

Summary Report

2014 Air Quality and Climate Change Survey



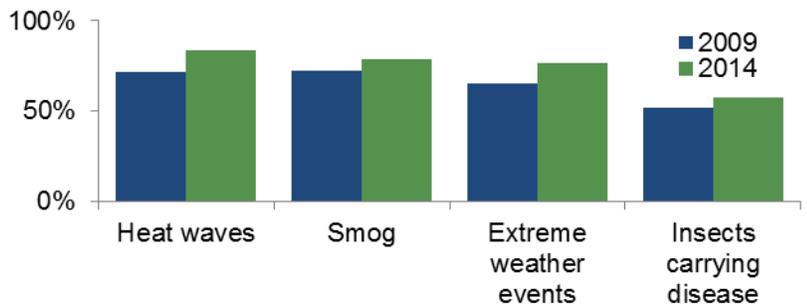
The Halton Region Health Department first collected information on air quality and climate change in 2009. Results from the 2009 survey were used to inform health promotion strategies for Halton Region’s Air Quality and Climate Change Program. The primary purpose of the 2014 Air Quality and Climate Change Survey was to determine if there have been any changes since 2009. The survey was also used to collect additional information on knowledge and behaviours related to air quality and climate change.

Knowledge of Climate Change

- **95%** of residents agreed that the world's climate is changing, and **83%** were concerned about it. Females and residents aged 25-44 were more likely to agree that the climate is changing and to be concerned about it.
- **76%** of Halton residents recognized that human activity contributes to climate change.
- **92%** of residents who recognized that human activity contributes to climate change identified exhaust from vehicles and **70%** identified energy use at home as contributors to climate change.
- Residents aged 25-44, those in the high and middle income groups, and post-secondary graduates were more likely to recognize that energy use at home contributes to climate change.

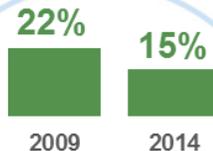
Impact of Climate Change on Local Communities

- Halton residents were more likely to know that climate change is likely to cause more smog advisory days, extreme weather events, frequent and severe heat waves, and insects carrying disease in 2014 compared to 2009 (see the figure below).
- Females and residents aged 25-44 were more likely to be aware of the impact of climate change on the local community.
- **74%** of residents knew climate change could have an effect on human health. Among these residents, **8%** thought the effect could be positive, **17%** both positive and negative, **68%** negative and **7%** did not know what effect climate change could have on human health.



Percent of Halton residents who agree that climate change is likely to affect the environment in various ways

Impact of Poor Air Quality on Health



The percent of residents who rated Halton's air quality as poor/very poor decreased from 2009 to 2014.

Females were more likely to rate the air quality as poor/very poor.

Females and Milton residents were more likely to think that air quality in Halton became worse.

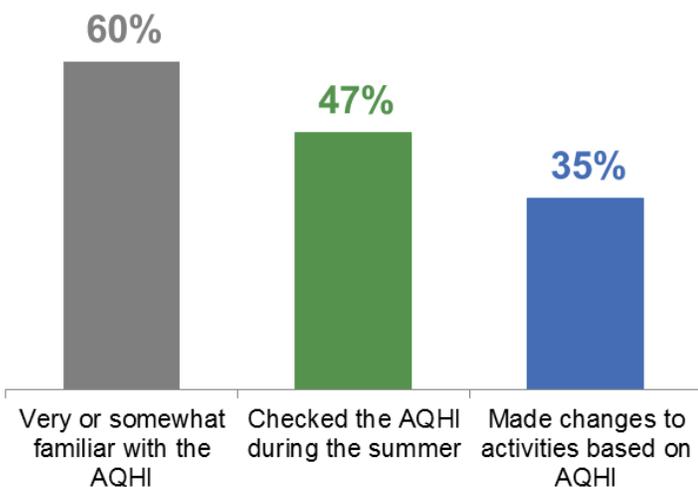
7% of residents in 2014 indicated that poor air quality affected their health or the health of their family, compared to 13% in 2009.

6% of residents thought the air quality in Halton improved in the past 5 years, 38% that it stayed the same, 24% that it became worse, and 32% did not know.



Air Quality Health Index^ϕ

60% of Halton residents were familiar with the AQHI, 47% of Halton residents checked the AQHI in the summer, and 35% of Halton residents made changes to their activities when the AQHI was high enough to affect their health.



Percent of Halton residents who are familiar with the AQHI, check the AQHI and make changes to activities when the AQHI is high enough to affect their health



Residents aged 25-44 and 45-64 were more likely to be aware of, check and change their activities based on the AQHI.



Post-secondary graduates were more likely to be aware of, check and change their activities based on the AQHI.



The percent of residents who were familiar with the AQHI increased as income increased.



Females were more likely to change their activities based on the AQHI.

Energy Use at Home

- **23%** of residents in 2014 were aware that alternative sources of power could be purchased in Halton, up from **10%** in 2009. Only **4%*** of households in Halton purchased energy from alternative sources.
- **54%** of Halton residents always turned off the lights when leaving the room for 15 minutes or longer.
- **16%** of households in Halton dried all or most of their clothes on a clothesline or rack. Drying clothes on a clothesline decreased as household income increased.



Phantom Power†

- **40%** of households in Halton reported taking action to reduce the use of phantom power.
- **32%** of households unplugged devices not in use to reduce the use of phantom power.
- **11%** of households unplugged charged cell phones to reduce the use of phantom power.
- **9%** of households used a power bar to reduce the use of phantom power.
- **5%** of households purchased energy star appliances to reduce the use of phantom power.

Switching off power bars, completely unplugging cell phone chargers and other devices, and purchasing energy star appliances are the ways to reduce phantom power. It was not possible to determine from the survey if residents are correctly using these methods to reduce phantom power.

Energy Use on the Road



36% of Halton drivers reported carpooling. Females and residents in the middle and high income groups were more likely to carpool. Carpooling also decreased as age increased.



55% of Halton drivers never let their vehicle idle for over a minute during the past month. Older drivers and drivers in the low income group were most likely to report never letting their vehicle idle.



71% of Halton drivers checked their tire pressure in the past month. Males were more likely than females to check their tire pressure.



52% of Burlington drivers, **44%** of Oakville drivers and **29%** of Halton Hills drivers were aware that there are bylaws to limit idling in their municipalities. Milton does not have an idling bylaw.

Active Transportation^ψ

52%

52% of Halton residents used active transportation at least once in the past year.



Residents aged 18-24 were most likely to use active transportation. The use of active transportation decreased as age increased.

Burning Wood

Burning wood releases harmful pollutants into the air, affecting both outdoor and indoor air quality. Exposure to wood smoke can cause respiratory illness, worsen asthma and decrease lung function. Each of the four municipalities in Halton have their own bylaws that restrict or limit the burning of wood outdoors.



17% of households in Halton burned wood inside the home during the winter. Residents in the high income group were more likely to burn wood inside the home.



12% of households burned wood outside the home during the summer. Residents in the high income group and Halton Hills residents were more likely to burn wood outside the home.

Definitions

Residents includes Halton adults aged 18 and over.

♠The **Air Quality Health Index** is a tool developed by Health Canada and Environment Canada that measures air quality in relation to health on a scale from 1 to 10+. For more information on the AQHI click [here](#).

†**Phantom power** (standby power) is electricity being used by devices like televisions, cell phone chargers, and computers while they are plugged in but not being used.

ψ**Active transportation** refers to walking or biking for reasons other than recreation or fitness, such as walking to work or running errands.

Estimates marked with an asterisk (*) should be interpreted with caution due to high variability.

Data Source: Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (Feb-May 2009, Mar-Aug 2014), Halton Region Health Department and Institute for Social Research, York University

For information on methods and limitations, see the full [Air Quality and Climate Change in Halton Report](#).



For the complete Air Quality and Climate Change in Halton Report visit the Environmental Health page of the Halton Health Statistics website at:

halton.ca