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**Texas Commission on Fire Protection**  
Report on Customer Service Surveys, 2014

Submitted June 1, 2014

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## ***Identification of customers***

For the purpose of the commission's 2014 Customer Satisfaction Survey, the following groups reflect customers served by strategies in the 2014-15 General Appropriations Act.

### Goal 1: Education & Assistance

#### *Strategy A.1.1.: Fire Safety Information & Education Programs*

CUSTOMER: Fire departments (chiefs, training officers and other officers, fire protection personnel), schools and universities, state agencies, industries, local governments, businesses, training academies, general public.

SERVICE PROVIDED: Acquire, develop and maintain current and historical information on fire protection and provide training aids and fire protection information to fire departments and other entities. Attendance and presentations at the conferences hosted by state fire protection associations; utilization of exhibit booth at conferences; instruction in field examinations, and commission rules and regulations.

### Goal 2: Fire Department Standards

#### *Strategy B.1.1.: Certify & Regulate Fire Service*

CUSTOMER: Fire departments and local governments.

SERVICE PROVIDED: Certify and regulate fire departments and fire service personnel according to standards adopted by the agency and as prescribed by statute. Regulate paid fire protection personnel, fire departments and training facilities. Perform biennial inspection of fire departments, local government agencies providing fire protection, and institutions or facilities conducting training for fire protection personnel or recruits. Establish minimum curriculum requirements for basic certification as fire protection personnel. Establish minimum requirements and evaluation of courses for higher levels of fire protection personnel certification. Enforce standards for protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus. Administer a voluntary certification and regulation program for qualified individuals not connected with local governments or volunteer fire departments. Administer a voluntary certification and regulation program for volunteer fire protection personnel, fire departments and training facilities.

## ***Survey development***

The commission developed a survey to measure statutorily required customer service quality elements. This year's survey focused primarily on communications and service timeliness. The agency conducted the 2014 survey online during March and April 2014. (The agency did not conduct a survey in FY13.)

To randomly select customers, the agency displayed a banner link to the survey on its public web pages. The agency also published a link to the survey on its Facebook page and solicited notices in stakeholder publications.

The commission's customer satisfaction survey groups the customer service quality elements into four major groups, as follows:

### ***TCFP's function***

The survey form asked customers to describe their understanding of the commission's role.

### ***Your interactions with TCFP***

The survey form asked customers to describe how and why they contact us.

### ***Service quality***

The survey form asked customers to rate their satisfaction with the agency on dimensions of timeliness, knowledge, courtesy and respect, and the outcome of their interaction with us.

### ***Additional comments***

The survey form asked customers for additional suggestions for improvement.

## ***Survey response analysis***

Overall, the results indicate an above-average satisfaction rate among the agency's customers. In the 2014 survey, the average satisfaction score for all areas was 4.03 on a 5.00 scale, where "1" is "very dissatisfied," "3" equals "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied," and "5" means "very satisfied."

The agency's 2014 average satisfaction rating of 4.03 was higher than 2012's survey, in which the average satisfaction rating was 3.85.

### ***Key findings - overall***

1. The commission achieved a "satisfied" rating (4.0 or higher) in most categories.
2. The commission received 455 responses during the 2014 survey period, representing an almost four-fold increase in responses; the agency received 121 responses to its 2012 survey.
3. The overall trend in satisfaction between the 2014 survey and previous surveys is positive.

The commission analyzes the responses in a number of ways, including examining the raw scores and the percentages of satisfied and dissatisfied customers. The scores and a brief analysis of each question follows.

### ***Findings – specific areas***

Each section includes the raw scores and percent of satisfied and dissatisfied customers.

The ratings are determined on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "very dissatisfied" and 5 indicating "very satisfied."

Percentages of satisfied customers are determined by dividing the number of customers choosing "satisfied" or "very satisfied" by the total number of respondents to a particular question.

## ***Customer interactions with TCFP***

Most of the agency's interactions with its customers occur over the telephone, by e-mail or on-line, or at the customer's location, so the location and accessibility of the agency's physical facilities are less relevant than measuring how our customers interact with us. The agency uses the survey to gain a more accurate understanding of the relative importance of each of its communication channels.

The survey asked, "If you contacted TCFP, what method did you use to contact us? If you used more than one, please type the additional ways in the "other" box."

### ***Contact methods***

| Contact method | Number of customers | Percent of customers |
|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Telephone      | 292                 | 64%                  |
| E-mail         | 192                 | 42%                  |
| Website        | 125                 | 27%                  |
| Mail           | 63                  | 14%                  |
| Fax            | 18                  | 4%                   |
| Facebook       | 7                   | 2%                   |
| Other          | 16*                 | 4%                   |

*\*Most of the customers who checked this box indicated "face to face" or "in person" contact or named a specific conference, test, compliance inspection, or other in-person contact method.*

As shown above, 64 percent of the agency's customers contacted the agency by phone, while a slightly higher percentage (69 percent) contacted the agency electronically (via e-mail or the website).

### ***Timeliness of response***

The survey asked, "How satisfied are you with the time it took staff to answer your question, resolve your issue or provide you service?"

| Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Undecided | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Not answered |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| 36                | 32           | 35        | 166       | 149            | 33           |
| 9%                | 8%           | 8%        | 39%       | 35%            | -            |

*418 of 455 respondents answered this question.*

74 percent of the respondents who answered this question indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the **timeliness** of the agency's responses. 17 percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

## ***Customer interactions with TCFP (continued)***

### ***Agency services***

The survey asked, "Please mark the service you have used most often in the past 12 months."

| <b>Certifications</b> | <b>FIDO</b> | <b>Testing</b> | <b>Injury Reporting</b> | <b>Library</b> | <b>Compliance Inspection</b> | <b>No response</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 187                   | 187         | 50             | 13                      | 4              | 3                            | 7                  |
| 42%                   | 42%         | 11%            | 3%                      | 1%             | 1%                           | -                  |

*444 of 455 respondents answered this question.*

42 percent of agency customers indicated that the most-frequently accessed agency service related to certifications, while an equal number indicated that the agency's online FIDO system was the most-frequently accessed service during the prior 12 months. (The agency has developed several modules in its FIDO system over the past five years, with the primary focus on certification modules. During the past two years, the agency has focused on developing its testing modules, including a new online course approval system.)

### ***Why customers are contacting the agency***

In the "Customer interactions with TCFP" portion of the survey, the agency asked, "Have you contacted TCFP in the last 12 months? If so, why?" Two-thirds (67 percent) of the respondents indicated that they were contacting the agency with questions regarding certification or testing. Just under 10 percent contacted the agency regarding injury reporting, compliance inspections, library services or administrative issues. (One hundred respondents either did not respond to this question or stated that they had not contacted the agency within the previous 12 months.)

***Service quality***

A major focus of this year’s survey was to gain a better understanding of the quality of the services we provide. The survey sought to measure our customer’s perception of our knowledge, timeliness, respect and courtesy.

***The staff was knowledgeable and easy to understand.***

438 respondents. Overall: 4.05 out of 5.00.  
81% “satisfied” or “very satisfied.”

| Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Undecided | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Not answered |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| 13                | 15           | 56        | 210       | 145            | 17           |
| 3%                | 3%           | 13%       | 48%       | 33%            | -            |

***The staff was able to handle my inquiry quickly and to my satisfaction.***

437 respondents. Overall: 3.92 out of 5.00.  
77% “satisfied” or “very satisfied.”

| Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Undecided | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Not answered |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| 24                | 28           | 48        | 196       | 141            | 18           |
| 5%                | 6%           | 11%       | 45%       | 32%            | -            |

***I was treated with respect by the staff.***

435 respondents. Overall: 4.16 out of 5.00.  
83% of respondents indicated “satisfied” or “very satisfied.”

| Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Undecided | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Not answered |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| 18                | 10           | 44        | 176       | 187            | 20           |
| 4%                | 2%           | 10%       | 40%       | 43%            | -            |

***The staff was courteous and professional.***

432 respondents. Overall: 4.14 out of 5.0.  
82% of respondents indicated “satisfied” or “very satisfied.”

| Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Undecided | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Not answered |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| 16                | 12           | 50        | 173       | 180            | 24           |
| 4%                | 3%           | 12%       | 40%       | 42%            | -            |

***Service quality (continued)***

***Overall, how satisfied were you with your contact with TCFP?***

438 respondents. Overall: 4.04 out of 5.00.  
79% of respondents indicated "satisfied" or "very satisfied."

| Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Undecided | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Not answered |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| 20                | 23           | 47        | 174       | 172            | 19           |
| 5%                | 5%           | 11%       | 40%       | 39%            | -            |

***Overall, how satisfied were you with the way your question, problem or inquiry was resolved?***

436 respondents. Overall: 4.02 out of 5.00.  
77% of respondents indicated "satisfied" or "very satisfied."

| Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Undecided | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Not answered |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| 18                | 23           | 55        | 176       | 163            | 20           |
| 4%                | 5%           | 13%       | 40%       | 37%            | -            |

***Have you received a compliance inspection in the last 24 months? If so what was your overall satisfaction with the inspection process?***

352 respondents. Respondent rating: 3.87 out of 5.00.  
64% of respondents indicated "satisfied" or "very satisfied."

| Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Undecided | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Not answered |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| 6                 | 8            | 113       | 126       | 99             | 103          |
| 2%                | 2%           | 32%       | 36%       | 28%            | -            |

## ***Comments.***

The survey form provided a field which asked customers what changes we can make to improve our service, as well as a field for additional comments. The agency received 411 comments between these two fields. The agency has grouped the responses into broad categories, including consistency (15 responses), courtesy (14), customer service (44), customer training or direct contact (5), fees (58), library resources (1), policy or process (67), responsiveness (17), staffing (9), technology (68), timeliness (9), other (20), "no changes" or "none" (51), and non-specific positive responses (31).

Several responses specifically address or could be grouped into more than one category, but the agency has sought to identify the primary category for each of these responses.

All of the [2014 survey responses](#) are available to view online at the commission's website. (The agency has redacted the names of specific staff members or board members identified in the comments; feedback regarding named individuals has been brought to the attention of the agency's executive staff. The agency has also made non-substantive grammar and spelling corrections.)

### ***Survey tool analysis***

Although as previously noted the small response rate could potentially indicate a strong non-response bias in the surveys, the relative consistency in the data over the years seems to indicate that the sampling is not fundamentally flawed. (The exception to this could be in the area of complaint handling, where the small number of respondents means that overly positive or overly negative results could skew the percentages significantly.)

For the FY 2012 survey period, the agency targeted a random sample of agency customers by conducting the survey only online.

Approaches under consideration for future surveys include distributing the survey to certification exam takers, departments undergoing inspection, etc. This approach would be extremely difficult, however, without dedicating more agency staff specifically to the task of performing the surveys.

This agency's governing bodies, including the commission itself and its advisory committees, are comprised primarily of members of the community the agency serves. These groups provide continuous oversight and feedback regarding the agency's activities. Although objectivity might be a factor given these members' involvement in the rulemaking processes, some method of quantifying satisfaction levels among these groups could provide additional insights regarding the agency's customer satisfaction performance.

| <b>Customer Service Performance Measures</b>   | <b>FY 2014 Performance</b> |
|--|----------------------------|
| <b>Outcome</b> Percent of Surveyed Customer Respondents Expressing Overall Satisfaction with Services Received | <b>79%</b>                 |
| <b>Outcome</b> Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery        | <b>54%</b>                 |
| <b>Output</b> Number of Customers Surveyed   | <b>455</b>                 |
| <b>Output</b> Number of Customers Served   | <b>31,015</b>              |
| <b>Efficiency</b> Cost Per Customer Surveyed   | <b>N/A</b>                 |
| <b>Explanatory</b> Number of Customer Groups Inventoried   | <b>11</b>                  |

## ***Customer service performance measures definitions***

**Outcome:** Percentage of surveyed customer respondents expressing overall satisfaction with services received.

**Short Definition:** Surveyed customers are offered an opportunity to rate several factors pertaining to the agency. The rating scale included five response selections from "Very dissatisfied" to "Very satisfied" or "Not Applicable."

**Purpose/Importance:** The purpose of the survey is to meet the requirements of Senate Bill 1563. While meeting this requirement, the survey will offer the agency an opportunity to augment its understanding of customer needs and expectations.

**Source/Collection of Data:** Surveys were made available on the agency's website in March and April 2014.

**Method of Calculation:** The overall satisfaction rating is the percentage of respondents to the question, "Overall, how satisfied were you with your contact with TCFP who marked "4" (satisfied) or "5" (very satisfied), divided by the number of respondents who answered the question. (Non-respondents are not included in the calculation of percentages.)

**Data Limitations:** Accurate tallying and analysis of survey scores.

**Calculation Type:** Non-Cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Higher than Previous.

**Outcome:** Percentage of surveyed customer respondents identifying ways to improve service delivery.

**Definition:** The percentage of surveyed customer respondents who identified ways to improve service delivery expressed as a ratio of surveys returned to surveys containing suggestions.

**Purpose/Importance:** The customers receiving the service afforded by the agency are the best judges of how they would like to receive that service. Responses and suggestions from our customers encourage an open dialog that will result in better customer service and may result in more efficient methods of delivery.

**Collection of Data:** Survey forms were made available on the agency's web site in March and April 2014.

**Method of Calculation:** For calculating the percentages, the "percent suggesting improvement" is the number of respondents who made comments, divided by the total number of respondents.

**Data Limitations:** Accurate tallying and analysis of survey scores.

**Calculation Type:** Non-cumulative

## ***Customer service performance measures definitions (continued)***

**New Measure** : No

**Desired Performance:** Active participation by customer respondents.

**Output:** Number of customers surveyed.

**Short Definition:** The number of surveys distributed to agency customers

**Purpose/Importance:** A wide range of distribution and a large number of customers reached will afford the agency an excellent opportunity to poll the expectations of the customers.

**Collection of Data:** The survey form was made available on the agency's website in March and April 2014.

**Method of Calculation:** The number of responses.

**Data Limitations:** The survey respondents are self-selected, and limited to visitors to the agency's website or Facebook page in March and April 2014.

**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Active participation by customers.

**Output:** Number of customers served.

**Short Definition:** This measure reflects the number of fire protection personnel regulated by the agency.

**Purpose/Importance:** Determination of the number of customers served allows the agency to allocate its time and resources to the specific needs of regulated individuals.

**Collection of Data:** The number of regulated individuals in the agency's certification database.

**Method of Calculation:** Identified the number of certified fire fighters.

**Data Limitations:** Data is limited to those individuals or entities specifically regulated by the agency. Customers not regulated by the agency cannot be anticipated.

**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

**New Measure:** Yes

**Desired Performance:** Not Applicable

## ***Customer service performance measures definitions (continued)***

**Efficiency: Cost per customers surveyed.**

**Short Definition:** Personnel costs for coding and posting to the website, and for compiling and analyzing the data.

**Purpose/Importance:** Determine the cost of surveying the agency customers.

**Collection of Data:** Cost was determined by tracking the invoices for printing, business reply permit, and postage.

**Method of Calculation:** Cost per customer was calculated by dividing the total cost by the customers surveyed.

**Data Limitations:** Data is limited to known costs.

**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Utilization of the most cost-effective methods.

**Explanatory: Number of customer groups inventoried.**

**Short Definition:** This measure defines the various customer groups served by the agency.

**Purpose/Importance:** Determination of the customer groups allows the agency to allocate its time and resources to the specific needs of the specific groups served.

**Collection of Data:** Groups served was determined from input from the agency employees.

**Method of Calculation:** Totaled the groups reported by the employees.

**Data Limitations:** Data is limited to those groups identified by the employees.

**Calculation Type:** Cumulative

**New Measure:** No

**Desired Performance:** Effective service to all customer groups.

