



FACTUM

Over a Quarter (27%) of Canadians Do Not Feel Safe Taking Public Transit Alone, Rising to 44% of Toronto Residents

Three in Ten (31%) Canadians Say They Are Now More Alert and Aware of Their Surroundings on Transit, Including 49% of Toronto Residents

Toronto, ON, March 6, 2023 – A new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of Global News finds that, in the wake of a series of violent attacks on public transit in Toronto, some Canadians are changing the way they approach public transit, and many feel attacks might be part of a concerning, wider trend.

Concerns Over Safety on Transit Systems Have Triggered Changes in Behaviour for Some Canadians

Although the majority of Canadians report feeling safe when using public transit, more Canadians say they feel safe transiting with friends or family (73%, 40% somewhat/33% very) than when they do so alone (62%, 40% somewhat/22% very). However, this means one-quarter say they feel *unsafe* taking public transit alone (27%, 19% somewhat/8% very).

The plurality (45%) of Canadians have not changed their behavior in light of recent acts of violence on transit systems. However, three in ten (31%) remain wary, saying they are more alert and aware of their surroundings. Two in ten (19%) say they have avoided travelling at night, while a similar proportion (17%) signaled having taken extra safety precautions (e.g., not turning their back to anyone or carrying pepper spray). Around a seventh (14%) say they now avoid using transit entirely, while 13% have started transiting less, and a similar proportion (12%) avoid doing so alone.

- Canadians aged between 18-34 are more likely to have changed their habits as they avoid traveling alone more often (18% vs. 11%: 35-54; 9%: 55+), avoid traveling at night (32% vs. 13%: 35-54; 14%: 55+), and are more likely to have taken safety precautions (29% vs. 17%: 35-54; 9%: 55+)
- Regionally, Ontarians are more likely to have taken extra safety precautions while transiting (24%: +7pts compared to national average) and are more likely to avoid public transit at night (24%: +5 pts) or traveling alone (18%: +6 pts). Inversely residents of Quebec (57%: +12 pts compared to national average) and the Atlantic provinces (58% +13 pts) are more likely to have not altered their behavior.

Over Half (55%) Say Recent Acts of Violence Are Part of Wider Trend in Canada

Thinking about the string of violent attacks and their implications for public safety, a majority (55%, 37% somewhat/17% strongly) disagree that recent acts of violence are isolated incidents and not part of a wider trend in Canada, while 45% agree (34% somewhat/12% strongly), not including “don’t know” responses. Men (52% vs. 38% women) and those in Quebec (54% vs. 46% ON, 45% ATL, 39% BC, 37% SK/MB, 36% AB) are significantly more likely to feel that recent acts of violence are isolated incidents.



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GTA Residents Feel Less Safe, Taking More Actions to Ensure Safety

Given recent news about transit safety on the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) in particular, it's interesting to note that GTA residents – especially those living in Toronto proper (the 416) – feel less safe riding transit and are taking greater action to ensure their safety.

- Residents of the 416 (44%) and the 905 (35%) are more likely than the average Canadian (27%) to say they feel unsafe taking public transit alone.
- Residents of the 416 (25%) and 905 (18%) are more likely than the average Canadian (15%) to say they feel unsafe taking public transit even with friends or family present.
- Residents of GTA are more likely than the average Canadian to be taking various actions to protect their safety as noted in the chart below. In fact, only 21% of Toronto residents haven't changed their behaviour at all when it comes to transit, underscoring the impact of recent news on their behaviour.

Behaviour Changes as a Result of Recent Acts of Violence on Transit

Action Taken	Canadian Average	GTA 905	GTA 416
Being more alert and aware of my surroundings while on transit	31%	38%	49%
Avoiding traveling at night on transit	19%	31%	28%
Taking safety precautions (i.e. not having back to anyone; carrying pepper spray, etc.)	17%	25%	34%
Avoiding transit use entirely	14%	22%	17%
Using transit less	13%	17%	26%
Avoiding traveling alone on transit	12%	24%	19%
Other actions	3%	3%	2%
None of the above	45%	34%	21%



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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between February 15 and 17, 2023, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,350 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed (including a sample of n = 500 GTA residents). Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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