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How Safe Would You Feel in Your City if Atomic War Comes?

42 Pct. in Survey Say They Would Feel Safe; Others Give Criticism of Civilian Defense

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PRINCETON, N. J., Feb. 23—Would you feel reasonably safe in your city or town if an atomic war should come?

Half the American population would not, judging by a survey just completed by the American Institute of Public Opinion.



The proportion who say they wouldn't feel safe is much higher in big cities than in rural areas.

Those who think their cities or towns would not be safe are far from satisfied with what state officials are doing to organize civil defense. Only one in four in such cities thinks these officials are doing enough at present.

Civil defense programs have been drawn up or put into operation by many of the larger states in recent months.

To find out what the public thinks of progress made and also to find out how many Americans would feel reasonably safe in case of atomic attack, the Institute had its interviewers put two questions to a balanced cross-section of adults.

The first question was:

"Living here in this city (community), would you feel reasonably safe if an atomic

(atom bomb) war should come, or not?"

Safe	42%
Not safe	50
No opinion	8
	—
	100%

Here is the vote by community size:

	Under 10,000	10,000 to 100,000	100,000 & over
Safe	49%	38%	34%
Not safe ..	44	56	56
No opinion .	7	6	10
	100%	100%	100%

* * *

Civil Defense

The second question in the survey was this:

"Do you, yourself, think officials of your state are doing enough to protect citizens of this state in case of an atom bomb attack, or not?"

Whether you approve or disapprove of the civil defense effort in your community depends a great deal on how safe you feel your area is from atomic attack.

Here is how the vote divides between adults who rate their city "safe" and those who rate it "unsafe":

	Safe	Un-Safe
Officials doing enough	49%	25%
Not enough	27	51
No opinion	24	24
	100%	100%

The Federal government has been discussing a large-scale program for building air raid shelters, particularly in cities and towns that would be prime target areas. The problem of cost has been a major stumbling block, as it would take many billions of dollars to erect enough shelters to hold the populations of the larger cities in case of attack.

Civil defense officials who have recently visited England to study the British experience in World War II report that the British found it impractical to move people more than 150 yards at night to air raid shelters or 300 yards in daylight.