



National Small Business Poll

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Small Business Poll

Waste And Hazardous Materials

NFIB National Small Business Poll

The *National Small Business Poll* is a series of regularly published survey reports based on data collected from national samples of small-business employers. Eight reports are produced annually with the initial volume published in 2001. The *Poll* is designed to address small-business-oriented topics about which little is known but interest is high. Each survey report treats different subject matter.

The survey reports in this series generally contain three sections. The first section is a brief Executive Summary outlining a small number of themes or salient points from the survey. The second is a longer, generally descriptive, exposition of results. This section is not intended to be a thorough analysis of the data collected nor to explore a group of formal hypotheses. Rather, it is intended to textually describe that which appears subsequently in tabular form. The third section consists of a single series of tables. The tables display each question posed in the survey broken-out by employee size of firm.

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Small Business
Poll



*Waste and Hazardous
Materials*

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National Small Business Poll



Waste and Hazardous Materials

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Waste and Hazardous Materials	2
Tables	6
Data Collection Methods	18

Executive Summary

- Small-business garbage/waste is typically taken away by a waste hauler (72%). Thirteen (13) percent do the job themselves and another 10 percent have a landlord do it for them.
- Forty-five (45) percent of small businesses recycle both paper products and metal (cans). Thirty-five (35) percent recycle plastics and 27 percent glass. Twenty (20) percent recycle all four product categories. Thirty-seven (37) percent recycle none of them.
- Forty-three (43) percent of small businesses recycle electronic equipment, such as computer screens and televisions.
- Twenty-five (25) percent of small employers have inventoried their business in the last three years to determine the use, storage and disposal of hazardous materials.
- Twenty-one (21) percent of small businesses transport, store or dispose of hazardous materials. Of that number, 25 percent transport them; 77 percent store them; and 57 percent dispose of them.
- Over half (57%) of small businesses storing hazardous materials are conditional exempt generators as classified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Thirty-eight (38) percent of them are small generators and 2 percent are large generators. The remainder do not know the amount of hazardous waste they store.
- Most small employers who work with hazardous substances keep records on a limited number of them. Sixty-nine (69) percent keep records on any such substance. Of those who do, 30 percent keep records on a single substance and another 19 percent keep them on two.
- Forty (40) percent of small employers report that a government agency has examined their hazardous material records within the last three years.
- Hazardous wastes from small businesses are most frequently carted off by a certified hauler (57%). The second most frequent means of disposal (17%) is that the firm itself takes the waste to an authorized land fill. Eight percent recycle it on the premises.
- The most plentiful hazardous material in a small business with at least one is typically also the most dangerous hazardous material.
- Virtually no small business has had a hazardous material spill serious enough in the last three years to bring in another firm to help with the clean-up.
- Small businesses appear to use fewer/less hazardous substances per unit of output than they did three years ago. About 7 percent eliminated the use of hazardous substances entirely while 8 percent reduced their use.

Waste and Hazardous Materials

Congress passed the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) in 1976. Among other things, RCRA was intended to protect the public from hazardous materials, conserve resources and energy through recycling, reduce or eliminate waste, and clean up waste which has leaked or spilled. While the term garbage typically applies to household refuse and the term solid or hazardous waste to the residual of industrial processes, small business generates both. Many small firms, therefore, fall under the regulatory schemes designed to control them. As a result, this issue of the *National Small Business Poll* centers on Waste and Hazardous Materials and small business's direct exposure to the objectives and rules of RCRA.

Garbage and Solid Waste Disposal

Small businesses generate large amounts of garbage and waste. Both must be removed from the business periodically. The removal schedule is a function of varying factors, including the amount of garbage/waste generated, the type of garbage/waste generated, the cost of removal, etc. The most common scheduled interval is weekly (38%), though daily is also common (20%) (Q#4). Twenty-one (21) percent schedule different pick-up intervals for different materials. The remainder operate on other schedules.

Seventy-three (73) percent of small employers hire a hauler to pick up their garbage/waste (Q#4a). But 13 percent take their waste to the dump/landfill themselves and another 11 percent have a landlord that does the job for them. Disposing of the firm's own waste could result from a number of factors, including availability of commercial service, availability of business vehicles, etc.

a. Recycling

Legislation, environmental concern, and occasionally even economics have yielded an increasing focus on recycling. Small business participates in recycling efforts, though the extent of participation is difficult to measure. Paper and metals (cans, etc.) are

materials small-business owners are most likely to collect for recycling. Forty-five (45) percent of small businesses collect the former to recycle (Q#5A) and 45 percent the latter (Q#5D). Larger, small firms are somewhat more likely to collect paper than smaller, small firms, but no more likely to collect metal.

Fewer small businesses gather plastics and glass for recycling. Thirty-five (35) percent collect plastics (Q#5C), but just 27 percent collect glass (Q#5B). For both, smaller, small firms are somewhat more likely to participate than larger, small firms.

Small employers recycle at very different rates. Twenty (20) percent recycle all of the four types of wastes mentioned above. Another 8 percent recycle three of the four. But 37 percent do not recycle those wastes and another 36 percent recycle only one or two of them. These figures exaggerate the condition, however. A substantial minority do not generate these wastes making it impossible to recycle them. For example, 12 percent do not generate any glass waste, though just 2 percent have no paper to recycle. That means proportionally more recycling occurs than would initially appear.

Those who collect to recycle none of the four (paper, glass, plastics, metal) or just one or two of them were asked why

they do not recycle or recycle more. The most common reason (46%) for the lack of participation is that they generate minimal amounts of the materials in question (Q#6). The second most common reason (26%) is that their disposal service does not separate the material for subsequent recycling. In other words, the business may separate the waste, but it all goes into one big pile after the disposal service picks it up. So, why bother? Other reasons were mentioned much less frequently. Still, significant percentages opined that there are more important things to think about than recycling (10%) and the landlord sets the rules of which recycling is not one (7%).

b. Recycling Electronics

Recycling used electronic material, or at least disposing of it in a common location, has been drawing increasing attention. Forty-three (43) percent of small employers send their used computers, cell phones, televisions, batteries, and similar material to be recycled or disposed of in a manner specific to the product (Q#7). Forty-five (45) percent do not. Eleven (11) percent term the question not applicable to them.

A clear overlap exists between those businesses that recycle used electronic material and those that also recycle paper, glass, plastic, and metal.

Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT)

While waste in general creates a variety of public problems, hazardous waste is a subset that creates many more serious problems. Further hazardous waste raises questions about hazardous materials handling before they become waste. Hazardous materials were described to the respondent as acids, solvents, pesticides, used oil, heavy metals like lead or mercury, used chemicals, paint waste, highly combustible substances, and things of that nature. Twenty-five (25) percent of small employers inventoried their businesses in the last three years for hazardous materials use, storage and/or disposal (Q#1); 71 percent did not, and the remainder did not know.

Twenty-one (21) percent of small employers have businesses that use, store, transport, or dispose of hazardous materials (Q#2). In other words, just over one in five small businesses work with such materials.

Of that number, 25 percent transport these substances (Q#2a). That represents about 5 percent of all small employers. Seventy-seven (77) percent (16% of the population) store them (Q#2b); and, 57 percent (12% of the population) dispose of them (Q#2c). However, only 19 percent have enough hazardous materials to be required to notify the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or its state equivalent of the amounts they have (Q#2d).

EPA has three classifications of hazardous waste generators for regulatory purposes - conditional exempt generators, small quantity generators and large quantity generators. Eight percent of small employers who generate hazardous materials think they are conditional exempt generators; 36 percent term themselves small quantity generators; and 1 percent think they are large quantity generators (Q#2d1). However, 53 percent do not know.

Since each EPA classification has different rules to follow, small employers need to know the amounts of hazardous material they generate. Rather than use government terminology with which the small employer may not be familiar, the survey question was rephrased for respondents who could not classify themselves with the government's name and put it in terms of weight or volume. Ninety (90) percent of those who could not classify themselves by government terminology dispose of less than 100 kilograms or its liquid equivalent per month (Q#2d2). These small employers are almost assuredly conditional exempt generators. Thus, more than half (57%) are conditional exempt generators, those with the smallest amounts of hazardous materials (Q#2d3). Meanwhile, 38 percent of the small-business population disposing of hazardous materials are small quantity generators. Just 2 percent are large quantity.

a. Records

Records maintenance is one of the most demanding aspects of hazardous material use and disposal. Sixty-nine (69) percent of small employers who use, store, transport, or dispose of hazardous material keep records on all such materials used (Q#2e). Most (78%) do so only because government requires it of them (Q#2e3); they would not keep those records for business purposes. Of those who

keep records, 30 percent keep them on a single substance (Q#2e1). Another 19 percent keep them on two. That means half who keep records, keep them on just one or two items. Still, 17 percent keep them on 10 or more. Fourteen (14) percent did not offer a response, suggesting records on multiple substances. But the number of those substances cannot be reasonably estimated.

EPA or its state equivalent is supposed to review these records periodically. Forty (40) percent of small employers indicate that at least one of the authorized agencies has examined their hazardous material records in the last three years (Q#2e2). In contrast, 57 percent have not with 4 percent who cannot recall.

b. Disposal

Disposal of any hazardous waste material is of considerable concern to numerous interests. It is of concern to small-business owners not only because of possible environmental effects (and resulting suits), but also due to the substantial cost in its disposal. The survey addressed a firm's most plentiful hazardous waste and its most dangerous hazardous waste; they are not necessarily the same.

The most plentiful hazardous waste generated by small businesses is carted off by a certified hauler in 57 percent of cases (Q#2f). The second most frequent means of disposal (17%) is by the firm itself. The owner or employees take the material to an authorized land fill. Eight percent recycle it on the premises. Four percent burn or incinerate it. But nine percent do not know. The reason such a relatively large number do not know is not obvious.

The means to dispose of the most dangerous hazardous material parallels the means used to dispose of the most plentiful hazardous materials. Fifty-eight (58) percent use a certified hauler, while 19 percent haul the waste to an authorized land fill themselves (Q#2g). Ten (10) percent recycle it on the premises; 2 percent burn or incinerate it. Again, about one in 10 do not know.

An important reason for the similarity of disposal methods is that the most plentiful hazardous waste is also the most dangerous hazardous waste in 69 percent of cases (Q#2h).

A related disposal issue can arise with a spill of some type. The survey asked about

any spill in the last three years requiring assistance from an outside source to help with the clean-up. One percent (one case in the survey) had such an experience (Q#2i). The only conclusion that results is that serious spills of hazardous materials in small businesses occur rarely.

c. Using Fewer Hazardous Materials

The problems created by hazardous materials can sometimes be addressed either by reducing the amount of hazardous materials used per unit of output, including substituting other materials for them, or eliminating them entirely. Small-business owners choose all of the above.

Nearly four in five small businesses do not use, store, transport, or dispose of hazardous materials. Of that 79 percent, 90 percent have not used hazardous materials in the last three years (Q#3). But 8 percent used hazardous materials three years ago and no longer do. That translates into about 7 percent who formerly used hazardous materials and do not any more.

Others choose to reduce their per unit use. Fifty-three (53) percent of small businesses that employ hazardous materials use the same amount of hazardous materials per unit of output today as they did three years ago (Q#2k). But, 42 percent or 9 percent of the population have actually been able to decrease their use. The reductions may have been relatively small per firm (the survey produced no data on the topic). Yet, the large number that uses less suggests an important overall reduction in the amount of hazardous materials employed. Two percent increased their per unit use of such substances. The result is a net 40 percent of small businesses using hazardous materials (8% of the population) reduced the amount used per unit of output over the last three years. Add the 8 percent reducing use of hazardous materials to the 7 percent eliminating them and a total of 15 percent have cut use.

The important issues are how and why the reductions occurred. Were the products or processes using hazardous materials reduced/eliminated because the small firms using them found a better way of doing things? Or, was it because they were no longer competitive and had to stop producing/doing something? The data do not directly speak to the question.

Final Comments

The primary business waste issue for small employers revolves around common garbage. When they generate more than minimal amounts, and many do not, recycling becomes the paramount concern. Only about one in five transports, stores or disposes of hazardous waste. And, among that group, over half generate modest amounts. About one in 10 are seriously impacted from this perspective by RCRA and complementary state regulation. The group encounters a very structured regulatory system. But how often they encounter it is quite another matter. For example, about 30 percent who maintain records on hazardous materials maintain them on only one item while 17 percent maintain them on 10 or more.

The purpose of this survey was to obtain estimates of the number of small employers engaged in various activities related to solid waste. That objective was achieved. A regrettable consequence is that the survey obtained a bit of information about many areas, but little detail on any. Still, a probable paperwork problem was identified. For example, small businesses are often required to maintain records they otherwise would not and government does not appear to check them often. The survey identified infrequent recycling as common. While small volumes affect the propensity to recycle, so do other factors. But as a result of these findings, one begins to see how small business fits into questions of waste and its disposal.

Waste and Hazardous Materials

(Please review notes at the table's end.)

	Employee Size of Firm			
	1-9 emp	10-19 emp	20-249 emp	All Firms
1. Within the last three years have you or has someone on your behalf inventoried your business for the use, storage, or disposal of hazardous materials, such as acids, solvents, pesticides, used oil, heavy metals like lead or mercury, unused chemicals, paint waste, highly combustible substances, and things of that nature?				
1. Yes	22.9%	35.7%	32.5%	25.3%
2. No	73.5	63.1	63.6	71.4
3. (DK/Refuse)	3.6	1.2	2.6	2.1
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752
2. Does your business use, store, transport, or dispose of hazardous materials like just mentioned in its operation? Small amounts of household-like cleaning supplies don't count.				
1. Yes	19.2%	27.1%	26.0%	20.7%
2. No	79.0	72.9	72.7	77.7
3. (DK/Refuse)	1.8	—	1.3	1.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752
2a. Do you transport hazardous material in your business's operation? (If "Yes" in Q#2.)				
1. Yes	25.4%	21.7%	25.0%	24.8%
2. No	73.7	78.3	75.0	74.5
3. (DK/Refuse)	0.8	—	—	0.6
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168
2b. Do you store or use hazardous material?				
1. Yes	74.6%	87.0%	80.0%	77.0%
2. No	21.2	13.0	20.0	19.9
3. (DK/Refuse)	4.2	—	—	3.1
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168

Employee Size of Firm
 1-9 emp 10-19 emp 20-249 emp All Firms

2c. Do you dispose of or trash hazardous material wastes?

1. Yes	54.2%	70.8%	55.0%	56.8%
2. No	45.8	29.2	40.0	42.6
3. (DK/Refuse)	—	—	5.0	0.6
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168

2d. Do you store, dispose of, or transport ENOUGH hazardous materials that you are required to notify the federal Environmental Protection Agency, or its state equivalent, of those materials?

1. Yes	18.8%	21.7%	15.8%	18.9%
2. No	81.2	78.3	84.2	81.1
3. (DK/Refuse)	—	—	—	—
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168

2d1. Are you a conditional exempt generator, a small quantity generator, or a large quantity generator as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency, or are you not sure? (If “Yes” in Q#2d.)

1. Conditional exempt generator	7.6%	8.7%	10.0%	8.1%
2. Small quantity generator	35.6	39.1	35.0	36.0
3. Large quantity generator	1.7	—	—	1.2
4. Not sure	53.4	52.2	55.0	53.4
5. (Refuse)	1.7	—	—	1.2
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168

2d2. Do you estimate that your business disposes of? (If “Unsure” or refuse in Q#2d1.)

1. < 220 lbs (100 kg) or its liquid equivalent of hazardous waste per month	—	—	—	89.7%
2. Between 220 lbs (100 kg) and 2,200 lbs (1,000 kg) or its liquid equivalent of hazardous waste per month	—	—	—	2.3
3. > 2,200 lbs (1,000 kg) or its liquid equivalent of hazardous waste per month	—	—	—	1.2
4. (DK/Refuse)	—	—	—	6.9
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	37	29	29	95

2d3. Results from Q#2d1 and #2d2 combined.

1. Conditional exempt generator	57.6%	54.5%	56.5%	56.9%
2. Small quantity generator	35.6	45.5	42.1	37.5
3. Large quantity generator	2.5	—	—	1.9
4. (DK/Refuse)	4.2	—	—	3.8
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168

2e. Do you keep records or a manifest of all hazardous materials used?

1. Yes	66.9%	78.3%	73.7%	69.4%
2. No	33.1	21.7	26.3	30.6
3. (DK/Refuse)	—	—	—	—
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168

Employee Size of Firm
 1-9 emp 10-19 emp 20-249 emp All Firms

2e1. Approximately, how many such hazardous substances do you keep records on? (If “Yes” in Q#2e.)

1. One	—	—	—	29.9%
2. Two	—	—	—	18.7
3. 3 - 4	—	—	—	11.2
4. 5 - 9	—	—	—	9.3
5. 10 or more	—	—	—	16.9
6. (DK/Refuse)	—	—	—	14.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	43	42	37	122

2e2. In the last three years, has EPA or another governmental agency examined those records?

1. Yes	—	—	—	39.6%
2. No	—	—	—	56.8
3. (DK/Refuse)	—	—	—	3.6
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	43	42	37	122

2e3. Do you use those records for any business purpose, other than to satisfy government requirements?

1. Yes	—	—	—	18.0%
2. No	—	—	—	77.5
3. (DK/Refuse)	—	—	—	4.5
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	43	42	37	122

2f. How do you dispose of your most PLENTIFUL hazardous waste? Do you:?

1. Have a certified hauler take it away	52.1%	63.6%	78.9%	57.0%
2. Recycle it on the premises	10.3	4.5	—	8.2
3. Burn or incinerate it	5.1	—	5.3	4.4
4. Take it to an authorized land fill	18.8	18.2	5.3	17.1
5. Flush it down the sewer	1.7	—	—	1.3
6. Other	7.7	13.6	10.5	8.9
7. (DK/Refuse)	4.3	—	—	3.1
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168

2g. How do you dispose of your most HAZARDOUS or DANGEROUS hazardous waste? Do you:?

1. Have a certified hauler take it away	55.9%	56.5%	73.7%	58.1%
2. Recycle it on the premises	11.9	4.3	5.3	10.0
3. Burn or incinerate it	1.7	—	5.3	1.9
4. Take it to an authorized land fill	20.3	21.7	5.3	18.8
5. Flush it down the sewer	—	—	—	—
6. Other	7.6	17.4	5.3	8.8
7. (DK/Refuse)	2.5	—	5.3	2.5
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168

2h. Are your most plentiful hazardous waste and your most hazardous or dangerous waste the same substance?

1. Yes	69.2%	90.9%	71.4%	69.4%
2. No	22.2	9.1	19.0	20.0
3. (DK/Refuse)	8.5	—	9.5	7.5
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168

2i. In the last three years, did you experience a spill or a leak of a hazardous substance serious enough to require bringing in outside help to clean it up?

1. Yes	—%	4.3%	—%	0.6%
2. No	100.0	95.7	100.0	99.4
3. (DK/Refuse)	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168

2j. In the last three years, have you been able to substitute less hazardous or non-hazardous materials for the hazardous materials you once used?

1. Yes	41.9%	30.4%	38.1%	39.8%
2. No	55.6	65.2	52.4	56.5
3. (DK/Refuse)	2.6	4.3	9.5	3.7
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168

Employee Size of Firm
 1-9 emp 10-19 emp 20-249 emp All Firms

2k. In the last three years, has the amount of hazardous material your business stores and disposes of increased, decreased, or stayed about the same on a per unit of sales basis?

1. Increased	0.9%	—%	9.5%	1.9%
2. No change	53.0	65.2	42.9	53.4
3. Decreased	42.7	34.8	42.9	41.6
4. (DK/Refuse)	3.4	—	4.8	3.1
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	63	54	51	168

3. Which best describes your business situation over the last three years? (If “No” or “DK/Refuse” in Q#2.)

1. Haven’t used hazardous materials	90.5%	88.5%	86.2%	89.9%
2. Eliminated the use of hazardous materials	7.3	11.5	8.6	7.8
3. (DK/Refuse)	2.2	—	5.1	2.3
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	289	146	149	584

4. How often do you typically dispose of the solid non-hazardous waste your business generates?

1. Every day	19.8%	15.7%	21.8%	19.6%
2. A few times a week	9.6	10.8	19.2	10.7
3. Weekly	38.5	41.0	28.2	37.8
4. More than once a week	4.2	6.0	3.8	4.4
5. Different schedules for different materials	20.2	22.9	21.8	20.6
6. (DK/Refuse)	7.7	3.6	5.1	7.0
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

4a. Who picks up the solid, non-hazardous waste from your business?

1. The landlord	10.4%	10.7%	10.5%	10.5%
2. Waste hauler	70.5	78.6	81.6	72.5
3. My business does	14.7	9.5	5.3	13.2
4. (DK/Refuse)	4.4	1.2	2.6	3.9
<hr/>				
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

5. Does your business sort and recycle or send out to be recycled its?:

A. Paper product waste

1. Yes	44.8%	42.4%	51.9%	45.2%
2. No	51.8	56.5	45.5	51.7
3. (Not applicable)	2.3	1.2	—	1.9
4. (DK/Refuse)	1.1	—	2.6	1.1
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

B. Glass product waste

1. Yes	29.1%	20.2%	22.1%	27.4%
2. No	58.7	70.2	66.2	60.7
3. (Not applicable)	12.0	9.5	10.4	11.6
4. (DK/Refuse)	0.2	—	1.3	0.2
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

C. Plastics product waste

1. Yes	37.5%	24.7%	30.3%	35.4%
2. No	55.6	70.6	63.2	58.0
3. (Not applicable)	6.0	4.7	5.3	5.8
4. (DK/Refuse)	0.8	—	1.3	0.8
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

D. Cans and similar metal product waste

1. Yes	44.3%	43.5%	47.4%	44.5%
2. No	44.5	50.6	50.0	45.7
3. (Not applicable)	10.3	5.9	2.6	9.0
4. (DK/Refuse)	1.0	—	—	0.8
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

Employee Size of Firm
1-9 emp 10-19 emp 20-249 emp All Firms

6. Why doesn't your business recycle? Is the primary reason because?: (If two or fewer "Yes" responses in Q#5A – 5D.)

1. The landlord is responsible for waste disposal	7.1%	7.3%	8.9%	7.3%
2. We generate minimal amounts of waste	48.0	43.6	37.8	46.4
3. The waste disposal service doesn't separate recyclables	25.7	29.1	28.9	26.4
4. We have more important things to think about	8.0	12.7	17.8	9.6
5. Other	8.9	5.5	4.4	8.0
6. (DK/Refuse)	2.3	1.8	2.2	2.2
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	199	131	120	450

7. Does your business recycle or send to be recycled its used electronic equipment, such as computers, cell phones, televisions or batteries?

1. Yes	42.7%	43.5%	43.6%	42.9%
2. No	45.2	55.9	43.6	45.1
3. (Not applicable)	10.9	9.4	9.0	10.6
4. (DK/Refuse)	1.2	1.2	3.8	1.4
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

Demographics

D1. Which best describes your position in the business?

1. Owner/manager	81.9%	75.3%	68.8%	79.9%
2. Owner, but NOT manager	5.4	7.1	11.7	6.2
3. Manager, but NOT owner	12.7	17.6	19.5	13.9
4. (DK/Refuse)	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

D2. Is your primary business activity: (NAICs code)

1. Agriculture, forestry, fishing	3.9%	1.2%	2.6%	3.5%
2. Construction	9.4	13.4	11.8	10.1
3. Manufacturing, mining	8.1	8.5	10.5	8.4
4. Wholesale trade	6.8	6.1	7.9	6.9
5. Retail trade	15.8	13.4	14.5	15.3
6. Transportation and warehousing	3.6	3.7	1.3	3.4
7. Information	1.8	1.2	1.3	1.7
8. Finance and insurance	3.7	3.7	2.6	3.6
9. Real estate and rental/leasing	6.7	2.4	3.9	6.0
10. Professional/scientific/ technical services	12.8	7.3	9.2	11.9
11. Admin. support/waste management services	5.2	4.9	1.3	4.8
12. Educational services	0.8	1.2	1.3	0.9
13. Health care and social assistance	4.7	6.1	11.8	5.6
14. Arts, entertainment or recreation	1.0	2.4	3.9	1.4
15. Accommodations or food service	6.0	15.9	13.2	7.8
16. Other service, incl. repair, personal service	8.9	8.5	2.6	8.3
17. Other	0.7	—	—	0.4
18. (DK/Refuse)	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

	Employee Size of Firm			
	1-9 emp	10-19 emp	20-249 emp	All Firms

D3. Over the last two years, have your real volume sales:?

1. Increased by 30 percent or more	15.5%	12.9%	19.5%	15.6%
2. Increased by 20 – 29 percent	10.6	12.9	10.4	10.8
3. Increased by 10 – 19 percent	23.8	29.4	26.0	24.6
4. Increased by < 10 percent	17.8	17.6	24.7	18.4
5. Decreased by < 10 percent	11.1	10.6	7.8	10.7
6. Decreased by 10 percent or more	14.7	9.4	6.5	13.0
7. (DK/Refuse)	7.0	7.0	5.2	6.8
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

D4. Is this business operated primarily from the home, including any associated structures such as a garage or a barn?

1. Yes	23.9%	7.1%	2.6%	20.0%
2. No	75.1	92.9	97.4	79.2
3. (DK/Refuse)	1.0	—	—	0.8
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

D5. How long have you operated this business?

1. < 6 years	25.2%	26.2%	19.2%	24.7%
2. 6 – 10 years	19.5	17.9	20.5	19.4
3. 11 – 20 years	27.2	23.8	20.5	26.1
4. 21 – 30 years	20.0	19.0	19.2	19.8
5. 31 + years	6.3	13.1	19.2	8.4
6. (DK/Refuse)	1.8	—	1.3	1.5
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

D6. What is your highest level of formal education?

1. < H.S.	1.0%	2.4%	—%	1.0%
2. H.S. diploma/GED	19.0	16.5	13.0	18.1
3. Some college or associate's degree	21.3	23.5	16.9	21.1
4. Vocational or technical school degree	3.1	2.4	2.5	3.0
5. College diploma	35.4	37.6	46.8	36.8
6. Advanced or professional degree	18.7	16.5	20.8	18.7
7. (DK/Refuse)	1.5	1.2	—	1.3
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

	Employee Size of Firm			
	1-9 emp	10-19 emp	20-249 emp	All Firms

D7. Please tell me your age

1. < 25 years	0.7%	1.2%	—%	0.6%
2. 25 – 34 years	5.9	7.1	6.4	6.1
3. 35 – 44 years	20.7	17.6	21.8	20.5
4. 45 – 54 years	33.6	32.9	32.1	33.4
5. 55 – 64 years	25.8	27.1	26.9	28.0
6. 65+ years	10.3	11.8	11.5	10.6
7. (Refuse)	3.1	2.4	1.3	2.8
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

D8. What is the zip code of your business? (Regions)

1. East (zips 010-219)	17.1%	15.3%	22.1%	17.4%
2. South (zips 220-427)	16.9	17.6	19.5	17.2
3. Mid-West (zips 430-567, 600-658)	24.6	25.9	20.8	24.3
4. Central (zips 570-599, 660-898)	23.6	25.9	26.0	24.1
5. West (zips 900-999)	16.4	14.1	11.7	15.7
6. (DK/Refuse)	1.5	1.2	—	1.3
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

D9. Urbanization (Derived from zip code.)

1. Highly Urban	13.4%	9.3%	12.8%	12.9%
2. Urban	17.8	19.8	16.7	17.9
3. Fringe Urban	18.1	19.8	19.2	18.4
4. Small Cities/Towns	18.1	23.3	23.1	19.2
5. Rural	28.4	20.9	24.4	27.2
6. (Not Known)	4.2	7.0	3.8	4.5
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

Employee Size of Firm
1-9 emp 10-19 emp 20-249 emp All Firms

D10. Compared to your competitors over the last three years, do you think the overall performance of your business in terms of sales and net profits makes it a:?

1. High performer	21.3%	17.6%	33.8%	22.1%
2. Somewhat high performer	19.8	28.2	28.6	21.6
3. Moderate performer	43.7	40.0	27.3	41.6
4. Somewhat low performer	2.6	1.2	1.3	2.3
5. Low performer	6.7	5.9	5.2	6.4
6. (Haven't been in business three years)	1.5	1.2	—	1.3
7. (DK/Refuse)	4.5	5.9	3.9	4.6
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

D11. Sex

1. Male	77.5%	82.4%	87.0%	79.0%
2. Female	22.5	17.6	13.0	21.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	352	200	200	752

Table Notes

1. All percentages appearing are based on **weighted** data.
2. All "Ns" appearing are based on **unweighted** data.
3. Data are not presented where there are fewer than 50 unweighted cases.
4. ()s around an answer indicate a volunteered response.

WARNING – When reviewing the table, care should be taken to distinguish between the percentage of the population and the percentage of those asked a particular question. Not every respondent was asked every question. All percentages appearing on the table use the number asked the question as the denominator.

Data Collection Methods

The data for this survey report were collected for the NFIB Research Foundation by the executive interviewing group of The Gallup Organization. The interviews for this edition of the *Poll* were conducted between April 27 - May 10, 2007 from a sample of small employers. “Small employer” was defined for purposes of this survey as a business owner employing no fewer than one individual in addition to the owner(s) and no more than 249.

The sampling frame used for the survey was drawn at the Foundation’s direction from the files of the Dun & Bradstreet Corporation, an imperfect file but the best currently available for public use. A random stratified sample design is typically employed to compensate for the highly

skewed distribution of small-business owners by employee size of firm (Table A1). Almost 60 percent of employers in the United States employ just one to four people meaning that a random sample would yield comparatively few larger small employers to interview. Since size within the small-business population is often an important differentiating variable, it is important that an adequate number of interviews be conducted among those employing more than 10 people. The interview quotas established to achieve these added interviews from larger, small-business owners are arbitrary but adequate to allow independent examination of the 10-19 and 20-249 employee size classes as well as the 1-9 employee size group.

Table A1
Sample Composition Under Varying Scenarios

Employee Size of Firm	Expected from Random Sample*		Obtained from Stratified Random Sample			
	Interviews Expected	Percent Distribution	Interview Quotas	Percent Distribution	Completed Interviews	Percent Distribution
1-9	593	79	350	47	352	46
10-19	82	11	200	27	200	27
20-249	75	10	200	27	200	27
All Firms	750	100	750	101	752	100

* Sample universe developed from the Bureau of the Census (2002 data) and published by the Office of Advocacy at the Small Business Administration.

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The **NFIB Research Foundation** is a small-business-oriented research and information organization affiliated with the National Federation of Independent Business, the nation's largest small and independent business advocacy organization. Located in Washington, DC, the Foundation's primary purpose is to explore the policy related problems small-business owners encounter. Its periodic reports include *Small Business Economic Trends*, *Small Business Problems and Priorities*, and now the *National Small Business Poll*. The Foundation also publishes ad hoc reports on issues of concern to small-business owners. The Foundation's functions were recently transferred from the NFIB Education Foundation.



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