



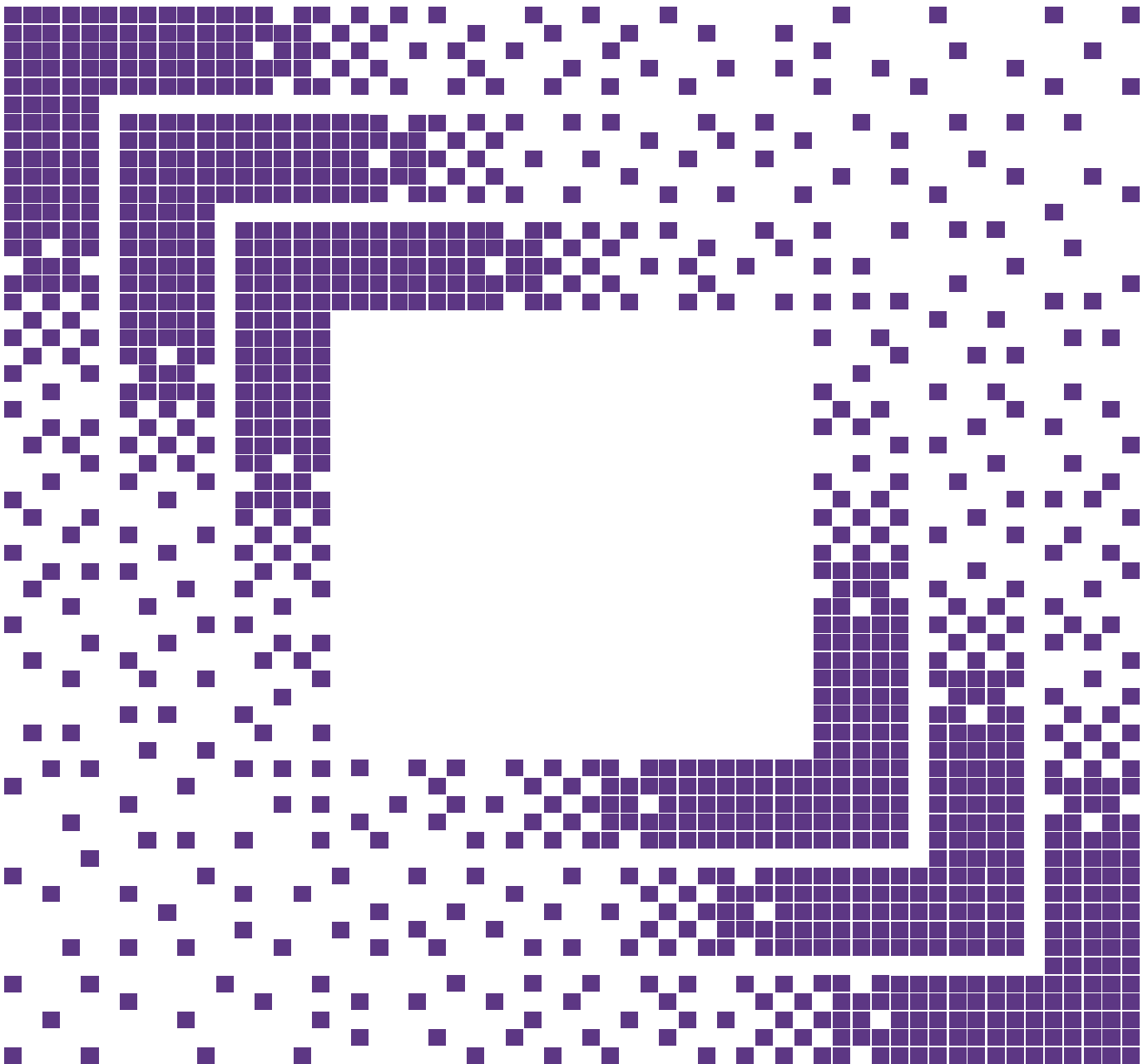
Catalogue no. 85-554-XIE

# General Social Survey - Cycle 13

## Overview:

# Personal Safety and Perceptions of Policing

August 2001



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Statistics Canada  
Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division

# General Social Survey - Cycle 13

## Overview: Personal Safety and Perceptions of Policing

August 2001

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## **Symbols**

The following standard symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

- .. figures not available.
- ... figures not appropriate or not applicable.
- nil or zero.
- amount too small to be expressed.
- <sup>p</sup> preliminary figures.
- <sup>r</sup> revised figures.
- x confidential to meet secrecy requirements of the *Statistics Act*.

## **Other symbols used:**

- † Coefficient of variation is 16.6% to 33.3%.  
Use with caution.

## **Note:**

Percentages in tables may not total 100% due to rounding.

A CMA (census metropolitan area) refers to a large urban core (over 100,000 population) together with adjacent urban and rural areas that have a high degree of economic and social integration.

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## Introduction

This report presents a brief overview of the information collected in Cycle 13 of the General Social Survey (GSS) on victimization. For a detailed analysis, please see *A Profile of Criminal Victimization: Results of the 1999 General Social Survey* (catalogue no. 85-553-XIE). The GSS has two principal objectives : first, to gather data on social trends in order to monitor changes in Canadian society over time, and second, to provide information on specific social issues of current or emerging interest.

This is the third cycle of the GSS that collects information on the nature and extent of criminal victimization in Canada. The two previous cycles included questions on accidents. Since the National Population Health Survey collects information on accidents, these questions have been dropped from cycle 13.

One of the most important applications of the data is to measure the nature and extent of criminal victimization in order to complement the officially reported data for these incidents as derived from administrative sources (for example, police-recorded incidents).

Population surveys such as the GSS, which focus on the characteristics of the victim, the incident and the perpetrator, provide an important complement to officially recorded crime rates as they measure both crime incidents that come to the attention of the police and those that are unreported. Through this survey, information is also collected on its impact and consequences to the victim, the reasons why the victim reported or did not report the incident to the police, and satisfaction with the police, as well as public perception of crime and the administration of justice. This survey, therefore, provides criminal justice planners, policy makers, legislators, community groups and researchers with reliable information on the nature and extent of criminal victimization in Canada to develop related policies, programs and services.

The target population included all people aged 15 and over, except full-time residents of the Yukon, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Data was collected each month from February to December 1999. Over this period, a total of 25,876 people were successfully interviewed, yielding a response rate of 81.3%. For further information on methods and data quality, please refer to the section at the end of this report.

Questions or comments pertaining to this report should be addressed to:

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**Table 1A:**  
**Population aged 15 and over by feelings of safety walking alone in neighbourhood after dark,<sup>1</sup>**  
**by CMA, 1999**

CMA	Total population	Feel very safe	Feel reasonably safe	Feel somewhat or very unsafe	Don't walk alone after dark	Don't know/Not stated
	(000s)			%		
Canada	24,260	35	38	15	11	--
St. John's	142	45	35	8 †	11	--
Halifax	286	27	45	19	9 †	--
Saint John	102	41	34	11 †	14 †	--
Québec	584	39	36	14	10	--
Montréal	2,721	31	39	19	10	--
Ottawa-Hull	841	39	35	17	10	--
Toronto	3,721	29	42	16	12	1 †
Hamilton	547	32	42	14	12	--
Winnipeg	533	25	42	19	13	--
Regina	154	35	40	18 †	6 †	--
Saskatoon	176	30	45	11 †	14 †	--
Calgary	744	34	44	13	9	--
Edmonton	738	29	45	16	9	--
Vancouver	1,656	22	48	21	9	--
Victoria	264	29	41	17	14 †	--

<sup>1</sup> Includes all respondents whether or not they walk alone in their neighbourhood after dark.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 13.

**Table 1B:**
**Population aged 15 and over by feelings of safety waiting for public transportation after dark,<sup>1</sup>  
by CMA, 1999**

CMA	Total population	Feel somewhat or very worried	Feel not at all worried	Don't use public transportation at night	Public transportation not available at night	Don't know/Not stated
	(000s)			%		
Canada	24,260	16	17	44	23	--
St. John's	142	8 †	19	48	25	—
Halifax	286	19	22	44	15	—
Saint John	102	10 †	15 †	33	42	—
Québec	584	13	17	58	12	--
Montréal	2,721	24	21	50	6	--
Ottawa-Hull	841	19	21	52	9	—
Toronto	3,721	21	23	51	4	—
Hamilton	547	13	16	63	7 †	--
Winnipeg	533	23	20	51	5 †	--
Regina	154	15 †	19 †	62	--	—
Saskatoon	176	17 †	20	59	--	—
Calgary	744	22	22	50	6	--
Edmonton	738	18	18	52	11	--
Vancouver	1,656	34	21	43	1 †	--
Victoria	264	23	21	54	--	--

<sup>1</sup> Includes all respondents whether or not they use public transportation after dark.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 13.



**Table 1C:**  
**Population aged 15 and over by feelings of safety when at home alone after dark,**  
**by CMA, 1999**

CMA	Total population	Feel somewhat or very worried	Feel not at all worried	Never at home alone	Don't know/ Not stated
	(000s)		%		
Canada	24,260	20	79	1	--
St. John's	142	16	83	--	--
Halifax	286	22	78	--	--
Saint John	102	16 †	83	--	--
Québec	584	20	80	--	--
Montréal	2,721	20	78	2 †	--
Ottawa-Hull	841	18	81	--	--
Toronto	3,721	20	78	1 †	--
Hamilton	547	22	78	--	--
Winnipeg	533	24	76	--	--
Regina	154	20	79	--	--
Saskatoon	176	23	76	--	--
Calgary	744	19	79	--	--
Edmonton	738	23	76	--	--
Vancouver	1,656	28	71	1 †	--
Victoria	264	19	80	--	--

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 13.

**Table 2A:**  
**Population aged 15 and over by perception of level of crime in neighbourhood compared to other areas, by CMA, 1999**

CMA	Total population (000s)	Higher	Same	Lower	Don't know/ Not stated
		%			
Canada	24,260	8	28	60	5
St. John's	142	--	9	87	--
Halifax	286	9 †	31	58	--
Saint John	102	--	23	69	--
Québec	584	5 †	32	58	5 †
Montréal	2,721	9	36	48	6
Ottawa-Hull	841	6 †	26	60	8
Toronto	3,721	11	28	53	8
Hamilton	547	10 †	28	57	6 †
Winnipeg	533	10	33	50	7
Regina	154	11 †	34	51	--
Saskatoon	176	7 †	32	57	--
Calgary	744	6	32	57	4 †
Edmonton	738	9	27	60	4 †
Vancouver	1,656	16	33	47	5
Victoria	264	--	32	61	--

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 13.

**Table 2B:**  
**Population aged 15 and over by perceived change in level of crime in**  
**neighbourhood during past 5 years, by CMA, 1999**

CMA	Total population	Increased	Decreased	Same	Don't know/ Not stated
	(000s)		%		
Canada	24,260	29	6	54	10
St. John's	142	26	8 †	59	7 †
Halifax	286	36	6 †	48	10 †
Saint John	102	18 †	8 †	66	8 †
Québec	584	21	8 †	59	12
Montréal	2,721	25	8	56	11
Ottawa-Hull	841	27	8	53	13
Toronto	3,721	30	6	50	15
Hamilton	547	36	6 †	47	11 †
Winnipeg	533	38	4 †	48	10
Regina	154	38	--	48	10 †
Saskatoon	176	37	--	51	10 †
Calgary	744	31	7	47	16
Edmonton	738	30	4 †	54	12
Vancouver	1,656	38	5	46	11
Victoria	264	31	--	50	15 †

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 13.

**Table 3A:**  
**Population aged 15 and over by perception of job being done by local police in regard to enforcing laws, by CMA, 1999**

CMA	Total population	Good job	Average job	Poor job	Don't know/ Not stated
	(000s)		%		
Canada	24,260	60	29	5	5
St. John's	142	58	35	4 †	3 †
Halifax	286	55	35	7 †	3 †
Saint John	102	63	29	--	--
Québec	584	70	23	3 †	4 †
Montréal	2,721	65	24	5	6
Ottawa-Hull	841	59	30	4 †	7 †
Toronto	3,721	61	27	4	8
Hamilton	547	59	30	5 †	6 †
Winnipeg	533	51	36	5 †	7
Regina	154	40	48	10 †	--
Saskatoon	176	47	45	6 †	--
Calgary	744	63	28	4 †	5
Edmonton	738	54	34	8	4 †
Vancouver	1,656	51	34	8	7
Victoria	264	62	29	--	5 †

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 13.

**Table 3B:**  
**Population aged 15 and over by perception of job being done by local police in regard to responding to calls, by CMA, 1999**

CMA	Total population	Good job	Average job	Poor job	Don't know/ Not stated
	(000s)		%		
Canada	24,260	49	21	8	23
St. John's	142	50	27	5 †	18
Halifax	286	47	24	7 †	21
Saint John	102	60	17 †	--	17 †
Québec	584	59	19	--	20
Montréal	2,721	56	17	6	21
Ottawa-Hull	841	46	19	6 †	29
Toronto	3,721	44	17	6	32
Hamilton	547	44	21	9 †	26
Winnipeg	533	39	25	10	26
Regina	154	34	31	19 †	16 †
Saskatoon	176	45	25	9 †	22
Calgary	744	45	22	7	25
Edmonton	738	45	23	9	23
Vancouver	1,656	45	22	10	22
Victoria	264	53	22	--	21

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 13.

**Table 3C:**  
**Population aged 15 and over by perception of job being done by local police in regard to being approachable, by CMA, 1999**

CMA	Total population	Good job	Average job	Poor job	Don't know/ Not stated
	(000s)		%		
Canada	24,260	66	17	4	12
St. John's	142	75	16	--	6 †
Halifax	286	70	18	--	10 †
Saint John	102	73	14 †	--	9 †
Québec	584	66	15	4 †	16
Montréal	2,721	60	17	6	17
Ottawa-Hull	841	63	15	4 †	18
Toronto	3,721	61	18	4	17
Hamilton	547	65	16	7 †	12
Winnipeg	533	60	18	7	15
Regina	154	58	26	--	12 †
Saskatoon	176	64	20	--	12 †
Calgary	744	65	19	4 †	12
Edmonton	738	66	19	5	9
Vancouver	1,656	63	19	5	13
Victoria	264	69	15	7 †	9 †

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 13.

**Table 3D:**  
**Population aged 15 and over by perception of job being done by local police in regard to supplying prevention information to the public, by CMA, 1999**

CMA	Total population	Good job	Average job	Poor job	Don't know/ Not stated
	(000s)		%		
Canada	24,260	54	26	9	11
St. John's	142	63	23	8 †	5 †
Halifax	286	50	29	13	8 †
Saint John	102	59	25	--	9 †
Québec	584	62	24	5 †	9 †
Montréal	2,721	54	25	10	11
Ottawa-Hull	841	54	24	9	13
Toronto	3,721	47	26	12	15
Hamilton	547	47	29	12	13
Winnipeg	533	48	28	9	14
Regina	154	46	40	10 †	--
Saskatoon	176	52	29	10 †	9 †
Calgary	744	56	25	11	9
Edmonton	738	52	29	9	9
Vancouver	1,656	50	29	10	11
Victoria	264	59	23	9 †	8 †

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 13.

**Table 3E:**  
**Population aged 15 and over by perception of job being done by local police in regard to ensuring neighbourhood safety, by CMA, 1999**

CMA	Total population	Good job	Average job	Poor job	Don't know/ Not stated
	(000s)		%		
Canada	24,260	62	26	5	6
St. John's	142	69	24	3 †	4 †
Halifax	286	57	32	6 †	5 †
Saint John	102	68	22	--	--
Québec	584	73	20	--	5 †
Montréal	2,721	68	21	5	6
Ottawa-Hull	841	60	28	3 †	9
Toronto	3,721	58	28	5	10
Hamilton	547	56	30	6 †	9 †
Winnipeg	533	53	33	6 †	9
Regina	154	44	46	--	6 †
Saskatoon	176	53	38	5 †	--
Calgary	744	63	27	3 †	6
Edmonton	738	54	33	6	6
Vancouver	1,656	49	35	8	9
Victoria	264	59	30	6 †	6 †

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, Cycle 13.



## Methods

The target population for Cycle 13 of the GSS was all persons 15 years of age and over residing in Canada, excluding:

1. residents of the Yukon, Nunavut and Northwest Territories;
2. full-time residents of institutions.

In the survey, all respondents were contacted by telephone. Households without telephones were therefore excluded; however, persons living in such households represent less than 2% of the target population. Survey estimates have been adjusted (i.e. weighted) to account for persons without telephones.

Data for Cycle 13 of the GSS were collected monthly from February 1999 to December 1999 inclusively. The sample was evenly distributed over the 11 months to represent seasonal variation in the information. The sample was selected using the Elimination of Non-Working Banks technique of Random Digit Dialing (RDD).

From the 31,828 households in the GSS Cycle 13 sample, 25,876 usable responses were obtained, producing a response rate of 81.3%.

## Data Limitations

The figures which appear in this report are estimates based on data collected from a small fraction of the population and are subject to error. The error can be divided into two components: sampling and non-sampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between an estimate derived from the sample and the one that would have been obtained from a census that used the same procedures to collect data from every person in the population. The size of the sampling error can be estimated from the survey results and an indication of the magnitude of this error is given for the estimates in this report. If the estimated sampling error is greater than 33%, it is considered too unreliable to publish and the symbol '--' is printed in table cells where this occurs. Although not considered too unreliable to publish, estimates with an estimated error between 16.6% and 33.3% of the related estimate should be "qualified" and used with caution. These are identified with an asterisk.

All other types of errors, such as coverage, response, processing, and non-response, are non-sampling errors. Many of these errors are difficult to identify and quantify.

Coverage errors arise when there are differences between the target population and the surveyed population. Households without telephones represent a part of the target population that was excluded from the surveyed population. To the extent that this excluded population differs from the rest of the target population, the estimates will be biased. In general, since these exclusions are small, one would expect the biases introduced to be small.

To the extent that the non-responding households and persons differ from the rest of the sample, the estimates will be biased. The overall response rate in terms of questionnaires that were complete enough to be useful for analysis was 81.3%. Non-response could occur at several stages in this survey. There were two stages of information collection: at the household level and at the individual level. As such, some non-response occurred at the household level, some at the individual level. Non-response also occurs at the level of individual questions so the overall response rate for some questions will be below 81.3%. For most questions, the response rate was high, with non-response indicated in the data files.