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Statistical Data online at: <https://www.nationalsanta.com/epk-national-santa//>

Video release on YouTube: [2026 Red Suit Survey](#)

66.9..... 238..... and Chocolate Chip Cookies.

24 years of surveys confirm the year's hardest-working person!

Santa Claus Named Hardest Working Person of the Year in 2026 Red Suit Survey

North Pole, October 1, 2026 – Researchers have learned the average Santa is: 66.9 years-old and weighs 238 pounds. “This may be because his favorite cookie is chocolate chip!” according to lead authors Colter Uscola and National Santa Claus, Tim Connaghan.

Connaghan, dean of the International University of Santa Claus, and Uscola, a doctoral researcher at the University of British Columbia, continued the 20-plus-year “Red Suit Survey” tradition by recently surveying four hundred professional Santas.

Responses from the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and the South Pacific provided unique statistics about the average Santa Claus.

A closer look shows that 81.9% of Santas are married and have an average of 2.7 children and five grandchildren. The average Santa owns at least three suits and wears a size eleven boot, while 18% of those surveyed own five or more suits.

Each year, this elite group of white-bearded men appears wherever Santa is needed—fitting for the year's hardest-working man!

2026 Red Suit Survey

- When asked what inspired them to become Santa Claus, 32.8% cited encouragement from friends and family, while 18.2% pointed to an employer, church, school, or local association. Another 10.3% said they had always wanted to be Santa, and 12.7% said they had the right physical appearance—or were simply told, “You fit the suit.”
- Colds and flu are major concerns for Santas. Of those surveyed, 78.6% reported being sneezed or coughed on one to four times a day, 17.5% reported five to eight times, and 10% reported 12 to 20 times. In addition, 84.1% said they receive an annual flu shot.
- 26.2 percent of Santas have been “wet” on by a child!
- Of the Santas surveyed, 79.4% have had their beard pulled to test whether they are real. Children account for 63.5% of the pulling, sometimes after parents urge them to “Yank Santa’s beard!” Adults make up 15.9% of the pullers, most often little old ladies.
- Every surveyed Santa reported working with crying babies. However, 58.8% said fewer than one in ten babies cry, while 26.7% estimated the figure at about 25%.
- And, he has all those presents to deliver!

The annual “**Red Suit Survey**” offers valuable insight into Santa’s life, work, and the challenges he faces during the Christmas season.

All details of this year’s culmination of surveys can be found on the web at: NationalSanta.com. Just click on the tab for ‘**RED SUIT SURVEY.**’

Over 57 years in the Red Suit, Connaghan has gained broad insight into the role. He has awarded diplomas to almost 6,000 Santas and Mrs. Claus through his **International University of Santa Claus** (School4Santas), served as National Santa for the **Marine Corps Toys for Tots**, appeared with Mariah Carey, and presided over the **Hollywood Christmas Parade**.

The tradition of Santa Claus welcoming children dates to 1890, when Boston Stores owner Col. James Edgar donned the “Red Suit” at his Brockton, Massachusetts, store and became the first department store Santa.

Today, thousands of Santas bring joy to children and families worldwide, with hundreds appearing in malls and stores as “The Man in the Red Suit” and welcoming family visits. Beyond asking who has been “naughty or nice,” the annual surveys have uncovered hundreds of surprising statistics.

- Average age of Santa: 66.89 Years young. Youngest working Santa, 24. Oldest, 93 years old.
- Average weight 238.32 pounds (108 kilos).
- 80.6% tell us the “bowl of Jelly” is real.

2026 Red Suit Survey

- 85.8% are proud of their 'real beards' The remaining 14.2% are also proud to bring joy to all! Because it is not the beard, nor the red suit. It is what you have in your heart!
- Fifty-five percent of the real bearded Santas are naturally white! 27.4% have an account at Sally's. The remaining are all natural, maybe bit of salt and pepper, or members of a diverse Santa community.
- Thirty-one percent of Santas have unfortunately encountered a 'wet' child on their lap.
- Eighty-eight 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.
- Among mall Santas, 60.7% see 50 to 100 children each day, 25% see 200 to 300, 27.5% see 400 to 500, and 7% see more than five hundred.
- His favorite cookie is Chocolate Chip (52.7%), with Oatmeal Raisin (14%) second.
- Santa's favorite Christmas Eve Beverage is Milk (33.4%), Hot Cocoa (27.1%), and eggnog (13.4%). Coca-Cola came in at 8.8%.
- Favorite Christmas Song - "Santa Claus is Coming to town," (16.4); Second is "Silent Night," (13.7%) Followed by Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer (12.8%); Here comes Santa Claus (12.8%); and Jingle Bells (11.9%)
- 94.2% reported their number one Greeting is "Merry Christmas,"
- Would you believe the day after Christmas, 31.5% immediately start their Christmas planning for next year!

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

- 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 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 percent use a fan to keep cool while working. Fifty-three percent wish they had a fan!
- Over 45 percent have up to ten children trying to take their glasses off each day.
- Fifty-five percent will pose for pictures with pets, which range from puppies and kittens to boa constrictors!

2026 Red Suit Survey

- When they come to visit Santa, over 75 percent of the children report they have been good all year long. However, many of the Santas believe only half are telling the truth.
- Only 17 percent of Santas speak a send language. These include Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Russian, and Italian. Eleven percent speak Spanish and 2% use American Sign Language.
- After Christmas, 84% of the Clauses look forward to spending time with family, while 10% plan to enjoy a long nap.

Since the first Santa Survey in 2004, researchers have compiled a wide range of statistics and findings.

After the first Discover Santa Convention in 2006, a Mrs. Claus told Time magazine that “Santa is a chick magnet.” Later surveys found that 39% of Santas disagreed, 32% said it was sometimes true, and 26.5% joked, “It’s a difficult job, but someone has to do it!”

No one knows exactly how many Santas work in the United States or worldwide. Estimates place the U.S. total between 8,000 and 10,000, with only a few thousand appearing in malls—though only the real Santa Claus knows for sure! The University of British Columbia led this year’s survey of exactly four hundred Santas, and the results affirm that Santa truly is “The Hardest Working Person of the Year.”



National Santa Tim Connaghan has made it his mission to understand every aspect of working as Santa. Since first wearing the Red Suit for fellow troops in Vietnam in 1969, he has worked in malls and stores and appeared at major national events and shows, gaining firsthand knowledge of the role and its “dos and don’ts.”

As Santa Claus, he will officially arrive in New York City on November 20, before Thanksgiving, to light the **All-American Christmas Tree**. The next day, he will appear at the first of many **Toys for Tots** collection events.

From just before Thanksgiving through Christmas, he entertains at major corporate parties, concerts, shows, media events, and television specials while also appearing at the **Marriott Marquis at Times Square**.

2026 Red Suit Survey

Public speaker, corporate spokesperson, comedian, and actor Tim Connaghan serves as the **“National Santa”** for the **Marine Corps Toys for Tots Foundation**. Inducted into the **International Santa Claus Hall of Fame** in 2011, he is now celebrating his 59th year wearing the Red Suit.

He is author of three books: **“Behind the Red Suit,” “Making the Moment,”** and **“Santa’s Tips to Surviving the Holidays.”**

As Santa Claus, he has appeared on ***The Tonight Show, Today, and Dr. Phil***, along with more than one hundred other television programs and films. He has also been featured in hundreds of news articles, radio and television broadcasts, and commercials; appeared at the **Grand Ole Opry**; and performed with **Mariah Carey**. A former president of the nation’s largest Santa association, he produced two of the world’s largest Santa conventions: **“Discover Santa”** and **“DiscoverSanta 2016.”**

Whether appearing at a major mall, presiding over a tree-lighting ceremony, or visiting a family’s home, Santa Tim values the joy he brings to children worldwide despite the job’s occasional challenges.

To view his current calendar go to: <https://www.nationalsanta.com/calendar/> For information, questions, survey research and statistics, interviews or appearances, email Santa Tim at Santa@NationalSanta.com, or call: (631) 871-4901.



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