

**Seattle Police Department Research Report**

**MARCH 2016  
SERVICE QUALITY UPDATE**

*Feedback from the People We Serve*

April 22, 2016



*This report is one in a series that summarizes the feedback received by the Seattle Police Department from 9-1-1 callers who have had an officer dispatched to assist them and are later surveyed by telephone.*

## **9-1-1 Caller Surveys: Summary and Conclusions from March 2016**

The Seattle Police Department customer satisfaction surveys provide feedback about the service provided by the Department to those who call 9-1-1 and have an officer dispatched to assist them. Key findings and conclusions from March 2016 and comparisons to previous surveys are summarized below.

**Overall Satisfaction.** Overall, customers continue to be satisfied with their experience with the Department “from calling 9-1-1 on to all contacts [they] had with the Police Department as a result of that call.” Eighty-four percent of the customers rated their overall satisfaction with this experience as 4 or 5 on a five-point scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied,” for an average rating of 4.29 out of 5 possible points. Overall satisfaction in March 2016 was significantly higher than in the first survey in June 2006.

**Officers Responding to Customers’ 9-1-1 Calls.** Customers rated the officers who responded to their calls positively. Customers indicated that the officers who responded to the 9-1-1 calls were professional and courteous (67% “strongly agree”); listened to customer concerns, answered questions, and provided the information, assistance, and explanations customers needed and wanted (50% to 54% “strongly agree”). The responding officers received lower ratings for giving “tips on preventing future crimes” (25% “strongly agree”).

Ratings that the responding officers were (1) professional and courteous, (2) provided the information needed, (3) clearly explained procedures and requirements, (4) told you what would happen next, and (5) gave tips on preventing crimes increased significantly since the first survey in June 2006. Ratings of one item also increased significantly between December 2015 and March 2016: “The officer clearly explained procedures and requirements.”

**Seattle Police Department Overall.** Customers also rated the Department highly. Customers indicated that “Department personnel are professional and courteous” (47% “strongly agree”) and the Department clearly explains procedures and requirements, is a good resource for information about preventing crime, is available when needed, and focuses on public safety issues of concern (27% to 30% “strongly agree”). While these are positive ratings, ratings of the officers with whom customers had personal contact (officers responding to 9-1-1 calls) were higher than ratings of the Department overall.

Ratings that (1) Department personnel are professional and courteous and that the Department, (2) clearly explains procedures and requirements, (3) is a good resource for information about preventing crime, and (4) focuses on public safety issues of concern increased significantly since the first survey.

**9-1-1 Operations.** Customers were satisfied with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator (70% “extremely satisfied”) and with the speed with which their calls were answered by the operator (68% “extremely satisfied”). Satisfaction with service provided by the 9-1-1 operator was higher in March 2016 than in the first survey in June 2006. Satisfaction with the speed with which calls were answered has not changed significantly since June 2015, when the question was introduced. Eight percent, or 15 customers, had to dial 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator in March 2016, though all callers should be able to reach an operator the first time they dial 9-1-1.

**Feelings of Safety.** Customers said that they feel more safe “walking alone in [their] neighborhood during the day” (62% “extremely safe”) than they do “walking alone in [their] neighborhood at night” (26% “extremely safe”) or overall in Seattle (23% “extremely safe”).

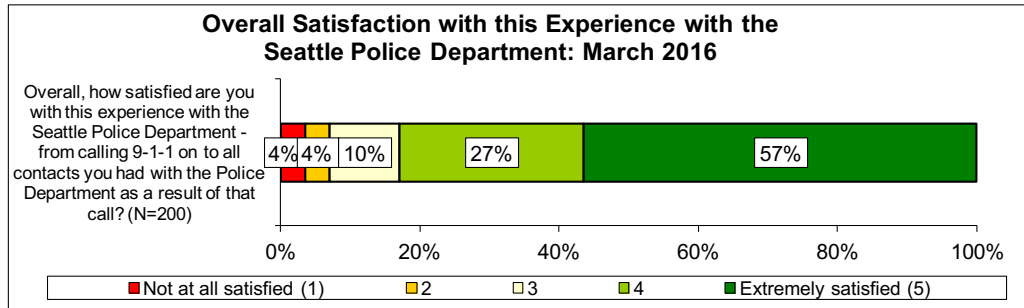
As in past surveys, customers reported that the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 led some of them to feel less safe than before, but the service provided by the Department as a result of their calls to 9-1-1 increased the proportion of customers who felt more safe and decreased the proportion who felt less safe than before they called 9-1-1. The service provided by the Department appears to provide customers with reassurance and increase their feelings of personal safety.

## 9-1-1 Caller Surveys: Results

This report (1) summarizes key results of the March 2016 survey of customers who called 9-1-1 in February 2016 and had an officer dispatched to assist them and (2) compares the March 2016 results with those of the previous 30 surveys of 9-1-1 callers, conducted between June 2006 and December 2015.

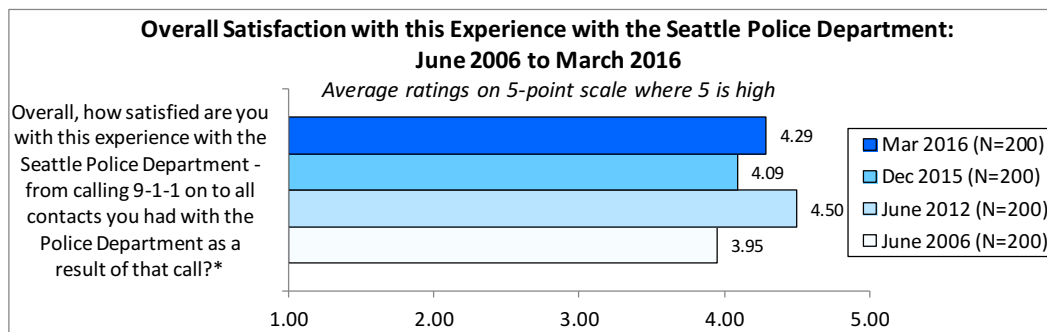
**Overall Satisfaction.** Customers who had an officer dispatched to provide assistance after calling 9-1-1 were asked to use a five-point scale, where 5 means “extremely satisfied” and 1 means “not at all satisfied,” to answer the question, “Overall, how satisfied are you with this experience with the Seattle Police Department – from calling 9-1-1 on to all contacts you had with the Police Department as a result of that call?”

As the next chart<sup>1</sup> shows, 84 percent of customers rated their satisfaction with this experience with the Department as 4 (27%) or 5 (57%) on the five-point scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied.” Four percent rated their satisfaction as 1, or “Not at all satisfied,” and four percent rated their satisfaction as 2 on the five point scale where 1 means, “Not at all satisfied.”



The question about overall satisfaction has been included in all 31 customer satisfaction surveys. The next chart and similar charts, below, show the average ratings of overall satisfaction from four of the surveys: June 2006, when the survey was first conducted; June 2012, the month before the Department entered into the consent decree with the Department of Justice; and December 2015 and March 2016, the two most recent surveys.<sup>2</sup>

With an average rating of 4.29 in March 2016, overall satisfaction with this experience with the Seattle Police Department was significantly higher than in June 2006, when the first survey was conducted.



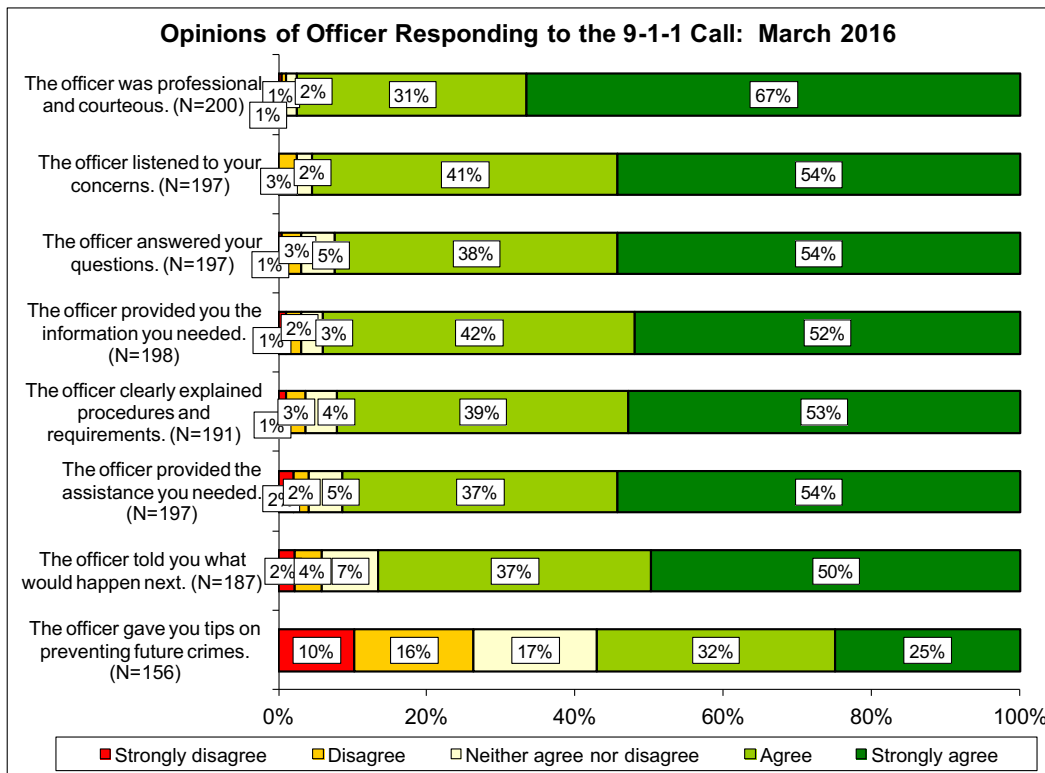
<sup>1</sup> Percentages do not total 100 in this and some subsequent charts due to rounding.

<sup>2</sup> The numbers of respondents answering each question are omitted from some charts for readability, but the number consistently was close to 200. Average ratings in bold font differed significantly between December 2015 and March 2016, the last two surveys. Average ratings of items with an asterisk (\*) following the text of the item differed significantly between the first time the question was asked and March 2016.

**Officer Responding to the Call.** To assess customers’ experiences with and opinions of the officer who responded to their calls to 9-1-1, customers were asked to indicate their level of agreement (“Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly disagree”) with a series of statements about the officer.

Customers rated officers highest for being professional and courteous and lowest for giving tips on preventing future crimes, as shown in the next chart.

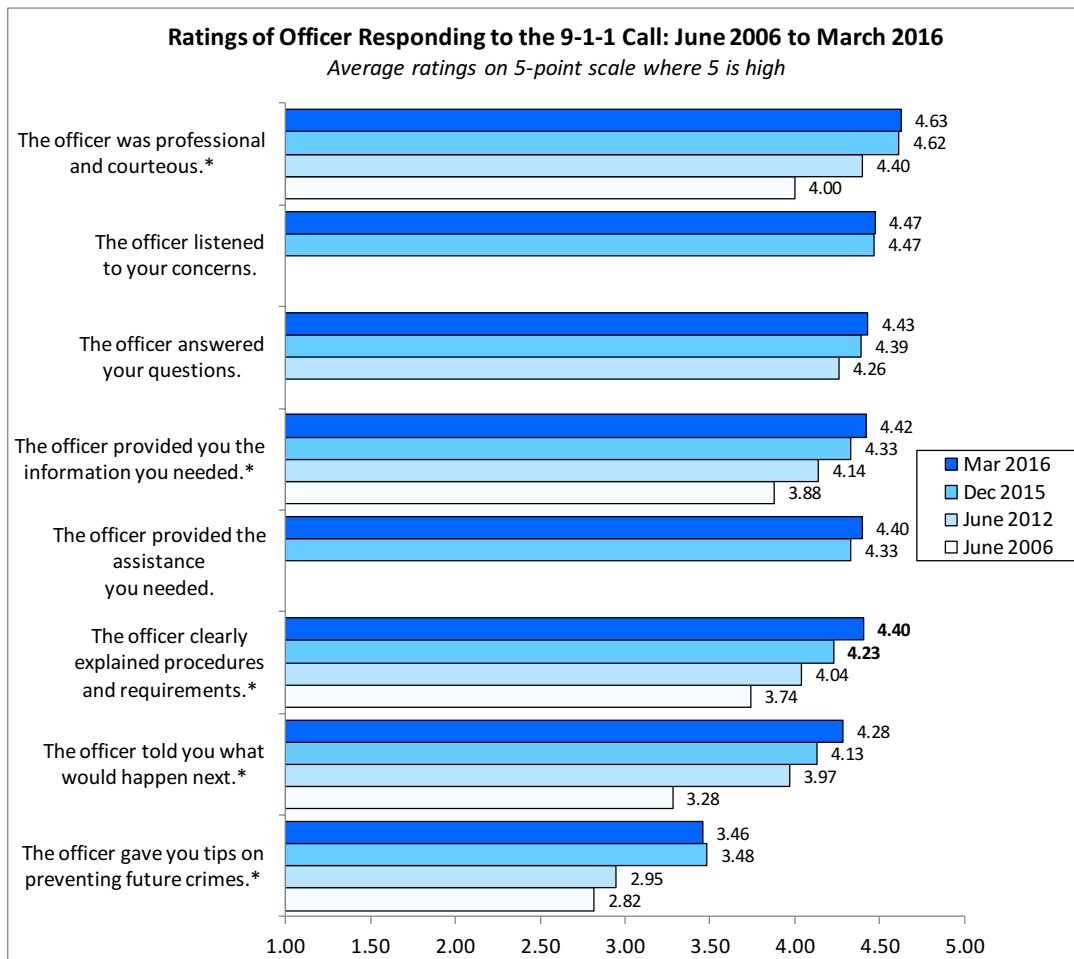
- Two-thirds (67%) of the customers said that they “strongly agree” that the officer who first visited after their call to 9-1-1 “was professional and courteous,” and 98 percent said that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement. Just one percent said that they “disagree” that “The officer was professional and courteous,” and one percent said that they “strongly disagree” with this statement.
- Between 50 and 54 percent of the customers said that they “strongly agree” with six of the statements: “The officer listened to your concerns,” “The officer answered your questions,” “The officer provided you the information you needed,” “The officer clearly explained procedures and requirements,” “The officer provided the assistance you needed,” and “The officer told you what would happen next.” Between 87 and 95 percent of customers said that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with these statements, and between three and six percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statements.
- A total of 57 percent of the customers said that they “agree” or “strongly agree,” and 26 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree,” with the statement, “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes.”



Five of these items about responding officers were included in all 31 customer satisfaction surveys: “The officer was professional and courteous,” “The officer provided you the information you needed,” “The officer clearly explained procedures and requirements,” “The officer told you what would happen next,” and “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes.” As shown in the next chart, ratings of all five of these items were significantly higher in March 2016 than they were in June 2006, when the questions

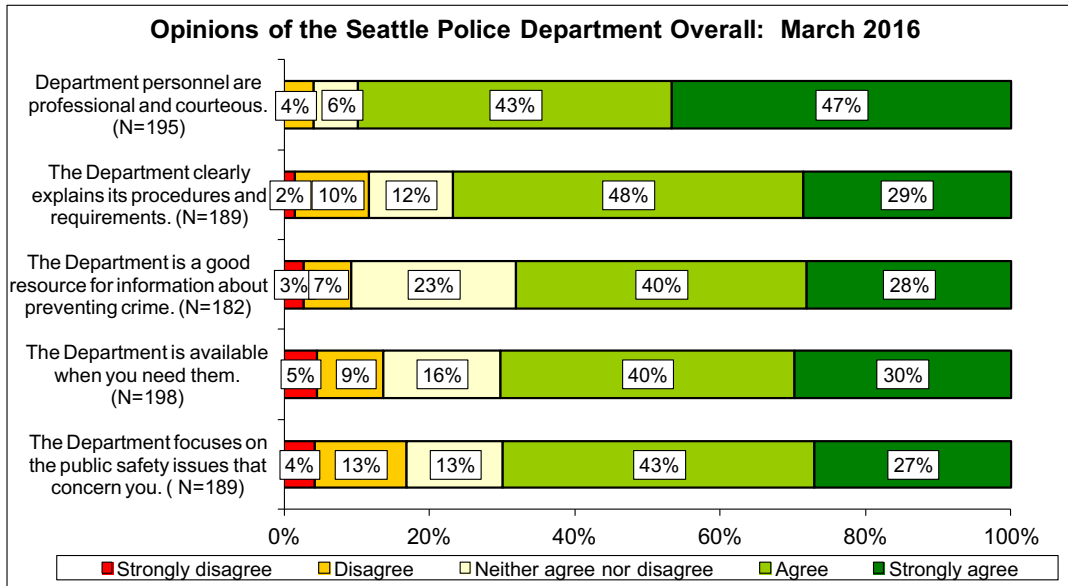
were first asked. In addition, ratings of one item, “The officer clearly explained procedures and requirements,” were significantly higher in March 2016 than in December 2015, the previous survey.

The three remaining items were added to the survey beginning in 2007. “The officer answered your questions,” was added in April 2007. Responses to this item have fluctuated significantly over time, but ratings in March 2016 did not differ significantly from April 2007, when the question was first asked, or from the previous survey in December 2015. “The officer listened to your concerns” was added to the survey in June 2014, and “The officer provided the assistance you needed” was introduced to the survey in June 2015; ratings of these items have not changed significantly across surveys.

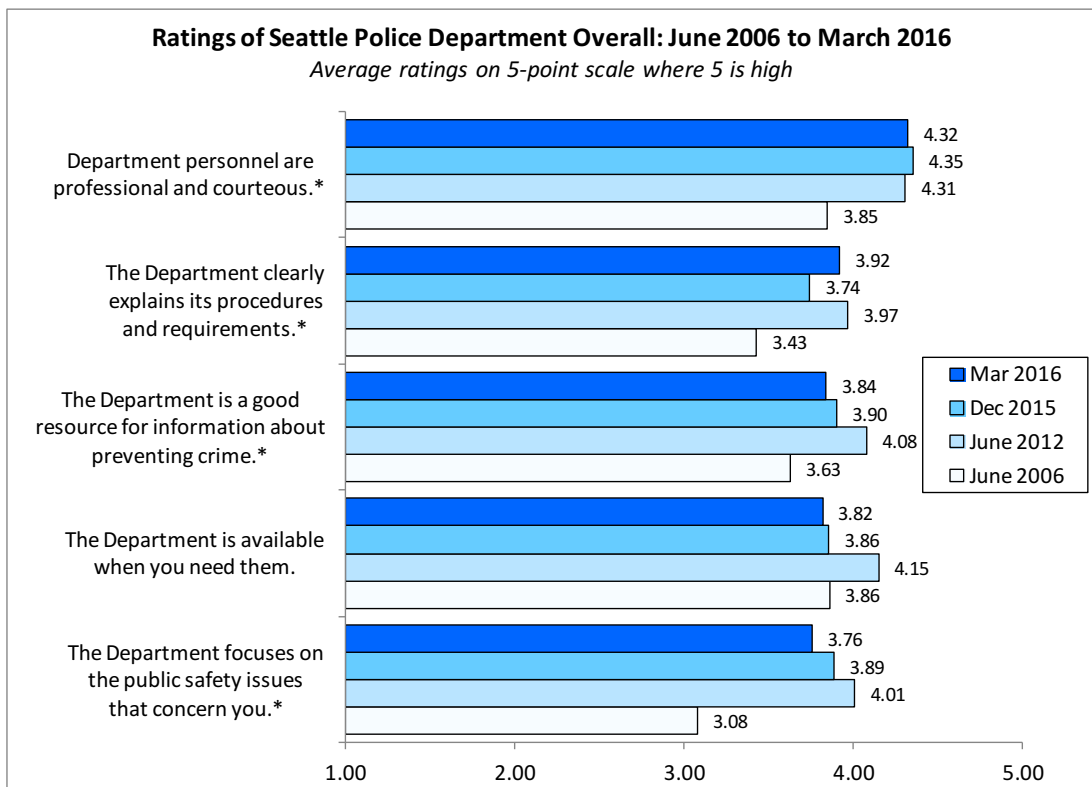


**Seattle Police Department Overall.** To assess opinions of the Seattle Police Department overall, customers were asked to indicate their level of agreement (“Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly disagree”) with statements about the Department, including the five statements shown in the next chart.

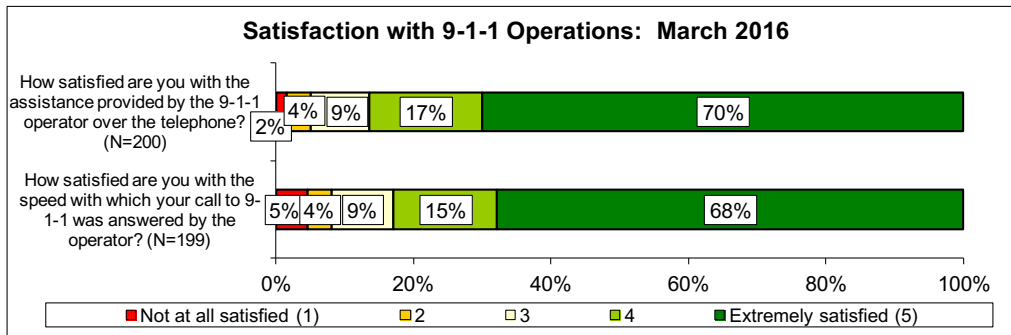
Customers rated the Department highest for having professional and courteous personnel, just as they rated the officer who responded to their call highest for being professional and courteous. Almost half (47%) of the customers said that they “strongly agree” and 43 percent said they “agree” with the statement, “Department personnel are professional and courteous.” Just four percent said that they “disagree” with this statement and none “strongly disagree.” Between 27 and 30 percent of the customers said they “strongly agree” (a total of 68% to 77% either “agree” or “strongly agree”) with the other four statements about the Department; between 10 and 17 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with these statements, as shown in the next chart.



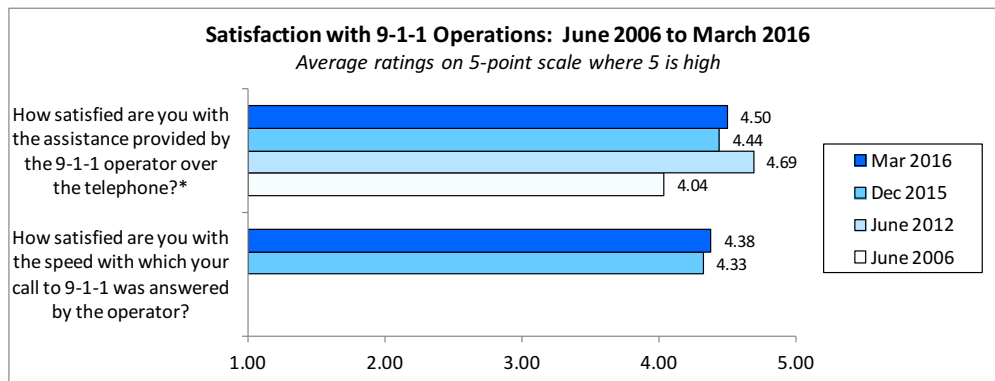
These questions about the Department overall were included in all of the customer satisfaction surveys, and responses to the questions changed significantly over time. Ratings of four items increased significantly between the first survey and March 2016: “Department personnel are professional and courteous,” “The Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements,” “The Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime,” and “The Department focuses on the public safety issues that concern you.” Ratings of the fifth item, “The Department is available when you need them,” fluctuated over time but did not differ significantly between June 2006 and March 2016.



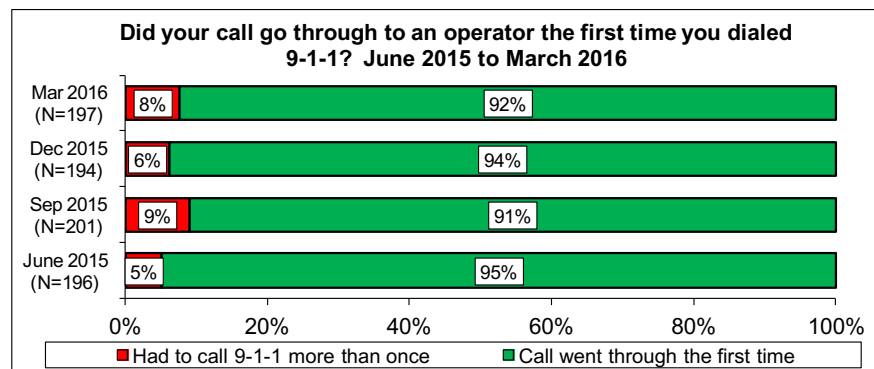
**9-1-1 Operations.** Just over two-thirds of the customers rated their satisfaction with both the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator and the speed with which their call was answered as 5 on the five-point scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied” (70% and 68%, respectively). A total of 87 and 83 percent rated their satisfaction with the assistance and the speed with which their calls were answered as either a 4 or a 5 on this five-point scale, respectively. Six percent rated their satisfaction with the service provided by the operator as either 1 or 2 on the five-point scale where 1 means “not at all satisfied.” Nine percent rated their satisfaction with the speed with which their calls were answered as 1 or 2. These results are shown in the next chart.



The questions about customers’ satisfaction with the service provided by the 9-1-1 operator have been included in all 31 surveys, and ratings of this item were significantly higher in March 2016 than in June 2006, when first asked. Ratings of satisfaction with the speed with which calls were answered did not change significantly between June 2015, when first asked, and March 2016.

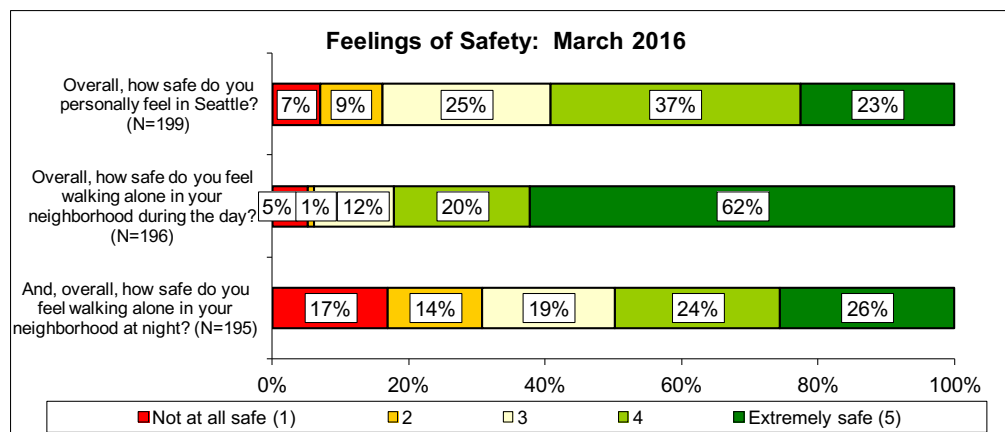


Beginning In June 2015, customers were asked if they reached an operator the first time they dialed 9-1-1. Responses to this question, shown in the next chart, have not differed significantly since the question was introduced. Between 91 and 95 percent of the customers reached an operator the first time they dialed 9-1-1, and between 5 and 9 percent (between 10 and 19 customers) had to dial 9-1-1 more than once.

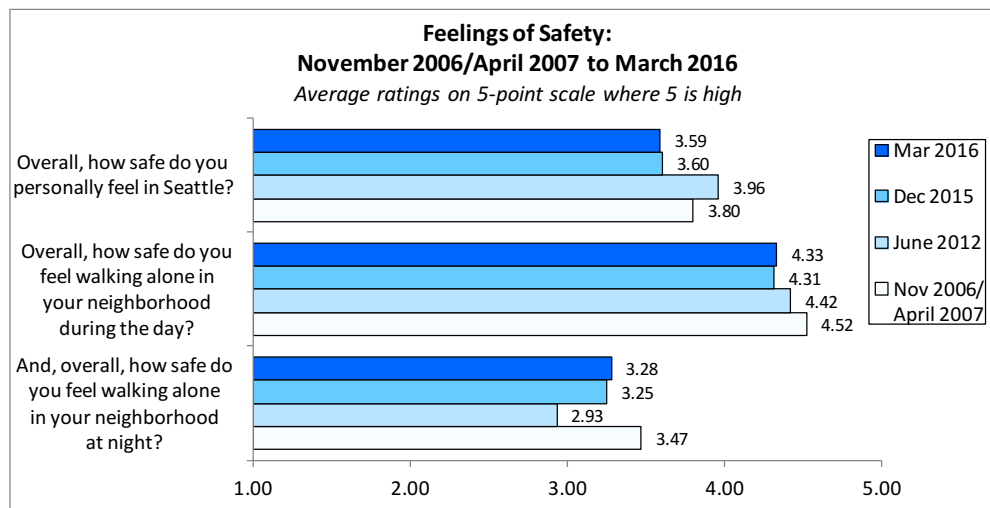


The fifteen customers (8%) who had to call 9-1-1 more than once in March 2016 were asked how often they dialed 9-1-1 to reach an operator. Ten (67%) reached the operator on their second attempt, 3 (20%) on their third attempt, 1 (7%) on the fourth attempt, and 1 (7%) did not say how many times he or she had to call 9-1-1 to reach an operator.

**Feelings of Safety.** Customers said that they feel more safe walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day than they feel in Seattle overall or than walking alone in their neighborhoods at night. Sixty percent of the customers rated their overall feelings of safety in Seattle as 4 or 5 on a five-point scale where 5 means “extremely safe”; and 16 percent rated their feelings as 2 or 1, where 1 means “not at all safe.” Over 80 percent rated their feelings of safety when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day as 4 or 5, and 50 percent rated their feelings of safety when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night as 4 or 5 on the scale where 5 means “extremely safe”. Just six percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 (“not at all safe”) or 2 when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day, and 31 percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 or 2 when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night.



The questions about feelings of safety were added to the surveys in November 2006 (overall feeling of safety in Seattle) and in April 2007 (feelings of safety walking alone in your neighborhood during the day and at night). Feelings of safety reported on these three questions have fluctuated significantly across surveys, though ratings were not significantly different in March 2016 than when these questions were first asked. These results are shown in the next chart.

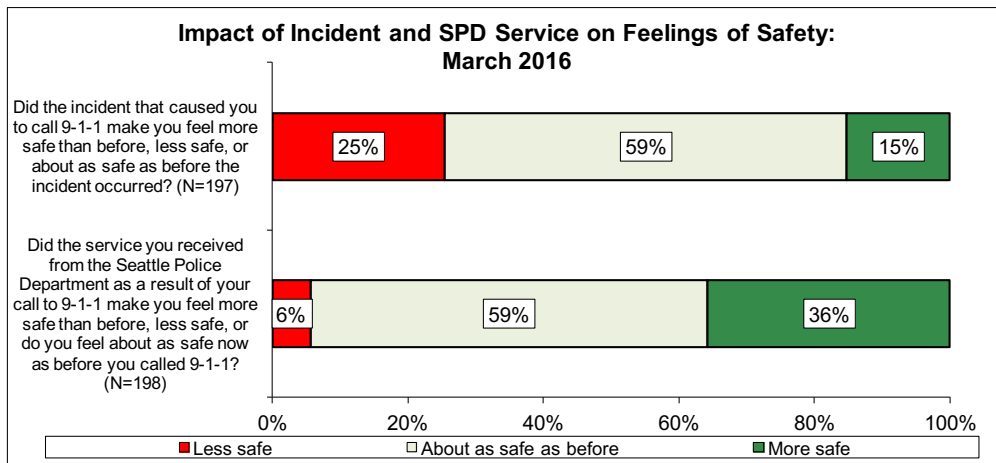


When asked about the impact of the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 on their feelings of safety, over half of the customers (59%) reported that they feel “about as safe as before the incident occurred.” The remaining customers said that they either felt “less safe” (25%) or “more safe” (15%) than before the

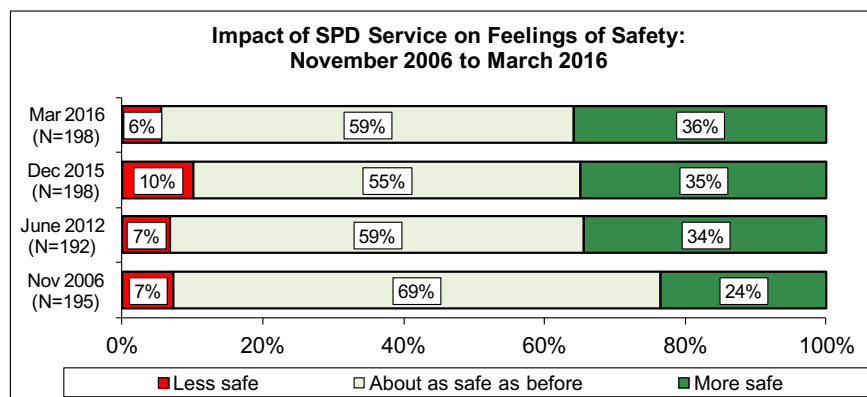
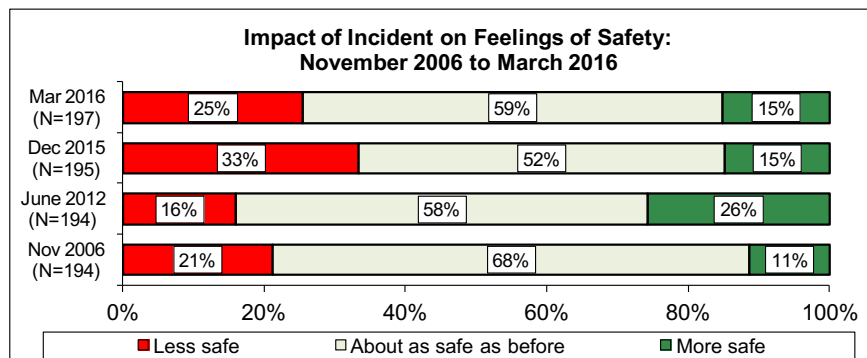


incident occurred. Similarly, when asked about the impact of the service received from the Department as a result of their call to 9-1-1, over half (59%) of the customers said that they feel “about as safe now as before they called 9-1-1,” while 36 percent said they feel “more safe,” and 6 percent feel “less safe.”

The responses to these two questions show that the service received from the Seattle Police Department led to an increase in the percentage of customers who said they feel “more safe” (15% to 36%), as well as a decrease in the percentage of customers who felt “less safe” (25% to 6%), as shown in the next chart. This indicates that feelings of personal safety increased and customers were reassured by the Department’s response.



Customers’ reports of the impacts of both the incident and the service provided by the Department have changed significantly across surveys. However, in every survey, a larger proportion of customers said they felt “more safe” and a smaller proportion said they felt “less safe” after receiving service from the Department than after the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1. Service provided by the Department consistently led to increases in feelings of personal safety, as shown in the next two charts.



## **Appendix**

### **9-1-1 Caller Surveys: Background, Objectives, and Methods**

**Background.** In 2006, the Seattle Police Department began surveying members of the public (customers) who had personal contact with an officer after calling 9-1-1. The surveys have been conducted two to four times a year, and a total of 31 surveys have been conducted to date. These surveys have been designed to assess customers' experiences and satisfaction with the service provided by the Seattle Police Department, and the results of the surveys have been used to assess service delivery; examine differences between precincts; identify strategies and tactics to achieve specific service objectives; and provide feedback to officers, precinct captains, and watch lieutenants.

**Objectives.** The information objectives of the survey research include the following:

- Assess customers' overall satisfaction with their experience with the Department after calling 9-1-1;
- Assess experiences with and opinions of the services provided by the officer who first visited customers after their calls to 9-1-1;
- Assess opinions of the Seattle Police Department overall;
- Assess satisfaction with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator and the speed with which the call to 9-1-1 was answered; and
- Assess customers' feelings of safety in Seattle, including the impact of both (1) the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 and (2) the service provided by the Department after the call to 9-1-1 on customers' feelings of safety.

**Research Methods.** Similar to the previous surveys, 200 customers who called 9-1-1 and had an officer dispatched to provide assistance were interviewed by telephone for this survey. All of the customers interviewed had called 9-1-1 between February 8 and 18, 2016, and were randomly selected from lists of 9-1-1 callers who had an officer dispatched to provide assistance, excluding sensitive cases, such as domestic violence calls. The interviews were completed between February 23 and March 7, 2016. The interviews were approximately 10 to 12 minutes long.

The questionnaire used in the interviews was developed with Department input and approval. During the course of this research, some questions have been added to or deleted from the survey questionnaire to reflect the changing information needs of the Department. However, questions about customers' overall satisfaction with their experience with the Department after calling 9-1-1, experiences with and opinions of the officer who first visited after the call to 9-1-1, opinions of the Seattle Police Department overall, and satisfaction with the service provided by the 9-1-1 operator have been included in every survey. Since late 2006 and early 2007, the surveys also included questions about customers' feelings of safety in Seattle.