

THE 2006 EXPEDIA VACATION DEPRIVATION SURVEY



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THE 2006 EXPEDIA VACATION DEPRIVATION SURVEY

Toronto, ON – According to a new Ipsos Reid survey conducted on behalf of Expedia.ca, while employed Canadians receive an average of 19 vacation days a year, one-quarter (24%) do not use all of their days. In fact, workers have an average of 2 leftover days each year. And, 10% of say they usually take zero vacation days a year.

What are the reasons why some Canadian workers may not take all of their vacation days? Some do not schedule far enough in advance (11%), are too busy at work (9%), trade in unused days for money (8%), cannot because of their kids' school schedules (5%), fear missing an important meeting/decision at work (3%), and some fear that taking all of their vacation days may be perceived negatively by their employer (3%).

Canadian workers should be vacationing more though. Most return from a vacation feeling rested, rejuvenated and reconnected to their personal life (55%) and/or better about their job and feeling more productive (44%).

The reality is, however, that two in ten workers have cancelled or postponed vacation plans in the past because of work (22%) and/or check their work messages while on vacation (18%) and 4% of workers say their boss is not very supportive of employees using their vacation time. Moreover, approximately four in ten (37%) employed Canadians indicate that they regularly work more than 40 hours a week.

But, who is the most "vacation-deprived"? Employed Canadians were asked to rank ten professions from 1-10 where 10 means the most vacation-deprived and 1 means the least vacation-deprived, the results are as follows:

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1. Medical professionals (48% top three box)
2. Caregivers (46%)
3. Retail/Service workers (42%)
4. Trades people (31%)
5. Lawyers and others working in law (28%)
6. People who work in sales (27%)
7. Financial professionals (23%)
8. Administrative/clerical workers (20%)
9. Civil servants/government workers (18%)
10. Teachers (17%)

Canadian workers are a stressed-out bunch. Only one-third (31%) say they never have trouble coping with stress from work during the vacation cycle. Others are most stressed the first few days back dealing with work that accumulated while they were out (24%), the last few days before they leave for vacation preparing to wrap things up (23%), the last few days of vacation getting ready to return to work (12%), or the first few days of vacation trying to relax and unwind (10%).

So, how do employed Canadians plan to use their vacation days this year? Most will take extended periods of time off: 38% will take at least one two-week vacation and use any



leftover days here or there and 32% will take at least one one-week vacation and use any extra days here or there.

The survey also reveals that, most (53%) Canadian workers don't receive any "extra" days for the December holiday season, long weekends in the summer, their birthday, moving day, or "hallmark holidays".

Some Canadians may not be satisfied with the number of vacation days they receive from their employer each year and would choose more, if the choice was theirs. Given the choice between five things they could receive from their employer to reward loyalty or years spent with the company, 40% would opt for an additional vacation day. In addition, 22% of employed Canadians say they would take a job with a lower salary in exchange for more vacation time. Moreover, three in ten (29%) workers have called in sick to take or extend a vacation and 25% would do so in the future (including 71% who have done it before and would do it again).

These are the findings of an online Ipsos Reid/Expedia.ca survey conducted from April 20 to April 27, 2006. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1020 employed adult Canadians was interviewed. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian working population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to Census information.



One-Quarter of Canadian Workers Don't Use All Their Vacation Days--On Average, 2 Days Go Unused

Employed Canadians receive, on average, 19 vacation days a year. These include personal leave days but not sick days or company/country holidays. Specifically, 14% employed Canadians say they usually get no vacation days each year; 2% get up to a week (1-5 days), 10% get 6-10 days, 22% get 11-15 days, 14% get 16-20 days, 16% get 21-25 days, 12% get 26-30 days, and 10% get more than 30 vacation days each year.

One in ten (10%) employed Canadians say they usually take no vacation days each year. Five percent take up to a week (1-5 days), 15% take 6-10 days, 21% take 11-15 days, 15% take 16-20 days, 15% take 21-25 days, 11% take 26-30 days, and 10% take more than 30 vacation days each year. And, the mean average number of vacation days Canadian workers usually take is 19.

- Workers residing *outside of* Quebec are much more likely to usually take zero vacation days (11% of workers in the rest of Canada vs. 4% in Quebec).
- Workers with an annual household income of *less than* \$30,000 are much more likely than those with more to usually take zero vacation days (25% vs. 7%).
- Workers 18-34 years of age are *twice as likely* as those 35 years of age or older to usually take no vacation days (14% vs. 7%).

When we calculate the number of vacation days Canadians say they usually receive versus the number of vacation days they say they usually take, one-quarter (24%) doesn't usually



take all of their days: 2% have 2 days leftover, 1% have 3 days leftover, 2% have 4 days leftover, 6% have 5 days leftover, and 13% have 6 or more days leftover. Seven in ten (71%) have 0 days left over and 6% take more vacation days than they receive. The mean average number of days leftover is 2.09.

Why Don't Some Take All Of Their Days?

There are a variety of reasons why Canadian workers don't take all of their days: Because if they don't schedule vacation time far enough in advance, they never seem to be able to take all of their vacation days (11%); their work is their life and they're too busy to get away (9%); they can get money back from their unused vacation days (8%); they have kids in school and it's hard to get away (5%); they feel like they might miss an important meeting or an important decision will be made without them (3%); they fear that taking all of their vacation time will be perceived negatively by their employer and that their job might be in jeopardy (3%); and 15% say some other reason explains why they don't take all of their vacation days. One in ten (10%) answered that they don't have any vacation days and 50% say they always take all of their vacation days.

Why They Should Be Vacationing More & The Reality Of The Situation...

Most (55%) Canadian workers say that after a vacation, they come back feeling rested, rejuvenated and reconnected to their personal life and 44% say they return from vacation feeling better about their job and feeling more productive.



However, 37% of workers say they regularly work more than 40 hours per week; 22% say they have cancelled or postponed vacation plans in the past because of work; 18% say they check their work messages (email and voicemail) while on vacation; and 4% of workers say their boss is not very supportive of employees using their vacation time.

Another one in ten (11%) say none of these situations apply to them.

- Quebec workers are *less likely* than others to regularly work more than 40 hours (28% vs. 39% in the rest of Canada) and/or check work messages while on vacation (7% vs. 22% in the rest of Canada).
- Workers with an annual household income of \$30,000 or greater are more likely than those with less to say they return from vacation feeling rested and rejuvenated (57% vs. 41%) and/or better about their job (47% vs. 29%). However, those with an annual household income of \$30,000 or greater are also more likely to check work messages while on vacation (20% vs. 8%).
- Male workers are more likely than their female counterparts to regularly work more than 40 hours (45% vs. 27%) and/or to have cancelled or postponed vacation plans because of work (27% vs. 16%).

Who Is The Most "Vacation-Deprived"?

Employed Canadians were asked to rank ten professions from 1-10 where 10 means the most vacation-deprived and 1 means the least vacation-deprived. For this survey, a "vacation-deprived" profession is defined as one where employees are not provided with enough vacation time or are somehow prevented from actually taking some or all of their vacation



days each year. The results indicate that the ten professions are ranked most to least vacation-deprived in the following order. These are based on top 3 box summaries (8, 9, and 10 on a 10-point scale). Please see detailed tables for full results.

1. Medical professionals (doctors, nurses, etc.): 48% top 3 box
2. Caregivers (social workers, long-term care workers, etc.): 46%
3. Retail/Service workers (store clerks, waiters, etc.): 42%
4. Trades people (mechanics, plumbers, electricians, etc.): 31%
5. Lawyers and others working in law: 28%
6. People who work in sales (real estate, insurance, etc.): 27%
7. Financial professionals (stockbrokers, advisors, accountants, bankers, etc.): 23%
8. Administrative/clerical workers: 20%
9. Civil servants/government workers: 18%
10. Teachers (primary, secondary, post secondary): 17%

Canadian Workers Are a Stressed-Out Bunch

Only one-third (31%) say that during a vacation cycle, they never have trouble coping with stress from work. By comparison, 24% are most stressed the first few days back in the office dealing with work that has accumulated while they've been gone; 23% are most stressed the last few days before vacation preparing to wrap up work; 12% are most stressed the last few

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days of vacation getting ready to return to work; and 10% are most stressed during the vacation cycle, the first few days of vacation trying to relax and unwind.

- Workers 35 years of age or older are twice as likely as those 18-34 to feel the most stress during the first few days of a vacation (12% vs. 6%).
- Men are more likely than women to never have trouble coping with stress from work during the vacation cycle (36% vs. 26%).

So How Do Canadian Workers Plan To Use Their Vacation Time?

Most Canadian workers anticipate taking extended periods of time off in 2006. Four in ten (38%) workers will take at least one vacation that lasts up to 2 full weeks (10 business days) and take whatever remaining time they have here and there (e.g., two week escape) and 32% will take at least one vacation that lasts a full week (5 business days) and take whatever remaining time they have here and there (e.g., power week). By comparison, 6% will take a day off from time to time, no long breaks (e.g., one day at a time) and another 6% will take a power weekend, take off Friday and Monday and have a 4-day getaway (e.g., weekend warrior). One in ten (10%) anticipate using their vacation time some other way and 8% say they don't have any vacation time for 2006.

- Quebec workers are more likely than others to take at least one vacation that lasts up to 2 weeks (54% vs. 33% of workers in the rest of Canada).
- Workers with an annual household income of \$30,000 or greater are more likely than those with less to take at least one vacation that lasts up to 2 weeks (41% vs. 24%).



- Workers 35 years of age or older are more likely than those 18-34 to take at least one vacation that lasts up to 2 weeks (43% vs. 29%).

Most Workers Don't Receive Any "Extra" Vacation Days?

Approximately one-third (36%) of Canadian workers receive extra vacation days or time off during the period between Christmas and New Year's; 16% get extra time off for a moving day; 10% get extra long weekends in the summer; 7% get time off for their birthday; and 2% get extra vacation days for Hallmark Holidays such as Valentine's Day or Groundhog Day. On the other hand, 53% of Canadian workers don't receive any extra vacation days or time off for these occasions.

- Quebec workers are much more likely than others to get the period between Christmas and New Year's off (50% vs. 32% of workers in the rest of Canada) as well as Moving Day (24% vs. 13% of workers in the rest of Canada).

Some May Not Be Happy With How Many Vacation Days They Get

Given the choice between five things they could receive from their employer to reward loyalty or years spent with the company, 40% would opt for one additional vacation day. By comparison, 10% would prefer a nicer workspace; 9% would prefer a celebratory lunch/dinner/party; 7% would prefer a monogrammed valuable such as a pin, watch, or pen; and 3% would prefer a parking space. The remaining 31% say they would not like any of these choices.

- Workers with an annual household income of \$30,000 or greater are more likely than those with less to opt for the additional vacation day (43% vs. 26%).



- Women are more likely than men to prefer an additional vacation day (44% vs. 37%).

Two in ten (22%) employed Canadians say they would likely consider taking a lower salary in order to have more vacation time (5% "very likely" and 17% "somewhat likely"). On the other hand, 78% would not consider it (37% "not very likely" and 41% "not at all likely").

Three in ten (29%) workers have called in sick to take or extend a vacation (71% have not). And, one-quarter (25%) would consider doing so in the future (10% "very likely" and 15% "somewhat likely"). In fact, 71% of those who have called in sick to take/extend a vacation in the past would consider doing it again (33% "very likely" and 38% "somewhat likely"). On the other hand, 75% of workers would not consider calling in sick in the future (32% "not very likely" and 43% "not at all likely") and 29% of those who have done so before would be unlikely to do it again (26% "not very likely" and 3% "not at all likely").

- Quebec workers are much more likely than others to have called in sick to take or extend a vacation (47% vs. 23% of workers in the rest of Canada). They're also more likely to consider doing it in the future (34% vs. 22% of workers in the rest of Canada).
- Workers 18-34 years of age are *more likely* than those who are older to have called in sick to take or extend a vacation (40% vs. 23%). They're also more likely to consider doing it in the future (38% vs. 19%).



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For more information on this news release, please contact:

*Jennifer McLeod
Senior Research Manager
Ipsos Reid Public Affairs
(416) 324-2900*

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