



Commuting to work in a Contact Centre



**A survey conducted by
the Contact Professionals Alliance**

September 2009

Survey Methodology

In August 2009 the Contact Professionals Alliance, Canada's largest peer-to-peer Call Centre community conducted a survey to find out how far and how long the commute was for Contact Centre workers in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

The survey was conducted on-line with the questionnaire posted on www.SurveyMonkey.com

The link to the survey was offered by email to approximately 5,000 people who work in Contact Centres. 169 people responded. The survey closed on September 11, 2009.

The largest number of responses (138) came from people in the Greater Toronto Area. Because of the small sample size, data from the non-GTA responses (31) is not included in this report.

It also should be noted the vast majority of survey respondents had job descriptions of Team Leader and above, so the data cannot necessarily be assumed to apply to Customer Service Reps (CSRs).

Introduction

According to Statistics Canada, . residents in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) have the longest commutes in Canada – up from 68 minutes in 1992 to **79 minutes** in 2005,

Based on a commuting survey conducted by the Contact Professionals Alliance in September 2009, GTA Call Centre workers commute even longer.

On a typical day, Highway 401 carries up to 440,000 vehicles, which makes it the busiest highway in the world.

On any business day during rush hour, more than 70% of the GTA freeway network is gridlocked, and some spots don't move for 14 hours per day.

And congested roads cost over \$2 billion per year for lost productivity in the Greater Toronto Area alone. <http://www.orba.org/lib/db2file.asp?fileid=1086>.

How do you get to work?

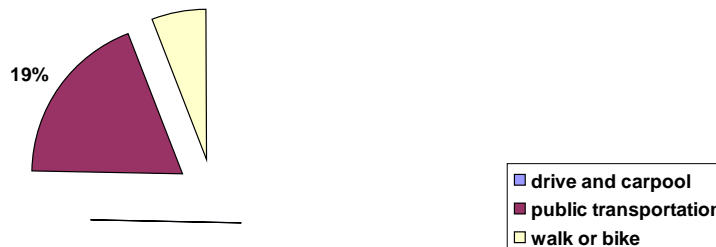


How do you usually travel to and from work on a normal business day? (Note: If you drive or walk to a public transport station, select "public transportation".)

According to Stats Can, there are 2.5 million commuters in what the agency calls the census metropolitan area (CMA) of Toronto.

In 2006, 71.1 percent of them used a car to get to work, either by driving or as a passenger. 22.2 percent of commuters used public transit to get to work. A total of 4.8 percent walked to work, while only one percent biked.

Comparing StatsCan data to our survey responses, it appears that Contact Centre workers drove or carpoolled to work more often (75.3%), and took public transport less often.



The distance between home and work



***What is the postal code of the place where you live?
Where do you commute to- where is your place of work?***

Although Stats Can reports that the median daily commute in Toronto is 9.4 km, our survey respondents travel much, much further: an average of 26- 30 km one-way.

Statistics Canada defines "median distance" as meaning the point where half the population in a given region travels more than that distance, and the other half travels less.

Here is what our survey respondents reported as their one-way commuting distance, in kilometers:

Drivers and Carpoolers		Public Transportation		Walk, Bicycle	
Minimum	1	Minimum	3	Minimum	0
Maximum	152	Maximum	89	Maximum	4
Average	38	Average	29	Average	2
Median	30	Median	26	Median	2

Without further research, it will be difficult to understand the huge difference between the StatsCan data and ours, but it is quite possible that the people who responded to our voluntary survey were those who knew they had longer than average commuting times.

Average time spent commuting



How long does it usually take you to travel from home to your work location?

GTA residents have the longest commutes in the country: 79 minutes in 2005, according to Statistics Canada. Those traveling by car saw their time increase to 59 minutes, and those traveling by transit saw an increase to 106 minutes.

Our survey respondents reported these **one-way** commuting times, in minutes:

Drivers and Carpoolers	Public Transportation	Walk, Bicycle			
Minimum	5	Minimum	15	Minimum	5
Maximum	105	Maximum	120	Maximum	30
Average	43	Average	57	Average	19
Median	40	Median	60	Median	20

Compare Toronto to American cities

The longest average commute in the USA, at 39.6 minutes, is in the Vineland, N.J., metropolitan area, about 40 miles south of Philadelphia. The New York area had the second-longest commute, at 34.2 minutes, and the Washington area was third at 33.4 minutes. <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,211338,00.html>

Our respondents spent an average of 86 minutes on a round-trip commute. Multiplied by 242 working days per year , that equates to around 8.6 weeks a year spent commuting.

For an employee earning \$45,000 per year, 8.6 weeks equates to almost **\$7,500** per year of wage equivalence loss.

Lost productivity

Congested roads cost over \$2 billion per year for lost productivity in the Greater Toronto Area alone. <http://www.orba.org/lib/db2file.asp?fileid=1086>.

How long does it take you to get to work?



Highway 401 is the busiest highway in North America, and carries more cars than even the freeway in Los Angeles.

On a typical day, the section of Highway 401 past Keele Street is the busiest section of highway in the world. On any business day during rush hour, more than 70% of the GTA freeway network is gridlocked, and some spots don't move for 14 hours per day.

Using data from the CPA survey to compare the average distance traveled to the average time spent commuting, here is the **average speed of commuting**, by method:

	Average speed in km/h
Drivers and carpoolers	54
Public transport	31
Walkers/ bikers	0.1

Information from the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) in 2006 shows that despite traffic congestion it is, in most cases, faster to use a car or other private vehicle get to and from work than to use public transit.

And despite higher fuel costs and environmental concerns, most workers continue to use their automobile to get to and from work

http://www.caa.ca/documents/2006-10-27_Socio-EconomicReport-Eng.pdf

Tardiness is a constant problem in Call Centres everywhere. Management of Service Level in a Centre is a game of seconds, not minutes. An employee who is late 10 minutes each day has, by the end of the year, taken the equivalent of a week's paid vacation

A slow commute does have one benefit

According to the Ontario Ministry of Transport, Ontario's fatality rate of 0.87 per 10,000 licensed drivers in 2006 was the lowest ever recorded in Ontario.

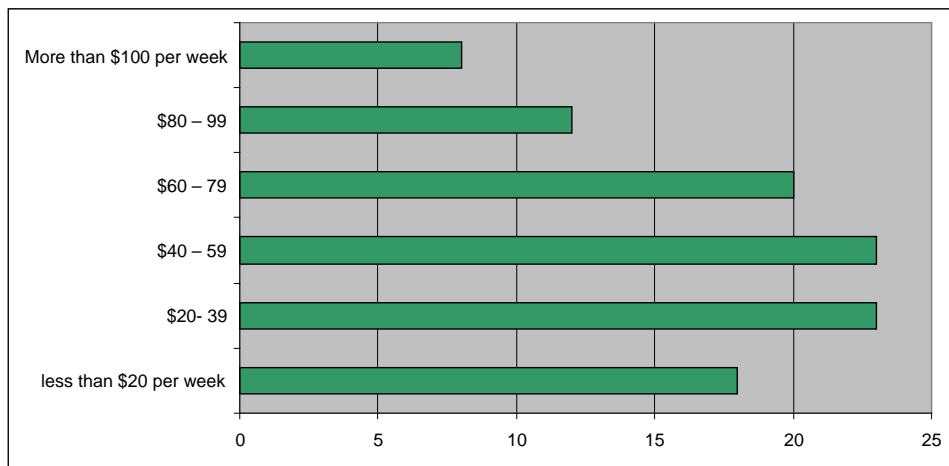
Ontario's rate was also the lowest in all of North America.
http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/orsar/orsar06/chp1_06.shtml

How much does it cost you
to commute?



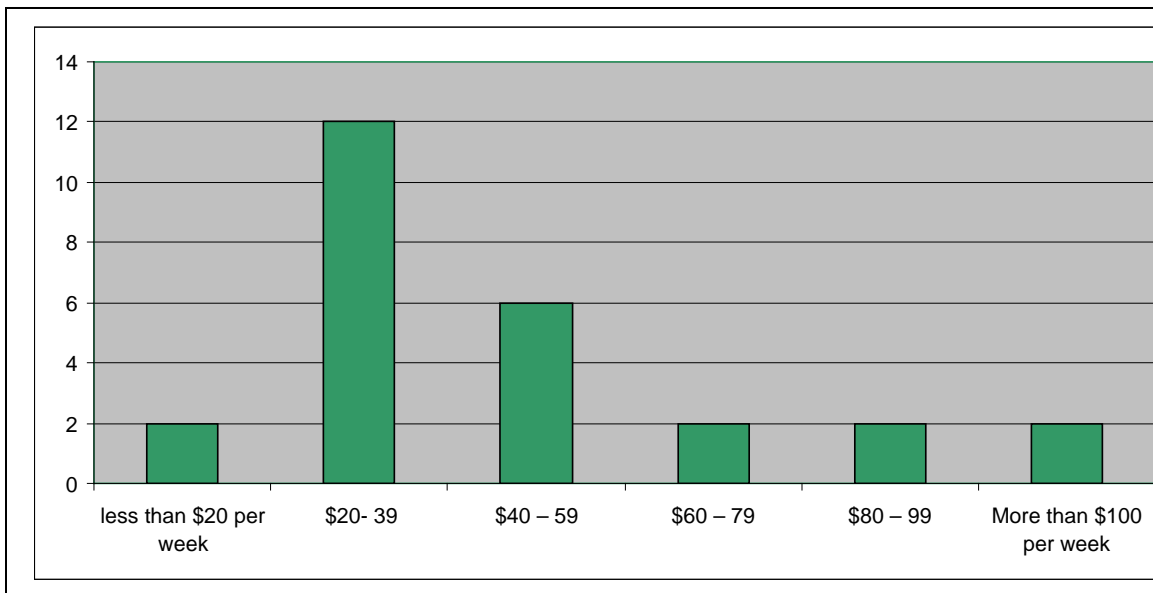
How much does it cost you to commute per week? (If you drive include gas, tolls and parking. Exclude maintenance, insurance, etc.)

For drivers and carpoolers



less than \$20 per week	18.1%
\$20- 39	23.2%
\$40 – 59	23.2%
\$60 – 79	20.2%
\$80 – 99	12.1%
More than \$100 per week	8.8%

For those who take public transport:



less than \$20 per week	2.8%
\$20- 39	12.5%
\$40 – 59	6.2%
\$60 – 79	2.8%
\$80 – 99	2.8%
More than \$100 per week	2.8%

In Toronto, a monthly adult TTC transit pass costs \$100.00 (\$23.00 per week), based on a 12 month subscription.

The Government of Canada introduced a tax credit for public transport in 2006. Details are at

http://www3.ttc.ca/Fares_and_passes/Passes/Tax_credits_for_transit_passes.jsp

Employer Reimbursement



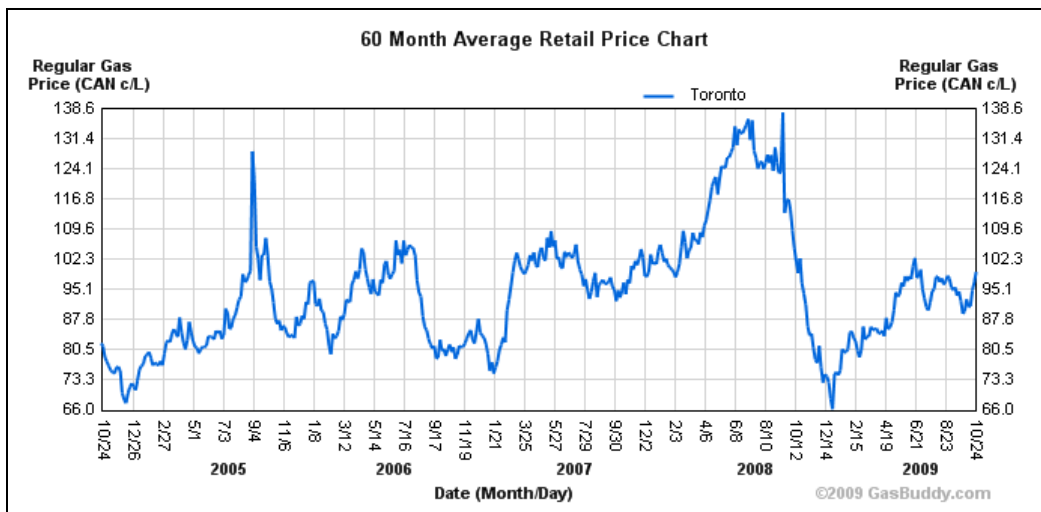
Does your employer reimburse any part of your commuting expense? (e.g. public transport pass, taxi voucher, etc.)

91.7% of respondent's employers do NOT reimburse any part of an employee's commuting costs.

Reimbursement for respondents who are reimbursed included a car allowance and a fee per km for travelling between offices in a multi-Call Centre environment.

Interestingly enough, GTA workers who chose to live in outer suburban areas in order to save money on housing may be in for a surprise. Including costs for gas, insurance and car maintenance, the Canadian Automobile Association calculated in 2005 that a husband and wife who each make the Hamilton-Toronto commute in separate Chevy Cavaliers will spend close to \$144,000 over five years just getting to work.

http://www.canadianbusiness.com/my_money/spending/auto/article.jsp?content=20050620_142618_5324



Health issues around commuting



A recent study in The New England Journal of Medicine found that nearly one out of every 12 heart attacks is linked to being stuck in traffic, and that commuters nearly triple their risk of having an attack just getting into their car!

http://www.canadianbusiness.com/my_money/spending/auto/article.jsp?content=20050620_142618_5324

Commuters who endure heavy traffic nearly triple their odds of suffering a heart attack in the next hour, according to a German study. Among women, the risk is even higher—almost five times the norm.

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200909/natural-element-driven-distraction>

Commuting is also associated with hostility, high blood pressure and poor cognitive performance. 87% of Ontarians believe traffic congestion causes aggressive driving ("Nerves of Steel", Canadian Safety Council, 2003).

Why Employee Satisfaction is so important



According to Stats Canada, Canadian workers are spending more time travelling to and from work: 63 minutes in 2005 (or almost 12 full days for someone who works full time), compared with 54 minutes in 1992.

Liking the job and being eager to get there

One correlation that catches attention is the link between liking one's job and the probability of liking commuting.

According to the statistical model, the predicted probability that a worker who likes his paid work a great deal would also like travelling to work was 64%, compared with only 10% for a worker who disliked her paid work a great deal.

This finding indicates that when a worker likes her job, she will more likely be anxious to get to work and may also be more likely to put up with some of the unpleasant aspects of commuting, such as road congestion.

Among the other characteristics associated with attitude to commuting are age and level of education (but not gender). On average, younger workers tend to like commuting less. This correlation between age and attitude to commuting may be due to generational differences between baby-boomers and their children.

Another possibility is that younger workers tend to like commuting less because it takes up too much of the time they might otherwise spend with their family and friends.

General commuting Information from Statistics Canada

Commuting Patterns and Places of Work of Canadians, 2006 Census:

<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-561/p33-eng.cfm>

Toronto

- The number of people whose usual place of work was in the Toronto census metropolitan area rose from 2,361,400 to 2,503,700 between 2001 and 2006, an increase of 6.0%.
- The number of people whose place of work was in the City of Toronto rose by 0.7% over the past five years, to 1,336,500 in 2006. In contrast, the increase came to 12.9% in the peripheral municipalities in this CMA.
- In 2006, the municipalities of Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Vaughan and Markham were among the 25 largest municipalities in Canada from the point of view of the number of people working there. Of these 25 municipalities, Vaughan ranked first in terms of the increase in the number of workers (+22.2%), Brampton ranked fifth (+14.1%), Markham ranked seventh (+10.9%), Mississauga ranked tenth (+10.1%) and Toronto ranked twenty-fourth (+0.7%).
- In 2006, the number of people commuting to work in the municipalities of Toronto, Mississauga, Vaughan and Markham was higher than the number of workers living in these municipalities (+232,300 in Toronto, +68,700 in Mississauga, +25,800 in Vaughan and +6,900 in Markham). In contrast, the number of people working in the municipality of Brampton was lower than the number of workers living there (net loss of 58,900 workers).
- The fastest growing peripheral municipalities around Toronto in terms of the number of people reporting them as their usual place of work were Mississauga (+35,100 or +10.1%), Vaughan (+25,000 or +22.2%), Brampton (+17,300 or +14.1%) and Markham (+12,700 or +10.9%).
- The median commuting distance for workers living in the Toronto CMA who worked at a usual place of work was 9.4 kilometres in 2006, compared to 9.2 kilometres in 2001.
- For workers living in the Toronto CMA in 2006, 63.6% drove to work (compared to 65.2% in 2001) and 7.5% got to work as a passenger in a car (compared to 6.3% in 2001).
- In 2006, 22.2% of commuters living in the Toronto CMA used public transit (compared to 22.4% in 2001), 4.8% walked (4.6% in 2001), 1.0% cycled (0.8% in 2001) and 0.9% used another mode of transportation (0.8% in 2001).
- In 2006, 43.0% of workers whose usual place of work was in the City of Toronto used a sustainable mode of transportation to get there, i.e., public transit, walking or cycling (compared to 41.1% in 2001). The corresponding proportions were 10.8% for those commuting to Vaughan (9.4% in 2001), 10.7% for those commuting to Markham (9.5% in 2001), 11.9% for those commuting to Mississauga (11.0% in 2001) and 10.4% for those commuting to Brampton (10.2% in 2001).



Characteristics associated with liking the commute to get to work				
	Dislikes or greatly dislikes	Neutral	Likes or greatly likes	Total
	%			
Mode of transportation used to get to work¹				
Automobile (no public transportation)	29	33	39	100
Public transportation (no automobile)	47	30	23	100
Walking	19	20	61	100
Cycling		34	58	100
Other	37 ^E	28 ^E	35 ^E	100
Area of residence				
Toronto	36	30	35	100
Montréal	35	28	37	100
Vancouver	34	37	29	100
Ottawa–Gatineau	36	31	33	100
Calgary	38	36	26	100
Edmonton	39	30	31	100

	Dislikes or greatly dislikes	Neutral	Likes or greatly likes	Total
	%			

Commuting duration				
1-29 minutes	16	28	56	100
30-59 minutes	24	34	42	100
60-89 minutes	33	35	32	100
90-119 minutes	40	31	28	100
120 minutes and over	55	26	19	100
Distance from workplace				
1-4 kilometers	16	25	59	100
5-9 kilometers	22	33	45	100
10-14 kilometers	27	35	38	100

15-19 kilometers	32	38	29	100
20-24 kilometers	37	34	29	100
25-29 kilometers	35	40	25	100
30-34 kilometers	43	33	24	100
35-39 kilometers	51	26	23	100
40 kilometers or over	50	28	22	100
Age group				
15 to 24 years	36	31	33	100
25 to 34 years	33	33	35	100
35 to 44 years	30	32	38	100
45 to 54 years	26	32	43	100
55 years and over	27	28	45	100
Highest level of schooling attained				
Less than secondary	23	28	49	100
Secondary diploma	29	30	41	100
College or trade/technical diploma	30	32	38	100
University degree	34	34	32	100
Assessment of paid job				
Greatly dislikes	62	19 ^E	19 ^E	100
Dislikes	56	26	18	100
Neutral	38	42	20	100
Likes	28	32	40	100
Greatly likes	16	22	62	100
1 The mode of transportation used to make the greatest part of the journey (based on time).				
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2005.				



The Contact Professionals Alliance is the largest peer-to-peer Call Centre community in Canada. www.cpacan.com

Founded in 2001, CPA has two objectives:

- ◇ To provide networking and personal development opportunities for Call Centre professionals and
- ◇ To provide in-house and public training to advance the competency and professionalism of Call Centre Operations staff.

CPA has the most comprehensive set of all-Canadian, peer-to-peer training in Canada. CPA also created Canada's unique ***Certificate of Technical Expertise in Contact Centre Management***. More than 800 people in Canada have completed at least one course towards the Certificate.

CPA also offers breakfast sessions, lunch and learns, Call Centre tours, and research reports like this one.

For more information about CPA please contact

Elizabeth Winter

Founder, Contact Professionals Alliance

Telephone: (416) 410 4663 or (866) 465 2233

eliz@cpacan.com