# 2011 Ward Profiles - Known Limitations of the Data

**How do the changes in the 2011 Census methodology affect this** **data?**

There have been changes in the way information has been collected for portions of the 2011 Census. This will impact the extent to which comparisons can be made with previous Census periods on some Census variables. In general, data collected by the 2011 Census can be compared to the data from previous Censuses, with due regard for changing definitions of individual variables. The information previously collected by the long-form Census questionnaire was collected in 2011 as part of the new voluntary National Household Survey (NHS) by Statistics Canada.

In general, the 2011 NHS data is less comparable to that of the previous Censuses due to non-response bias inherent in voluntary surveys. Non-response bias can occur when people do not respond to a survey "because non-respondents tend to have different characteristics from respondents. As a result, there is a risk that the results will not be representative of the actual population", [notes](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/ref/nhs-enm_guide/guide_4-eng.cfm#A_5_5) the National Household Survey User Guide.

The smaller the geographic area or population group, the greater the risk of non-response and non-comparable data. The National Household Survey User Guide [states](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/ref/nhs-enm_guide/guide_4-eng.cfm#A_5_5): "Caution must be exercised when NHS estimates are compared with estimates produced from the 2006 Census long form, especially when the analysis involves small geographies. Users are asked to use the NHS's main quality indicator, the global non-response rate…in assessing the quality of the NHS estimates and determining the extent to which the estimates can be compared with the estimates from the 2006 Census long form. Users are also asked to read any quality notes that may be included in dissemination products." For more information, please see the [National Household Survey User Guide](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/ref/nhs-enm_guide/index-eng.cfm) Catalogue No. [99-001-x2011001](http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=99-001-x2011001&lang=eng) released May 8, 2013.

The risk of non-comparable data for population groups grows when two variables are cross-tabulated or tabulated for small geographic areas, such as variables relating to minority populations, income and shelter costs. Seventy-four percent of the Census Tracts in the City of Toronto reported by the 2011 NHS have a Global Non-Response Rate above 25%, [the threshold for suppression for the 2011 Census](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/ref/DQ-QD/qual-eng.cfm). Comparisons may be more suitable where the Global Non-Response Rates of the geographies are similar and the Coefficients of Variation of the variables are low. Use of NHS data involves a careful understanding of the significant differences and higher non-response inherent in the NHS by comparison to the Census.

**Can the counts of dwellings by structure type be compared?**

The structural type of dwelling data in the 2006 Census and the 2011 NHS are not directly comparable with the previous Censuses because of a change in the definition of an apartment in a duplex in 2006, resulting in the reclassification of ground-related units to apartments.

**Why do the totals vary from table to table?**

The totals vary due to rounding of some of the totals by Statistics Canada to the nearest 5. Also, the sum of a characteristic may not precisely match the total number of households.

**What is meant by the term “undercoverage”?**

Statistics Canada's numbers upon release and as reported above do not account for undercoverage. Although Statistics Canada makes a great effort to count every person, in each Census a notable number of people are left out for a variety of reasons. For example, people may be traveling, some dwellings are hard to find, and some people simply refuse to participate. Statistics Canada takes this into account and estimates an ‘undercoverage’ rate for the urban region (CMA) every Census, but not for the City. The 2006 net undercoverage rate for the Toronto CMA is 4.94% ± 0.56%. Net undercoverage also varies by age and sex and is highest for those between 15 and 44 years of age.  In 2006, net undercoverage peaked at 9.91% for males and 6.08% for females 24-34 years of age, per the [2006 Census Technical Report: Coverage](http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/ref/rp-guides/rp/coverage-couverture/cov-couv_index-eng.cfm), Catalogue No. [92-567-X](http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/access_acces/alternative_alternatif.action?l=eng&loc=http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/ref/rp-guides/rp/coverage-couverture/pdf/92-567-X2006001-eng.pdf&t=2006%20Census%20Technical%20Report:%20Coverage), released March 2010.

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