unaided awareness of the Canadian Coast Guard are much more likely to say they would recognize a CCG ship as red with the white (diagonal) stripe (6%) or as red and white (34%) than those with no awareness (unaided) of the CCG.

As seen with unaided awareness of the CCG, males and females 18 to 34 years of age are less likely to say how they would recognize one of their ships.



Description	Red ship, white (diagonal) stripe	Red and white	Other	Don't know / no answer
Canadians 35 and older	4%	22%	36%	37%
Females 18-34	1%	6%	33%	60%
Males 18-34	1%	16%	31%	52%

## B. Impressions of the Canadian Coast Guard and attributes

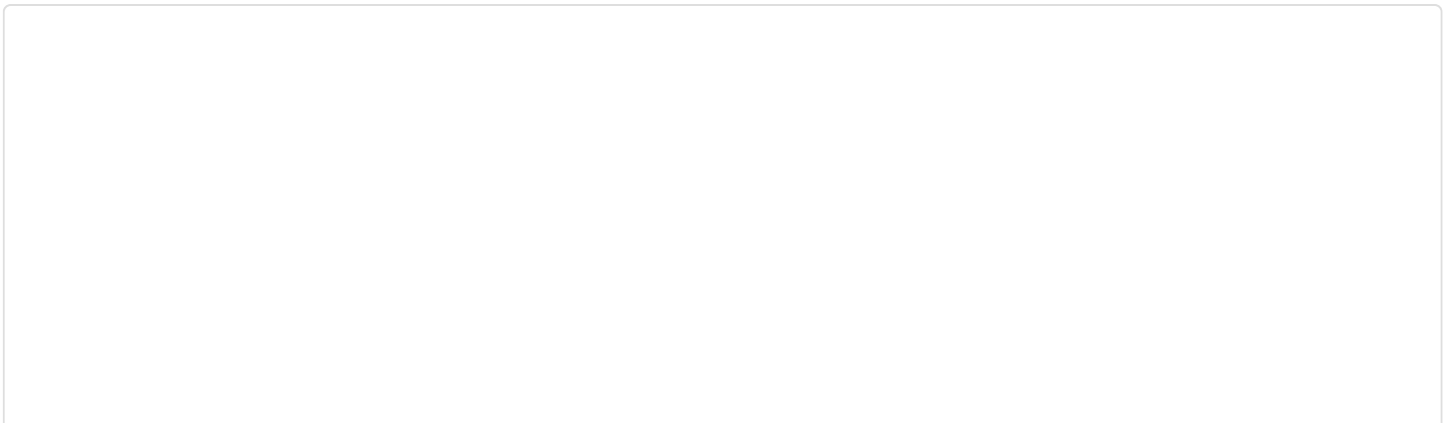
### 1. General impressions of the Canadian Coast Guard

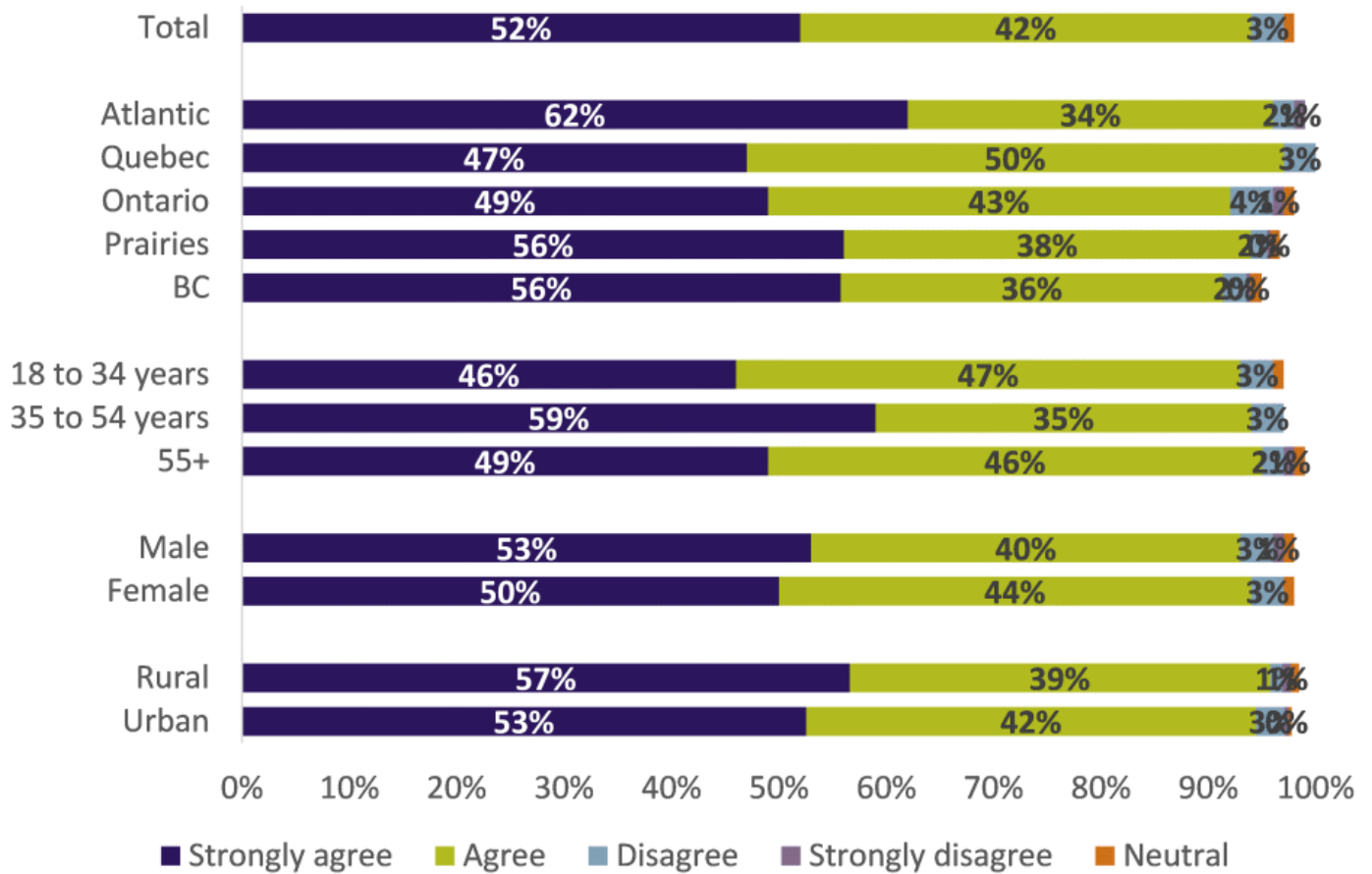
A majority of Canadians have confidence in the Canadian Coast Guard's ability to protect the environment from oil spills, while almost all Canadians have trust and confidence in its ability to save lives.

A strong majority of Canadians (94%) agree that they have trust and confidence in the CCG to save lives of people on ships in distress (including 52% who strongly agree). There is also a high level of trust and confidence in the Coast Guard's ability to protect the environment from oil spills (72%, including 22% who strongly agree).

There are some differences across subgroups on some of the attributes measured. By and large, residents of Atlantic Canada and the Prairie Provinces are more positive in their impressions of the Canadian Coast Guard in comparison to those in other regions. Moreover, Canadians between the ages of 35 and 54 are more likely to strongly agree with both statements tested in the survey. When considering the CCG's ability to protect the environment from oil spills, residents of British Columbia are less confident in their ability.

### Trust and confidence in the Coast Guard's ability to save lives of people on ships in distress





Description

**For each of the following statements about the Canadian Coast Guard, please indicate whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree.**

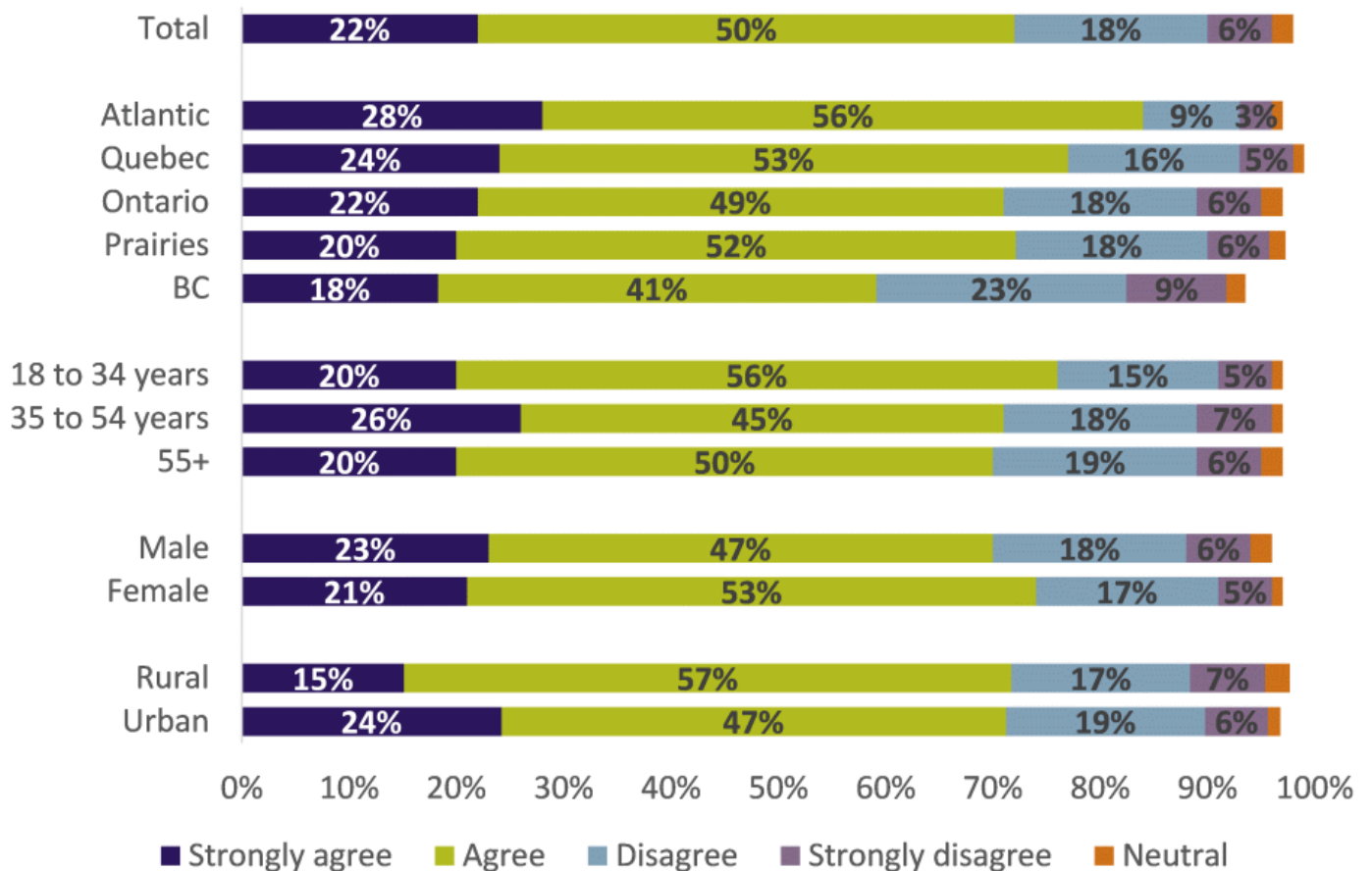
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neutral
Urban	53%	42%	3%	0%	0%
Rural	57%	39%	1%	1%	1%
Female	50%	44%	3%	0%	1%
Male	53%	40%	3%	1%	1%
55+	49%	46%	2%	1%	1%
35 to 54 years	59%	35%	3%	0%	0%
18 to 34 years	46%	47%	3%	0%	1%
BC	56%	36%	2%	0%	1%
Prairies	56%	38%	2%	0%	1%

Ontario	49%	43%	4%	1%	1%
Quebec	47%	50%	3%		
Atlantic	62%	34%	2%	1%	
Total	52%	42%	3%		1%

Q3. For each of the following statements about the Canadian Coast Guard, please indicate whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree.

BASE: All respondents

### Trust and confidence in the Coast Guard's ability to protect the environment from oil spills



#### Description

For each of the following statements about the Canadian Coast Guard, please indicate whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neutral
Urban	24%	47%	19%	6%	1%
Rural	15%	57%	17%	7%	2%
Female	21%	53%	17%	5%	1%
Male	23%	47%	18%	6%	2%
55+	20%	50%	19%	6%	2%
35 to 54 years	26%	45%	18%	7%	1%
18 to 34 years	20%	56%	15%	5%	1%
BC	18%	41%	23%	9%	2%
Prairies	20%	52%	18%	6%	2%
Ontario	22%	49%	18%	6%	2%
Quebec	24%	53%	16%	5%	1%
Atlantic	28%	56%	9%	3%	1%
Total	22%	50%	18%	6%	2%

*Q3. For each of the following statements about the Canadian Coast Guard, please indicate whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree.*

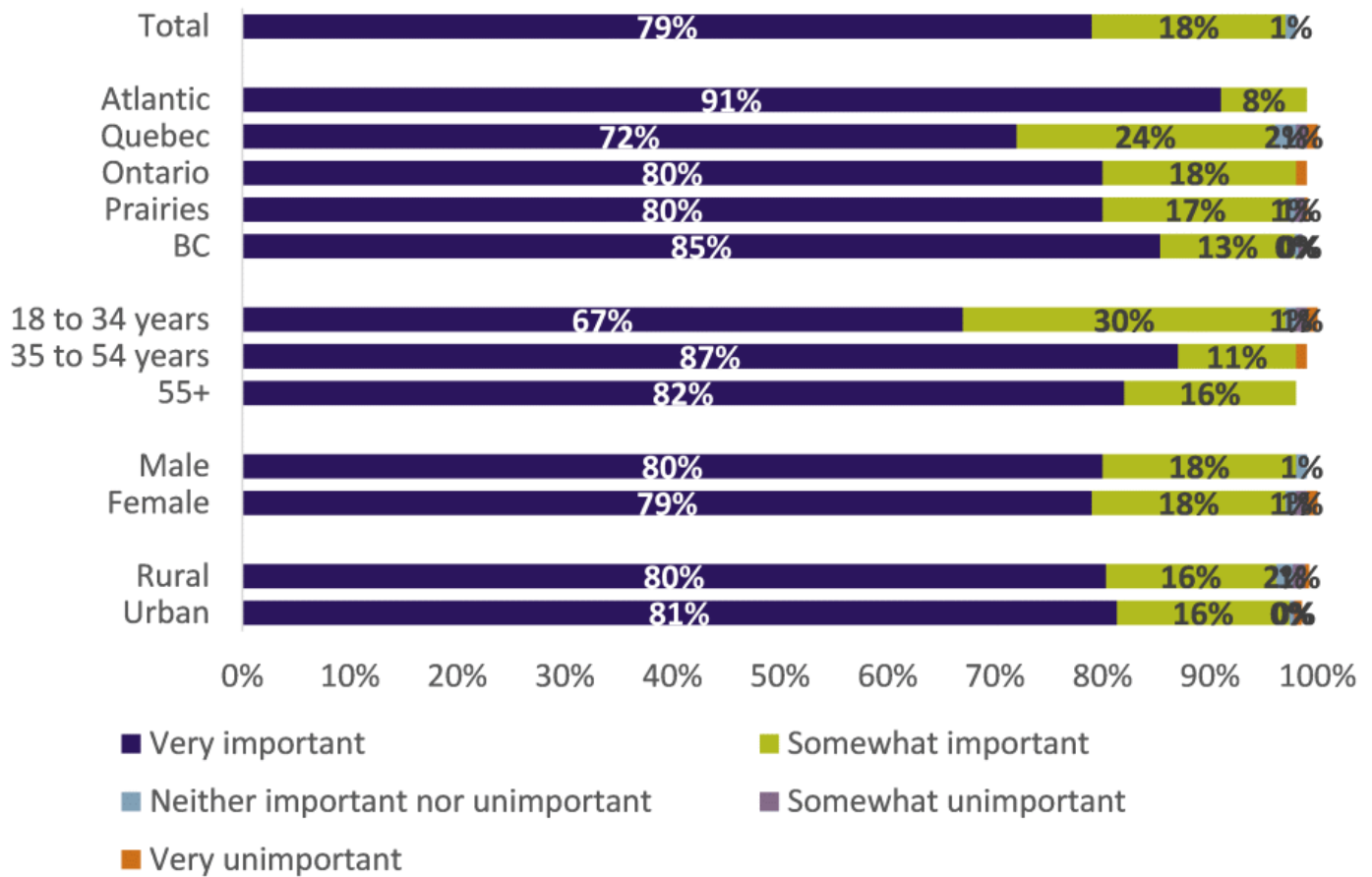
*BASE: All respondents*

## 2. Importance of the Canadian Coast Guard to Canada

Canadians place a high degree of importance on the Coast Guard to Canada; perceived importance is highest among Atlantic Canada residents.

Four in five Canadians believe that the Canadian Coast Guard is very important to Canada. An additional one in five (18%) consider it somewhat important.

### Importance of the Canadian Coast Guard to Canada



Description

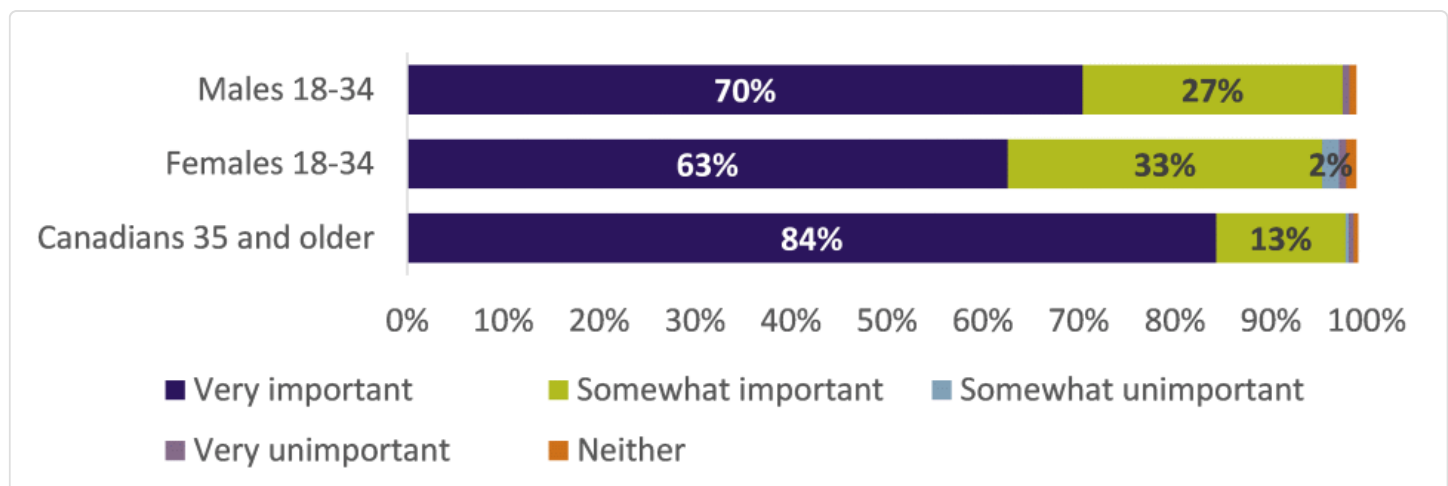
**How important is the Coast Guard to Canada? Is it...**

	Very important	Somewhat important	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant
Urban	81%	16%	0%	0%	1%
Rural	80%	16%	2%	1%	0%
Female	79%	18%	1%	1%	1%
Male	80%	18%	1%	0%	0%
55+	82%	16%	0%	0%	0%
35 to 54 years	87%	11%	0%	0%	1%
18 to 34 years	67%	30%	1%	1%	1%
BC	85%	13%	0%	0%	0%

Prairies	80%	17%	1%	1%	0%
Ontario	80%	18%			1%
Quebec	72%	24%	2%	1%	1%
Atlantic	91%	8%			
Total	79%	18%	1%		

*Q4. How important is the Coast Guard to Canada? Is it...*  
*BASE: All respondents*

While virtually all Canadians consider the Canadian Coast Guard important (either somewhat or very), there are differences in the degree of importance across subgroups. As noted throughout this report, Atlantic Canadians and British Columbians are more likely to believe the Coast Guard is very important, whereas residents of Quebec are more apt to consider it somewhat important. Moreover, strong belief in the importance of the Coast Guard is also higher among Canadians 35 and older (84% very important, vs. 67% for those under 35).



Description	Very important	Somewhat important	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant	Neither
Canadians 35 and older	84%	13%	0%	0%	0%
Females 18-34	63%	33%	2%	1%	1%



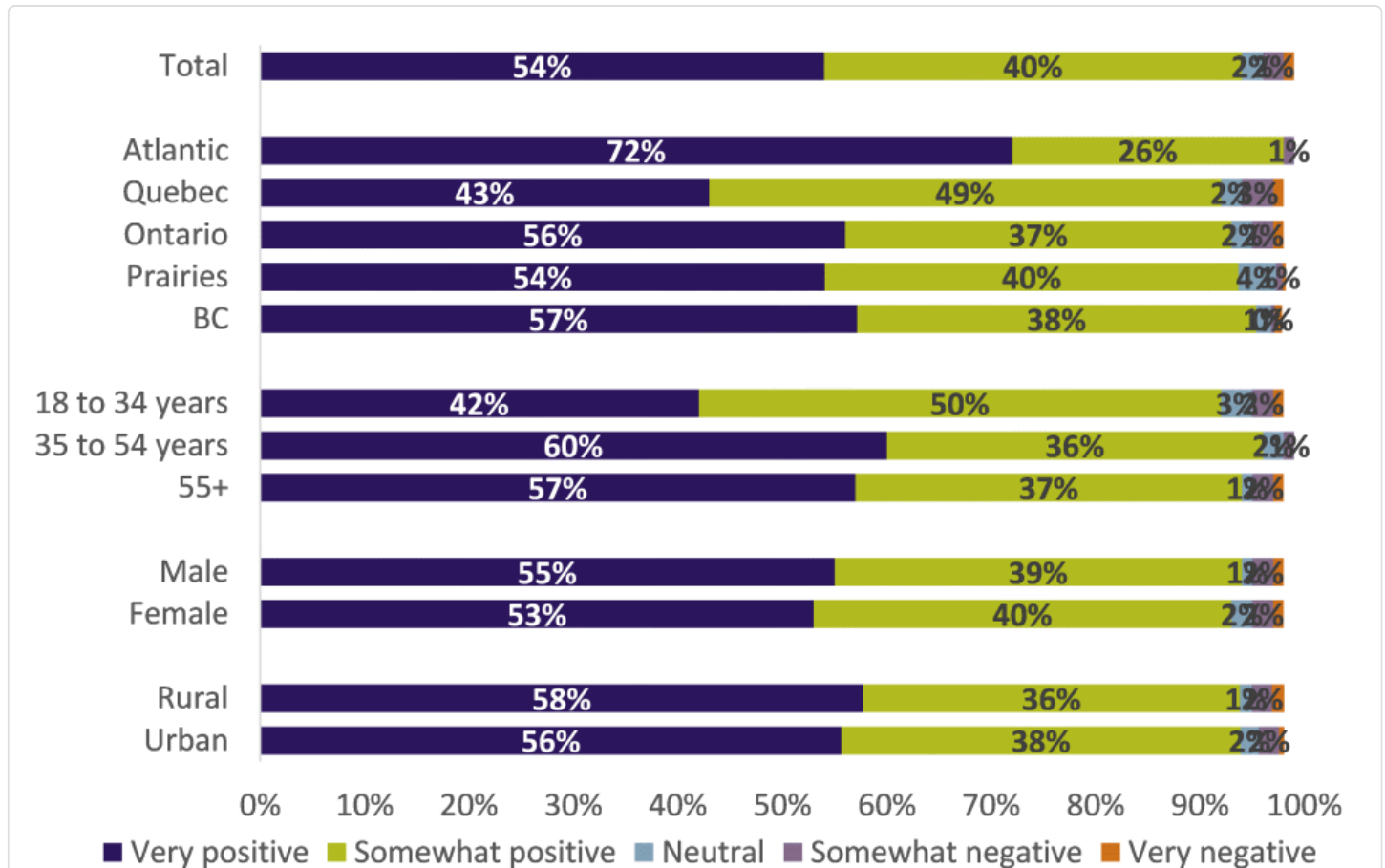
Males 18-34      70%      27%      0%      1%      1%

### 3. Overall impression of the Canadian Coast Guard

The vast majority of Canadians have a positive impression of the Canadian Coast Guard. Impressions are highest among residents of Atlantic Canada.

Over nine in ten Canadians have a positive impression of the Canadian Coast Guard, including 54% who say it is very positive.

#### Overall impression of the Canadian Coast Guard



#### Description

**Overall, would you say you have a positive or negative opinion of the Canadian Coast Guard? Is that very or somewhat (positive/negative)?**

	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Neutral	Somewhat negative	Very negative
Urban	56%	38%	2%	2%	0%

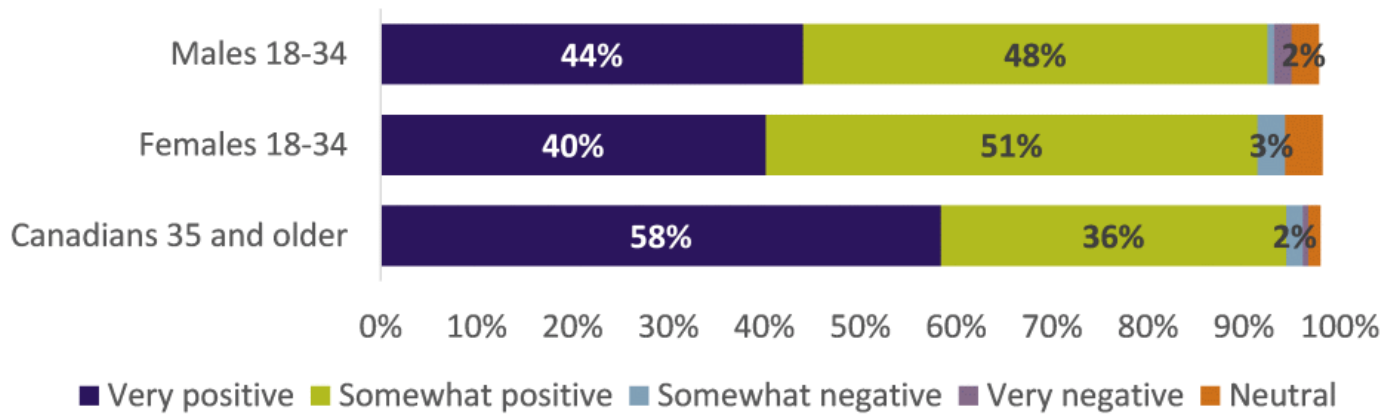
Rural	58%	36%	1%	2%	1%
Female	53%	40%	2%	2%	1%
Male	55%	39%	1%	2%	1%
55+	57%	37%	1%	2%	1%
35 to 54 years	60%	36%	2%	1%	
18 to 34 years	42%	50%	3%	2%	1%
BC	57%	38%	1%	0%	1%
Prairies	54%	40%	4%	1%	0%
Ontario	56%	37%	2%	2%	1%
Quebec	43%	49%	2%	3%	1%
Atlantic	72%	26%		1%	
Total	54%	40%	2%	2%	1%

*Q5. Overall, would you say you have a positive or negative opinion of the Canadian Coast Guard? Is that very or somewhat (positive/negative)?*

*BASE: All respondents*

As noted throughout this report, residents of Atlantic Canada are more likely to have a very positive impression than those in other regions. Meanwhile, residents of Quebec are more apt to say their opinion is somewhat positive for the organization. Again, those under the age of 35 are more apt to say their impression is somewhat positive in comparison to older Canadians who are more likely to say their impression of the Canadian Coast Guard is very positive.

Again, Canadians 18 to 34 years of age are slightly less positive in their assessment of their opinion of the Canadian Coast Guard in comparison to other Canadians.



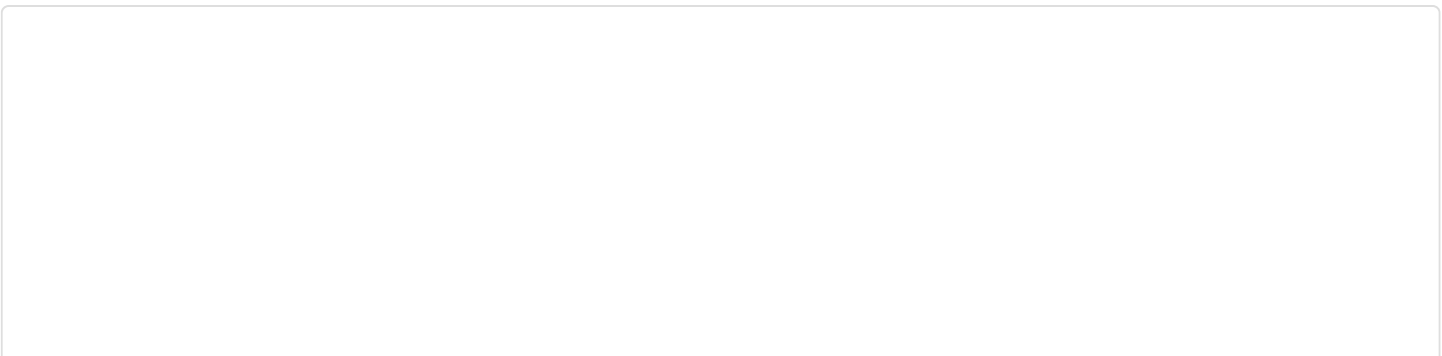
Description					
	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Somewhat negative	Very negative	Neutral
Canadians 35 and older	58%	36%	2%	1%	1%
Females 18-34	40%	51%	3%	0%	4%
Males 18-34	44%	48%	1%	2%	3%

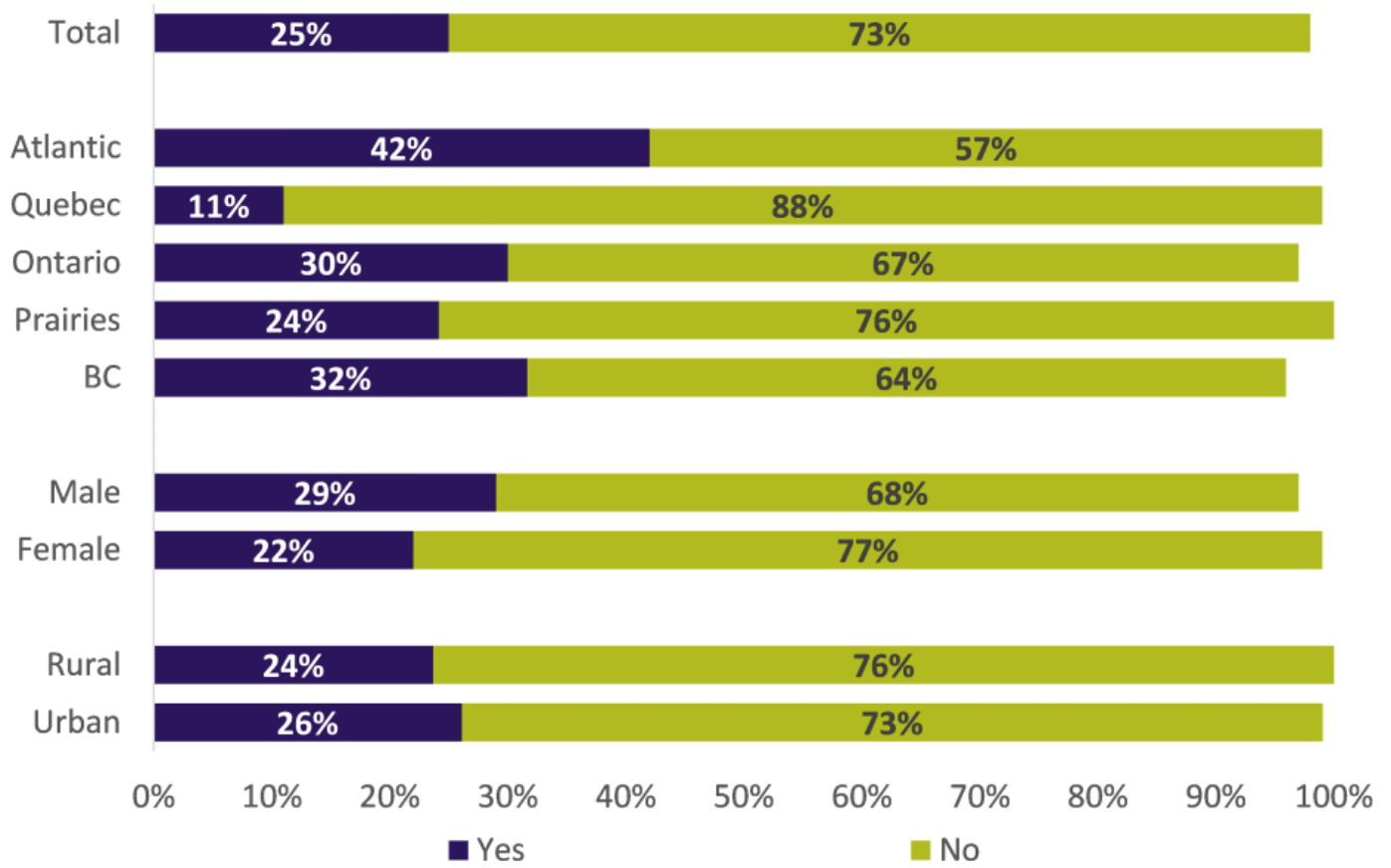
### C. Canadian Coast Guard as a career option

The Coast Guard is seen as a viable career option. One in four younger Canadians would consider a career with the Canadian Coast Guard. Three in four older Canadians (over the age of 40) would encourage a family member to join.

One in four Canadians under the age of 40 say they would consider a career with the Canadian Coast Guard. Regionally, residents of Quebec are least likely to claim they would consider a career with the organization.

#### Consider a career with the Canadian Coast Guard





Description

**Would you ever consider a career with the Coast Guard?**

	Yes	No
Urban	26%	73%
Rural	24%	76%
Female	22%	77%
Male	29%	68%
BC	32%	64%
Prairies	24%	76%
Ontario	30%	67%
Quebec	11%	88%
Atlantic	42%	57%

Total

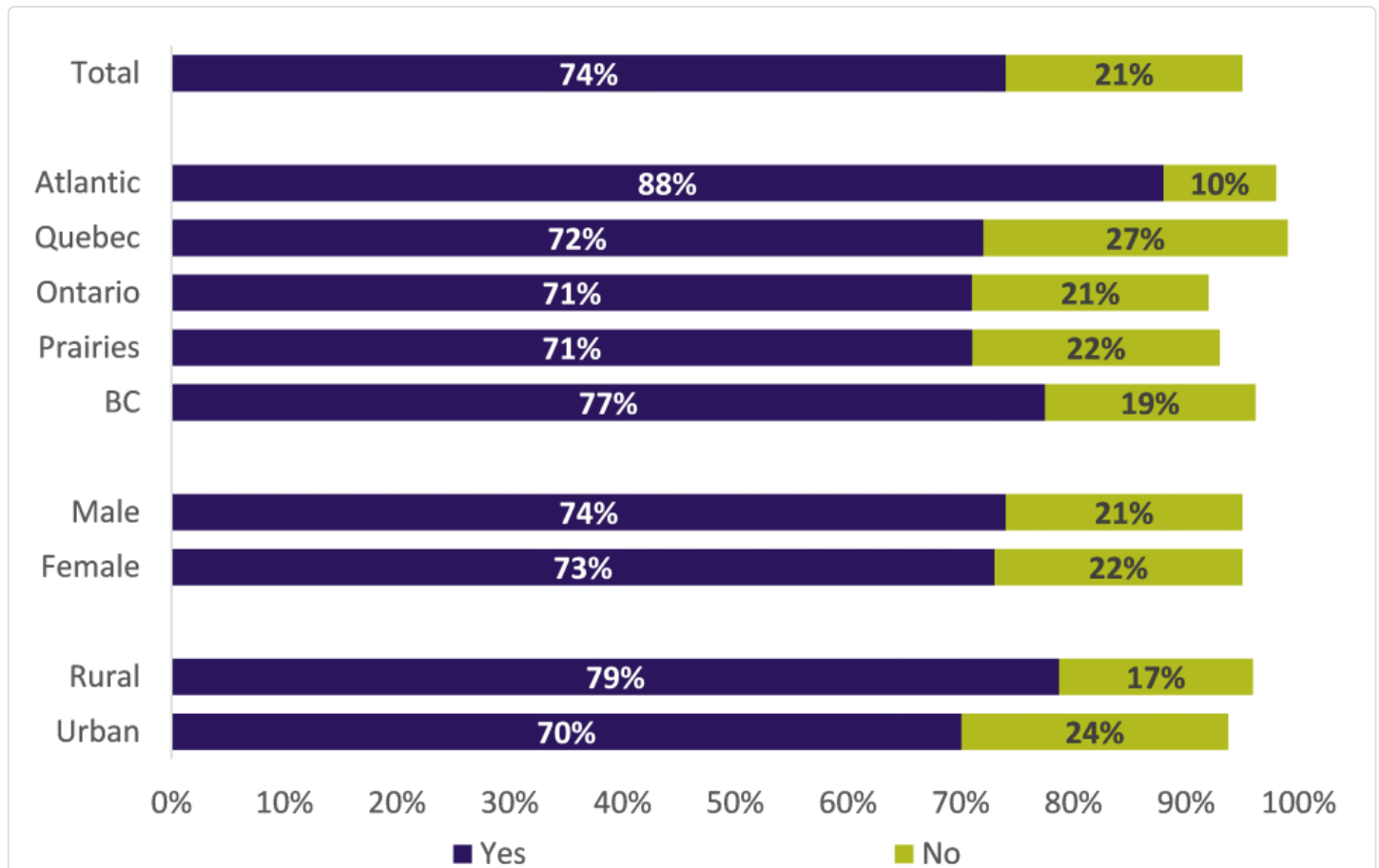
25%

73%

Q6. Would you ever consider a career with the Coast Guard?  
BASE: Respondents between the ages of 18 and 39 (n=418)

Three in four Canadians at least 40 years of age say they would encourage a family member to pursue a career with the Canadian Coast Guard. Encouragement is highest among residents in Atlantic Canada.

### Encourage family member to pursue a career with the Canadian Coast Guard



#### Description

**Would you encourage a family member to pursue a career with the Coast Guard?**

	Yes	No
Urban	70%	24%

Rural	79%	17%
Female	73%	22%
Male	74%	21%
BC	77%	19%
Prairies	71%	22%
Ontario	71%	21%
Quebec	72%	27%
Atlantic	88%	10%
Total	74%	21%

Q7. *Would you encourage a family member to pursue a career with the Coast Guard?*  
*BASE: Respondents at least 40 years of age (n=1,584)*

## APPENDIX A: Research instruments

1. Can you name an organization that responds to vessels in distress off Canada's coasts?

DO NOT READ – CODE ONE ONLY

01 – Canadian Coast Guard (CORRECT MENTION)

02 – Other mention (INCORRECT MENTION)

99 – Don't know / no answer

2. How would you recognize one of their ships?

DO NOT READ LIST

01 – Red ship, white (diagonal) stripe

02 – Red and white

88 – Other

99 – Don't know / no answer

The Coast Guard conducts search and rescue for mariners in distress, responds to marine pollution incidents, provides ice breaking services, maintains navigational aids (such as buoys that indicate safe routes) and operates a vessel traffic control system in order to ensure the safe navigation of all vessels through Canada's coastal waters.

3. For each of the following statements about the Canadian Coast Guard, please indicate whether

you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree.

ROTATE

- a. I have trust and confidence in the Coast Guard's ability to save lives of people on ships in distress.
- b. I have trust and confidence in the Coast Guard's ability to protect the environment from oil spills.

04 – Strongly agree

03 – Agree

02 – Disagree

01 – Strongly disagree

Volunteered

98 – Neutral

99 – Don't know/no answer

4. How important is the Coast Guard to Canada? Is it... (READ)

05 – Very important

04 – Somewhat important

03 – Neither important nor unimportant

02 – Somewhat unimportant

01 – Very unimportant

99 – Don't know / no answer

5. Overall, would you say you have a positive or negative opinion of the Canadian Coast Guard?  
Is that very or somewhat (positive/negative)?

04 – Very positive

03 – Somewhat positive

02 – Somewhat negative

01 – Very negative

Volunteered

98 – Neutral

99 – Don't know/no answer

6. IF 18-39 YEARS OF AGE: would you ever consider a career with the Coast Guard?

02 – Yes

01 – No

99 – Don't know / no answer

7. IF 40 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER: Would you encourage a family member to pursue a career with the Coast Guard?

02 – Yes

01 – No

99 – Don't know / no answer

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1. Pouvez-vous nommer une organisation qui intervient lorsqu'un navire est en détresse au large des côtes du Canada?

NE PAS LIRE – CODE UN SEULEMENT

01 – Garde côtière canadienne (BONNE RÉPONSE)

02 – Autre réponse (MAUVAISE RÉPONSE)

99 – Ne sait pas / pas de réponse

2. De quelle manière reconnaissez-vous un de ses navires?

NE PAS LIRE LA LISTE

01 – Navire de couleur rouge, avec une bande (diagonale) blanche

02 – Rouge et blanc

88 – Autre

99 – Ne sait pas / pas de réponse

La Garde côtière conduit des activités de recherche et sauvetage pour les marins en détresse, intervient en cas d'incidents de pollution marine, fournit des services de déglacage, entretient les aides à la navigation (comme les bouées qui indiquent les passages sécuritaires), et opère un système d'aide au trafic maritime afin de garantir une navigation sécuritaire pour tous les navires sur les eaux côtières du Canada.

3. Pour chacune des déclarations suivantes concernant la Garde côtière canadienne, veuillez indiquer si vous êtes vivement en désaccord, en désaccord, d'accord, ou vivement d'accord.

ALTERNER

a. J'ai confiance dans la capacité de la Garde côtière de sauver des vies humaines sur les navires en détresse.

b. J'ai confiance dans la capacité de la Garde côtière de protéger l'environnement des déversements de pétrole.

04 – Vivement d'accord

03 – D'accord

02 – En désaccord

01 – Vivement en désaccord

Réponse sur une base volontaire

98 – Neutre

99 – Ne sait pas / pas de réponse

4. À quel point est-ce que la Garde côtière est importante pour le Canada? Est-elle... (LIRE)

05 – Très importante

04 – Plutôt importante

03 – Ni importante ni sans importance

02 – Plutôt sans importance

01 – Très peu importante

99 – Ne sait pas / pas de réponse



5. Dans l'ensemble, diriez-vous que vous avez une opinion positive ou négative de la Garde côtière canadienne? Elle est très ou plutôt (positive/négative)?

04 – Très positive

03 – Plutôt positive

02 – Plutôt négative

01 – Très négative

Réponse sur une base volontaire

98 – Neutre

99 – Ne sait pas / pas de réponse

6. SI VOUS AVEZ ENTRE 18 ET 39 ANS : Envisageriez-vous poursuivre une carrière au sein de la Garde côtière?

02 – Oui

01 – Non

99 – Ne sait pas / pas de réponse

7. SI VOUS AVEZ AU MINIMUM 40 ANS : Encourageriez-vous un membre de votre famille à poursuivre une carrière au sein de la Garde côtière?

02 – Oui

01 – Non

99 – Ne sait pas / pas de réponse

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