

# ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE CANADIAN PUBLIC


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# DID YOU KNOW?

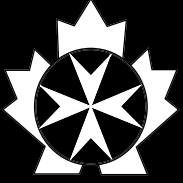
AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR ST. JOHN AMBULANCE MEMBERS

 **DID YOU KNOW** that during the last five years, the voluntary sector has had extensive cuts to funding, has been asked to do more, and has had its integrity and credibility questioned? The voluntary sector, of which St. John Ambulance is a part, is now taking a stronger look at accountability.

The Angus Reid Group conducted some research for the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, to determine the Canadian public's knowledge and attitudes about charitable organizations, accountability issues of concern to the public, and the impact of accountability concerns. The results show that the public has a poor understanding of the size and accomplishments of Canada's charities:

- ⇒ the public knows little about the charitable sector and has difficulty defining it (eg. they do not generally include hospitals and universities)
- ⇒ public opinion is easily influenced by the media, which has focussed on negative stories about mismanagement or misuse of funds by particular organizations
- ⇒ the public believes charitable organizations deliver community and social services, and conduct or support medical research
- ⇒ people have positive opinions about charities in general and trust organizations with whom they have a relationship, but there is an undercurrent of discontent and mistrust, particularly for charities that people do not know
- ⇒ the public's sources of information about charities are personal contact, the media, and solicitations, but the most common point of contact is via charitable solicitations
- ⇒ the public's accountability concerns are mainly about the need for information about how money is being used: specifically efficiency (is money being wasted?) and effectiveness (what is being accomplished with the money?)
- ⇒ accountability concerns — in the public's words:
  - ◆ be more specific about where money is going
  - ◆ publish how much money is received and how every dollar is spent
  - ◆ have independent audits
  - ◆ show value; show effectiveness; show a proven track record
  - ◆ show what the organization has done in their community
  - ◆ specify what progress is being made with the money received
  - ◆ give more money to what is needed and less on advertising
  - ◆ let the public know the inner workings of the organization
  - ◆ spend less on overhead
- ⇒ consequences of the public's concerns is a preference for local charities rather than national or international ones:
  - ◆ more knowledge about local organizations means more trust
  - ◆ people are able to see tangible benefits of local services
  - ◆ local organizations are viewed as smaller and therefore less of a bureaucracy

See August 1998 issue of **DID YOU KNOW?**  
for more on Accountability.



# LE SAVIEZ-VOUS?

FEUILLE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS À L'INTENTION  
DES MEMBRES DE L'AMBULANCE SAINT-JEAN

 **SAVIEZ-VOUS** que les Compétitions nationales de la Brigade de 1998 ont été organisées conjointement par le Conseil du Québec et le District fédéral? Les compétitions se sont tenues du 15 au 17 mai derniers à la Garnison de Saint-Jean, laquelle est une base militaire située à Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, au sud de Montréal. Vingt-deux équipes représentant neuf Conseils Saint-Jean se sont réunies pour faire montre de leurs compétences en matière de soins de santé et de leur habileté à travailler en équipe.