

## Five things you should know about the Canadian Census

Long-form? Short-form? Mandatory? Voluntary? So much to know, so little time.

The census begins on May 2 this year and some Canadians may find the process a bit confusing given recent changes to the national tally.

Set yourself up for census success by separating fact from fiction with these myth busters:

1. **The census is mandatory.** All Canadians must complete their census questionnaire, either online, through the mail, in person or by phone. The mandatory long-form census replaces the previous voluntary household survey, as of November 2015.
2. **There are two types of census questionnaires.** Three out of four Canadians will receive a short-form census with 10 questions, while one out of four will receive a long-form census with 60 questions. The short-form census provides basic household information such as address, marital status and number of children, while the long-form census digs deeper into things like citizenship and immigration status, ethnic background, birthplace of parents, education, income, housing, child care and other support payments, and employment status.
3. **The census measures more than just the number of people in Canada and where they live.** Data collected from the census are used to make life easier for people and the communities where they live. For example, things like traffic congestion, overcrowded schools or new or improved hospitals and retirement centres can all be addressed using information from the census.
4. **Your information is protected.** Everything you report is kept confidential and is protected by law. Your identity gets separated from your information and is never attached to it again. Take note of the secure access code on your census letter from Statistics Canada, which you should receive on or around May 2. This code is one of the measures in place to ensure you can securely complete your census questionnaire online.
5. **The results of the census are released in 2017.** Data from the 2016 Census will be released in a very timely fashion. The first data release (for population and dwelling counts) is scheduled for February 8, 2017.

The actual questions, and other information, about the 2016 Census can be found on the Statistics Canada website.