

Seattle Police Department Research Report

MARCH 2017

SERVICE QUALITY UPDATE

Feedback from the People We Serve

August 1, 2017

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.

9-1-1 Caller Surveys: Summary and Conclusions from March 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 March 2017 and comparisons to previous surveys from June 2014 through December 2016 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-three percent 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 4.32 out of 5 possible points. Ratings of overall satisfaction, while high, have fluctuated significantly since June 2014.

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 (97% “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 (85% to 94% “strongly agree” or “agree”). The responding officers received lower ratings for giving “tips on preventing future crimes” (65% “strongly agree” or “agree”).

Ratings that the responding officers were professional and courteous, listened to customer concerns, answered questions, provided the information and assistance needed, clearly explained procedures, and told customers what would happen next increased significantly between June 2014 and March 2017. All eight ratings of responding officers have increased significantly since December 2016.

Seattle Police Department Overall. Customers also rated the Department highly. Customers indicated that “Department personnel are professional and courteous” (90% “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 (69% to 77% “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 “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” increased significantly since June 2014. Ratings that the Department clearly explains procedures and is a good resource for information about preventing crime also increased significantly since December 2016. Ratings that the Department is available when needed and focuses on the public safety issues of concern 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 (92% and 87%, respectively, rated their satisfaction 4 or 5 on the scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied”). Satisfaction with the service provided by the 9-1-1 operator and the speed with which calls were answered did not change significantly since June 2014.

Feelings of Safety. Customers said that they feel safer “walking alone in [their] neighborhood during the day” (58% “extremely safe”) than they do overall in Seattle (24% “extremely safe”) or “walking alone in [their] neighborhood at night” (17% “extremely safe”). Feelings of safety have not changed significantly since June 2014.

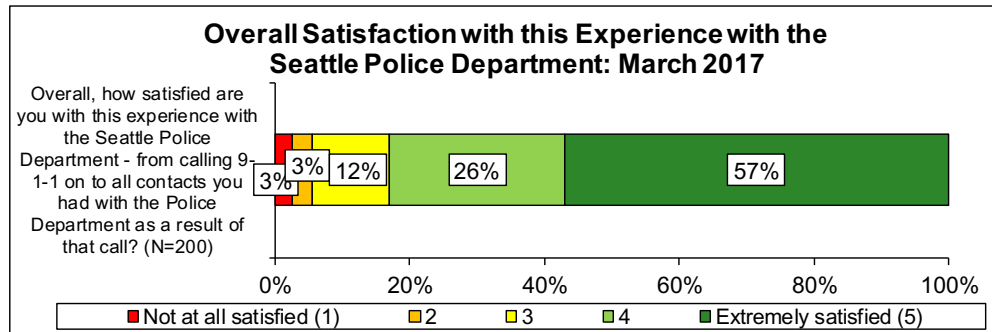
As in past surveys, customers reported that the incident that caused them to call 9-1-1 led some of them to feel less safe than before they called 9-1-1, but the service provided by the Department as a result of their calls increased the proportion of customers who feel “more safe” and decreased the 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 March 2017 survey of customers who called 9-1-1 in February 2017 and had an officer dispatched to assist them and (2) compares the March 2017 results with those of similar surveys of 9-1-1 callers over the past three years, beginning in June 2014.¹

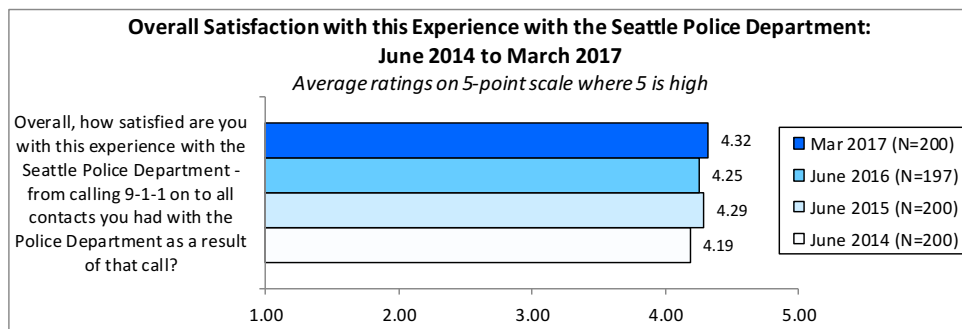
Overall Satisfaction. Customers who had an officer dispatched to provide assistance after calling 9-1-1 were asked to use a five-point scale, where 5 means “extremely satisfied” and 1 means “not at all satisfied,” to answer the question, “Overall, how satisfied are you with this experience with the Seattle 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 26 percent rated their satisfaction as 4 on this scale. Three percent rated their satisfaction as 1, or “Not at all satisfied,” and three 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 March 2017 was 4.32 on the five-point scale where 5 is high. Responses to this question have fluctuated significantly since June 2014, but the level of satisfaction reported in March 2017 did not differ significantly from satisfaction in June 2014 or December 2016, the most recent survey.

The next chart presents the average ratings from four surveys, June 2014, June 2015, June 2016, and March 2017, as do similar charts for other questions presented below.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 24, Release 24.0.0.0, 2016*). Differences were considered statistically significant when the probability of the differences occurring by chance was less than .05 (p<.05).

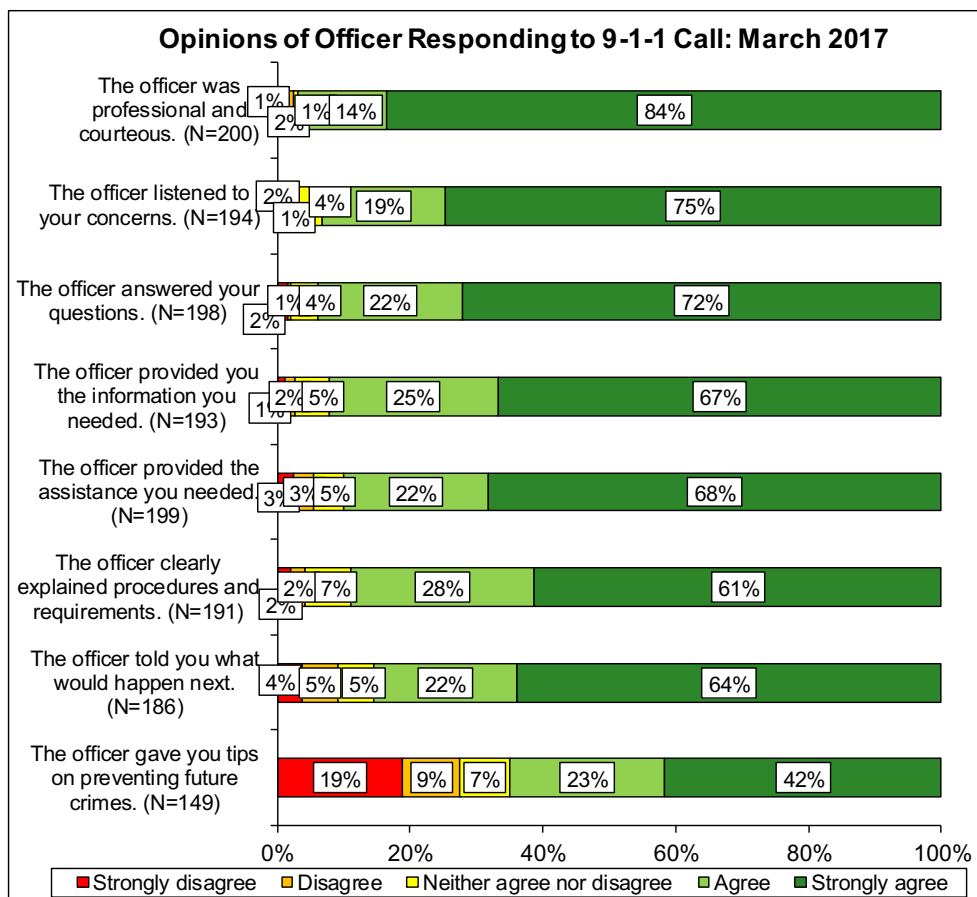
² Percentages do not total 100 in this and some subsequent charts due to rounding.

³ The numbers of respondents answering each question are omitted from some charts for readability, but approximately 200 customers participated in each survey. Average ratings in bold font differed significantly between December 2016 and March 2017, the last two surveys. Average ratings of items with an asterisk (*) following the item differed significantly between June 2014 and March 2017.

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.

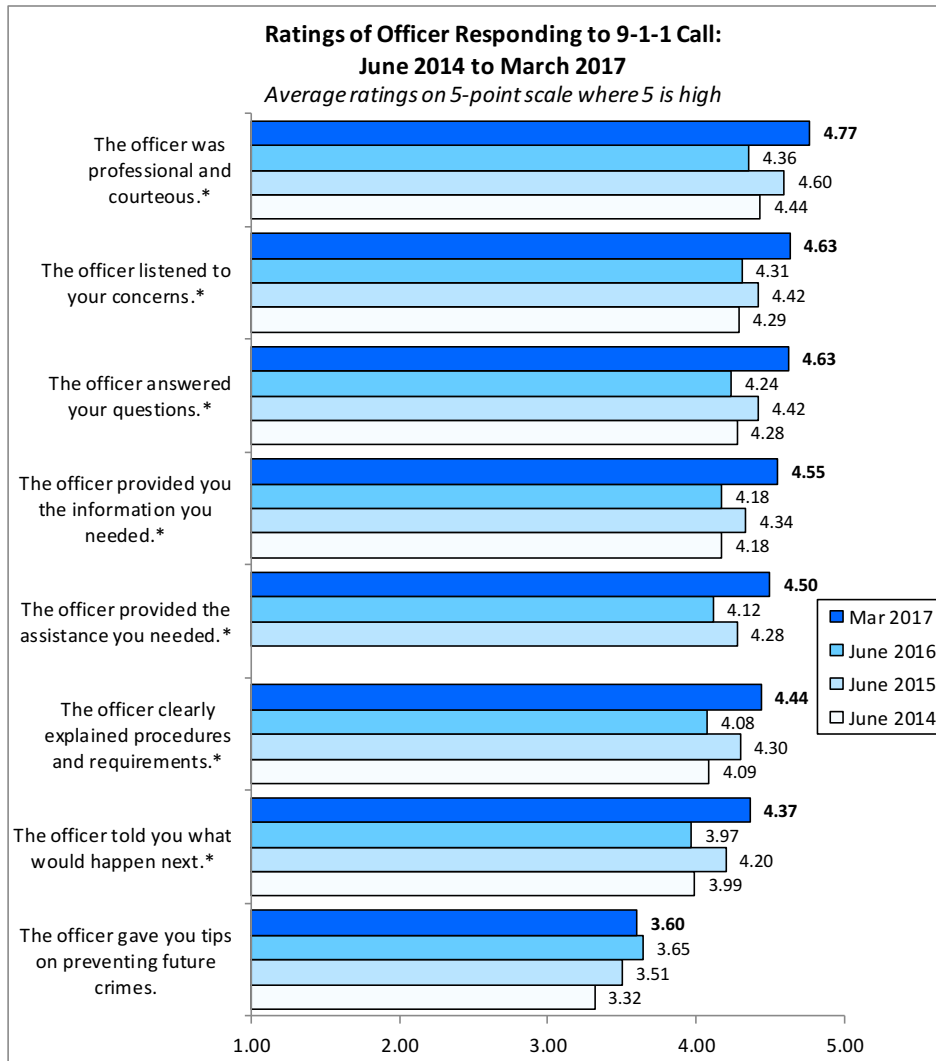
- Eighty-four percent of the customers said that they “strongly agree” that the officer who first visited after their call to 9-1-1 “was professional and courteous,” and 97 percent⁴ said that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with this statement. Three percent said either that they “strongly disagree” or “disagree” that “The officer was professional and courteous.”
- Between 61 and 75 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 85⁵ and 94 percent of customers said that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” with these statements, and between two and nine percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statements.
- A total of 65 percent of the customers said that they “agree” or “strongly agree,” and 28 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.

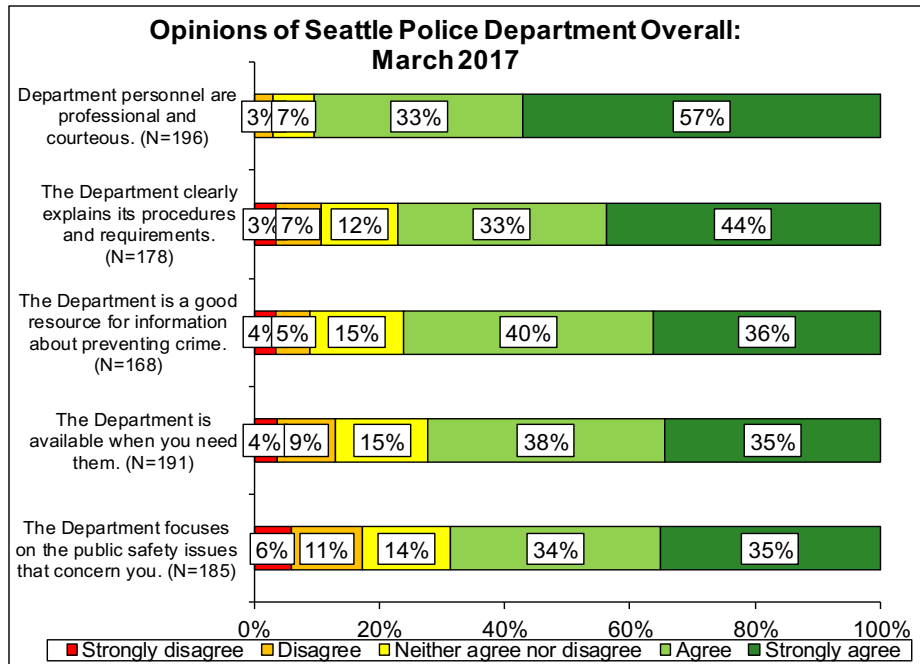
Ratings of responding officers on seven items were significantly higher in March 2017 than in June 2014 (indicated by asterisks in the following chart): The officer was “professional and courteous,” “listened to your concerns,” “answered your questions,” “provided you the information you needed,” “provided the assistance you needed,” “clearly explained procedures and requirements,” and “told you what would happen next.” While ratings that “The officer gave you tips on preventing future crimes” were not significantly higher in March 2017 than June 2014, ratings of this and all of the other items were significantly higher in March 2017 than in December 2016, the previous survey (indicated by average ratings in **bold** font in the following chart).



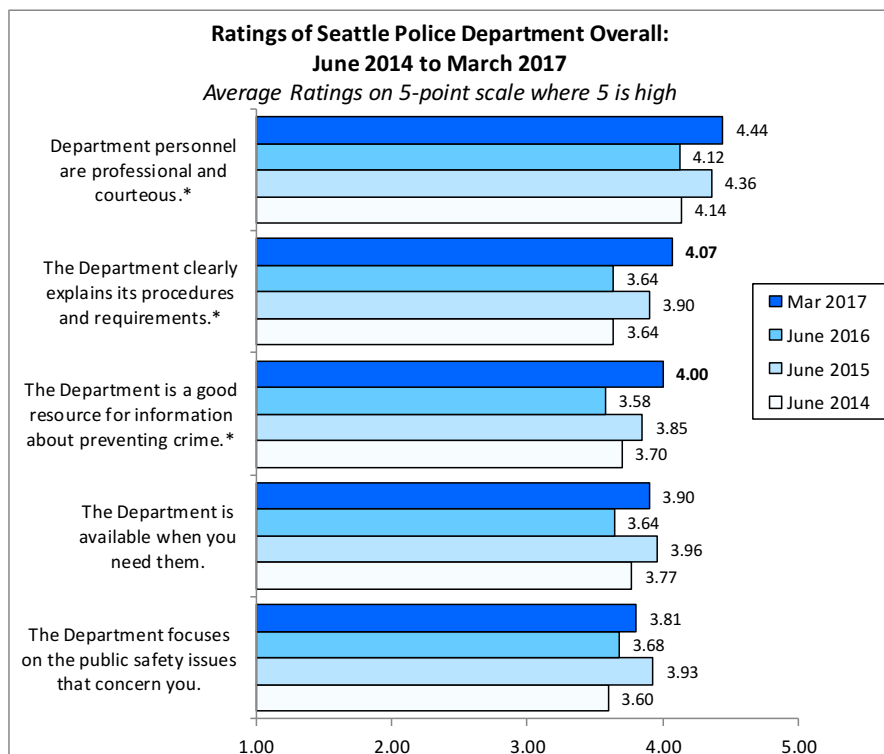
Seattle Police Department Overall. To assess opinions of the Seattle Police Department overall, customers were asked to indicate their level of agreement (“Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly disagree”) with statements about the Department, including the five 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. Ninety percent of the customers said that they “strongly agree” or “agree,” three percent said they “disagree,” and no one said that they “strongly” disagreed that “Department personnel are professional and courteous.” Between 69 and 77 percent of the customers said they “strongly agree” or “agree” with the other four statements

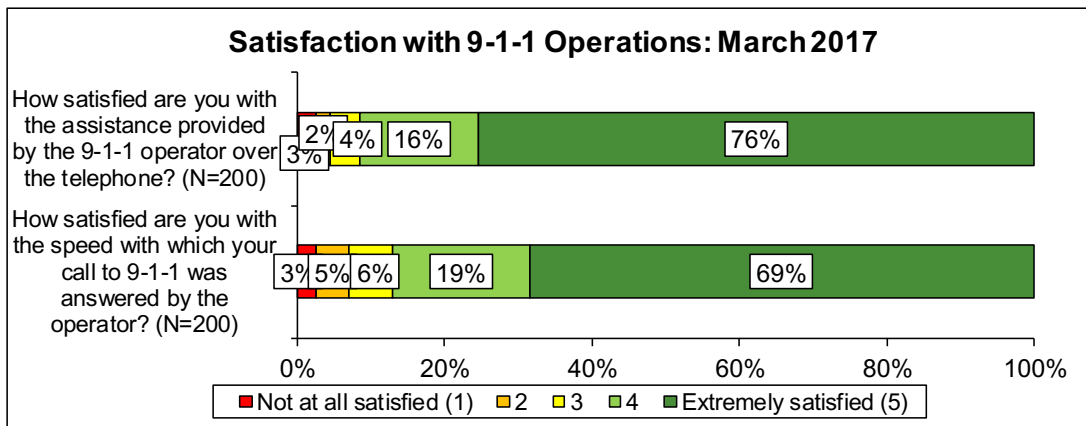
about the Department; between 9 and 17 percent said that they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with these statements, shown in the next chart.



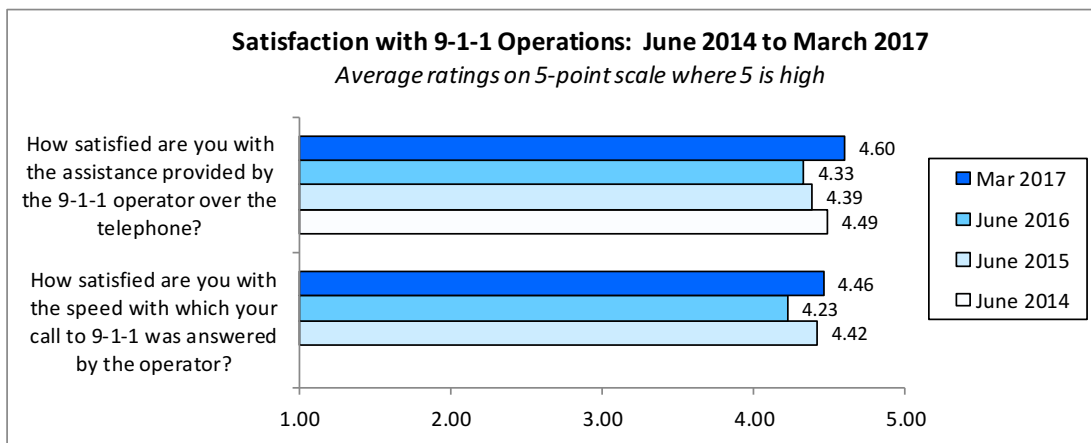
Ratings of three questions about the Department overall were significantly higher in March 2017 than in June 2014: “Department personnel are professional and courteous,” “The Department clearly explains its procedures and requirements,” and “The Department is a good resource for information about preventing crime.” Ratings of two of these items also were significantly higher in March 2017 than in December 2016: The Department “clearly explains its procedures and requirements” and “is a good resource for information about preventing crime.” Ratings of the other two items, the Department “is available when you need them” and “focuses on the public safety issues that concern you,” have not changed significantly since June 2014.



9-1-1 Operations. Three-fourths (76%) 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 two-thirds (69%) rated their satisfaction with the speed with which their call was answered as 5 on this scale. A total of 92 and 87⁶ percent, respectively, rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided by the operator and the speed with which their calls were answered as either a 4 or a 5 on this five-point scale. Five and seven⁷ percent, respectively, rated their satisfaction with the assistance provided by the operator and the speed with which calls were answered 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.



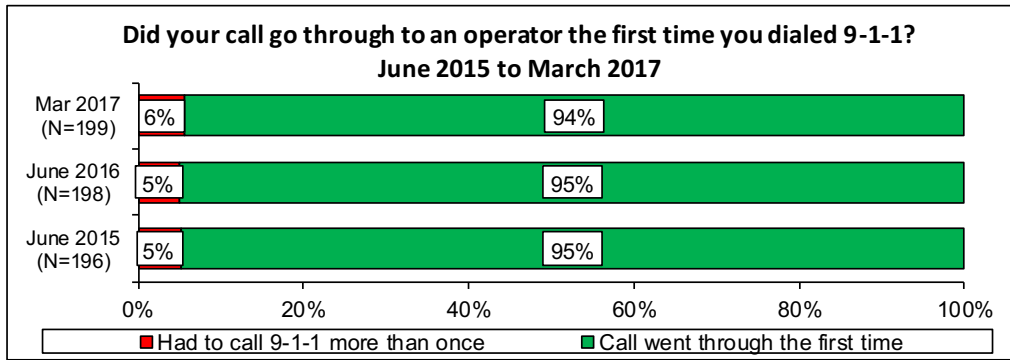
Neither item regarding satisfaction with 9-1-1 operations changed significantly across surveys, so the variations in average ratings shown in the following chart are not statistically significant. An average for satisfaction with the speed with which calls were answered is not shown for June 2014 because this item was not added to the survey until June 2015.



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 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.

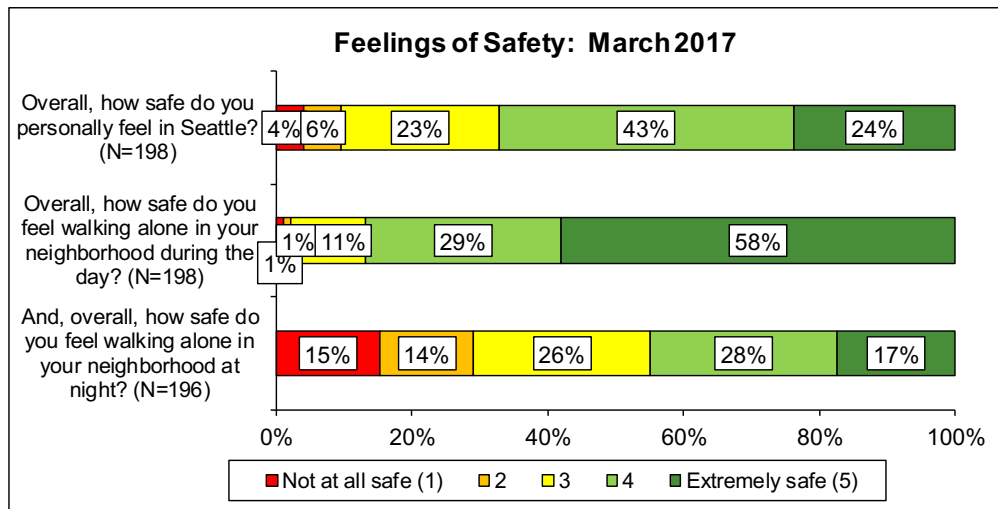
⁶ Correcting for rounding error.

⁷ Correcting for rounding error.

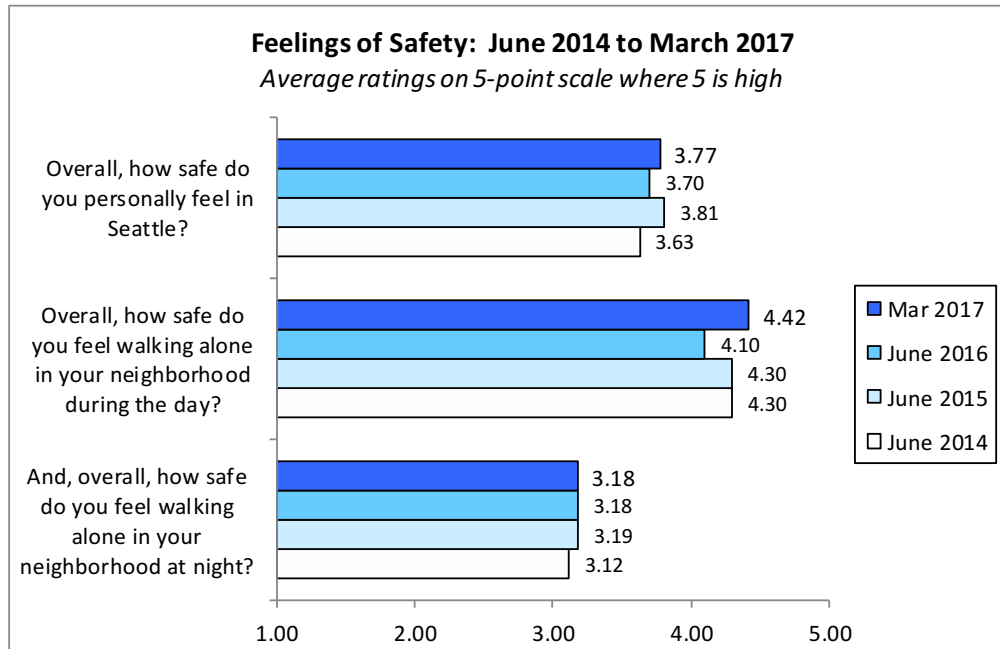


Also since June 2015, customers who had to call 9-1-1 more than once were asked how often they dialed 9-1-1 to reach an operator. In March 2017, nine of these customers said that they reached the operator on their second attempt, and two reached the operator on their third attempt.

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. Sixty-seven 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” (24% “extremely safe”); 10 percent rated their feelings as 2 or 1, where 1 means “not at all safe.” Eighty-seven percent rated their feelings of safety when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day as 4 or 5 (58% “extremely safe”), and 45 percent rated their feelings of safety when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night as 4 or 5 (17% “extremely safe”). Two percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 or 2 when walking alone in their neighborhoods during the day, and 29 percent rated their feelings of safety as 1 or 2 when walking alone in their neighborhoods at night (1 means “not at all safe”).

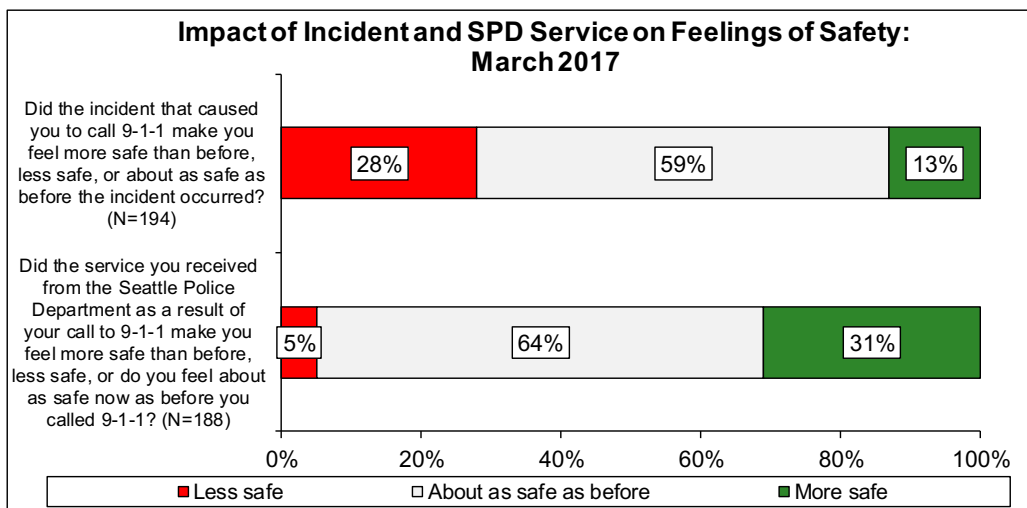


Customers’ feelings of safety in Seattle overall and walking in their neighborhoods alone during the day and at night, summarized in the next chart, have not changed significantly since June 2014.



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 (59%) reported that they “feel about as safe as before the incident occurred.” The remaining customers said that they either feel “less safe” (28%) or “more safe” (13%) 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 (64%) of the customers said that they “feel about as safe now as before they called 9-1-1,” while 31 percent said they feel “more safe,” and 5 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” (13% to 31%), as well as a decrease in the percentage of customers who feel “less safe” (28% to 5%), 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’ assessments of the impacts of both the incident and the service provided by the Department change significantly from survey to survey. 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 35 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 March 2017 customer survey and compares the March 2017 survey to the 10 other surveys conducted since June 2014. Thus, this report focuses on customer satisfaction under current leadership in the Department.

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 February 15 and February 23, 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 February 27 and March 9, 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.