

Working from home in Canada

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The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a substantial increase in work from home in Canada. This increase in telework has potentially important implications for numerous aspects of the economy and society such as the housing market, office rental space and economic activity in downtown areas, productivity, wage growth, worker turnover, family-work balance, childcare, commuting, public transit, and greenhouse gas emissions. A new release, "[Research to Insights: Working from home in Canada](#)," explores some of these implications.

After rising to about 40% in April 2020, the percentage of Canadians working most of their hours from home in a given week fell to about 20% in November 2023

In April 2020, Statistics Canada introduced questions in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) aimed at estimating the number and percentage of Canadians working most of their hours from home as well as their usual work locations. LFS data show that after rising to about 40% in April 2020 and then declining to almost 30% in January 2022, the percentage of Canadians working most of their hours from home during the LFS reference week decreased to about 20% in November 2023. In contrast, about 7% of Canadians worked most of the time from home in May 2016.

Diverse employee preferences may be a challenge for employers

Of all employees usually working from home, almost one in four would ideally work a greater proportion of their hours from home than they did in the reference week of August 2023. In contrast, about one in eight would ideally work a smaller proportion of their hours from home than they did during that week. One challenge for employers seeking to implement telework is to accommodate this diversity of preferences.

The increase in work from home has reduced public transit use, putting financial pressures on urban transit systems

The increase in work from home triggered by the pandemic directly decreased public transit use by reducing the number of passenger trips taken by former public transit commuters who started working partly or exclusively from home. As rates of telework increased from roughly 7% in January 2020 to about 40% in April 2020 and stay-at-home orders were implemented, the number of passenger-trips in urban transit systems fell from 163.9 million to 25.7 million during that period.

The increase in work from home may also have reduced public transit use indirectly by reducing commute times and traffic, thereby leading some non-teleworkers to move away from public transit and start commuting by car.

The increase in work from home likely reduced greenhouse gas emissions due to transportation

A recent Statistics Canada study estimates that if all Canadians whose job could be done from home in 2015 and who worked onsite that year had started working exclusively from home, greenhouse gas emissions due to transportation could have fallen by 9.5 megatons of carbon dioxide equivalent on an annual basis. This represents 12% of households' direct greenhouse gas emissions due to transportation in 2015.

Since not all Canadians currently work exclusively from home, the reduction in households' direct greenhouse gas emissions due to transportation triggered by the increase in work from home observed from May 2016 to May 2023 is, on an annual basis, likely lower than 12%.

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The product "[Research to Insights: Working from home in Canada](#)" is now available as part of *A Presentation Series from Statistics Canada About the Economy, Environment and Society (11-631-X)*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).