

## Shock and Awe Campaign Impact Survey – Results at a Glance

### Project Introduction

The Shock and Awe Campaign, also known as "The Shock Factor," was a three-year national drowning prevention project that provided Canadian boaters with lifesaving knowledge and awareness to help them respond effectively to accidental immersion/submersion. By emphasizing how easily accidental immersion/submersion can lead to drowning, the program aimed to increase lifejacket wear rates and improve overall boater safety in an effort to reduce drowning incidents and the need for search and rescue (SAR) operations.

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### Campaign Goals

1. Change how boaters perceive the risks associated with not wearing a lifejacket.
  2. Use innovative and compelling technology to improve boating safety education, including the need to develop better preparation, prevention, and performance skills.
  3. Save lives, reduce pain and suffering, and minimize the economic and social burden associated with responding to SAR incidents.
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### Research Objectives

To measure the campaign's impact, a national survey studied boaters'

- **Knowledge** - what they know about accidental immersion.
- **Attitudes** - how they feel about water safety and risks.
- **Behaviours** - whether they wear lifejackets or adopt safer practices.

The study compared pre-campaign knowledge, attitudes and beliefs to those gathered two years into the project's advertising.

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### Key Findings

- **Awareness** - The campaign reached over one-third of (Canadian?/Ontario?) boaters—comparable to top-performing awareness scores in past CSBC research.
  - **Knowledge Gains** - Boaters became more aware of key risks, including:
    - The danger of falling overboard.
    - The shock effect "gasp" reflex that can disrupt breathing.
    - The risks of cold-water exposure and non-fatal drowning.
  - **Attitude Shifts** - Many boaters became more concerned about risks such as non-fatal drowning, cold-water effects, and water inhalation.
  - **Behavioural Intent** - While overall lifejacket wear rates didn't see significant changes, more boaters expressed intent to "always" wear a lifejacket.
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### Who Was Most Impacted?

The campaign made the strongest impression on **females, immigrants, new boaters, weak swimmers, and pleasure power boaters**. These groups showed notable improvements in knowledge, attitudes, and some behaviours.

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### Opportunities for Growth

While the campaign resonated strongly with certain groups, connecting more effectively with Canadian-born boaters—who make up the majority of the target audience—remains an area to enhance. Insights from this study will help refine future approaches to engage this key demographic.

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### What This Means for the Future

The Shock and Awe campaign successfully increased knowledge and influenced attitudes, providing valuable insights for shaping future efforts. Building on this foundation, future campaigns will work to engage Canadian-born boaters better and reinforce lifejacket use among all audiences.

Together, we continue striving for safer waters and fewer drowning incidents across Canada.