

Seattle Police Department Research Report

December 2017

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: February 12, 2018

9-1-1 Caller Surveys: Summary and Conclusions from December 2017

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 2017 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 percent (correcting for rounding error) 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 4.25 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 (94% “strongly agree” or “agree”); and officers listened to customer concerns, answered questions, provided the information and assistance needed, clearly explained procedures, and told customers what would happen next (79% to 92% “strongly agree” or “agree”). The responding officers received lower ratings for giving “tips on preventing future crimes” (54% “strongly agree” or “agree”).

Ratings of the responding officers fluctuated significantly since June 2014, but ratings in December 2017 did not differ significantly from either June 2014 or September 2017.

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 is available when needed, clearly explains procedures and requirements, focuses on public safety issues of concern, and is a good resource for information about preventing crime (57% to 71% “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, but ratings in December 2017 did not differ significantly from June 2014 or September 2017. Ratings on two items, “The Department focuses on the public safety issues that concern you” and “The Department is available when needed,” 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 with the speed with which their calls were answered by the operator (90% rated their satisfaction 4 or 5 on the scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied”). Ratings of satisfaction with the service provided by the 9-1-1 operator and with the speed with which calls were answered fluctuated significantly across surveys, but satisfaction in December 2017 did not differ significantly from September 2017 or June 2014 (assistance provided) and June 2015 (speed), when the question about the speed with which calls were answered was first asked.

Feelings of Safety. Customers said that they feel safer “walking alone in [their] neighborhood during the day” (58% “extremely safe”) than they do “walking alone in [their] neighborhood at night” (22% “extremely safe”) or overall in Seattle (24% “extremely safe”). Feelings of safety have not changed significantly since June 2014.

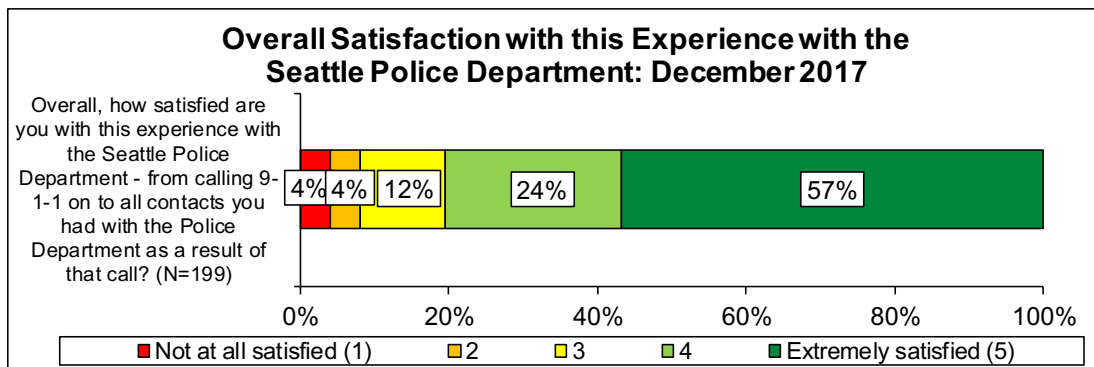
As in past surveys, customers reported that the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 led some of them to feel less safe than before they called 9-1-1, but the service provided by the Department as a result of their calls increased the proportion of customers who feel “more safe” and decreased the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

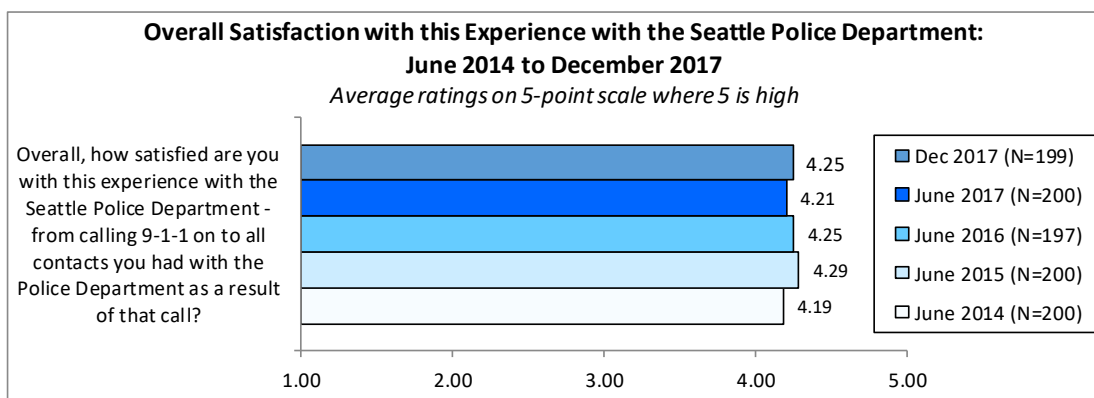
This report (1) summarizes key results of the December 2017 survey of customers who called 9-1-1 in late November and early December and had an officer dispatched to assist them and (2) compares the December 2017 results with those of the 13 other surveys of 9-1-1 callers conducted since June 2014.¹

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 chart shows, 57 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, 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.”²



The next chart shows that the average rating in December 2017 was 4.25 on the five-point scale where 5 is high. Responses to this question have fluctuated significantly since June 2014, but the satisfaction reported in December 2017 did not differ significantly from satisfaction in June 2014 or September 2017, the most recent survey. This chart and similar charts, below, present the average ratings from five surveys over the past three-and-a-half years: June 2014, June 2015, June 2016, June 2017, and December 2017.³



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 ($p < .05$).

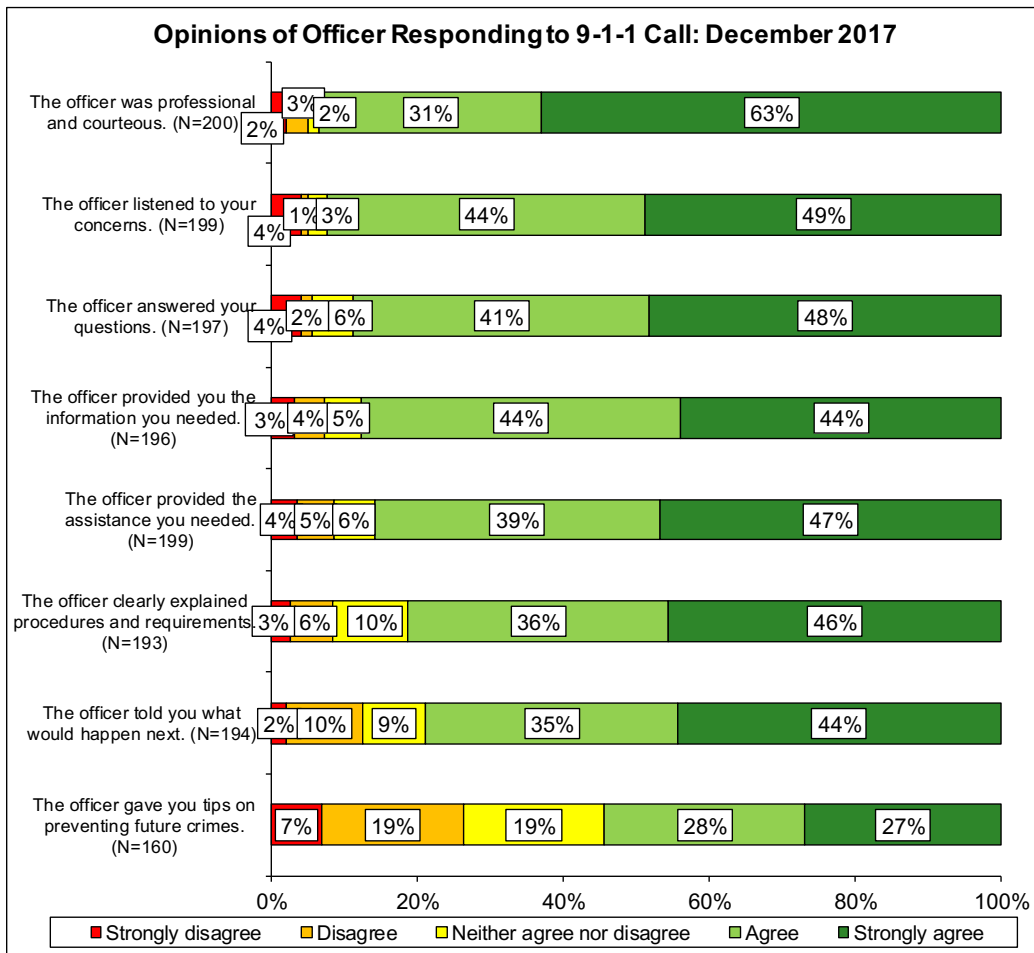
² Percentages do not total 100 in this and some subsequent charts due to rounding.

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.

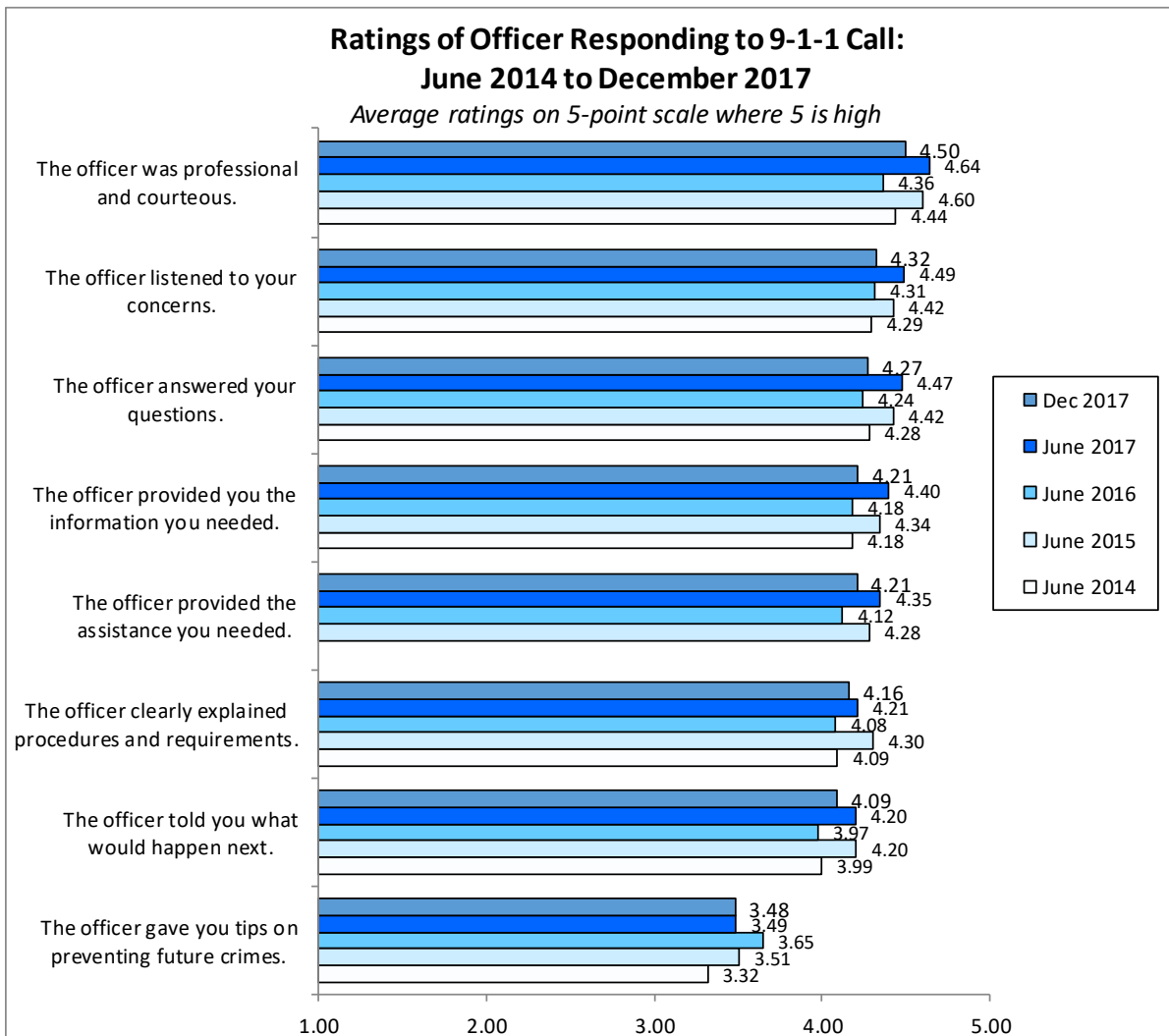
- Sixty-three percent of the customers said that they “strongly agree” that the officer who first visited after their call to 9-1-1 “was professional and courteous,” and 94 percent said that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement. Five percent said they either “strongly disagree” or “disagree” that “The officer was professional and courteous.”
- Between 44 and 49 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 79 and 92⁴ percent of customers said that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” with these statements, and between 5 and 12 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statements.
- A total of 54 percent⁵ of the customers said that they “agree” or “strongly agree,” and 26 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree,” with the statement, “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes.”



⁴ Correcting for rounding error.

⁵ Correcting for rounding error.

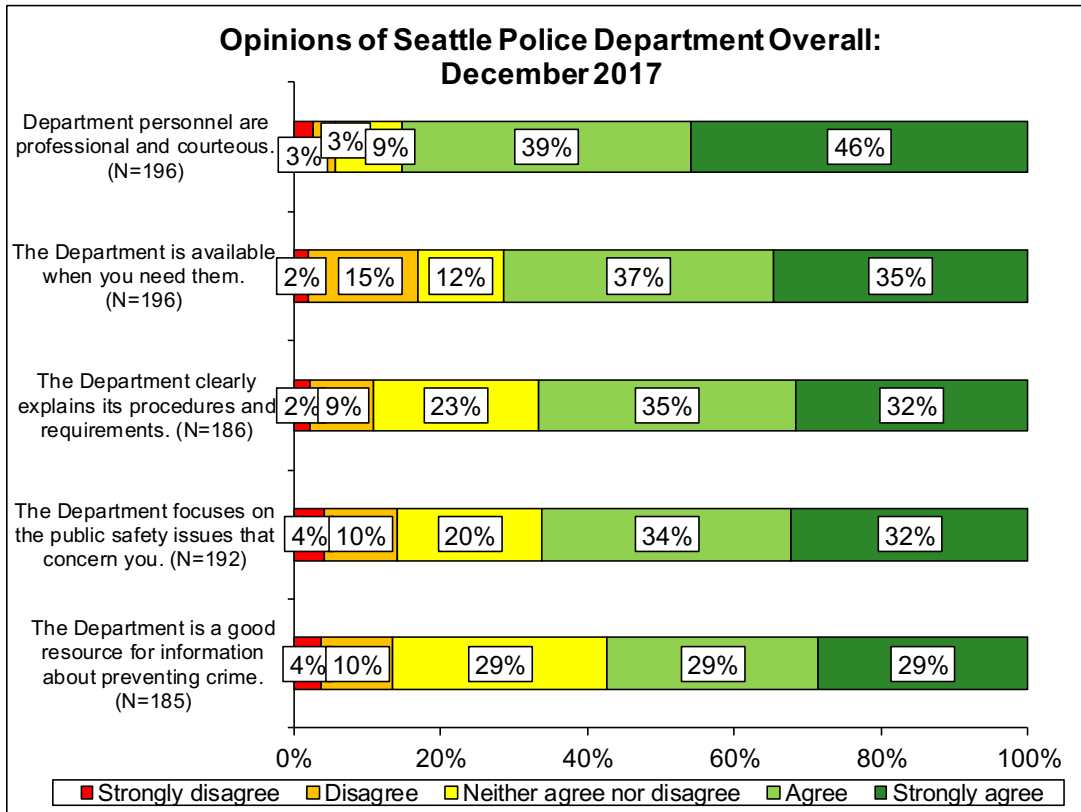
Ratings of responding officers, shown in the next chart, fluctuated significantly since June 2014, but ratings in the current survey, December 2017, did not differ significantly from June 2014 or September 2017.



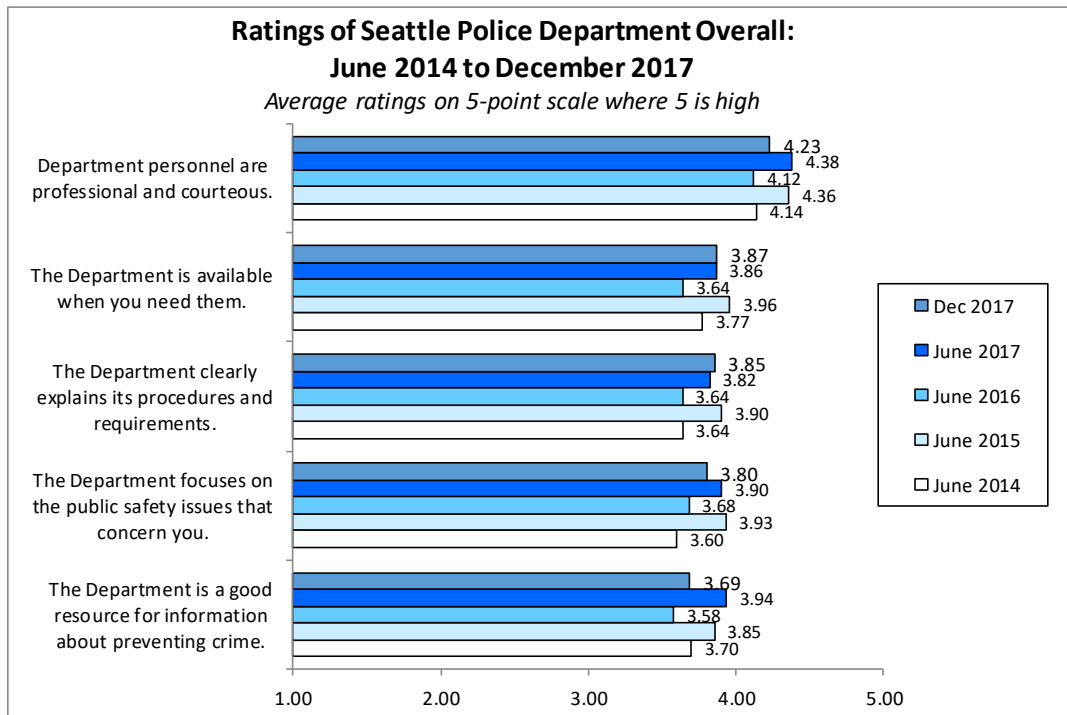
Seattle Police Department Overall. To assess opinions of the Seattle Police Department overall, customers were asked to indicate their level of agreement (“Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly disagree”) with statements about the Department, including the five 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,” and six percent said they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that “Department personnel are professional and courteous.” Between 57 and 71 percent⁶ 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.

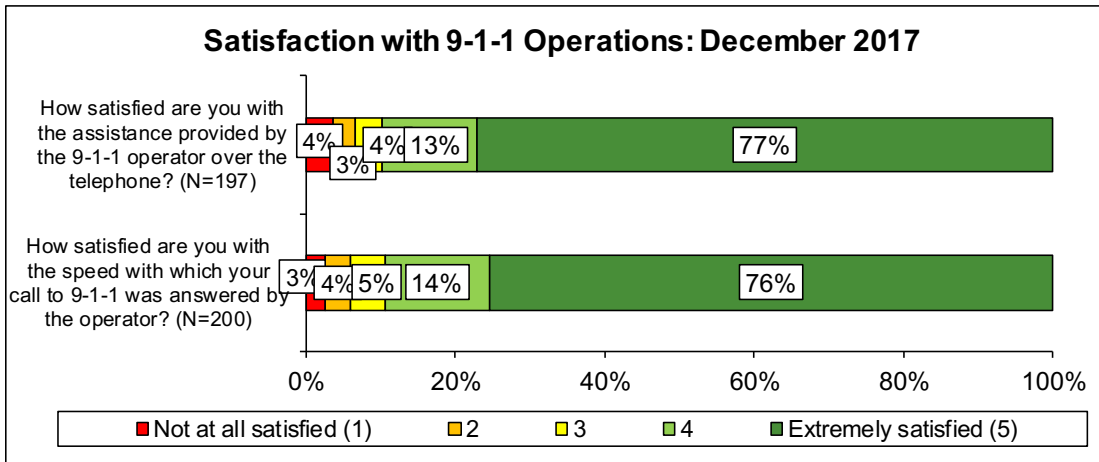
⁶ Correcting for rounding error.



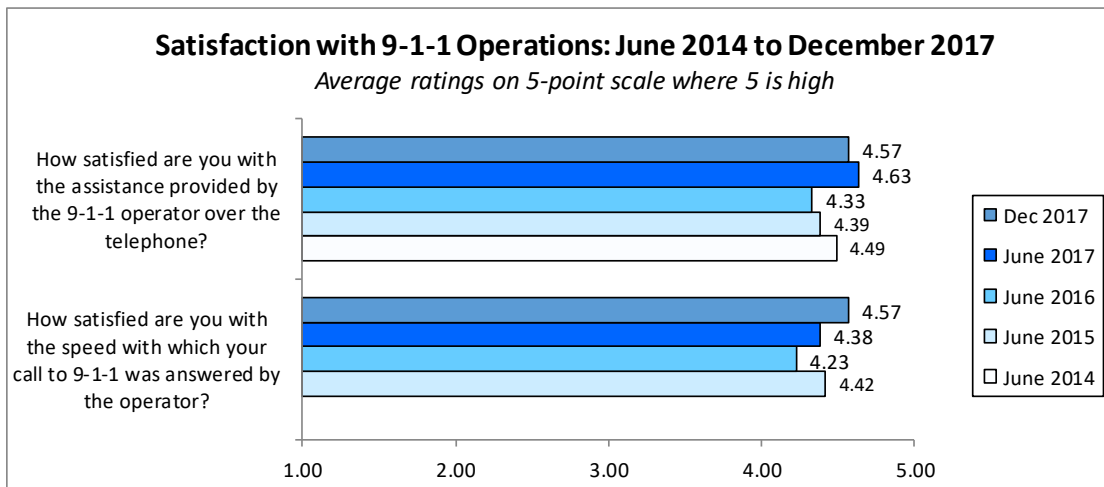
Ratings of three questions about the Department overall have fluctuated significantly since June 2014: “Department personnel are professional and courteous,” “The Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements,” and “The Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime.” Ratings of these items did not differ significantly between December 2017 and June 2014 or September 2017. Ratings of the other two items, that the Department focuses on public safety issues of concern and is available when needed, have not changed significantly since June 2014.



9-1-1 Operations. Seventy-seven percent of customers rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator as 5 on the five-point scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied,” and 76 percent rated their satisfaction with the speed with which their call was answered as 5 on this scale. A total of 90 percent rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided by the operator and the speed with which their calls were answered as either 4 or 5 on this five-point scale. Seven and six⁷ 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.

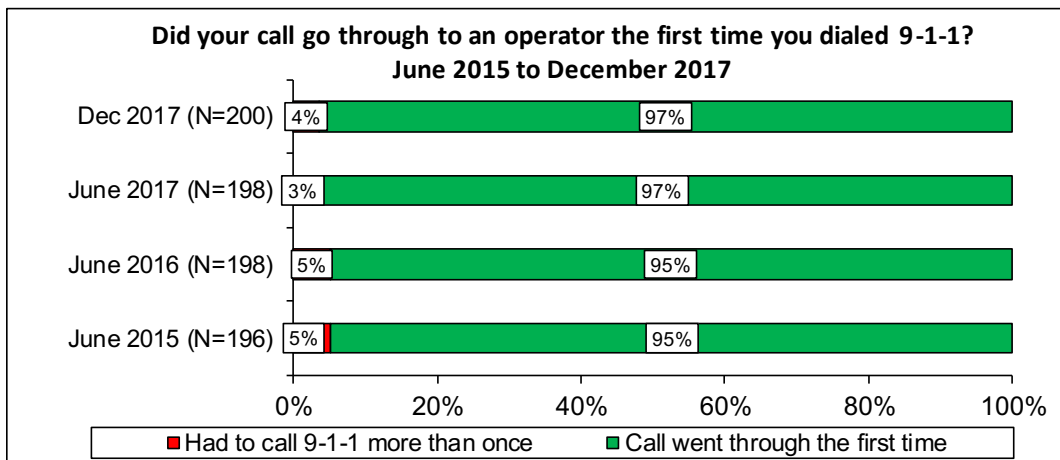


Ratings of satisfaction with the assistance provided by the 9-1-1 operator fluctuated significantly since June 2014, but satisfaction in December 2017 did not differ significantly from September 2017 or June 2014. Similarly, satisfaction with the speed with which the call was answered fluctuated significantly over time, but satisfaction in December 2017 did not differ significantly from September 2017 or June 2015, when this question was first included in the survey.



Since June 2015, customers have been asked if they reached an operator the first time they dialed 9-1-1. Responses to this question, summarized in the next chart, have not differed significantly over time. In each survey since June 2015, between 91 and 97 percent of the customers reached an operator the first time they dialed 9-1-1, and between 3 and 9 percent (between 5 and 19 customers) had to dial 9-1-1 more than once to reach an operator.

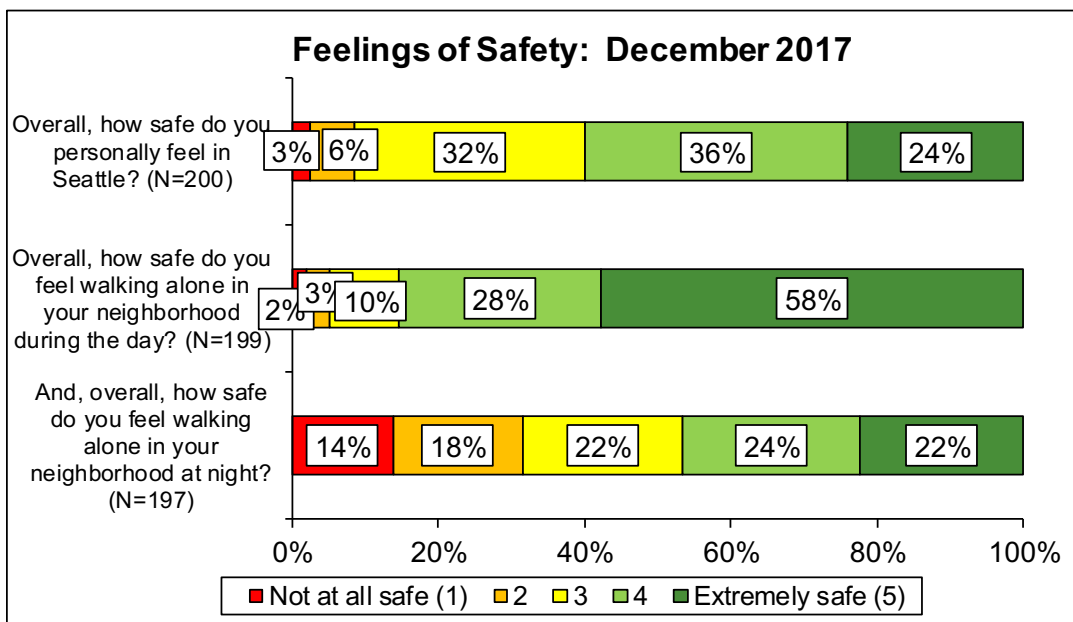
⁷ Correcting for rounding error.



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. In December 2017, six customers said that they reached the operator on their second attempt, and one didn't know which attempt reached the operator.

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.

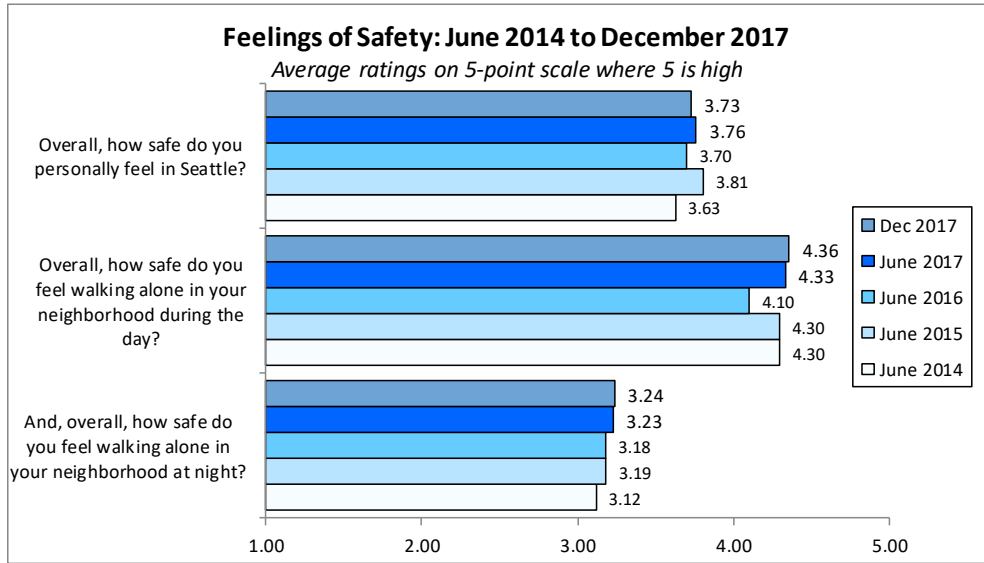
- Sixty percent rated their overall feelings of safety in Seattle as 4 or 5 on the five-point scale (24% “extremely safe”); 9 percent rated their safety as 1 or 2 where 1 means “not at all safe.”
- Eighty-five percent⁸ of the customers rated their feelings of safety when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day as 4 or 5 on a five-point scale where 5 means “extremely safe” (58% “extremely safe”); five percent rated their safety as 1 or 2 where 1 means “not at all safe.”
- Forty-seven percent rated their feelings of safety as 4 or 5 (22% “extremely safe”) and 31 percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 or 2 when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night⁹ (5 means “extremely safe”; 1 means “not at all safe”).



⁸ Correcting for rounding error.

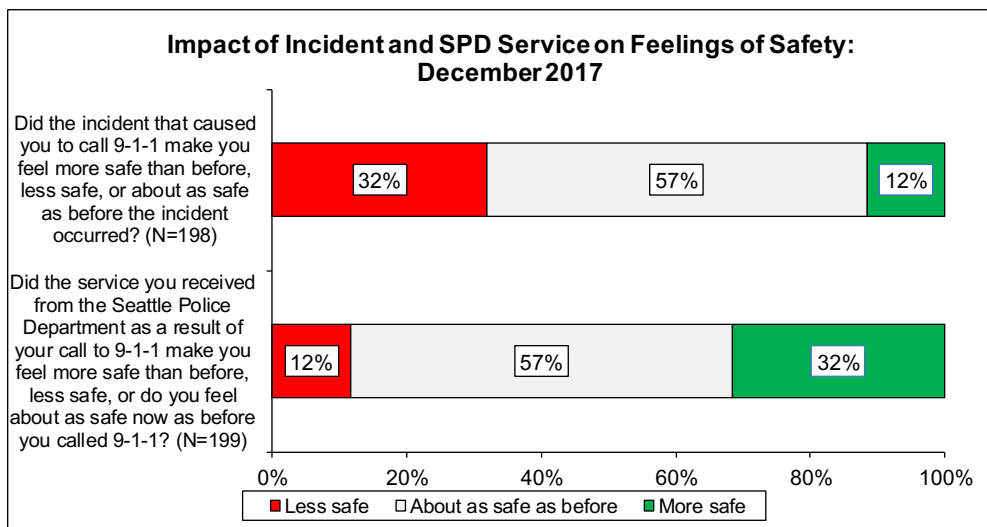
⁹ Correcting for rounding error.

Customers’ feelings of safety in Seattle overall and walking in their neighborhoods alone during the day and at night, summarized in the next chart, 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 (57%) reported that they “feel about as safe as before the incident occurred.” The remaining customers said that they either feel “less safe” (32%) or “more safe” (12%) 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 (57%) of the customers said that they “feel about as safe now as before they called 9-1-1,” while 32 percent said they feel “more safe,” and 12 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” (12% to 32%), as well as a decrease in the percentage of customers who feel “less safe” (32% to 12%), 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 38 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 2017 customer survey and compares the December 2017 survey to the 13 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, 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 27 and December 7, 2017, 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 11 and December 21, 2017. 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.