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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français

This public opinion research report presents the results from focus groups and a representative survey conducted by Ipsos on behalf of Public Safety Canada.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre Recherche sur l'opinion publique: Campagne de sensibilisation à la préparation aux situations d'urgence - Rapport des résultats.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Colledge". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Mike Colledge
President
Ipsos Public Affairs

1. Executive Summary

This report presents findings from qualitative and quantitative research conducted on public attitudes to emergency preparedness.

1.1 Background

In January 2019, Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Ministers Responsible for Emergency Management approved The Emergency Management Strategy for Canada (EMS). The EMS established five priority areas for action in order to strengthen the resilience of Canadian society by 2030, including two areas to be supported by a national advertising campaign: improving understanding of disaster risks in all sectors of society, and increasing focus on whole-of-society disaster prevention and mitigation activities.

A key element in building a stronger, more resilient Canada is empowering citizens to educate themselves and to take action to mitigate risks to their property and personal safety. A national advertising campaign will seek to educate and inform a broad swath of Canadians about the risks they could potentially face in their region. The national campaign will feature the relaunch of the successful Get Prepared campaign (2006) and allow for a refresh of the brand and its existing assets, for a new cohort of parents and homeowners.

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives by methodology have been outlined in the table below.

Methodology	Objectives
Qualitative research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qualitatively evaluate three concepts developed for the forthcoming emergency preparedness campaign
Quantitative baseline survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a quantitative baseline of the state of public opinion on the issue of emergency preparedness including awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours when it comes to emergency preparedness

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Qualitative Research

Three created concepts were developed – namely, ‘Jumping into Action’; ‘Prepared not Scared’; and ‘Walking Disaster’. The concepts were tested in 10 online focus group discussions held between December 8th – 16th, 2020. As shown in the table below, the research elicited views of Canadians from across the country and in both official languages. Canadians aged 25 to 55 years old and parents of children under 17 were classified as low risk. The high-risk category included seniors; persons with a disability; indigenous communities; medically dependent persons; low-income Canadians; persons with lower levels of educational attainment; women-only households; newcomers; and cultural minorities. A copy of the recruitment screener has been appended.

Group number	Province	Level of risk	Language	Number of participants
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1	Ontario	Low	English	6
2	Ontario	High	English	8
3	Quebec	Low	French	8
4	Quebec	High	French	8
5	Atlantic Canada	Low	English	7
6	Atlantic Canada	High	English	8
7	Alberta	Low	English	7
8	Alberta	High	English	7
9	British Columbia	Low	English	6
10	British Columbia	High	English	7

The discussions were hosted virtually and each discussion lasted 90 minutes. During the discussions, participants were shown the concepts in video animatic format and asked to provide their reactions by typing in their answers, taking part in a verbal discussion and ‘voting’ in closed-ended questions. A copy of the discussion guide has been appended. An incentive of \$100 was offered for participation in the study.

The findings presented in section 2 of this report are qualitative in nature meaning that their value is in understanding the factors and interplay between factors behind attitudes and reactions to the concepts. Counts from the closed-ended questions used in the discussions to gauge participants’ reactions to the concepts have been included. These counts should be interpreted as a summary of the weight of opinion in the discussions only and should not be extrapolated as representative of the wider population.

1.3.2 Quantitative Baseline Survey

A representative sample of n=2,022 Canadians age 25-55 was surveyed online between December 16-30, 2020. The natural fallout by age and parents/non-parents allowed for a relatively large sample of parents with children age 5-18, which is intended to be a focus of the future preparedness campaign, to be included in the sample (n=580). Over-sampling was also used to ensure a minimum of n=100 of each of the following groups were included in the sample: Indigenous Canadians (n=164), immigrants <10 years in Canada (n=124), and immigrants 10+ in Canada (n=234).

The survey was offered in both official languages and averaged 18 minutes in length.

More details on the methodology are provided in Appendix B.1.

Notes to reader:

- The term Canadian is used throughout the report to denote survey respondents.
- All results in the report are expressed as a percentage, unless otherwise noted.
- Throughout the report, percentages may not always add to 100% due to rounding or if respondents were permitted to give more than one response i.e. select all that apply.
- Due to rounding, some percentages in the report may not match those presented in the tabulated data (available under separate cover).
- Unless otherwise stated, base sizes shown in the tables embedded in the report are weighted.

1.4 Key Findings

This report presents the findings from the qualitative research and the quantitative baseline survey only.

1.4.1 Qualitative research

- ‘Jumping into Action’ performed the strongest of the three concepts tested due to the concept’s straight-to-the-point nature first and foremost, followed by its instructional and aspirational qualities.
- There was broad consensus that ‘Prepared not Scared’ has potential in “getting stuck in one’s head” but it had a more polarising effect. On the one hand, participants could see how the “catchy” and “cheesy” “jingle” could become an earworm. However, the concept came across as “childish” and this was very off putting for a few participants.
- ‘A Walking Disaster’ emerged as the weakest concept across the board with several participants finding it confusing upon initial viewing. The analogy drawn between a natural disaster and an unwelcome guest did not come through clearly and often enough.

1.4.2 Quantitative Baseline Survey

- Most Canadians (74%) believe they live in a low- (53%) or moderate-risk (22%) area. Two in ten (21%) don’t know about the specific level of risk (12%) or have never thought about it (9%). Only 4% of Canadians believe they live in an area that is at high risk.
- Most Canadians (76%) are unconcerned (29%) or unaware (47%) of specific risks of weather-related emergencies and natural disasters. Only one in ten Canadians (11%) have taken steps to reduce the risk of their home being affected by a weather-related emergency or natural disaster such as flood, wildfire, tornado, hurricane, ice storm, blizzard, extreme cold. This includes only 2% that have also taken steps to help their community.
- Past experience with natural disaster, or living in a moderate to high-risk area, has little bearing on future preparedness. The survey found that past natural disaster experience does not strongly influence future preparedness. While Canadians who have experienced a natural disaster in the past are more likely to be aware of the risks to their community, and are more likely to have taken steps to protect themselves than the average Canadians, still only 20% say they have taken steps to protect themselves from future risk. This is the case even though 41% of them say the previous event require repairs to their home and 84% did not move out of the area.
- Nearly all Canadians (98%) have *at least some* emergency safety items in the home, but very few (27%) report taking *most or all* of the necessary specific measures mentioned in the survey to protect their home.¹ One-quarter (23%) report taking *some* necessary measures and 50% report taking *none of the necessary measures*.
- Canadians are more likely to expect government to provide rescue services than financial support. Half of Canadians age 25-55 (51%) definitely think the government has an obligation to provide rescue services and an additional 41% say it depends on the type of event or emergency or the extent of the impact on their life. Only 3% do not feel the government is obliged to provide rescue services in the event of an emergency. In contrast, only 27% of Canadians age 25-55 definitely think the government has an obligation to provide financial aid to cover your immediate needs in an emergency. However, depending upon the type of event or emergency or the extent of the impact on their life, a majority may expect financial support for government.

¹ -- such as, installing a sump pump in the basement to prevent flooding, renovating the exterior of the structure of my residence with fireproof materials, installing shutters or other window coverings to mitigate damage from storms, tornadoes and hurricanes installing a one-way backflow valve in the basement drain, improving the grading around the foundation of the house to facilitate water runoff, removing dead wood from the property, extending downspouts to divert rain water from the foundation, etc.).

- Half of Canadians (55%) say the experience of COVID-19 has affected the way they prepare for emergencies, including storing additional food and essential items (34%) and putting money, or more money, aside for unexpected expenses (29%). The data suggests that those who say COVID-19 has affected their preparedness tend to be those who are already preparing (e.g. have an emergency plan 68% vs. 49%).
- There is little consensus for how long it is possible to survive at home during an emergency. A significant minority think they could last at least a week (39%) including 11% who think they can last 2 weeks and 15% who think they can last more than 2 weeks.
- When it comes to credible sources of information and resources on emergency preparedness, Canadians find all of the organizations measured in the survey credible. Between them, more Canadians find local first responders *very credible* compared with the others, but credibility is high for each of the organizations measured as well: federal, provincial and municipal levels of government.