

Confidence Cools To Three-Month Low

Consumer confidence has cooled with the arrival of November, dipping to its lowest level since July. Nonetheless, it remains very high by historical standards.

A decline in ratings of the buying climate is largely at fault for the dip: Forty-eight percent of Americans now say it's a good time to buy things, the fewest since June and nine points below the high last January.

Still, that's 10 points above average. And other ratings are especially strong: Three-quarters of Americans say the economy's good, five points from the record high; and two-thirds rate their own finances positively, four points off the record.

	Today	Highest	Lowest	Average
Positive ratings:				
National Economy	75%	80	7	41
Personal Finances	66	70	42	57
Buying Climate	48	57	20	38

INDEX - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on these ratings, stands at +26 on its scale of +100 to -100, down three points from last week. The index has averaged +29 this year, a point above its record 1999 average. Its lifetime average is -10, depressed by recession in the early 1990s.

	ABC/Money	Index
Today	+26	
Sept. 3, 2000	+34	
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
2000 average	+29	
1999 average	+28	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-10	

Call the ABC News Polling Unit, ext. 2621, for a chart tracking the index over time.

GROUPS - As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans: The index is +57 in higher-income households compared to -13 in the lowest, +51 among college graduates but -19 among high-school dropouts, +32 among whites but -9 among blacks and +36 among men but +17 among women.

GENERAL POPULATION:

Overall Index	26	29	29	30	23	38	22	29
State of Economy	50	52	52	50	40	60	38	49
Personal Finances	32	36	30	32	30	40	28	34
Buying Climate	-4	0	4	8	0	14	-6	4

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Sex:								
Men	36	35	32	33	30	45	30	36
Women	17	23	25	27	15	30	11	21
Age:								
18 - 34	24	25	29	26	18	37	16	26
35 - 44	24	31	26	32	19	37	15	27
45 - 54	35	31	33	36	30	45	11	32
55 - 64	31	30	23	25	22	51	13	30
65 +	21	30	30	28	26	45	12	29
Income:								
Under \$15K	-13	-13	-23	-19	-30	-12	-36	-23
\$15K To \$24.9K	-6	6	-5	9	11	26	-20	1
\$25K To \$39.9K	18	20	14	26	17	33	12	23
\$40K To \$49.9K	45	46	46	19	27	60	19	39
Over \$50K	57	54	60	62	54	68	54	61
Region:								
Northeast	25	36	28	37	21	48	17	32
Midwest	30	31	37	35	27	46	17	32
South	23	20	21	22	24	31	17	23
West	28	32	32	31	15	43	14	30
Race:								
White	32	32	30	33	27	43	25	33
Black	-9	7	17	3	2	25	-15	1
Politics:								
Republican	43	46	44	42	39	55	31	42
Democrat	24	30	33	25	21	38	7	28
Independent	20	21	16	28	19	39	13	23
Education:								
< High School	-19	-12	-21	8	-17	13	-23	-8
High Sch. Grad.	10	15	24	16	12	32	8	19
College +	51	50	48	46	41	53	38	47
Home:								
Own	34	34	32	37	34	44	31	36
Rent	7	14	17	9	-1	19	-1	9
Marital Status:								
Single	31	32	29	26	13	42	9	26
Married	31	32	32	38	30	44	27	34
Sep/Wid/Div	1	9	12	2	0	27	-3	8
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	34	33	36	37	32	44	28	35
Part-Time	19	16	23	31	20	40	11	26
Not Employed	17	25	20	19	11	29	8	19

END