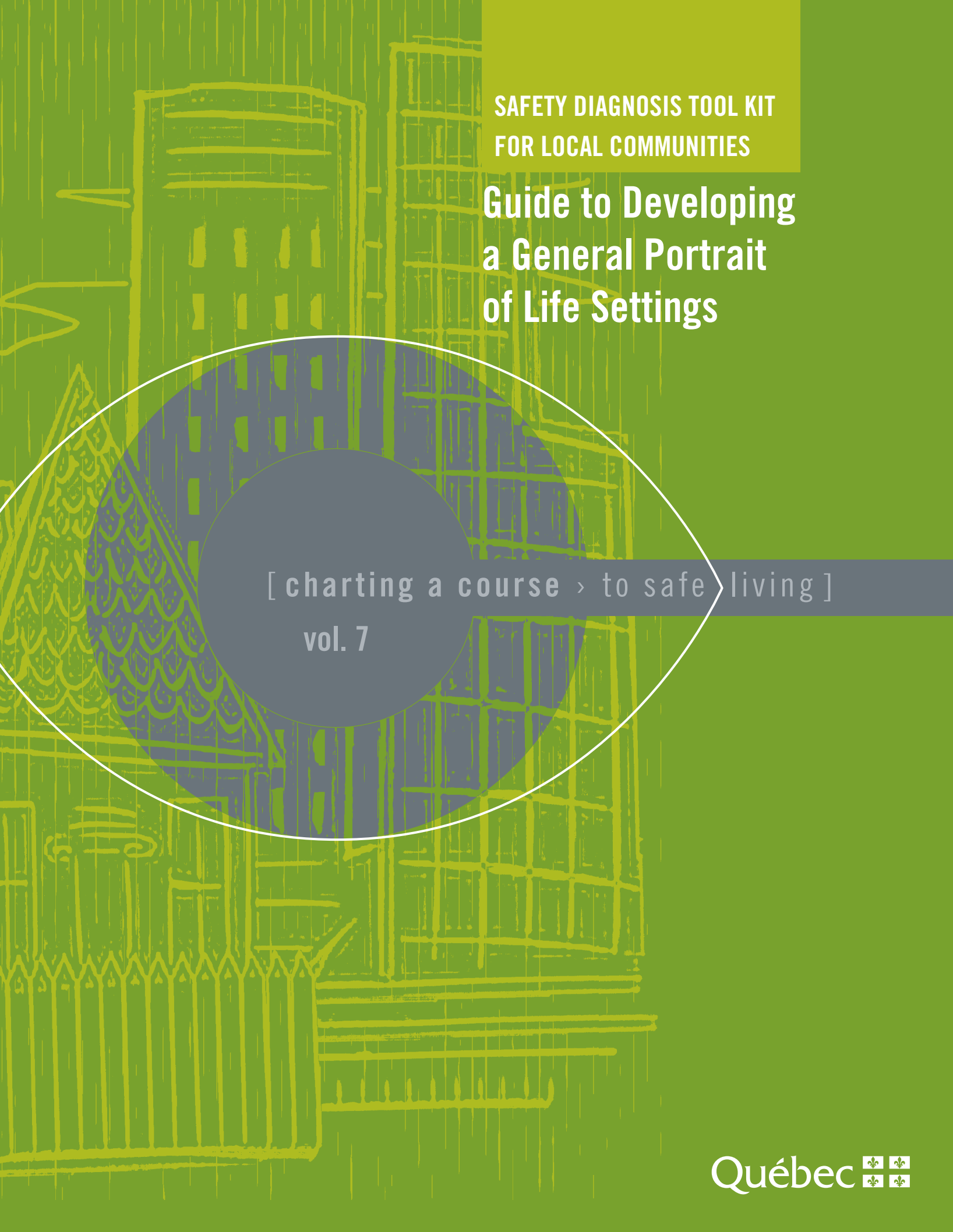




SAFETY DIAGNOSIS TOOL KIT
FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Guide to Developing a General Portrait of Life Settings

[charting a course › to safe living]

vol. 7

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*Institut national
de santé publique*

Québec 

In cooperation with:

• Ministère de la Sécurité publique

AUTHORS

Louise Marie Bouchard

Direction du développement des individus et des communautés, Institut national de santé publique du Québec

Pierre Maurice

Direction du développement des individus et des communautés, Institut national de santé publique du Québec

Daniel Rochette

Direction de la prévention et de l'organisation policière, ministère de la Sécurité publique du Québec

Robert Lavertue

Direction de la prévention et de l'organisation policière, ministère de la Sécurité publique du Québec

SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR

Pierre Maurice

Direction du développement des individus et des communautés, Institut national de santé publique du Québec

COLLABORATORS

Catherine Belley

Direction du développement des individus et des communautés, Institut national de santé publique du Québec

Monique Rainville

Direction du développement des individus et des communautés, Institut national de santé publique du Québec

COVER PAGE GRAPHIC DESIGN

Lucie Chagnon

TYPOGRAPHY AND LAYOUT

N Pixel

TRANSLATION

Alison McGain

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Ce document est aussi disponible en version française sous le titre de Trousse diagnostique de sécurité à l'intention des collectivités locales – Manuel pour accompagner le processus et déterminer le diagnostic de sécurité. Il est accessible dans chacun des sites Internet mentionnés ci-dessus.

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The [charting a course › to safe living] collection

This document is part of a collection prepared to foster and support safety promotion in life settings. Volumes 6 to 12 are the main components of a safety diagnosis tool kit developed for local communities. To date, the following volumes have been compiled for this collection:

Please note that the following list of volumes in the [charting a course to safe living] collection is different from the one provided in volumes 6, 10, 11 12 and 13, which were published prior to 2011.

VOLUME 1

Renée Levaque, Laurence Le Hénaff and Pierre Maurice. *Formation pour l'amélioration de la sécurité et la prévention de la criminalité à l'intention des collectivités locales*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2006.

VOLUME 2

Josephina Alvarez. *Réalisation d'un diagnostic de sécurité. Trousse à l'intention des collectivités locales – Les diagnostics locaux de sécurité: une étude comparée pour mieux comprendre et mieux agir*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2006.

VOLUME 3

Julie Laforest. *Indicateurs de vulnérabilité associés à la sécurité d'un territoire*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2007.

VOLUME 4 (forthcoming)

VOLUME 5

Louise Marie Bouchard, Monique Rainville, Pierre Maurice and Mélanie Tessier. *Survey on Personal Safety and Victimization in Life Settings – Questionnaires and Instructions for Using a Computerized Data Input, Processing and Analysis Tool*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec (forthcoming in 2012).

VOLUME 6

Louise Marie Bouchard, Pierre Maurice and Monique Rainville. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities – Safety Diagnosis Handbook*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2011.

VOLUME 7

Louise Marie Bouchard, Pierre Maurice, Daniel Rochette and Robert Lavertue. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities – Guide to Developing a General Portrait of Life Settings*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2011.

VOLUME 8

Louise Motard. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities – Guide to Analyzing Crime Using Official Statistics – 2nd edition*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2011.

VOLUME 9

Catherine Goulet-Cloutier, Louise Marie Bouchard and Pierre Maurice. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities – Guide to Conducting Surveys on Personal Safety in Life Settings*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2011.

VOLUME 10

Monique Rainville, Louise Marie Bouchard and Pierre Maurice. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities – Guide to Organizing Focus Groups – 2nd edition*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2011.

VOLUME 11

Julie Laforest, Louise Marie Bouchard and Pierre Maurice. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities – Guide to Organizing Semi-Structured Interviews With Key Informants – 2nd edition*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2011.

VOLUME 12

Louise Marie Bouchard, Pierre Maurice and Monique Rainville. *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities – Guide to Direct Observation of Community Safety – 2nd edition*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2011.

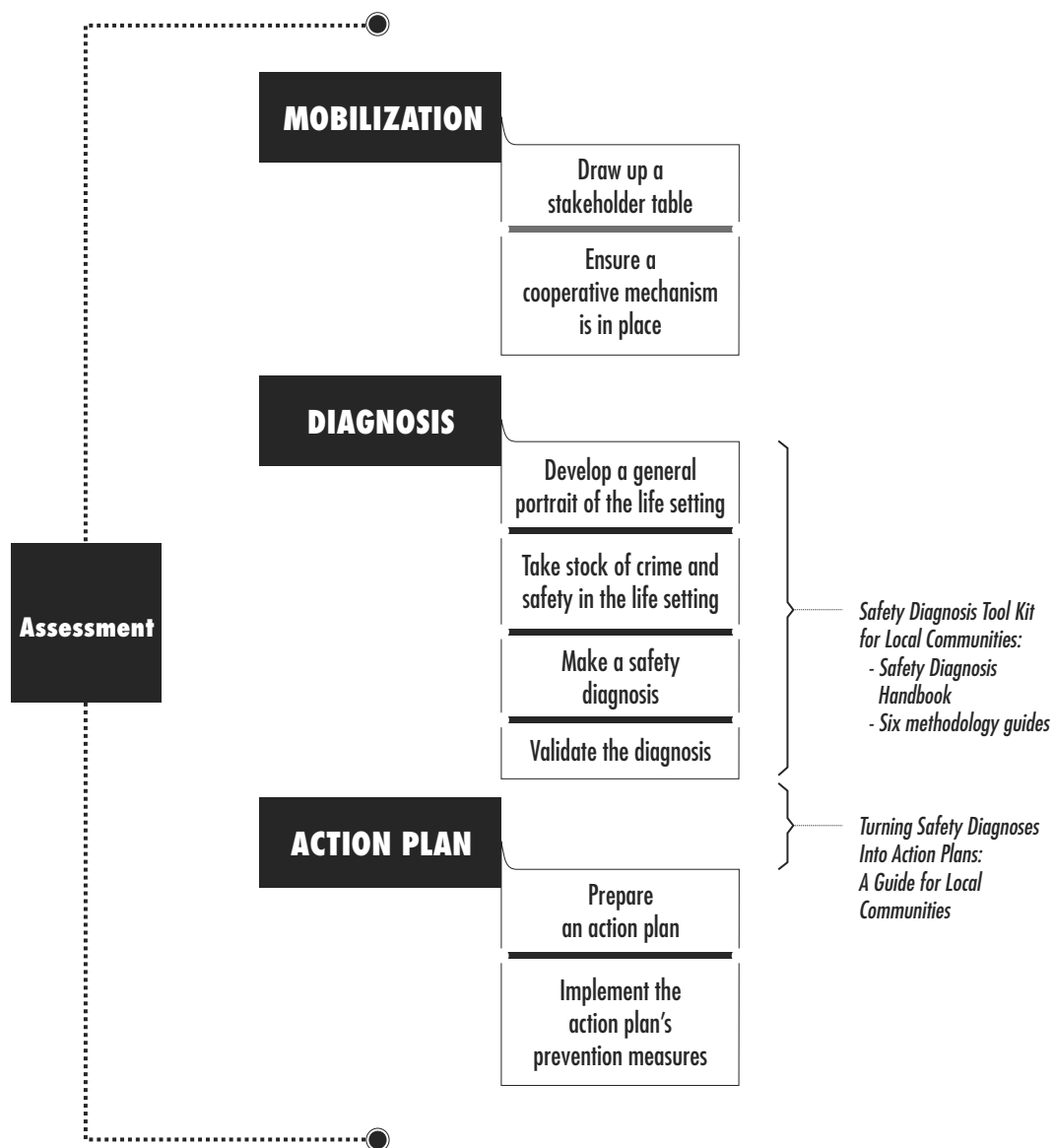
VOLUME 13

Julie Laforest, Louise Marie Bouchard and Pierre Maurice. *Turning Safety Diagnoses Into Action Plans: A Guide for Local Communities*, Québec, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2010.

About this guide...

Promoting safety and preventing crime through a setting-oriented approach requires a structured procedure for planning the various activities to be carried out. The procedure involves mobilizing the population and intersectoral partners, making safety diagnoses and drawing up action plans. The *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities* was prepared to assist with this procedure. It comprises several tools, including the *Safety Diagnosis Handbook* and six methodology guides. The document *Turning Safety Diagnoses Into Action Plans: A Guide for Local Communities* was prepared in addition to the tool kit, to facilitate the process of translating diagnoses into effective action plans.

Structured activity-planning procedure



The present document, *Guide to Developing a General Portrait of Life Settings*, is one of the six methodology guides included in the *Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities*. The aim of this guide is to assist with the first step in the diagnosis procedure, which is designed to provide a good grasp of the characteristics of the life setting under study, as well as a frame of reference for the data collection activities that will be carried out to take stock of the setting's safety. The guide will thus help to develop a general portrait of the life setting based on its geographic, human and economic characteristics and certain physical characteristics related to housing. Ultimately, this portrait will make it possible to identify the social and physical conditions that are likely to affect the life setting's safety (see the section "Make a diagnosis" in the *Safety Diagnosis Handbook*).

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A general overview

To do a safety diagnosis for a particular life setting, you have to get to know the setting. You will thus obtain a good understanding of its specific characteristics, as well a frame of reference for data collection activities. The present guide describes the main steps involved in developing a life setting's general portrait.

Although many parameters can be used to characterize a life setting, some warrant special attention in a process aimed at improving safety or preventing crime; for example, the setting's geographic, human and economic characteristics and some of its physical characteristics pertaining to housing. Gaining insight into these characteristics will enable you to:

- share in general knowledge about the life setting under study;
- clearly define the setting in relation to the surrounding area and according to zones of interest;
- ensure that all segments of the population are well represented;
- frame requests for information more precisely so as to obtain the data you need to make a safety diagnosis;
- obtain a better understanding of the specific characteristics of the life setting in relation to those of other settings;
- identify characteristics that will make it possible to determine the social and physical conditions likely to affect the safety of the life setting;
- craft a message that is tailored to the different segments of the population.

It is thus essential to develop a general portrait of the life setting under study at the beginning of the diagnostic process. Developing this type of portrait can be fairly complex depending on the size of the setting, the availability of information, the different groups represented in the population, the range of economic activities and so forth. Nonetheless, you must strive to avoid complicating the process, insofar as possible, and ensure that the information gathered will really be useful for the diagnosis. The procedure involves six steps:

- plan the general portrait;
- process and analyze the information on the setting's geographic characteristics;
- process and analyze the information on the setting's population characteristics;
- process and analyze the information on the setting's economic characteristics;
- process and analyze the information on the characteristics pertaining to housing;
- identify key findings on the setting's characteristics.

The present guide is organized around these steps. In addition, to more fully explain the proposed procedure, the guide presents an example of its application in a fictitious regional county municipality (RCM) known as “Les Plateaux”. However, for easier understanding, the amount of information processed is more limited than in a real-life situation and the analysis of the information has been somewhat simplified.

Organization of the guide

THIS GUIDE IS DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS.

The first part focuses on how to plan the process of developing a portrait of a life setting.

1

PLANNING

The second part describes how to process and analyze information related to the life setting's geographic, human and economic characteristics and to some of its physical housing characteristics.

2

IMPLEMENTATION

The third part describes how to identify key findings on the life setting's characteristics.

3

ANALYSIS

The guide concludes with three appendices on information sources.

APPENDICES

Planning a general portrait

CLEARLY IDENTIFY THE TARGET LIFE SETTING

To develop a general portrait of a particular life setting, you need to gather information that reflects the actual situation in that setting. Therefore, you must have a good understanding of its geographic limits right from the start. To that end, you must determine not only its external boundaries but also clearly define the different zones that make it up, where applicable.

MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT INFORMATION YOU NEED

To develop a good general portrait of a life setting, you have to gather information on a range of characteristics. Depending on the setting under study, certain information may be readily available, while other information may be obtained only by filing specific requests. However, before you attempt to determine the availability of information, you should know what information you need. Therefore, we suggest that you take note of the kind of information this guide suggests you gather before you embark on the data collection process.

Once you know what information you require, you will have to contact certain organizations to find out whether documents containing that information already exist: for example, the RCM, municipality or borough where the study area is located; local health and social services organizations (e.g. health and social services centres (CSSS), local health and social services centres (CLSCs), regional public health offices); local education organizations (e.g. school boards); and employment organizations (e.g. local employment offices). These bodies will be able to tell you whether the information you are looking for is already available and will thus save you time and money. When the information is available, you must ensure that it:

- concerns the area you want to study;
- is up to date;
- does not have to be modified due to recent events.

Once you have completed the above-mentioned steps, you will know whether there is already enough information available to provide you with a good understanding of your study area, whether the information needs to be updated or supplemented or whether you have to start the data collection process from scratch. Note that the Statistics Canada Web site¹ contains a large amount of information, in addition to tables and figures. We therefore recommend that you start by visiting this Web site.

1. Visit the *Community Profiles* page of the Statistics Canada Web site (see Appendix 1).

DECIDE WHAT RESOURCES YOU NEED AND DRAW UP A SCHEDULE

You must also work out a budget, decide who will take part in developing the portrait of the study area and coordinating the various activities, and work out a schedule that is as realistic as possible.

Resources

The present guide is sufficiently detailed for you to develop a portrait of your study area on your own. However, if you want to hire a consultant, you have to provide for a large enough budget. Moreover, if you have to submit requests for information, you must provide for sufficient funding to cover the related costs. If your study area is a municipality or an RCM, you will be able to access information on the Internet free of charge.² However, if it is a smaller entity, you will probably have to request information from Statistics Canada and will be billed accordingly. Since costs vary depending on the request, we suggest that you ask for an estimate before you submit any official information requests.

Developing a general portrait involves a range of activities and expertise:

- searching for and taking stock of existing information;
- submitting requests for additional information;
- processing and analyzing the information gathered;
- writing a report.

These activities may be carried out by one person or in a group. In the latter case, it is a good idea to have someone coordinate the process as a whole.

Schedule

The time it takes to develop a general portrait will depend largely on how much information you require over and above that which is already available, and on the time it will take to obtain that information. It is important to bear in mind that developing this type of portrait is part of the preparatory work required to take stock of a setting's safety and, therefore, it is a step that should be completed fairly rapidly. If it looks like it will take a long time to obtain certain information, it can be a good idea to write a preliminary report so as not to unduly delay the safety diagnosis. However, the report must be finalized as soon as all the necessary information becomes available.

2. This information is derived from censuses and is available on the Statistics Canada Web site.

SUBMIT REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION, IF NECESSARY

If you wish to obtain information from Statistics Canada, you must send an e-mail to that effect to the agency, specifying at least the following:³

- the limits of the life setting under study; for example: the names of the streets that border it, whether you are including both sides of the street or only one side, and so forth;
- the limits of the zones you have defined within the study area and the names you have assigned to them (Zone 1, Zone 2, etc.), if you want to analyze your data on the basis of these zones;
- the different types of information you need for the study area. The information you request must enable you to analyze the characteristics described in this guide. The various tables that Statistics Canada is required to compile and publish by law may help you to more clearly identify what information you have to request;
- whether the information requested is to cover simply the study area in general or, if you have divided the area into zones, each of the different zones as well;
- which census years are concerned. If you want to detect trends, you have to cover at least three different periods;
- whether you want information on a specific age group or sex;
- your name and telephone number.

CLASSIFY THE INFORMATION GATHERED

You now have to group the information gathered from existing documents and the Statistics Canada Web site into the following four categories:

- geographic characteristics of the study area;
- characteristics of the population;
- economic characteristics;
- housing characteristics.

3. The address for submitting requests online appears on the “Contact Us” page of the Statistics Canada Web site.

Processing and analyzing the data gathered in order to develop a general portrait of the study area

To develop a general portrait of the study area, you have to process all of the information gathered and present it in tables or figures that can be used for analysis purposes. This will enable you to identify key findings on the area concerned. These findings will not only provide you with a framework for collecting information on the various crime and safety problems identified, but allow you to identify the social and physical conditions that might affect the study area's safety.⁴

The following sections of the guide explain how to process and analyze the different categories of information.

GEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY AREA

Limits of the area and its components

To obtain pertinent information on administrative boundaries, consult the sources of geographic information provided in Appendix 1.

Before you start to develop a general portrait of the study area, we suggest that you specify its geographic location. First of all, you must indicate whether it is a municipality, RCM, borough, residential district, an area next to a park or a school, city block, etc. It is also very important that you clearly describe its limits and various components (e.g. municipalities in the case of an RCM, boroughs or neighbourhoods in the case of a city). This information may be set out in a simple description or on a map containing the names of the different municipalities, boroughs, neighbourhoods and so forth.

You may decide to mention other things as well. The questions listed below can be used as a guide for deciding what information you should include in describing the geographic location of an RCM or a municipality; for example:

In the case of an RCM

- What administrative region is it located in?
- What other RCMs are located in that region? Which ones are adjacent to the one you want to describe?
- Does the RCM share boundaries with an RCM in another administrative region? If so, which RCM and which administrative region is it located in?
- Which municipalities are located in the RCM? What is the surface area of each municipality? What proportion of the RCM's total population is found in each municipality?

4. For more information, see the *Safety Diagnosis Handbook of the Safety Diagnosis Tool Kit for Local Communities*.

In the case of a municipality

- What administrative region is the municipality located in? Which RCM?
- Which other municipalities are located in the RCM? What is the surface area of each municipality? What proportion of the RCM's total population is found in each municipality?
- Which municipalities are adjacent to the one you want to describe?
- Does the municipality share boundaries with a municipality in another RCM? If so, which municipality and which RCM is it located in?
- Which sub-areas are officially recognized for the municipality (boroughs, neighbourhoods, urban villages, etc.)? What are their exact geographic limits?

Exemple

The example of the Les Plateaux RCM

The Les Plateaux RCM is part of the administrative region of Les Hautes-Terres. It is situated in the eastern part of the region, on the boundary with Les Basses-Terres. The territory of the RCM represents 16.8% of the territory of Les Hautes-Terres, making it the smallest of the five RCMs in the region. However, it is the second largest in terms of population: with 82 456 inhabitants in 2006, it accounted for 26% of the region's population. The Les Plateaux RCM has eight municipalities. Table 1 shows the distribution of the RCM's population and the total surface area of each municipality.

Table 1 Distribution of the population of the Les Plateaux RCM

	Total population	Population % RCM	Total surface area (km ²)	Surface area % RCM
Les Plateaux RCM	82 456	100%	709.0	100%
Saint-Gelais	45 117	55%	56.7	8%
Saint-Pierre	13 053	16%	71.0	10%
Du Ruisseau	6 049	7%	106.4	15%
Lierre	3 178	4%	78.0	11%
Sainte-Marie	5 841	7%	120.5	17%
Des Érables	2 948	3%	121.0	17%
Gédéon	2 225	3%	85.0	12%
Du Vallon	4 045	5%	70.5	10%
Les Hautes-Terres region	317 138	—	4 220.0	—

Source: [year] Census,* Statistics Canada.

* It is always important to indicate the source of the information appearing in a table or chart. In addition, when the information comes from a census, the year of the census must be given. In this guide, there are no references to specific years since the examples provided are fictitious. Instead, we have used expressions such as "current census" or "last census". In a real-life situation, the easiest approach is to specify the exact year of the census concerned.

Division of the area into zones

*To obtain pertinent information
for dividing an area into
meaningful zones, consult
the sources of geographic
information provided
in Appendix 1.*

In some cases, it can be very useful to divide a study area into meaningful zones. This is because the different parts of the area do not necessarily face the same safety problems. For example, it can be interesting to compare zones with different population densities or land use (e.g. commercial, urban, rural, industrial, residential, school), as this will enable you to put safety or crime problems into context when the safety diagnosis is made.

If you want to develop a portrait of a municipality, for instance, you may decide to divide the territory into boroughs, neighbourhoods, city blocks, and so forth. Or, if the portrait concerns an RCM with several small municipalities, you may decide to group the municipalities with the same characteristics together.

In other words, the study area can be divided up in several ways based on a variety of considerations, such as:

- geographic characteristics (natural environments);
- administrative boundaries;
- living spaces (urban villages);
- type of community (urban, rural, semi-rural);
- economic activities.

In the example of the Les Plateaux RCM, the municipalities have been grouped according to the rural or urban nature of the population (i.e. population density). In another life setting, the best approach might be to divide the area into residential and commercial zones, into two zones separated by a barrier, such as a railroad, or into zones with single-family dwellings and zones with multi-family dwellings.

Regardless of how a study area is divided up, the zones must always be meaningful for the population that lives there. Therefore, we suggest that you validate the zones with key informants, such as elected municipal officials or representatives of the educational community, the health and social services sector or the police.

The example of the Les Plateaux RCM

The working group decided to group the municipalities in the RCM according to whether they were urban or rural*. For this purpose, they used the information on the Statistics Canada Web site, since the agency uses these same criteria to classify municipalities (Tables 2 and 3).

Analysis revealed that over three quarters, or 76.1%, of the population of the Les Plateaux RCM live in urban settings. More precisely, three municipalities out of eight are 100% rural (Les Érables, Gédéon and Le Vallon). Only one municipality, Saint-Gelais, is 100% urban. This municipality, which is the RCM's central municipality, is surrounded by four other municipalities (Saint-Pierre, Le Ruisseau, Lierre and Sainte-Marie), whose population is primarily urban. Table 3 shows the proposed classification of the municipalities that was submitted to and approved by the RCM's Council of Mayors during its most recent meeting.

Table 2 Proportion of the population living in urban settings*

Area	Urban population (%)
Les Plateaux RCM	76.1
Saint-Gelais	100.0
Saint-Pierre	63.9
Du Ruisseau	68.2
Lierre	64.2
Sainte-Marie	54.5
Des Érables	0.0
Gédéon	0.0
Du Vallon	0.0

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

* A setting is urban if it has at least 1 000 inhabitants, as well as at least 400 inhabitants per square kilometre. Information on whether or not a particular setting is urban can be found in a table on the Statistics Canada Web site entitled *Population counts, for Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions (municipalities), by urban and rural, [...] Census — 100% data*. Since it is sometimes difficult to locate the table on the Web site, we suggest that you contact Statistics Canada for the exact location.

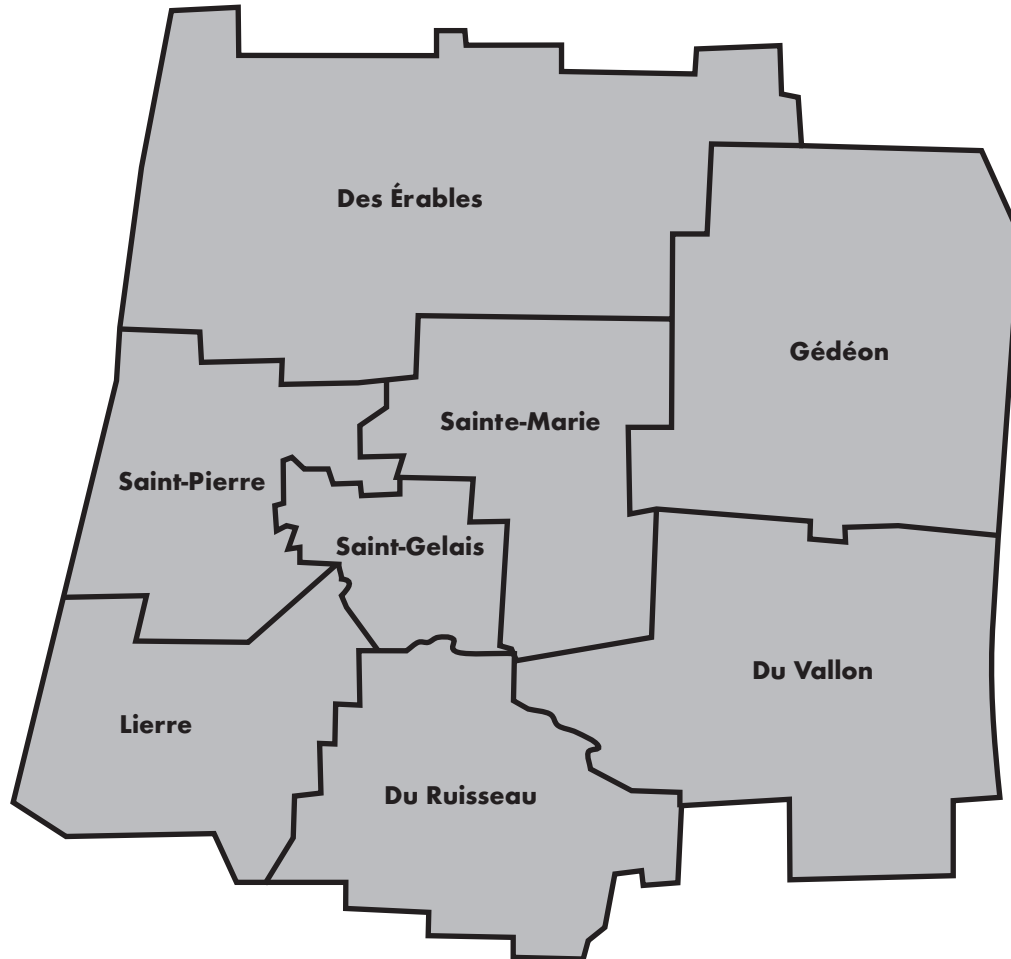
Table 3 Municipalities of the Les Plateaux RCM grouped into three zones

Zone	Municipalities	Surface area (km ² and %)		Population (no. and %)	
Central municipality	Saint-Gelais	56.7 km ²	8%	45 117	55%
Semi-urban zone	Saint-Pierre, Du Ruisseau, Lierre, Sainte-Marie	375.9 km ²	53%	28 121	34%
Rural zone	Des Érables, Gédéon, Du Vallon	276.5 km ²	39%	9 218	11%
Total for the RCM		709.3 km ²	100%	82 456	100%

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

Exemple

Map of the Les Plateaux RCM*



- * We highly recommend that you make sure there have been no changes in the boundaries of RCMs and municipalities during the period covered by the Statistics Canada data so as to ensure that the data are comparable for all of the years being studied. If the data are not comparable, you must do certain calculations to take this into account.

2

IMPLEMENTATION

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Four population characteristics have been selected for the purposes of this guide:

- change over time;
- age structure;
- ethnocultural make-up;
- level of education.

Of course, you can decide to consider other population characteristics as well. However, you must make sure they have a bearing on safety in the study area concerned. You will save time and energy if you avoid exploring aspects that are of no use to the diagnosis.

As in the case of the other statistical information mentioned in this guide, we suggest that you present the information on population characteristics in a table or chart. It can also be interesting to include comparative data on several similar areas, such as all of the RCMs in an administrative region or all of the administrative regions in the province of Québec. You should then do a brief analysis of each of the variables included in the table or chart and present the conclusions that can be drawn from the information gathered.

Change over time

Population change refers to the growth or decline observed in an area's population between two or more censuses. Note that censuses are conducted every five years. The change may result from a shift in one of the characteristics of the population (e.g. ethnocultural make-up, percentage of young people) over that period. This information, coupled with other data, can shed light on a community's economic vitality, population inflow or outflow (e.g. exodus of young people), and so on.

In the case of a small study area (neighbourhood, city block, sector, etc.), information on the distribution of and change in population can provide insight into other aspects such as the influx of people on a seasonal basis (e.g. owners of secondary residences or cottages, users of a local ski centre, people drawn to the area during the fruit picking season).

Statistics Canada is the main source of information on the human, economic and physical housing characteristics described in this guide.

Appendix 2 explains how to obtain the necessary information from the census data available on the agency's Web site.

The example of the Les Plateaux RCM

The Les Plateaux RCM currently has a population of 82 456, or 6.3% more than during the last census. Population growth in the RCM is remarkable, outstripping that of Québec as a whole (4.1%) and tripling that of the Les Hautes-Terres region (2.1%). In fact, Les Plateaux has the highest growth rate of all of the RCMs in the region, some of which have even seen their population decline since the last census (Table 4).

Saint-Gelais is the largest municipality in the RCM. With 45 117 inhabitants, it has 55% of the RCM's total population. Compared with the last census, however, Saint-Gelais' population grew by only 2.3%, or much less than the population of the RCM and of Québec as a whole.

That said, the highest population growth since the last census was observed in the RCM's semi-urban zone. In the four municipalities making up this zone, the population grew by 16.8%. However, the situation in the three rural municipalities was very different and even worrisome. With a loss of 119 inhabitants since the last census, the RCM's rural zone posted a population decrease of 1.3% (Table 5).

We will have to wait until the next census to see if the population of Saint-Gelais and the RCM's semi-urban zone continues to grow over time.

Table 4 Change in the population of the RCMs in the Les Hautes-Terres administrative region, according to the most recent (current) census and the previous census*

Area	Current	Previous	Change (%)
Les Plateaux RCM	82 456	77 539	6.3
Les Coteaux RCM	88 632	86 777	2.1
Les Corniches RCM	70 340	71 631	- 1.8
Les Vallées RCM	46 645	45 024	3.6
Les Cent-Lacs RCM	22 190	22 831	- 2.8
Region 19 Hautes-Terres	310 263	303 802	2.1
Province of Québec	7 546 131	7 237 479	4.1

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

Table 5 Change in the population of the municipalities in the Les Plateaux RCM, according to the most recent (current) census and the previous census*

Area	Current	Previous	Change (%)
Saint-Gelais	45 117 (54.7%)	44 121	2.3
Semi-urban zone	28 121 (34.1%)	24 081	16.8
Rural zone	9 218 (11.2%)	9 337	- 1.3
Les Plateaux RCM	82 456 (100.0%)	77 539	6.3
Province of Québec	7 546 131	7 237 479	4.1

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

* It can be a good idea to present this type of information in a chart. Generally speaking, charts are easy to generate with an electronic spreadsheet like Excel. Figure 1 on the next page reproduces the information in Table 4, and Figure 2, the information in Table 5.

Exemple

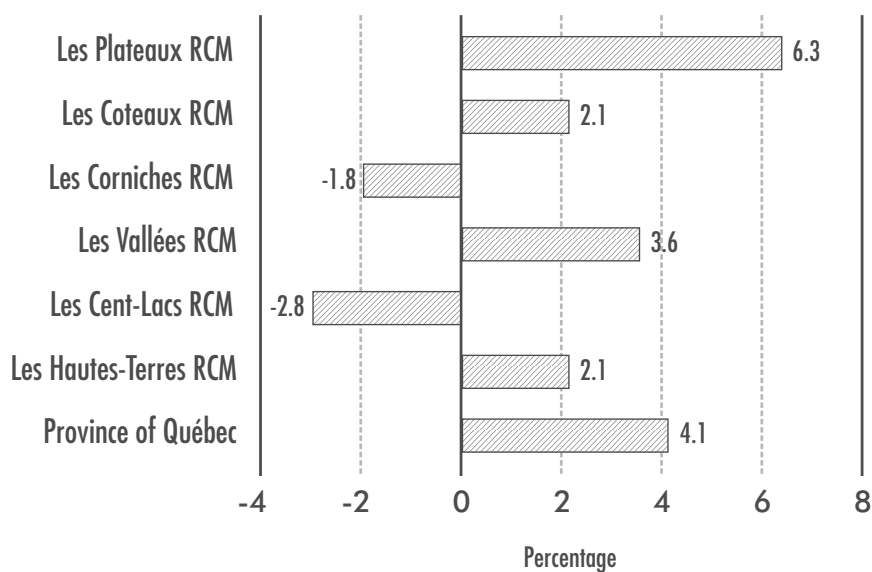


Figure 1 Change in the population (%) of the RCMs in the Les Hautes-Terres region, according to the most recent (current) census and the previous census

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

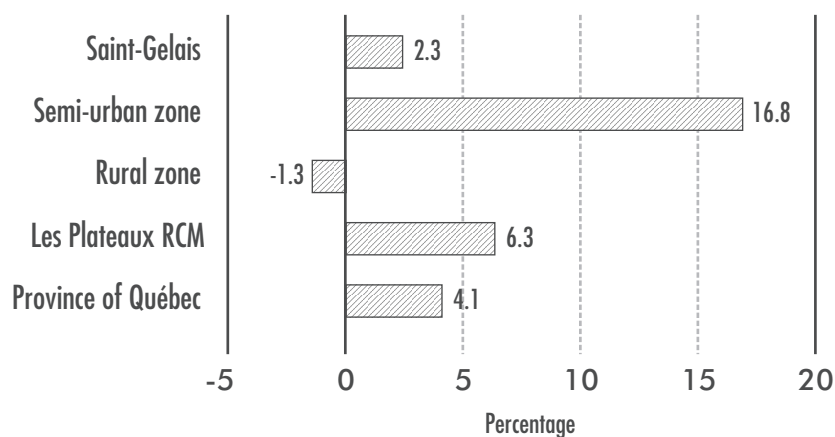


Figure 2 Change in the population (%) of the municipalities in the Les Plateaux RCM, according to the most recent (current) census and the previous census

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada

Age structure

The age structure of a population refers to the proportion of individuals in each age group. According to some authors, the more young people there are in a population, the more the population will be subject to crime.⁵ Therefore, it is a good idea to look at the age structure of a population during safety diagnoses.

In this guide, population age structure is represented in two different ways. The first shows the proportion (%) of individuals in each age group, while the second, which is more concise, shows the median age, or the age that divides the population into two numerically equal groups. For example, if the median age of a population is 38 years 6 months, this means that 50% of the population is younger than 38 years 6 months and 50% is older. Both of these methods make it possible to determine if the population in one area is generally older or younger than in another.

Exemple

The example of the Les Plateaux RCM

Overall, the age structure of the population of the Les Plateaux RCM is comparable to that of the province of Québec as a whole. However, major differences can be seen between the RCM's rural and semi-urban municipalities (Tables 6 and 7).

For example, the proportion of people under 25, and especially 14 and under, is lower in the rural municipalities than in the RCM or Québec as a whole. However, the proportion of people age 65 and over is very high, i.e. 22.5% compared with 14.1% in the RCM and 13.3% in Québec as a whole. This means that the population of the municipalities in the rural zone is relatively old.

In marked contrast, young people under age 15 account for 27.4% of the population in the semi-urban municipalities, or 10 percent more than in the RCM (17.4%) and Québec as a whole (17.8%). As for the proportion of people age 65 and over, it is roughly half that in the RCM and the province. The proportion of people between the ages of 25 and 44 is also very high in the RCM's semi-urban zone. Therefore, this zone corresponds to an area where young families with children predominate.

The age structure of the population of Saint-Gelais is similar to that of the RCM and Québec. However, the proportion of people age 65 and over is higher, probably because older people prefer to live near the various services available in the RCM's central municipality.

2

IMPLEMENTATION

5. J. Laforest. *Indicateurs de vulnérabilité associés à la sécurité d'un territoire*, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, 2007 [http://www.inspq.qc.ca/pdf/publications/721_indicateurs_final_crpspc.pdf].

Table 6 Structure of the population (%) by area and age group

Age group	Saint-Gelais	Semi-urban zone	Rural zone	Les Plateaux RCM	Québec
0-14	16.1	27.4	11.6	17.4	17.8
15-24	11.4	15.9	9.6	12.2	13.1
25-64	55.5	50.8	57.3	56.3	55.8
65 and over	17.0	5.9	22.5	14.1	13.3
Population as a whole	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

With a median age of 42.7, the population of the Les Plateaux RCM is older than that of Québec as a whole [41]. However, major differences can be seen between the RCM's municipalities. The median age of the population in most municipalities is higher than in the RCM, except in the four semi-urban municipalities, where it is 39.3 years. This also suggests that young families live in the semi-urban zone. The median age of Saint-Gelais' population, i.e. 44.4 years, is higher than the average for the RCM.

With a median age of 47.7 years, the population of the three rural municipalities is much older than elsewhere in the RCM. This means that in addition to undergoing a decline in population (see "Change over time"), the RCM's three rural municipalities have witnessed the aging of their population and perhaps an exodus of young people.

Table 7 Median age of the population

Area	Men	Women	Total
Saint-Gelais	42.7	45.7	44.4
Semi-urban zone	40.6	39.1	39.3
Rural zone	46.3	48.8	47.7
Les Plateaux RCM	42.2	43.3	42.7
Province of Québec	39.9	41.9	41.0

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

Ethnocultural make-up

To determine the ethnocultural make-up of a population, we recommend that you analyze information on mother tongue, as well as information that will enable you to determine what proportion of the population consists of immigrants, visible minorities and Status Indians.

This is because it is important in safety diagnoses to examine a population's safety problems and perception of safety against the backdrop of its ethnocultural characteristics. Moreover, knowledge of such characteristics will allow you to ensure your data collection activities take into account the population's make-up and concerns, as well as certain linguistic barriers that you may have to overcome. This information will also enable you to interpret some of the information on the study area's human and economic characteristics in the light of cultural factors. For example, the vitality, entrepreneurial spirit and business acumen of certain cultural groups might explain the economic development of certain areas within a community. Lastly, information on the ethnocultural groups is useful for identifying community leaders and determining how to contact, consult and gather information from them.

Definitions of the main characteristics to be taken into account in determining the ethnocultural make-up of a life setting are provided in the following box.

Mother tongue

Statistics Canada defines mother tongue as “the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood.” It can be useful to know the distribution of a population by mother tongue, as it is an indicator of the population's homogeneity or heterogeneity.

Immigrant

According to Statistics Canada, immigrants are “persons who are, or have been, landed immigrants in Canada. A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities.” In this guide, we look at the proportion (percentage) of the population with immigrant status relative to the study area's population as a whole.

Visible minority

According to the *Employment Equity Act* (1986), a visible minority consists of “persons, other than aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.” In this guide, we consider the proportion (percentage) of the population made up of visible minorities relative to the study area's population as a whole.

Aboriginal population

According to Statistics Canada, the Aboriginal identity population includes “those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a registered Indian as defined by the Indian Act of Canada, and/or those who reported they were members of an Indian band or First Nation.” In order to describe an area in terms of the Aboriginal population present there, you must determine the proportion (percentage) of people in the total population who report themselves to be Aboriginal. It can also be useful to target certain areas with a large Aboriginal population (see Appendix 3 for a list of Web sites other than the Statistics Canada site that provide this type of information).

The example of the Les Plateaux RCM

Analysis of the ethnocultural data for the RCM revealed that its population is very homogeneous: 90% of its inhabitants have French as their mother tongue, less than 5% are immigrants and only 1.4% belong to a visible minority.

The following must be taken into account in making a safety diagnosis for Les Plateaux:

- Although the RCM's population is homogeneous, it includes a number of unilingual Anglophones (Table 8), primarily in the rural (9.3%) and semi-urban (7.2%) zones.
- The population also includes a number of Aboriginal people (5.2%), all of whom live in Saint-Gelais, the RCM's central municipality (percentage not shown in the table below).
- The few members of the population who belong to visible minorities are mainly Asian, Latin American and Black (Table 10).

Table 8 Distribution of the population by mother tongue

Mother tongue	Saint-Gelais	Semi-urban zone	Rural zone	Les Plateaux RCM	Québec
English only (%)	2.0	7.2	9.3	3.8	7.7
French only (%)	94.4	86.1	88.7	91.1	79.0
English and French (%)	0.3	1.4	1.2	0.4	0.7
Other (%)	3.3	5.3	0.8	4.7	12.6

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

Table 9 Distribution of the population by immigrant status

	Saint-Gelais	Semi-urban zone	Rural zone	Les Plateaux RCM	Québec
Non-immigrant population (%)	95.4	92.8	93.9	95.5	88.5
Immigrant population (%)	4.6	7.2	6.1	4.5	11.5

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

Table 10 Distribution of the population by number of people belonging to visible and non-visible minorities

	Saint-Gelais	Semi-urban zone	Rural zone	Les Plateaux RCM
Non-visible minority	44 378	27 763	9 161	81 302
Visible minority	739 (1.6%)	358 (1.3%)	57 (0.6%)	1 154 (1.4%)
Asian	480	233	7	720
South Asian	11	25	2	38
Black	74	21	0	95
Latin American	170	68	48	286
Other	4	11	0	15

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

Highest level of education attained

You may decide to examine the education level of a population for several reasons. In the context of a safety diagnosis, such information can be important for adapting and disseminating the diagnosis in accordance with the population's specific needs. It will enable you to tailor communications and data collection methods to the target population. For example, if you decide to do a survey of a population that is not very well educated, you will probably decide to conduct it by telephone or by meeting with people directly.

A population's level of education can be analyzed in several different ways. We suggest that you use the following three categories to group the information given by Statistics Canada on highest level of education attained:⁶

- 1) no certificate, diploma or degree;
- 2) a diploma of secondary studies or a certificate or diploma from a trade school;
- 3) a certificate or diploma of college studies, a university certificate or diploma below a bachelor's degree or a university diploma or degree.

Exemple

The example of the Les Plateaux RCM

Generally speaking, the level of education of the population of the Les Plateaux RCM seems to be lower than the Québec average (Table 11). The proportion of people aged 25 to 64 with less than a certificate of secondary school studies is above the Québec average, while the proportion with a certificate or diploma of college studies or a university certificate or diploma is lower than in Québec as a whole.

However, this general portrait masks major differences between the municipalities in the RCM. For example, the level of education in Saint-Gelais is comparable to that of the RCM as a whole; however, in the four municipalities bordering the semi-urban zone, it is close to the Québec average.

The level of education in the RCM's three rural municipalities is lower than the average level in the RCM and, in some cases, seems to be very low. Moreover, the proportion of the population with a level of education equal to or above a diploma of college studies is much lower than in Québec as a whole.

Table 11 Education level of people age 15 and over (%)

Highest level of education attained	Saint-Gelais	Semi-urban zone	Rural zone	Les plateaux RCM	Québec
No certificate, diploma or degree	29.7	21.4	42.2	30.3	25.3
A diploma of secondary studies or a certificate or diploma from a trade school	44.1	41.0	51.1	43.6	41.2
A certificate or diploma of college studies, a university certificate or diploma below a bachelor's degree or a university diploma or degree	26.2	37.6	10.7	27.1	33.1

Source: ...Census, Statistics Canada.

6. If you use Statistics Canada data, we suggest that you present the results in percent by dividing the number of people in each education level by the population age 15 and over.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Income

In a safety diagnosis, income is a good indicator of a life setting's social conditions. Low income and median income are the most accessible and most common indicators used in Canada for measuring poverty. Poverty can affect the type of crime encountered in a life setting, as well as people's perception of crime and safety.⁷

According to Statistics Canada, a person is deemed to have a low income when he or she spends a disproportionate share of income on food, shelter and clothing. The proportion varies depending on family size and region. Several low income indicators are available; however, we suggest that you use the "percentage of people with low income before tax" without making any age distinctions.

"Median income" is the amount that divides the income distribution of people age 15 and over into two equal groups based on their income. For example, if the median income in a given area is \$20 000, this means that half the population 15 years of age and over in that area has an income of less than \$20 000 and the other half, an income of over \$20 000. Therefore, the lower an area's median income is, the more the area can be considered economically disadvantaged.

Example

The example of the Les Plateaux RCM

The median income of people age 15 and over in the Les Plateaux RCM is \$20 977, or slightly above (+\$312) the Québec average (\$20 665). However, there are major differences between the various parts of the RCM, with the median income ranging from \$18 318 in the rural zone to \$24 959 in the semi-urban zone, for a difference of \$6 641. The median income in Saint-Gelais is \$20 143, or \$834 less than in the RCM and \$522 less than in Québec as a whole.

In addition, the proportion of the population in the Les Plateaux RCM with a low income is less than in the province as a whole (12.6% compared with 17.2%). That said, the proportion of the population of Saint-Gelais with a low income (16.8%) is above that of the RCM and similar to that of the province. The proportion in the rural zone resembles that in the RCM, while the proportion in the semi-urban zone (5.3%) is much lower than in the RCM and the province as a whole.

Table 12 Total annual median income of people age 15 and over and percentage of people in this age group with low income before tax

Area	Median total income (\$)	Difference in median income relative to RCM (\$)	Difference in median income relative to Québec (\$)	Low income before tax (%)
Saint-Gelais	20 143	- 834	- 522	16.8
Semi-urban zone	24 959	3 982	4 294	5.3
Rural zone	18 318	- 2 659	- 2 347	12.5
Les Plateaux RCM	20 977	—	312	12.6
Québec	20 665	- 312	—	17.2

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

7. J. Laforest, Op. cit.

Unemployment rate

In a safety diagnosis, the unemployment rate is a good indicator of a life setting's social conditions and labour market dynamics. Moreover, the scientific literature⁸ often associates the unemployment rate with crime and disorder.

According to Statistics Canada, the unemployment rate in a given area corresponds to the number of people who are unemployed expressed as a percentage of the labour force in the week prior to Census Day.

Exemple

The example of the Les Plateaux RCM

The unemployment rate in the Les Plateaux RCM is lower than in the province as a whole, i.e. 7% compared with 8.2%. The semi-urban zone has the lowest unemployment rate, i.e. 5.5%, while the rural zone has the highest, i.e. 9.1%. The unemployment rate in the municipality of Saint-Gelais is above that in the RCM, i.e. 7.6%.

Table 13 Annual unemployment rate

	Saint-Gelais	Semi-urban zone	Rural zone	Les Plateaux RCM	Québec
Unemployment rate (%)	7.6	5.5	9.1	7.0	8.2

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Housing tenure

In a safety diagnosis, housing tenure is a good indicator of the physical conditions in a life setting. Housing tenure refers to whether a dwelling is owned or rented by the occupant. A high proportion of owner-occupants in a neighbourhood seems to ensure a certain degree of housing stability, which, according to social disorganization theory, can be considered a protective factor against crime. Apparently, housing stability builds a sense of commitment among residents to their life setting and enables them to exercise social control.⁹

8. J. Laforest, Op. cit.

9. J. Laforest, Op. cit.

According to Statistics Canada, housing tenure refers to the number of rented private dwellings relative to the number of dwellings occupied by owners. We suggest that you present only the proportion of owned private dwellings, as it is understood that the remaining proportion consists of rented dwellings:

$$\frac{\text{Number of owned dwellings}}{\text{Total number of private dwellings occupied by usual residents}^{10}}$$

Exemple

The example of the Les Plateaux RCM

Housing tenure in the Les Plateaux RCM is identical to that in the province of Québec as a whole: 60% of dwellings are owner-occupied while 40% are rented. However, the distribution varies widely from one part of the RCM to another. In the semi-urban zone, over 90% of dwellings are occupied by owners, while in Saint-Gelais, the proportion of owner-occupied dwellings is less than that of rented dwellings. In rural areas, 75% of dwellings are occupied by owners.

Table 14 Proportion of owner-occupied dwellings

Area	Owner-occupants (%)
Saint-Gelais	45.6
Semi-urban zone	91.0
Rural zone	75.4
Les Plateaux RCM	60.6
Québec	60.1

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

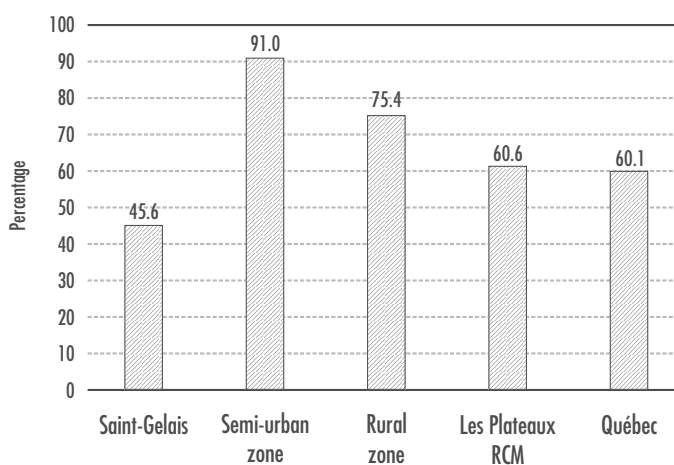


Figure 3 Proportion of owner-occupied dwellings (%)

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

10. This excludes dwellings occupied by foreign and/or temporary residents.

Housing type and condition

In a safety diagnosis, housing type and condition are good indicators of a life setting's physical conditions. Some characteristics, such as multiple dwelling housing and poorly maintained housing, can even be indicators of an area's level of vitality. Unlike owner-occupied dwellings, multiple dwelling housing is associated with a certain degree of residential instability, and such instability makes it harder for residents to develop a sense of belonging to their life setting. As for poorly maintained housing, it can affect a population's feeling of safety, in that a high number of dilapidated dwellings can give rise to an impression of disorder.¹¹

The two indicators used in the example below are percentage of multiple dwelling housing and number of housing units in need of major repairs. To calculate the percentage of multiple dwelling housing in a given area, you have to add together the percentages of housing units in the following three categories of buildings: duplexes, buildings with less than five storeys and buildings with five storeys or more.

Example

The example of the Les Plateaux RCM

The percentages of multiple dwelling housing and housing in need of repairs in the RCM of Les Plateaux are slightly lower than in the province as a whole, i.e. 33.3% and 5.4% respectively compared to 37.9% and 7.7%. However, these average percentages are misleading. In Saint-Gelais, the RCM's most highly populated municipality, the proportion of multiple dwelling housing is close to 50%. As for housing in need of repairs, it is concentrated primarily in the rural zone.

Table 15 Proportion of multiple dwelling housing and housing in need of repairs by area

Area	Multiple dwelling housing (%)	Housing in need of repairs (%)
Saint-Gelais	49.2	4.8
Semi-urban zone	10.3	6.2
Rural zone	15.7	11.7
Les Plateaux RCM	33.3	5.4
Québec	37.9	7.7

Source: ... Census, Statistics Canada.

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IMPLEMENTATION

11. J. Laforest, Op. cit.

Identifying key findings

During the previous step, you gathered and analyzed information on some of the study area's geographic, human and economic characteristics, as well as on certain physical housing characteristics considered useful for obtaining general knowledge about the area targeted by the safety diagnosis. You now have several tables and figures illustrating all of the characteristics selected. In addition, you have analyzed these characteristics, following perhaps some of the examples presented in the guide. Your next task is to identify key findings on the life setting under study.

More precisely, you must identify the following three types of key findings:

<i>Type A key findings</i>	Findings that can be used to describe the life setting or that distinguish it from other settings.
<i>Type B key findings</i>	Findings that underscore characteristics which can affect the way the safety diagnosis is conducted and how the information will be communicated.
<i>Type C key findings</i>	Findings that highlight certain social and physical conditions which may ultimately be deemed likely to have an impact on the setting's safety (see the section "Make a diagnosis" in the <i>Safety Diagnosis Handbook</i>).

The table on the next page presents the key findings derived for the Les Plateaux RCM from the analyses discussed throughout this guide; it also indicates the type of findings concerned (type A, B or C). The comments in the right-hand column explain why the information is considered to constitute a key finding. You do not have to include such comments in your key findings table; however, should you decide to do so, you might be able to base the conclusion to the general portrait of your study area on them.

Drawing up a key findings table requires the ability to synthesize information, as well as good judgment and in-depth knowledge of the life setting concerned. Therefore, you should enlist the participation of several people. This will also enable you to take into account a broad range of considerations pertaining to the life setting for which you want to make a safety diagnosis.



The example of the Les Plateaux RCM

Table 16 Key findings on the life setting

Key findings [type*]	Comments
The Les Plateaux RCM is located in the Les Hautes-Terres administrative region [type A]. The RCM has 82 456 inhabitants and is the second largest in the region [type A]. It comprises eight municipalities that can be grouped into three zones [types A and B]: • Saint-Gelais, the RCM's central municipality, which has 55% of the population [type A]; • semi-urban zone, which includes the municipalities of Saint-Pierre, Le Ruisseau, Lierre and Sainte-Marie, and has roughly one-third of the RCM's population [type A]; • rural zone, which includes the municipalities of Les Érables, Gédéon and Le Vallon, and has 11.2% of the population spread out over close to 40% of the RCM's territory [types A and B].	These key findings were singled out primarily to describe the study area. More precisely, the information on the three zones will be useful for grouping the data gathered or for defining more precisely the information requests that will be submitted to various organizations. In addition, the fact that the rural zone covers 40% of the RCM's territory highlights potential data collection problems, given that the population is scattered widely over that zone.
There are major differences between the three zones in regard to population and economic characteristics: • The semi-urban zone has the youngest population and the highest population growth in the RCM. It also has a wealthier, better educated population, along with the lowest unemployment rate [types A and C]. • The population in the rural zone is aging [type A] and on the decline, in addition to being less well-educated [types A and B] and less wealthy [type C]. It also has the highest unemployment rate [type C].	These key findings were singled out because they highlight differences between the different zones [type A]. Some of the findings (unemployment and income) may ultimately be considered conditions that are likely to have an impact on the setting's safety [type C]. Lastly, these findings show that data collection and communication methods will have to be tailored to the needs of the less well-educated population in the rural zone [type B].

* *Type A key findings:* Findings that can be used to describe the life setting or that distinguish it from other settings.

Type B key findings: Findings that underscore characteristics which can affect the way the safety diagnosis is conducted and how information will be communicated.

Type C key findings: Findings that highlight certain social and physical conditions which may ultimately be deemed likely to have an impact on the setting's safety.

Table 16 Key findings on the life setting (suite)

Key findings [type*]	Comments
From an ethnocultural standpoint, the population of the Les Plateaux RCM is fairly homogeneous (White and French-speaking). However, there are some exceptions: • There is a unilingual Anglophone population in the RCM, especially in the rural (9.3%) and semi-urban (7.2%) zones [type B]. • There is also an Aboriginal population in the RCM, all of whose members live in the central municipality [type B]. • There are a few members of visible minorities in the population, most of whom are Asian, Latin American or Black [type B].	These findings were singled out to ensure that representatives of all of the different groups in the population will be included in some of the data collection activities [type B].
In regard to housing, major differences are found between the RCM's three zones: • Almost all of the residents in the semi-urban zone own their dwellings [types A and C]. • Over half of the dwellings in the municipality of Saint-Gelais are multiple dwelling units and are occupied by tenants [types A and C]. • The largest proportion of dwellings in need of repairs is found in the rural zone [types A and C].	These findings were singled out because they make it possible to not only describe the RCM's territory but also determine what sets the different zones apart from each other [type A]. In addition, these findings may ultimately be considered conditions that are likely to have an impact on the setting's safety [type C].

* *Type A key findings:* Findings that can be used to describe the life setting or that distinguish it from other settings.
Type B key findings: Findings that underscore characteristics which can affect the way the safety diagnosis is conducted and how information will be communicated.
Type C key findings: Findings that highlight certain social and physical conditions which may ultimately be deemed likely to have an impact on the setting's safety.

In short...

Developing a general portrait of a life setting will provide you with a good grasp of its geographic, human and economic characteristics, as well as some of its physical housing characteristics. It is the first step to be taken in making a safety diagnosis and it must be carefully planned. The key findings that emerge from an analysis of these characteristics will enable you to describe the setting or to identify what distinguishes it from other settings, to pinpoint characteristics that might affect the way the safety diagnosis is conducted and how information will be communicated, and to highlight social and physical conditions that may ultimately be deemed likely to have an impact on the setting's safety.

Appendix 1

**Information sources:
geographic characteristics**

Information sources: geographic characteristics

GEOGRAPHIC LIMITS

To determine the geographic limits of an RCM or a municipality, visit the Web site of the ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire (MAMROT) or ask the RCM or municipality concerned for a map providing the necessary information.

Address of the MAMROT Web site: http://www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca/organisation/orga_cart.asp.

The maps of Québec's various regions available on this site are particularly useful for obtaining information on the geographic limits of a study area and the areas that border it.

MAMROT's site also provides up-to-date information on RCMs and municipalities in Québec, including population estimates for the current year. However, if you use census data from Statistics Canada for developing your study area's sociodemographic portrait, we suggest that you not use MAMROT population data as well unless it applies to census years. Otherwise, it will not be readily comparable with the information from Statistics Canada. It is also important to check whether there have been any municipal mergers between census years.

DIVIDING THE AREA INTO ZONES

To help you decide how to divide your study area into zones, you can not only visit the Statistics Canada Web site, which provides information on the urban or rural character of areas, but also the Community Information Database (CID) compiled by the Rural Secretariat of the Government of Canada.

Address of the CID Web site: <http://www.cid-bdc.ca/about>

Appendix 2

**Information sources:
human and economic characteristics
and certain physical characteristics pertaining to housing**

Information sources: human and economic characteristics and certain physical characteristics pertaining to housing

Statistics Canada is the main source of information for defining the human, economic and physical housing characteristics of a study area. This information, which is derived from population censuses, is available on the agency's Community Profiles page.¹²

Address of the Statistics Canada Web site: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/start-debut-eng.html>

To access this information, call up the "Community Profiles" page and type the name of the target RCM or municipality beside "Place name" in the search box and then select a province. We recommend that you look at the tables and figures provided in the community profiles. Depending on your study area, you may be able to use these tables and figures directly or at least model the presentation of your results on them.

Note that since the 2006 Census, it has been possible to obtain information on small geographic regions within some of Québec's municipalities and towns.

We strongly recommend that you check how many municipalities were included in the RCM at the time of the most recent census, for there may have been some mergers or de-mergers since then. For this purpose, once you have called up the "Community Profiles" page for the target RCM, click on the "Hierarchy" tab and compare the municipalities listed with the ones that are currently part of the RCM. If there are any differences, you will have to do certain calculations to take this situation into account.

We also suggest that you print out or save, from the Statistics Canada Web site, any tables you require to complete your data collection needs.

12. When this guide was prepared, the "Community Profiles" tool was located in the "Specialized search tools" section, which could be accessed from Statistics Canada's home page. If you can no longer find the tool in that section, contact Statistics Canada for the new location.

Appendix 3

**Information sources:
aboriginal presence**

Information sources: aboriginal presence

To obtain information on Aboriginal populations, you can visit not only the Statistics Canada Web site, which will enable you to determine how many people with Aboriginal identity live in your study area, but also the two Web sites listed below:

- Web site of the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones (SAA) du Québec, which contains information on the geographic location of Aboriginal populations in Québec:
http://www.autochtones.gouv.qc.ca/nations/cartes_communautes.htm;
- Web site of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, which contains information on the population, geography, political and economic situation, education, community services and infra-structures in each of Québec's Aboriginal communities:
<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/>

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