
Texas Commission on Fire Protection
Report on Customer Service Surveys, 2018

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Identification of Customers

For the purpose of the commission's 2018 Customer Service Survey, the following groups reflect customers served by strategies in the 2018-19 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 and 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 2018 survey online during March and April 2018.

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.

The commission's customer service survey categorized the service 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 interactions with us.

Additional comments

The survey form asked customers for additional suggestions for improvement.

Survey response analysis

Overall, the results indicate an average to below average satisfaction rate among the agency's customers. The agency launched a new data management system in January 2018 and numerous problems, particularly with the user interface, manifested following the launch. The problems drove many of the interactions between customers and agency staff, often overwhelming staff members' ability to respond to all requests for help. Responses and comments from survey participants largely reflect the frustration faced by users due to the problems encountered.

Work began immediately to correct the problems with the system and continued during the survey period. Corrections and improvements continue to be implemented as of the publishing of this report.

Key findings – overall

1. The commission achieved “less than satisfied” rating (lower than 4.0) in most categories.
2. The commission received 162 responses during the 2018 survey period, representing a significant drop in the number of responses compared to the 2016 survey (548 responses).
3. The overall trend in satisfaction between the 2018 survey and previous surveys is lower, again likely due to the difficulties experienced following the data system launch.

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

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,” except where noted otherwise.

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 2018 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. 81 percent indicated they were fire fighters, company officers or chief officers. In the "Other" category, approximately half of respondents indicated their primary role was fire apparatus engineer.

Customer role	Response Count	Percent of customers
Chief Officer	71	43.8%
Fire fighter	35	21.6%
Company Officer	25	15.4%
Other	11	6.8%
Inspector/Investigator	10	6.2%
Instructor	5	3.1%
Individual certificate holder	5	3.1%

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)	59	44	37	22	2.86
Assist in the education process for fire service personnel	40	42	39	41	2.50
Enforce fire service standards	49	28	27	58	2.42
Administer certification exams	14	48	59	41	2.22

Customer interactions with TCFP

Most of the agency’s interactions with its customers occur over the telephone, by e-mail or online, 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.

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?” Ninety-six percent of respondents indicated that they had contacted agency within the last year.

Contact methods

The survey asked, “If you contacted TCFP, what method did you use to contact us? (Check all that apply.)” For this question, we allowed customers to select multiple methods of communication, to accurately represent the ones most frequently used to interact with the agency. Aside from the usual methods, we included options for the agency’s public website, FIDO (the agency’s proprietary online certification and professional data management portal), and social media.

Contact method	Number of customers	Percent of customers
Telephone	106	73.6%
E-mail	102	70.8%
FIDO	101	70.1%
Website	70	48.6%
Face to face	35	24.3%
Mail	25	17.4%
Social media	5	3.5%
Fax	4	2.8%

As shown above over 70 percent of the agency’s customers interacted with the agency by phone, e-mail, or via FIDO.

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.)	125	86.8%
Testing (applying for/taking a test, checking prerequisites, etc.)	92	63.9%
Updating personal information	45	31.3%
Compliance (inspections, questions about standards, etc.)	36	25.0%
Injury reporting (adding/updating injury reports)	21	14.6%
Other	11	7.6%
Library resources (checking out library items, research requests, receiving newsletter, etc.)	4	2.8%

Service quality

A 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 commission launched its new data management system in January, which included a new user interface for both outside customers and agency staff. Unfortunately, numerous problems were encountered following the launch, particularly with the user interface. As might be expected, this resulted in a significant drop in the satisfaction rate of our customers. The problems likely also had a negative impact on the number of individuals participating in the survey as compared to the previous one.

Staff was knowledgeable

136 respondents. Overall 3.78 out of 5.00.
70% “agreed” or “strongly agreed.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
35	60	23	12	6
25.7%	44.1%	16.9%	8.8%	4.4%

Staff directed me to the right person as needed.

136 respondents. Overall: 3.74 out of 5.00.
72% “agreed” or “strongly agreed.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
33	65	16	14	8
24.3%	47.8%	11.8%	10.3%	5.9%

Staff was helpful.

135 respondents. Overall: 3.55 out of 5.00.
66% “agreed” or “strongly agreed.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
30	59	15	17	14
22.2%	43.7%	11.1%	12.6%	10.4%

Service quality (continued)

Staff provided clear instructions.

136 respondents. Overall: 3.46 out of 5.00.

58% “agreed” or “strongly agreed.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
26	53	27	17	13
19.1%	39.0%	19.9%	12.5%	9.6%

Staff handled my issue in a timely manner.

135 respondents. Overall: 3.41 out of 5.00.

60% “agreed” or “strongly agreed.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
26	55	19	18	17
19.3%	40.7%	14.1%	13.3%	12.6%

Staff was respectful, courteous and professional.

136 respondents. Overall: 3.64 out of 5.00.

70% “agreed” or “strongly agreed.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
40	55	11	12	18
29.4%	40.4%	8.1%	8.8%	4.4%

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

135 respondents. Overall: 3.41 out of 5.00.

62% “agreed” or “strongly agreed.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
25	59	22	14	15
18.5%	43.7%	16.3%	10.4%	11.1%

Testing section

The agency included an extra section in the 2018 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?		
	Count	Percent
Yes	65	45.1%
No	79	54.9%

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

65 respondents. Overall: 4.23 out of 5.00.
83% rated the conditions as “excellent” or “good.”

Excellent	Good	Average	Mediocre	Poor
31	23	8	1	2
47.7%	35.4%	12.3%	1.5%	3.1%

Clarity of examination instructions

65 respondents. Overall: 4.2 out of 5.00.
85% rated the instructions as “excellent” or “good.”

Excellent	Good	Average	Mediocre	Poor
27	28	8	0	2
41.5%	43.1%	12.3%	0.0%	3.1%

Test proctor effectiveness

65 respondents. Overall: 4.26 out of 5.00.
86% rated proctor effectiveness as “excellent” or “good.”

Excellent	Good	Average	Mediocre	Poor
30	26	7	0	2
46.2%	40.0%	10.8%	0.0%	3.1%

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?”

Of the 162 respondents, 145 customers submitted responses, with some falling into multiple categories, totaling 159 suggestions. Improvements to FIDO made up 80 percent (40) of responses in the “Technology” category, with nearly half of those (19) specifically mentioning a better user interface or increased user-friendliness.

The “Policies/Procedures” included suggestions regarding commission policies and processes, such as suggestions for agency’s compliance division to adopt higher standards or improvements to the testing process, as well as changes to reciprocity between the agency and other certifying entities.

The third highest category (with just over 10 percent of total responses) was “Customer Service,” followed closely by “Timeliness,” with half of customer responses (7) seeking faster posting of test results.

Category	Total
Technology	50
Policies/Procedures	28
Customer Service	19
Timeliness	14
Fees	9
Communication	6
Staffing	4
Compliments	3
Resources	3
Coordination with other entities	2
Existential	1
N/A	20
<hr/> Total	159

Survey tool analysis

The Tool used for this year’s survey was essentially identical to the last one administered in 2016. Again, the difference in satisfaction rate was no doubt a reflection of the problems encountered with the new data management system and the frustration experienced by users.

For the FY 2018 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 2018 Performance
Outcome: Percent of surveyed customer respondents expressing overall satisfaction with services received	34%
Outcome: Percent of surveyed customer respondents identifying ways to improve service delivery	90%
Output: Number of customers surveyed	162
Output: Number of customers served	32,381
Efficiency: Cost per customer surveyed	\$0.62
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 from the agency's website in March and April 2018.

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 from the agency's website in March and April 2018.

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.

Output: Number of customers surveyed.

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

Purpose/Importance: A wide range of distribution and 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 from the agency's website in March and April 2018.

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 during the survey period.

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

Efficiency: Cost per customer 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 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.

