

DISASTER PERCEPTIONS AND PREPAREDNESS

Mark Baldassare, Dean Bonner, Lunna Lopes, Jui Shrestha

► Most Californians have limited knowledge about preparing for a disaster.

When asked how much they know about steps they can take to prepare for a disaster such as a major earthquake, only one in three Californians (33%) say they are very knowledgeable, while slightly more than half (54%) claim to be somewhat knowledgeable. About one in 10 adults admit to being not too (8%) or not at all (4%) knowledgeable about this subject. Levels of knowledge were similar in 2006 (29% very, 52% somewhat knowledgeable). Knowledge of disaster preparedness is similar across regions. Whites (46%) are more than twice as likely as Latinos (21%) to say they are very knowledgeable. Men (37%) are somewhat more likely than women (29%) and homeowners (37%) are somewhat more likely than renters (29%) to be very knowledgeable.

► Many Californians are worried about the potential impact of a disaster on their household.

More than six in 10 Californians are either very (28%) or somewhat (36%) worried that a household member will experience personal injury, property damage, or that a disaster such as a major earthquake will result in a major disruption of their household routine. Californians today are somewhat more likely than they were in 2006 to be very worried (28% to 20% in 2006). Today, Californians in Los Angeles County (38%) are more likely than those in the Central Valley (29%), the San Francisco Bay Area (24%), the Inland Empire (22%), and Orange/San Diego Counties (19%) to be very worried about the impact of a disaster. Latinos (48%) are by far the most likely racial/ethnic group to be very worried (27% Asians, 21% blacks, and 15% whites). Women (33%) and renters (35%) are more likely than men (23%) and homeowners (23%) to be very worried.

► Californians are more likely to have a disaster supplies kit than a definite disaster plan.

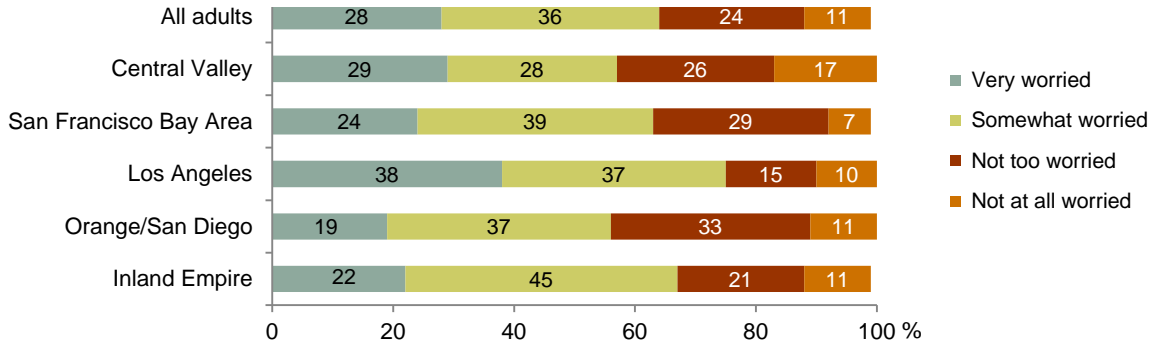
Fifty-two percent of Californians report having a disaster supplies kit, while 47% say they do not have one. More Californians reported having a kit in 2006 (60% yes, 40% no). Residents in Los Angeles County (57%) are the most likely to report having a disaster kit, followed by those in the San Francisco Bay Area (53%), the Inland Empire (49%), Orange/San Diego Counties (49%), and the Central Valley (47%). Among racial/ethnic groups, whites (55%) are the most likely to have a disaster plan, followed by blacks (50%), Latinos (49%), and Asians (47%). Six in 10 Californians age 35 and older (59%) have a disaster kit, while a similar share of those 18 to 34 (58%) do not have one. Fewer than half of Californians (44%) say they have a definite disaster plan, while about half (51%) say they do not have one. Findings were similar in 2006 (47% yes, 48% no). Today, fewer than half across regions report having a definite disaster plan. Asians (53%) and whites (48%) are more likely than blacks (39%) and Latinos (36%) to have such a plan.

► Confidence in federal readiness has risen, but Californians still trust state and local governments more.

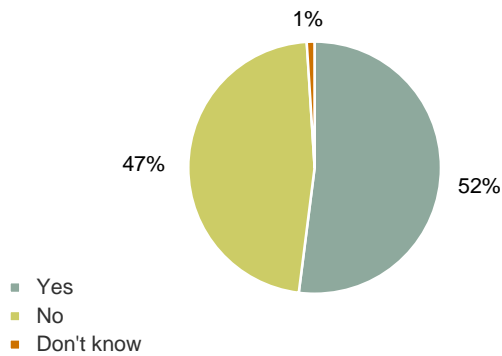
Two in three Californians have a great deal (20%) or some (46%) confidence in the federal government's readiness to respond to disasters; three in ten have very little (22%) or no confidence (10%). This marks a sharp increase from 2006, when only four in 10 expressed confidence (9% great deal, 32% some). Today, residents in Los Angeles County (26%) are the most likely to be very confident about the federal government, followed by those in the San Francisco Bay Area (19%), Orange/San Diego Counties (18%), the Central Valley (17%), and the Inland Empire (16%). Californians have more confidence in their state and local government: nearly three in four have a great deal (27%) or some (46%) confidence, while one in four have very little (18%) or no confidence (7%). This marks a 14 point increase in confidence since 2006 (13% great deal, 46% some). Today, residents in Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area (31% each) are the most likely to be very confident, followed by those in Orange/San Diego Counties (26%), the Central Valley (24%), and the Inland Empire (19%). Asians (40%) and Latinos (31%) are more likely than blacks and whites (21% each) to be very confident about state and local government readiness.



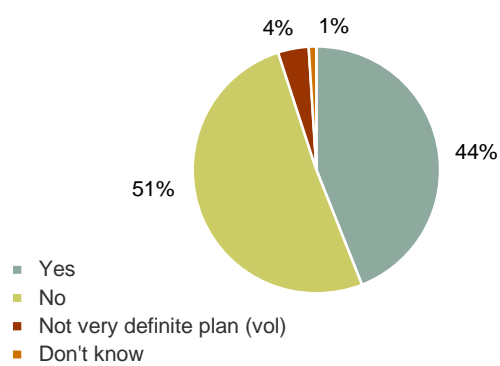
How worried are you that you and the members of your household will experience personal injury, property damage or a major disruption of your routine if there is a disaster, such as a major earthquake?



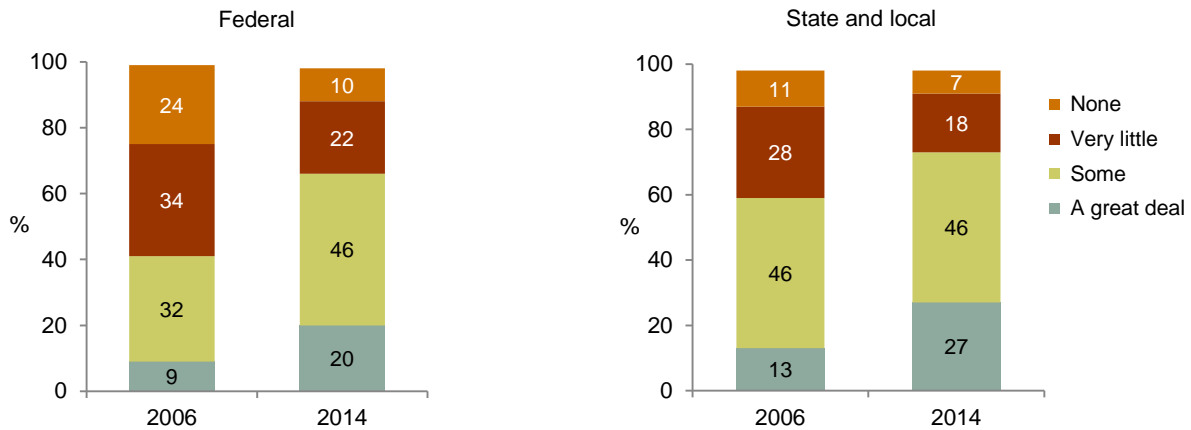
Does your household have a disaster supplies kit equipped with food, water, and other essential supplies?



Does your household have a definite disaster plan in case of an earthquake, flood, or other disaster?



How much confidence do you have in the _____ government in terms of their readiness to respond to disasters, such as a major earthquake in California?



Sources: PPIC Statewide Surveys, March 2006 (2,002 adults) and September 2014 (1,702 adults). Margin of error for all adults is ±2% in March 2006 and ±3.6% in September 2014; the margins of error for subgroups are larger.

Contact: surveys@ppic.org