

The Pulse of Toronto Poll

Fall 2017

Public Safety and Toronto Police Issues



Public Release Date: Thursday, October 12, 2017, 6:00 am EDT

DART Insight and Communications is a Canadian based consultancy that provides clients in private, public, association and not-for-profit organizations with market and opinion research services (**DART Insight**) and communications strategy and execution, media training, event deployment and corporate services (**DART Communications**). **DART** is independent and is not tied to any political organization. **DART** is comprised of highly experienced, recognized and awarded senior practitioners in many related disciplines who have gathered together under one banner to serve clients in North America and beyond. The founders of **DART** are veteran pollster and commentator John Wright and communications specialist Victoria Ollers. To learn more about us visit www.dartincom.ca

Public releases of polling results, including detailed tables (weighted/unweighted), questions used and analysis, are provided freely at <http://www.dartincom.ca/polls/>

The Pulse of Toronto Poll

Fall 2017

Public Safety and Toronto Police Issues

This is the third in a series of four releases by NewsTalk 1010 Toronto on polling results conducted and analyzed by the polling and market research division of **DART Insight and Communications** ("**DART Insight**"). This release of findings addresses Torontonians opinions concerning *Public Safety and Toronto Police Issues*. The **DART Insight** poll was conducted September 16-19, 2017. A full methodology and links to further information including the detailed tables used herein appear at the end of this release.

A Brief Commentary on the Results

No matter what city or town across Canada or beyond, policing issues are often front and center with the population. There are many factors that contribute to this: the amount and type of crime committed within a particular jurisdiction, the resources that the local government puts in place to adequately ensure the safety of its citizens and the conduct of police leadership and those on the front lines.

Over the past few years Torontonians have either witnessed through social and regular media or experienced themselves many aspects concerning policing in their community. Some have been subtle, others have been sensationalized. Some have been localized in different parts of the city while others have played out in courts and inquests. And as a backdrop has been the transition from older administrative and policing techniques to new efficiencies and effectiveness strategies which have led to friction with the police union and others. It has also given rise to new voices in the community who believe that police conduct should be given greater scrutiny particularly when it involves visible and other minorities.

This survey attempts to capture some of the more urgent issues and measures of confidence that affect Torontonians today. It recognizes that police officers and those associated with the Toronto police service often have an extremely difficult job to do and most carried out in an exemplary fashion. But not all do. Perceptions are important for all sides in the debate.

Regardless of the facts that might exist or be used to make a point, public perception is the currency of the court of public opinion.

Over the last few months we've heard some suggest to the city of Toronto is far less safe than it's been in the past. In fact, some argue that new efficiencies within the police service are having an undesired impact and then despite the evidence of lower crime due to changing demographics and policing techniques, others say that violent crime has become a particularly systemic part of Toronto's communities.

In 2003 a NewsTalk 1010 poll asked a simple question of Torontonians: do you feel safe walking around your neighborhood after dark. After all, in a city is largest Toronto, this is probably the litmus test for community Ground Zero. And while it's ebbed and flowed from time to time, in 2003 a full majority of 78% of Torontonians said they felt safe doing so. That was 14 years ago. And while that sense of safe walking around their neighborhood after dark dropped to 64% in 2005 and 68% in 2009. And despite all the happenings across the city since the last sounding six years ago, Torontonians feel as safe today, literally in their own front yards, as they did 14 years ago (77%.)

That, is an important measure. It's a testimony to the civility of one of North America's largest centers, particularly as diverse as it is. But not everything is as swell in the city as it sometimes appears to be. In 2003 a NewsTalk 1010 poll found that 34% of Torontonians expressed fear as to how they might be treated by police if they were pulled over. Today, 14 years later, with a slightly different worded question, we find that some 61% of Torontonians indicate that they be scared if they were pulled over by police officer.

We've been very careful in constructing this survey - particularly when it comes to asking about the perceptions of police conduct. The results do not seek to tar all who serve in the blue uniform with the same brush so we've taken a different tact in asking some of these questions that might have been done in the past. And with that, we hold that there can be some valuable questions raised as to why people in Toronto feel the way they do and what we can do, collectively, to make things better.

John Wright
CEO Insight
DART Insight and Communications
jwright@dartincom.ca

As this Factum has been posted in the public domain, the written analysis or findings may be excerpted in whole or in part. Proper attribution is expected and appreciated.

The Chief...

The First Year Performance of Police Chief Mark Saunders: Lowest Rated in 18 Years...

Seven in 10 (69%) approve of how police **Chief Mark Saunders** has performed in his role in the past year. To give this some context, we went back in time with the NewsTalk 1010 polls and looked at predecessors who were measured at the same time during their first-year term, and on that count Chief Saunders has the distinction of being the lowest rated in 18 years when compared to his last three predecessors. In fact, Chief Saunders is five points behind former Chief Boothby (in 1999), seven points back of former Chief Fantino and 11 points back of former Chief Blair.

Police Chief Approval after one year on the job	Agree	Disagree
I approve how Police Chief Mark Saunders has performed in his role in the past year	69%	31%
Bill Blair	80%	20%
Julian Fantino	78%	22%
David Boothby	74%	26%

To be fair, not every chief has remained is highly admired as they have started out in the job. So clearly, as there may be a way down in public esteem there might just as easily be one that travels up. And in that regard, we are still early on in Chief Saunders tenure.

Alternatively, three in 10 (**31%**) do not approve of the Chiefs performance - which at this time was 26% for Chief Boothby, 22% for Chief Fantino and 20% for Chief Blair.

The Toronto Citizenry...

Eight In 10 (77%) of Torontonians Feel Safe Walking Around Their Neighbourhood After Dark...

A significant majority (77%) of Torontonians *feel safe walking around “my own neighbourhood after dark”* – just one point lower than it was (78%) 14 years ago in 2003. By contrast, this measure was at 68% in 2009 and at 64% in 2005.

One quarter (23%) *disagree that they feel safe walking around their neighborhood after dark* and are most likely to be those who are least educated (37%), and women (30%). Geographically, those who are most likely to have the sentiment come from Scarborough (34%), followed by those in Etobicoke (24%), North York (22%) sees, York/East York (16%) and the Old City of Toronto/Downtown.

Being Frightened or Scared if Pulled Over by Police...

In 2003, a NewsTalk 1010 poll found that just 34% of Torontonians indicated that if they were **pulled over by the police** and suspected of something they'd be “frightened by how they might treat me.”

Fourteen years later a similar, but more pointed, question was asked and the findings are remarkable.

Today, six in 10 (61%) Torontonians indicate they'd “*be scared*” if they were “*pulled over by a police officer for no apparent reason*”. Those most likely to hold this point of view are women (69%) compared to men (53%), younger (69% aged 18 – 34) and middle-aged (66% aged 35 – 54), those with children (66%) and those with the lowest income (65%). Geographically, this sentiment is most likely to assist in North York (69%) followed by those in Etobicoke (61%), old city of Toronto/downtown (60%), Scarborough (58%) and York/East York (57%).

Those who indicate that they would *not be scared* (39%) are more likely to be older (52% 55+), men (47%), honest household income (46% \$75,000 – \$99,000 per annum) and lower

household income (42% \$50,000 – \$74,000 per annum), and homeowners (43%). Those who are least likely to be scared are from York/East York (43%) followed by those from Scarborough (42%), (40%), Etobicoke (39%) and North York (31%).

Police Conduct...

Torontonians were asked to indicate the scope of how many members of the Toronto police force did certain things on and off the job. The scope included a choice of one of “**none, a few, many, most, all**” for each scenario.

The following are the combined percentages of **Torontonians who believe how many Toronto police do the following:**

- Two thirds (**63%**) believe that when charged with misconduct or a criminal act **many/most/all** Toronto *police get preferred treatment compared to any civilian who did the same thing.*

Four in 10 (**37%**) believe that only **a few/none** Toronto police officers, when charged with misconduct or act criminal act, get preferred treatment compared to any other civilian who did the same thing.

- A majority (**54%**) believe **many/most/all** Toronto *police ignore an infraction committed by a fellow police officer on or off duty* – like impaired driving.

Almost half (**46%**) believe that only **a few/none** Toronto police officers ignore an infraction committed by a fellow police officer on or off duty – like impaired driving.

- Half (**51%**) believe **many/most/all** Toronto *police never really get punished for any wrongdoing they commit on or off the job.*

Half (**49%**) believe that only **a few/none** Toronto police officers never really get punished for any wrongdoing they commit on or off the job.

- A significant minority (**44%**) believe **many/most/all** Toronto *police unfairly and discriminately racially profile black and dark-skinned Torontonians.*

A majority (**56%**) believe that only **a few/none** Toronto police officers unfairly and discriminately racially profile black and dark-skinned Torontonians.

- Just over one third (**35%**) believe **many/most/all** Toronto *police rough up suspects, especially if they are black/dark skinned or are from certain neighborhoods, during arrests.*

Two thirds (**65%**) believe that only **a few/none** Toronto police officers rough up suspects, especially if they are black/ dark skinned or are from certain neighborhoods.

- Only one third (**33%**) believe **many/most/all** Toronto *police are adequately trained to deal with people who are having a mental health crisis.*

Seven in 10 (**67%**) believe that only **a few/none** Toronto police officers are adequately trained to deal with people who are having a mental health crisis.

- Three in 10 (**28%**) believe **many/most/all** Toronto *police lie in court or falsify notes to get a conviction.*
- Seven in 10 (**72%**) believe that only **a few/none** Toronto police lie in court or falsify notes to get a conviction.
- One in six (**18%**) believe **many/most/all** Toronto *police plant incriminating evidence on someone to make an arrest.*

Eight in 10 (**82%**) believe that only **a few/none** Toronto police officers plant incriminating evidence on someone to make an arrest.

The Toronto Police Union...

Majority (72%) Believe Police Union Cares More About its Members than About Citizens and Policing...

Almost the quarters (72%) of Torontonians believe the *police union cares more about its members than it does about citizens and policing*. There are very few demographic or geographic differences of opinion across Toronto on this matter, however those with higher income (77% \$100,000 +), those in Old City of Toronto/Downtown (77%) and York/East York (77%) are more likely to share this view.

This compares with three in 10 (28% somewhat) *who disagree with this perspective* and are more likely to be living in Etobicoke (36%) and be lower educated (34%).

Torontonians Split: (51% versus 49%) Believe Toronto Police Union has Credibility...

Torontonians are split: half (51%) believe the Toronto police union has credibility when they speak out on behalf of the membership compared with the other half (49%) who don't.

Of those who believe the Toronto Police Union has credibility (51%), they are more likely to be those with children (57%), those with some post-secondary education (56%), those who are lower income (55% earning less than \$50,000 household income per annum) women (54%) versus men (48%), and younger Torontonians (54% aged 18 - 34).

Of those who don't believe the Toronto police union has credibility (49%), they are more likely to be higher income (56% \$100,000 + household income per annum), lower educated (55%), and living in York/East York (54%) and the Old City of Toronto/Downtown (53%).

Majority (76%) Believe Police Get Paid More Than Enough to do Their Job...

Three quarters (76%) of Torontonians believe that **police "get paid more than enough to do their job"**. This view is most likely held by those who earn over \$75,000 household income

per year (82%), those in the Old City of Toronto/Downtown (82%), those with children (80%), those lower educated (80%), men (79%) versus women (73%) and those who are lower educated (80%).

In the alternate, one quarter (24%) of Torontonians disagree the Toronto police get paid more than enough to do their job. Those taking this position are more likely to be those with some post-secondary education (29%), women (27%), those earning less than \$74,000 household income per year (29%) and those living in the Etobicoke (28%).

Terrorism...

This section of the poll was conducted prior to the terrorist attack in Edmonton on Saturday, September 30, 2017 and the domestic mass shooting in Las Vegas, United States, on Sunday, October 1, 2017.

Majority (72%) Believe Police and Security Forces are Proactive to Prevent Terrorist Attack...

Almost three quarters (72%) of Torontonians believe that *police and security forces are doing everything they can to prevent a Toronto terrorist attack*. There are no significant differences in opinion for any demographic across the city on this issue except for Etobicoke where only two-thirds (65%) believe this to be the case.

Three in 10 (28%) disagree and more likely are those who live in Etobicoke (35%), are lowest educated (31%) and middle aged (31%).

Majority (58%) Believe Police and Security Forces are Prepared if Terrorist Attack Happens – Up from 35% (+23 Points) in 2005...

Six in 10 (58%) of Torontonians believe that *police and security forces are prepared to deal with a Toronto terrorist attack if it happens*. Notably, this is up 23 points since 2005 (35%) when a similarly worded question was asked by NewsTalk 1010. This view is more likely to

be held by those who live in York/East York (66%) and are middle household income (66% \$75,000 – \$99,000.)

In the alternate, four in 10 (42%) **disagree** and are more likely to live in Etobicoke (49%) and Scarborough (46%), be middle-aged (46% 35 – 54), have lower annual household income (46% \$50,000 – \$74,000), have some post-secondary education (45%) and own their own residence (44%).

Two-Thirds (64%) of Torontonians Don't Believe Terrorist Attack is Imminent...

A majority (64%) of Torontonians *disagree with the view that Toronto is likely to have a terrorist attack anytime in the next year*. (Note that this survey was conducted before the Edmonton terrorist attack on Saturday, September 30, 2017). Those more likely to share this perspective are younger (72% aged 18 – 34), reside in the Old City of Toronto/Downtown (71%), are regular TTC riders (69%) and are higher educated (67%).

However, just over one third (36%) of Torontonians believe that *Toronto is likely to have a terrorist attack anytime in the next year*. Those with this view are more likely to be lowest educated (48%), older (44% aged 55+) and residing in either North York (42%) or Scarborough (41%).

Majority (53%) Believe Toronto Refugees Are a Source of Terrorists...

A majority (53%) of Torontonians believe *there are terrorists pretending to be refugees who will come to Toronto to cause violence and destruction*. This view is primarily held by those who are least educated (75%), are older (63% aged 55 live in Scarborough (62%) and Etobicoke (59%), have children (59%) and own their own residence (57%).

Almost half (47%) *disagree with this view* and are more likely to be from those who are living in the Old City of Toronto/Downtown (61%), younger (56% aged 18 – 34), rent their own residence (53%) are higher educated (52%) and are regular users of the TTC (55%).



Methodology

These are some of the findings of a **DART** Insight poll conducted September 16-19, 2017 on behalf of NEWSTALK 1010 Toronto for its fall "Pulse of Toronto" series. **DART** Insight constructed the questionnaire and analysis. A sample of 814 adults was surveyed within the Toronto (proper) boundaries using the Maru/Matchbox online panel. <https://ca.linkedin.com/company/maru-matchbox> Weighting was then employed to balance the demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflected that of the adult population of Toronto according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of **DART** Insight online poll results is measured using a Bayesian Credibility Interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 3.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Toronto adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

-30-

For more information on this news release, please contact:

John Wright
CEO - Insight
DART Insight and
Communications
(416) 919-2101

For the findings of these polling results, including detailed tables (weighted/unweighted), questions used and analysis, are provided freely at <http://www.dartincom.ca/polls/>

DART applauds, encourages, and complies with the industry disclosure and conduct standards set by the Canadian Association for Public Opinion Research (CAPOR) and adopted with the Market Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA). Accuracy of any Online polling results are measured using a Bayesian Credibility Interval which is endorsed by the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR).