

Public perceptions of the Canadian Coast Guard – Narrative executive summary

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

Prepared by:

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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.

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