

Metro Vancouver Residents Say They Are Not Adequately Prepared for a Significant Earthquake

Only One-in-Four (26%) Say Their Household is Adequately Prepared

Only One-in-Seven (14%) Say Their Local Municipality is Adequately Prepared



Ipsos Reid

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Vancouver, BC – A new Ipsos Reid poll, taken in the week following Japan’s devastating earthquake, shows that few Metro Vancouver residents are confident about our own level of earthquake preparedness. Only one-quarter (26%) of residents believe their own household is adequately prepared for a significant earthquake and aftershocks. Even fewer residents (14%) believe their local municipality is adequately prepared to respond to a significant earthquake and aftershocks.

Household and Municipal Earthquake Preparedness

<i>Household Question: Overall, do you believe your household is adequately prepared for a significant earthquake and aftershocks?</i>	Household (n=900) %	Municipality (n=900) %
<i>Municipality Question: How about your local municipality – do you believe it is adequately prepared to respond to a significant earthquake and aftershocks?</i>		
Yes	26	14
No	66	59
Don’t know	8	27

Fewer than four-in-ten (36%) Metro Vancouver residents think that governments have done a good job at ensuring that Metro Vancouver infrastructure such as public buildings, schools, hospitals, roads and bridges are prepared for a significant earthquake and aftershocks. A slight majority (54%) think governments have done a poor job in this regard.

Government Performance at Preparing Infrastructure

<i>In your view, how have governments performed at ensuring that Metro Vancouver infrastructure such as public buildings, schools, hospitals, roads and bridges are prepared for a significant earthquake and aftershocks?</i>	Total (n=900) %
Very good job	2
Somewhat good job	34
Somewhat poor job	34
Very poor job	20
Don’t know	10

<i>Total Good Job</i>	36
<i>Total Poor Job</i>	54

There appears to be at least some public appetite for increased government spending on infrastructure. Seven-in-ten (71%) residents say they would support governments making a substantial spending increase to prepare local infrastructure for a significant earthquake and aftershocks, even if that means cutting funding from other programs or services, or increasing taxes. Support for this idea will likely depend on the details, as only 14% of residents are strongly in support, while a majority (57%) are only somewhat supportive. One-in-four (25%) residents say they oppose a substantial spending increase to prepare infrastructure.

Support for Significant Government Spending Increase

<i>Would you support or oppose governments making a substantial spending increase to prepare local infrastructure for a significant earthquake and aftershocks, even if that means cutting funding from other programs or services, or increasing taxes?</i>	Total (n=900) %
Support strongly	14
Support somewhat	57
Oppose somewhat	19
Oppose strongly	6
Don't know	4
<i>Total Support</i>	71
<i>Total Oppose</i>	25

Ipsos Reid asked survey respondents to indicate whether or not their household has taken some preparedness actions recommended by the Provincial Emergency Program. The results show that most Metro Vancouver households have a long way to go in terms of their earthquake preparedness. Of note, only one-third (34%) have an exit plan, only half (49%) have a three-day supply of water, and only about six-in-ten (59%) have a comprehensive first aid kit.

Preparedness Actions Taken By Households

<i>Listed below are some more of the actions recommended by the Provincial Emergency Program. Which of these actions have you taken in your household?</i>	Total (n=900) Yes %
Have an extra set of house and car keys handy	66
Stock sleeping bags and blankets for every family member	61
Stock a comprehensive first aid kit	59
Stock a three-day supply of non-perishable food for every family member	58
Identify and know how to use shutoff valves for electricity, water and gas	58
Stock a change of clothing for every member of your family	55
Stock a three-day supply of food and water for pets ***	54
Stock a portable battery operated (or wind-up) radio with spare batteries	53
Stock a supply of prescription medication ***	51
Stock a three-day supply of water for every family member	49
Identify the safest place in your household and in each room	42
Place all emergency supplies in a location that you can get at easily	42
Arrange an out-of-area phone contact person for family members	36
Arrange an exit plan and a location to meet up with family	34
Secure furniture such as bookshelves to the wall	31
Keep copies of important personal papers in a fireproof/waterproof container	27
Keep sturdy shoes beside all household members' beds	20
Assign specific safety tasks to every family member ***	16
Know your community's emergency and evacuation plans	15
*** Excludes those who say question not applicable to their household	

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid online poll conducted on behalf of Global BC. The poll was fielded March 17-21, 2011 with a representative sample of 900 adult British Columbia residents. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of ± 3.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error will be larger for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual British Columbia population according to 2006 Census data. The polling was conducted using Ipsos Reid's "Voice of the West Interactive Forum" – an online panel of more than 6,500 British Columbians who have been recruited to match the overall characteristics of the adult residents of the province.

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