



Seattle Police Department Research Report

December 2018

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: January 28, 2019

9-1-1 Caller Surveys: Summary and Conclusions from December 2018

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 December 2018 survey and comparisons to the other surveys conducted since June 2014 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-one percent of the customers (correcting for rounding) 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 4.28 out of 5 possible points. Ratings of overall satisfaction have remained high while fluctuating significantly since June 2014.

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 (95% “strongly agree” or “agree”); and officers answered questions, listened to customer concerns, clearly explained procedures, provided the information and assistance needed, and told customers what would happen next (80% - 89% “strongly agree” or “agree”). The responding officers received lower ratings for giving “tips on preventing future crimes” (51% “strongly agree” or “agree”).

Ratings of the responding officers fluctuated significantly since June 2014, and ratings of six items were significantly higher in December 2018 than in June 2014: The officer was “professional and courteous,” “answered your questions,” “listened to your concerns,” “clearly explained procedures and requirements,” “provided you the information you needed,” and “told you what would happen next.”

Seattle Police Department Overall. Customers also rated the Department highly. Customers indicated that “Department personnel are professional and courteous” (86% “strongly agree” or “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 (59% to 69% “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 of three items, “Department personnel are professional and courteous,” “The Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements,” and “The Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime,” fluctuated significantly since June 2014. Ratings of two of these items, “Department personnel are professional and courteous” and “The Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements,” were significantly higher in December 2018 than in June 2014. 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 June 2014.

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 (89% and 88%, respectively, rated their satisfaction 4 or 5 on the scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied”). Ratings of satisfaction with the service provided by the operator have not changed significantly since June 2014. Ratings of satisfaction with the speed with which calls were answered have fluctuated significantly across surveys, but satisfaction in December 2018 did not differ significantly from September 2018 or June 2015, when this item was first included in the surveys.

Feelings of Safety. Customers feel safer “walking alone in [their] neighborhood during the day” (59% “extremely safe”) than they do “walking alone in [their] neighborhood at night” (32% “extremely safe”) or overall in Seattle (25% “extremely safe”). Customers’ feelings of safety walking alone in their neighborhood during the day have fluctuated significantly since June 2014. Ratings of safety overall in Seattle and walking alone in their neighborhood at night have not changed significantly since June 2014.

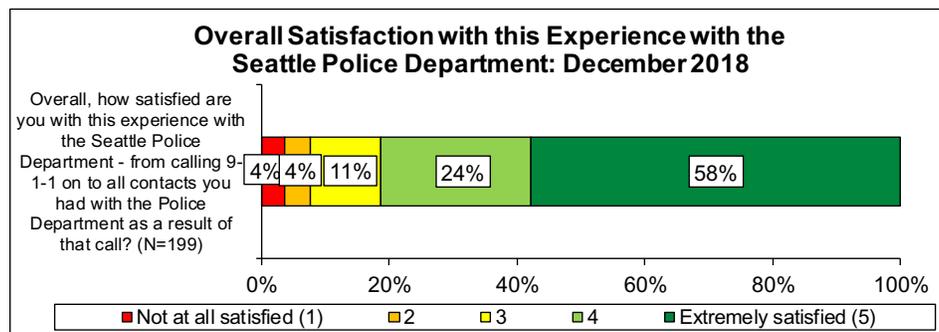
As in past surveys, customers reported that the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 led some of them to feel less safe than before they called 9-1-1, but the service provided by the Department as a result of their calls increased the proportion of customers who feel “more safe” and decreased the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

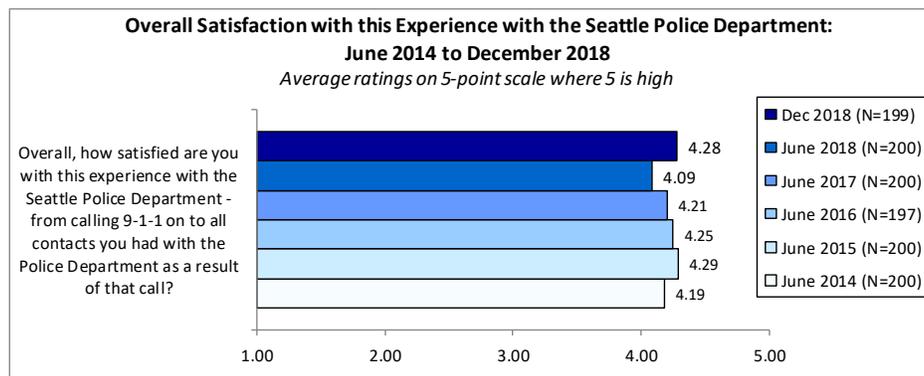
This report (1) summarizes key results of the December 2018 survey of customers who called 9-1-1 between November 28 and December 6, 2018, and had an officer dispatched to assist them and (2) compares the December 2018 results with those of the 17 other surveys of 9-1-1 callers conducted since June 2014.¹

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 chart² shows, 58 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. Four percent rated their satisfaction as 1 and four 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 December 2018 was 4.28 on the five-point scale where 5 is high (“extremely satisfied”). Responses to this question have fluctuated significantly since June 2014, but the satisfaction reported in December 2018 did not differ significantly from satisfaction in June 2014 or September 2018, the previous survey. This chart and similar charts, below, present the average ratings from six surveys: June 2014, June 2015, June 2016, June 2017, June 2018, and December 2018.³



¹ Results were compared across 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 25, Release 25.0.0.1, 2017*). Differences were considered statistically significant when the probability of the differences occurring by chance was less than .05 ($p < .05$).

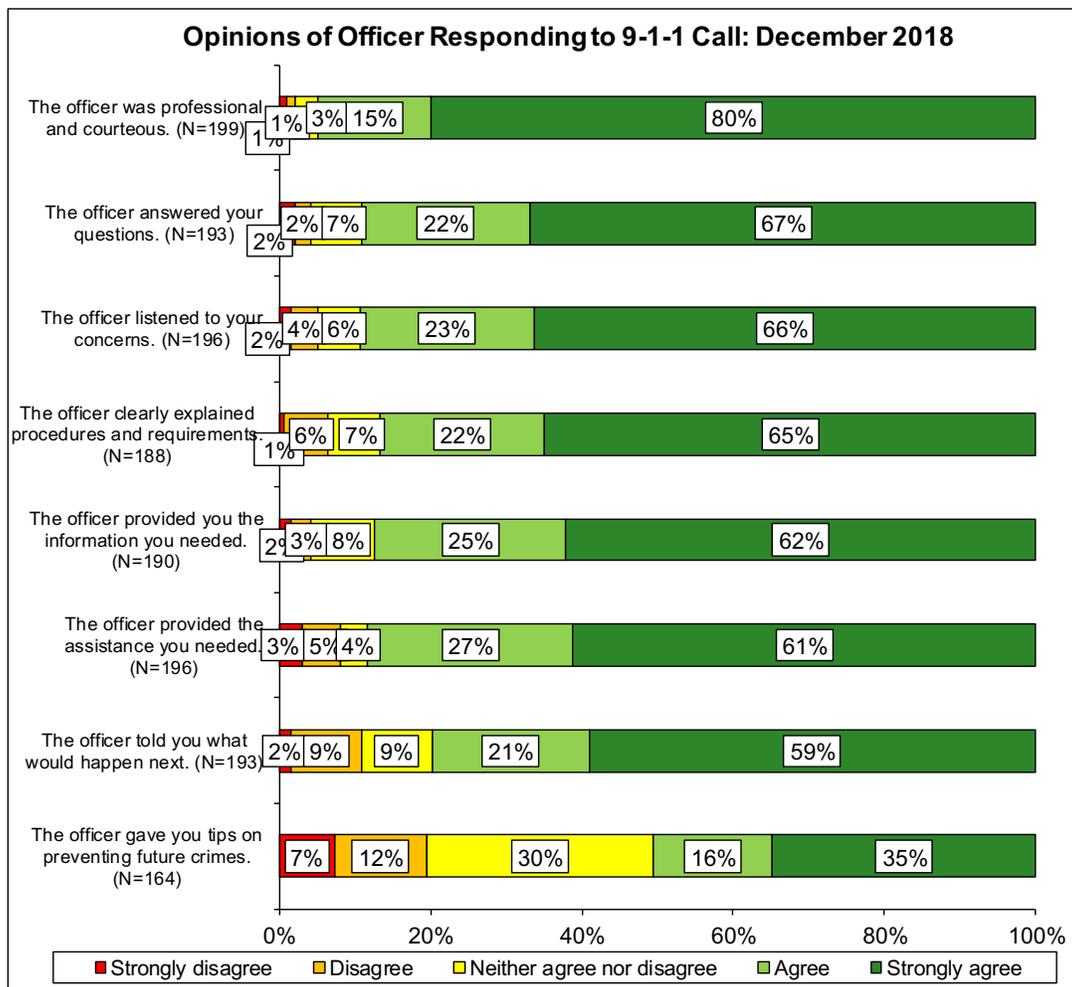
² Percentages do not total 100 in this and some subsequent charts due to rounding.

³ 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.

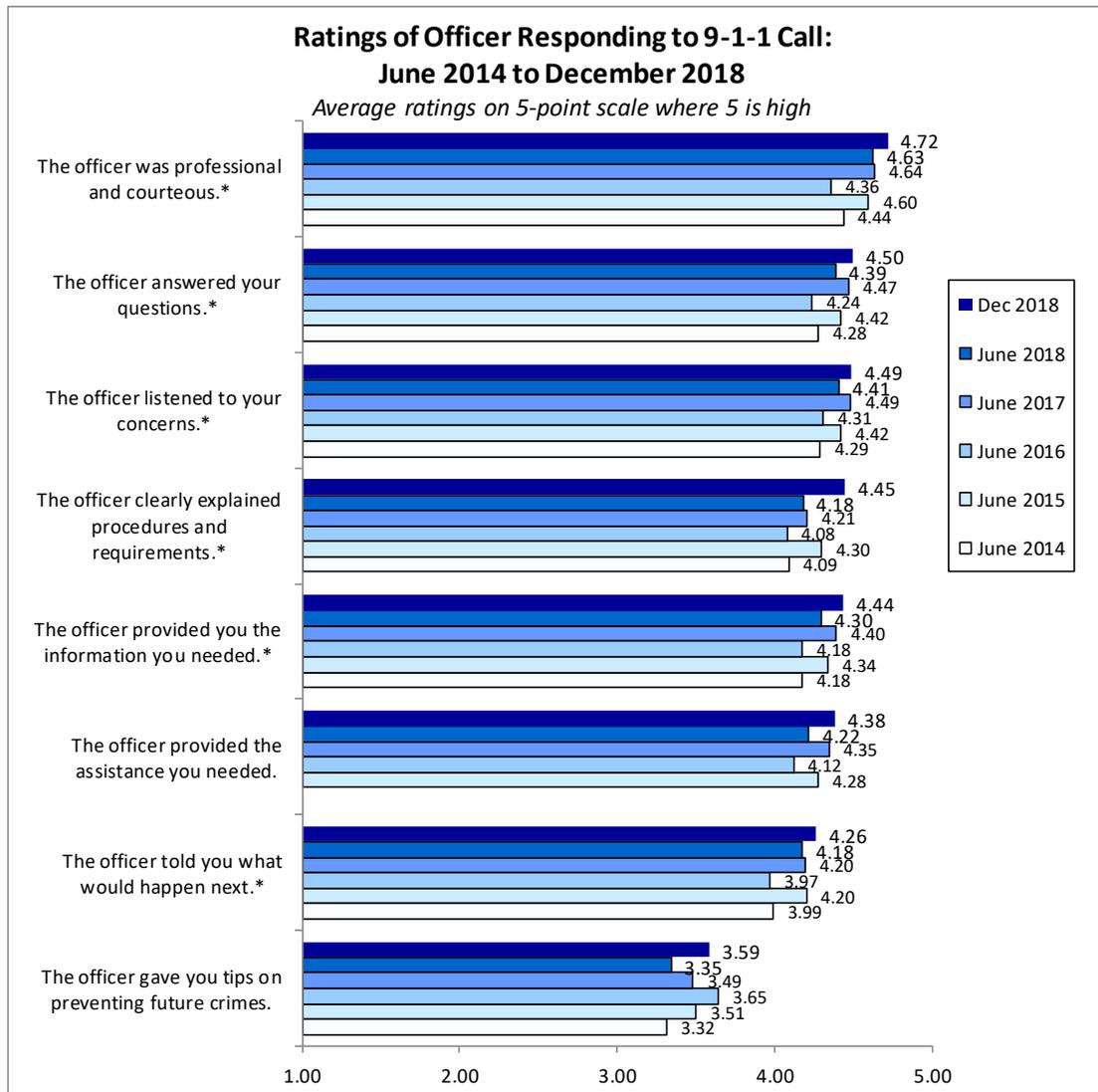
Customers rated officers highest for being professional and courteous and lowest for giving tips on preventing future crimes, as shown in the next chart.

- Eighty 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 95 percent said that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement. Two percent said they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that “The officer was professional and courteous.”
- Between 59 and 67 percent of the customers said that they “strongly agree” with six of the statements about responding officers: “The officer answered your questions,” “The officer listened to your concerns,” “The officer clearly explained procedures and requirements,” “The officer provided you the information you needed,” “The officer provided the assistance you needed,” and “The officer told you what would happen next.” Between 80 and 89 percent of customers said that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” with these statements, and between four and eleven percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statements.
- A total of 51 percent of the customers said that they “agree” or “strongly agree,” and 20 percent⁴ said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree,” with the statement, “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes.”



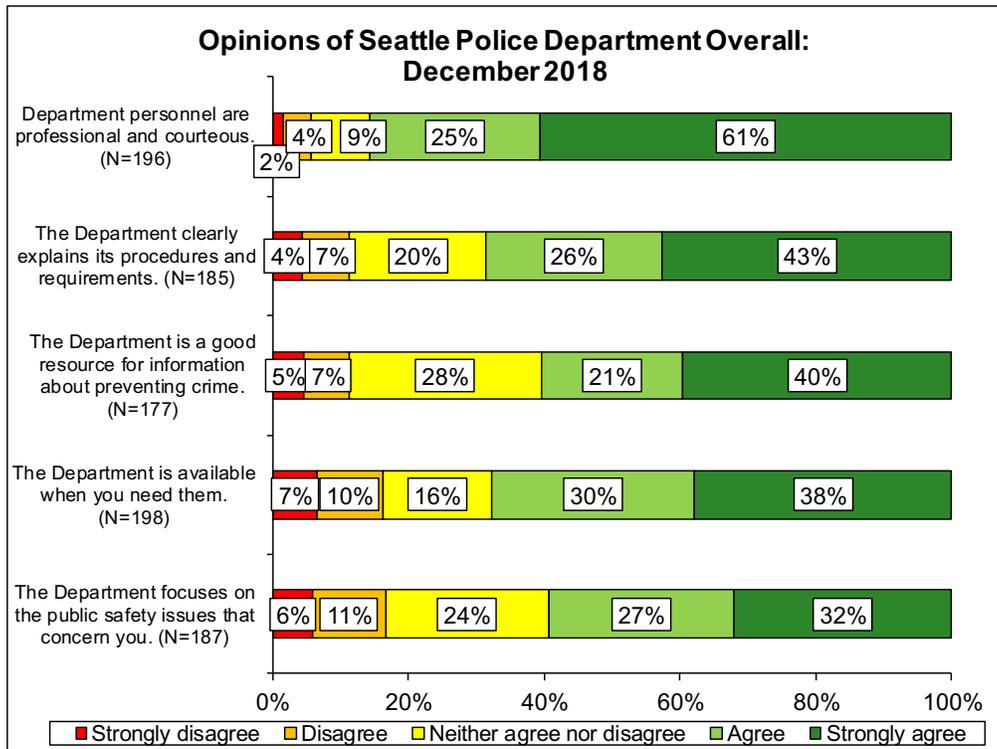
⁴ Correcting for rounding error.

Ratings of responding officers on six items were significantly higher in December 2018 than in June 2014: The officer was “professional and courteous,” “answered your questions,” “listened to your concerns,” “clearly explained procedures and requirements,” “provided you the information you needed,” and “told you what would happen next.” Asterisks (*) follow these items in the chart, below. Ratings of responding officers on all items fluctuated significantly since June 2014, while differences between September 2018, the previous survey, and December 2018 were not statistically significant.

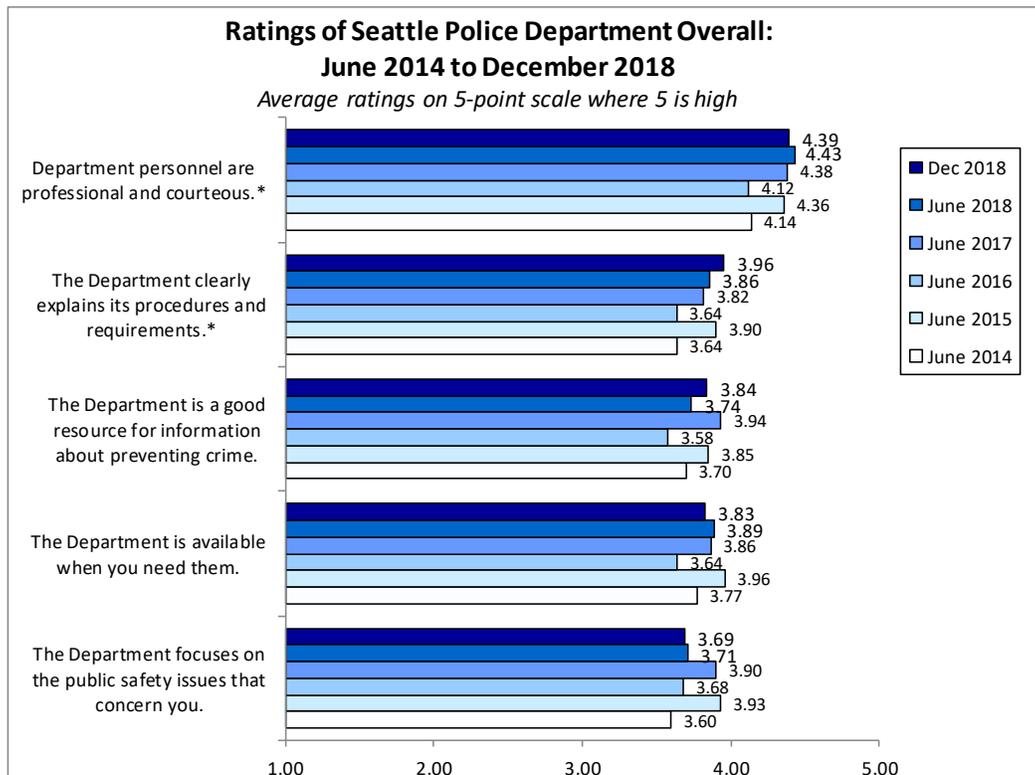


Seattle Police Department Overall. To assess opinions of the Seattle Police Department overall, customers were asked to indicate their level of agreement (“Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly disagree”) with statements about the Department, including the five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

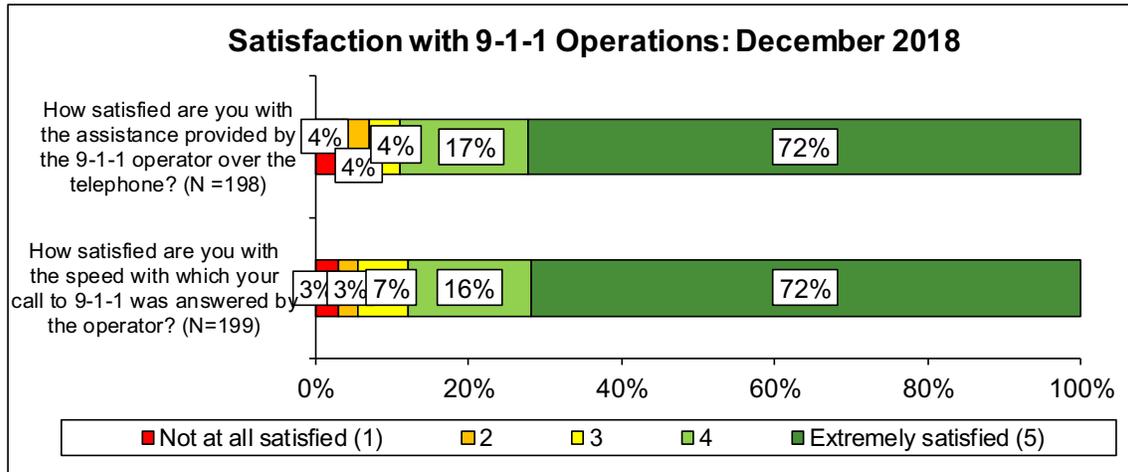
Customers rated the Department highest for having professional and courteous personnel, just as they rated the officer who responded to their call highest for being professional and courteous. Eighty-six percent of the customers said that they “strongly agree” or “agree,” and six percent said they “disagree” or “strongly disagree,” that “Department personnel are professional and courteous.” Between 59 and 69 percent of the customers said they “strongly agree” or “agree” with the other four statements about the Department; between 11 and 17 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with these statements, shown in the next chart.



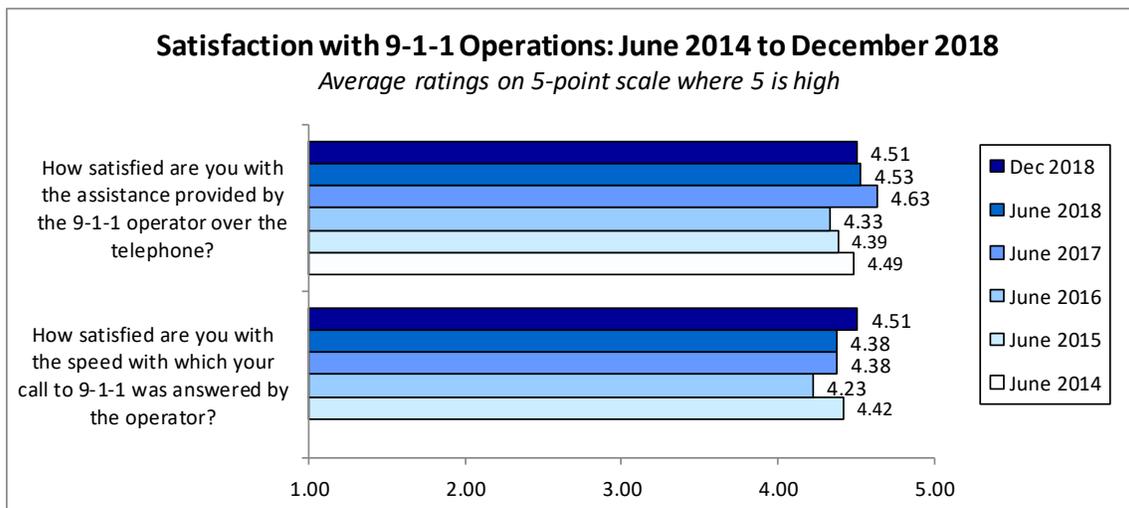
Ratings of two items, “Department personnel are professional and courteous” and “The Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements,” were significantly higher in December 2018 than in June 2014. Ratings that “The Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime” fluctuated since June 2014 but did not differ significantly between December 2018 and September 2018 or June 2014. 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 June 2014.



9-1-1 Operations. Seventy-two percent of customers rated their satisfaction with 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.” A total of 89 and 88 percent rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided by the operator and the speed with which their calls were answered, respectively, as either 4 or 5 on this five-point scale. Seven percent⁵ and six percent rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided by the operator and the speed with which calls were answered, respectively, 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.

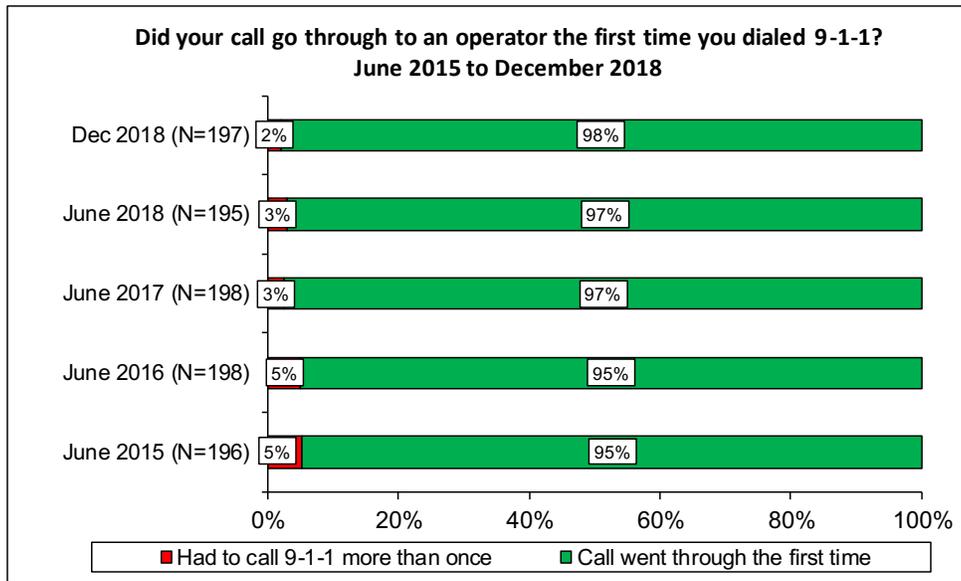


Ratings of satisfaction with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator have not changed significantly since June 2014. Satisfaction with the speed with which the call was answered fluctuated significantly over time, but satisfaction in December 2018 did not differ significantly from September 2018 or June 2015, when this question was first included in the survey.



As shown in the next chart, two percent of the customers (4 customers) said that they had to dial 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator. Since June 2015, when this question was first asked, between 1 and 9 percent of the customers (between 1 and 19 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 December 2018 did not differ significantly from September 2018 or June 2015.

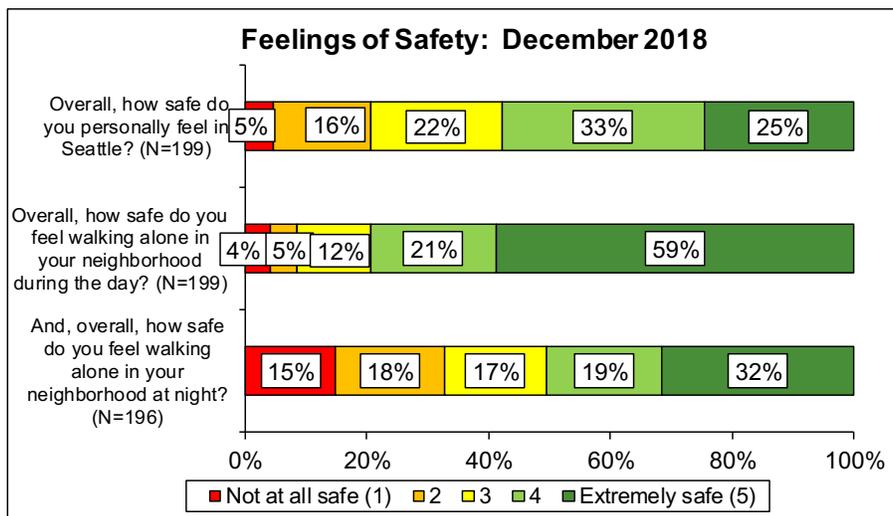
⁵ Correcting for rounding error.



Also beginning in June 2015, 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 four customers who had to dial 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator in December 2018, two reported reaching an operator on their second attempt, one on the third attempt, and one on the eighth attempt.

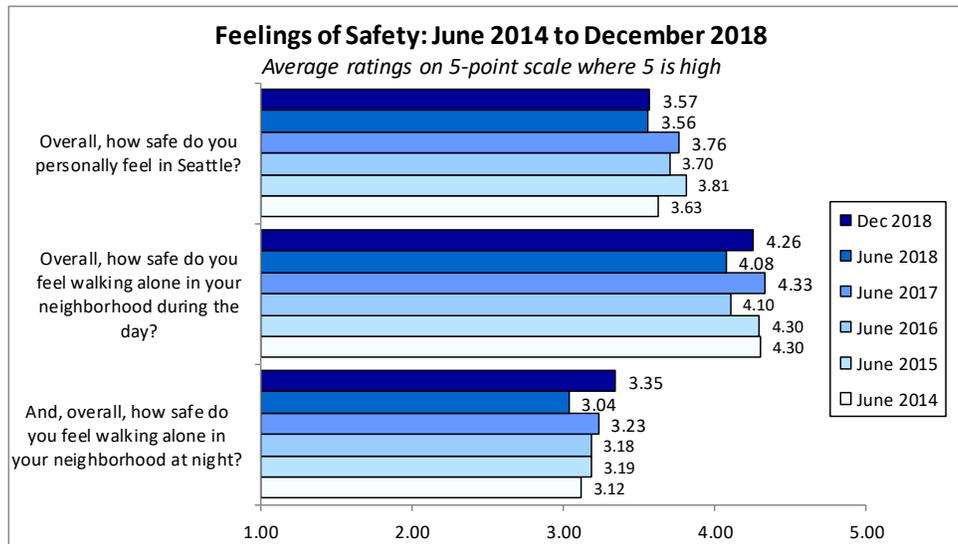
Feelings of Safety. Customers said that they feel safer walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day than they feel in Seattle overall or walking alone in their neighborhoods at night, as shown in the next chart.

- Fifty-eight percent of the customers rated their overall feelings of safety in Seattle as 4 or 5 on the five-point scale (25% “extremely safe”); 21 percent rated their safety as 1 or 2 where 1 means “not at all safe.”
- Seventy-nine percent⁶ 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” (59% “extremely safe”); nine percent rated their safety as 1 or 2 where 1 means “not at all safe.”
- Fifty-one percent rated their feelings of safety as 4 or 5 (32% “extremely safe”), and 33 percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 or 2 when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night.



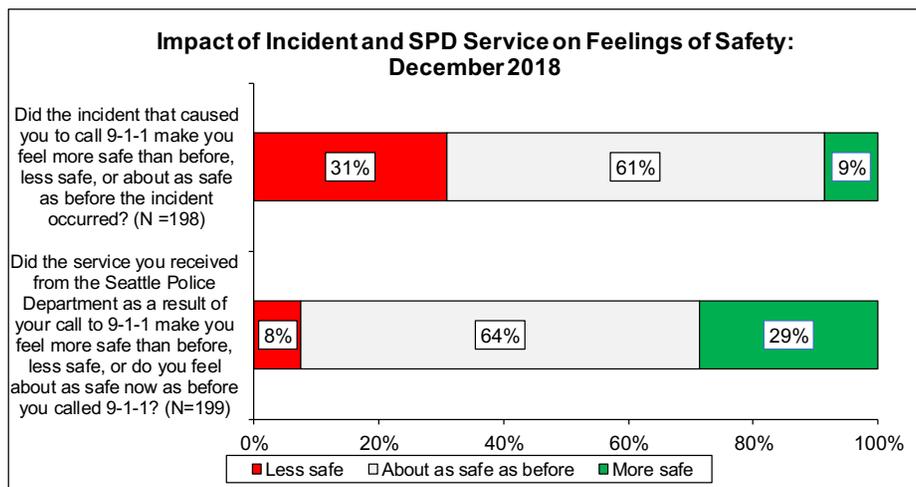
⁶ Correcting for rounding error.

Customers’ feelings of safety walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day fluctuated significantly since June 2014, but results in December 2018 did not differ significantly from September 2018 or June 2014. Customers’ feelings of safety overall in Seattle and walking alone in their neighborhoods at night have not changed significantly since June 2014.



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 (61%) reported that they “feel about as safe as before the incident occurred.” The remaining customers said that they either feel “less safe” (31%) or “more safe” (9%) 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 (64%) of the customers said that they “feel about as safe now as before they called 9-1-1,” while 29 percent said they feel “more safe,” and eight 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” (9% to 29%), as well as a decrease in the percentage of customers who feel “less safe” (31% to 8%), as shown in the next chart. This indicates that feelings of personal safety increased and customers were reassured by the Department’s service.



As noted in previous survey reports, customers’ opinions of the impacts of both the incident and the service provided by the Department have changed significantly over time. 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.

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 42 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 December 2018 customer survey and compares the December 2018 survey results to results from the 17 other surveys conducted since June 2014.

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, 199⁷ 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 28 and December 6, 2018, 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 December 10 and December 20, 2018. 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.

⁷ While interviewers completed 200 interviews, one customer who had called 9-1-1 more than once in late November and early December participated in two interviews. The duplicate interview was deleted, and results presented in this report reflect the responses of 199 customers.