

A Majority (54%) of Canadians Would Use Social Media Channels, Such as Facebook or Twitter to Let Their Friends and Family Know That They are Safe in the Event of an Emergency
One-Third (35%) of Canadians Think That Emergency Services Such as Fire or Police Would Respond to a Request for Help Over Social Media

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Ipsos Reid

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**A Majority (54%) of Canadians Would Use Social Media Channels,
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That They are Safe in the Event of an Emergency**

*One-Third (35%) of Canadians Think That Emergency Services Such as
Fire or Police Would Respond to a Request for Help Over Social Media*

Toronto, ON – A majority (54%) of Canadians ‘would’ (29% definitely/24% probably) use social media channels, such as Facebook or Twitter to let their friends and family know that they are safe in the event of an emergency, while one-third (31%) ‘would not’ (16% definitely/15% probably) according to a new poll conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of the Canadian Red Cross. One in ten (14%) say that they ‘might or might not’ use social media channels to inform friends and family of their safety in an area-wide emergency.

In terms of posting information, fewer than one in ten (8%) Canadians say that they have personally experienced a disaster and then posted information or photos about that event to a social media site; more than nine in ten (93%) have not posted such information. Of those who have, an overwhelming majority chose Facebook (87%) as the network on which to post.



The following table includes the full list of social media sites used to post information or pictures of personally-experienced disasters:

| <u>Social Media Channel</u> | <u>%</u> |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Facebook | 87% |
| YouTube | 11% |
| Blog | 8% |
| Google+ | 6% |
| Twitter | 5% |
| Other | 11% |

Indeed, the development of online communities, especially through the frequent use of social media and networking tools, has provided Canadians with new avenues to receive important information electronically. Two-thirds (64%) of Canadians say that they participate in online communities or social media networks, such as Facebook or Twitter, although four in ten (36%) do not participate in such groups.

Most people who participate in these networks do so daily. Six in ten (62%) participate in their online community/social network 'every day or nearly every day'. The list below



outlines fully how frequently Canadians participate in their online communities and social networks:

- Every day or nearly every day – 62%
- A few times a week – 21%
- Once a week – 7%
- A few times a month – 6%
- One a month or less often – 3%

Electronic Emergency Updates

Although TV (39%) and radio (26%) tend to be the preferred ways of receiving news about an emergency, one-third (31%) prefer to get their news updates electronically (such as by e-mail, web site post, text alert, online news, etc.).

When it comes to signing up for electronic updates, Canadians are more likely to sign up for electronic alerts in times of emergency, compared to general preparation updates. Half (49%) ‘would’ (21% definitely/28% probably) sign up for emails, text alerts, or smart phone applications to receive information about disaster preparedness when there are official warnings in their community. One-third (31%), however, ‘would not’ (13% definitely/18% probably) sign up for such alerts, while two in ten (19%) are indifferent.

Six in ten (60%) ‘would’ (28% definitely/32% probably) sign up for information via electronic alerts on the location of medical services. The table below outlines fully how likely

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Canadians would be to sign up for information via electronic alerts based on specific situations:

| <u>Alert Type</u> | <u>Information</u> | <u>Would</u> | <u>Wouldn't</u> | <u>Might/Might Not</u> |
|-------------------|--|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Emergency | Location of medical services | 60% | 25% | 15% |
| Emergency | How to keep yourself safe during and after an emergency | 58% | 25% | 17% |
| Emergency | Shelter Locations | 55% | 27% | 18% |
| Emergency | Preparedness information such as how to know the risks in your area, make a plan, and build a preparedness kit | 51% | 28% | 21% |
| Emergency | Location of Red Cross reception centres | 51% | 28% | 20% |
| Official Warning | Information about disaster preparedness when there are official warnings of disaster | 49% | 31% | 19% |



Of all the ways to receive this kind of information electronically, emails (39%) are the most preferred method for Canadians. One-quarter (25%) say that they prefer text (SMS), while one in ten (13%) prefer smart phone applications. However, two in ten (20%) say that they don't prefer any of the above options, while 3% don't know.

Disaster/Emergency Responders and Social Media Websites

While many indicate that disaster and emergency responders already 'currently' monitor social media websites, more indicate that responders 'should' monitor social media for any signs of emergency. Not only do many Canadians think that these responders should monitor social media, many also believe that they should be prepared to respond to calls for help that are posted in social media networks.



The table below outlines the extent to which Canadians agree or disagree that different responders *currently* monitor, *should* monitor, and *should be prepared to respond* to social media websites for emergencies:

| <u>Responders and Social Media</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> |
|---|--------------|-----------------|
| Disaster response agencies like the Canadian Red Cross <u>should be prepared to respond</u> to calls for help that are posted in social media networks | 68% | 30% |
| Disaster response agencies like the Canadian Red Cross <u>should</u> monitor social media websites | 67% | 25% |
| Emergency responders like firefighters and the police <u>should</u> monitor social media websites | 66% | 27% |
| Emergency responders like fire fighters and the police <u>should be prepared to respond</u> to calls for help that are posted in social media networks | 63% | 24% |
| Emergency responders like firefighters and the police <u>currently</u> monitor social media websites | 55% | 21% |
| Disaster response agencies like the Canadian Red Cross <u>currently</u> monitor social media websites | 54% | 18% |

About one-third (35%) of Canadians think that emergency services such as fire or police would respond to a request for help over social media, while two-thirds (65%) think that



these services would not respond. Of those who think that these services would respond, most (74%) believe that the response time would be an hour or less.

Personal Preparedness for Times of Emergency/Disaster

While many Canadians say that they have personally experienced emergencies, two-thirds (66%) of Canadians have not taken steps to prepare themselves in the event of a disaster. One-third (34%) of Canadians, however, say that they have taken steps to prepare for such situations.

The types of emergencies that Canadians say they have most frequently experienced are a loss of electricity for more than 72 hours (41%), and hurricanes, tornadoes, or severe storms (38%). Other emergencies that Canadians have personally experienced include: flooding (16%), fire (12%), and an evacuation order as a result of a disaster (9%).

Of those who have not taken any steps towards disaster preparation, the main reason they have not done so is because of the perception that these types of disasters rarely occur or are unlikely to occur in their area (27%). Two in ten Canadians (21%) say that they have 'never thought about it' when it comes to preparing for emergencies or disasters.



The following table shows the full list of reasons provided by Canadians for not taking steps to prepare themselves in the event of a disaster:

| <u>Reason for Not Taking Emergency Preparation Steps</u> | <u>%</u> |
|--|-----------------|
| This type of disaster rarely occurs/unlikely to occur in my area | 27% |
| Never thought about it | 21% |
| No time/never got around to it | 12% |
| Unnecessary/no need | 11% |
| Already prepared/know what to do | 8% |
| Not concerned/don't care | 7% |
| Should consider/begin to be prepared | 3% |
| Feel safe/secure | 3% |
| Preparations are (partially) underway/still being implemented | 2% |
| No plan in place/don't know what to do | 2% |
| No reason | 3% |
| Other mention | 9% |
| Don't know | 8% |



While many are unprepared, some Canadians take precautions by having provisions available in the event of an emergency. Six in ten (62%) Canadians say that they have 'food and water to last them/ them and their family 72 hours in the event of an emergency in which there was no electricity at their home'. Three in ten (30%) say that they have 'a disaster preparedness kit in their home', while one-quarter (26%) of Canadians have a 'disaster kit in their car. That said, three in ten (28%) Canadians indicate having none of these.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between June 19 and July 4, 2012, on behalf of the Canadian Red Cross. For this survey, a sample of 500 Canadians from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was surveyed online and 500 Canadians were interviewed by telephone. The data was then merged and weighting employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data, and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of n=1,000 and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. 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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