

Seattle Police Department Research Report

**DECEMBER 2015
SERVICE QUALITY UPDATE**

Feedback from the People We Serve

January 13, 2016



This report 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 December 2015

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 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.” Three-fourths 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 4.09 out of 5 possible points. Overall satisfaction in December 2015 did not differ significantly from June 2006, the first survey, or from September 2015, the most recent survey.

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 (66% “strongly agree”); listened to customer concerns, answered questions, and provided the information, assistance, and explanations customers needed and wanted (40% to 54% “strongly agree”). However, these officers received lower ratings for giving “tips on preventing future crimes” (23% “strongly 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. Ratings of one item also increased significantly between September 2015 and December 2015: “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” (47% “strongly agree”) and the Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime, focuses on public safety issues of concern, is available when needed, and clearly explains procedures and requirements (27% to 31% “strongly 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 and that the Department, (2) is a good resource for information about preventing crime, (3) focuses on public safety issues of concern, and (4) clearly explains procedures and requirements increased significantly since the first survey. Ratings that the Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime also increased significantly between September 2015 and December 2015.

9-1-1 Operations. Customers were satisfied with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator (68% “extremely satisfied”) and with the speed with which their calls were answered by the operator (67% “extremely satisfied”). Satisfaction with service provided by the 9-1-1 operator was higher in December 2015 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 introduced. Six percent, or 12 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 [their] neighborhood during the day” (57% “extremely safe”) than they do “walking alone in [their] neighborhood at night” (22% “extremely safe”) or overall in Seattle (25% “extremely safe”). Customers’ feelings of safety walking alone in their neighborhood during the day have declined significantly since April 2007, when first asked.

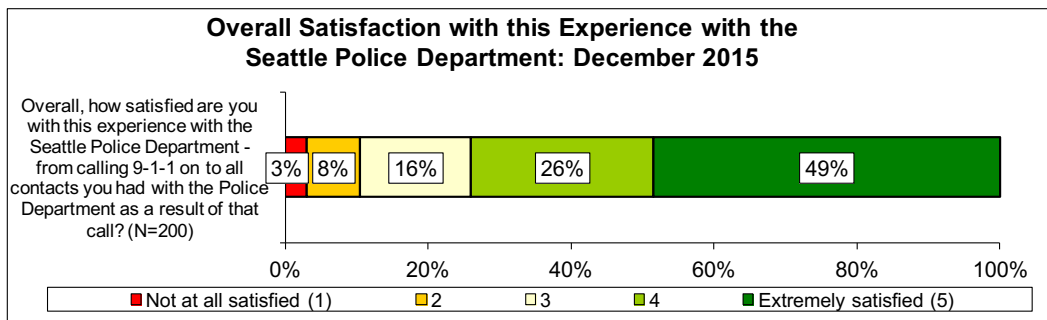
As in past surveys, customers reported that the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 led some of them to feel less safe than before, but the service provided by the Department as a result of their calls to 9-1-1 increased the proportion of customers who felt more safe and decreased the proportion 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 December 2015 survey of customers who called 9-1-1 in November and had an officer dispatched to assist them and (2) compares the December 2015 results with those of the previous 29 surveys of 9-1-1 callers, which were conducted between June 2006 and September 2015.

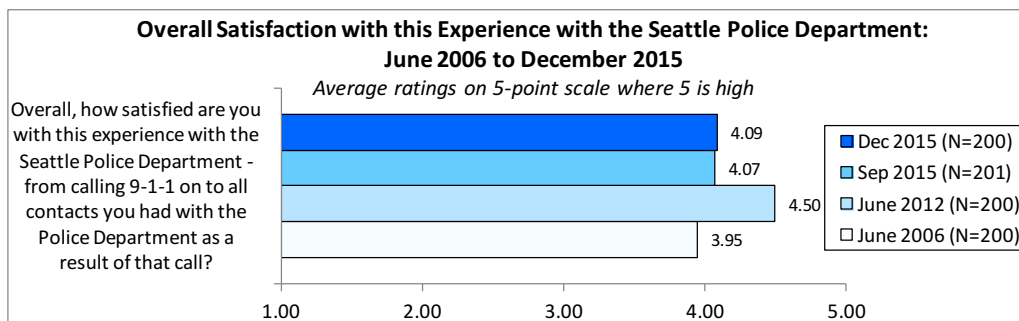
Overall Satisfaction. Customers who had an officer dispatched to provide assistance after calling 9-1-1 were asked to use a five-point scale, where 5 means “extremely satisfied” and 1 means “not at all satisfied,” to answer the question, “Overall, how satisfied are you with this experience with the Seattle 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 chart¹ shows, 75 percent of customers rated their satisfaction with this experience with the Department as 4 (26%) 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 30 customer satisfaction surveys, and customers’ responses to this question differed significantly across 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 2015 and December 2015, the two most recent surveys.²

With an average rating of 4.09 in December 2015, overall satisfaction with the experience with the Seattle Police Department did not differ significantly from September 2006, when the first survey was conducted.



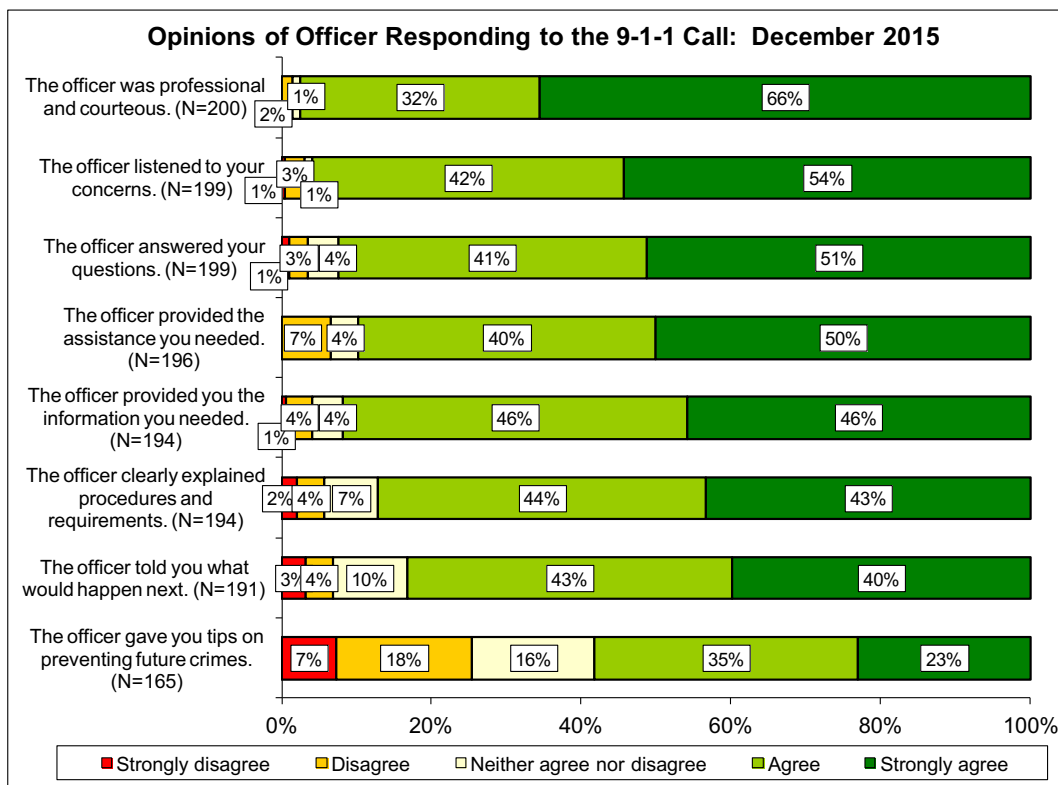
¹ Percentages do not always total 100 in this and subsequent charts due to rounding.

² 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 September 2015 and December 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 December 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.

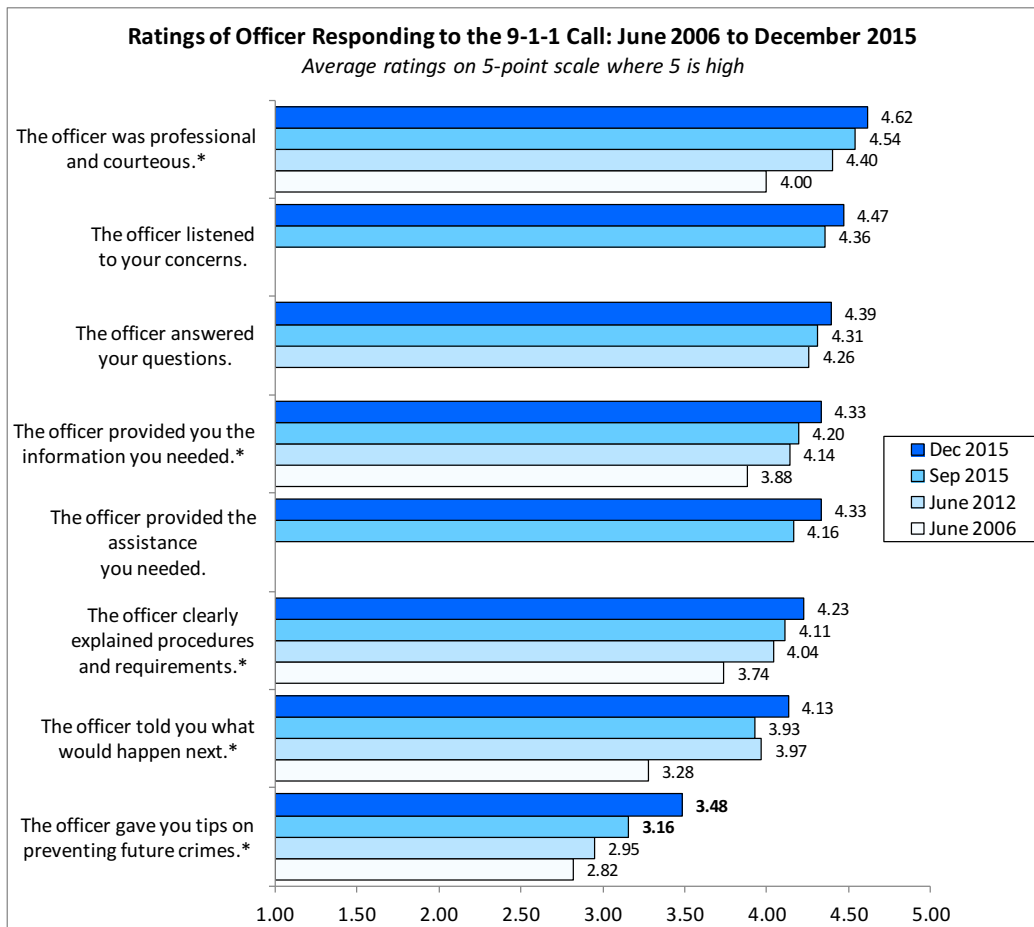
- Two-thirds (66%) of the customers said that they “strongly agree” that the officer who first visited after their call to 9-1-1 “was professional and courteous,” and 98 percent said that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement. Just one percent said that they “disagree” that “The officer was professional and courteous,” and no one strongly disagreed with this statement.
- Between 40 and 54 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 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 83 and 96 percent of customers said that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with these statements, and between four and seven percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statements.
- A total of 58 percent of the customers said that they “agree” or “strongly agree,” and 25 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 30 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.” As shown in the next chart, ratings of all five of these items were clearly significantly higher in December 2015 than they were in June 2006, when the

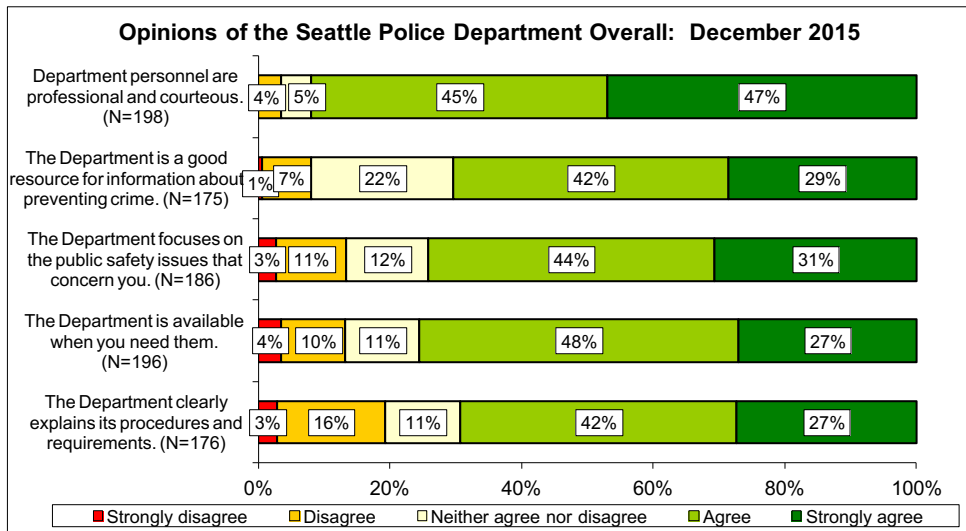
questions were first asked. In addition, ratings of one item, “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes,” were significantly higher in December 2015 than in September 2015, the previous survey.

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

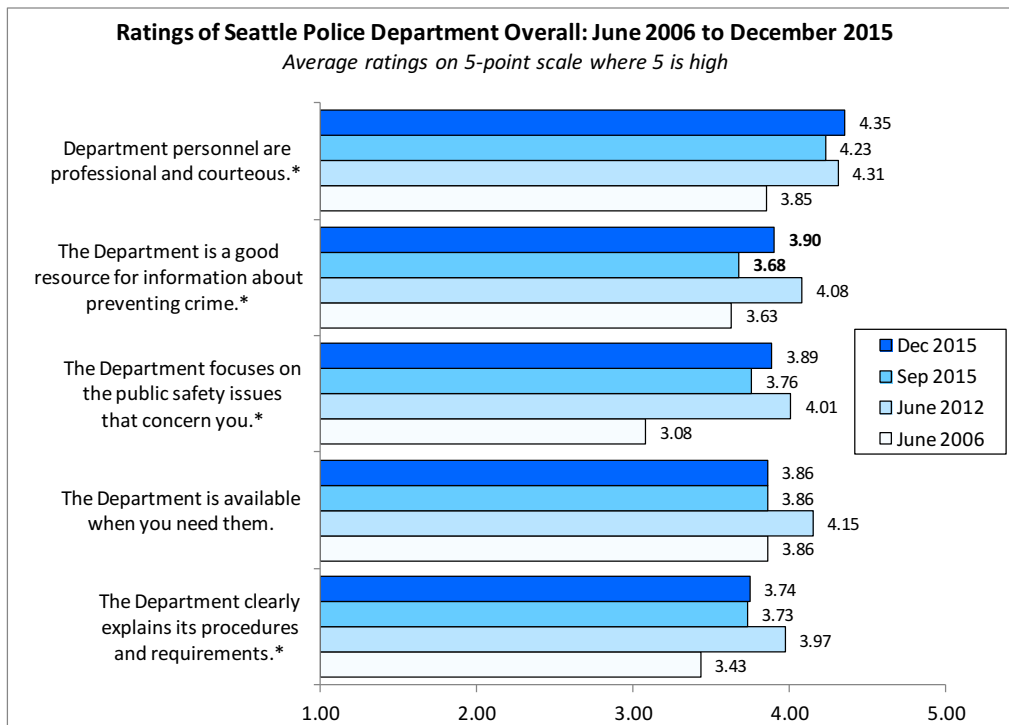


Seattle Police Department Overall. To assess opinions of the Seattle Police Department overall, customers were asked to indicate their level of agreement (“Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly disagree”) with statements about the Department, including the five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

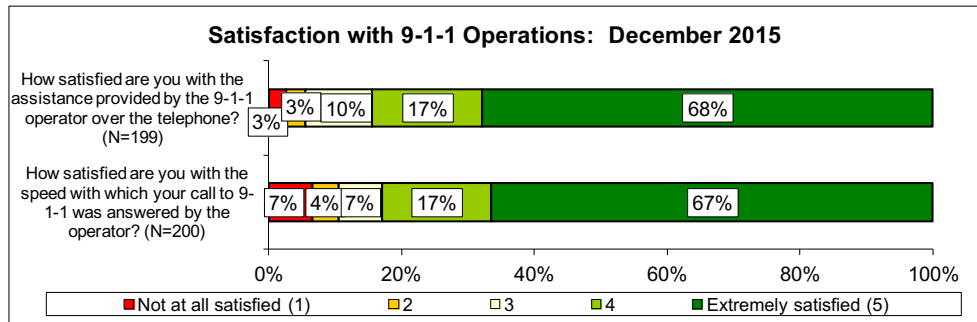
Customers rated the Department highest for having professional and courteous personnel, just as they rated the officer who responded to their call highest for being professional and courteous. Almost half (47%) of the customers said that they “strongly agree” and 45 percent said they “agree” with the statement, “Department personnel are professional and courteous.” Just four percent said that they “disagree” with this statement and none “strongly disagree.” Between 27 and 31 percent of the respondents said they “strongly agree” (a total of 69% to 75% either “agree” or “strongly agree”) with the other four statements about the Department; between 8 and 19 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with these statements, as shown in the next chart.



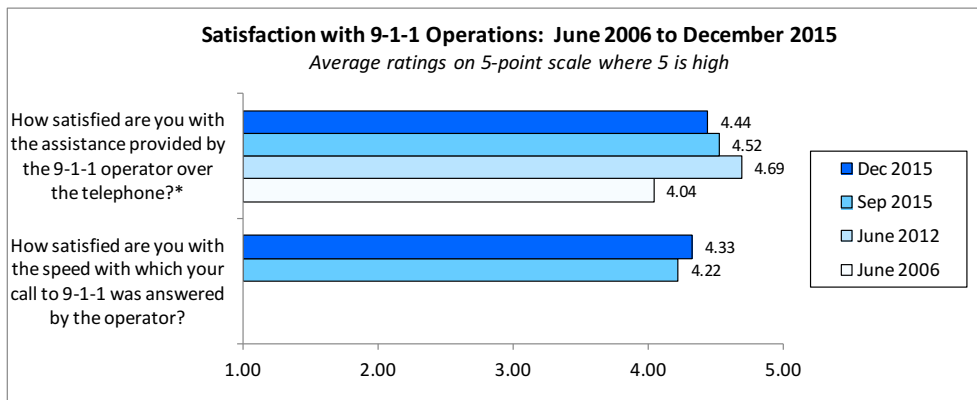
These questions about the Department overall were included in all of the customer satisfaction surveys, and responses to the questions changed significantly over time. Four of the items increased significantly between June 2006, when the surveys began, and December 2015: “Department personnel are professional and courteous,” “The Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime,” “The Department focuses on the public safety issues that concern you,” and “The Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements.” Ratings of one of these items, “The Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime,” also increased significantly between the September and December 2015, the last two surveys. Ratings of the item, “The Department is available when you need them,” fluctuated over time but did not differ significantly between June 2006 and December 2015.



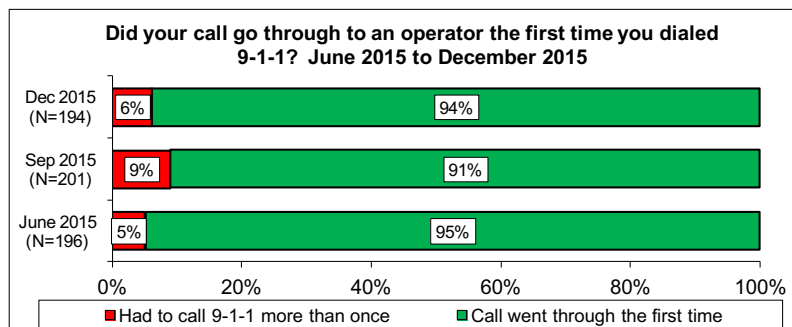
9-1-1 Operations. About two-thirds of the customers rated their satisfaction with both the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator and the speed with which their call was answered as 5 on the five-point scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied” (68% and 67%, respectively). A total of 85 and 84 percent 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. Six 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 30 surveys, and ratings of this item were significantly higher in December 2015 than in June 2006, the first survey. Ratings of satisfaction with the speed with which calls were answered did not change significantly since June 2015, when the question was first asked.

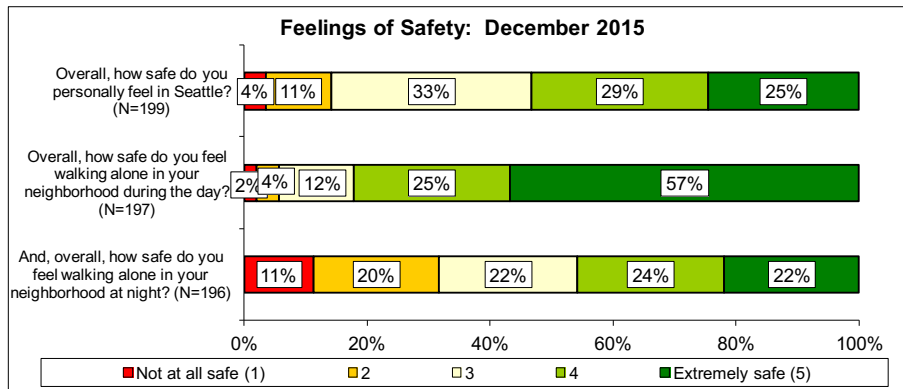


Beginning In June 2015, customers were asked if they reached an operator the first time they dialed 9-1-1 and, if not, how often they dialed 9-1-1 to reach an operator. In December 2015, six percent (12 customers) had to call 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator. As the next chart shows, responses to this question have not differed significantly since the question was introduced. 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.

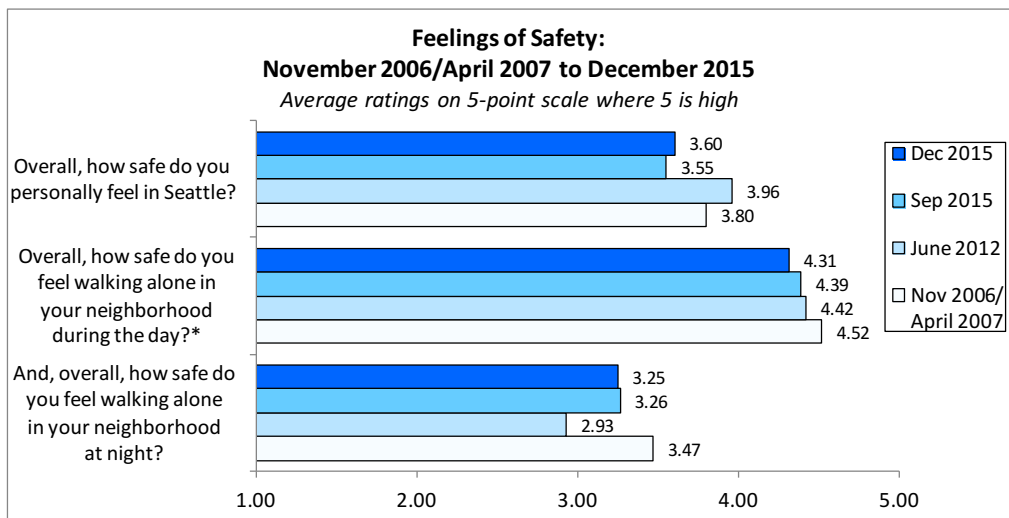


Of the 12 customers who had to call 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator in December 2015, 9 (75%) reached the operator on their second attempt, 2 (17%) on their third attempt, and 1 (8%) on the tenth attempt.

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 15 percent rated their feelings as 2 or 1, where 1 means “not at all safe.” Over half (57%) rated their feelings of safety as 5 (“extremely safe”) when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day, and 22 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 11 percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night.



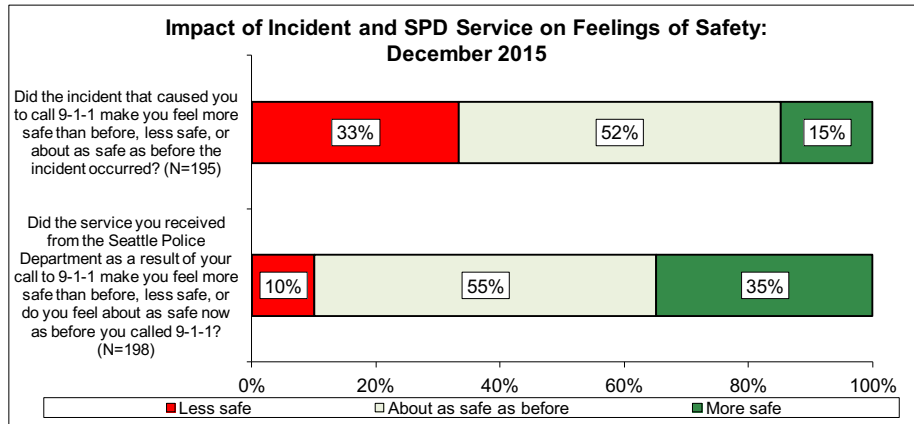
The questions about feelings of safety were added to the surveys in November 2006 (overall feeling of safety in Seattle) and in April 2007 (feelings of safety walking alone in your neighborhood during the day and at night). Feelings of safety reported on these three questions have fluctuated significantly across surveys, and feelings of safety walking alone in your neighborhood during the day were significantly lower in December 2015 than in April 2007 when this question was first asked. These results are shown in the next chart.



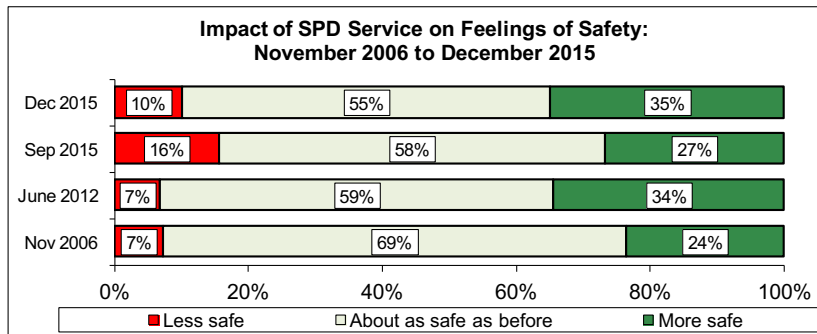
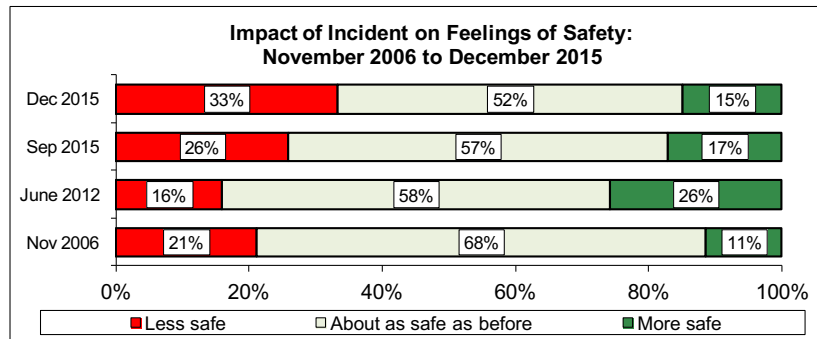
When asked about the impact of the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 on their feelings of safety, over half of the customers (52%) reported that they feel “about as safe as before the incident occurred.” The remaining customers said that they either felt “less safe” (33%) or “more safe” (15%) than 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 (55%) of the customers said that they feel “about as safe now as before they called 9-1-1,” while 35 percent said they feel “more safe,” and 10 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” (15% to 35%), as well as a decrease in the percentage of customers who felt “less safe” (33% to 10%), 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 30 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 November 9 and November 20, 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 November 23 and December 5, 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.