



National Justice Survey 2018

Executive Summary

Prepared for Department of Justice

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SUMMARY

The Department of Justice supports the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada through administering federal law, developing policies, and providing legal support to government departments and agencies. The Department has periodically commissioned the National Justice Survey, which seeks to understand Canadians' perceptions, understanding, and priorities on justice-related issues.

The 2018 National Justice Survey will be used to inform policy development, public engagement, and communications. Specifically, the study explores Canadians' views and perceptions of:

- The criminal justice system;
- Sexual harassment in the work place;
- Privacy and the management of personal information;
- The *Canadian Human Rights Act*; and
- Family law.

The national, online survey included 2,016 completed responses from randomly sampled Canadians from EKOS' in-house panel (Probit¹). This sample size yields a precision of +/-2.2 per cent at a 95 per cent confidence interval for the sample overall. Results can be extrapolated to the broader population of Canadians.

Criminal Justice System

Canadians show moderate awareness of the criminal justice system. Over half said they are aware of the role of police; however, perception of awareness drops when thinking about courts or corrections.

Even with self-reported moderate knowledge of the criminal justice system, Canadians appear to be apprehensive of the system, with a greater proportion who stated they are not confident the system is accessible (35 per cent, compared to 33 per cent who are confident) or fair to all people (42 per cent not confident; 27 per cent confident).

¹ Probit offers complete coverage of the Canadian population (i.e., Internet, phone, cell phone), random recruitment (i.e., all respondents to our panel are recruited by telephone using RDD and are confirmed by live interviewers – they do not opt themselves into our panel), and equal probability sampling (which means that results are generalizable to the broader population).

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Most Canadians said they have recently heard or read about sexual harassment in the work place. Most often, they have heard about sexual harassment in the workplace through the media, while roughly half have heard through popular culture or social media. One-quarter got information through their employer or colleagues at work.

Most Canadians feel they are well informed in terms of what is considered to be sexual harassment; for those less informed, over half noted the need for information on the types of sexual harassment, and four in ten identified the need for information on what to do if sexually harassed in the workplace. If needed, two in three Canadians do not think they would experience any difficulty assessing information or advice on sexual harassment. About two in three Canadians reported that if they wanted information on sexual harassment, they would prefer to access the information online. Of those who perceived difficulties accessing information or advice, most cited that it may affect their career, they do not trust the people in charge, or general fear or embarrassment.

If sexual harassment was experienced in the workplace, nearly half of Canadians said they would complain to an agency, ombudsperson or some other office to have the complaint investigated and resolved. Other types of recourse identified were to navigate the situation on their own, or have a lawyer take the matter to court or tribunal.

One-third of Canadians perceive that the problem of sexual harassment is the same as it was ten years ago. Slightly more than one-third said that sexual harassment in the workplace is less serious, although one-quarter rated the problem as more serious today than a decade ago. Most, nearly nine in ten Canadians, consider prevention in the forms of training and education the most effective approaches to address sexual harassment.

Privacy

In terms of the management of personal information by the federal government, nearly two-thirds of Canadians feel that a federal department should only collect information directly from the individual, rather than collecting it from another department.

Discrimination

Canadians proclaim various levels of awareness or knowledge on the rights and responsibilities under anti-discrimination laws. Four in ten said they are aware of the rights and responsibilities while over one-quarter said they lack awareness. Perceived knowledge is fairly evenly split with one-third of Canadians who rated themselves as either knowledgeable, moderately knowledgeable, or not knowledgeable.

Fewer than half of Canadians responded that if discriminated against, they would complain to an agency, ombudsperson, or some other office to have their complaint investigated and resolved on their behalf. Over one in five said they would seek to resolve the situation on their own.

Family Law

Most Canadians believe that family laws should require that decisions regarding a separating or divorcing couple's child(ren) be based entirely, or almost entirely, on what is in the child(ren)'s best interests. Over one-quarter reported they have been personally involved in the family justice system as a person who experienced or is experiencing separation or divorce.

The main source of information about the family justice system, according to over one-third of Canadians, would be government websites or publications. About one-quarter said they would seek information from a legal professional.

Nearly one in five Canadians said they have visited the Justice Canada website and two per cent have used the Justice Canada helpline to gather information or seek advice on family law. Among the twenty per cent who have used the Justice Canada website or helpline, reactions were fairly evenly split between those who felt it was difficult, easy, or neither difficult nor easy to get the needed information.

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