

Canadians' experiences with emergencies and disasters, 2014

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One in three Canadians living in the provinces has experienced a major emergency or disaster in their community during their lifetime that severely disrupted their daily lives.

According to results from the 2014 Survey of Emergency Preparedness and Resilience (SEPR) in Canada, blizzards, winter storms or ice storms were the most commonly reported emergency or disaster, experienced by 46% of the more than 9 million Canadians who endured a major emergency or disaster. This was followed by extended power outages that lasted 24 hours or longer (36%) and floods (12%).

According to the SEPR, the most common disruptions to daily lives experienced by victims of major emergencies or disasters were an inability to use electrical appliances (63%), missing work or school (61%) or missing an appointment or planned activity (52%).

The disruptions most commonly experienced by Canadians who encountered blizzards, winter storms or ice storms were missing work or school (74%), followed by the inability to use electrical appliances (63%). Missing work or school (64%) and missing appointments or planned activities (56%) were the most common disruptions experienced by flood victims. Those who had experienced extended power outages were most commonly unable to use electrical appliances (88%) and unable to heat or cool their homes (70%).

One in four disaster victims evacuated their home

The most severe disruptions experienced by victims of emergencies included home evacuation (29%) and an inability to use roads or transportation within the community (28%).

For those who experienced blizzards, winter storms or ice storms, more than one-third reported needing to evacuate their homes (35%) and a similar proportion were unable to use roads or transportation within their communities (38%).

The inability to use roads or transportation within one's community was most common among flood victims, experienced by nearly half (48%), while the need to leave or evacuate the home was experienced by about a quarter (26%) of flood victims.

One in three victims of major emergencies or disasters experienced property loss or financial impacts

Some major emergencies or disasters came with consequences beyond disruption of day-to-day life. These included loss of property or financial impacts (32%), long-term emotional or psychological after-effects (8%), and major physical injuries or serious health consequences (3%).

Loss of property or financial impacts were often experienced by victims of Canada's most common emergencies: blizzards, winter storms or ice storms (34%), extended power outages (30%), and floods (40%).

Although most victims of major emergencies (85%) were able to recover from immediate short-term impacts within two weeks of the event, about 14% needed more than two weeks to return to their regular routines.

Most victims who suffered property loss or financial impacts (91%) recovered within a year. Less than half of victims who suffered emotional or psychological impacts recovered within a year of the event (45%). For about a quarter of victims, the recovery time exceeded the one-year time frame (23%).



Note to readers

The Survey of Emergency Preparedness and Resilience (SEPR) in Canada, carried out for the first time in 2014, was developed in partnership with Defence Research and Development Canada's Centre for Security Science and Public Safety Canada. The purpose of the SEPR is to improve understanding of community resilience across Canada's provinces by collecting data on factors that affect how well individuals and communities are able to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from major emergencies or disasters. The main objective of the survey is to provide estimates of emergency preparedness and resilience at the community, provincial and national levels.

The target population for the SEPR was individuals 15 years of age or older residing in Canada's provinces, excluding full-time residents of institutions. Because data for the SEPR were collected only from people living in the provinces, information for the territories is not available. The SEPR also does not cover people who do not have a working telephone. Together, people who do not have a working telephone and those residing full-time in institutions represent approximately 2% of the provincial population.

In addition, the SEPR did not include some populations that may be considered vulnerable or in greater need of support in emergency or disaster situations. Such populations include the homeless and residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

This SEPR report focuses on Canadians' personal experiences with emergencies or disasters that happened in Canada during an individual's lifetime in a location where the person was living at the time. The event also had to be significant enough to severely interrupt the individual's regular daily activities.

Additional results from the SEPR are available in the report, "[Emergency preparedness in Canada, 2014](#)," and the infographic, "[Emergency Preparedness and Planning in Canada](#)," which were released by Statistics Canada in October 2015.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5208](#).

The *Juristat* article, "[Canadians' experiences with emergencies and disasters, 2014](#)" ([85-002-X](#)), is now available. From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, under *Publications*, choose *All subjects*, then *Crime and justice*, and *Juristat*.

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