



KING COUNTY
FLOOD CONTROL
D I S T R I C T

GREEN RIVER VALLEY FLOODING PUBLIC AWARENESS SURVEY

Prepared by Cocker Fennessy, Inc.
September 17, 2009



Objectives

- Assess public awareness & concern of flood risk
- Identify actions residents are taking to prepare
- Determine communication practices and preferences
- Provide information about Howard Hanson Dam situation and flooding risk



Methodology

- Collaborated with local, state and federal agency partners to inform survey methodology and design
- Statistically-valid telephone survey of 451 residents in the Green River Valley (including Auburn, Kent, Tukwila, Renton and unincorporated King County)
- Respondents selected at random (random digit dialing sample)
- Margin of error is ± 4.6 at the 95% confidence interval
- Survey fielded August 17 – 27, 2009
- Conducted interviews in English and Spanish

Key Findings

STRENGTHS

- Most (75%) have heard about the flood risks associated with the Howard Hanson Dam (HHD)
- When asked to recall information about the flood risks associated with HHD, many shared accurate and detailed information
- After hearing about risks associated with the HHD, a large majority (82%) feel it is somewhat or very important to prepare for flood season
- For those who are aware of the risk, most have heard about it because of direct mail (42%)

Key Findings

CHALLENGES

- Few are very concerned about flooding (15%) and a majority believe they are in a low risk area (75%)
- A large minority (18%) do not plan to do anything to prepare for flooding and many have not thought about it (24%)
- Few (12%) have flood insurance
- 67% feel they know what to do in the event of an emergency
- 26% feel their community is prepared for a flood emergency

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Key Findings

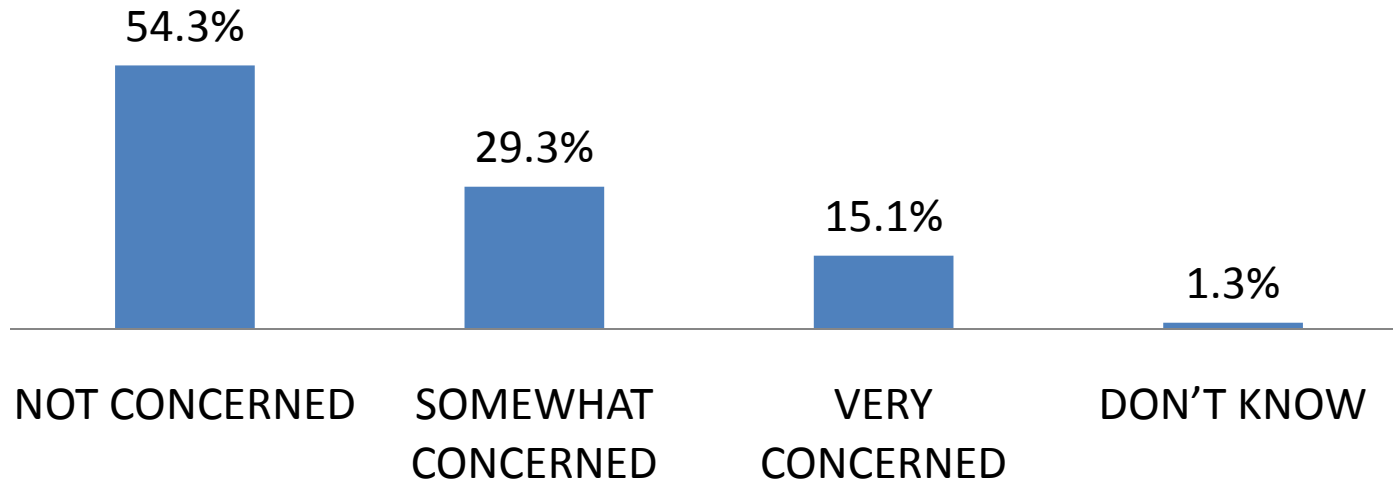
CHALLENGES (CONTINUED)

- Information source preferences differ significantly depending upon the type of information sought and when it is needed
- Some demographic subgroups may need additional assistance. For example, older people are currently less likely to prepare for flooding season. Also, those with special medical needs (7-9%) may require additional assistance in the event of an emergency.
- In addition, those who are new to the area, renters and those who have not experienced an emergency before may need additional attention



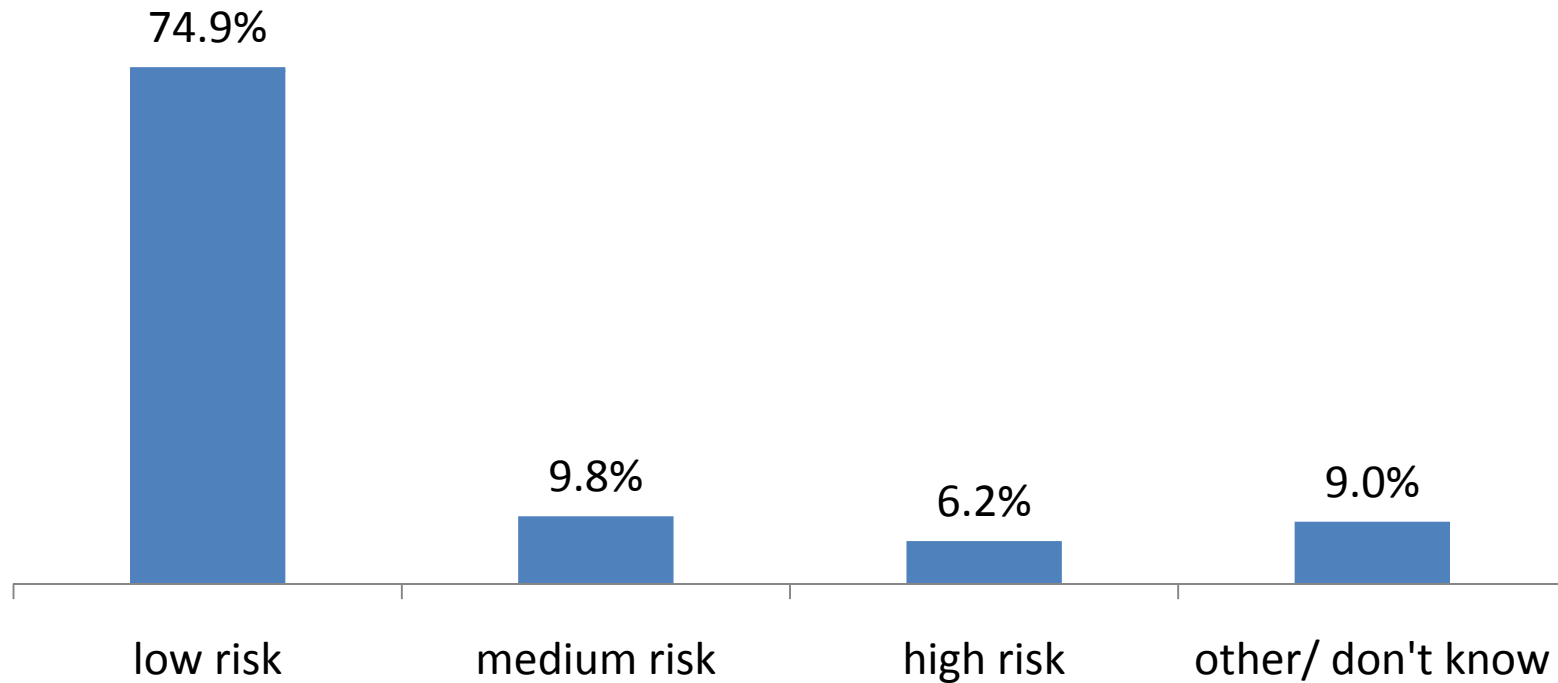
Fifteen percent are very concerned about flooding risk in the Green River Valley.

With regard to floods, would you say you are...?



Most (75%) describe the risk of flooding as “low”.

To the best of your knowledge, how would you describe the risk of flooding where you live?



Those with a high income and high levels of education are the most likely to feel there's a low risk

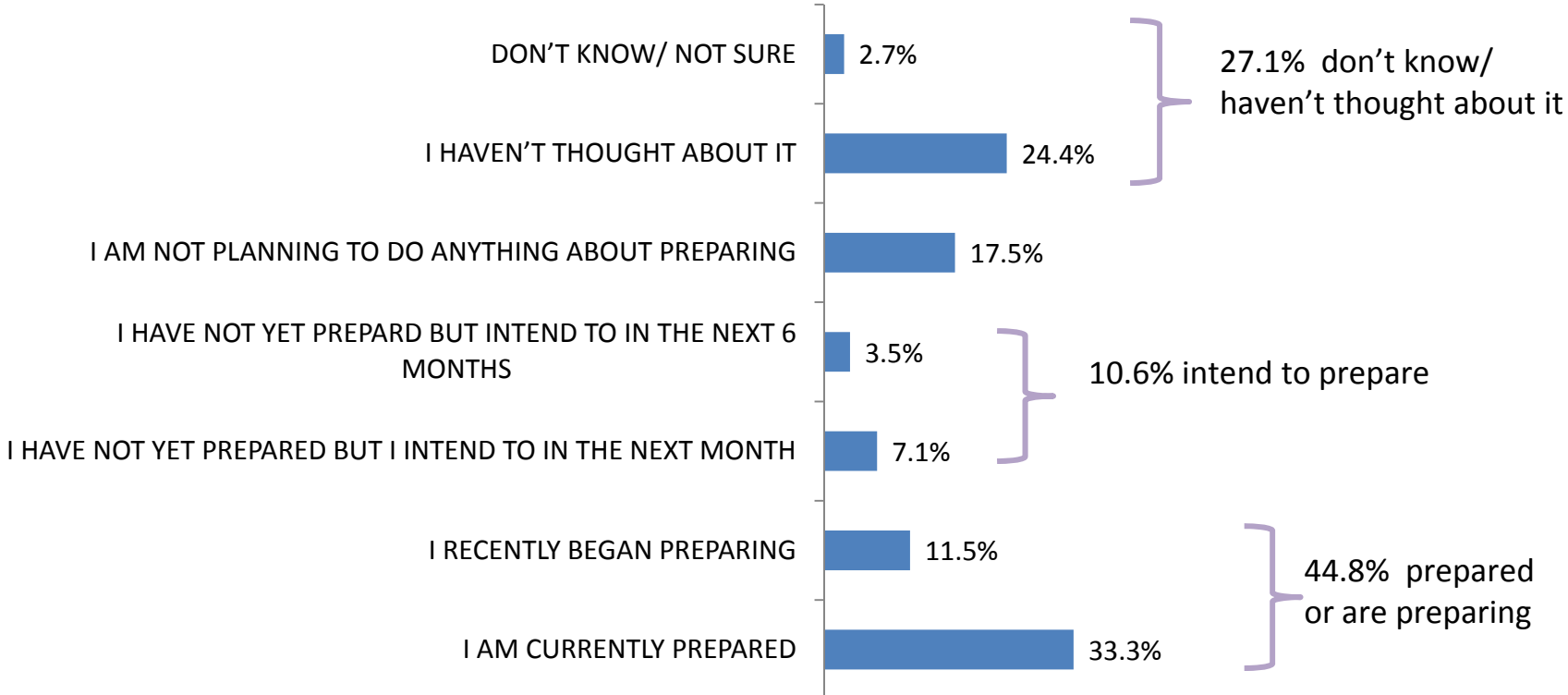
Cocker Fennessy, Inc.

Those living in a flood plain and closest to waterways are more likely to feel there's a high risk.



Nearly 45% feel they are already prepared or recently began to prepare for flooding. Those who have been involved in an emergency are more likely to be prepared. Those living in a flood plain are *not* more likely to be prepared.

In thinking about preparing for a major flooding event, which best represents your preparedness?

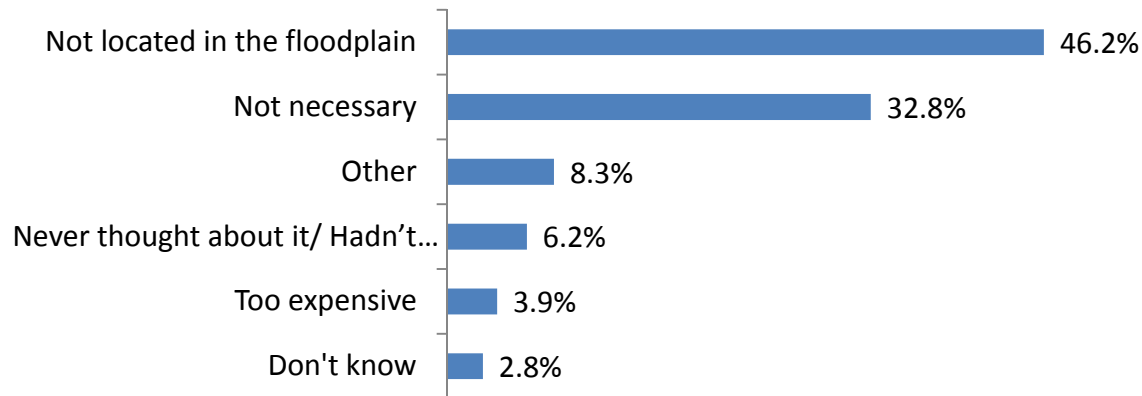


Only 12% have flood insurance. Reasons for lack of coverage include not living in the floodplain and feeling it's not necessary.

Does your household have flood insurance?

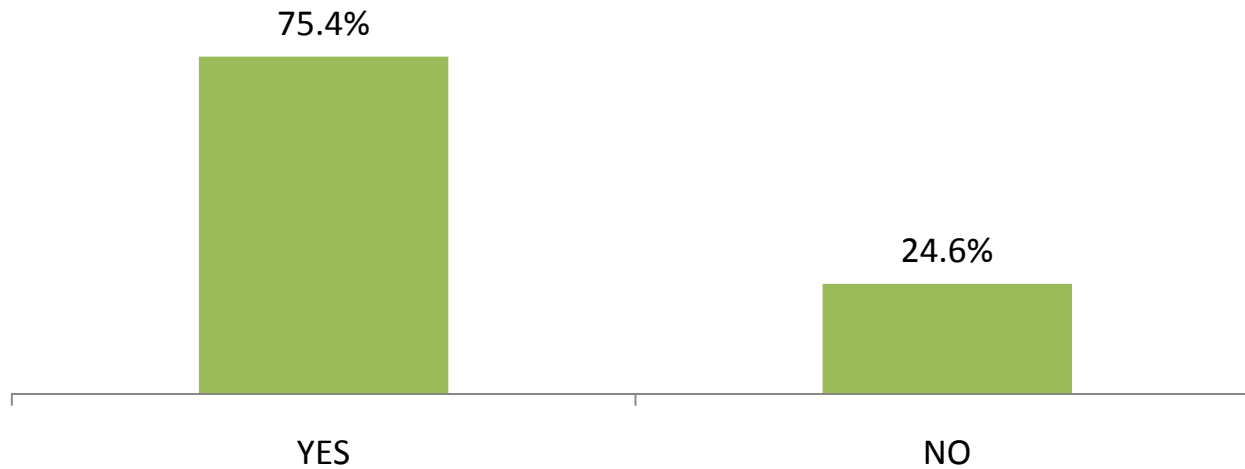


What is the main reason your household doesn't have flood insurance?



Most (75%) have heard about Howard Hanson Dam flood risks.

Have you heard anything about flood risks associated with the Howard Hanson Dam?



LIKELY TO BE AWARE

- Older
- Educated
- Higher Income
- Have Pets
- Lived in area 6+ years
- Live in flood plain
- Live close to river, stream or creek
- Have a pet or animal

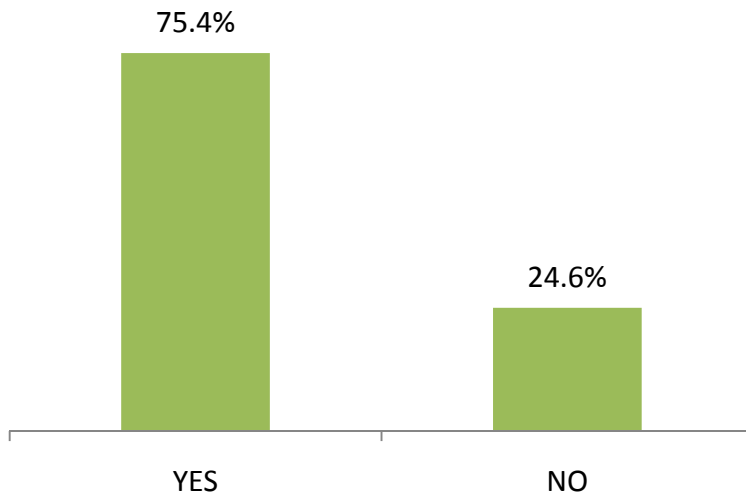
LESS LIKELY TO BE AWARE

- Younger
- Non-white
- Lower-income

After hearing a detailed statement about flood risks, recall increased slightly (4%).

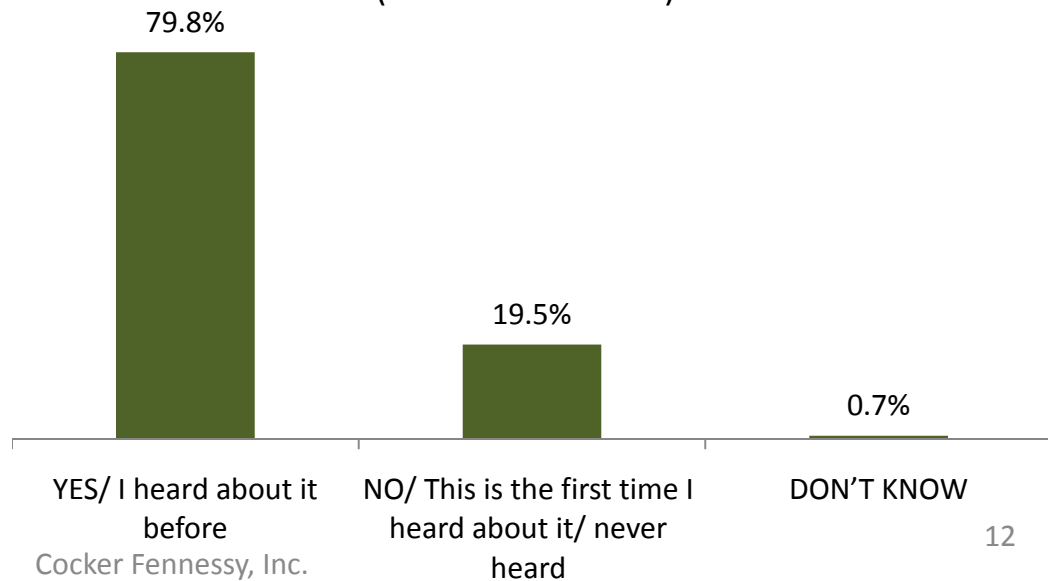
Have you heard anything about flood risks associated with the Howard Hanson Dam?

(PRE-STATEMENT)



“Residents and businesses below the Howard Hanson Dam in the Green River Valley are strongly encouraged to prepare now for a higher risk of flooding. The increased risk is due to seepage discovered at the dam after record flooding last winter. Until the problem can be fixed, the flood water storage capacity behind the dam is restricted. If King County receives heavy and prolonged rain this flood season (October through March), many homes, businesses and transportation corridors that don’t typically see flood water – including parts of Auburn, Kent, Renton, Seattle and Tukwila – could be inundated. Evacuations are possible. Transportation routes could be disrupted. And power outages and sewer back-ups are possible.”

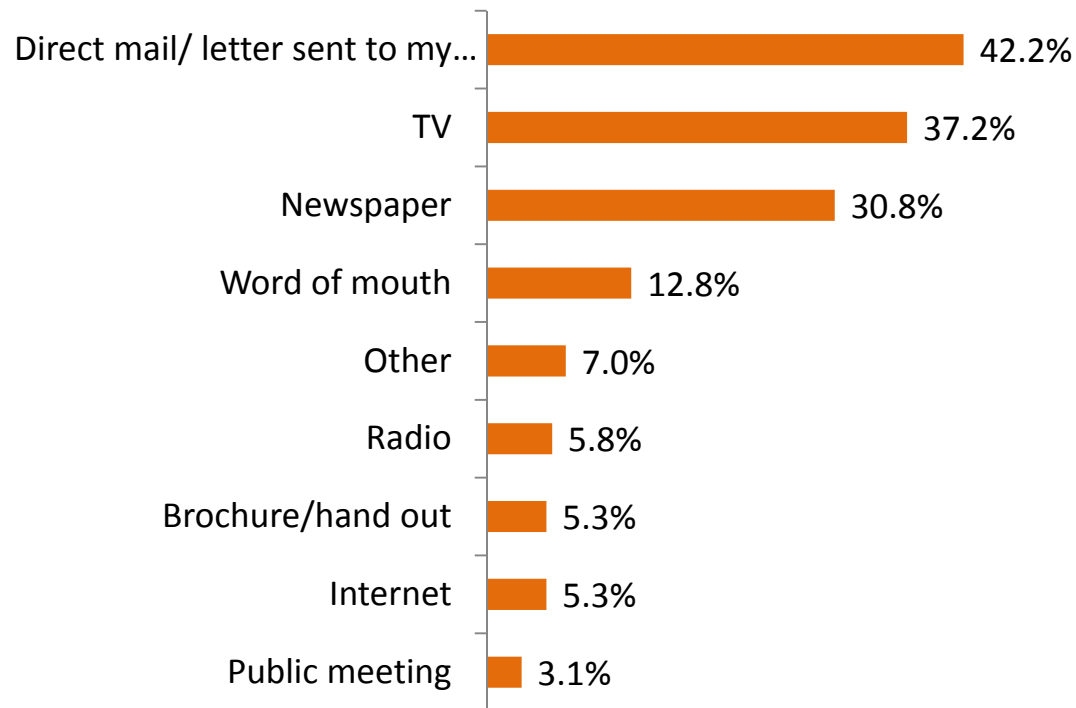
Prior to me reading this statement, had you heard anything about this flood risk?
(POST-STATEMENT)





Direct mail, television and newspapers are the leading sources of information about flood risks associated with the Howard Hanson Dam.

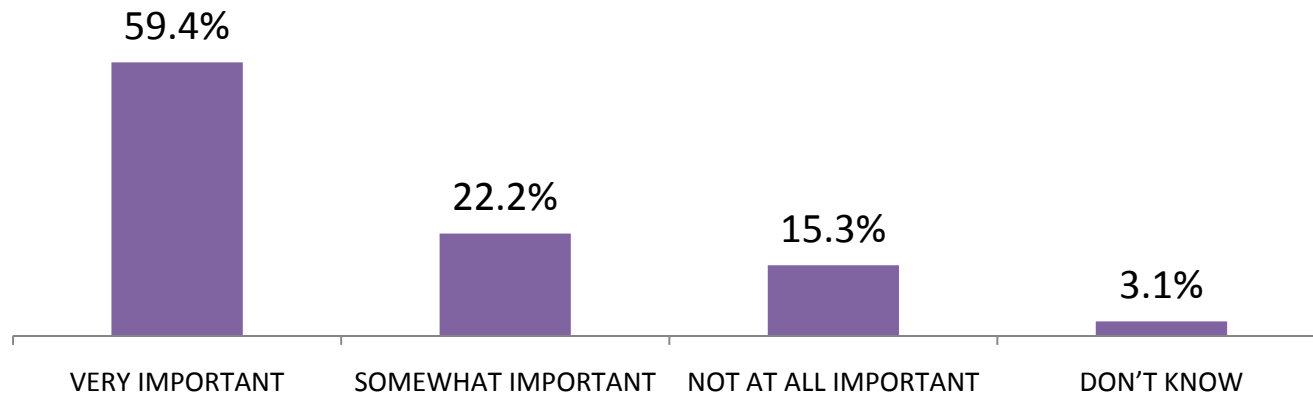
If you heard about this increased flood risk before, where did you get this information?





After hearing about flood risks associated with the Howard Hanson Dam, most (82%) believe it is very or somewhat important to prepare for the coming flood season.

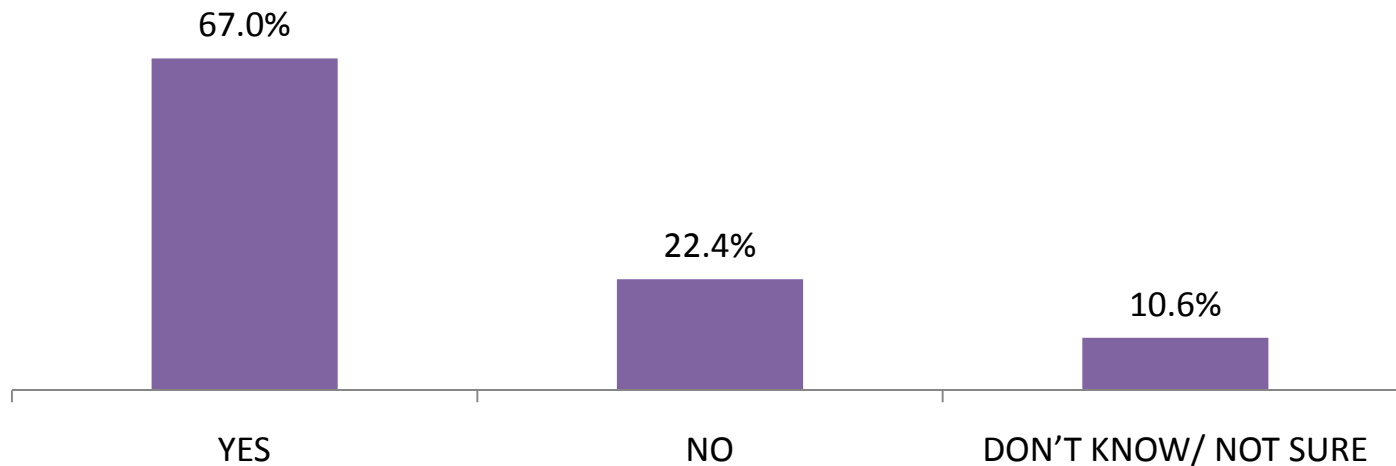
Based on the information I read to you, do you feel it is very, somewhat or not at all important to prepare, in advance, for the coming flood season?



Those living in a flood plain or near a river, creek and stream are more likely to value advance preparation.

One in three (33%) don't know or are unsure of what to do in the event of a flood emergency.

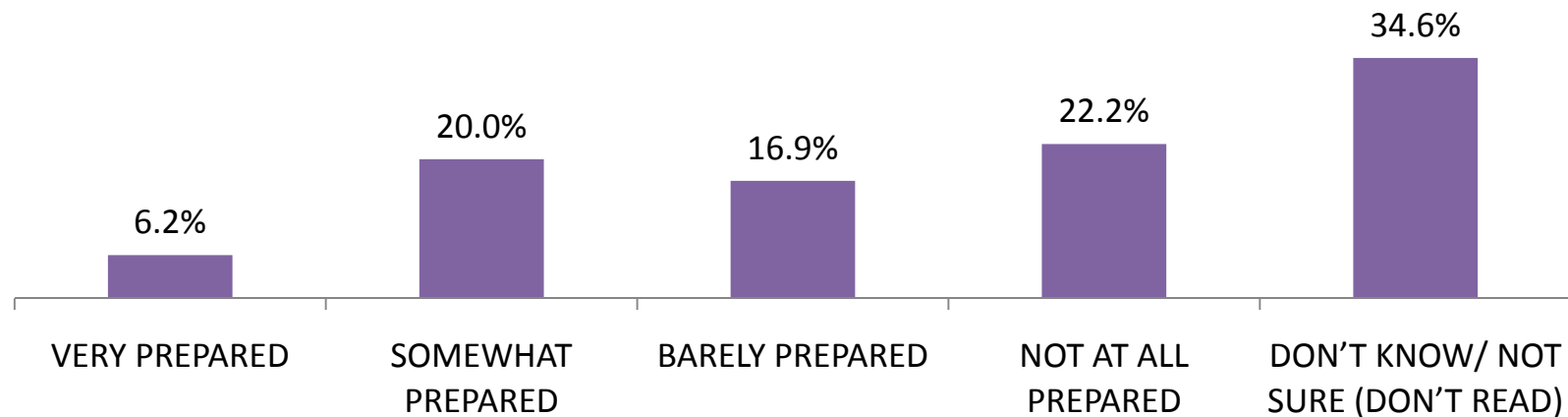
Do you feel you know what to do in the event of a flood emergency?



Lower income populations, women, and those with lower levels of educational attainment are less likely to feel they know what to do.

One in five respondents feel their community is prepared for a flood emergency.

Overall, how prepared is your community for a flood emergency?

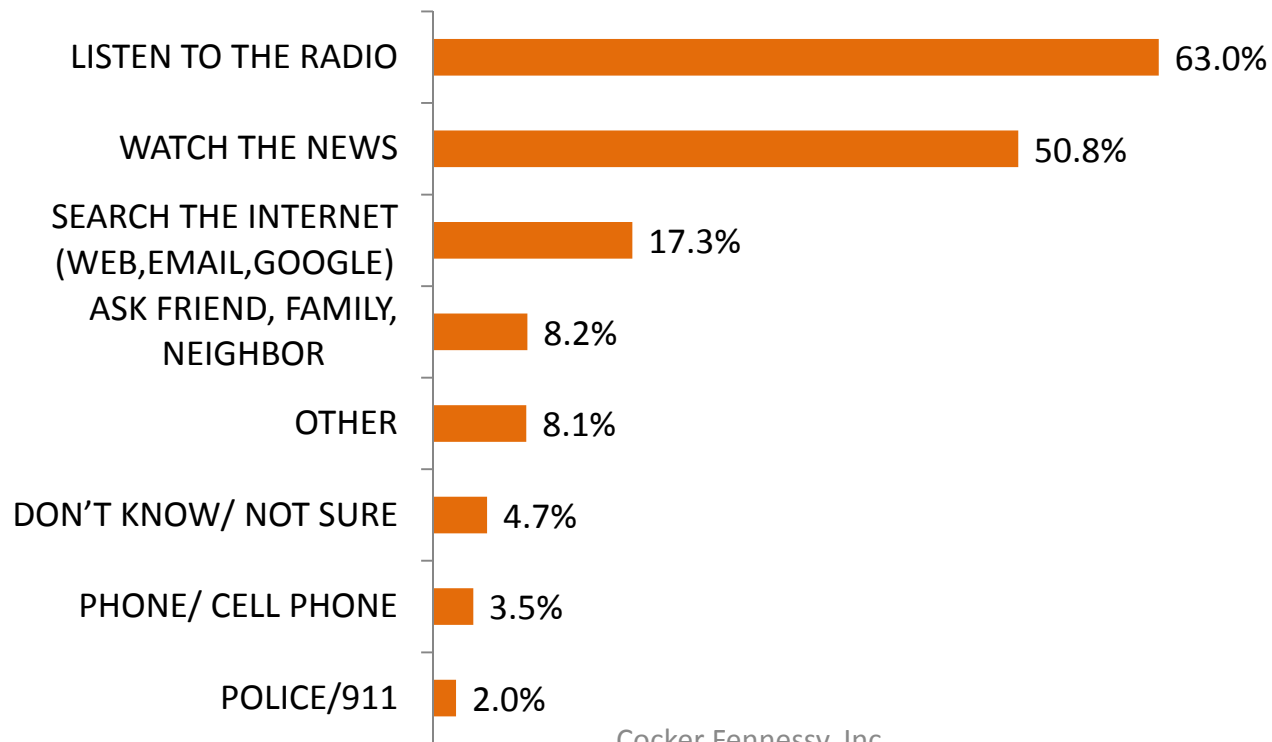


People living farther away from a stream, creek or river are less likely to feel their community is prepared.



In the event of a flood emergency, people expect to get information from the radio and tv news.

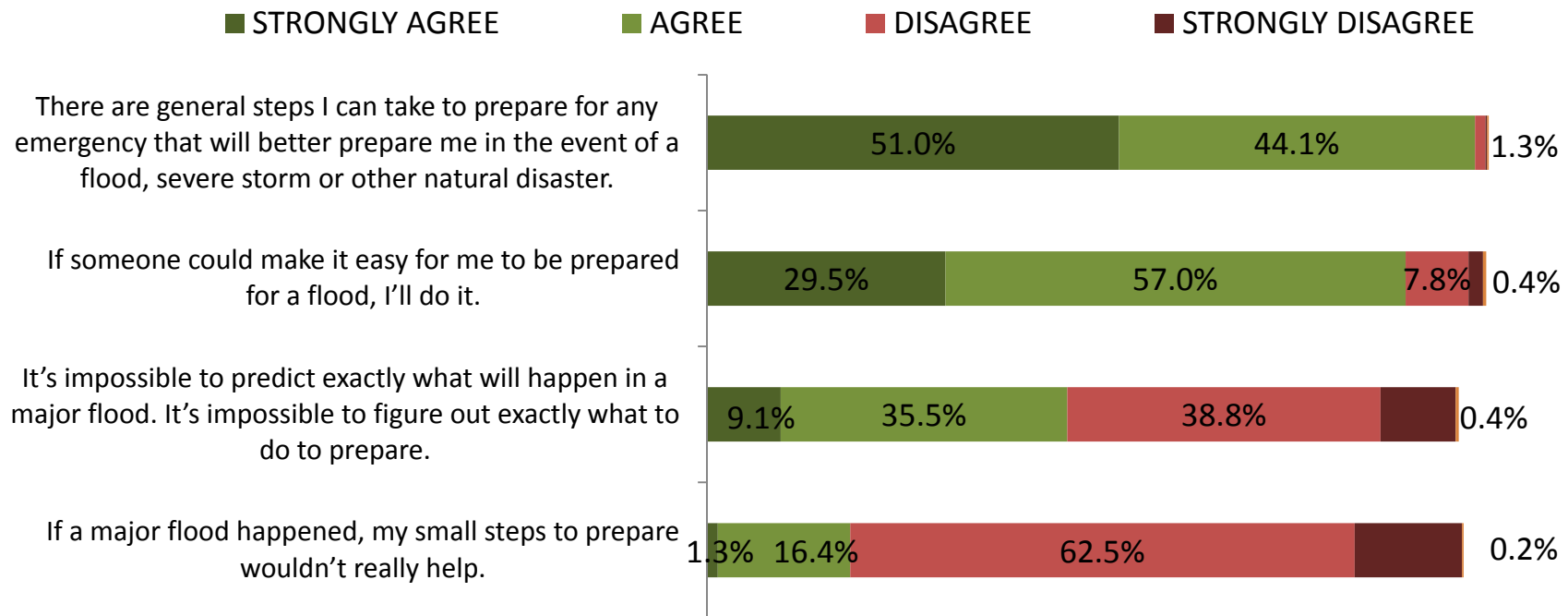
In the event of a flood emergency, how would you go about getting information?





Most respondents have positive beliefs about preparing for emergencies. However, there are still some that feel that flooding is too impossible to predict (45%) or that their actions won't make a difference (18%).

I am going to read you a few statements about flood preparedness. After I read each one, please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

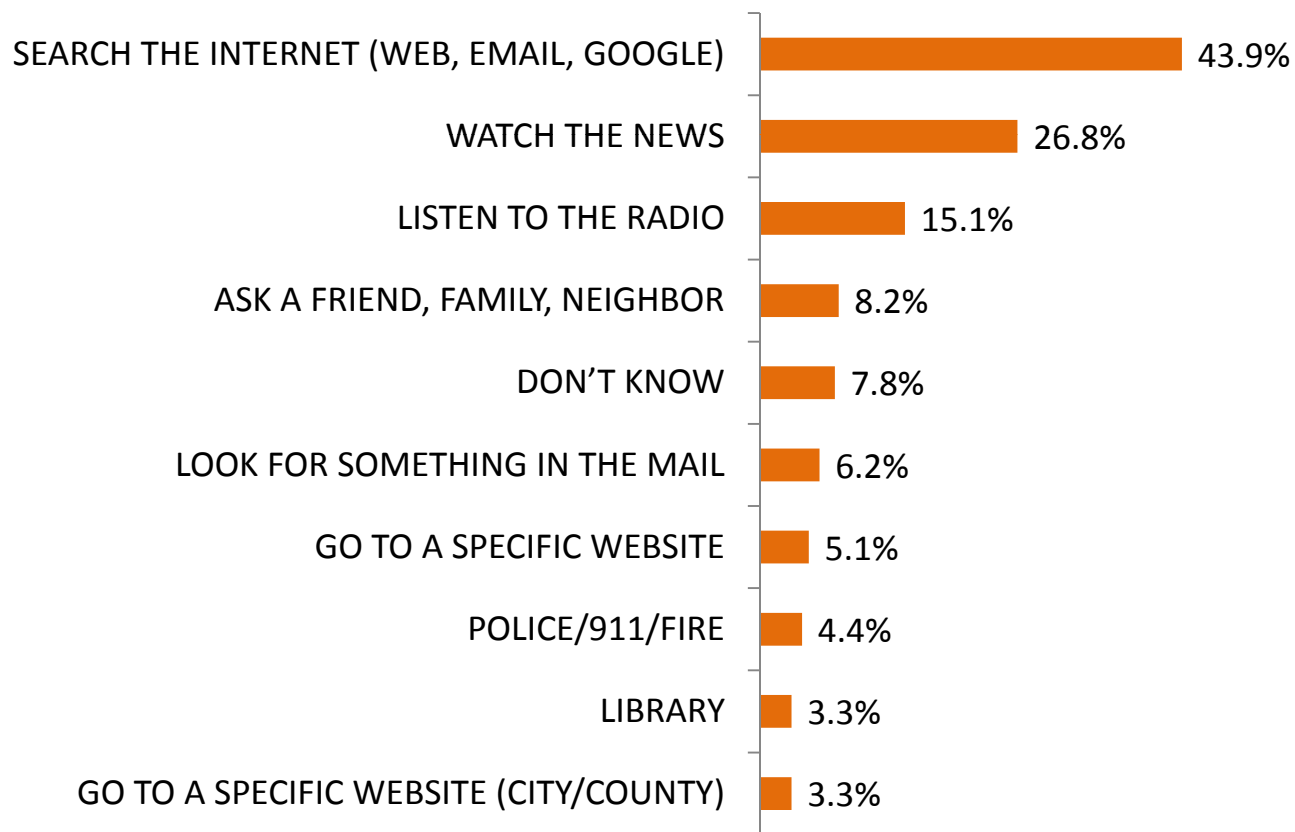


People who live in apartments, condos and duplexes are more likely to feel that their small steps to prepare wouldn't really help.



When preparing for flooding, people are most likely to seek information via the Internet.

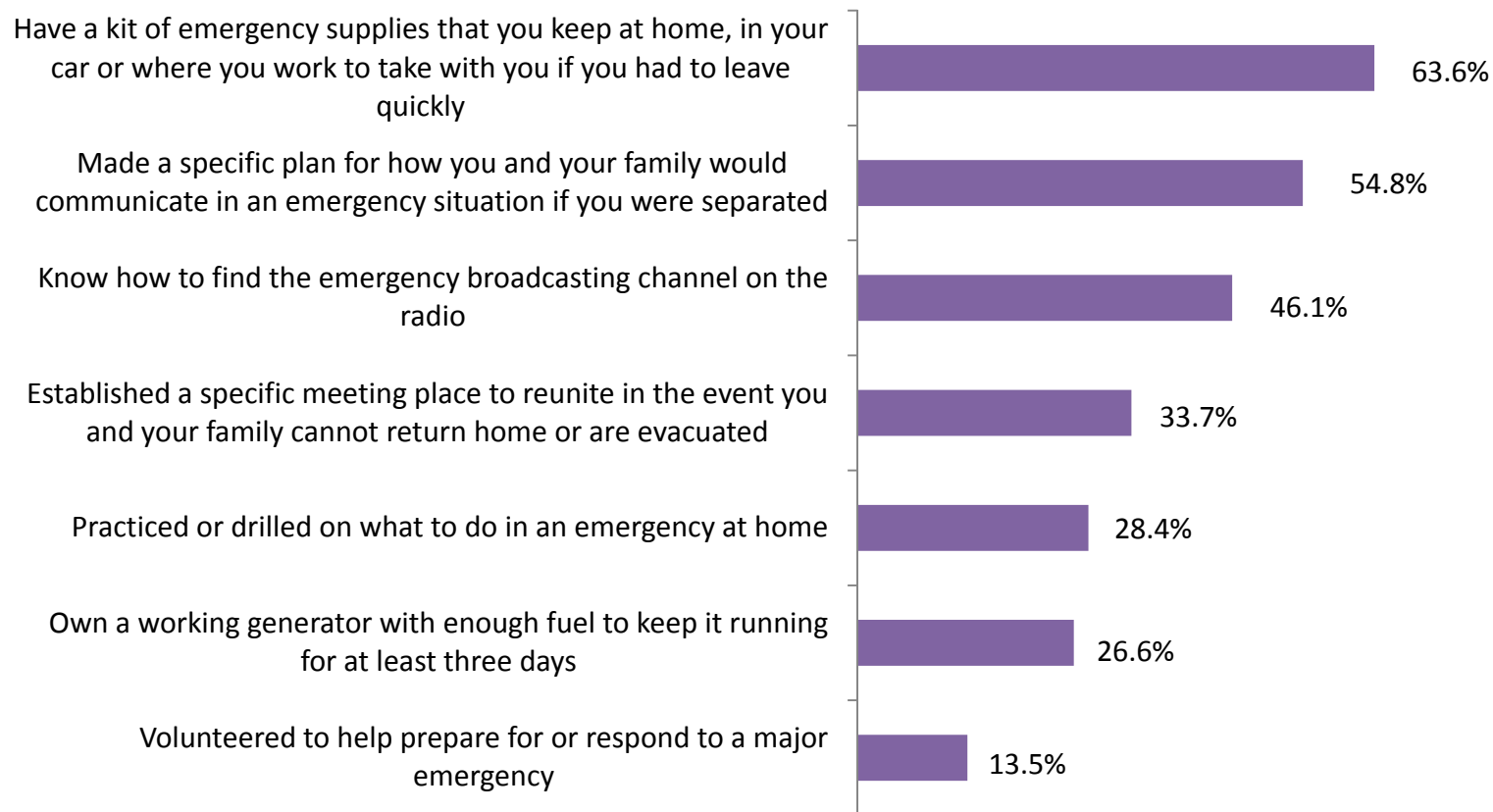
If you were looking for information to help you PREPARE FOR flooding, how would you go about getting this information?





When asked about specific preparations, people are most likely to have a kit of emergency supplies.

For the next few questions, I'm going to ask you whether you've done some specific things to prepare for flooding. ("Yes" Responses)

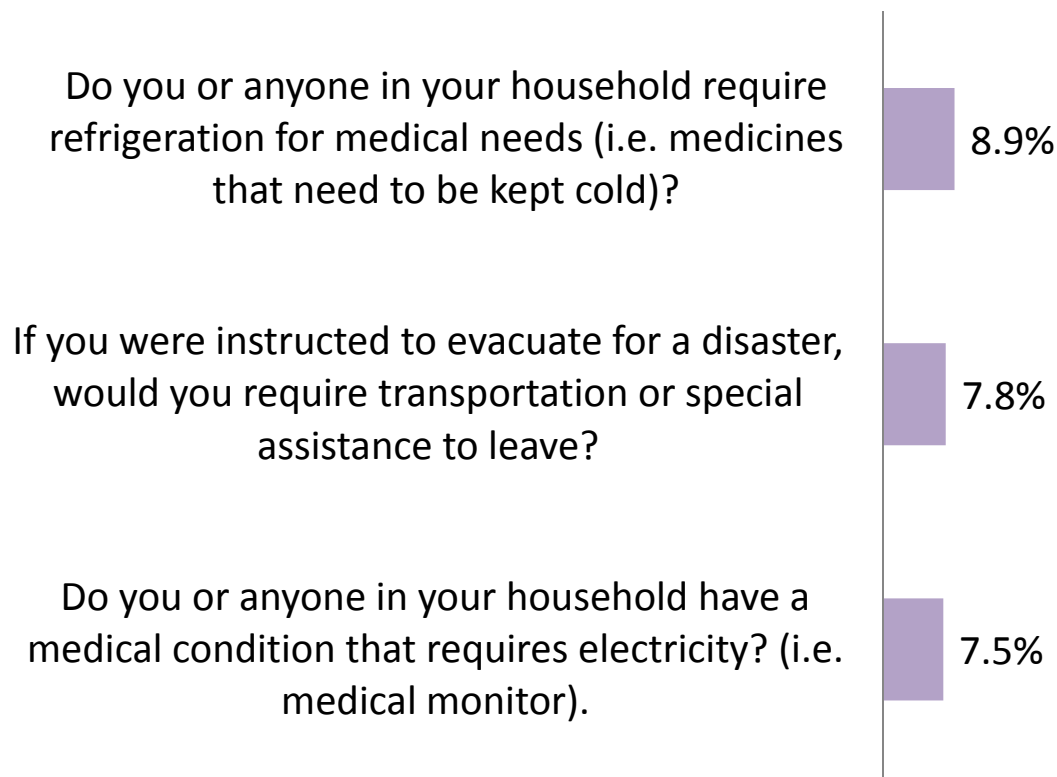




Seven to nine percent of respondents indicated they have medical needs or would require special assistance in the event of evacuation.

Special Assistance/Needs

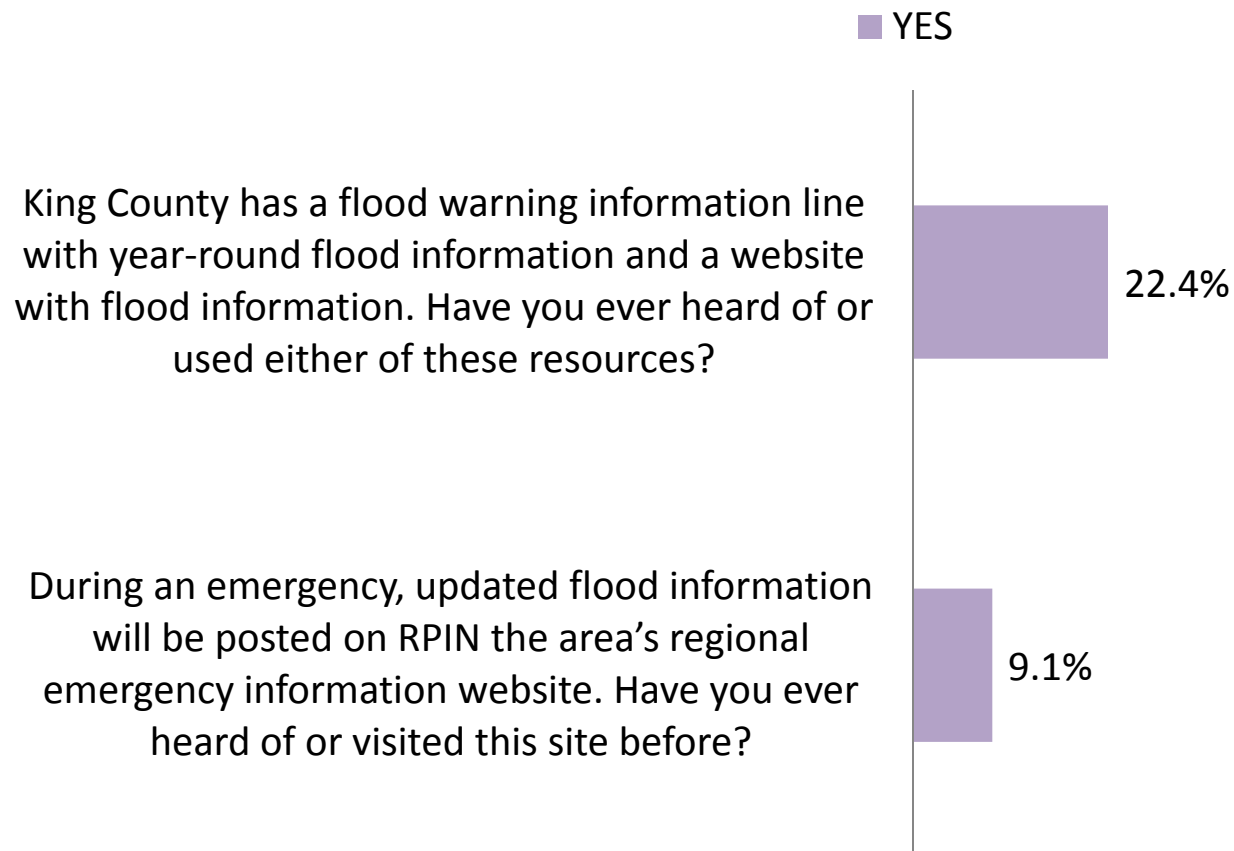
■ YES





Twenty-two percent of respondents are aware of King County’s flood warning information line or website and nine percent are aware of RPIN.

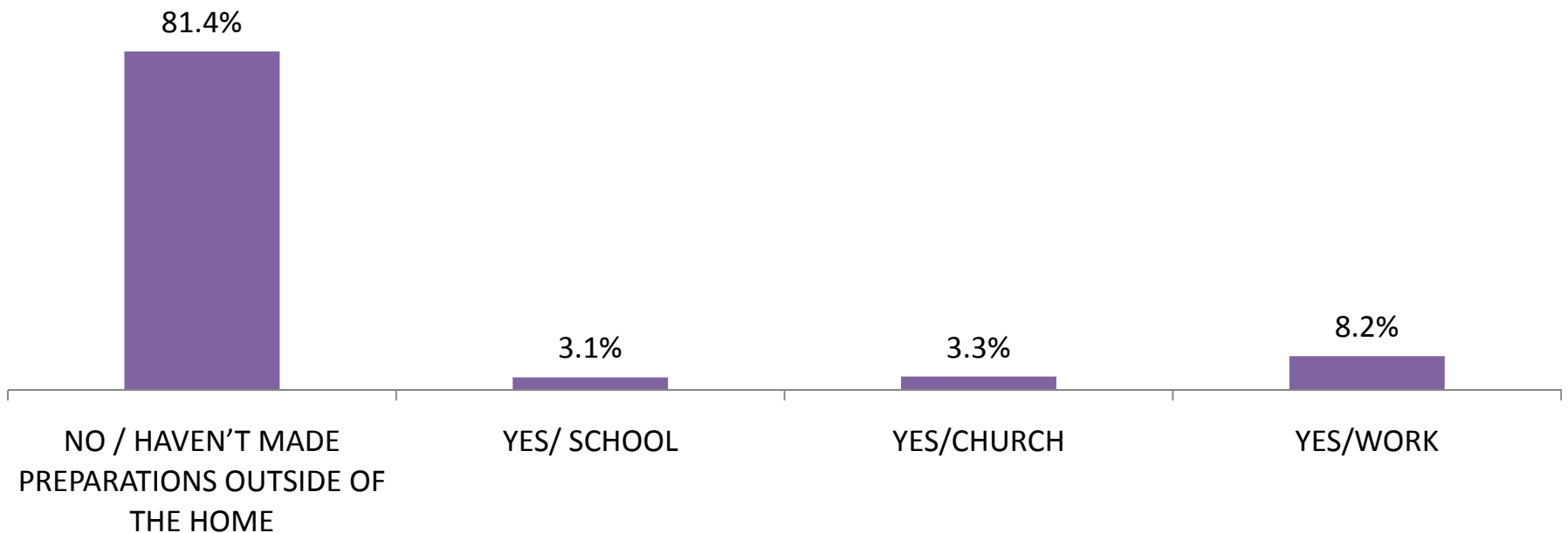
Knowledge of Specific Resources





Most (81%) have not made flood emergency preparations outside of the home. For those who have prepared outside of the home, they are most likely to have done so at work.

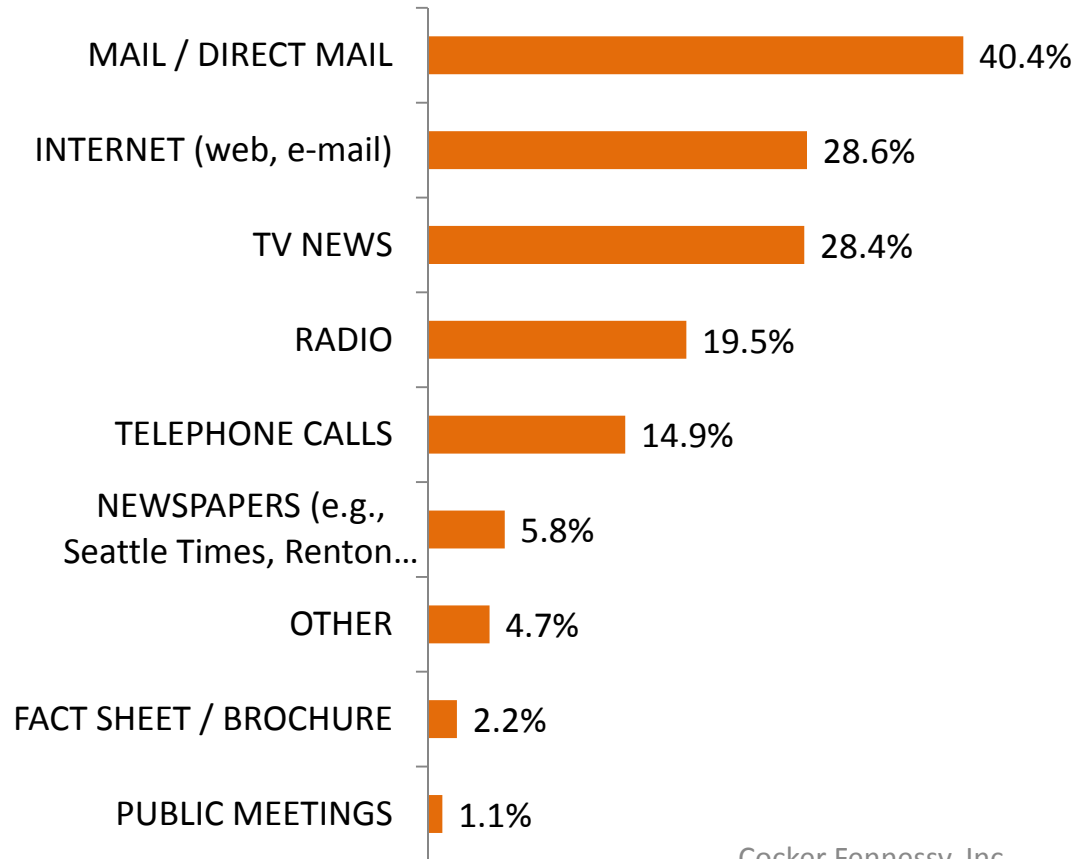
Have you made any preparations for flood emergencies at somewhere outside of your home (such as school, church, or work).





When receiving information about flood preparation and emergencies, people prefer direct mail (40%).

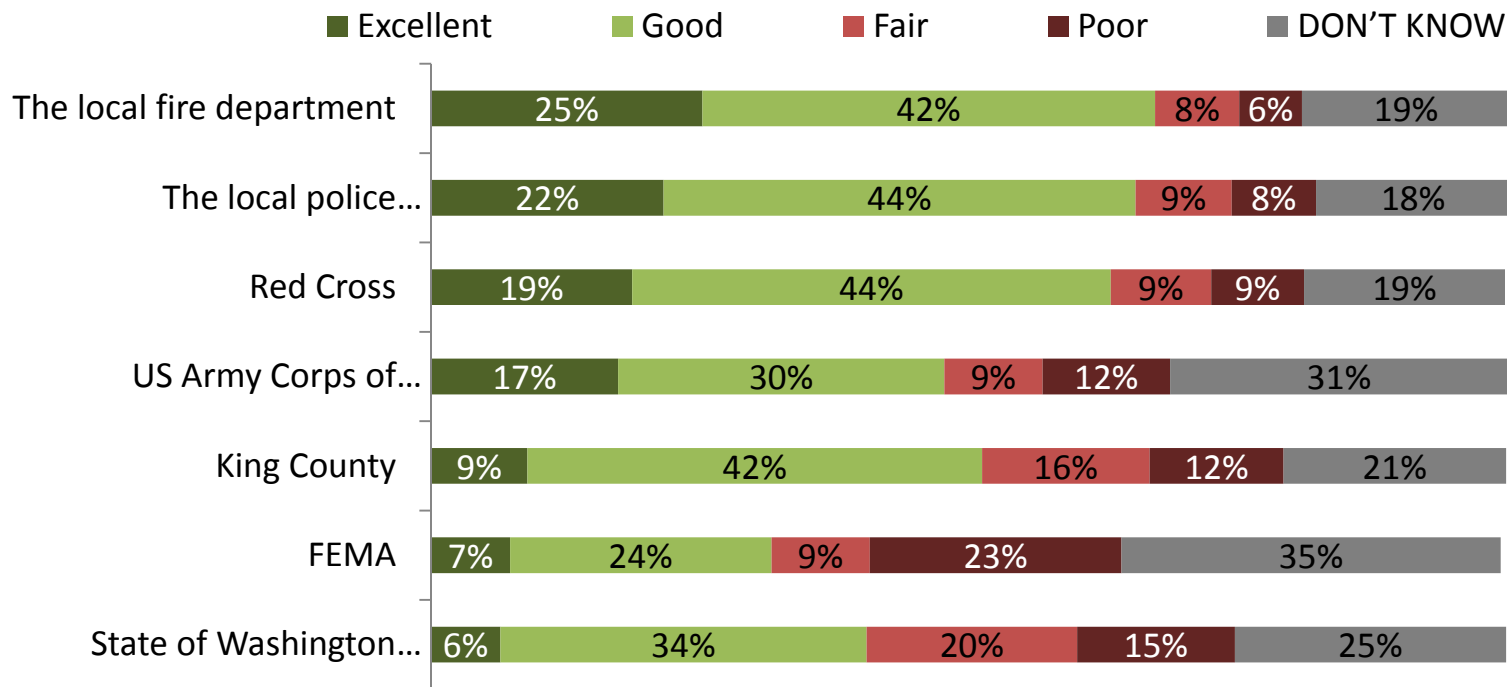
What is the best way to get information to you about flood preparation and flood emergencies?





Local fire (67%) and police departments (66%) and the Red Cross (63%) are the most trusted sources of information about flood emergencies. Across all sources tested, a large minority had no opinion.

I'm going to read a list of organizations, I'd like to know if you think they are an excellent, good, fair or poor source of information about flood emergencies:





Background

- 45% have been personally involved in an emergency situation as a result of a natural disaster
- 13% live in a flood plain
- 50% live within 2 miles of a river, stream or creek
- 27% have children under age 18 living at home
- 55% have a pet or animals



Additional information, including the survey instrument and a topline report are available. For additional information, contact:

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