

# The Gallup Poll

RELEASE THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 1977

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Over Half in Northern Climes

THIRD OF FAMILIES SUFFERED  
HARDSHIPS IN WINTER OF '76-'77

By George Gallup

PRINCETON, N.J. -- Even the first signs of warmer weather cannot erase the memories of one of the severest winters in the nation's history. Fully one-third of the American people -- and nearly half in the southeast and east central states -- say this year's record cold has caused them hardships.

The hardships (or inconveniences) range from higher fuel bills to losing one's job, from frozen pipes to dead house plants. The weather played havoc in many different ways. A 78-year-old man from Grayville, Tenn., said: "We couldn't get out of the house and we were darn lucky we weren't hurt when the trees iced over and fell on the roof of our house. Then along came a stiff wind and blew the roof right off."

The 44-year-old owner of a charter fishing business complained: "The cold weather really hurt my business -- it's too cold for customers and the fish are in deep water."

## LOWER INCOME GROUPS

## HARDEST HIT

Hardest hit by the cold, which set new records in many parts of the nation, were persons in the lower income groups. About four in 10 among those whose family income is under \$10,000 per year say they suffered hardships as a result of the unprecedented weather, while the proportion among those whose income is more than \$10,000 per year is about three in 10.

Few areas of the nation were spared the icy blasts of winter, as reflected in the regional results, which show almost as high a proportion of Southerners as Northerners citing hardships.

Little difference in the findings is noted in terms of community size, although the proportions citing hardships or inconvenience is slightly higher in the rural than in the more urbanized areas.

This question was asked:

"As you know, extreme cold has hit many parts of the nation this winter. Has this cold weather caused any specific hardships or inconveniences for you and your family, or not?"

Here are the results nationally and by region of the nation and income level:

HAS COLD CAUSED  
HARDSHIPS/INCONVENIENCE?

	Yes	No
NATIONAL	33%	67%
New England	39	61
Middle Atlantic	39	61
East Central	45	55
West Central	29	71
Southeast	44	56
Southwest	18	82
Rocky Mountain	8	92
Pacific	8	92
CITY SIZE		
1,000,000 & over	32	68
500,000-999,999	32	68
50,000-499,999	30	70
2,500-49,999	30	70
Under 2,500, rural	38	62
INCOME		
\$20,000 & over	29	71
\$15,000-\$19,999	28	72
\$10,000-\$14,999	30	70
\$7,000-\$9,999	36	64
\$5,000-\$6,999	41	59
\$3,000-\$4,999	37	63
Under \$3,000	39	61

All those who said weather had caused hardships or  
inconvenience were then asked to indicate what the problems

were. Here are the findings, ranked in order of frequency of mention:

1. Growing cost of fuel (oil, natural gas, etc.)
2. Employment problems -- missed work/laid off
3. Frozen pipes in house
4. House is colder than usual -- hard to heat
5. Unable to go outside because of the bitter cold
6. Sickness/illness/ailments (such as arthritis) due to cold
7. Poor driving conditions
8. Transportation difficulties
9. Car battery froze
10. Children missed school
11. Cold is unpleasant/annoying
12. Continuous snow-shoveling
13. Walking is dangerous
14. Difficult to care for livestock

Others include: Must wear extra clothing; plants, shrubs died; car was damaged due to icy conditions.

HOW MANY HAVE

LOWERED THERMOSTATS?

As one means of alleviating the energy shortage

(particularly that of natural gas) exacerbated by the extraordinarily cold weather, President Jimmy Carter suggested that all Americans lower thermostat settings in their homes to 65 degrees during the day and 60 at night.

Three persons in four in the East (76 per cent) and Midwest say they have lowered their thermostats, while the proportions are somewhat lower in the South and West.

At the time of the survey interviewing, thermostats, according to respondents, were kept at an average temperature during the daytime of 65 degrees in the East and 67 degrees in the Midwest, 65 degrees in the South and 66 degrees in the West.

While Americans have generally complied with the President's suggestions for daytime thermostat settings, they have been more reluctant to lower their thermostats at night.

Although night-time settings were lower than those reported during the day, the average thermostat setting in each of the four regions was higher than Carter's suggestion. In the East the average setting was 63 degrees, 65 degrees in the Midwest, 62 in the South, and 64 in the far West.

The results reported today are based on in-person, in-home interviews with 1,588 adults, 18 and older, conducted in more than 300 scientifically selected localities during the period Feb. 4-7.