

**Seattle Police Department Research Report**

**SEPTEMBER 2015  
SERVICE QUALITY UPDATE**

*Feedback from the People We Serve*

November 2, 2015



*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**

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 September 2015 and comparisons to previous surveys are summarized below.

**Overall Satisfaction.** Overall, customers were 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.” Over 70 percent rated their overall satisfaction with this experience as 4 or 5 on a five-point scale were 5 means “extremely satisfied,” for an average rating of 4.07 out of 5 possible points. Overall satisfaction in September 2015 did not differ significantly from June 2006, the first survey, and overall satisfaction was lower in September than in June 2015.

**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 (56% “strongly agree”); listened to customer concerns, answered questions, and provided the information, assistance, and explanations customers needed and wanted (40% to 43% “strongly agree”). However, these officers received slightly lower ratings for telling customers “what would happen next” and giving “tips on preventing future crimes” (34% and 15% “strongly agree,” respectively). 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 two items decreased significantly between June 2015 and September 2015: “The officer told you what would happen next” and “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes.”

**Seattle Police Department Overall.** Customers also rated the Department highly. Customers indicated that “Department personnel are professional and courteous” (36% “strongly agree”) and the Department is available when needed, focuses on public safety issues of concern, clearly explains procedures and requirements, and is a good resource for information about preventing crime (18% to 26% “strongly agree”). While these are positive ratings, ratings of the officers with whom customers had personal contact (the 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) focuses on public safety issues of concern, (3) clearly explains procedures and requirements, and (4) is a good resource for information about preventing crime increased significantly since the first survey.

**9-1-1 Operations.** Customers were satisfied with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator (69% “extremely satisfied”) and with the speed with which their calls were answered by the operator (63% “extremely satisfied”). Satisfaction with service provided by the 9-1-1 operator was higher in September 2015 than in the first survey in June 2006. Satisfaction with the speed with which calls were answered did not change significantly since June 2015, when the question was introduced. Nine percent, or 19 customers, had to dial 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator in June 2015, 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 your neighborhood during the day” (59% “extremely safe”) than they do “walking alone in your neighborhood at night” (24% “extremely safe”) or overall in Seattle (20% “extremely safe”). Customers’ overall feelings of safety in Seattle have declined significantly since June 2015 and November 2006, when first asked.

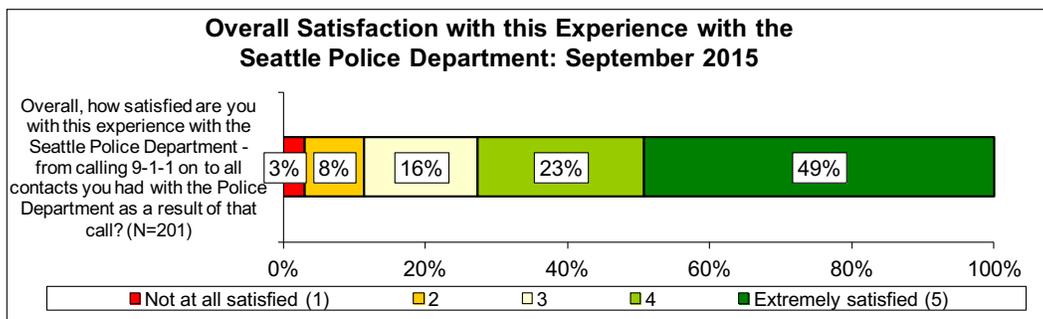
As in past surveys, customers reported that the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 led some of them to feel less safe than before, but the service provided by the Department as a result of their calls to 9-1-1 increased the proportion of customers who felt more safe and decreased the proportion that 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 September 2015 survey of customers who called 9-1-1 in late August and had an officer dispatched to assist them and (2) compares the September 2015 results with those of the previous 28 surveys of 9-1-1 callers conducted between June 2006 and June 2015.

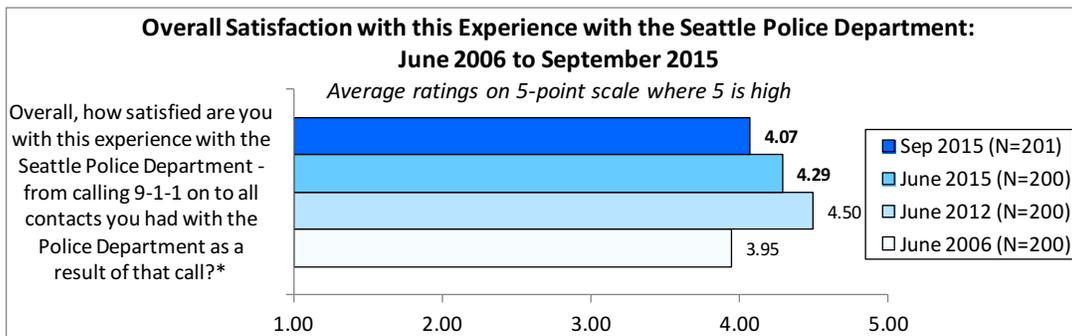
**Overall Satisfaction.** Customers who had an officer dispatched to provide assistance after calling 9-1-1 were asked to use a five-point scale, where 5 means “extremely satisfied” and 1 means “not at all satisfied, to answer the question, “Overall, how satisfied are you with this experience with the 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 shows<sup>1</sup>, 72 percent of customers rated their satisfaction with this experience with the Department as 4 (23%) or 5 (49%) on a five-point scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied.” Three percent rated their satisfaction as 1, or “Not at all satisfied,” and eight 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 29 customer satisfaction surveys, and customers’ responses to this question differed significantly across surveys. The next chart shows 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 June 2015 and September 2015, the two most recent surveys.<sup>2</sup>

With an average rating of 4.07 in September 2015, overall satisfaction with the experience with the Seattle Police Department did not differ significantly from June 2006, when the first survey was conducted. Ratings were significantly lower in September 2015 than in June 2015 and in June 2012.



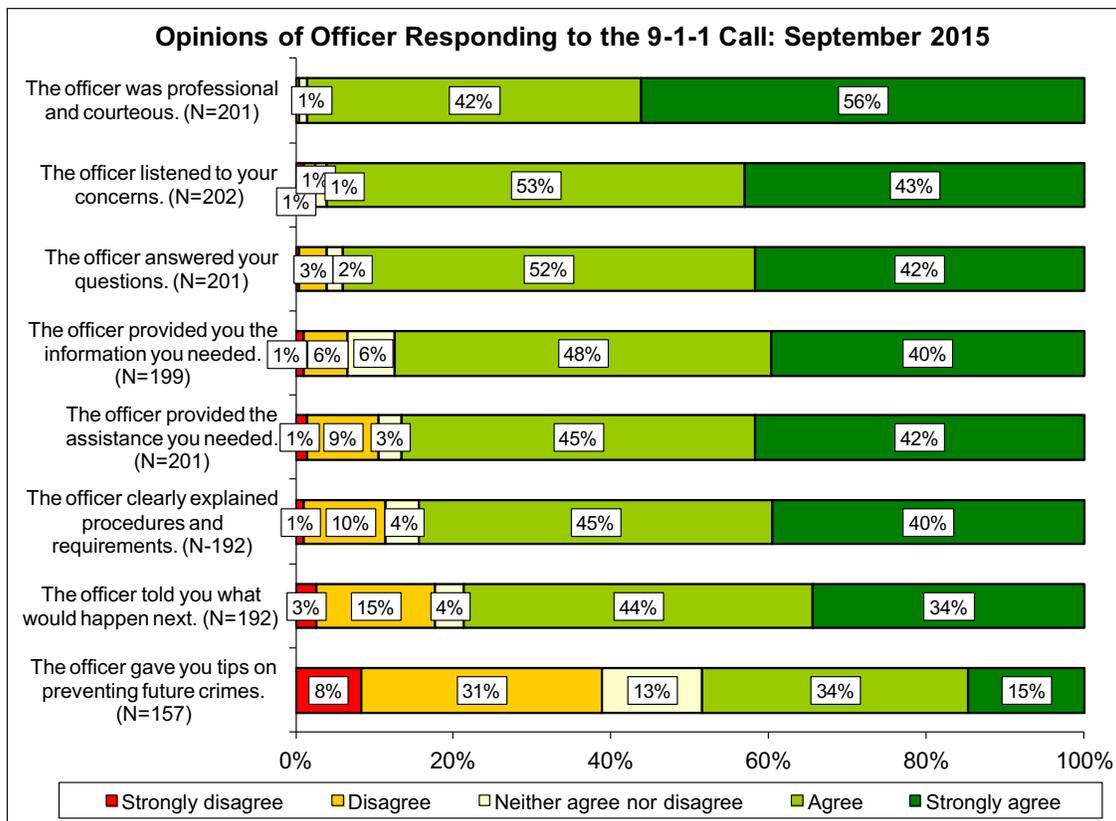
<sup>1</sup> Percentages do not always total 100 in this and subsequent charts due to rounding.

<sup>2</sup> The numbers of respondents answering each question are often omitted from these charts for readability, but the number consistently was close to 200. Average ratings shown in bold font differed significantly between June 2015 and September 2015, 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 September 2015.

**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.

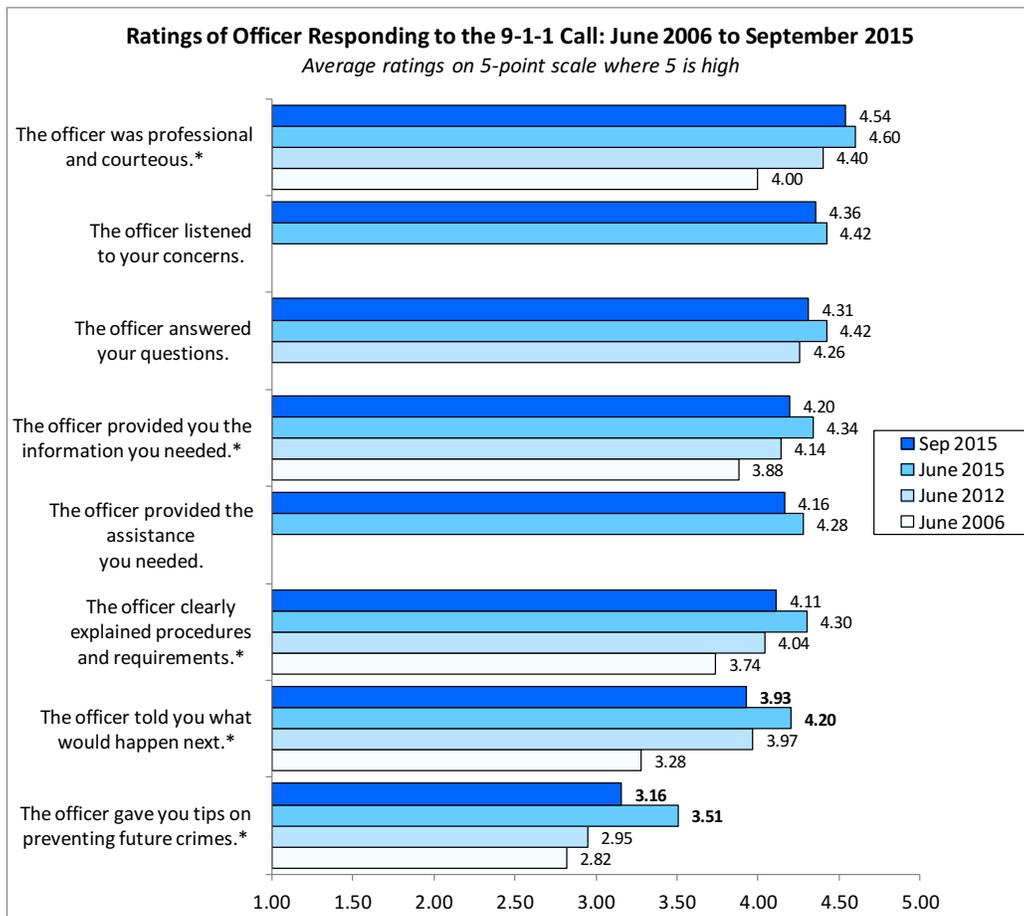
Customers rated officers highest for being professional and courteous and lowest for giving tips on preventing future crimes, as shown in the next chart.

- Over half (56%) 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” and no one strongly disagreed with this statement.
- Between 40 and 43 percent of the customers said that they “strongly agree” with five of the statements: “The officer listened to your concerns,” “The officer answered your questions,” “The officer provided you the information you needed,” “The officer provided the assistance you needed,” and “The officer clearly explained procedures and requirements.” Between 85 and 96 percent of customers said that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with these statements, and between two and eleven percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statements.
- One third (34%) of the customers said that they “strongly agree” with the statement, “The officer told you what would happen next.” Three-fourths (78%) said that they “agree” or “strongly agree,” and 18 percent “disagree” or “strongly disagree,” with this statement.
- A total of 49 percent of the customers said that they “strongly agree” or “agree,” and 39 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 29 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.” Ratings of all five of these items were significantly higher in September 2015 than they were in June 2006, when the questions were first asked. However, ratings of two of the items, “The officer told you what would happen next” and “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes” were significantly lower in September 2015 than in June 2015, when the most recent survey was conducted.

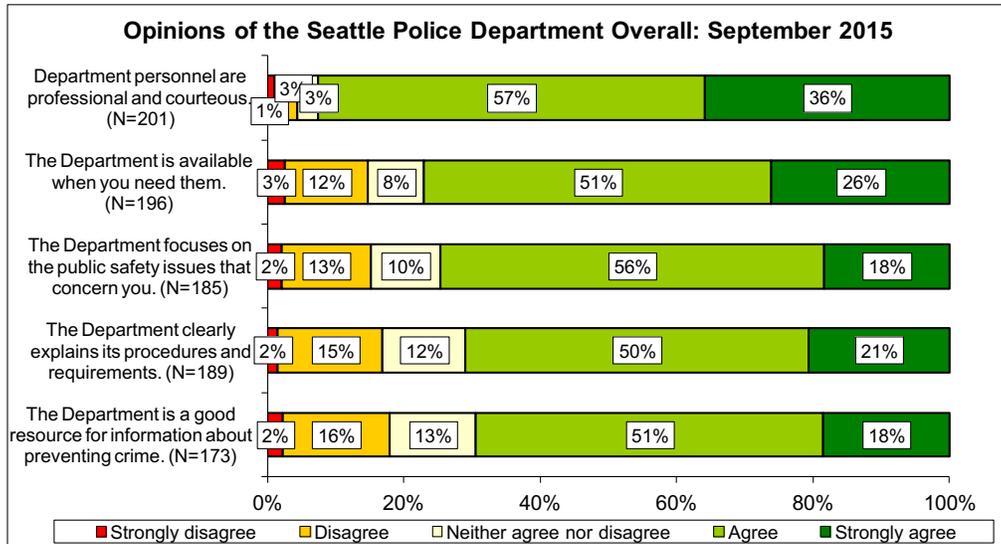
The three remaining items were added beginning in 2007. “The officer answered your questions,” was added to the survey in April 2007. Responses to this item have fluctuated significantly over time, but ratings in September 2015 did not differ significantly from April 2007, when the question was first asked, or from the previous survey in June 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 for the first time in June 2015; ratings of these items have not changed significantly across surveys.



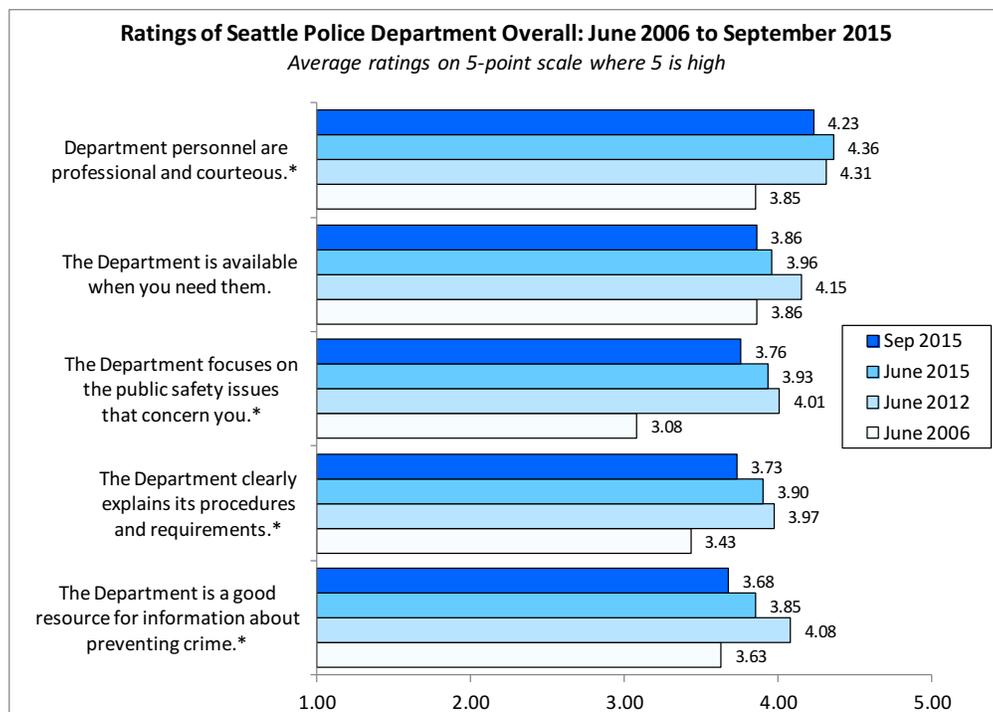
**Seattle Police Department Overall.** To assess opinions of the Seattle Police Department overall, customers were asked to indicate their level of agreement (“Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly disagree”) with statements about the Department, including the 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. Over one-third (36%) of the customers said that they “strongly agree” and 57 percent said they “agree” with the

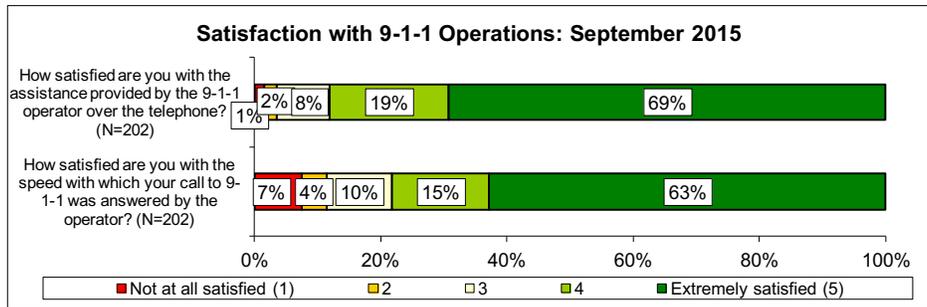
statement, “Department personnel are professional and courteous.” Just four percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement. Between 18 and 26 percent of the respondents said they “strongly agree” (a total of 69% to 77% either “agree” or “strongly agree”) with the other four statements about the Department; between 15 and 18 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with these statements, as shown in the next chart.



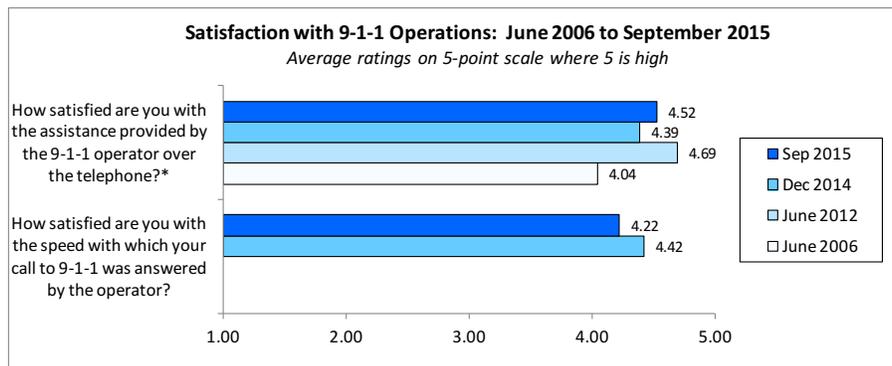
These questions about the Department overall were included in all of the customer satisfaction surveys, and responses to the questions changed significantly over time. Four of the items increased significantly between June 2006, when the surveys began, and September 2015: “Department personnel are professional and courteous,” “The Department focuses on the public safety issues that concern you,” “The Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements,” and “The Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime.” Ratings of the item, “The Department is available when you need them,” fluctuated over time but were the same in June 2006 and September 2015.



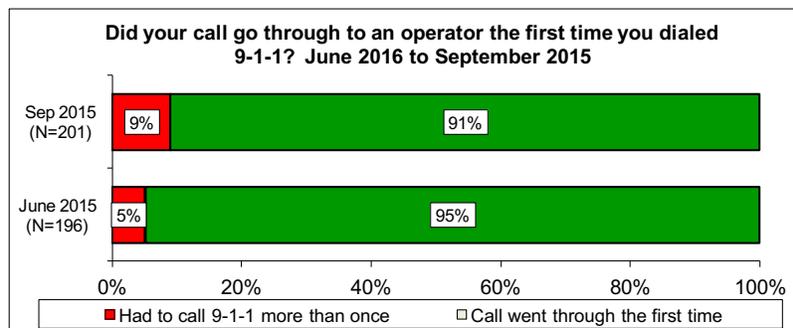
**9-1-1 Operations.** About two-thirds of the customers rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator and with the speed with which their call was answered as 5 on the five-point scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied” (69% and 63%, respectively). A total of 88 and 78 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. Three 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.” Eleven 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 29 surveys. The ratings in September 2015 were significantly higher 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 September 2015.

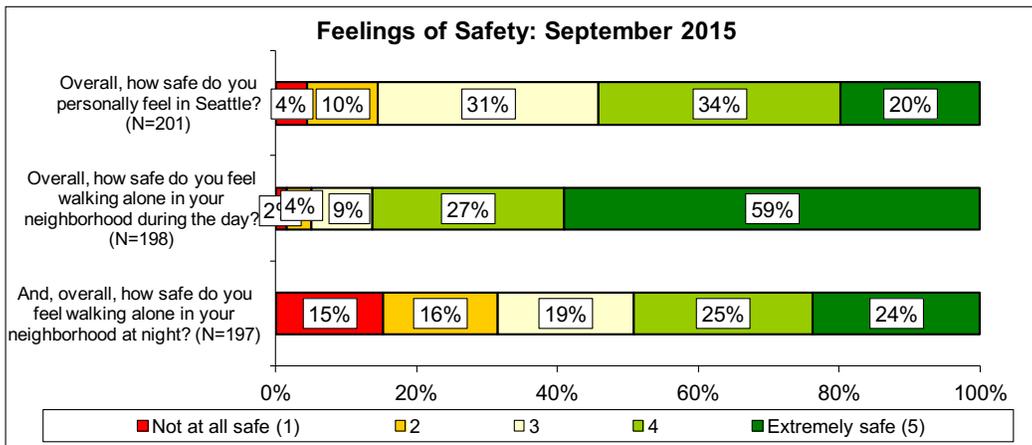


Beginning In June 2015, customers were asked if they reached an operator the first time they dialed 9-1-1 and, if not, how often they dialed 9-1-1 to reach an operator. As the next chart shows, in September 2015, 91 percent of the customers reached an operator the first time they dialed 9-1-1, and 9 percent (19 customers) had to dial 9-1-1 more than once. In June 2015, 95 percent of the customers reached an operator the first time they dialed 9-1-1, and 5 percent (10 customers), had to dial 9-1-1 more than once. The differences between June and September 2015 were not statistically significant.

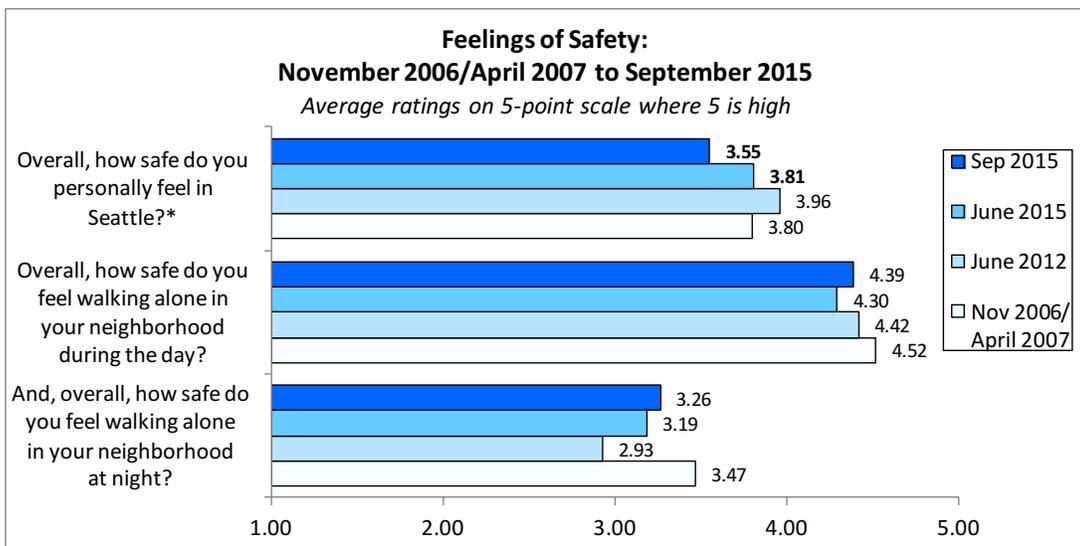


Of the 19 customers who had to call 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator in September 2015, 12 (63%) reached the operator on their second attempt, 4 (21%) on their third attempt, 1 (5%) on the fourth attempt, and 2 (11%) on their fifth attempt.

**Feelings of Safety.** Over half (54%) 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 14 percent rated their feelings as 2 or 1, where 1 means “not at all safe.” Over half (59%) rated their feelings of safety as 5 (“extremely safe”) when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day, and 24 percent rated their feelings of safety as 5 when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night. At the same time, just two percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 (“not at all safe”) when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day, and 15 percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night.

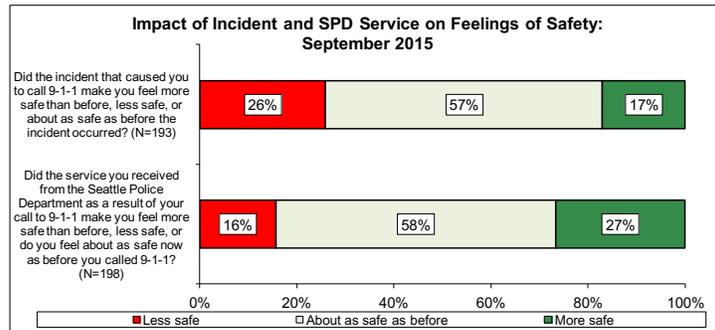


These questions about feelings of safety were added to the surveys in November 2006 (overall feeling of safety in Seattle) and in April 2007 (feelings of safety walking alone in your neighborhood during the day and at night). Overall feelings of safety in Seattle were significantly lower in September 2015 than in both June 2015 and November 2006, when this question was first asked. Customers’ feelings of safety walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day and at night fluctuated significantly across surveys, but the September 2015 results did not differ significantly from June 2015 or April 2007, when these questions were first asked. These results are shown in the next chart.

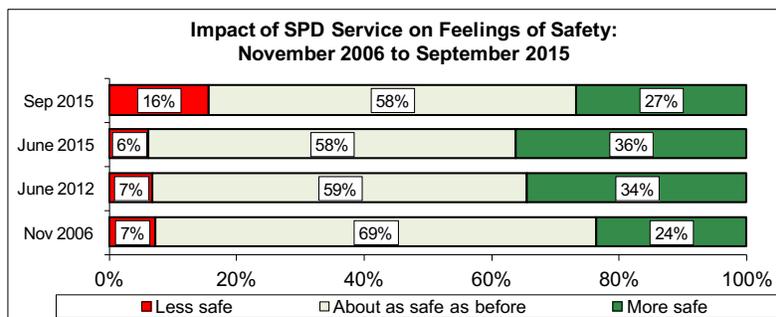
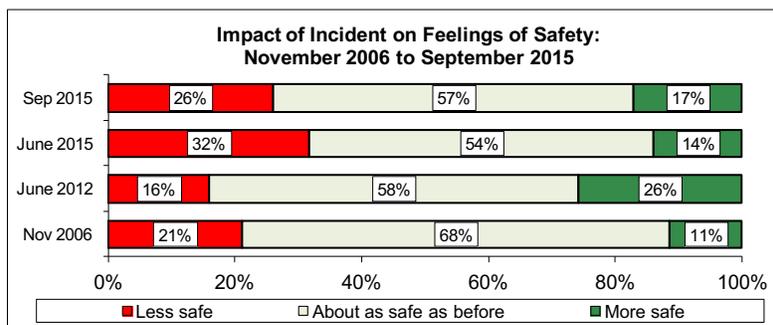


When asked about the impact of the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 on their feelings of safety, over half of the customers (57%) reported that they feel “about as safe as before the incident occurred.” The remaining customers said that they either felt “less safe” (26%) or “more safe” (17%) than 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 (58%) of the customers said that they feel “about as safe now as before they called 9-1-1,” while 27 percent said they feel “more safe,” and 16 percent feel “less safe.”

Examining the responses to these two questions shows that the service received from the Seattle Police Department led to an increase in the percentage of customers who said they feel “more safe” (17% to 27%), as well as a decrease in the percentage of customers who felt “less safe” (26% to 16%). 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, the service provided by the Department led to increases in the proportion of customers saying they felt “more safe” than before – and to decreases in the proportion who said they felt “less safe” than before – in comparison to the feelings resulting from the incident that led customers to call 9-1-1. The following charts illustrate this pattern of responses across all surveys: 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. The finding that the service provided by the Department leads to increases in feelings of personal safety and is reassuring to customers has been consistent across surveys.



## **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 29 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, in September 2015, 202 customers who called 9-1-1 and had an officer dispatched to provide assistance were interviewed by telephone. All of the customers interviewed had called 9-1-1 between August 17 and August 27, 2015, 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 August 31 and September 15, 2015. Each interview lasted approximately 10 to 12 minutes.

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.