

Seattle Police Department Research Report

**DECEMBER 2016
SERVICE QUALITY UPDATE**

Feedback from the People We Serve

January 20, 2017

This report is one of a series of reports that summarize 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 December 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 December 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.” Seventy-eight 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 4.15 out of 5 possible points. Ratings of overall satisfaction fluctuated significantly across surveys.

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 (93% “strongly agree” or “agree”); and answered questions, listened to customer concerns, and provided the information, assistance, and explanations customers needed and wanted (82% to 91% “strongly agree” or “agree”). The responding officers received lower ratings for giving “tips on preventing future crimes” (45% “strongly agree” or “agree”).

Ratings that the responding officers were (1) professional and courteous, (2) provided the information needed, (3) told you what would happen next, (4) clearly explained procedures and requirements, and (5) gave tips on preventing crimes increased significantly since the first survey in June 2006.

Seattle Police Department Overall. Customers also rated the Department highly. Customers indicated that “Department personnel are professional and courteous” (90% “strongly agree” or “agree”) and the Department clearly explains procedures and requirements, is available when needed, is a good resource for information about preventing crime, and focuses on public safety issues of concern (65% to 71% “strongly agree” or “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, (2) the Department clearly explains procedures and requirements, and (3) the Department 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 and with the speed with which their calls were answered by the operator (84% and 78%, respectively, rated their satisfaction 4 or 5 on the scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied”). Satisfaction with service provided by the 9-1-1 operator was higher in December 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 first asked. Eight percent, or 16 customers, had to dial 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator in December 2016.

Feelings of Safety. Customers said that they feel more safe “walking alone in [their] neighborhood during the day” (51% “extremely safe”) than they do overall in Seattle (18% “extremely safe”) or “walking alone in [their] neighborhood at night” (17% “extremely safe”). In December 2016, customers reported feeling significantly less safe overall in Seattle, walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day, and walking alone in their neighborhoods at night than they did when these questions were first asked in late 2006 and early 2007.

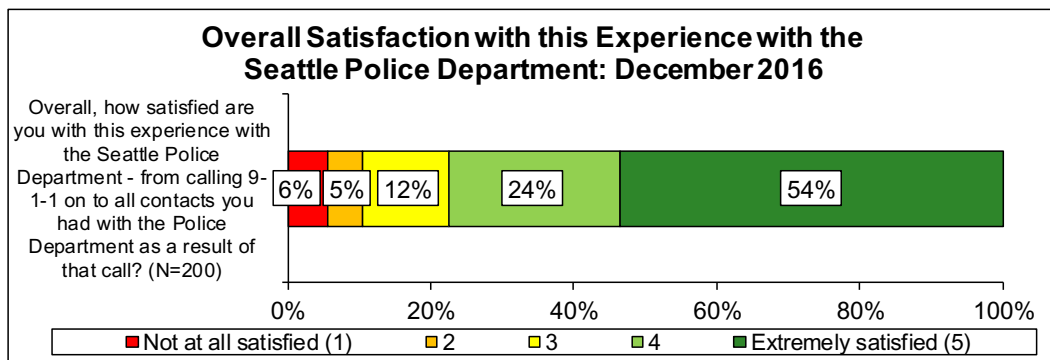
As in past surveys, customers reported that the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 led some of them to feel less safe than before, but the service provided by the Department as a result of their calls to 9-1-1 increased the proportion of customers who feel more safe and decreased the proportion who feel less safe than before they called 9-1-1. These results suggest that the service provided by the Department continues 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 December 2016 survey of customers who called 9-1-1 in November 2016 and had an officer dispatched to assist them and (2) compares the December 2016 results with those of the previous 33 surveys of 9-1-1 callers, which were conducted between June 2006 and September 2016.

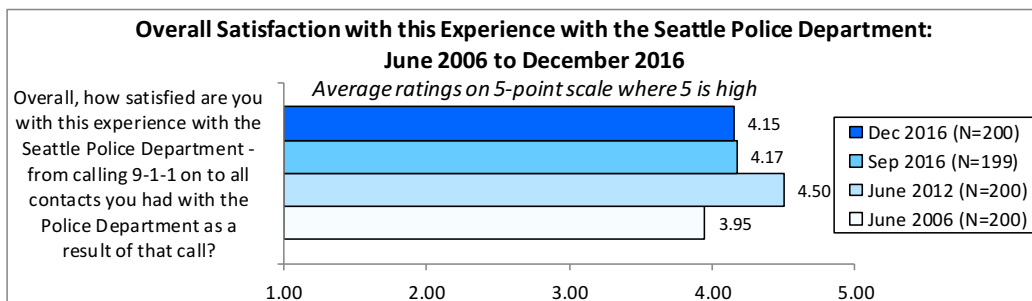
Overall Satisfaction. Customers who had an officer dispatched to provide assistance after calling 9-1-1 were asked to use a five-point scale, where 5 means “extremely satisfied” and 1 means “not at all satisfied,” to answer the question, “Overall, how satisfied are you with this experience with the Seattle 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 shows, 54 percent of the customers rated their satisfaction with this experience with the Department as 5 on the five-point scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied,” and 24 percent rated their satisfaction as 4 on this scale. Six percent rated their satisfaction as 1, or “Not at all satisfied,” and five percent rated their satisfaction as 2 on the five-point scale where 1 means, “Not at all satisfied.”¹



The question about overall satisfaction has been included in all 34 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 September 2016 and December 2016, the two most recent surveys.²

With an average rating of 4.15 in December 2016, overall satisfaction with this experience with the Seattle Police Department did not differ significantly from June 2006, when the first survey was conducted, although overall satisfaction has fluctuated significantly across surveys.



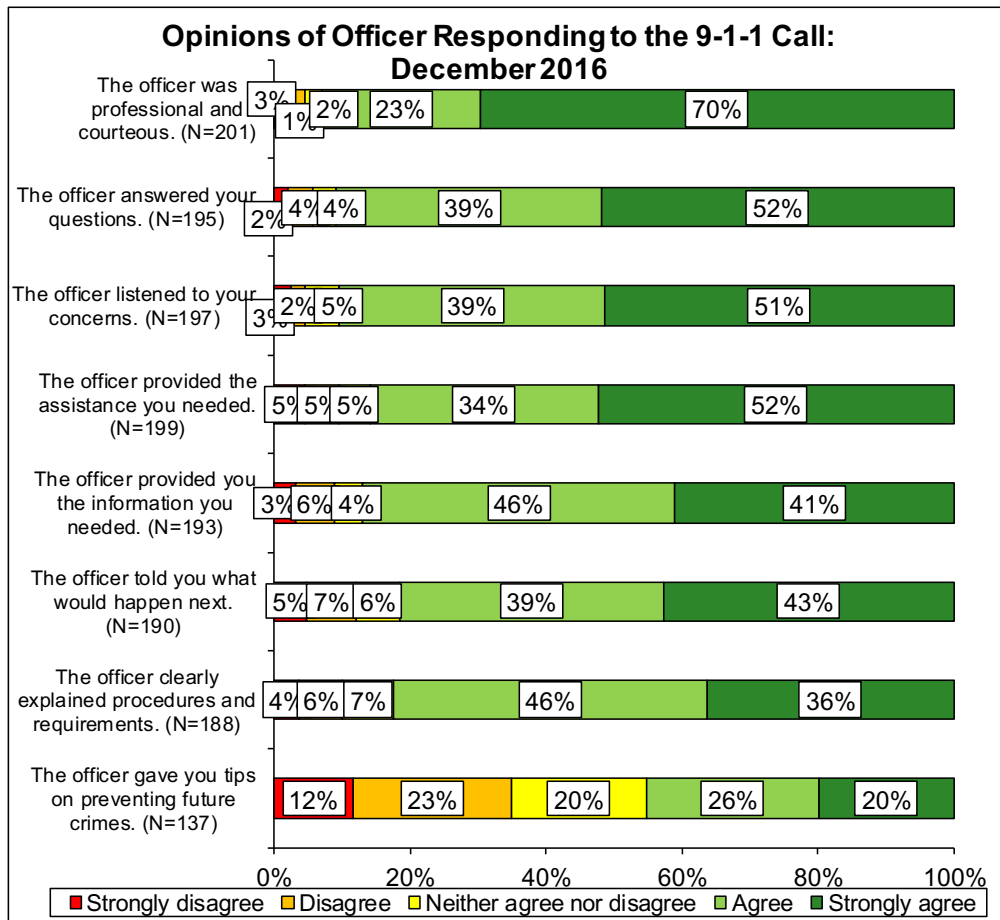
¹ Percentages do not total 100 in this and some subsequent charts due to rounding.

² The numbers of respondents answering each question are omitted from some charts for readability, but the number was consistently close to 200. Average ratings in bold font differed significantly between September 2016 and December 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 December 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.

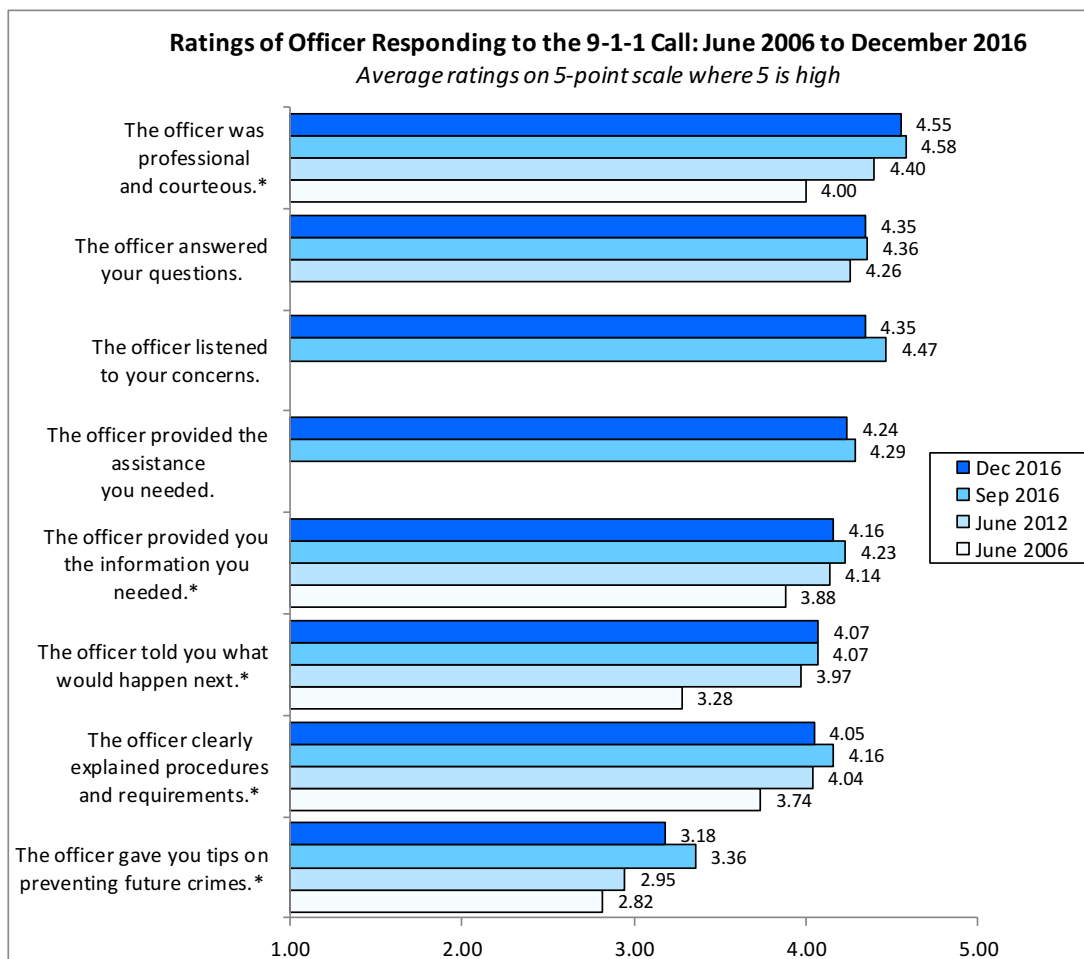
Customers rated officers highest for being professional and courteous and lowest for giving tips on preventing future crimes, as shown in the next chart.

- Seventy percent 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 93 percent said that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement. Three percent said that they “strongly disagree” and one percent said that they “disagree” that “The officer was professional and courteous.”.
- Between 36 and 52 percent of the customers said that they “strongly agree” with six of the statements: “The officer answered your questions,” “The officer listened to your concerns,” “The officer provided the assistance you needed,” “The officer provided you the information you needed,” “The officer told you what would happen next,” and “The officer clearly explained procedures and requirements.” Between 82 and 91 percent of customers said that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” with these statements, and between five and 12 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statements.
- A total of 45 percent³ of the customers said that they “agree” or “strongly agree,” and 35 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree,” with the statement, “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes.”



³ Correcting for rounding error.
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Five of these items about responding officers were included in all 34 customer satisfaction surveys: “The officer was professional and courteous,” “The officer provided you the information you needed,” “The officer told you what would happen next,” “The officer clearly explained procedures and requirements,” 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 December 2016 than they were in June 2006, when the questions were first asked. Ratings of the officer for providing “the assistance you needed” and answering “your questions” fluctuated significantly over time, although ratings of these items did not differ significantly between the time they were first asked and December 2016. Ratings of the item, “The officer listened to your concerns,” did not change significantly across time.

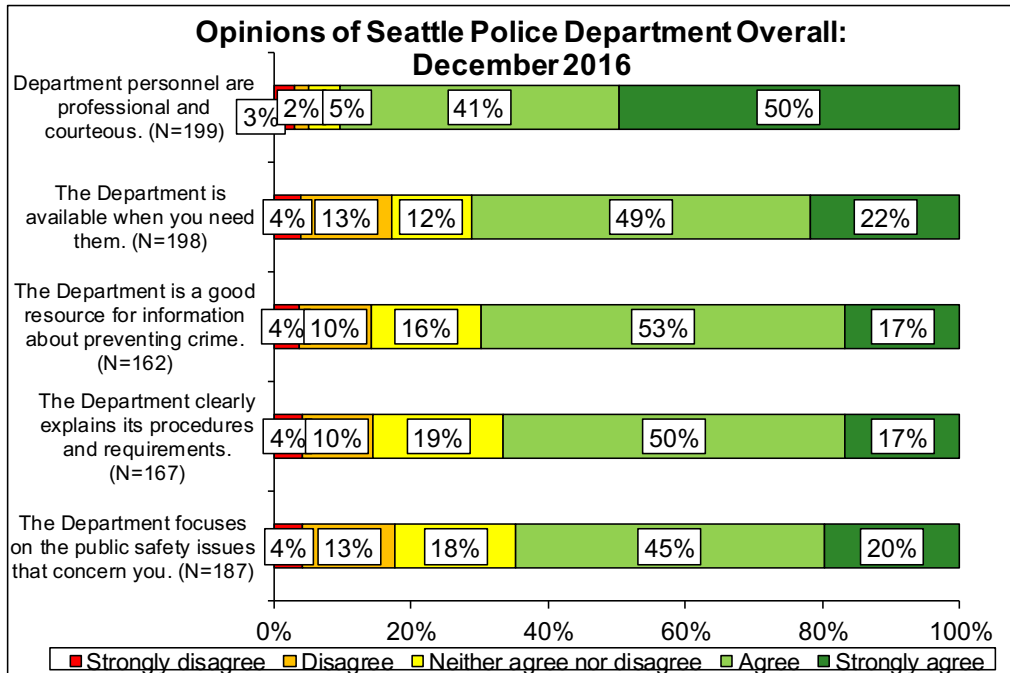


Seattle Police Department Overall. To assess opinions of the Seattle Police Department overall, customers were asked to indicate their level of agreement (“Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly disagree”) with statements about the Department, including the five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

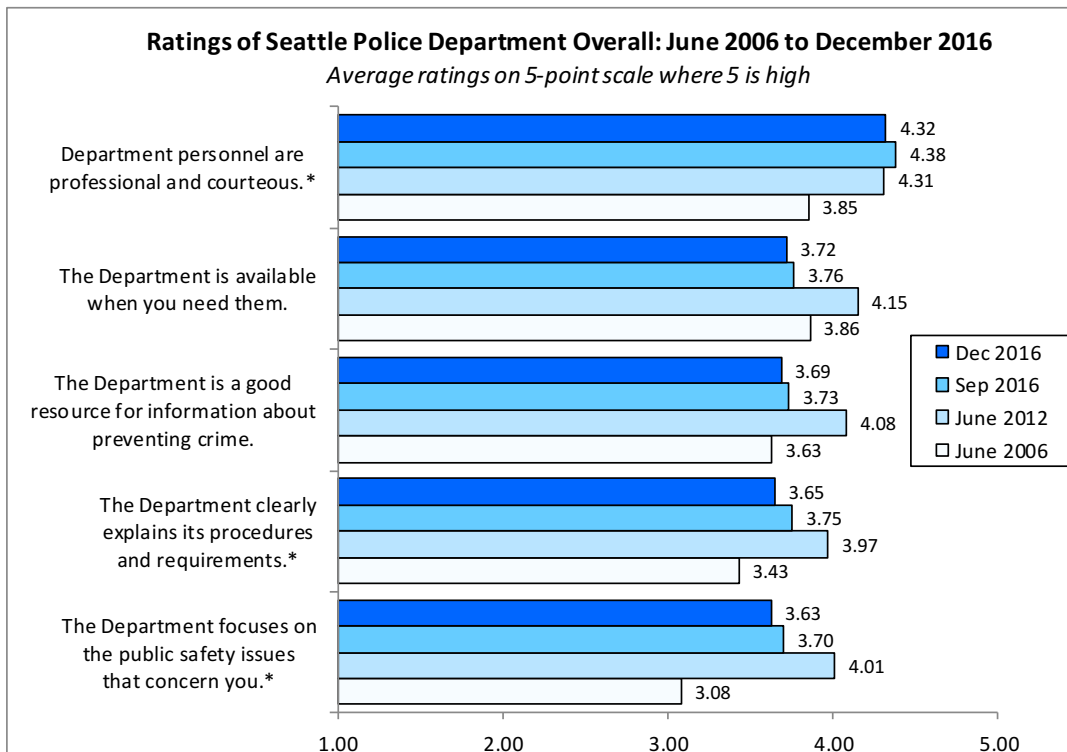
Customers rated the Department highest for having professional and courteous personnel, just as they rated the officer who responded to their call highest for being professional and courteous. Ninety percent⁴ of the customers said that they “strongly agree” or “agree” that “Department personnel are professional and courteous.” Five percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement. Between 65 and 71 percent of the customers said they “strongly agree” or “agree” with the other four statements about

⁴ Correcting for rounding error.
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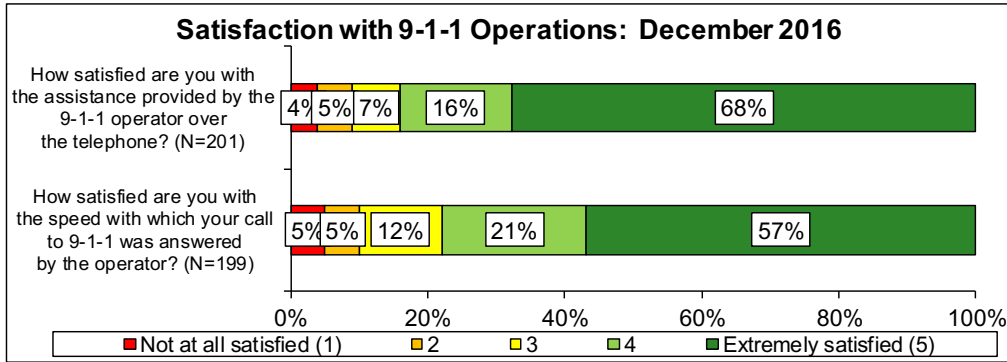
the Department; between 14 and 17 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with these statements, as shown in the next chart.



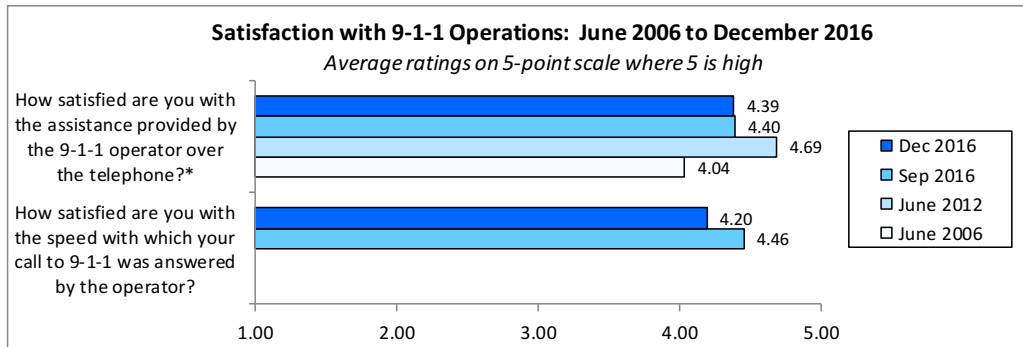
These questions about the Department overall were included in all of the customer satisfaction surveys, and responses to the questions fluctuated significantly over time. Ratings of three items were significantly higher in December 2016 than in the first survey: “Department personnel are professional and courteous,” “The Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements,” and “The Department focuses on the public safety issues that concern you.”



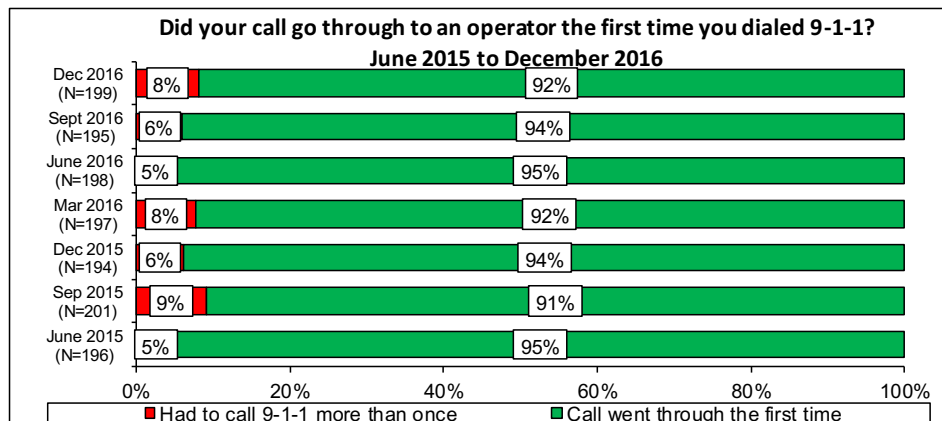
9-1-1 Operations. Two-thirds (68%) of customers rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator as 5 on the five-point scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied” and 57 percent rated their satisfaction with the speed with which their call was answered as 5 on this scale. A total of 84 and 78 percent, respectively, rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided by the operator and the speed with which their calls were answered as either a 4 or a 5 on this five-point scale. Nine and 10 percent, respectively, rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided by the operator and the speed with which calls were answered as either 1 or 2 on the five-point scale where 1 means “not at all satisfied.” These results are shown in the next chart.



The question about customers’ satisfaction with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator has been included in all 34 surveys, and ratings of this item were significantly higher in December 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 December 2016.

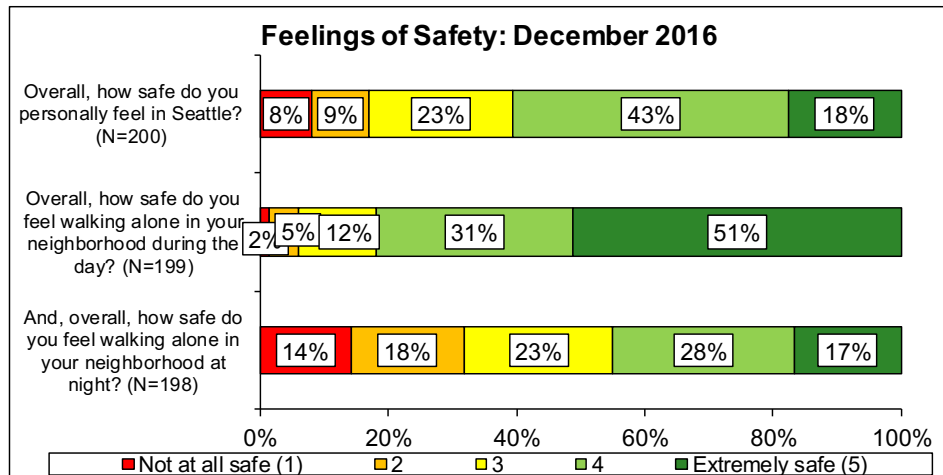


Since June 2015, customers have been asked if they reached an operator the first time they dialed 9-1-1. Responses to this question, shown in the next chart, have not differed significantly over time. Between 91 and 95 percent of the customers reached an operator the first time they dialed 9-1-1, and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

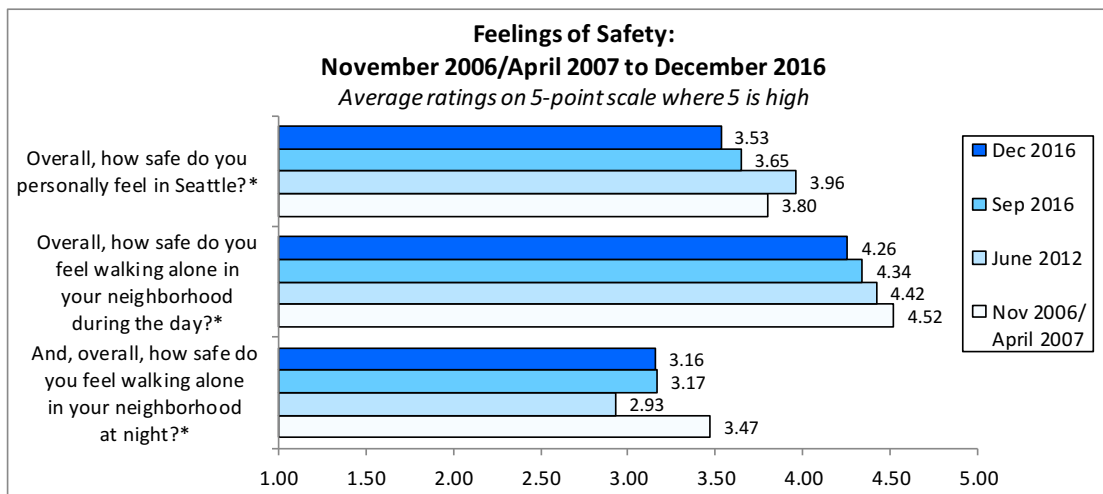


The customers who had to call 9-1-1 more than once were asked how often they dialed 9-1-1 to reach an operator. In December 2016, ten customers said that they reached the operator on their second attempt, two reached the operator on their third attempt, and one each reached the operator on their fourth, seventh, or twelfth attempt to do so. One customer did not indicate how many attempts were made to reach the 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 walking alone in their neighborhoods at night, as shown in the next chart. Sixty-one 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” (18% “extremely safe”); 17 percent rated their feelings as 2 or 1, where 1 means “not at all safe.” Eighty-two percent rated their feelings of safety when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day as 4 or 5 (51% “extremely safe”), and 45 percent rated their feelings of safety when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night as 4 or 5 (17% “extremely safe”). Six percent⁵ rated their feelings of safety as 1 or 2 when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day, and 32 percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 or 2 when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night (1 means “not at all safe”).



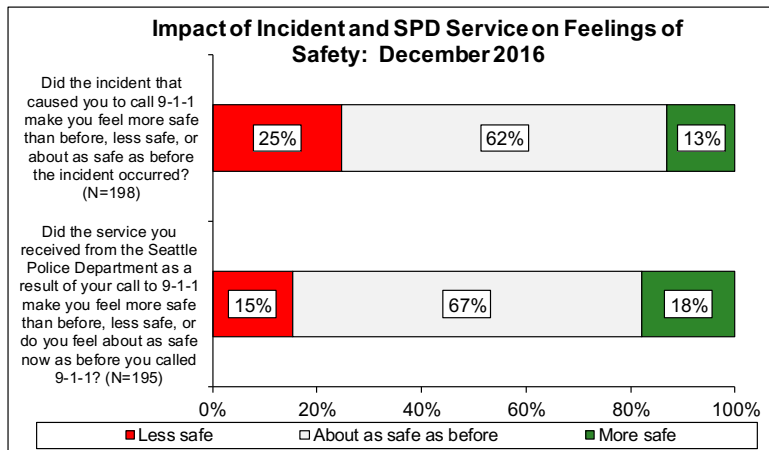
The questions about feelings of safety were added to the surveys in November 2006 (overall feeling of safety in Seattle) and April 2007 (feelings of safety walking alone in your neighborhood during the day and at night). The feelings of safety reported in response to all three questions were significantly lower in December 2016 than when the questions were first asked, as shown in the next chart.



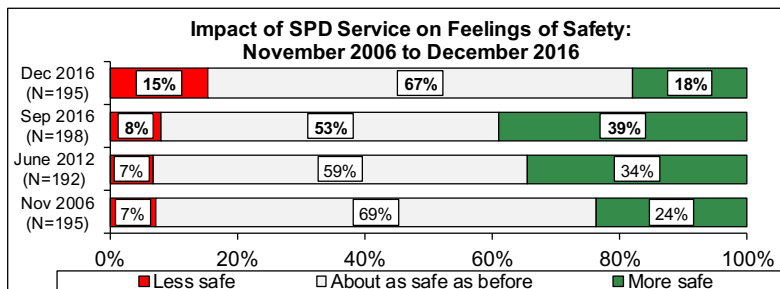
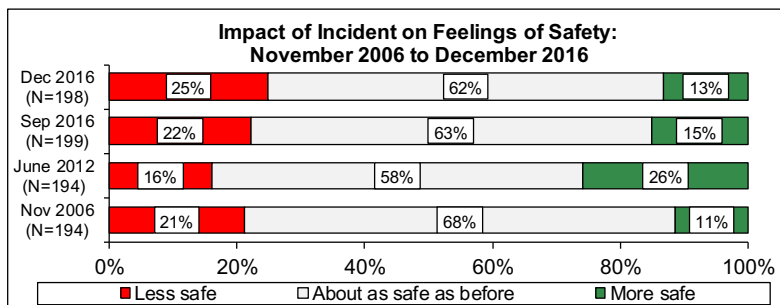
⁵ Correcting for rounding error.
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When asked about the impact of the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 on their feelings of safety, well over half of the customers (62%) reported that they “feel about as safe as before the incident occurred.” The remaining customers said that they either feel “less safe” (25%) or “more safe” (13%) 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 (67%) of the customers said that they “feel about as safe now as before they called 9-1-1,” while 18 percent said they feel “more safe,” and 15 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” (13% to 18%), as well as a decrease in the percentage of customers who feel “less safe” (25% to 15%), as shown in the next chart. This indicates that feelings of personal safety increased and customers were reassured by the Department’s service.



Customers’ reports of the impacts of both the incident and the service provided by the Department have changed significantly across surveys, and the impact of service on feelings of safety differed significantly between September and December 2016. However, in every survey, a larger proportion of customers said they feel “more safe” and a smaller proportion said they feel “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 34 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, 201 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 November 8 and November 17, 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 November 21 and December 5, 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.