

## COVID-19: Fourth wave renews debate over community restrictions in Western Canada

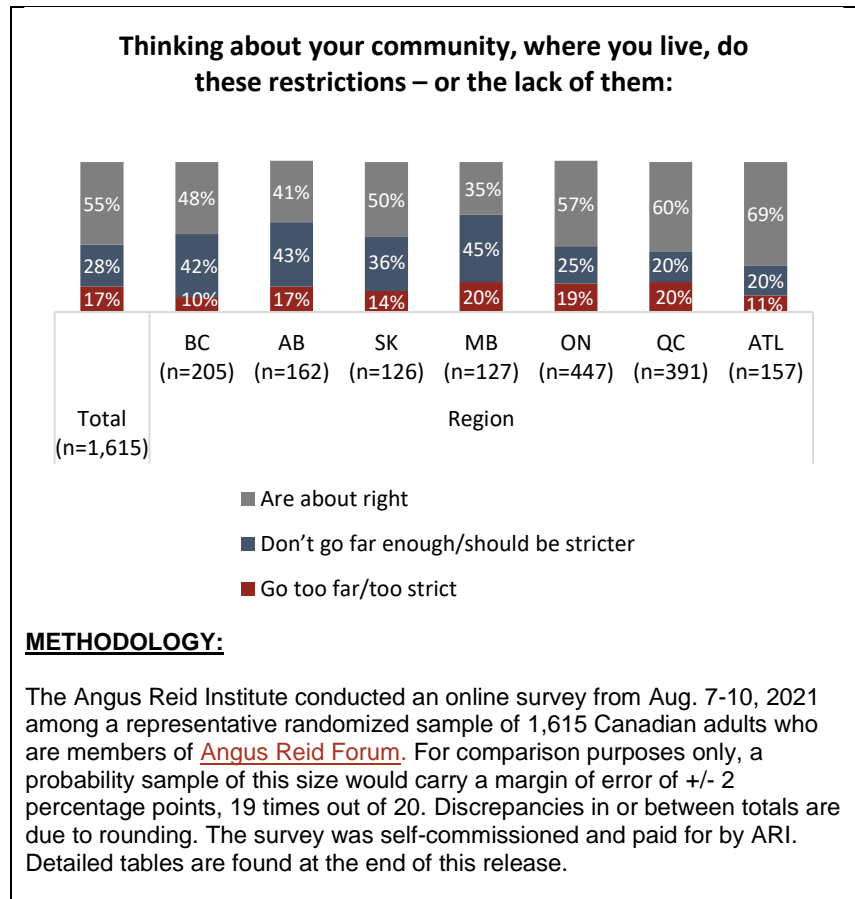
*COVID-19 handling plagues Kenney, Pallister; Ford recovers, Legault continues to receive praise*

**August 13, 2021** – Canadians continue to cope with the complications brought on by COVID-19, which is surging across the country – with [few regional exceptions](#).

Amidst rising concern, provincial governments are taking significantly different approaches to managing this fourth wave, prompting significantly different reactions from their respective constituents.

New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds the approach of Quebec Premier Francois Legault most aligned with what Quebecers want to see, including the introduction of vaccine passports for public spaces – set to be mandated in September.

The same alignment is not found in Alberta and Manitoba, where more than three-in-five residents each say their respective premiers have done a poor job handling the pandemic. Notably, each province has recently removed all COVID-19 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.

### CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

---

## INDEX

### Part One: Premier pandemic performance

### Part Two: Restrictions: Too strict or not strict enough?

#### Part One: Premier pandemic performance

Each region of the country is facing another uncertain autumn, as COVID-19 infections – driven by the highly contagious Delta variant – rise across the country.

Nationally, more than [81 per cent](#) of the eligible population has received one dose of vaccination against the coronavirus, but fewer than seven-in-ten are fully immunized. This has led to discussions of “vaccine passports” – in actual terms, showing proof of immunization in order to access certain facets of community life – at the provincial level. Quebec Premier Francois Legault was the first leader to [formally announce](#) a plan to pursue the policy. Beginning in September, unvaccinated Quebecers will be barred from entering non-essential public spaces.

Notably, two-thirds of Canadians and three-quarters of Quebec residents support the use of vaccine passports for events of 50 people or more in their province.

#### [Related research: Two-thirds support vaccine passports \(July 2021\)](#)

Other provincial leaders have been less enthusiastic. In Ontario and Alberta, Doug Ford and Jason Kenney have [ruled the idea out entirely](#). In British Columbia, John Horgan’s government has signalled that it would be [open to exploring](#) the idea, but has yet to act. Meantime, Manitoba and Saskatchewan have announced plans for vaccine passports in [some form](#), while Atlantic Canadian premiers have been [largely non-committal](#).

Asked to gauge the performance of their premier’s handling of the pandemic overall, a majority of constituents for Jason Kenney (64%), Brian Pallister (62%) — who announced [his resignation](#) this week — and Doug Ford (51%), continue to be critical. On the other end of the spectrum, Atlantic Canadians, Quebecers, and British Columbians are more approving. In Saskatchewan, residents are divided about the [otherwise popular](#) Scott Moe’s performance on this file:

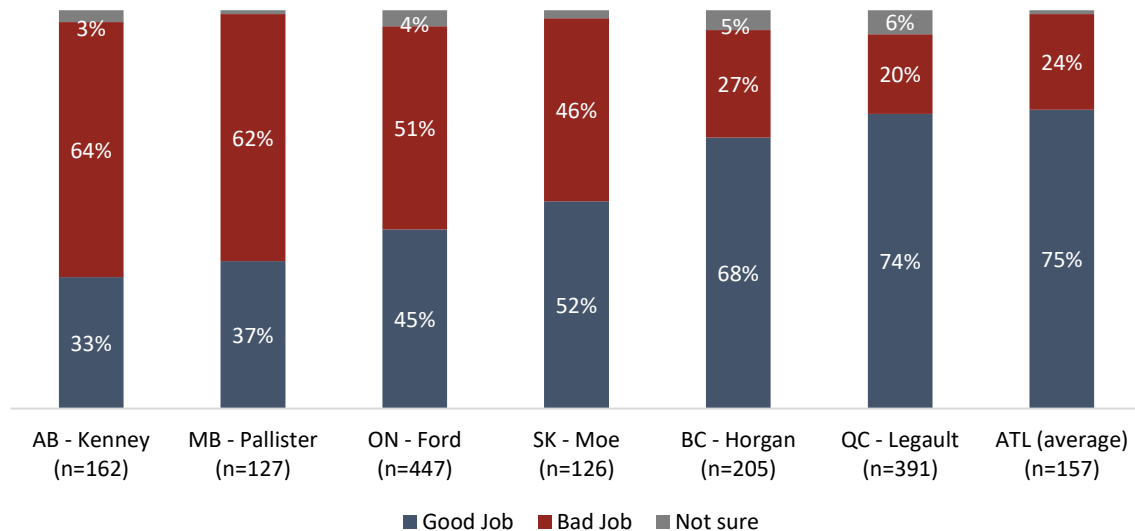
---

#### CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl

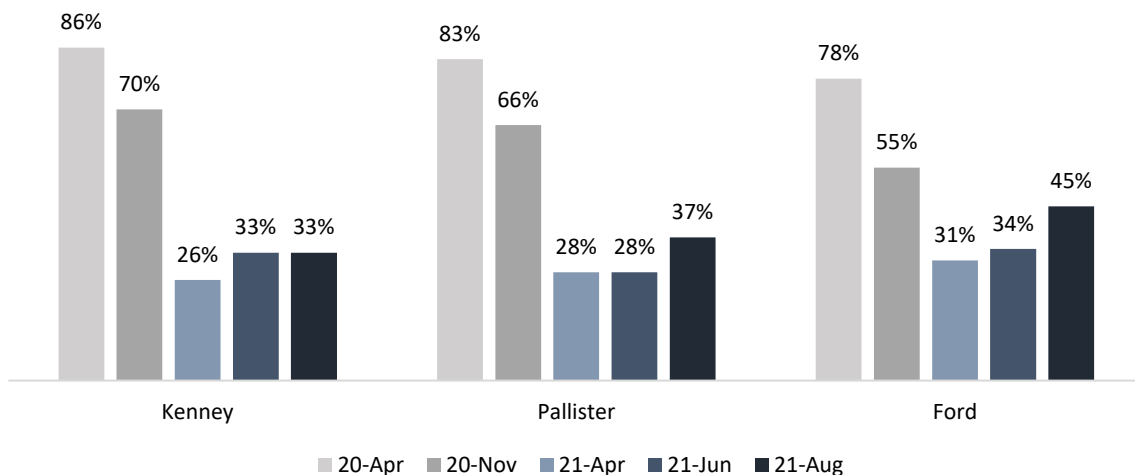
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

**Do you think your Premier is doing a good or bad job handling the COVID-19 pandemic overall?**



Appraisal on this file for Alberta's Jason Kenney continues to trend downward. Just one-third of Albertans are happy with his handling of COVID-19, despite his [recent lauding](#) of the government's performance. Kenney remains the least approved of leader on this issue. For Manitoba's Brian Pallister and Ontario's Doug Ford, the response is more favourable now than it was in June, but remains sub-majority:

**Percentage saying each is doing a good job on handling COVID-19**

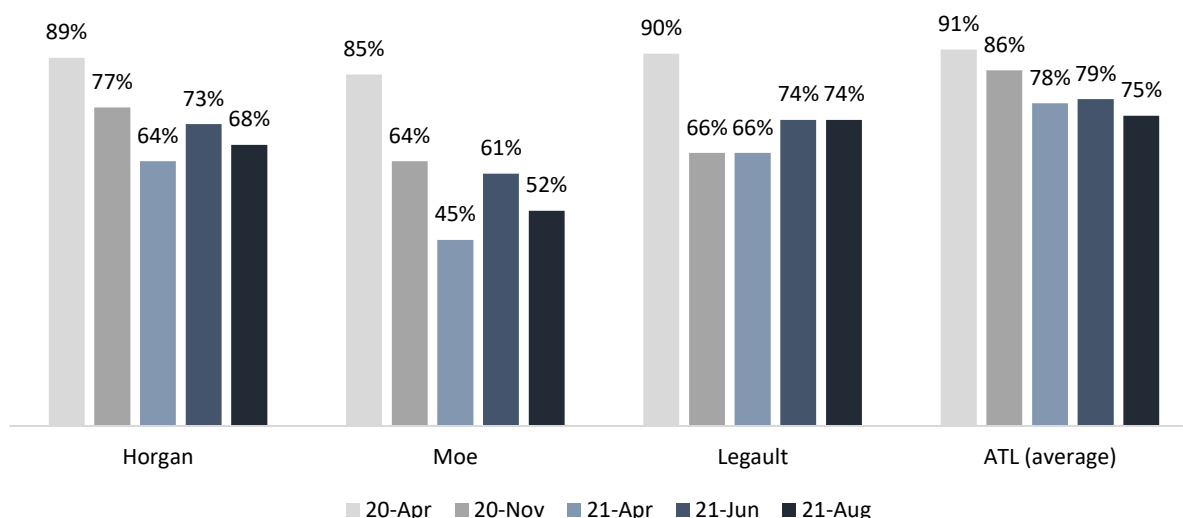


Saskatchewan residents have grown more critical of Scott Moe as the summer has worn on. In early July, Moe announced that the government would [no longer intervene](#) through regulation to control the virus, instead relying on vaccination. To date, [65 per cent](#) of residents have been fully immunized.

**CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

Percentage saying each is doing a good job on handling COVID-19



Part Two: Restrictions: Too strict or not strict enough?

While many provinces across the country have lifted the stricter measures meant to fight COVID-19, some restrictions — mostly to prevent large crowds in public spaces — remain. In Ontario and Quebec, gathering and capacity restrictions remain on many sectors and Canada’s two most populous provinces both have provincewide mask mandates. Most of those restrictions — except the mask mandate — could be gone as early as [next week](#) in Ontario, despite concern from experts that the province is entering the [fourth wave](#) of the pandemic.

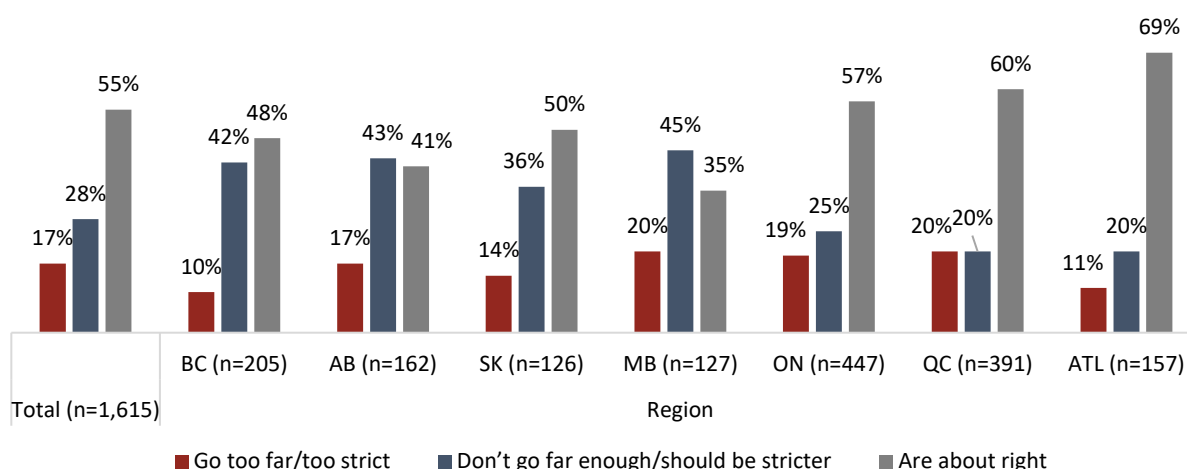
The continued mask mandate doesn’t seem to bother Quebecers and Ontarians. Three-in-five in both provinces say current restrictions are about right.

Residents of B.C., Alberta and Manitoba express the highest desire for more restrictions. The latter two also offer the lowest levels of satisfaction with the current restrictions compared to the rest of the country.

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

**Thinking about your community, where you live, do these restrictions – or the lack of them:**



Alberta and Saskatchewan were the first provinces to move on from COVID-19 public health orders. Since the beginning of July, there have been no restrictions in either province, while Manitoba’s health orders moved from requirements to recommendations last week — though some [capacity limits remain](#) in the province for larger public gatherings.

B.C. dropped its own mask mandate at the beginning of July, but restrictions persist on organized public gatherings and the Central Okanagan, a [current COVID-19 hot spot](#), is under stricter orders on restaurants, bars, nightclubs and group exercise. In that province, half (48%) say the current level of restrictions is about right, while two-in-five (42%) want them to be stricter.

On the east coast — where the highest number of people (69%) are satisfied with current levels of restrictions — Progressive Conservative Blaine Higgs joined his right-wing Prairie compatriots at the end of July by lifting all COVID-19 restrictions in the province, breaking from the four-province [Atlantic Bubble](#). Gathering limits remain in P.E.I, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, but only Nova Scotia still has a mask mandate.

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