

As pandemic endures, three-in-ten Canadians say restrictions in their own province don't go far enough

Albertans and Manitobans more critical of provincial response than those in the rest of the country

August 13, 2020 – The ongoing battle against the spread of COVID-19 is unceasing for provincial governments across the country. For months, they have walked the wobbly tightrope of trying to ensure the health and safety of citizens while also trying to keep the wheels of their respective economies turning.

A significant part of this effort centers on how much or how little to “open up” communities – that is – the restrictions placed on access to public spaces, physical distancing, and mask policies where they exist. On this front, Canadians offer a patchwork of opinions depending on the province in which they live.

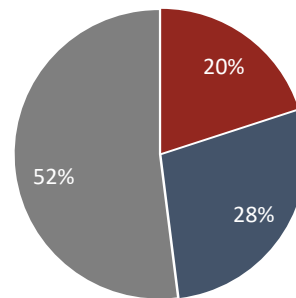
The latest data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds those in the four Atlantic provinces most satisfied with the coordinated approach in that region.

By contrast, those in British Columbia and Manitoba are most likely to say communities their province must be subject to tighter restrictions in order to keep COVID-19 spread down, while those in Alberta and Quebec are more likely to advocate for more relaxed restrictions.

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

Overall, thinking about restrictions that have been put in place in your area to prevent the coronavirus from spreading, do you think these restrictions go too far, don't go far enough, or are about right?



■ Go too far ■ Don't go far enough ■ Are about right

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from August 5 - 8, 2020 among a representative randomized sample of 1,511 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

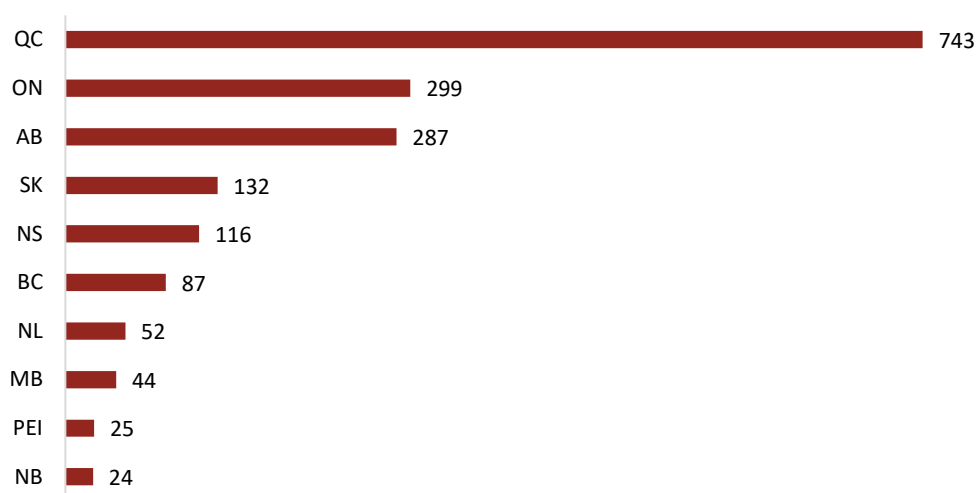
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Half of Canadians not satisfied with restrictions in their province

The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak has been diverse but shared in Canada. Quebec and Ontario account for the vast majority of fatal cases, in large part due to a [tragic spread](#) of the virus in long-term care homes in each province, but Alberta nearly matches Ontario in cases per capita. Western provinces have also been dealing with a [resurgence](#) of the virus in recent weeks.

COVID-19 Cases per 100,000 as of August 10
Source: NYTimes/Public Health Agency of Canada



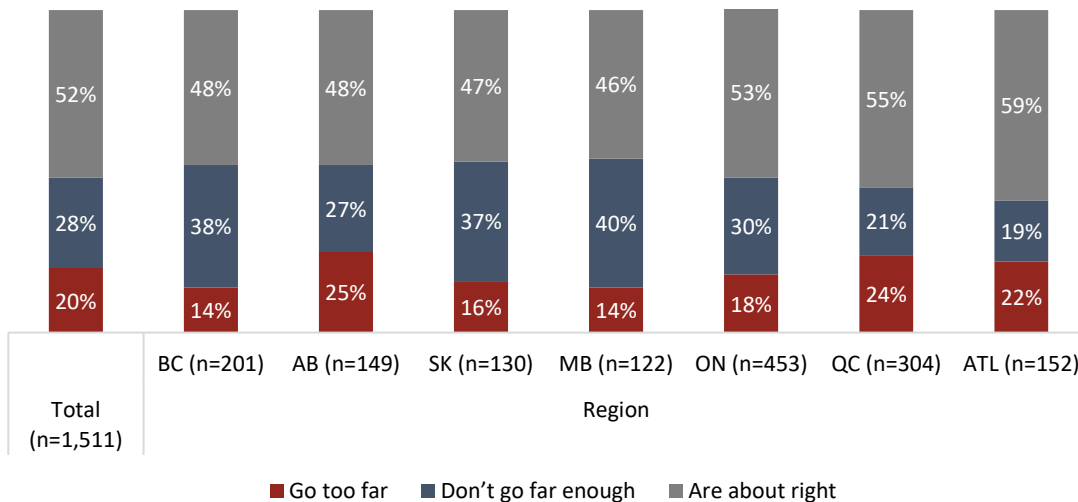
The person able to perfectly balance the health and economic considerations of Canada's COVID-19 response would command a hefty salary to be sure. For evidence, look no further than the responses Canadians offer on the question of whether their province has found the right mark in the restrictions they're using to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

In nearly every region, approximately half of Canadians (52%) feel their government has done a good job of balancing priorities, while half disagree (48%). Only in Atlantic Canada do residents commend their provincial governments at a rate of three-in-five (58%). Note, Atlantic Canada responses are aggregated for this release but will be explored separately, in detail, in the coming weeks:

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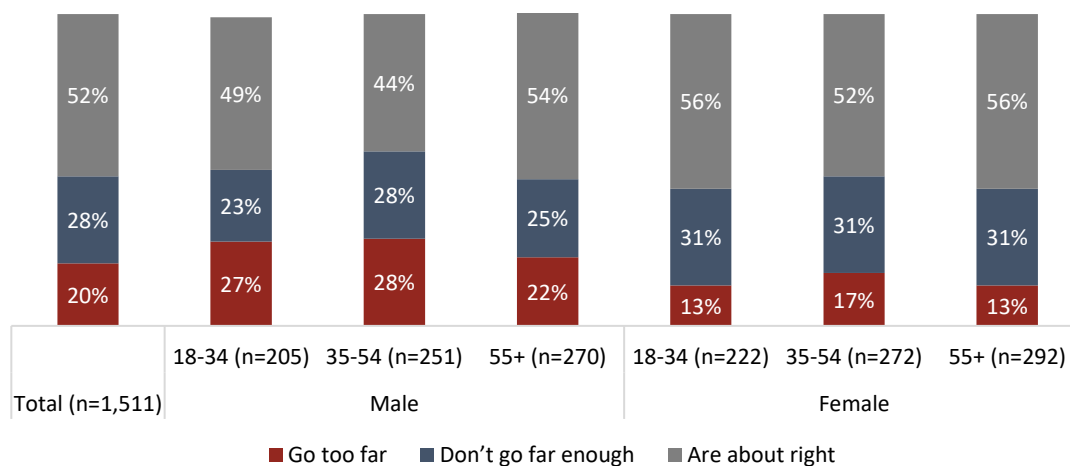
Atlantic Canada, presents challenges and advantages in the COVID-19 “[dance](#)”. Provinces in this area are more isolated, which allows better governance over travel, but an older population faces much higher risk. These provinces created a free-travel “[bubble](#)” that bars entry from other parts of the country with certain exceptions.

Notably, in three provinces, B.C., Saskatchewan and Manitoba, two-in-five residents desire more restrictions as opposed to fewer. Despite previous praise for its handling of the pandemic, B.C. now faces an [upwardly trending curve](#), with several outbreaks linked to [private parties](#). A return to previous restrictions is reportedly not in sight, as Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry has instead emphasized the need for residents to better exercise preventative measures over enforcing regulations.

Alberta and Quebec residents are most likely to say that their province’s restrictions are too strict. Quebec recently increased the maximum capacity of [public gatherings from 50 to 250 people](#), the highest level in the country alongside [New Brunswick](#).

Men, particularly those under the age of 55, are most likely to say that the restrictions in their province go too far. An identical 31 per cent of women across each age group feel the opposite, while women are also more likely to say their province has hit the right mark:

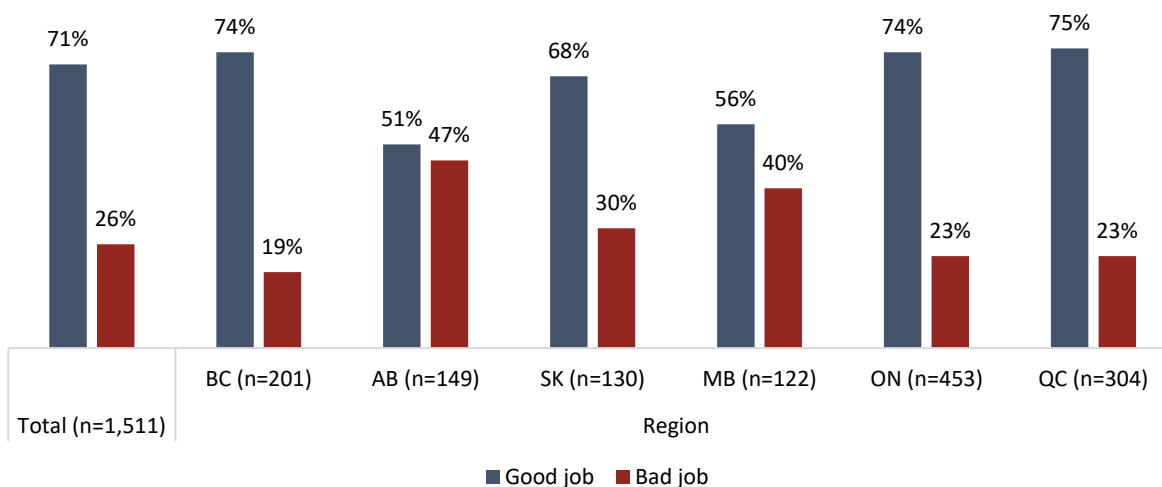
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Regional opinions of how premiers have handled COVID-19

In Quebec, BC and Ontario, significant majorities say their premier has done a “good job” handling the COVID-19 file. This drops to just over half when residents of Alberta and Manitoba weigh in on the jobs their own premiers have done responding to the pandemic:

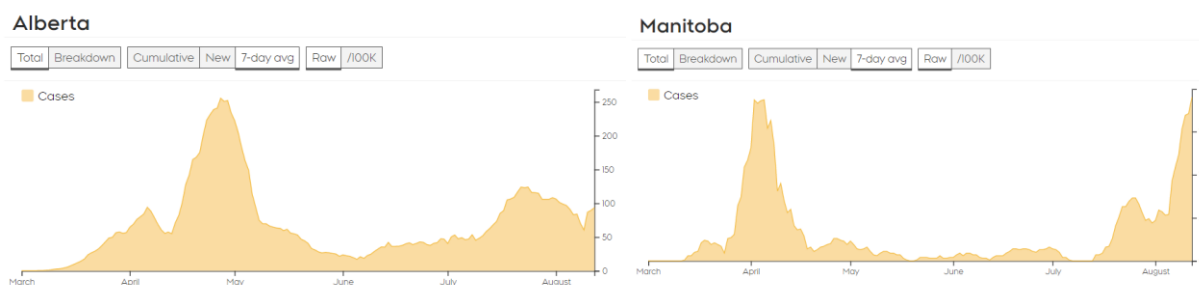
And, do you think your provincial premier is doing a good or bad job handling the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic?



Some of this response may be attributable to recent case numbers. In both Alberta and Manitoba, cases have been rising in recent weeks, after consistently dropping through May and June (see images below, both [courtesy of CTV News](#)):

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Cases have also been rising in British Columbia and Saskatchewan, but this does not appear to have negatively affected Premiers Horgan and Moe as intensely. Other missteps may provide more insight into public opinion of Kenney and Pallister.

The Manitoba premier was seen without a face mask at [Toronto airport](#) in July, against rules mandating face coverings for travellers, which angered some opponents. He also recently defended a campaign promoting tourism in the province, which [raised concerns](#) among residents who wish to see interprovincial travel [kept to a minimum](#).

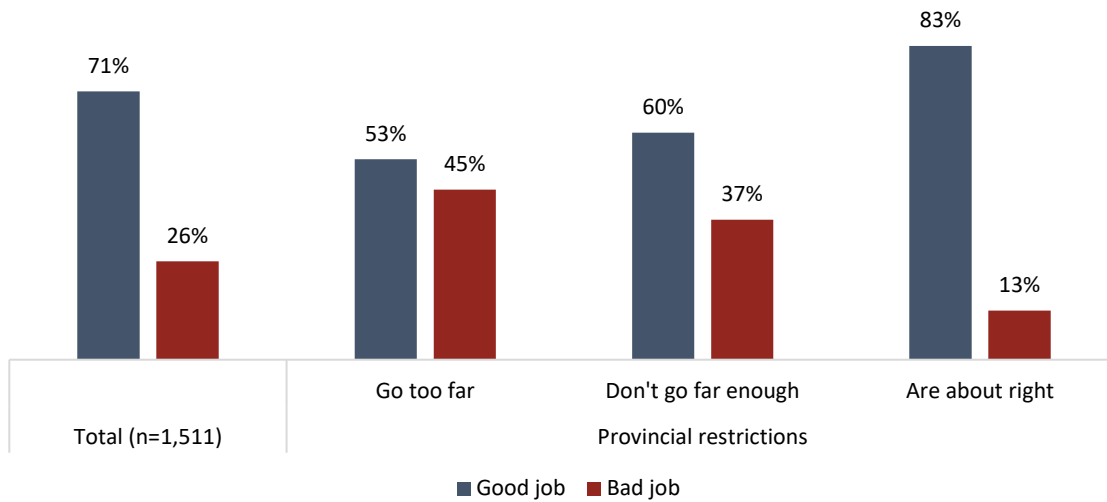
In March, the Alberta government directed school boards to temporarily lay off roughly [20,000 support staff](#), including substitute teachers and educational assistants, as schools were shut down. Now the province's plan to reopen schools in September has received criticism from [a collation of parents, educators, and doctors](#), citing a lack of safety precautions.

Each provincial leader has seen the percentage of their constituents saying they're doing a good job on the COVID-19 file drop as the pandemic has worn on:

Percentage saying their premier has done a good job in handling the COVID-19 response (Note: Atlantic Canada withheld, as data was aggregated for this study)							
	Total	Region					
		Horgan – BC	Kenney – AB	Moe – SK	Pallister – MB	Ford – ON	Legault – QC
April 15–17	85%	82%	67%	82%	74%	88%	92%
July 10–11	78%	83%	67%	81%	74%	79%	75%
August 5-8	71%	74%	51%	68%	56%	74%	75%

Notably, those Canadians who feel their province has gone too far in regulating activity are considerably more critical of their provincial leadership than others:

Premier appraisal by opinion of provincial restrictions due to COVID-19



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).