

Seattle Police Department Research Report

JUNE 2016

SERVICE QUALITY UPDATE

Feedback from the People We Serve

July 25, 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 June 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 June 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-one percent of the customers 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 4.25 out of 5 possible points. Overall satisfaction in June 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 (92% “strongly agree” or “agree”); listened to customer concerns, answered questions, and provided the information, assistance, and explanations customers needed and wanted (80% to 91% “strongly agree” or “agree”). The responding officers received slightly lower ratings for giving “tips on preventing future crimes” (67% “strongly agree” or “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. However, ratings of six items decreased significantly between March 2016 and June 2016: The officer “was professional and courteous,” “provided you the information you needed,” “clearly explained procedures and requirements,” “told you what would happen next,” “answered your questions,” and “provided the assistance you needed.”

Seattle Police Department Overall. Customers also rated the Department highly. Customers indicated that “Department personnel are professional and courteous” (85% “strongly agree” or “agree”) and the Department focuses on public safety issues of concern, clearly explains procedures and requirements, is available when needed, and is a good resource for information about preventing crime (61% to 68% “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, while ratings that the Department is available when needed declined since the first survey. In addition, ratings that personnel are professional and courteous, the Department clearly explains procedures and requirements, and the Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime decreased between March 2016 and June 2016.

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 (82% and 79%, 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 June 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. Five percent, or 10 customers, had to dial 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator in March 2016.

Feelings of Safety. Customers said that they feel more safe “walking alone in [their] neighborhood during the day” (44% “extremely safe”) than they do overall in Seattle (28% “extremely safe”) or “walking alone in [their] neighborhood at night” (21% “extremely safe”). In June 2016, customers reported feeling significantly less safe walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day and at night than they did in April 2007, when these questions were first asked.

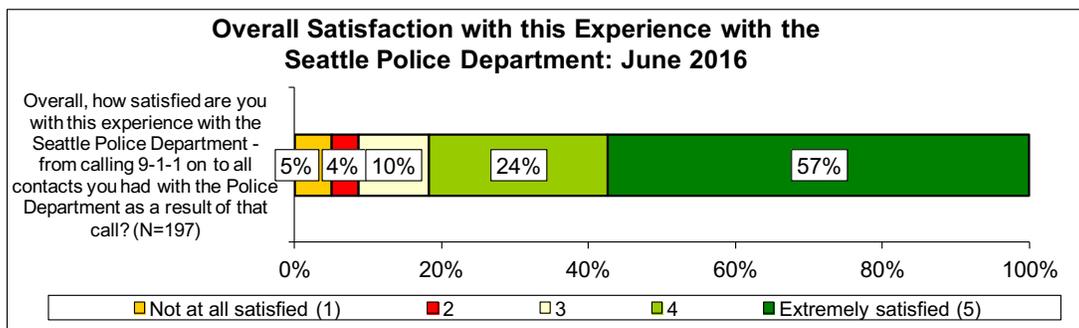
As in past surveys, customers reported that the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 led some of them to feel less safe than before, but the service provided by the Department as a result of their calls to 9-1-1 increased the proportion of customers who felt more safe and decreased the proportion who felt 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 June 2016 survey of customers who called 9-1-1 in May 2016 and had an officer dispatched to assist them and (2) compares the June 2016 results with those of the previous 31 surveys of 9-1-1 callers, which were conducted between June 2006 and March 2016.

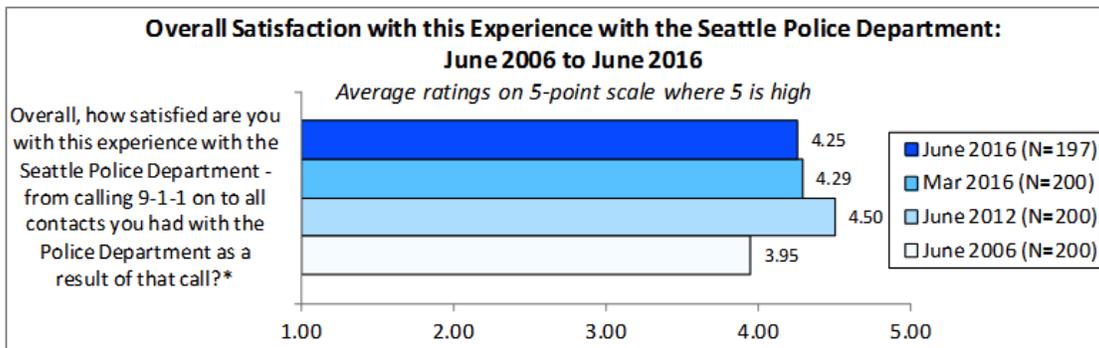
Overall Satisfaction. Customers who had an officer dispatched to provide assistance after calling 9-1-1 were asked to use a five-point scale, where 5 means “extremely satisfied” and 1 means “not at all satisfied,” to answer the question, “Overall, how satisfied are you with this experience with the Seattle 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, 81 percent of customers rated their satisfaction with this experience with the Department as 4 (24%) or 5 (57%) on the five-point scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied.” Five 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 32 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 March 2016 and June 2016, the two most recent surveys.¹

With an average rating of 4.25 in June 2016, overall satisfaction with this experience with the Seattle Police Department was significantly higher than in June 2006, when the first survey was conducted.

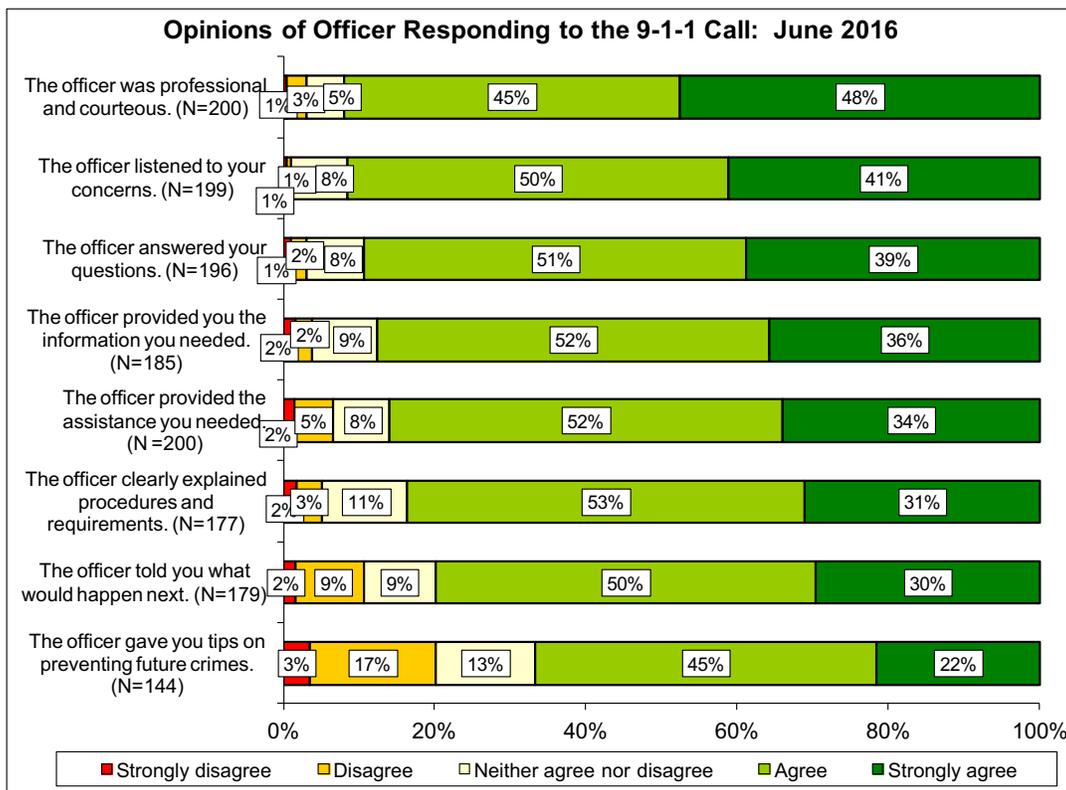


¹ The numbers of respondents answering each question are omitted from some charts for readability, but the number consistently was close to 200. Average ratings in bold font differed significantly between March 2016 and June 2016, the last two surveys. Average ratings of items with an asterisk (*) following the text of the item differed significantly between the first time the question was asked and June 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 chart².

- Almost half (48%) 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 92 percent³ 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 three percent “strongly disagree” with this statement.
- Between 30 and 41 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 provided the assistance you needed,” “The officer clearly explained procedures and requirements,” and “The officer told you what would happen next.” Between 80 and 91 percent of customers said that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” with these statements, and between two and 11 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statements.
- A total of 67 percent of the customers said that they “agree” or “strongly agree,” and 20 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree,” with the statement, “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes.”

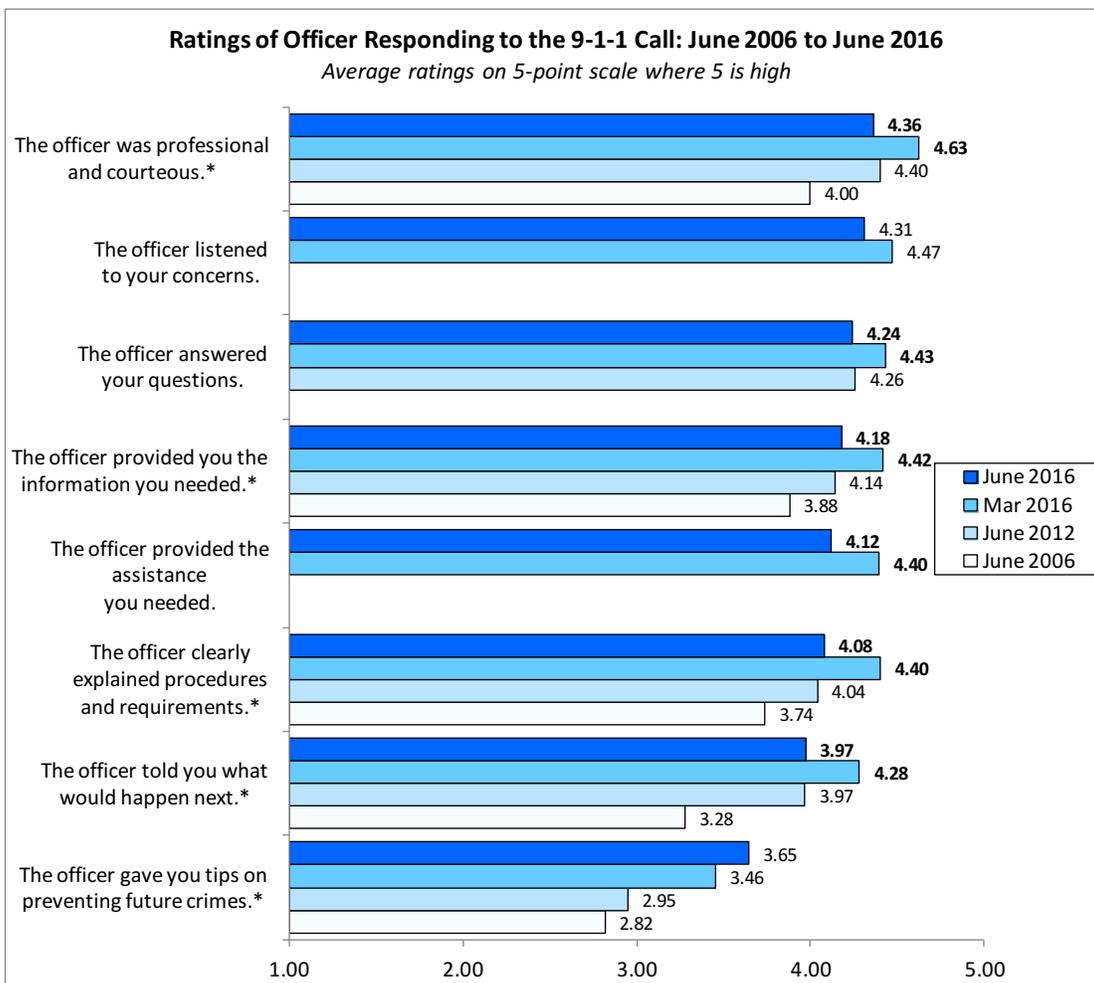


Five of these items about responding officers were included in all 32 customer satisfaction surveys: “The officer was professional and courteous,” “The officer provided you the information you needed,” “The officer clearly explained procedures and requirements,” “The officer told you what would happen next,”

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

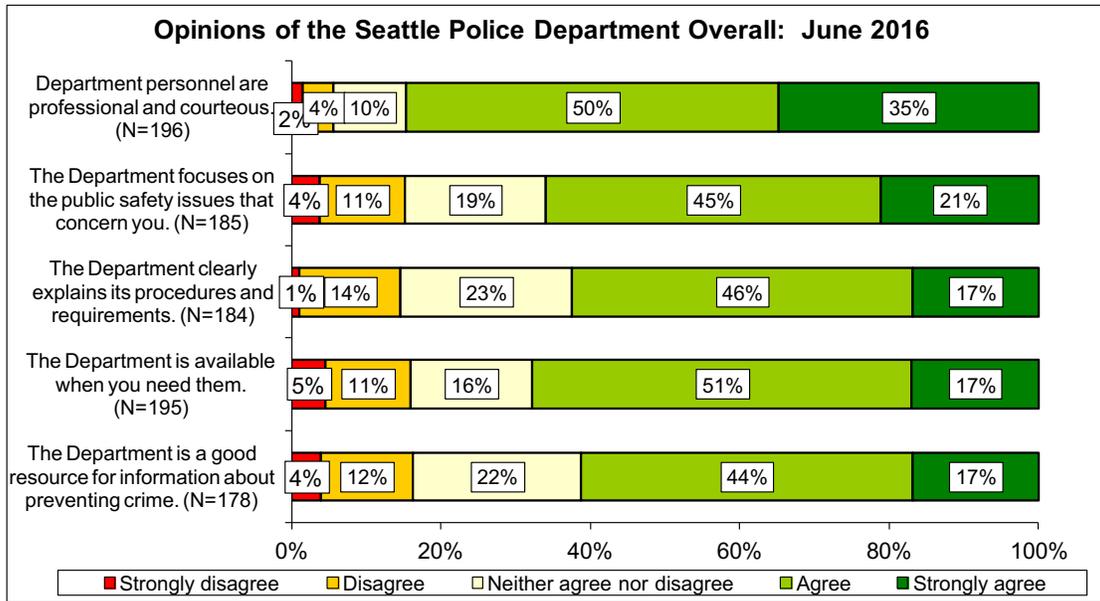
³ Corrected for rounding error.

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 June 2016 than they were in June 2006, when the questions were first asked. However, ratings of the officers declined significantly between March 2016 and June 2016 on four of these items: The officer “was professional and courteous,” “provided you the information you needed,” “clearly explained procedures and requirements,” and “told you what would happen next.” Ratings of two of items added to the survey more recently also declined significantly between March and June 2016: The officer “answered your questions” and “provided the assistance you needed.” “The officer listened to your concerns” was added to the survey in June 2014, and ratings of this item have not changed significantly across surveys.

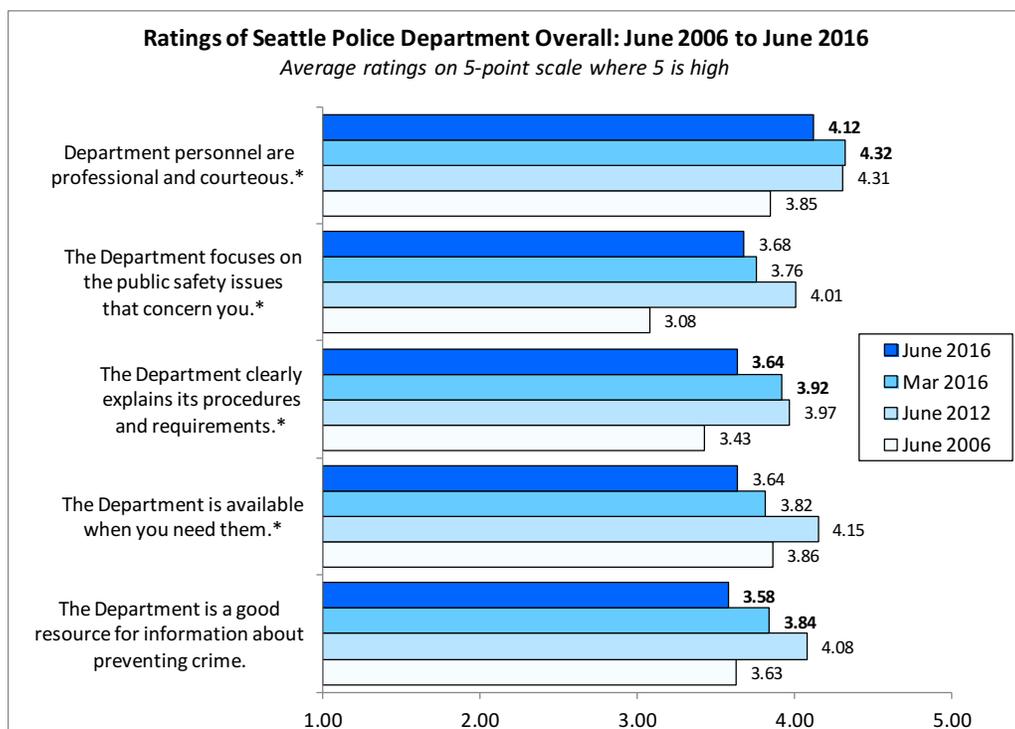


Seattle Police Department Overall. To assess opinions of the Seattle Police Department overall, customers were asked to indicate their level of agreement (“Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly disagree”) with statements about the Department, including the five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

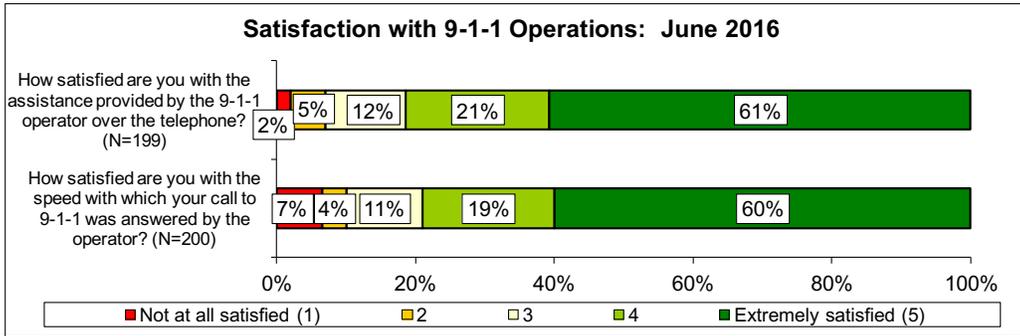
Customers rated the Department highest for having professional and courteous personnel, just as they rated the officer who responded to their call highest for being professional and courteous. Eighty-five percent of the customers said that they “strongly agree” or “agree” with the statement, “Department personnel are professional and courteous.” Just six percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with this statement. Between 61 and 68 percent of the customers said they “strongly agree” or “agree” with the other four statements about the Department; between 15 and 16 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with these statements, as shown in the next chart.



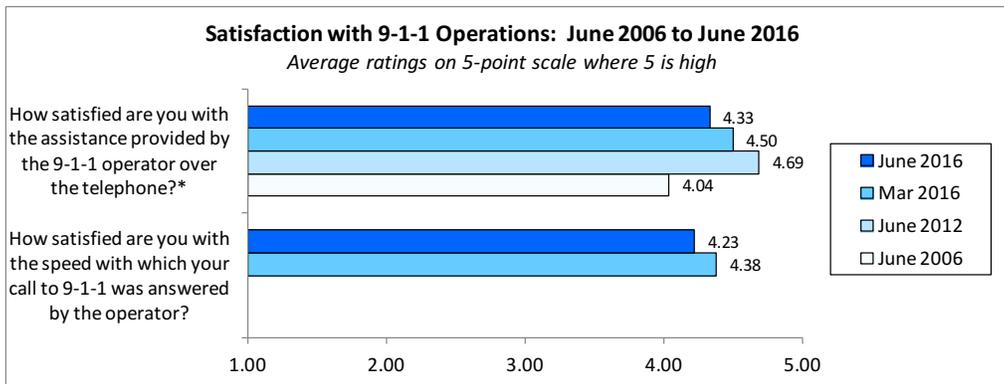
These questions about the Department overall were included in all of the customer satisfaction surveys, and responses to the questions changed significantly over time. Ratings of three items increased significantly between the first survey and June 2016: “Department personnel are professional and courteous,” “The Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements,” and “The Department focuses on the public safety issues that concern you.” Ratings of one item declined significantly between the first survey and June 2016: “The Department is available when you need them.” In addition, customers’ ratings of three items declined significantly between March 2016 and June 2016: “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.” These results are shown in the next chart.



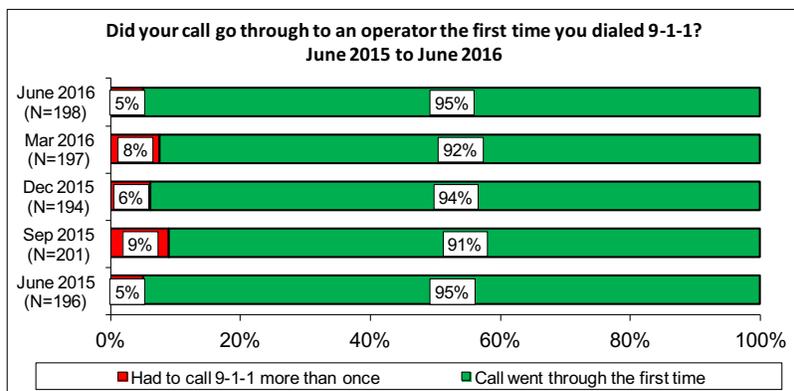
9-1-1 Operations. Six in ten customers rated their satisfaction with both the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator and the speed with which their call was answered as 5 on the five-point scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied” (61% and 60%, respectively). A total of 82 and 79 percent rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided and the speed with which their calls were answered as either a 4 or a 5 on this five-point scale, respectively. Seven percent rated their satisfaction with the assistance 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 assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator have been included in all 32 surveys, and ratings of this item were significantly higher in June 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 June 2016.

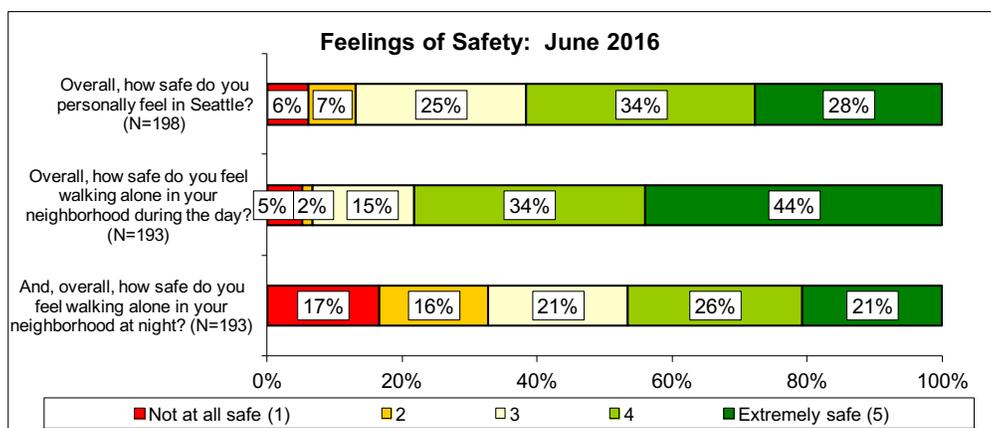


Since June 2015, customers have been asked if they reached an operator the first time they dialed 9-1-1. Responses to this question, shown in the next chart, have not differed significantly over time. Between 91 and 95 percent of the customers reached an operator the first time they dialed 9-1-1, and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

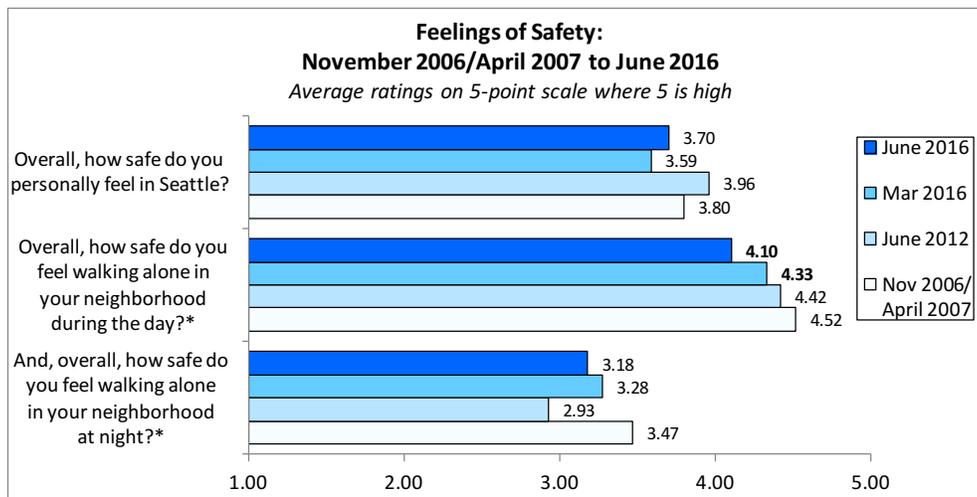


The ten customers (5%) who had to call 9-1-1 more than once in June 2016 were asked how often they dialed 9-1-1 to reach an operator. Seven (70%) reached the operator on their second attempt, two (20%) on their third attempt, and one on the sixth attempt.

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-two 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 13 percent rated their feelings as 2 or 1, where 1 means “not at all safe.” Seventy-eight percent rated their feelings of safety when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day as 4 or 5, and 47 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 seven percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 (“not at all safe”) or 2 when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day, and 33 percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 or 2 when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night.

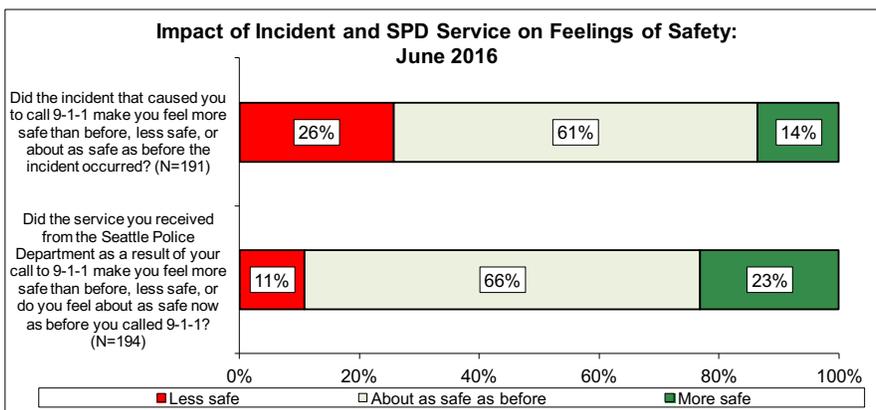


The questions about feelings of safety were added to the surveys in November 2006 (overall feeling of safety in Seattle) and in April 2007 (feelings of safety walking alone in your neighborhood during the day and at night). Feelings of safety in your neighborhood walking alone during the day and at night were significantly lower in June 2016 than in April 2007, when the questions were first asked. Feelings of safety in your neighborhood during the day also declined significantly between March 2016 and June 2016. Overall feelings of safety in Seattle have fluctuated significantly across surveys, but did not differ significantly from November 2006 (when first asked) or from March 2016 to June 2016. These results are shown in the next chart.

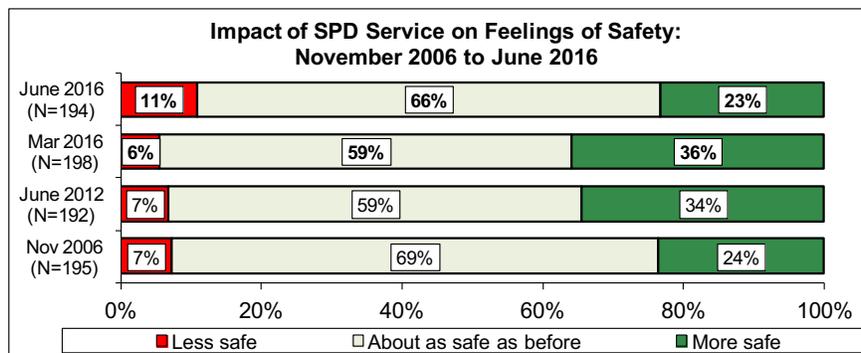
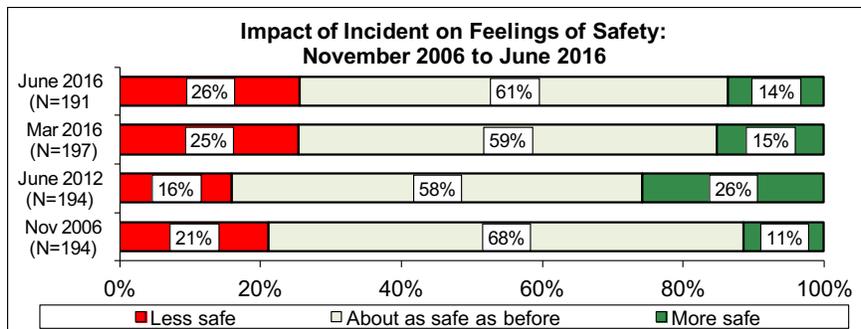


When asked about the impact of the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 on their feelings of safety, over half of the customers (61%) reported that they feel “about as safe as before the incident occurred.” The remaining customers said that they either feel “less safe” (26%) or “more safe” (14%) than 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 (66%) of the customers said that they feel “about as safe now as before they called 9-1-1,” while 23 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” (14% to 23%), as well as a decrease in the percentage of customers who felt “less safe” (26% to 11%), 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 32 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 May 19 and 26, 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 May 31 and June 11, 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.