
Texas Commission on Fire Protection
Report on Customer Service Surveys, 2016

Submitted June 1, 2016

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Identification of customers

For the purpose of the commission's 2016 Customer Satisfaction Survey, the following groups reflect customers served by strategies in the 2016-17 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. Collect and analyze injury data from fire departments and develop recommendations to help reduce the number of fire fighter injuries. Attend and make presentations at conferences hosted by state fire protection associations; utilize exhibit booth at conferences; provide instruction on 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 inspections 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. The agency conducted the 2016 survey online during April and May 2016.

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" equaled "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied," and "5" meant "very satisfied."

The agency's 2016 average satisfaction rating of 4.02 was nearly equivalent to 2014's survey, in which the average satisfaction rating was 4.03.

Key findings - overall

1. The commission achieved a "satisfied" rating (4.0 or higher) in most categories.
2. The commission received 548 responses during the 2016 survey period, representing a 20 percent increase in the number of responses; the agency received 455 responses to its 2014 survey.
3. The overall trend in satisfaction between the 2016 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 and agency roles

For the 2016 survey, the agency asked customers to identify their primary role in the fire service, and to rank the relative importance of each of the agency’s four major service areas.

Customer roles

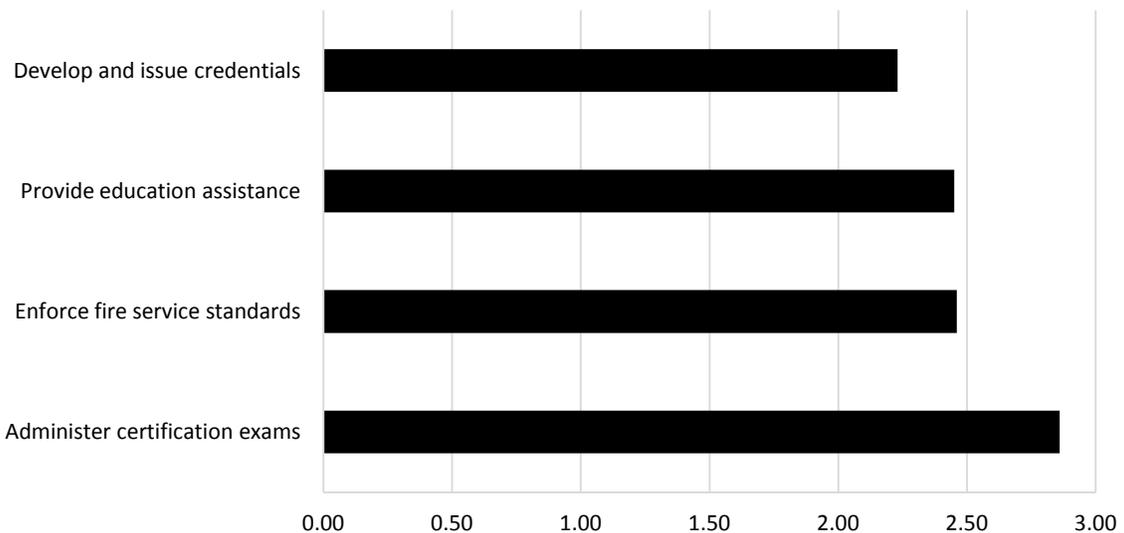
The survey tool asked customers to identify their primary role within the fire service. 76.3 percent indicated they were fire fighters, company officers or chief officers.

Customer role	Response Count	Percent
Firefighter	159	29.0%
Chief Officer	156	28.5%
Company Officer	103	18.8%
Inspector/Investigator	53	9.7%
Other	35	6.4%
Instructor	30	5.5%
Individual certificate holder	12	2.2%

TCFP’s role

The survey tool asked customers to rank the relative importance of the agency’s functions. (Note that for this measure, the lowest average score corresponds to the highest-ranked function.)

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	Rating Average
Develop and issue credentials (certifications)	161	175	136	76	2.23
Assist in the education process for fire service personnel	146	140	130	132	2.45
Enforce fire service standards	184	96	102	166	2.46
Administer certification exams	57	137	180	174	2.86



Customer interactions with TCFP

Most of the agency's interactions with its customers occur over the telephone, by e-mail or on-line via the agency's website, or at the customer's location, so the location and accessibility of the agency's physical facilities are less relevant than measuring how customers interact with the agency. 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	333	72.4%
FIDO	310	67.4%
E-mail	272	59.1%
Website	215	46.7%
Face to face	110	23.9%
Mail	93	20.2%
Fax	17	3.7%
Social media	12	2.6%

As shown above, 72.4 percent of the agency's customers contacted the agency by phone, and more than half interacted with the agency via electronic methods, including the agency's online portals and e-mail.

Contacts with the agency

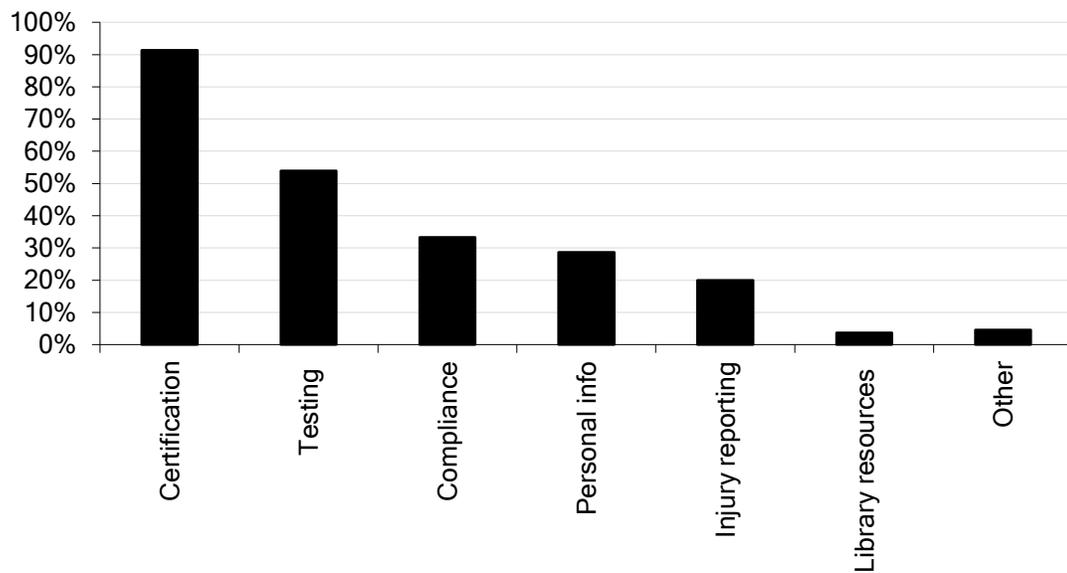
In the "Customer interactions with TCFP" portion of the survey, the agency asked, "Have you contacted TCFP in the last 12 months? If so, why?" 86 percent of the respondents indicated that they had contacted the agency within the last year.

Customer interactions with TCFP (continued)

Purpose of interactions

The survey tool asked customers, "What was the purpose of your interaction(s) with TCFP?"

Answer options	Number	Percent
Certification (checking requirements, applying for a new certification, etc.)	420	91.3%
Testing (applying for/taking a test, checking prerequisites, etc.)	248	53.9%
Compliance (inspections, questions about standards, etc.)	153	33.3%
Updating personal information	132	28.7%
Injury reporting (adding/updating injury reports)	92	20%
Library resources (checking out library items, research requests, receiving newsletter, etc.)	17	3.7%
Other	21	4.6%



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

440 respondents. Overall: 4.39 out of 5.00.
91% "agreed" or "strongly agreed."

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
227	172	28	12	1
52%	39%	6%	3%	0%

The staff directed me to the right person as needed.

439 respondents. Overall: 4.36 out of 5.00.
91% "agreed" or "strongly agreed."

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
215	181	31	10	2
49%	41%	7%	2%	0%

Staff was helpful.

439 respondents. Overall: 4.37 out of 5.00.
89% "agreed" or "strongly agreed."

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
230	164	28	11	6
52%	37%	6%	3%	1%

The staff was understandable.

437 respondents. Overall: 4.31 out of 5.0.
89% "agreed" or "strongly agreed."

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
209	180	30	11	7
48%	42%	7%	3%	2%

Service quality (continued)

Staff handled my issue in a timely manner.

441 respondents. Overall: 4.29 out of 5.00.
88% "agreed" or "strongly agreed."

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
216	171	28	16	10
49%	39%	6%	4%	2%

Staff was respectful, courteous and professional.

439 respondents. Overall: 4.42 out of 5.00.
91% "agreed" or "strongly agreed."

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
243	158	25	4	9
55%	36%	6%	1%	2%

Staff resolved my question, problem, or inquiry to my satisfaction.

437 respondents. Overall: 4.28 out of 5.00.
88% "agreed" or "strongly agreed."

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
217	165	28	16	11
50%	38%	6%	4%	3%

Testing section

The agency included an extra section in the 2016 iteration of the survey to gauge customer satisfaction with its certification examination processes. Just under half of the respondents indicated that they had taken a certification exam within the past 12 months.

Have you taken a TCFP certification exam in the past 12 months?		
	Percent	Count
Yes	44.3%	204
No	55.7%	256

If the respondent answered "Yes," the survey tool asked respondents to rate the quality of their testing experience on the dimensions of testing conditions, clarity of exam instructions, and test proctor effectiveness.

Testing conditions

204 respondents. Overall: 4.43 out of 5.00.
92% rated the conditions as "excellent" or "good."

Excellent	Good	Average	Mediocre	Poor
112	75	12	2	3
55%	37%	6%	1%	1%

Clarity of examination instructions

204 respondents. Overall: 4.44 out of 5.00.
91% rated the instructions as "excellent" or "good."

Excellent	Good	Average	Mediocre	Poor
117	70	9	5	3
57%	34%	4%	2%	1%

Test proctor effectiveness

204 respondents. Overall: 4.51 out of 5.00.
92% rated proctor effectiveness as "excellent" or "good."

Excellent	Good	Average	Mediocre	Poor
124	64	13	2	1
61%	31%	6%	1%	0%

Comments

The survey form provided a field which asked customers, "If there was one thing you would like to see the Texas Commission on Fire Protection improve, what would it be?"

Responses fell into a range of categories, with nearly one-third of respondents identifying online payments (49), online applications (19) and online testing (15) as the most-desired improvement the agency could undertake. "User-friendliness" of the agency's website and online FIDO system ranked very high in the technology category as well.

The category of "Policies/Procedures" included suggestions regarding commission policies and processes, such as the way the agency conducts compliance inspections, or the way in which the agency's regulatory authority is limited to paid personnel.

Fees were the next highest category, with roughly 18 percent of those who provided comments stating that the commission's fees were too high.

Category	Total
Technology	122
Policies/Procedures	81
Fees	66
Communications	37
Timeliness	25
Coordination with other entities	14
Compliments	12
Resources	11
Customer service	9
Staffing	9
Existential	4
Location	1
Total	379

Survey tool analysis

Although the relatively 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.

For the FY 2016 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, or to departments undergoing an inspection, etc. These approaches might be difficult without dedicating more agency staff specifically to the task of performing the surveys.

This agency's governing bodies, including the commission and its advisory committees, are comprised primarily of members of the community the agency serves. These groups provide 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.

Customer Service Performance Measures	FY 2016 Performance
Outcome Percent of Surveyed Customer Respondents Expressing Overall Satisfaction with Services Received	77%
Outcome Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery	96%
Output Number of Customers Surveyed	548
Output Number of Customers Served	31,115
Efficiency Cost Per Customer Surveyed	\$0.46
Explanatory Number of Customer Groups Inventoried	7

Customer service performance measure definitions

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

Short Definition: Surveyed customers are offered an opportunity to rate the overall quality of service experienced. The rating scale included five response selections from "Excellent" to Poor" and from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

Purpose/Importance: The purpose of the survey is to meet legislative requirements. 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 April and May 2016.

Method of Calculation: The overall satisfaction rating is the percentage of respondents to the question, "Please rate the overall quality of service you experienced" who marked "Excellent" or "Good," 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: Customers receiving agency services are often 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: Surveys were made available on the agency's web site in April and May 2016.

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

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Active participation by customer respondents.

Customer service performance measure definitions (continued)

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 was made available on the agency's website in April and May 2016.

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 April or May 2016

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 during the survey period.

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 measure definitions (continued)

Efficiency: Cost per customers surveyed.

Short Definition: Personnel costs for coding and posting to the website, monthly cost of the survey tool, and compiling and analyzing the data.

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

Collection of Data: Cost was determined by counting staff hours devoted to making the survey and the cost of the online survey tool.

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 customers identified.

Short Definition: The number of customers served by the agency.

Purpose/Importance: To determine numbers of customers to survey.

Collection of Data: Number of customers were determined by agency employees who listed the various people and entities served.

Method of Calculation: Identified the total number of certified fire fighters, library users, fire departments inspected/investigated, fire service training programs evaluated, and people tested based on FY15 data.

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

Calculation Type: Cumulative

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Not Applicable

Customer service performance measure definitions (continued)

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.

