

# What Ordinary Canadians Are Doing To Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions At Home

*Just as Likely to be Influenced by an Employee at a Home-Improvement Store (16%) as Prime Minister Harper (15%) on  
Environmental Issues*

Public Release Date: Monday, June 18, 6:00 a.m.



**Ipsos Reid**

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# What Ordinary Canadians Are Doing To Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions At Home

*Just as Likely to be Influenced by an Employee at a Home-Improvement Store (16%) as Prime Minister Harper (15%) on  
Environmental Issues*

**Toronto, ON** – A new poll conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of Icynene finds that most Canadians (79%) claim to have taken ‘some’ (63%) or ‘a lot’ (16%) of action in their own homes to reduce greenhouse gasses. For example, nearly four in ten (38%) homeowners say they have added insulation in the past two years to help reduce energy consumption, and one in ten (13%) say they intend to add it this upcoming summer.

And where are Canadians getting their advice? According to the findings, Canadians are just as likely to be influenced by an employee working at a home-improvement store (16%) as by Prime Minister Stephen Harper (15%) when it comes to environmental issues and climate change.

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Icynene from April 19 to April 23, 2007. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1236 adult homeowners was interviewed online. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 2.7$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure that the sample’s regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.*

## *Eight in Ten (79%) Have Taken Action in Own Home...*

Canadians are putting their words into action, with eight in ten (79%) homeowners saying that they have done either 'some' (63%) or 'a lot' (16%) to personally help reduce greenhouse gases by increasing energy efficiency in their own homes. Conversely, two in ten (20%) say that they have 'done little' (18%) or 'nothing at all' (3%) to increase energy efficiency in their own homes.

- Homeowners in central Canada have done the most to increase energy efficiency in their homes. Two in ten (19%) Residents of Quebec and Ontario claim to have 'done a lot' to increase efficiencies, while two thirds (64% and 63%, respectively) say that they have done 'some' to help out the environment by taking steps to increase energy efficiency.
- Seven in ten Albertans (71%) say that they have done 'some' (60%) or 'a lot' (12%) to increase efficiencies, which is eight points behind the national average (79%) and twelve points behind Quebec (83%), the Canadian leaders.
- It appears that household income is not a driving factor in energy conservation, with equal proportions of high-income households and low-income households (78%) doing 'some' (62% and 63% respectively) or 'a lot' (16% and 15% respectively) to help reduce greenhouse gases by increasing energy efficiency in their own homes.
- Counter-intuitively, the largest proportion of Canadian homeowners who claim to have 'done little' (29%) or 'nothing at all' (3%) is young adults, where almost one third (32%) of those homeowners aged 18 to 35 have indicated that they are not doing a lot

to help reduce greenhouse gasses in their homes, despite that youth are generally considered to be the most eco-friendly of all age cohorts.

## *Who Are Canadian Homeowners Listening to for Their Advice? Not Prime Minister Harper...*

Canadians appear to have little faith in the guidance of our elected politicians on environmental issues. Almost half (49%) of Canadian homeowners are most likely to be influenced by a building organization such as the Canada Green Building Council, followed closely (47%) by Dr. David Suzuki, the face of environmentalism in Canada. Canadian homeowners are slightly more likely to be influenced by what an employee working at a building improvement store has to say about the environment and climate change than by Prime Minister Stephen Harper (16% to 15%, respectively). It is two and a half times more likely for a Canadian homeowner to indicate that he or she is influenced by TV home-improvement personalities than by the Prime Minister (37% to 15%, respectively).

- Interestingly, homeowners in Alberta are more likely than those in the rest of Canada to take their cues from Stephen Harper, with two in ten (20%) claiming to do so.
- One quarter of Canadians (26%) are likely to be influenced by former American Vice President Al Gore, which is 11 points ahead of Prime Minister Harper. This is notable, since many Canadians have a natural affinity for distancing themselves from American policies and politicians.

## *Homeowners Don't Think that They're a Problem...*

Whatever the means by which Canadians get their advice, very few homeowners (3%) believe that homes and offices contribute most to the recent increases in greenhouse gasses. Despite the recent push to save energy in homes and offices, only a small portion of Canadians feel that they are the biggest contributor to greenhouse gasses. Primarily blaming industry, half of Canadian homeowners (49%) say that emissions from factories in industrial manufacturing 'contribute most to apparent increases in greenhouse gasses'. Next in line for the blame game are emissions produced from cars and automobiles (37%), followed by deforestation (7%), emissions from homes and offices (3%), and emissions caused by farming practices and livestock (3%).

However, Canadians might not be all that accurate in their assessment of the leading causes of greenhouse gas emissions. Admittedly, one third (31%) of Canadians feel that 'they do not know much' about environmental issues and the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on the environment, despite the increased coverage of this topic in the media over the past while. In this vein, only two in ten Canadian homeowners (18%) believe that installing insulation is most important in helping to conserve energy at home.

- Young adults, aged 18-34, are the most likely age group to say that homes and offices contribute most to greenhouse gas emissions (6%), compared to almost no (1%) older Canadians who say the same.
- Residents from Atlantic Canada are the most likely to blame industry, with six in ten (60%) saying that factories contribute most to greenhouse gas emissions.

- It would appear that residents from Quebec and Ontario, the most heavily populated provinces in Canada, are more likely than any other region to blame the emissions coming from cars and trucks (42% and 39% respectively).
- Older Canadians are the most likely age group to say that installing insulation is the most important (22%), with middle aged adults (17%) and young adults (12%) following steadily behind.

### ***Canadians Installing Insulation to Help with Energy Conservation...***

The most common methods among Canadians of reducing energy in the home are turning down the heat in the winter (83%), sealing air leaks (61%), and turning down the air conditioner in the summer (46). Despite the recent push towards the use of compact fluorescent light bulbs in homes, only 7% of Canadians believe this tactic is the most important in helping to conserve energy at home. In addition to these commonly-used methods, nearly four in ten (38%) Canadian homeowners have installed insulation over the past two years in order to be more energy efficient. Among those who have not already purchased insulation to increase energy efficiency in their own homes, one in ten (13%) plan to add insulation in the next few months in order to better protect their homes for the coming summer.

- Nearly half (47%) of homeowners in Atlantic Canada have purchased insulation in the past two years. Further, two in ten (19%) homeowners in Atlantic Canada, who have not already purchased insulation, plan on installing insulation in order to better prepare for the summer.
- Interestingly, two in ten (20%) homeowners who have a combined income of less than \$30,000 a year, and have not yet purchased insulation, plan to install insulation in

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order to help reduce energy consumption during the coming summer months. It appears that energy conservation through the purchasing of insulation transcends economic status.

## *Canadians More Knowledgeable, Have Taken More Action than American Counterparts*

A comparison with an identical survey conducted by Ipsos Reid in the United States reveals that while almost one third (33%) of Canadians agree that they 'do not know much about environmental issues and the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on the environment', almost half (46%) of Americans agree with that sentiment—a 13 point gap. To a similar spread, eight in ten (79%) Canadians claim to have taken action to 'personally help reduce greenhouse gases' in the home, while only two thirds (64%) of Americans claim to have done the same, representing a 15 point gap. Some other interesting comparisons are:

- Americans are most likely (37%) to be influenced by a non-profit organization, such as the American Lung Association, on issues of the environment. This differs from Canadians, where almost half (47%) are likely to be influenced by Dr. David Suzuki.
- Four in ten (38%) Canadians have installed insulation in the past two years, while only one third (32%) of Americans have done the same.
- A comparable proportion of Americans (14%) and Canadians (13%) intend to install insulation to help reduce energy consumption during the coming summer months.





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