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2021 Red Suit Survey

66.2 247 and Chocolate Chip Cookies

It all adds up to the hardest working person of the year! Santa Claus!

By National Santa, Tim Connaghan

New York, NY (November 15, 2021) – This past weekend, more than 70% of the Malls in America had already celebrated the arrival of a very special, red suited gentleman . . . Santa Claus!

And the **"Red Suit Survey,"** reports the average Santa is 66.2 years-old, weighs in at 247 pounds and his favorite cookie is chocolate chip!

It also gives us a little information on where the Santas will be working this year, or if they are still waiting until the restrictions from COVID-19 are gone. Almost 20% of the Santas surveyed, reported they did not work the holiday season in 2020. 2% reported they and/or a family member caught the virus

Additionally, there were many wonderful Santas, and even a few Mrs. Claus lost this past year due to the COVID 19 virus. Those numbers are not completely known and therefore not part of this survey.

Of those who did work last Christmas, 27% reported working on a mall or a Photo set using a plexiglass wall/box or wide-open set to practice social distancing. Almost 16% said they continued as in years past with no restrictions, (no masks, plexiglass, etc.). 33% did video chats via ZOOM, Skype, FaceTime or working for a national video conferencing company.

This year 82% of the Santas state they have gotten their vaccinations and are planning to return to some type of Christmas work. Approximately 16% are planning to take one more year off, until everything opens. So, if you are hearing of a shortage of Santas, this just may be the reason.

People across the country, those who hire Santas, or visit Santas, or those who report about Santas, want to know more about that man in the Red Suit. You know, the one sitting in the mall. Or maybe it is the one you meet at a Party.

The annual release of the **"Red Suit Survey,"** gives us a wonderful insight into some areas of Santa's life, his work, and the problems he faces during the Christmas Season. By the way, the remaining 30% of the Malls will see Santa arriving between now and Black Friday.

The tradition of Santa Claus welcoming the children, dates to 1890 when Col. James Edgar, owner of the Boston Stores, put on the "Red Suit" at his Brockton, MA store and became the first Department Store Santa.

Today, there are thousands of malls and stores showcasing "The man in the Red Suit." They invite the families and their children to visit. Beyond how many kids have been "naughty or nice," the annual surveys give us hundreds of surprising statistics!

- Average age of a Santa: 66 Years young. Youngest working Santa, 20. Oldest, 88 years old.
- Average weight 248 pounds (112 kilos).
- 79 tell us the "bowl of Jelly" is real.
- 92 are proud of their 'real beards' The remaining 8% are also proud to bring joy to all!
- 59% of the real bearded Santas are naturally white! 41% have an account at Sally's.
- Thirty percent of mall Santas have more than one hundred children sit on their lap every day. 7% see over 500 children a day.
- 31 percent of Santas have been "wet" on by a child!
- 88 percent of the Santas have had their beard pulled, to see if it is real. Surprisingly, 24% percent of the "pullees" were adults, mostly ladies. The rest were skeptical children.
- 97% of the Santas report children sneeze or cough on them daily, 13% report being coughed or sneezed on, up to fifteen times each day!
- Every Santa must manage crying Babies. But 64% of the Santas report it' actually less than 10% of the babies.

The following are additional mall Santa facts:

- Sixty percent of real bearded Santas groom their beard up to four times each day.
- Santa is a very well-hydrated man with 45 percent drinking 5 to 10 glasses of water each day.
- Fresh breath is of top priority for 20 percent of Santas who eat four to six mints each day.
- Fifty-two percent of Santas believe girls are shyer than boys.
- 46.4 per cent use a fan to keep cool while working. 53 percent wish they had a fan!
- Over 45 percent have up to ten children try to take their glasses off each day.
- 55 percent will pose for pictures with pets, which range from puppies and kittens to boa constrictors!
- When children come to visit Santa at the mall, over 75 percent believe they have been good all year long. However, only half the Santas believe they are telling the truth.

On the personal side Santa has told us via this and some earlier surveys:

- His favorite cookie is Chocolate Chip (42%), with Oatmeal Raisin (19%) second.
- Santa's favorite Christmas Eve Beverage is Hot Cocoa (31%) or Milk (25%).
- Favorite Christmas Song - "Santa Claus is Coming to town," (24%); Second is "Silent Night," (14%)
- Only 17 percent of the Santas speak a second language. These include, Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Russian and Italian. 11% speak Spanish and 2% use American Sign Language.
- 92% reported their number one Greeting is "Merry Christmas,"
- While most people look forward to family vacations or watching football games after Christmas, after spending most of the year freezing at the North Pole, 84 percent of Clauses want to spend time with their families. 10 percent look forward to taking a nice, long nap.
- After Christmas, 56 percent of the Santas go on vacation or visit relatives. Over 25 % of the Santas and Mrs. Claus prefer beaches and warm climates for their vacations and 14% report they would like to go on a cruise.
- Would you believe that 27% immediately start their Christmas planning for next year!

- Following the inaugural 2006 Discover Santa Convention, one Mrs. Claus reported in Time Magazine, that “Santa is a Chick Magnet.” Fifteen years later, when we again asked the Santas that question: 39% said NO, 32% said sometimes. And 26 and a half percent said, “It’s a difficult job, but someone has to do it!”

Last year forced many changes in our lives and changes in Santa’s life too! Hundreds of Santas met the challenge and adjusted how they run. 2021 will see Santa adjusting even more to this year’s challenges

- When asked how they coped with the Pandemic, 72% of the Santas said they made it through OK and even got to work as Santa. 1.3% reported catching the COVID virus.
- To date, 88 % of the Santas report they have had their vaccinations and are returning to work. The remaining Santas have decided to take 2021 off. 49% report they have also received their 2021 Flu shot.
- The author of the survey, Santa Tim says, he will be using rapid tests in addition to his being vaccinated. It will allow him to remain cautious. He is encouraging his fellow Santas to do the same.

“Santa’s work is much more involved than you think.” Says National Santa, Tim Connaghan, who annually produces the survey. More information on the ‘Average’ Santa, additional details and more survey statistics can be found on his website: <https://www.nationalsanta.com/epk-national-santa/>

Celebrating over fifty years of wearing the red suit, Connaghan has made it his job to know about everything related to working as a Santa. From his first day as Santa in 1969 for his fellow troops in Viet Nam, to working in Malls and Stores, to appearing at major national events and shows, he understands the job, and the “dos and don’ts” of wearing the “Red Suit.”

Whether it is sitting in a big mall, presiding over a tree lighting ceremony, or making a private home visit to a family, Santa Tim knows the rewards of bringing cheer and happiness to children across the world, even with all the little problems that come with the job.

Having graduated almost 4,700 Santas and Mrs. Claus from his **International University of Santa Claus**, (School4Santas), plus serving as the National Santa for the **Marine Corps Toys for Tots**, and presiding over the **Hollywood Christmas Parade**, there is not much that has escaped his view. And, according to Connaghan, one of the hardest jobs of all is that of the Mall Santa.

No one truly knows how many Santas there are in the United States, let alone around the world. It is estimated that there are between 8,000 and 10,000 in the United States (Only the real Santa Claus knows!) Santa Tim surveyed 380 Santas this year and the results from his fellow Clauses prove that Santa truly is, “The Hardest working Person of the Year.”



National Santa Tim Connaghan is currently celebrating his 53rd year of wearing the Red Suit. He is the National Santa for the **Marine Toys for Tots Foundation**, **Official Santa for the Hollywood Christmas Parade**, and producer of the world’s largest convention for Professional Santas. For other information, questions about survey research, statistics and details, interviews or appearances, email Santa Tim at Santa@NationalSanta.com, or call: (631) 871-4901.

*For an expanded 4-page version of this release, or more statistical information plus reports and results of this year’s and past year’s surveys, visit: <https://www.nationalsanta.com/epk-national-santa/>.

