

2022 CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY RESPONSE PLAN

Texas Commission on Fire Protection

The Customer Service Survey

TCFP's Customer Service Survey was open for customers to submit feedback for two months, from February 1, 2022 through March 31, 2022. During that period of time, 475 customers started the survey. Some completed the entire thing, others completed only a portion of the questions. Customers were allowed to complete as many questions as they wanted and could skip questions at will. Participants were allowed to remain anonymous.

Overall, we received quite a few compliments throughout the survey. Many customers were pleased with:

- improvements in the FIDO system
- the new method of conducting compliance inspections of fire departments
- TCFP's services in general
- interactions with staff, many mentioned by name

The complaints we received were numerous, which is to be expected from any survey. More often than not, people are motivated to take a survey to give negative feedback over positive feedback, and this survey was no exception. We plan to use all the criticism and negative feedback as we work to improve our offering of services for the Texas fire service.

Main Areas of Complaints

The following table lists the areas of our agency for which we received the most complaints.

Area of the Agency	Number of Complaints	Examples of Complaints
Customer Service/ Phones	57	No one answers the phone, don't return calls in a timely manner; personnel are rude, unprofessional, unfriendly, don't return phone calls, quote rules rather than explaining them in plain language
General Agency Issues	55	Not enough email updates, need more notice of changes; fees are too high and too numerous; want ID card for retired ffs showing certs and years of service; parking is difficult; wish meetings could be on Zoom; wish we had more staff; wish we would offer professional wallet cards
Certification Division	28	A & B list courses difficult to find; too many books on reference lists; not recognizing training from certain providers; hazmat ops is beyond what a new firefighter needs to know; difficulty understanding what is needed to transfer to TX from another state; can't carry over years of service from another state
Website	20	Difficult to navigate, confusing language, no phone directory for staff, change the photos

FIDO	19	Difficult to navigate, not user friendly; TPA process lacks good instructions and lacks feedback on whether you're doing it correctly; no training on how to use FIDO
Testing Division	15	Only two days' notice given when scheduling exams; instructions on how to challenge tests is not accessible; want to take Structure exam online; need instruction on how to do TPAs
Total Complaints	194	

Improvements Made Since the 2020 Survey

Many improvements have been made to agency operations since the 2020 customer service survey, including:

- A new Incident Commander certification
- Online testing – more online testing sites available in more areas of the state and the Basic Firefighter certification exam is now available on-line either in sections or in full.
- Agency re-organization to improve efficiency of operations
- Injury Reporting – several webinars were given by staff on the subject of injury reporting, and a video recording of the webinar is now available on our website; also, a comprehensive, written how-to guide was produced and is available for downloading from our website. These two resources have greatly improved the availability of clear instructions for customers who are new to injury reporting.
- Our Agency Chief has done a number of Facebook Live videos to share important information about commission news so customers are getting more, and more timely, updates from us.
- TCFP has started offering “regional meetings” where several members of the management team and compliance officers travel to all regions of the state to meet with local fire department and training facility personnel. The purpose of these meetings is to answer questions, listen to concerns, gather feedback and ideas from customers on how to improve our operations, and to offer the opportunity to connect with our staff personally to see how we can better assist our customers.
- The agency purchased and started using an online software application that gives us the ability to send 40,000 emails at once.

2022 Survey – TCFP’s Response Plan

Improvements we’ve already made

Inspection process. Compliance inspections are now scheduled with the heads of department (HODs) to ensure advanced notice so that the HOD is available to meet with the Inspector. The inspection begins with an e-mail request for electronic documents which gives the Inspector time to review the

department's documentation for compliance before meeting with them in person, and to be prepared to discuss and offer suggestions on ways to make improvements.

Managing phone calls. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, TCFP staff now typically work from home most of the time. To address the complaints about unanswered calls, we have started using Google Phone which ties the staff members' division contact number to their computer. When a call is received on that line, it displays the caller's number. If the call cannot be answered at the time it is received, the system records the call back number and allows the staff member to play back the voicemail so they can then return the call and offer assistance.

Contact information. A common complaint was that it is difficult to find contact information for anyone at TCFP. We have recently improved our website to provide a general e-mail address and phone number for each division. We also list the e-mail addresses for the Agency Chief and Deputy Chief. The agency policy requires calls and/or e-mails to be returned within one business day.

Offering all certification exams on-line. Another common complaint was that while most exams are available on-line, the Basic Firefighter exam was not. Effective April 1 of this year, this exam is now offered on-line. Individuals may choose to take each section or the entire exam at once as long as they are at a registered testing center.

High fees. A common concern has been the amount of each fee collected by TCFP. While the legislature placed a demand on the agency to be self-funded, resulting in significant fee increases back in 2011, we have offered some relief in the renewal fee area. Effective May 2022, the certification renewal fee was reduced by \$15, bringing it down to \$60 annually.

Improvements we've begun addressing

Document uploading. A common complaint has been that it is difficult to upload documents to FIDO. We are working to improve this by shifting our computer system to a cloud-based system. This will allow for adequate storage of documents. This will be an ongoing project.

Testing. There have been many complaints regarding the testing system. In July 2022, we will take this system off-line for three weeks to perform updates. We hope to remove out of date information and update areas which have not been properly maintained in recent years.

Reciprocity. In 2021 we began working to streamline the record review process. The goal is to offer clear direction on how/what to submit for a review that is intended to expedite the reciprocity process.

Haz-Mat exam issues. During 2021, staff began working with our Curriculum & Testing committee to evaluate and address issues regarding both hazardous materials awareness and operations exam concerns.

Communications. The most common complaint we received is that we do not provide adequate information regarding rule changes, meetings and new certifications. Since we started using the new mass e-mail system, we discovered that many local government IT systems block mass e-mails because they appear to be "spam." This will require local governments to update their whitelists to allow TCFP emails through their firewalls, and we've been addressing this issue at regional meetings and other communications with fire departments.

Another improvement in this area is that we now post regular announcements and updates via Facebook and the web site. This will remain an on-going project. Additionally, we've initiated a program of "regional meetings." Each year TCFP leadership travels the state, visiting each TCFP region at least twice in a year. The goal is to meet members of the fire departments we regulate in person so we can answer questions, listen to concerns, and receive valuable input from our stakeholders. Finally, we've also started attending all conferences to have a member of our staff available for discussions anytime.

A & B Lists. We began updating and adding new courses to both lists during 2021. Within the next month or so, we hope to have the revised lists posted on the Web Site.

Improvements we plan to address

Phone etiquette. A common complaint is how rude and unprofessional our staff is perceived to be when speaking on the phone. We have had several staff changes recently and all staff will be receiving customer service training to hopefully resolve this concern.

Web site and FIDO user-friendliness. We continue to identify new ways to enhance the usefulness and ease of using FIDO and navigating the web site.

TPA classes. We hope to develop a short but in-depth class on how to create and manage Training Prior Approvals (TPAs). We have received some interest in this area so we are working on this during 2022-23.

Exam Notices. This is an area that we need to work on. Ideally, with all exams being offered on-line now, the need for this change will be minimal. We are assessing the best way to accomplish this.

Brochures. TCFP currently does not have an informational brochure to make available during conferences, classes and/or meetings. We intend to request additional state funding that will enable us to develop and print these brochures for the coming years.