



Seattle Police Department Research Report

September 2019

SERVICE QUALITY UPDATE

Feedback from the People We Serve

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.

Draft Prepared: October 10, 2019

9-1-1 Caller Surveys: Summary and Conclusions from September 2019

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 the September 2019 survey and comparisons to the other surveys conducted since March 2016 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 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 4.18 out of 5 possible points. Ratings of overall satisfaction have remained high and not changed significantly since March 2016.

Officers Responding to Customers’ 9-1-1 Calls. Customers rated the officers who responded to their 9-1-1 calls positively. Customers indicated that the responding officers were professional and courteous (97% “strongly agree” or “agree”); and officers listened to customer concerns, answered their questions, provided the assistance and information needed, clearly explained procedures, and told customers what would happen next (79% - 93% “strongly agree” or “agree”). The responding officers received lower ratings for giving “tips on preventing future crimes” (48% “strongly agree” or “agree”).

All but one of the ratings of the responding officers fluctuated significantly since March 2016, and ratings that “The officer listened to your concerns” were significantly higher in September 2019 than in March 2016. Ratings of the item, “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes,” have not changed significantly since March 2016.

Seattle Police Department Overall. Customers also rated the Department highly. Customers indicated that “Department personnel are professional and courteous” (92% “strongly agree” or “agree”) and the Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements, is available when needed, is a good resource for information about preventing crime, and focuses on public safety issues of concern (68% to 74% “strongly agree” or “agree”). These were positive ratings, but 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 “Department personnel are professional and courteous” were significantly higher in September 2019 than in March 2016. Ratings of two items, “The Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime” and “The Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements,” fluctuated significantly since March 2016, but results in September 2019 did not differ significantly from March 2016 or June 2019. Ratings of two items, “The Department is available when needed” and “The Department focuses on the public safety issues that concern you,” have not changed significantly since March 2016.

9-1-1 Operations. Customers were satisfied with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator and the speed with which their calls were answered (91% and 87%, respectively, rated their satisfaction 4 or 5 on the scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied”). Ratings of these items fluctuated significantly across surveys, though ratings in September 2019 did not differ significantly from March 2016 or June 2019.

Feelings of Safety. Customers feel safer “walking alone in [their] neighborhood during the day” (46% “extremely safe”) than they do “walking alone in [their] neighborhood at night” (21% “extremely safe”) or overall in Seattle (19% “extremely safe”). Customers’ feelings of safety overall in Seattle were significantly lower in September 2019 than in June 2019. Customers’ feelings of safety walking alone in their neighborhood during the day fluctuated significantly since March 2016, while feelings of safety walking alone in their neighborhood at night have not changed significantly since March 2016.

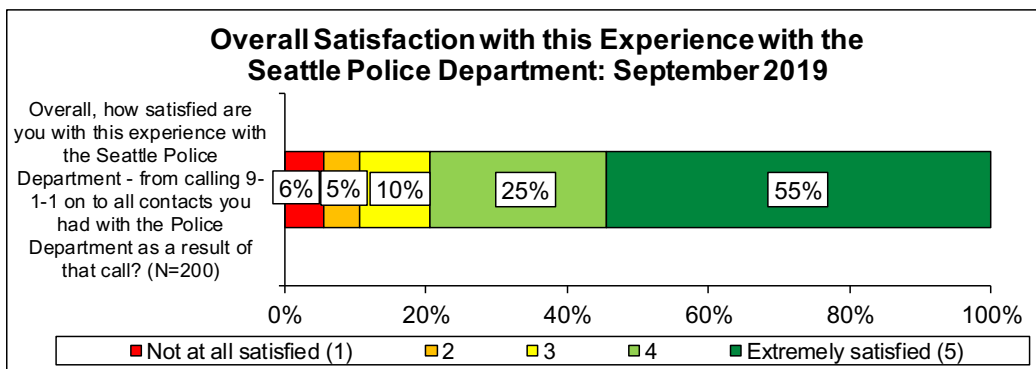
As in past surveys, customers reported that the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 led some of them to feel less safe than before they called 9-1-1, but the service provided by the Department as a result of their calls increased the proportion of customers who said they feel “more safe” and decreased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

9-1-1 Caller Surveys: Results

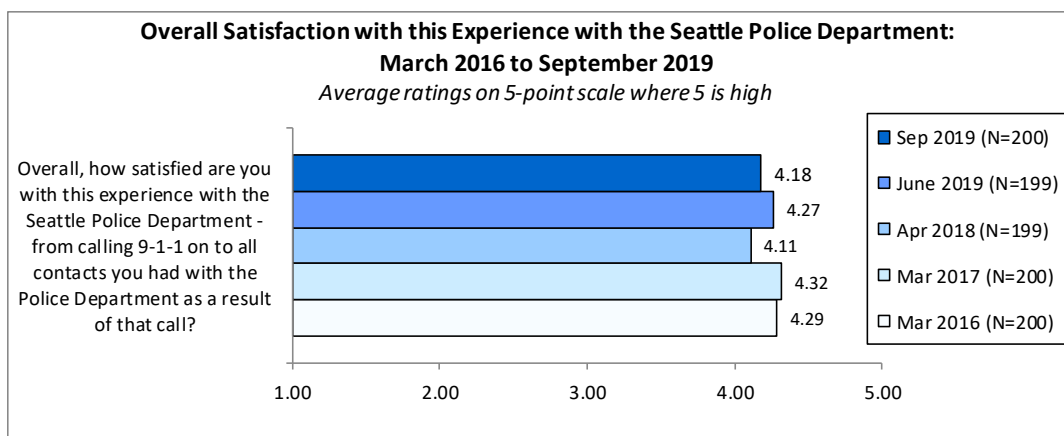
This report (1) summarizes key results of the September 2019 survey of customers who called 9-1-1 between August 21 and August 29, 2019, and had a Seattle Police Officer dispatched to assist them and (2) compares the results of all 14 surveys of 9-1-1 callers conducted between March 2016 and September 2019.¹

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, 55 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 25 percent rated their satisfaction as 4 on this scale. Six percent rated their satisfaction as 1 and five percent rated their satisfaction as 2 on this five-point scale where 1 means “Not at all satisfied.”



The next chart shows that the average rating of overall satisfaction in September 2019 was 4.18 on the five-point scale where 5 is high (“extremely satisfied”). Responses to this question have remained high and not changed significantly since March 2016. This chart and similar charts, below, present the average ratings from five surveys: March 2016, March 2017, April 2018, June 2019, and September 2019.²



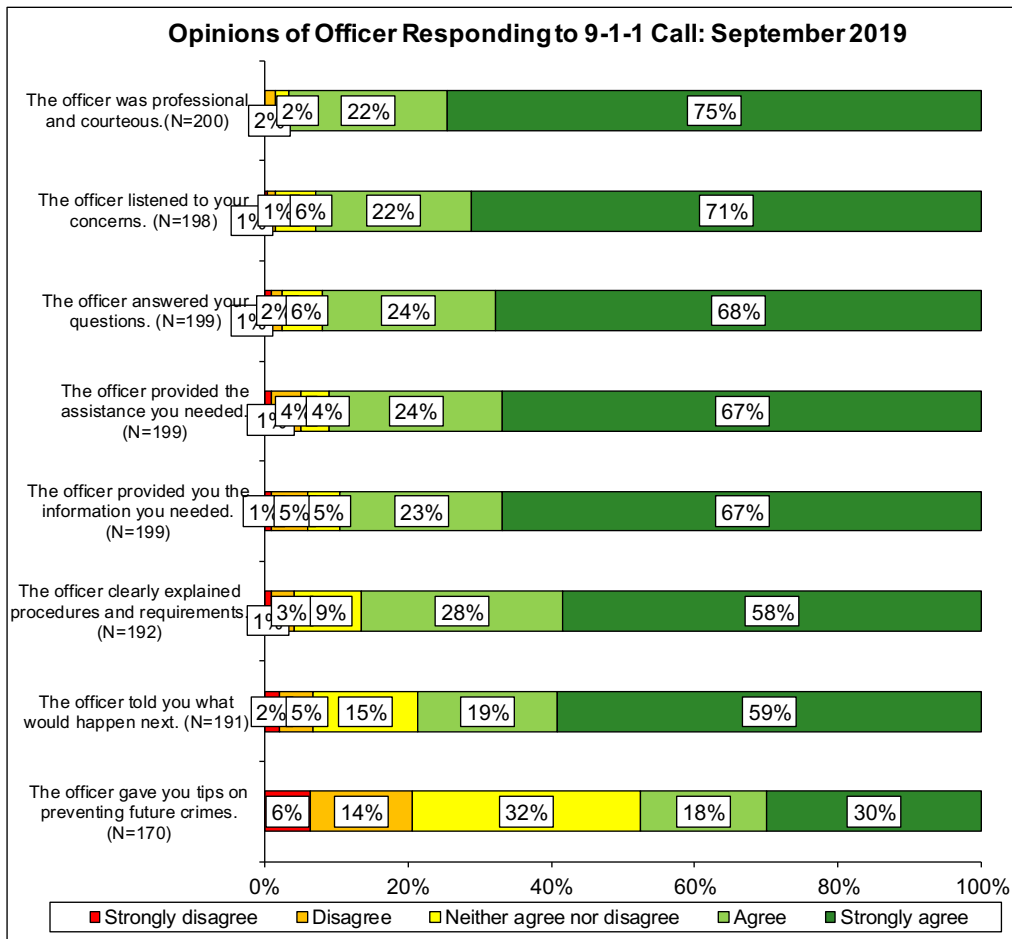
¹ Results were compared across all 14 surveys and tested to determine if any differences between survey results were statistically significant. Statistical tests included Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), t-tests, and chi-square tests (*IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26, Release 26.0.0.0, 2019*). Differences were considered statistically significant when the probability of the differences occurring by chance was less than .05 ($p < .05$).

² The numbers of respondents answering each question are omitted from some charts for readability, but approximately 200 customers participated in each survey.

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 chart³.

- Seventy-five 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 97 percent said that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement. Two percent said they “disagree” and none of the customers said they “strongly disagree” that “The officer was professional and courteous.”
- Between 58 and 71 percent of the customers said that they “strongly agree” with six of the statements about responding officers: “The officer listened to your concerns,” “The officer answered your questions,” “The officer provided the assistance you needed,” “The officer provided you the information you needed,” “The officer clearly explained procedures and requirements,” and “The officer told you what would happen next.” Between 79⁴ and 93 percent of customers said that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” with these statements, and between two and seven percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statements.
- A total of 48 percent of the customers said that they “agree” or “strongly agree,” and 21 percent⁵ said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree,” with the statement, “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes.”

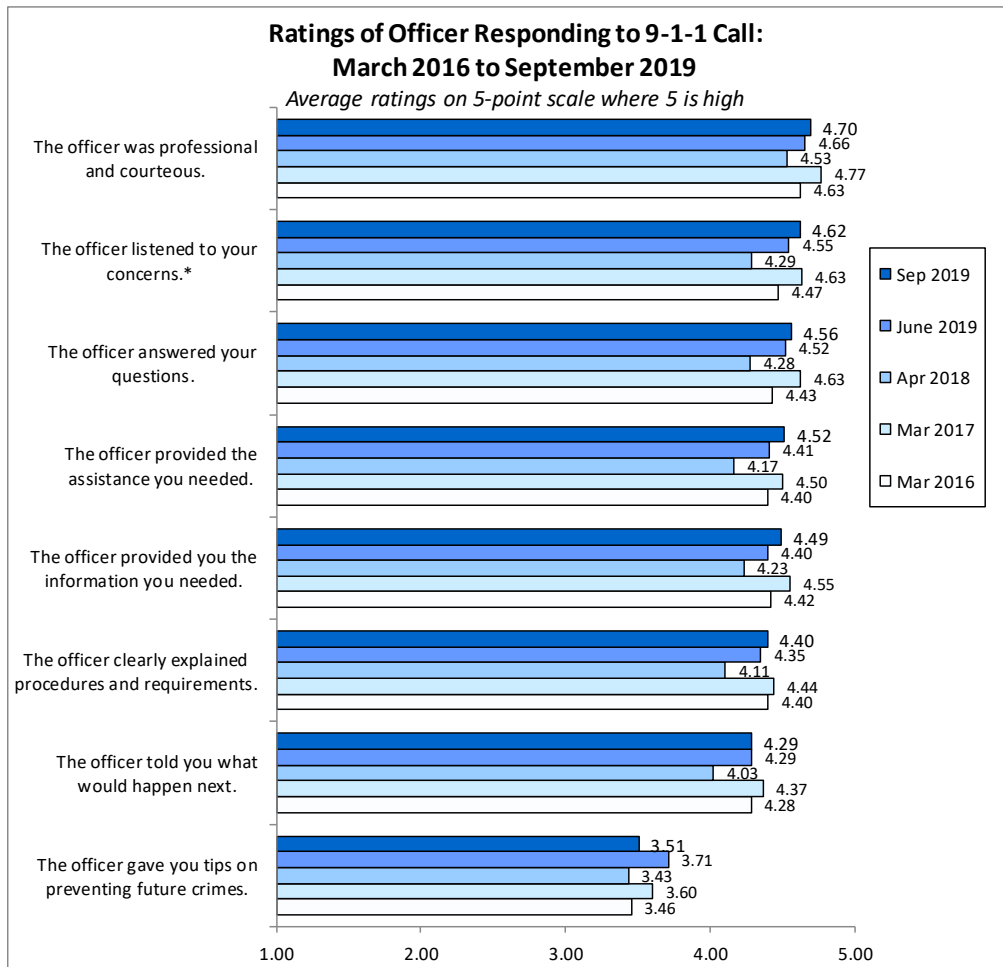


³ Percentages do not total 100 in this and some subsequent charts due to rounding.

⁴ Correcting for rounding error.

⁵ Correcting for rounding error.

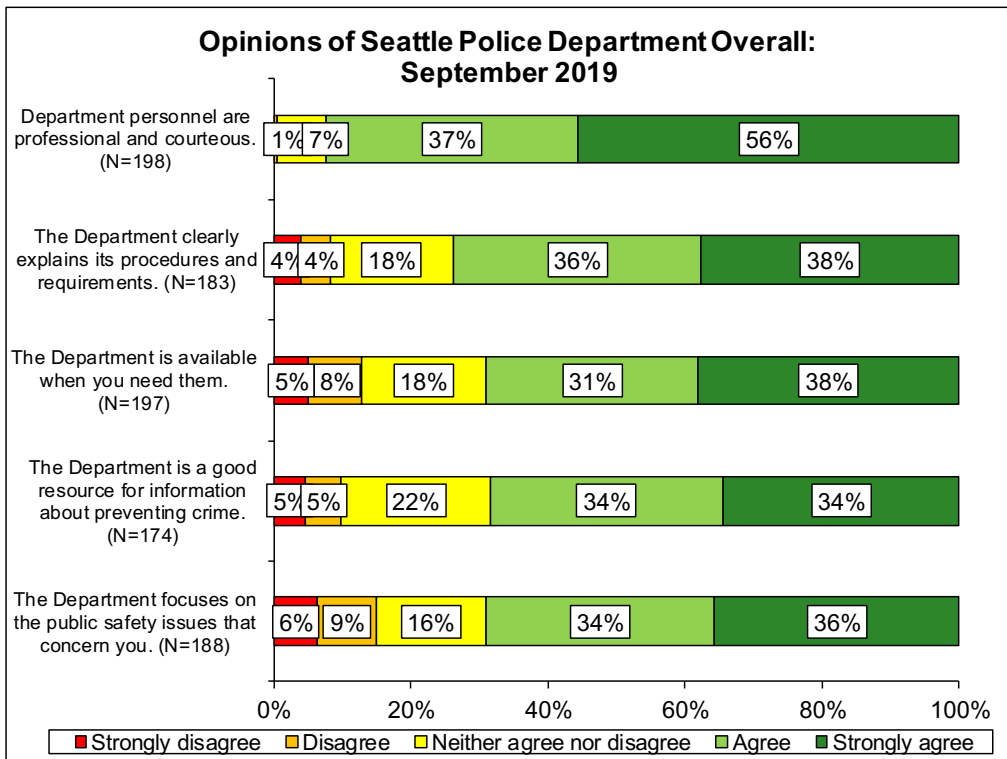
Average ratings of responding officers from five surveys in the last three years are shown in the next chart. Ratings on one item, “The officer listened to your concerns,” were significantly higher in September 2019 than in March 2016. Ratings that the responding officer was “professional and courteous,” “answered your questions,” provided the “assistance” and “information you needed,” “clearly explained procedures and requirements,” and “told you what would happen next” fluctuated significantly between March 2016 and September 2019, but ratings in September 2019 did not differ significantly from ratings in March 2016, the first of the surveys presented in this report, or from June 2019, the previous survey. Ratings on the remaining item, “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes,” have not changed significantly since March 2016.



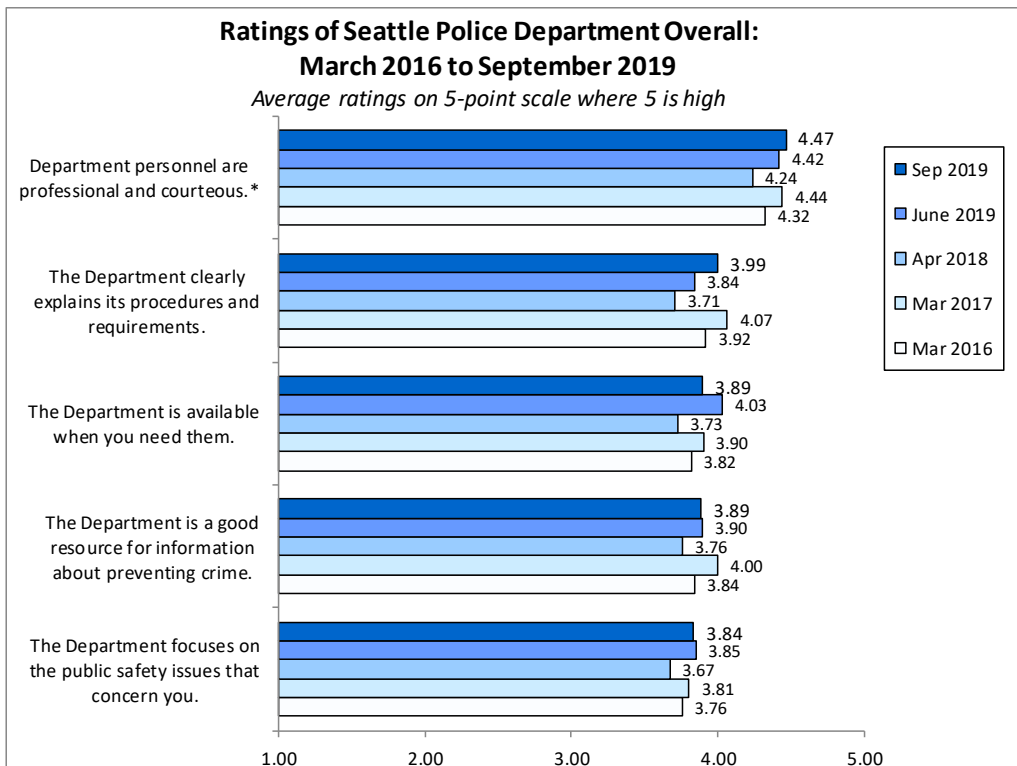
Seattle Police Department Overall. To assess opinions of the Seattle Police Department overall, customers were asked to indicate their level of agreement (“Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly disagree”) with statements about the Department, including the five 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-two⁶ percent of the customers said that they “strongly agree” or “agree,” one percent said they “disagree,” and no one said they “strongly disagree” that “Department personnel are professional and courteous.” Between 68 and 74 percent of the customers said they “strongly agree” or “agree” with the other four statements about the Department; between eight and 15 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with these statements, shown in the next chart.

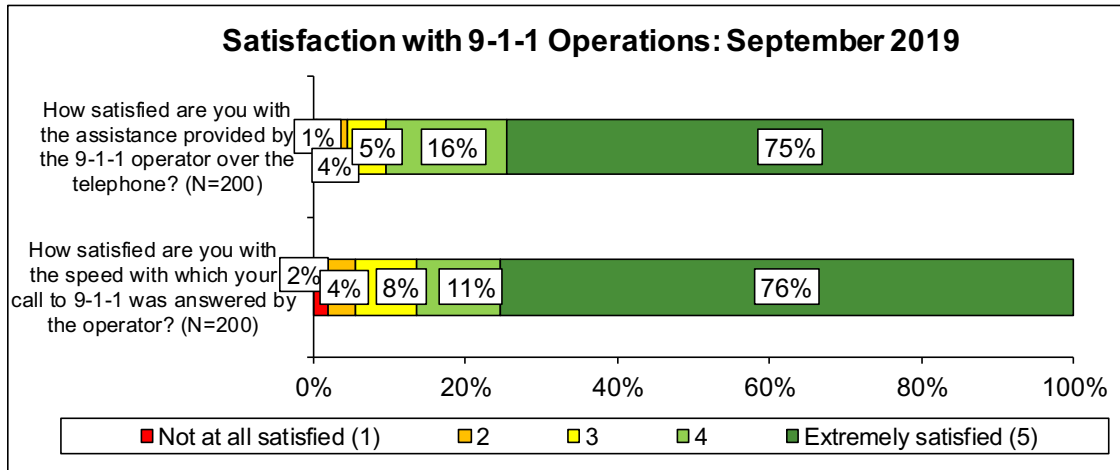
⁶ Correcting for rounding error.



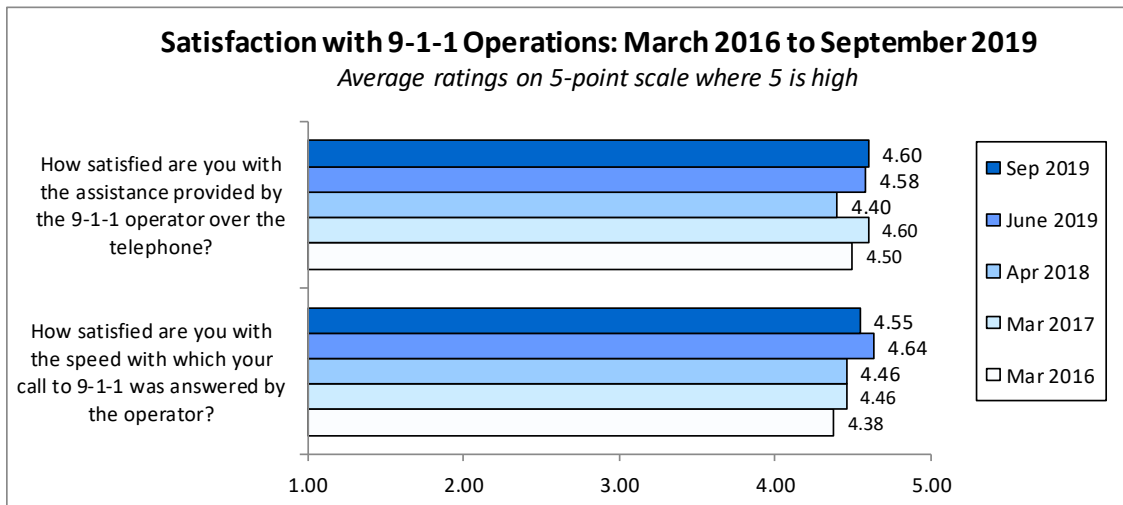
Ratings of one item, “Department personnel are professional and courteous,” were significantly higher in September 2019 than in March 2016. Ratings on two items, “The Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime,” and “The Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements,” fluctuated significantly between March 2016 and September 2019, but ratings in September 2019 did not differ significantly from March 2016 or from June 2019. Ratings of the other items, “The Department is available when you need them” and “The Department focuses on public safety issues that concern you,” have not changed significantly since March 2016.



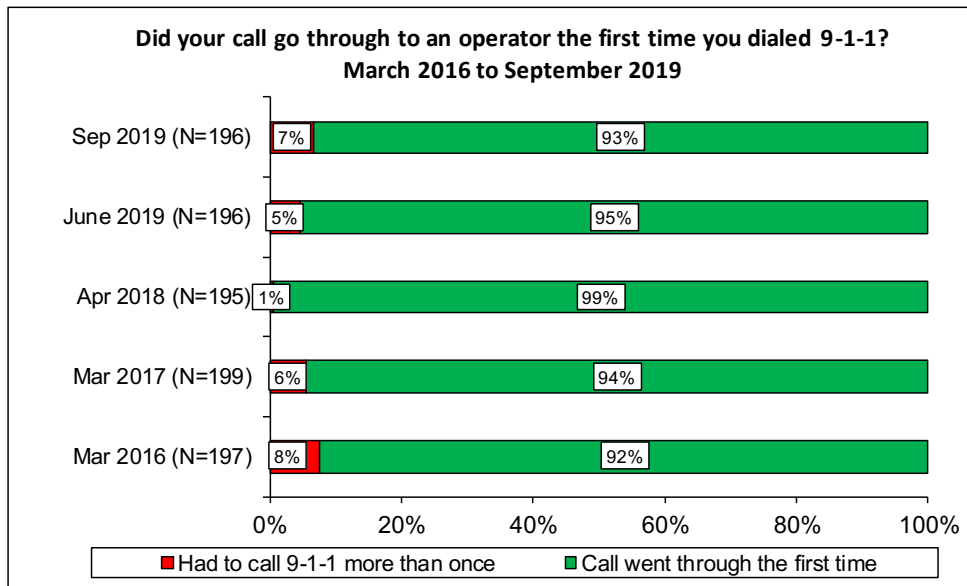
9-1-1 Operations. Seventy-five percent of customers rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator as 5, “extremely satisfied,” and a total of 91 percent rated their satisfaction as either 4 or 5 on this five-point scale; five percent rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided by the operator as either a 1 or 2, where 1 means “not at all satisfied.” Similarly, 76 percent rated their satisfaction with the speed with which their call was answered as 5, “extremely satisfied,” and a total of 87 percent rated their satisfaction as either 4 or 5; six percent rated their satisfaction with the speed with which their call was answered as either 1 or 2, where 1 means “not at all satisfied.” These results are shown in the next chart.



Ratings of satisfaction with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator and the speed with which the call was answered have fluctuated significantly over time, though ratings in September 2019 did not differ significantly from March 2016 or June 2019.



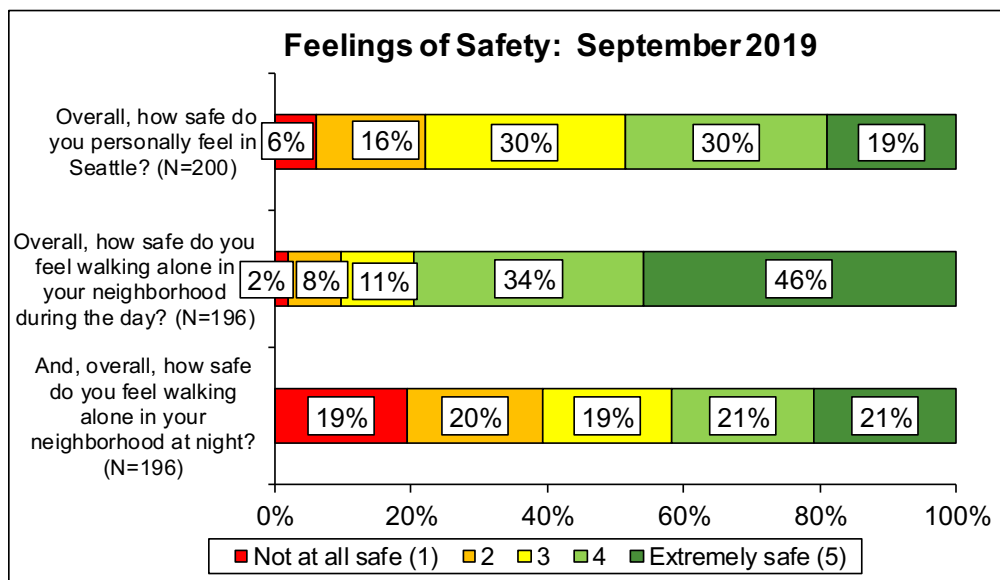
As shown in the next chart, seven percent (13) of the customers said that they had to dial 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator. Since March 2016, between 1 and 8 percent of the customers (between 1 and 16 customers) said that they had to dial 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator. These results fluctuated significantly across surveys, but results in September 2019 did not differ significantly from results in March 2016 or June 2019.



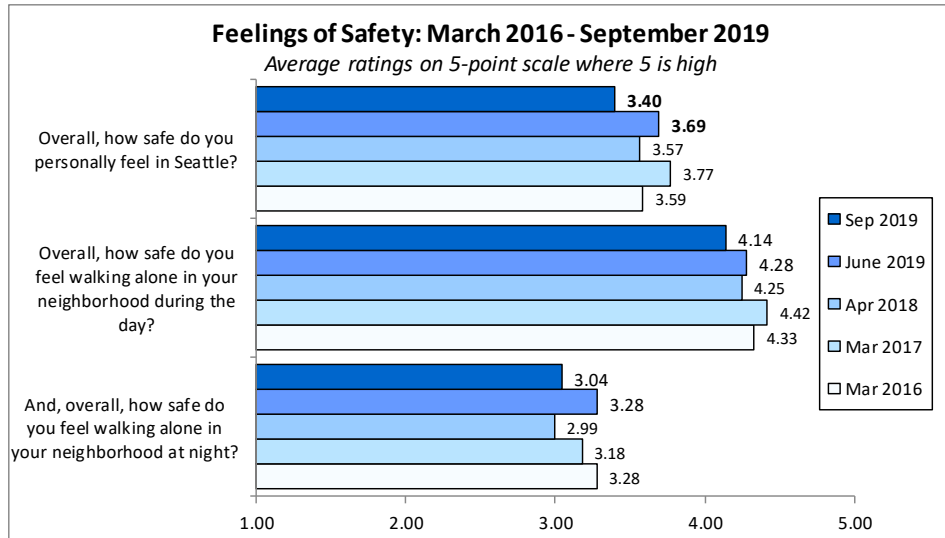
Customers who had to call 9-1-1 more than once were asked how often they dialed 9-1-1 to reach an operator. Of the 13 customers who had to dial 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator in September 2019, ten reported reaching an operator on their second attempt, one on the third, one on the fourth, and one on the tenth attempt.

Feelings of Safety. Customers said that they feel safer 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.

- Forty-nine percent of the customers rated their overall feelings of safety in Seattle as 4 or 5 on the five-point scale (19% “extremely safe”); 22 percent rated their safety as 1 or 2 where 1 means “not at all safe.”
- Eighty percent of the customers rated their feelings of safety when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day as 4 or 5 on a five-point scale where 5 means “extremely safe” (46% “extremely safe”); ten percent rated their safety as 1 or 2 where 1 means “not at all safe.”
- Forty-two percent rated their feelings of safety as 4 or 5 (21% “extremely safe”), and 39 percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 or 2 when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night.

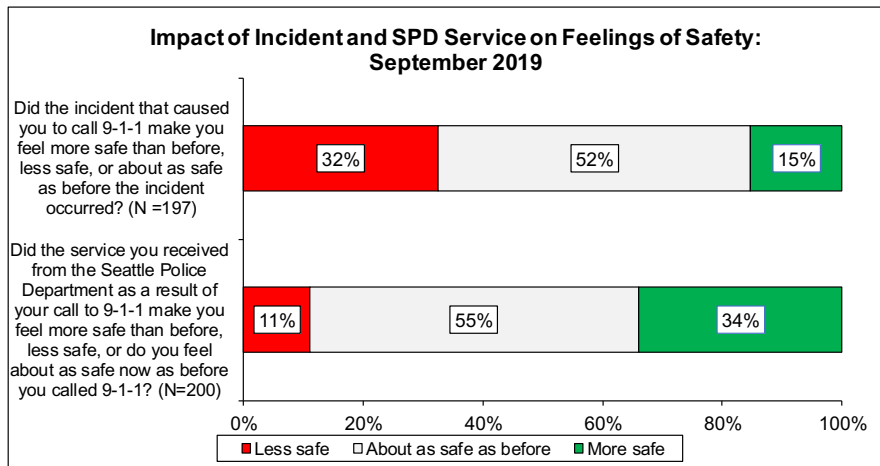


Customers’ feelings of safety overall in Seattle were significantly lower in September 2019 than in June 2019. Customers’ feelings of safety walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day fluctuated significantly since March 2016, but results in September 2019 did not differ significantly from March 2016 or June 2019. Customers’ feelings of safety walking alone in their neighborhoods at night have not changed significantly since March 2016.



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 (52%) reported that they “feel about as safe as before the incident occurred.” The remaining customers said that they either feel “less safe” (32%) or “more safe” (15%) than before the incident occurred. When asked about the impact of the service received from the Department as a result of their call to 9-1-1, over half (55%) of the customers said that they “feel about as safe now as before they called 9-1-1,” while 34 percent said they feel “more safe,” and 11 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 34%), as well as a decrease in the percentage of customers who feel “less safe” (32% to 11%), as shown in the next chart. This indicates that feelings of personal safety increased and customers were reassured by the Department’s service.



Customers’ opinions of the impact of the service provided by the Department have fluctuated significantly since March 2016. However, in every survey conducted, 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.

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 44 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.

This report presents the results of the September 2019 customer survey and compares the September 2019 survey results to results from the 13 other surveys conducted since March 2016.

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 August 21 and August 29, 2019, 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 September 3 and September 10, 2019. 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.