



Red Tape Survey Report

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1. INTRODUCTION

WHO WE ARE

The Surrey Board of Trade supports, promotes, and advocates for commercial and industrial interests for Surrey businesses — the city’s economic drivers. With Surrey’s rapidly growing significance in the Lower Mainland, British Columbia and across Canada, so does the importance of the Surrey Board of Trade’s role to champion for a strong vibrant business community, and to instigate change at the different levels of government.

OUR MEMBERSHIP

Surrey Board of Trade is a powerful link between business, government, and community with a membership of 6,000 member contacts and 60,000 employees.

WHAT WE DO

Since 1918, the Surrey Board of Trade provides businesses and organizations with:

1. Economic opportunity
2. International trade
3. Government advocacy
4. Business connections

Members can further expand their client base with our numerous networking opportunities throughout the year. We provide multiple levels of opportunity for members to promote their brand through business-to-business engagement.

ADVOCACY

We are an independent voice of business that develops positions on relevant topics of concern to our members.

No individual can succeed alone, nor can any business thrive without colleagues and support. The Surrey Board of Trade is here to help. With our many connections to government representatives, we advocate on your behalf.

PURPOSE OF SURVEYS

The Surrey Board of Trade periodically implements surveys, either voluntary opt-in or scientifically rigorous, on a range of topics. Member participation is voluntary and anonymous; however, the data is an invaluable tool for advocacy and policy development.

We thank all those who gave a few minutes of their time to provide information and direction on Surrey Board of Trade’s surveys.

THE RED TAPE SURVEY

We advocate for red tape reduction, defined as excessive bureaucracy, routines, rules, or complexity, which results in delay or unreasonable costs for business. Filing forms and applying for licenses are a part of doing business, however, we want to ensure that it isn't onerous on our members.

This is the fourth Red Tape Survey that captures member experiences from which the Surrey Board of Trade can measure improvement over time. Several emails introducing the survey were sent to the membership as a whole from the end of July to early October. The results are announced at the annual Surrey Development Industry Forum in conjunction with a press release of a summary of findings.

The Surrey Board of Trade conducts the Red Tape Survey annually to track improvements where they occur and identify concerns as they arise for our members. Specifically,

- To gain a deep understanding of our members' regulatory burden;
- To determine any actions, recommendations, or policies that may be required; and,
- To add to our body of knowledge that will lead to better regulation and lower costs for businesses and taxpayers.

This year's Red Tape Survey included questions pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many businesses have experienced hardship as a result of the economic shutdown. Understanding how COVID-19 has impacted business operations, and the confidence in recovery will provide insight whether Government's current policies are perceived as being beneficial or negligible.

The Red Tape Survey was inspired by both the Surrey Board of Trade's Finance and Taxation Policy Team and the Development and Land Use Policy Team.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than 51% of respondents identified as employers. 82% of Surrey Board of Trade member respondents found regulatory requirements of all levels of government had a moderate to major impact on their daily operations, which is up from the 2019 survey by 11%.

Below are recommendations made by the Surrey Board of Trade to governments. Given that our respondents are finding regulatory compliance to impede innovation and growth, it is reasonable to consider that it may likewise create disincentives for the broader business community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consistent with what our members have indicated for all three of the previous iterations of the survey, the Surrey Board of Trade recommends:

1. That governments reduce, where possible, the number of times businesses must report the same information;
2. That all levels of government improve their online service portals and call centre services, using clear language for instructions and ensuring relevant links are up to date and working; and,
3. Better communication and consultation with businesses when developing new regulations.

Impact of compliance	82% reported moderate to major impact on business to comply
Time away from business	58.9% of respondents spend 0–5 hours per week complying with government regulatory requirements
Most costly stage of compliance	34.1% of respondents found preparing the information to be costly 22.4% reported understanding the obligations in the first place to be costly 8.2% of respondents identified that COVID-19 related compliance measures as being costly
Financial costs of compliance	64.9% respondents determined that overall costs have increased in last 2 years
Time taken to fill out forms	70.3% respondents found the time taken to comply has increased in the last 2 years
Filing taxes	14.9% now outsource income tax return filing 33.8% of respondents take between 5-50 hours to file taxes

Agencies with the most red tape

85.7% identified Canada Revenue Agency to have moderate to high levels of red tape
68.3% rated the WorkSafeBC with moderate to high levels of red tape

Measures that would reduce red tape

92.1% identified better communication and consultation with businesses when developing new regulations has potential to help
88.7% suggest improving accessibility to web-based reporting would help reduce time of compliance
84.1% indicated that government regulators should reduce the frequency of reporting requirements to a minimum to reduce the cost of compliance

3. RESULTS SUMMARY

The responses from the respondents will be discussed in this section. There are some questions that will not be fully explored but are available in the appendix. As with 2017, 2018, and 2019 the survey was released in late July to the Surrey Board of Trade’s membership.

Question 1

Respondent’s role in the workforce



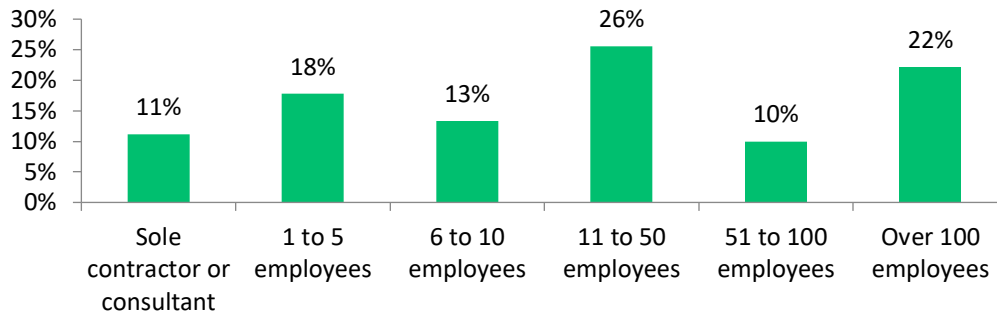
In each survey the Surrey Board of Trade releases, we initially ask a priming question to ensure that the results are indicative of the labour community. There are many businesses that are members ranging from sole contractors to employing hundreds, if not thousands, of people.

Question one asks whether the respondent is an employer, an employee, self-employed, or other. Those who select “Other” as a response are usually indicating that they are retired or unemployed.¹ It is apparent that the respondents are involved in the labour pool in some fashion and therefore qualified to answer the questions within this survey.

¹ In this case, there were two respondents who selected other. Both were recently retired at the time of the survey’s release, and therefore still able to participate in the survey.

Question 2

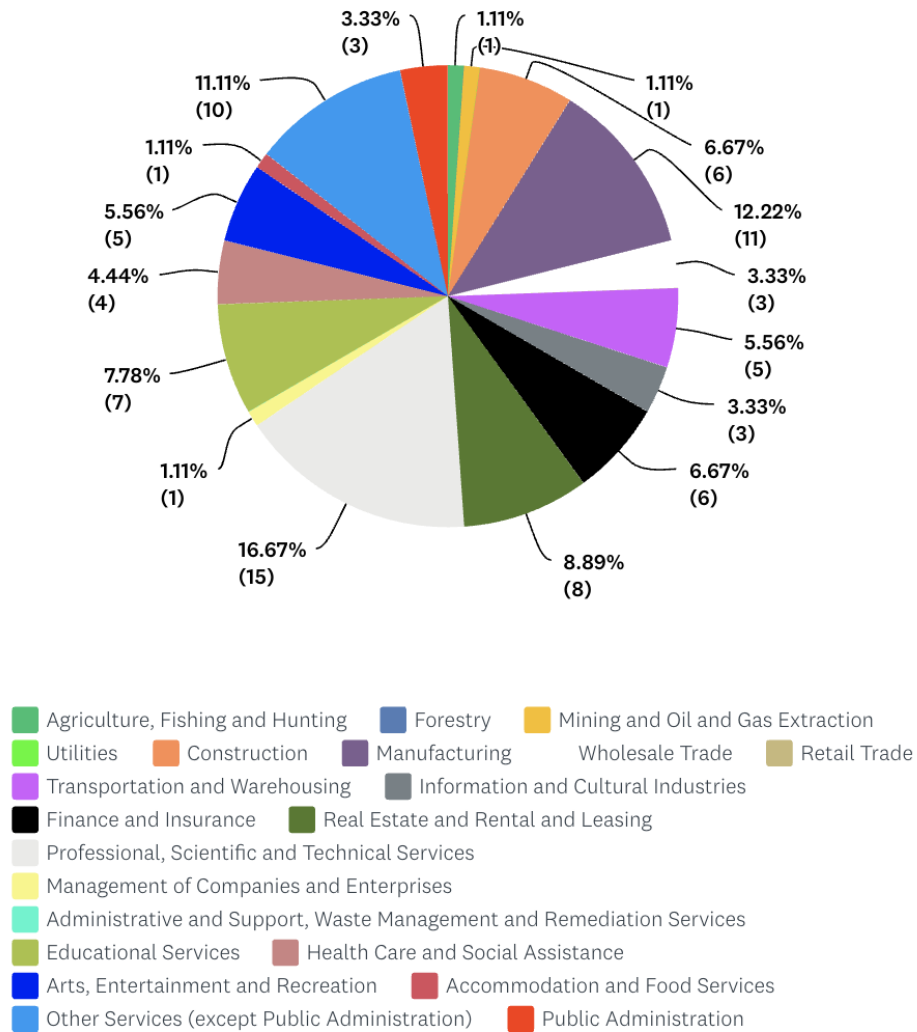
How many individuals are employed by your company?



The majority of the respondents belonged to organizations with 11 to 50 employees. This is indicative of the labour market within Surrey, and the Surrey Board of Trade's membership. The majority of businesses in Surrey are small to medium-sized businesses. These businesses include full time, part time, casual, temporary, and regular contractors.

Question 3

Which category would best describe your company?²



The largest number of respondents at 16.67% are in the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services. This category consists of people such as engineers, computer system designers, accounting and tax service providers, and payroll services, among other professions.

The next highest respondents come from Finance and Insurance service providers. Again, these industries have many businesses as a customer base and understand how limiting red tape is when it comes to remaining competitive.

² NAICS based choices

Question 4

Impact of COVID-19 on business

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
We have experienced a decline in revenues/business or leads	5.7%	12.5%	11.4%	29.6%	40.9%
We have experienced an increase in revenues/business or leads	40.7%	25.6%	19.8%	12.8%	1.2%
Accounts Payables for the months of March, April, May and June were higher than usual	12.8%	32.6%	32.6%	18.6%	3.5%
We had to adjust our pricing strategy	5.9%	22.4%	31.8%	30.6%	9.4%
Operating costs have increased	1.2%	23.3%	30.2%	33.7%	11.6%

With the impact of COVID-19 on their business in mind, we asked respondents to rate the above statements on a scale of 1 to 5.

There were 70.5% of respondents who indicated that they agree or strongly agree with the statement that they have experienced a decline in revenues/business or leads.

As expected, the majority of respondents indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with experiencing an increase in revenues/business or leads. Those that indicated they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they experienced an increase in revenues/business or leads (14%) are in the manufacturing sector, wholesale trade, professional science technical, construction, and financial and insurance services sector.

Accounts payable either reduced or did not change for the majority of the respondents. The economic shutdown may have had a hand to play in this situation.

The need to adjust prices depends on the fact that the business is still operable. Of those that responded to the survey, the majority adjusted their pricing. Some businesses had to raise their prices due to decreased traffic and increased overhead because of COVID-19 but others had to lower their prices in order to remain competitive.

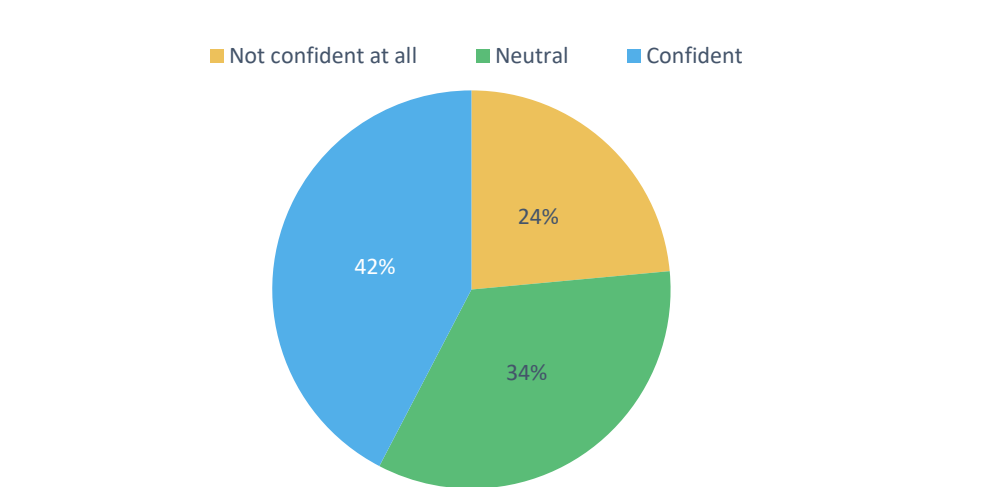
Operating costs have increase for the majority of the respondents of this survey. This is likely due to COVID restrictions, the need for personal protective equipment (PPE) and reduced capacity for certain businesses. Public consumption habits have been altered due to COVID-19, resulting in reduced in-person shopping and more online shopping.

Overall, the impact of COVID-19 is significant. Over the past few months, many surveys have asked how COVID-19 is impacting businesses, and it seems that the trend of high impact

remains. Although some businesses thrive due to the pandemic, there is a vast majority that have struggled or ceased to exist.

Question 5

Confidence in future business and sales



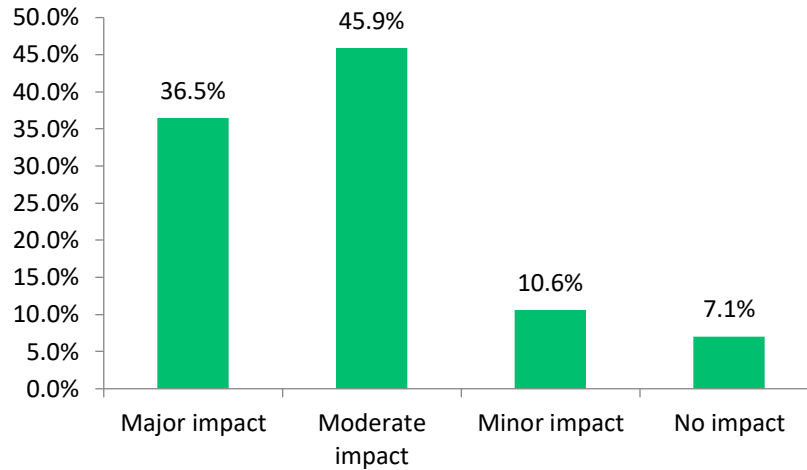
With British Columbia’s pandemic response being internationally lauded as one of the most competent plans, it is no surprise that there is a feeling of confidence in economic recovery and resurgence. These feelings are disproportionately weighted towards those in the 35-60 age bracket. Those younger than 35, and Generation Z in particular, are more negatively affected by the pandemic and have a bleaker outlook on recovery.³ Although many respondents are confident in future business and sales, a slightly lower percentage is wary of the future of business and sales.

Our government officials have touted that we are on the road to recovery. Contrasted with the higher numbers of positive COVID-19 cases in British Columbia, it is expected to be wary of economic recovery claims. Many still believe we are in the thick of the pandemic and will not come out the other end for years to come.

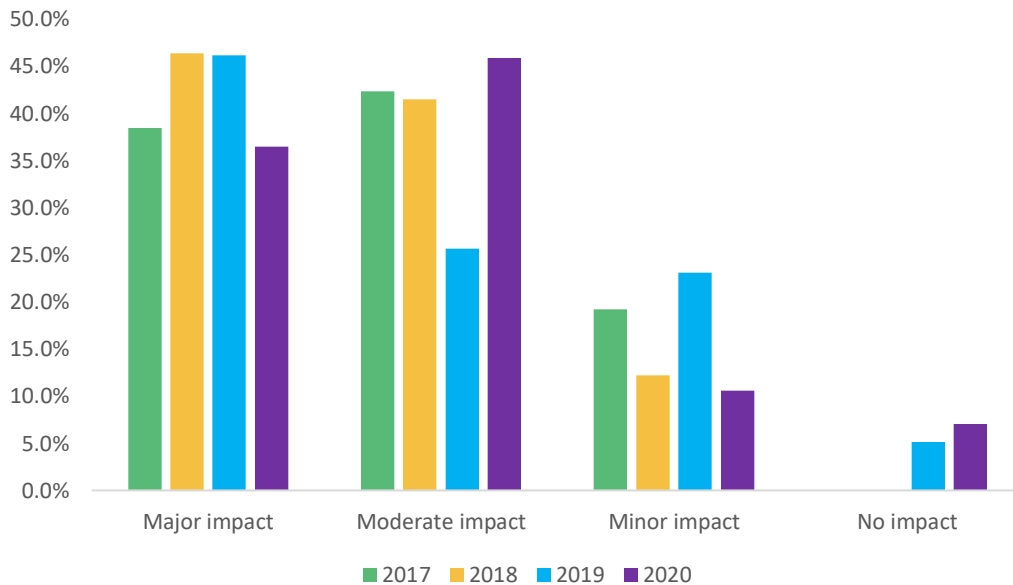
³ <https://mnpdebt.ca/en/resources/mnp-debt-blog/mnp-consumer-debt-index-highlights-divergent-experiences-of-canadians-during-covid>

Question 6

Impact on business of complying with government (federal, provincial, local) regulatory requirements

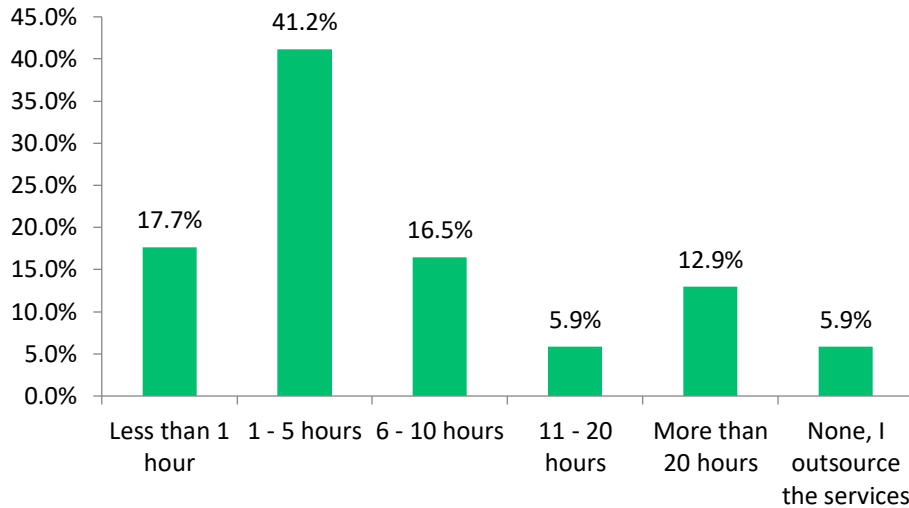


When respondents were asked to rate the impact of complying with government regulatory requirements, over 82% of respondents indicated a moderate to major impact. When looking at the previous year’s impacts and comparing them to 2020 (2017-2020), we see that overall a moderate or major impact is indicated by respondents. There was no respondent in 2017 and 2018 that found there to be no impact on business when complying with government regulatory requirements.

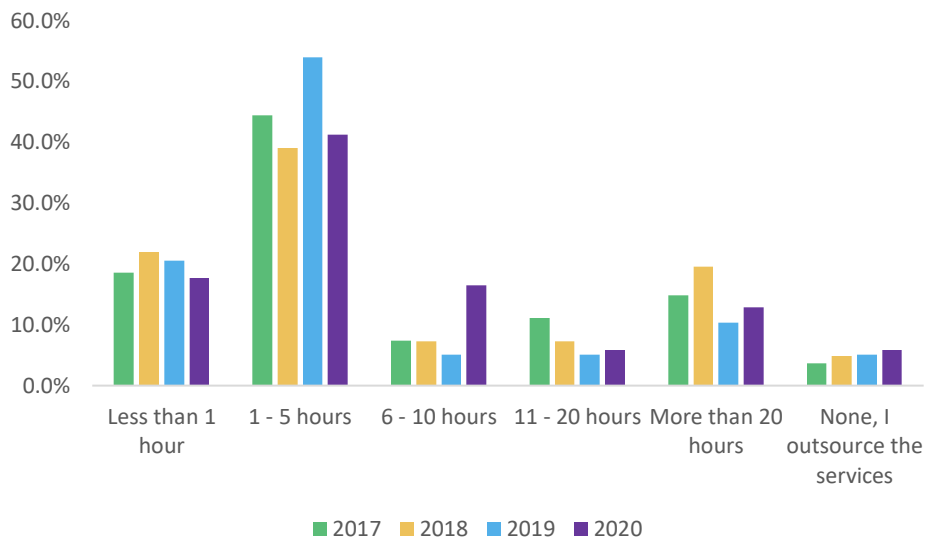


Question 7

Time spent per week on complying with government (federal, provincial, local) regulatory requirements

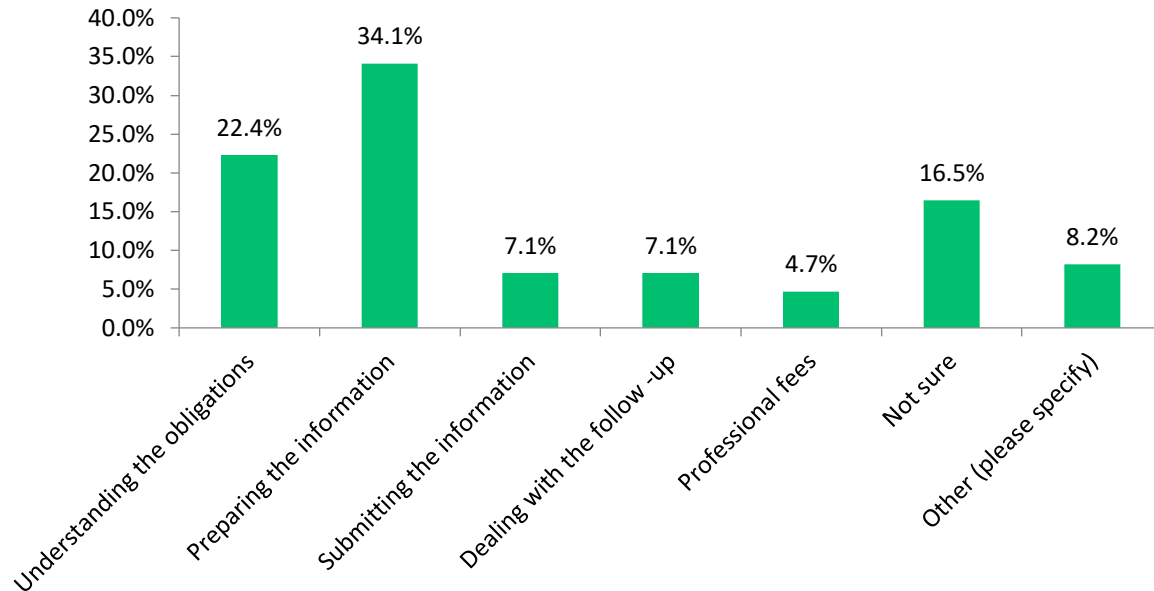


The 2020 responses indicate that the time spend to comply with government requirements is between 0-5 hours (58.9% of respondents). When comparing these figures with 2017 – 2019, we see that it is more or less consistent, although more respondents have indicated that it takes between 6-10 hours to comply in 2020 compared to the previous years. This may be because the processes have not been streamlined enough to ensure that businesses can focus on growth and productivity.



Question 8

Most costly stage of compliance

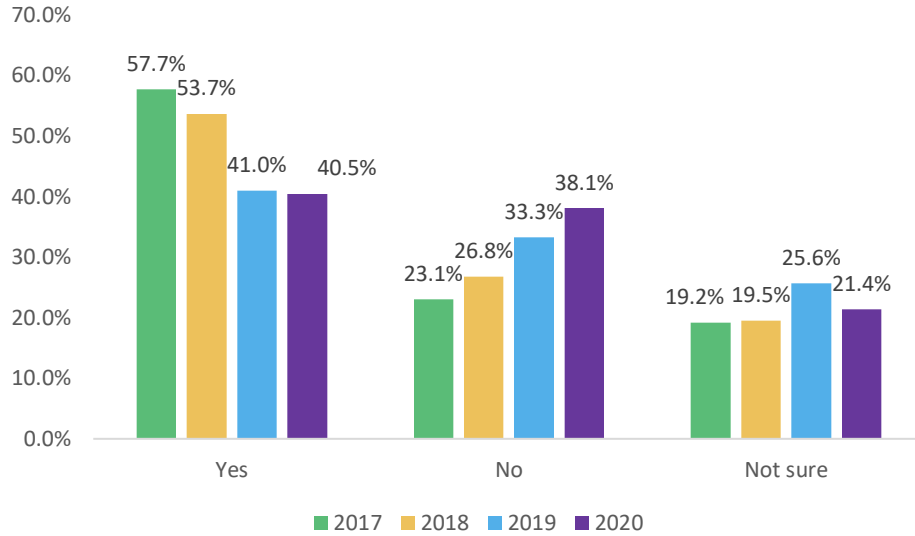


The costliest stage of compliance with regulatory requirements are preparing the information. Interestingly enough, of the 8.2% that chose other – down from last year’s 12.82% – three out of seven specified that COVID-19 has resulted in many new issues. Respondents indicated the following:

- PPE;
- Extra labour needed to provide clean facilities; and,
- Following and figuring out all obligations that have arisen due to COVID-19.

Question 9

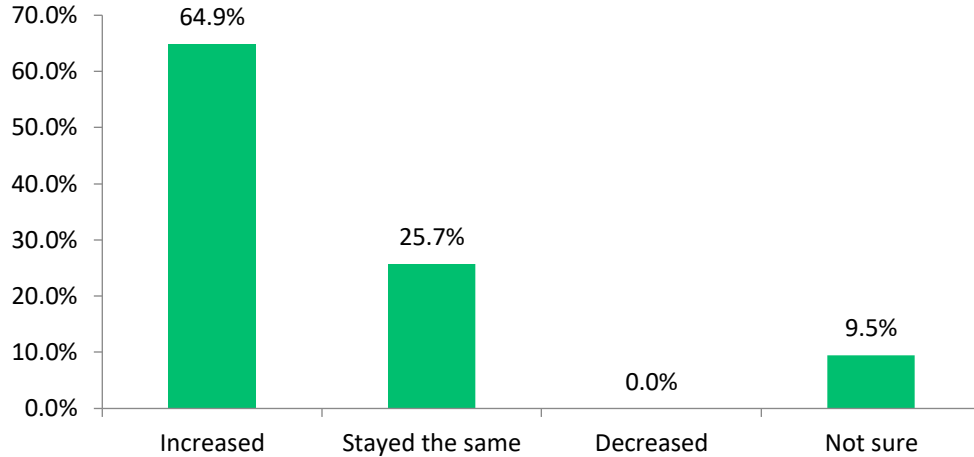
Do you report the same information to different government agencies?



Over the years, it is apparent that fewer businesses are reporting the same information to different government agencies. The responses in 2017 show the highest indication of reporting the same information to multiple agencies, which has steadily declined since then. It can be inferred that government reporting has become somewhat streamlined and resulted in fewer overlapping requirements.

Question 10

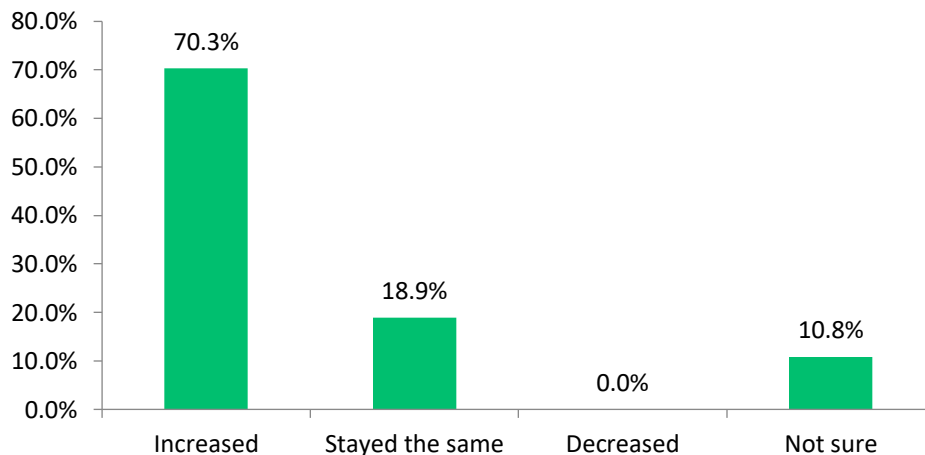
Overall cost of compliance with government regulations in last 2 years



An overwhelming number of respondents indicated that cost of compliance has increased in the last two years. This is consistent with the surveys since 2017. There have been more regulations implemented ranging from permits, environmental assessment practices, consultation practices, and taxes. No respondents indicated that cost of compliance has decreased.

Question 11

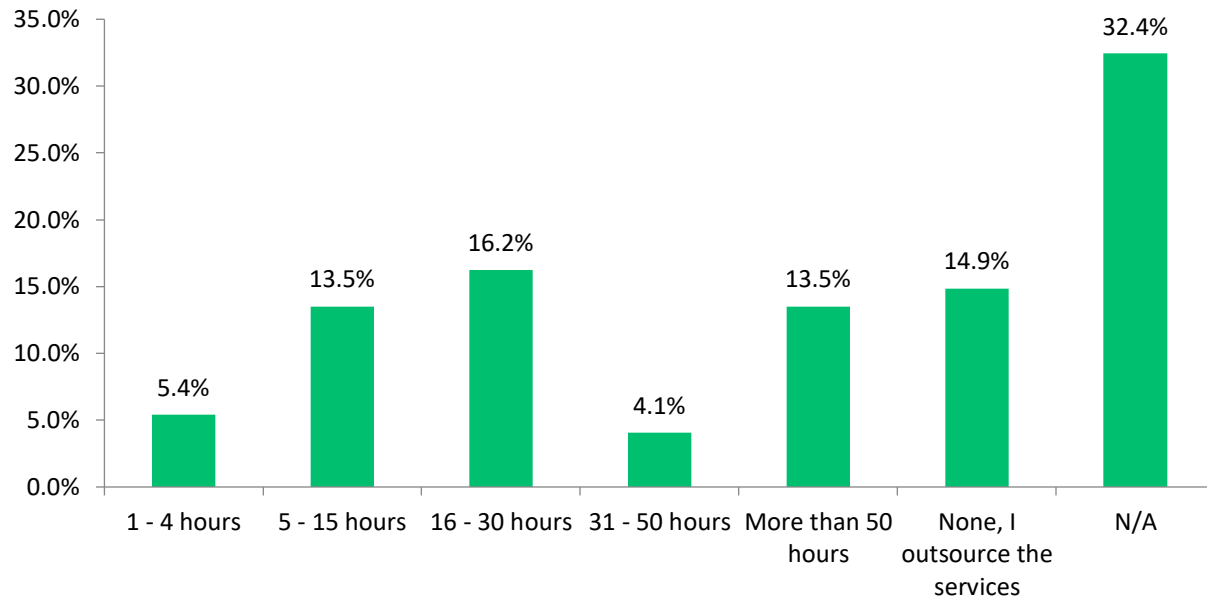
Overall time it takes to comply with government regulations in last 2 years



As with the cost with compliance, the time it takes to comply has increased, according to the membership. The business community is unable to innovate or scale up if they are continuously hammered with new and increasingly complicated regulations and red tape.

Question 12

Time spent on last business income tax return

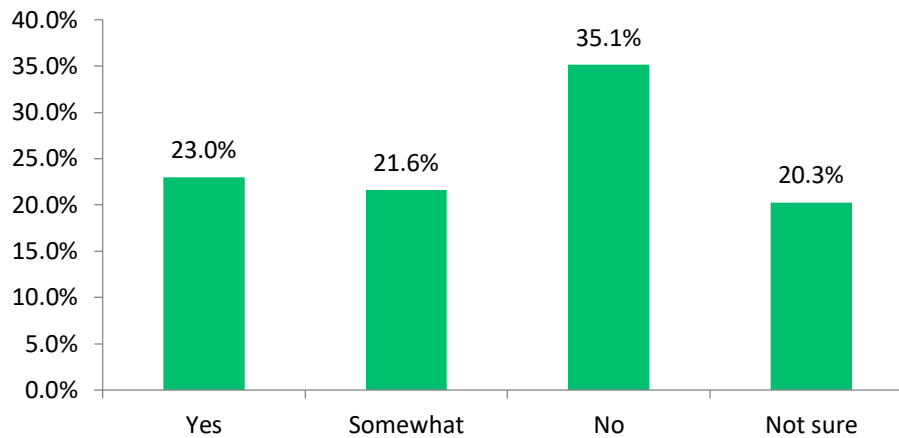


Due to COVID-19, it is not surprising that many respondents (32.4%) have not filed income tax returns when this survey was sent out. Many utilized the extensions afforded to them, although a large number (29.7%) still spent between 5 and 30 hours filing their business income tax return. Many of the respondents are now outsourcing the work to complete income tax returns. This may be seen as a boon for the government as jobs are being created and time is being allocated to innovate and grow the business. There is, however, still a large majority of SMEs that cannot afford to outsource – over 51% – that spend between 1-50+ hours completing business income tax returns.

The government must innovate their way that income taxes can be filed. There are many SMEs that are suffering as a result of this burden.

Question 13

Is compliance with regulatory requirements preventing your business from making changes to grow?

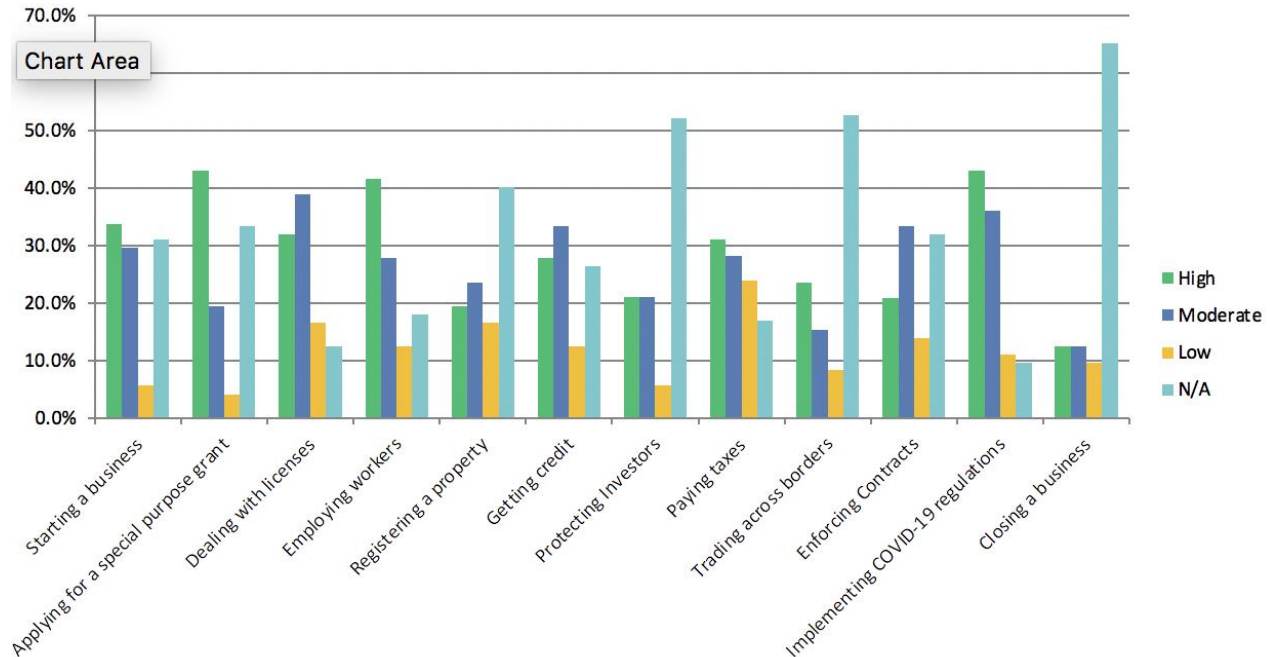


In this question, respondents were asked if regulatory requirements prevent their businesses from growing. An interesting result occurred this year; more respondents indicated that regulatory compliance is not impacting their ability to innovate and grow. There are many who indeed did indicate there is some impact – 44.6% stated that there is an impact.

Although regulations are a necessary part of business and doing business, there is room for cutbacks. If regulations hinder growth, governments need to take a look at policy and assess whether the regulations are impeding growth and Canada’s competitive edge in a globalized market. Assessing our regulations against that of other countries is a necessary part of global growth and driving investment.

Question 14

Rating the cost of compliance



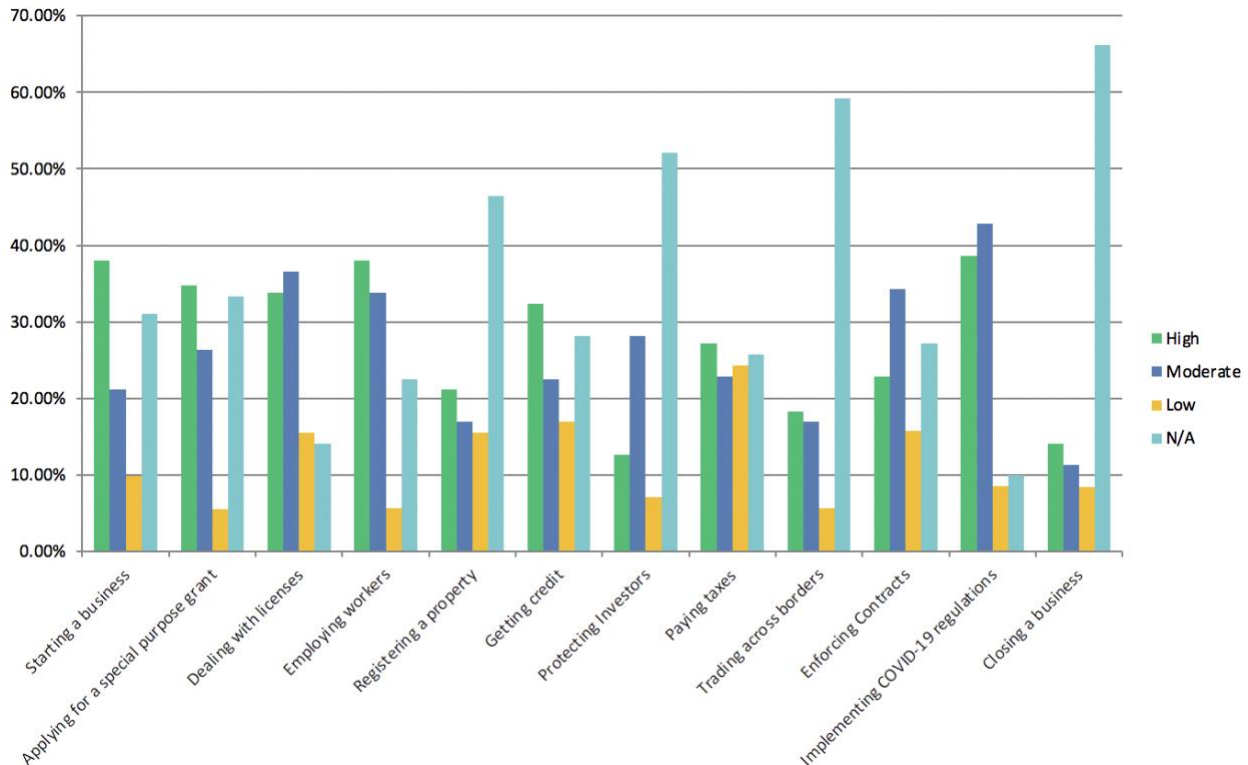
Respondents were asked to rate the options on how costly it is to comply. The options given were high, moderate, low, and not applicable. It is evident that the cost of compliance for applying for a special purpose grant (62.5%)⁴ – something that more businesses must do in light of COVID-19 - and employing workers (70.8%) as incredibly burdensome. But the factor that negatively affects businesses in terms of cost is paying taxes. Over 84% of respondents found that paying taxes results in a moderate to high cost.

This year, we added a question about COVID-19. Implementing COVID-19 regulations was selected as the second-highest cost to business at 79.2%.

⁴ Special purpose grants can include funding requests from government agencies and the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA), and various loans and grants [provided by the Government of British Columbia](#)

Question 15

Rating the time it takes to comply



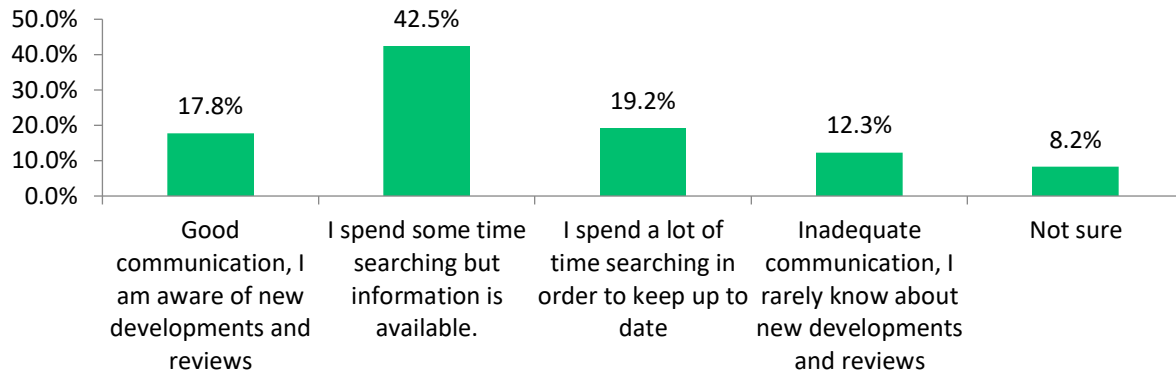
Respondents were asked to rate how long it takes to comply with the options listed from high, moderate, low, and not applicable. The respondents indicated that implementing COVID-19 regulations takes the most time at 81.4% indicating the time it takes is high or moderate. The rules and regulations have evolved since the beginning of the pandemic in mid-March 2020 as more information has been released.

Additionally, many felt that employing workers was time consuming. When the economy opened back up, Canada’s Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) was seen as an inhibitor to finding and employing individuals. The attractiveness of the CERB while offering little for employers to compete with the fund provided by CERB created an economic climate that did not allow for prompt return to work. The Federal Government began phasing out CERB from August 20 to September 26, after which individuals were transitioned to an enhanced Employment Insurance (EI) system. They Federal Government continued to provide the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), which made return to work more attractive.

If another pandemic-like situation occurs, Government needs to implement an economic shutdown on a case-by-case basis based on which sectors will act as vectors for disease transmission. A full outright shutdown nearly crippled the economy and has devastated livelihoods across Canada.

Question 16

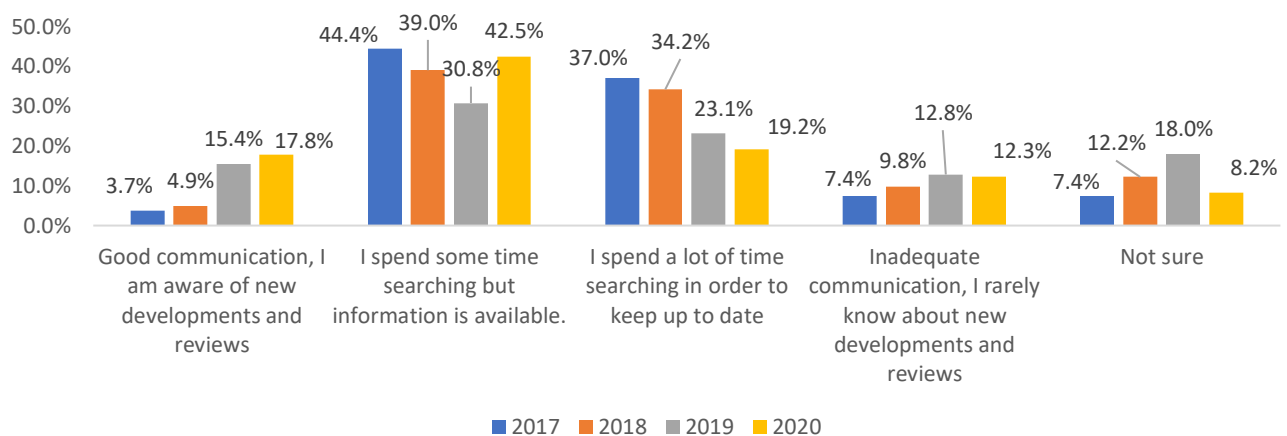
Communication effectiveness with federal government



The Federal Government is the best equipped to disseminate knowledge compared to local and provincial governments. The Federal Government has the most capital available to provide information to provinces and municipalities, that would then disseminate the information further using their own communication mechanisms.

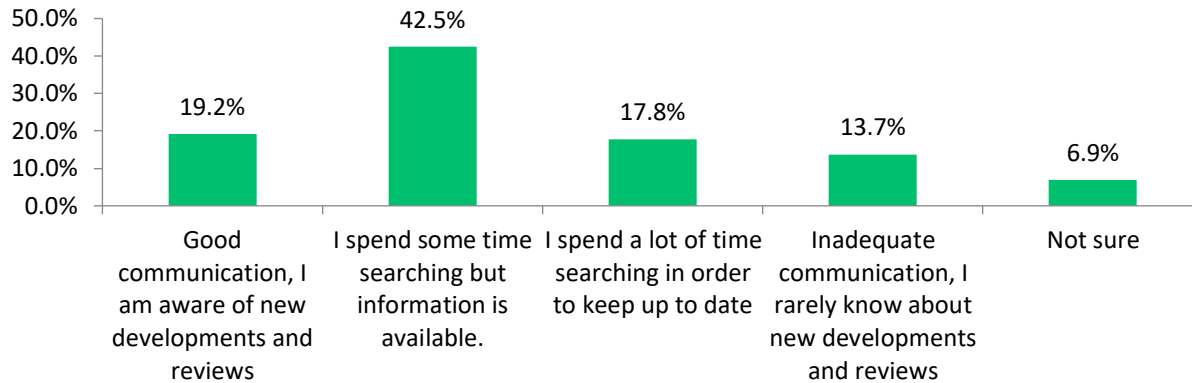
There are, however, shortcomings. The fact that over 31.5% of the respondents indicated that they spend a lot of time searching in order to keep up to date and that they rarely know about new developments and reviews reveals that the government still needs to improve their capabilities.

Over the years, it is apparent that communication is getting better. When comparing 2020 with the previous years, more respondents indicate that the communication levels are good. COVID-19 has made many more people aware and wanting more information. COVID-19 rules and regulations are at the forefront of the news, and the Government is being watched much more closely as a result.



Question 17

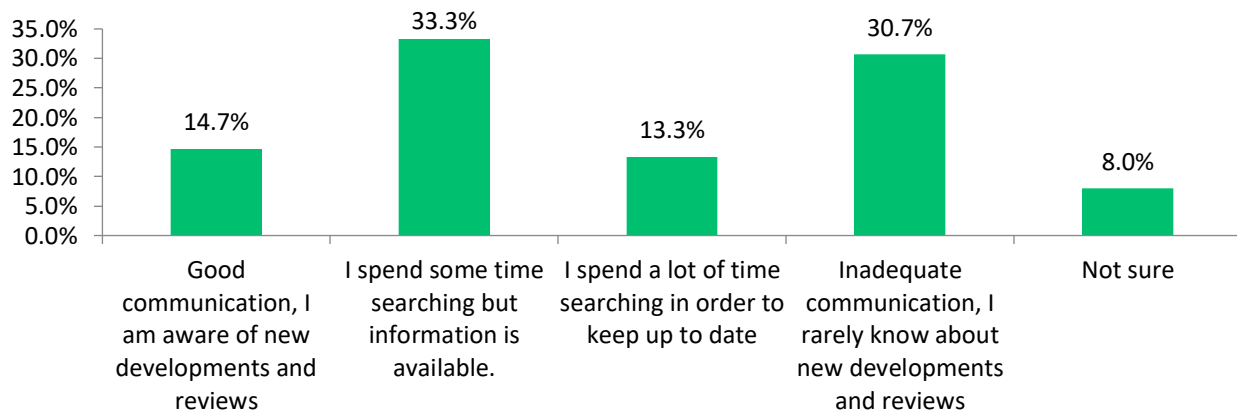
Communication effectiveness with provincial government



At the provincial level, a large majority believe the Government is relatively effective at disseminating information. Over 61% believe that information is readily available or that the Government is effective at communicating information. There are those that believe the Government could be more effective – over 31%. Government at the provincial level should continue to research ways to disseminate information broadly other than news blasts that not everyone subscribes to or is even aware of.

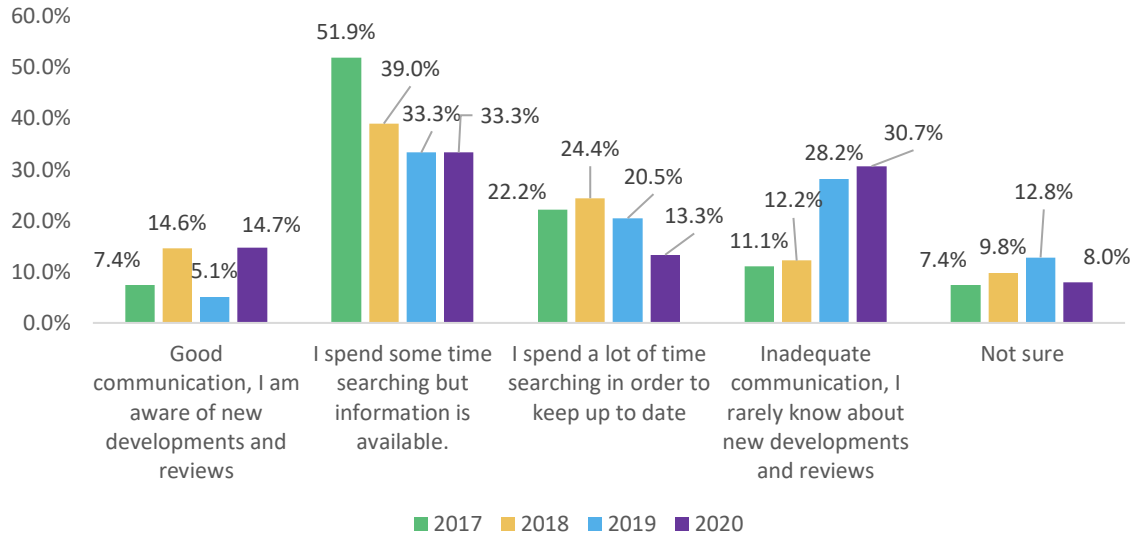
Question 18

Communication effectiveness with local government



While 48% indicated that the City of Surrey offers good communication, and respondents only spend some time searching for information, 44% indicated that the information dissemination mechanisms are lacking. The City of Surrey can become more effective in providing information to the public and the business community.

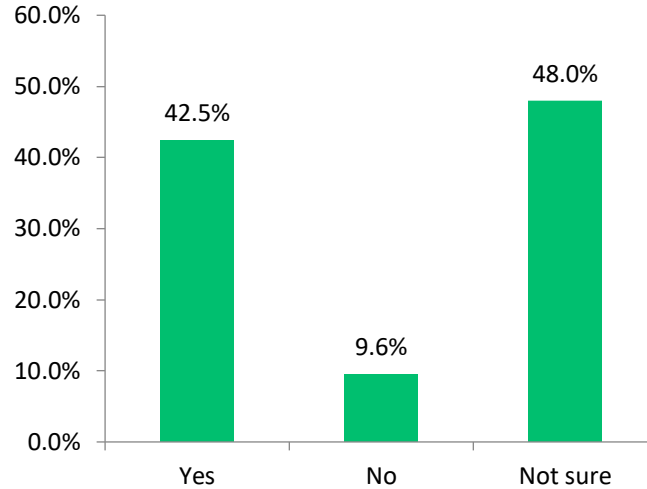
There are ways to relay information more effectively other than through email and the newspaper. The local government could utilize transformative information transfer processes such as signs along major highways and roadways. Many cities have large electronic billboards that display real-time information.



Historically, the City has not been consistent with their communications. When examining how many respondents chose that the City’s communication efforts are inadequate, there has been a rising trend, while those indicating that they spend some time searching for information has been steadily declining but even over the last two years.

Question 19

Opportunity to streamline reporting and make it less of a burden on business



The Government has an issue with redundancy and inefficiency. There are many options to create efficiency. Such solutions include streamlining, utilizing technology effectively, and improving the lines of communication.

Over 42% of the respondents of this year's survey indicated that there is an opportunity to streamline reporting.

Interestingly, there were many (48%) that were unsure whether there was any opportunity to streamline reporting. This may be due to the fact that there were some respondents who were employees and do not deal with the reporting aspect.

Additionally, there were 9.6% that indicated streamlining would not be possible to create less of a burden indicates how far Government needs to go to actually alleviate the burden.

Question 20

Suggestions to streamline reporting

As a follow-up to the previous question, this year we asked for recommendations on what streamlining would look like to the respondent. Recommendations included:

- streamlining the process to the lowest common denominator - clarity and surety is essential
- government consulting industry before policy positions are taken and announcements are made to ensure that policy is effective and efficient
- a one window system for paying all taxes (municipal, provincial, federal, payroll, property, etc.)
- a 2 for 1 regulatory system⁵
- ensure that local, provincial, and federal agencies are able to effectively share information and communicate
- review reporting requirements to ensure that the same question is not asked in multiple forms going to the same agency for the same project
- emails going straight to businesses
- daily/weekly emails and social media posts
- one single portal for all information on COVID-19 compliance for local, provincial, and federal governments
- regulatory review and overhaul

⁵ The respondent indicated that this would be similar to a system brought in by Christy Clark

Question 21

Greatest impact on reducing the cost of compliance

	1 - Definitely!	2 - Would probably help	3 - Possible	4 - Not really	5 - No impact	Not sure
Reduce the frequency of reporting requirements to a minimum	39.7%	27.0%	17.5%	6.4%	3.2%	6.35%
Agencies sharing information and making sure there are no duplicate information requirements	48.4%	20.3%	9.4%	12.5%	3.1%	6.25%
Better communication and consultation with businesses when developing new regulations	50.8%	30.2%	11.1%	1.6%	1.6%	4.76%
Improving accessibility of web-based reporting	59.7%	21.0%	8.1%	4.8%	1.6%	4.84%
One agency which collects all required information	51.6%	18.8%	10.9%	4.7%	6.3%	7.81%

Respondents were asked which of the above options would reduce the cost associated with compliance to regulations the most. The respondents were able to rate these options on a scale of one to five with one definitely helping and five having no impact. The respondents were also able to indicate if they were unsure of the impact.

Better communication and consultation with businesses when developing new regulations is key to reducing the cost of compliance where 92.1% agreed that it would provide some sort of benefit. 88.7% of respondents indicated that improving accessibility of web-based reporting would reduce costs of compliance. It would be imperative to businesses that all updates are customer focused. Coming in third, reducing the frequency of reporting requirements to a minimum would be effective in reducing costs.

A few respondents chose 'other' as an option. These respondents indicated the following:

- WorkSafeBC, bylaw, and CRA should understand the industry they are monitoring, reviewing, auditing.
- Start-ups and new businesses require so much reporting that they cannot focus on stability.

Question 22

Level of red tape in dealing with federal and provincial regulatory authorities

	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)	39.7%	46.0%	7.9%	6.4%
Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA)	33.9%	16.1%	4.8%	45.2%
PST	22.0%	25.4%	11.9%	40.7%
BC Business Registry	17.7%	30.7%	29.0%	22.6%
My LTSA - Land Titles Directory	14.5%	16.1%	21.0%	48.4%
BC Assessment	19.4%	24.2%	17.7%	38.7%
WorkSafeBC	33.3%	34.9%	12.7%	19.1%
Workers Compensation Board (WCB)	30.2%	25.4%	11.1%	33.3%

Over 85% of respondents indicated that the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has moderate to high levels of red tape at the federal level. The unnecessary audits, the time it takes to gather information, and the difficulty in getting answers from the CRA is a hinderance on business and economic growth.

There were over 68% of respondents that indicated WorkSafeBC as being overly onerous on businesses at the provincial level by ranking the agency as having moderate to high level of red tape.

We asked if there were other agencies that had excessive red tape.

Respondents indicated the following agencies:

- Provincial Health Authorities
- Health Canada
- Passenger Transportation Board
- Passenger Transportation Branch
- ICBC
- Industry Training Authority
- Technical Safety BC
- The City of Surrey's permitting office for renovations

Question 23

Level of red tape in dealing with various local government regulations

	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
Building & Construction Permits - From submission to completion	46.0%	9.5%	6.4%	38.1%
Building & Construction - Inspections	44.4%	7.9%	9.5%	38.1%
Building & Construction - Fees	39.7%	11.1%	11.1%	38.1%
Building & Construction - Public Hearing Process	41.3%	7.9%	6.4%	44.4%
By-Law & Licensing Forms - Business Licenses	30.2%	30.2%	19.1%	20.6%
By-Law & Licensing Forms - All Others	28.6%	28.6%	15.9%	27.0%
Engineering Services - All	39.7%	11.1%	9.5%	39.7%
City Services (Sanitation, Waste, Water)	30.7%	17.7%	19.4%	32.3%
City Online Services	27.0%	20.6%	27.0%	25.4%
Property Tax/Payment Services	23.8%	15.9%	33.3%	27.0%
Complaints & Resolutions	35.5%	17.7%	16.1%	30.7%

The building and construction industry in the local economy has had chronic issues related to getting projects approved and completed. Due to COVID-19, the City of Surrey has made many innovative changes to streamline operations and moving towards online permitting processes. Unfortunately, there is still much to do for other business services the City provides.

The top three red tape choices for individuals when combining high and moderate level selections are:

- By-Law & Licensing Forms - Business Licenses (60.3%);
- By-Law & Licensing Forms - All Others (57.1%); and,
- Building & Construction Permits - from submission to completion (55.6%).

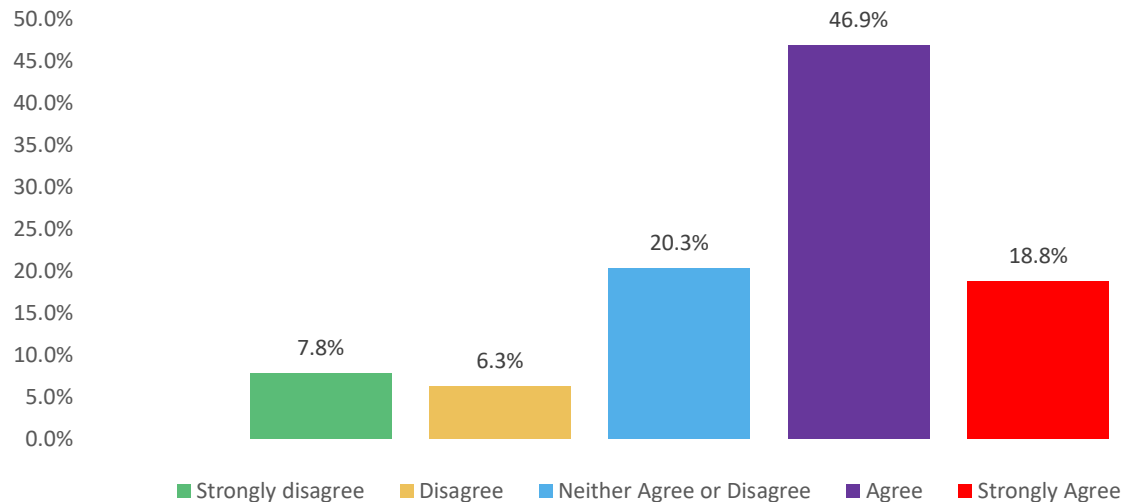
The three options selected that had the least red tape are:

- Property Tax/Payment Services (33.3%);
- City Online Services (27%); and,
- City Services (Sanitation, Waste, and Water) (19.4%).

Overall, the red tape at the local level associated with building is leading to housing insecurity. The majority of the results lead to high costs to build, which are then pushed onto the consumer.

Question 24

Change in cost of compliance or time spent on regulatory compliance since COVID-19



We asked respondents if they think cost of compliance or time spent on regulatory compliance has increased since COVID-19. Unsurprisingly, the majority were in agreement with 65.6% stating that they agree or strongly agree.

Question 25

Final thoughts

As we have in previous iterations of the survey, we asked if respondents had any further suggestions or comments that were not discussed in previous questions. Key themes emerged in the responses offered. They include:

- Regulatory branches and agencies should be honest with the wait times and time it takes for approval;
- Border closures will have drastic impacts on the housing industry as immigration is a key component to increasing supply;
- Sole proprietorships and property owners that lease buildings have not been supported through the pandemic;
- One agency collecting information is best. But here in surrey within municipality it takes lot of time (weeks to months) for one department to get information from other department while working in the same office building; and,
- We need a creative solution to all border travel, like on-site COVID-19 testing to allow border crossings in order to help reopen the economy.

3. CONCLUSION

All industry levels have been impacted by COVID-19 and, as a result, have had to adapt in a time of economic uncertainty. The Surrey Board of Trade concludes local, provincial and federal governments must reduce red tape. The business community is unable to innovate or scale up if they are continuously hammered with new and increasingly complicated regulations and red tape. The members that experience the high amounts of red tape include the construction and the professional services sector, although the service sector (including restaurants, and others) has seen an increase in regulatory burden as a result of COVID-19.

An overwhelming number of respondents indicated that cost of compliance has increased in the last two years. All levels of government need to reassess their policies and regulations in order to provide an economic environment that permits growth and innovation. Without drastic change, our job creators will shut down, economic prosperity will dwindle, and industry will seek greener pastures in less regulatory-intensive countries.

More than half of respondents spend between 1-50+ hours on business income tax returns. The government must innovate the way that incomes taxes can be filed, and how data is collected as SMEs are suffering as a result of this overburden. Governments can see that there is opportunity to increase innovation and growth in the business community by creating efficiencies in reporting and paying taxes.

Canada's competitive edge is dwindling. In light of an economic slowdown due to COVID-19 and a looming recession, Canada's competitive edge is only growing weaker. It is for this reason that the Surrey Board of Trade calls on the political leaders of the local, provincial, and federal governments to take action and preserve the economy.

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