

The Personal Security Index, 2003

by the Canadian Council on Social Development
Backgrounder - Introduction

What is the PSI?

The PSI is a tool to measure annual changes in the security of Canadians according to three key elements:

- ✓ Economic security in the broad sense of job and financial security;
- ✓ Health security in the sense of protection against the threats of disease and injury;
- ✓ Physical safety in the sense of feeling safe from violent crime and theft.

The PSI measures changes in both empirical data and in people's perceptions of their personal security. It is a valuable tool to measure well-being and is unique in combining both objective *and* subjective indicators. The Data Index, using many Statistics Canada databases, is designed to measure changes in "real" outcomes related to personal security, such as levels of income and debt, and rates of crime or poor health. The Perception Index is based on responses to a national survey conducted by EKOS Research Associates, which asked more than 3,000 Canadians how they rated several issues affecting their own personal security. This year, the polling was conducted in January and February 2003.

Why was it created?

The PSI was originally developed by the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) with the support of the Insurance Bureau of Canada, Canadian Heritage, EKOS Research Associates Inc., Health Canada, the Canadian Labour Congress and Human Resources Development Canada. It aims to provide an overview of the many different factors impacting the security of Canadians, and to determine whether the personal security of Canadians is improving overall or deteriorating.

A Five-Year Review

Since this is the fifth year that the Personal Security Index (PSI) has been calculated, this year's PSI also includes a review of five-year trends for the national-level data and highlights changes in Canadians' perceptions between 1998 and 2002.