



Canadians' Views of RCMP Policing Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français

EKOS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES INC.

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Background and Methodology

The RCMP has been conducting surveys of Canadian citizens since 2003 to assess citizens' opinions on quality of service, professionalism, sensitivity, community involvement, visibility, value of partnerships, and communication. Previous editions of the survey have been conducted by telephone. Due to the challenges and costs associated with telephone surveys, the RCMP would like to conduct the same survey online with the same representativeness used in the previous samples.

This research involved a survey of 3,033 Canadians. The sample was drawn from across Canada and was weighted more heavily toward areas policed by only the RCMP. The sample was stratified to ensure roughly equal representation from five regions (North, British Columbia, Prairies, Central, and Atlantic). We surveyed roughly 500 residents in the North, and about 600 in each of the other four regions.

The survey was conducted primarily online using our probability based online panel, Probit; however to help with tracking previous survey results (which were conducted by telephone), and to ensure we could collect information from the North (which has a very limited number of panellists), we also conducted interviews by telephone. We completed 1,310 telephone interviews, and 1,723 cases were collected online.

Survey Findings

Outlined below are key findings from this study. The remainder of this report describes survey results in more detail.

Attitudes to the RCMP

Survey findings reveal that fully 95 per cent of Canadians assign a high degree of importance to the RCMP's contribution to keeping Canadians safe, and three-quarters express satisfaction with the RCMP's performance in this area. These results are largely unchanged from 2016.

Looking at more specific aspects of the RCMP, survey findings reveal that clear majorities agree that the RCMP demonstrates professionalism in its work, demonstrates respect and integrity, that RCMP personnel are honest and demonstrate compassion, and that the organization is accountable. Tracking reveals improvement on many of these indicators since 2016.

Survey results also reveal that fully 94 per cent of Canadians feel that the RCMP is a recognized symbol of Canada. Moreover, three-quarters are satisfied with the RCMP's efforts to provide services in both official languages, agree that the RCMP prioritizes quality service, and express trust and confidence in the RCMP. Tracking reveals a ten-point rise since 2016 in the proportion of Canadians who

have trust and confidence in the RCMP, as well as a six-point increase in the proportion agreeing that the RCMP emphasizes providing quality service. However, the proportion of Canadians who agree that the RCMP prioritizes providing services in both official languages has decreased by five points since 2016.

While Canadians have a high degree of confidence in the RCMP in general, they award lower marks when it comes to the calibre of its leadership. Half of respondents agreed that the organization has effective leaders. Respondents also made little distinction between the different levels of leadership; 51 per cent rated the RCMP's local leaders as effective while roughly the same proportion (48 per cent) offered a positive appraisal of its national leaders. Tracking suggests that confidence in RCMP leaders is unchanged since 2016.

The RCMP also receives mixed reviews when it comes to issues related to innovation and transparency. Fewer than half of respondents agreed that the RCMP is a forward-looking and innovative organisation. About four in ten were satisfied with the level of information that the RCMP provides about its work (and one in three expressed dissatisfaction in this area). Respondents were sharply divided on whether the RCMP could be considered an open and transparent organization – four in ten agreed with this assessment, while virtually the same proportion disagreed. Tracking suggests a slight improvement in some of these areas since 2016: the proportion of Canadians who see the RCMP as forward-looking and innovative is up five percentage points, while agreement that the RCMP is open and transparent is up seven points.

The RCMP scores moderately well on broader indicators related to sensitivity. Just over half agreed that the RCMP is sensitive to the needs of Canada's various cultures and groups, while a similar proportion agreed that the RCMP is helping to build a fair and inclusive Canada. When the scope of the questions is narrowed to focus on specific groups, however, public satisfaction drops somewhat. Only about four in ten agreed that the RCMP treats women fairly (and one-third disagreed with this assessment). A similar proportion agreed that the RCMP is helping to build a better future for Indigenous people, while a sizeable minority (26 per cent) disagreed with this idea. Tracking reveals a seven-point increase in agreement that the RCMP is sensitive to the needs of different cultures and groups since 2016. Similarly, satisfaction with how the RCMP deals with Indigenous people is up seven points since 2016. However, longer-term tracking suggests a gradual, seven-point erosion in perceptions of how the RCMP treats women since 2012.

Results also reveal generally positive impressions of the impact of the RCMP on Canadians, although findings also suggest room for improvement in terms of the force's contributions at the community level. Seven in ten agreed that the RCMP effectively responds to national security threats, diminishes the threat of organized crime, and effectively handles threats to passenger aircraft. Six in ten believed the RCMP is effective in mitigating the impact of serious crime, reducing the distribution of narcotics, lessening the impact of economic crime, responding to cybercrime threats, responding to radicalization, and addressing youth crime. However, only about half were satisfied with the RCMP's contribution to creating informed and resilient communities, and in its efforts to foster safer Indigenous communities. Tracking reveals an 11-point increase since 2016 in the proportion of Canadians who agree that the RCMP is contributing to safer Indigenous communities, as well as a five-point bump in the proportion who believed the RCMP adequately addresses youth involvement in crime.

Primary Sources of Information about RCMP

Turning to communication with the RCMP, respondents were asked to rate the credibility of a range of information sources about the RCMP and its performance in their community. Results are generally mixed across all of the information sources examined. Forty-five per cent rate the news media as credible, and about three in ten rate their personal experience and friends and family as credible. Fewer than one in five rate social media as a credible source of information about the RCMP. Tracking reveals that the credibility of these sources has remained largely stable since 2016.

Contact with the RCMP

Respondents were asked if they had any direct contact with the RCMP in the past year. One-third (34 per cent) indicated yes, while the majority (66 per cent) said no. Tracking indicates a slight increase since 2016 in the proportion of Canadians who indicate they have had direct contact with the RCMP in the past year.

Those who indicated they had contact with the RCMP in the past year were then asked for their views on RCMP performance during this contact. Results are generally positive, with more than eight in ten agreeing that RCMP personnel demonstrated professionalism, treated them fairly, were courteous and respectful, and that it was easy to get in touch with the RCMP. Similarly, more than seven in ten felt that RCMP personnel were knowledgeable and competent, delivered the service in a timely fashion, and provided all the information needed. Results are more mixed in terms of the RCMP going beyond minimum requirements in providing good service: 58 per cent felt the RCMP went beyond minimum service requirements, and 20 per cent disagreed with this idea. Tracking reveals that these results have remained largely stable since 2012.

Those who indicated they had contact with the RCMP in the past year were also asked for their overall satisfaction with the service received from the RCMP. Three in four expressed satisfaction, and only 17 per cent were dissatisfied - and tracking reveals an increase in satisfaction with the service received.