

Satisfied or Not:

A study of the effectiveness of Norwich Township's EMS response cards?

By: Joseph Russell
Lieutenant
Norwich Township Fire Department
5181 Northwest Pkwy. Hilliard Ohio

A proposed research project submitted to the Ohio Fire Executive Program

8 June 2008

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that the following statements are true:

1. This paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

2. I have affirmed the use of proper spelling and grammar in this document by using the spell and grammar check functions of a word processing software program and correcting the errors as suggested by the program.

Signed: _____

Printed Name: _____

ABSTRACT

The Norwich Township Fire Department's EMS response follow up program was evaluated to see if captured data was effectively used and promoted change within the department.

The problem this study will address is the information that is currently collected from the card system being utilized to promote improvement in EMS services.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the current system being used, and determine possible options for a more efficient program.

With descriptive research the following questions were addressed:

1. What methods do other departments utilize for EMS response feedback?
2. How do other departments use their results?
3. Does the current data collected effect EMS protocol and procedure changes?
4. What options are there for Norwich Township to implement a more effective program?
5. Do the members of Norwich Township feel the system in place is beneficial?

Discussions with the department's EMS Coordinator revealed some interesting facts, the department was grading out at a 99.25% overall, but the questions asked did not address procedure issues.

The review of Applied Research Projects showed that 83% did not even have a program to evaluate their customer service. Also noted was the lack of an evaluative tool to check the program's accuracy, the effort that goes into initiating a program and agency's failing to capitalize on returned data.

A survey was conducted with other departments, it revealed that most used a mailer, and a majority of the departments implemented into training. Norwich members were also surveyed, most were pleased with current system but would like it used for training.

Recommendations for Norwich Township include an annual report, training sessions with the department members and conducting random phone interviews with previous patients. Also integrate the department's web site into the EMS response follow up program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT 2

Abstract..... 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS..... 4

INTRODUCTION 5

 Statement of the Problem..... 5

 Purpose of the Study 6

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE..... 8

LITERATURE REVIEW 12

PROCEDURES..... 15

 Definition of Terms..... 17

 Limitations of the Study..... 18

RESULTS 19

DISCUSSION 25

APPENDIX 1 – COpy of Norwich Township EMS Response Cards 32

APPENDIX 2 - EMS run follow-up survey for OFE Network 33

APPENDIX 3 – Norwich Township EMS run repsonse card survey..... 53

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Does Norwich Township's current customer feedback card system provide quality accurate data to analyze our EMS service? A system is in place for feedback from the community, but how accurate is this data? This system is a pre-paid post card with 5 basic questions, given to the pt. or other party on scene of runs that crews are on. As the cards come back data is collected, but what is it used for? The system has been in place for 5 years and there has been no official release of information that has been collected. The department does not really know if the services it is providing are at the level that the community expects and the mission statement requires. Businesses use their customer service feedback not only to train their staff but also use the information to change their products, procedures, staffing needs, and how their organization rates against their competitors.

The problem this study will address is the information that is currently collected from the card system being utilized to promote improvement in EMS services.

In 2000 the city of Hilliard which Norwich Township covers, and 85% of the departments runs occur, conducted a survey of services provided by the city of Hilliard and Norwich Township. The fire department was given a 95% approval rating. The results were exciting, but was it a direct reflection to the issues that were taking place between the city and the township? The local city government was at odds with township and the community. One way to assess if a department is providing the expected services to the community is by approval of a fire levy. Norwich Township is a fully fire levy funded department and do not currently bill for EMS services. The last levy that Norwich Township had on the ballot was in 1996, which passed roughly 2 to 1. Did the service of the department improve by 30% in 4 years, or is that the

difference between a monetary issue and an opinion. When people are asked to give their hard earned money, their decisions are based not only on the service, but also their pocket book.

This department has grown from a total volunteer, then a combination department, to an all paid Fire/EMS department with a staff of 86. Passage of a levy is one indicator of a community's satisfaction of services, but with the economic crisis today an effective quality assurance program is another vital source of information used to analyze an agency's services.

Norwich Township is fortunate that there is no competition to provide emergency services, however with that being said it can lead to underachievement, and complacency. Citizens have a right to dictate how their tax dollars are spent. There is always the possibility of some private entity looking to persuade local governments that it can provide the same or better services for less money.

Descriptive research will be used for this project.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the current system being used, and determine possible options for a more efficient program.

Research Questions

The research questions this study will investigate are:

1. What methods do other departments utilize for EMS response feedback?
2. How do other departments use their results?
3. Does the current data collected effect EMS protocol and procedure changes?
4. What options are there for Norwich Township to implement a more effective program?
5. Do the members of Norwich Township feel the system in place is beneficial?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

As Norwich Township continues to grow and the economy continues to suffer the department must utilize any tools that are available to satisfy the community's needs as well as the departments expectations. Society expects satisfaction for money spent on professional services, and like the business market consumers need a high quality product.

The department's EMS Coordinator implemented an EMS Response Follow-Up card program 5years ago. The goal was feedback to assist the department in evaluating the services provided, aid in training and education of personnel, and further develop and enhance the departments overall operability. These cards are handed out to every patient Norwich Township treats.

Norwich Township's current card system (Appendix 1) asks the following questions that can be answered in one of four categories: Excellent, Satisfactory, Fair, and Poor:

1. How do you rate the manner in which your call for service was received by our department?
2. How would you rate the quality of service by the EMS providers who responded?
3. Was the service prompt and professional?
4. Were the employees courteous and helpful?
5. Please comment on any Fair or Poor marks.

As stated on the handout with the response cards the information that is provided by these response cards is utilized by the department to evaluate an internal quality improvement plan. After 5 years of the system being in place, no plan has been implemented by the department.

When the department receives these cards back the information is entered into a data base, however the results are not released in any kind of annual report. Occasionally when one is returned that has some negative or positive feedback, those crew members who were on the run may have some follow-up with our EMS Coordinator. With the volume of runs that Norwich Township has, are there any trends that these cards have shown? Are there any patterns or inconsistencies? Do the results show areas where the organization needs to improve? Time is money; time has already been put into creating the cards, paying the postage, physically presenting them while on a run, and then the lag time into use receiving them. If the department does not utilize this information, then why spend the taxpayer's money on an effort like this.

For the period of 1/1/08 thru 6/31/08 Norwich Township went on 1684 EMS runs, there were 1684 response cards handed out and the department received 172 back, for an average of 10% returned. The following table addresses the data collected from the returned cards for the period of 1/1/08 thru 6/31/08:

Table 1

Norwich Township's EMS Response Card Feedback scores based on a 1 (lowest) – 4 (high-test)

	Cards	
	<i>S</i>	%
Dispatch Services	3.97	99.25
Quality of Service	3.98	99.5
Promptness	3.97	99.25
Courteous	3.96	99
TOTAL	15.88	99.25

The following data is EMS run information for Norwich Township, it shows a steady rise in the number of runs but a fairly consistent % of the pt. that are transported and those that refuse services. All of Norwich Townships' fire and medic apparatus are ALS units. There are no separate totals for ALS compared to BLS runs for this study.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Runs</u>	<u>Total Patients</u>	<u>Patients Transported</u>	<u>Patients Refusing Services</u>
2003	2620	2680	1427 – 53.2%	363 – 13.6%
2004	2938	2980	1723 – 57.8%	454 – 15.2%
2005	3251	3320	2048 – 61.7%	486 – 14.7%
2006	3544	3595	2197 – 61.1%	493 – 13.8%
2007	3632	3689	2298 – 62.3%	498 – 13.5%
As of 12/10/08	3464	3523	2209 – 62.7%	491 – 13.9%

These statistics do not include other types of EMS that would include cancelled enroute, gone on arrival, DOA, and transported by private vehicle. The information that has been provided is useful and pertinent to this research paper.

One area that is changing for Norwich Township is the demographics of the community. One factor that has contributed to this is an agreement the school district of Hilliard has with the City of Columbus. It is called the win-win agreement. Both entities agreed to allow residents in contiguous areas of Hilliard to attend the Hilliard school's, by paying the higher school tax. This has brought a increase in the number of runs the department has on people with language barriers, religious differences, and social economics. By using these issues, research will determine if Norwich Township is meeting the needs of the different social demographics.

The potential impact this study could have on the Norwich Township Fire Department is the potential expansion of the current program so Norwich Township can use the data collected to drive potential protocol and training changes, address demographic issues, and be proactive to trends that are noted.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The objective of this literature review is to summarize research that was done by other providers of emergency service. Literature that was used came from various Applied Research Projects for the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program, customer service articles from on-line trade magazines, and fire service trade text.

A consistent pattern was noted from the Applied Research Projects, in that 83% of them did not even have a program in place to evaluate their customer service. The fire service as a whole should not try to give their respective communities what they think the public wants, but rather give the public what it wants (Kinoshita, 1999). Typically most departments only relied on the occasional complimentary letter, letters of concern, and various telephone calls.

One comment that was applicable came from (Sutter, 2001), customer service programs tend to lack an evaluation of the program to check its accuracy, and also applying that feedback to improve services. A lot of effort goes into initiating the program, but then not taking advantage of the benefits the data has to offer. As stated earlier the economy for most areas is in decline, unemployment is up, and emergency services are expected to provide more for less. To accomplish this more must be done too educate the customers. One way to educate customers to have high expectations is by giving them favorable experiences (Self, 1997). Giving the customer the resources to voice their needs, issues, and complements will raise the bar for those customers we serve for years to come.

One of the benefits to receiving positive customer feedback is that it produces a positive effect within the organization (Krajic, 2001). As stated Marcucci (2000): A customer service survey gives a clear, explainable indication of how the customer base feels about the department. Positive comments and high ratings enhance the department's image. They also

encourage personnel to keep up the good work. These result in better service to the community and, ultimately, a more positive customer perception of the department. (p.17)

In order to effectively implement a program like this, total buy-in from the entire rank and file within a department to be successful. Current buy-in at Norwich Township is unknown, and the system will be evaluated to as to whether or not it lends itself as a useful tool for all. At this time it is a handout that comes along with our customers HIPPA rights.

Members of a fire department need to realize that customers are both internal and external (Hinton, 1991). Firefighters tend to forget that firefighters are customers to each other, if they start taking care of each other (Connealy, 1998) inside of their group, than the attitude of customer service will become second nature. “Follow a mean kid home and you’ll find mean parents” (Brunacini, 1996), to paraphrase this, if your administration projects themselves as hard-nose individuals who don’t care about their members, then they certainly can’t be expected to act any differently than their superiors. Remember reap what is sewn. If department leaders project compassion, professionalism, and a genuine love for their fellow man then their subordinates will follow.

Norwich Township and the city of Hilliard continue to grow and change. As with other communities the challenge of staying connected to the community is as important today as it was 50 years ago. With the 24 hour news networks that are at everyone’s disposal, there are countless stories of government personnel saying they are speaking and representing there communities, but do they really represent those they serve? There seems to less accountability and accessibility to those that represent the citizens (Lewis, 1998) than ever before. Providing a tool to keep the community in-touch and giving them a voice will keep an agency proactive. Letting them address any issues before they become tomorrows headline news.

The fire service continues to head down a path that more business world and competitive than ever before. A lot can be learned from knowing who are customers are and what they want (Smith, 1997, p. 26). Most organizations go to great lengths learning what is important to the customer and how to efficiently meet those needs while being cost effective (Greek, 2002). Not implementing, or lack of use of a customer service survey means we are merely doing what the fire service feels is best for its customers (Stanford, 2001).

Customer satisfaction surveys have a couple of areas that need to be addressed before they can be considered valid. One is the survey must measure what it is intended for (McCarthy, 2006). Certain biases can make the survey invalid, examples of these could be, but not limited too the following issues: poor sampling, personnel bias, faulty or poor wording, invalid data collecting and entry, or misinterpretation of the findings (Vavra, 1997). The other area that must be considered is the reliability of the survey (McCarthy, 2006). Errors can occur from the outset, whether it is the survey itself has difficult terminology, human errors, and sloppiness. Great detail and cautions must be taken in the development of a survey. Seeking advice from experts in the field of customer service surveys as well as the agencies legal council would be appropriate. Compliance with HIPPA Rights and regulations must be followed to avoid any unintended violations.

Partnership, problem solving and prevention or the three P's as they are referred too, boil down to quality customer service. Combined they create a baseline from which all customer service can spring from (Pacelli, 2006).

PROCEDURES

The research procedures used in preparing this paper consisted of literature reviews from various resources:

- USFA Learning Resource Center (Applied Research Projects) National Fire Academy EFO program
- Customer Service articles from various Fire/EMS magazines
- Numerous Customer Service readings via the internet

Interviews were conducted with the following people:

- The originator of Norwich Townships EMS Response Card System
- Norwich Township's administration

Norwich Township EMS run statistics were collected from the Clayton IDS data base that Norwich uses for their EMS runs. Run totals increased by 840 total EMS runs from 2003 to 2008. Overall customer satisfaction results remained steady throughout the same time period.

On-line surveys were conducted with the following groups:

- OFE fire department network
- Norwich Township firefighters

Through the use of the Ohio Fire Executive's online network, an online survey using Survey Monkey was conducted with various departments to see if they had a post EMS run follow-up program in place. While it is not known who the participants were, it did include 61 respondents. The questions asked of the respondents focused on level service provided (ALS, BLS, or First Responder), overall population served and length of existing program. The survey then asked participants what tools were used to conduct EMS follow-ups, budgeted funds, percentage of follow-ups received and how follow-ups were analyzed. The survey then focused on utilization of data for training purposes, changes in protocols and procedures that were generated by results. The final question asked participants if they knew how their respective departments rated based on results from post EMS follow-ups

Members of Norwich Township were asked to participate in an online survey also through the use of Survey Monkey. 61 of the 87 members of the department took part of this survey. The lack of communication and feedback is an ever presence issue in the fire service, so the first part of the survey addressed those issues. Respondents were asked if they had received any feedback from the current EMS response system, and then if so was it positive or negative? They were then asked had any of them received any other type of feedback from an EMS run they were on. It was asked of the participants if they had received any type of annual report, and if they would benefit from one. Protocol and training changes as a result of EMS follow-ups were addressed in the survey, and finally based on their own experience members were asked how they would rate the current system in place.

Definition of Terms

Term.

Administration. This would include the following personnel for Norwich Township:

Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief of Norwich Township

Executive Members. This would include the following personnel for Norwich Township:

Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Three Battalion Captains, EMS Coordinator,

Safety/Training Officer, Fire Prevention Captain.

Department Members. This includes all line staff employees, all staff employees, as well as elected officials that oversee all Township business.

HIPPA. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)

Privacy Rule. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

Limitations of the Study

The researcher found that the questions asked in the mailers sent by Norwich Township were vague in nature and did little to identify any procedure or protocol issues. Therefore the limited data creates a void in how to incorporate protocol and procedure issues into a customer response survey.

Question #7 of the internal department survey asked the respondent the following: Have you been given any report or summary of the findings from the EMS response cards since in inception? The results produced the following numbers; 17 (27.9%) had, and 44 (72.1%) had not been given any kind of report. In the results section, this is discussed with regards to potential data that members of Norwich Township may have but the executive members may not. With this survey being anonymous this may include everyone, however as discussed with the chiefs of the department they had not had received any feedback.

It is assumed that all respondents answered all questions honestly and in the best interest of customer service.

Respondents may be influenced by current morale, issues or attitudes toward the administration or citizens.

RESULTS

The researcher conducted a survey through the Ohio Fire Executive network and had 61 participants. The participants are not known and findings are strictly based on questions asked of the participants. 79% of the respondents served a population similar to that of the researchers department, and 96% provided ALS service. 28 of the 61 respondents conducted a post EMS survey, and of those 21 departments did theirs by a mailer. Overall four to seven years was how long most departments have had an EMS run follow-up program followed by eight to 11 years. This is not that long and indicates that this is uncharted territory for emergency service organizations. The use of some sort of mailer was used by 84% of the departments to conduct a survey. Budgeted amounts ranged from \$0.00 to more than \$2000.00 for departments that used a mailer. The results of those two questions indicates that the fire service fails to use technology to collect data obtain instant results. Another factor that is useful in this research was the fact that 72% of the respondents used the results of their post EMS run surveys for training purposes (Appendix 2).

Two glaring differences that stand out between Norwich Township and those surveyed were one: a majority of the respondents mailed their cards to a predetermined percentage of patients, whereas Norwich leaves theirs with someone 100% of the time. Secondly 44% surveyed stated that they received a returned survey 61 – 80% of the time. As noted earlier between 1/1/08 and 6/30/08 Norwich gave out 1684 cards and had only received 172 for a 10% return.

Question #10 (Appendix 2) asked the respondents how each agency analyzed the data that is collected, identical results 40.9% were seen in computer use and hand written reports. However 18.2% of the respondents did no analysis what so ever. The number of questions asked

on a survey was also asked, the majority 57.9% had surveys that had between 6 to 10 questions (Appendix 2). Norwich Township's system asks four questions with a fifth question being an open dialogue for the participant.

One question that produced interesting results was one that asked the respondent if there had been any procedural or protocol changes that resulted from their EMS survey. 43.5% said the results assisted them in making changes, and 47.8% said they made no changes. Compare that to Norwich Township which does not use their system to make changes. Another similarity to the data collected by Norwich Township was that 68.4% of the respondents stated that their EMS survey showed their customers were very pleased with their services (Appendix 2).

An in depth discussion was conducted with the administration of Norwich Township Fire Department with regards to the department's EMS Response program. Several issues arose during this discussion. The department's administration is given no annual report and they are unaware of what the data collected from EMS response follow-ups indicates. The administration was asked if they were aware that the department receives a 10% return on the surveys handed out on EMS runs. That low number created a deeper discussion with the administration, first the administration questioned if the lack of return was worth the investment; secondly how accurate are the results from the returned cards. An overview of the results from the past five years was presented to the administration and that verified their concern about low returns, however, it did indicate accurate results from the cards for the past 5 years. Another interesting point arose during these discussions with the administration. The administration felt the questions asked on the response cards were too vague. They noted that the questions failed to ask if any specific procedure or activities were done, and if so what were the results. An example they used was

IV's. Were IV's attempted, and if so how many? By not asking the administration felt training and protocol issues could not be addressed through the use of the cards.

The administration also said there is also a possibility that Norwich Township may soon start billing for EMS services. They believe it may be beneficial to look at other options to conduct a more effective post EMS run survey. Suggestions that were discussed were an online survey, random phone interviews, mailings, on site visits or any combination of the previous mentioned processes. The administration felt this is an invaluable tool and they were clear on not limiting the department's options.

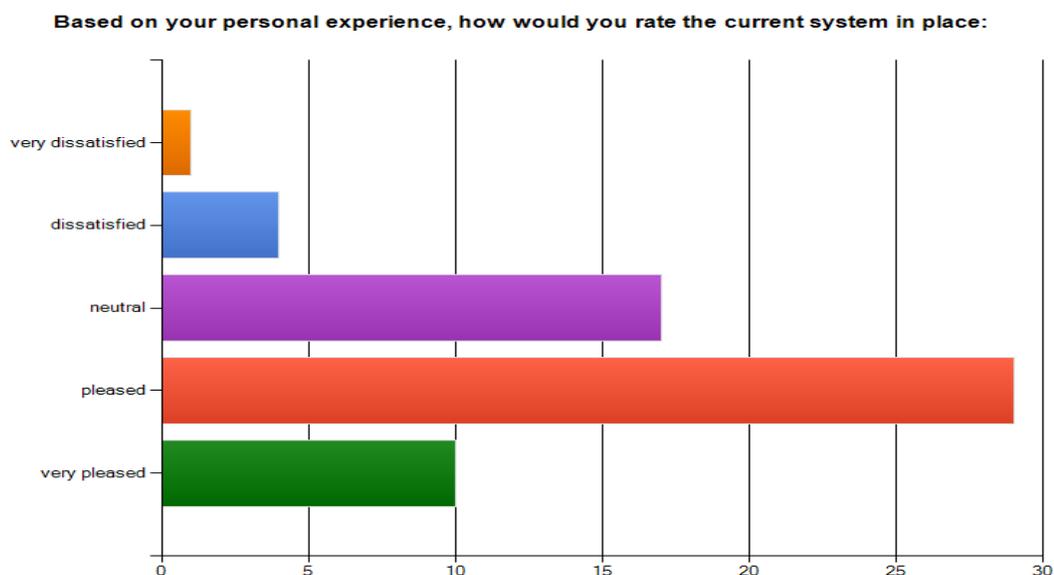
The researcher conducted an online survey using Survey Monkey with the members of Norwich Township. It consisted of 11 questions, and participation consisted of 61 of the 87 members of the department. Question #1 (Appendix 3) asked if the respondent had received any feedback from the current card system in which they had participated, 70.2% had gotten feedback and 100% of those stated it was positive. The survey asked if anyone had gotten feedback other than the cards system. 64.4% said they had and listed the following: Thank You cards, hand written letters, phone calls to their superiors, letters written to the editor in the local newspaper, and visits to the station with baked goods. Only three individuals said that they had received any type of negative report (Appendix 3).

Question #7 (Appendix 3) asked if they had received an annual report or summary since the programs inception, this produced interesting results. 27.9% stated that they had, and 72.1% had not received any report. This means 17 of the 61 surveyed potentially had information that the administration of the department didn't. When the respondents were asked if they would benefit from annual report; 70.5% said they would, the rest said they wouldn't or did not care to receive one (Appendix 3).

When asked if they felt the current system promotes protocol or procedural changes the numbers were similar in 3 categories. 16 (26.2%) said it did promote change, 24 (39.3%) stated it did not and 21 (34.4%) were unsure if changes were made based on data collected from the current system (Appendix 3).

Next respondents were asked if the data collected from the cards should be a factor in making any potential protocol changes (Appendix 3). The same exact numbers were received for both yes and no 27 (44.3%) each, only 7 (11.5%) had no opinion when asked if it should be a factor. The final question asked the respondents to rate how they felt about the current system being used. Based on the following options, the results were as follows:

Very Dissatisfied	1 for 1.6%
Dissatisfied	4 for 6.6%
Neutral	17 for 27.9%
Pleased	29 for 47.5%
Very Pleased	10 for 16.4%



With the research completed the focus can now address the original research questions. What methods are other departments using for EMS run feedback? Most departments use some sort of mailer, also used are phone interviews, personal home visits, the internet and one respondent indicated that their department will follow up only if there is a formal complaint.

How do other departments use their results? As a result of the conducted survey 43% of the departments collect data by computer, 39% by hand and 17% do nothing with them. Most departments use the results for training and as a tool to assist them in addressing protocol and procedural changes

Does the current data collected effect EMS protocol and procedure changes? As a result of discussions with the administration for Norwich Township and from the survey with members of the department it is unclear. The administration gets no feedback from the data collected; however when surveyed the members of the department 27.9% said they had received an annual report. 26.2% of department members felt data collected effected EMS protocol change

What options are there for Norwich Township to implement a more effective program? The resources are there to effect change. The township has a web site; by educating the public of its existence we can utilize it as another means to seek their input. Making a couple of calls a day will increase our percentage of feedback from residence by potentially 25%. A report needs to be made available to all members of what is being received, then by changing the questions training needs can be met.

Do the members of Norwich Township feel the system in place is beneficial? Overall the members of the department are pleased and feel it is beneficial. Most feel they would benefit from an annual report but they are split on whether it should be used to make protocol changes.

The department could move forward and continue to develop the system in place but may not produce effective buy-in throughout the membership.

DISCUSSION

The literature review that was used in the project established a good baseline from which this researcher could build from. Several publications pointed toward one common goal, and that is the “Golden Rule, Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” (Brunacini, 1996). This applies both in the field and within the walls of the firehouse. We tend to forget sometimes that we are our customers too. Create a positive environment at work and positive results will follow. The three key elements for a positive environment are keeping employees well informed, acknowledging for their efforts, and letting them know their voice is heard (Levitt, 1994). The reason work environment is being discussed is for the simple fact we are falling short by not keeping everyone informed. Norwich Township does not have an annual report on the EMS response cards, and there is little acknowledgement on a well done job. It is assumed that firefighters go the extra mile; however failure to give an “atta-boy” or handshake starts to leave doubt whether or not they are doing a good job. For argument sake, if the “Golden Rule” is followed than there should be little doubt if a job is being done right.

Research question 1 asked: What methods do other departments utilize for EMS response feedback? Several different forms of EMS feedback were cited by other departments. The survey indicated that some form of a mailer is the most often used tool to conduct a follow-up. Interestingly enough does the convenience of a mailer outweigh how informal they are? A few other tools that are used are face to face interviews, some sort of online survey, and phone interviews. Two issues about phone surveys that maybe relevant; first it would seem that most departments are trying to avoid calling individuals they come in contact with so they are not stereotyped as a telemarketer, and secondly personnel being tied up on the phone.

Research question 2 asked: How do other departments use their results? Whether a department uses some form of computer data base or collecting the results by hand, most put the information they get from their EMS run surveys to use. Most departments use the results for training purposes.

Research question 3 asked: Does the current data collected effect EMS protocol and procedure changes? When surveyed about protocol changes 47.8% said no changes had occurred as a result of feedback received, compared to 43.5% who stated some changes had occurred. After literature review and survey findings it is believed that in order to make such changes, you must ask the respondent specific questions about a procedure or protocol issue. Even if there is some form of medical expertise being surveyed, the answers provided may be subjective in nature, and would provide little data to recommend any department changes.

Research question 4 asked: What options are there for Norwich Township to implement a more effective program? As stated earlier there are several different options available to Norwich Township. This will be discussed in the recommendation section of the research paper.

Often times organizations tend to think problems with customer service should fall on the front line employees. Lost in the shuffle however the quality of service is often dependent on the training offered to those same employees. A mistake some organizations make is the attempt to substitute “smile” training for an adequate support system for those same front line employees. Most places depend on front line employees to a be source of information about what is wrong with an existing system or procedure, so they can work with them to better meet the needs and expectations of the customer (Wallace, 2000).

Research question 5 asked: do the members of Norwich Township feel the system in place is beneficial? As stated earlier in the literature review one of the benefits to receiving positive customer feedback is that it produces a positive effect within the organization (Krajic, 2001). That statement would lead one to believe that the results Norwich Township has received from their EMS response surveys (Table 1) would produce a highly positive environment, and satisfaction with the current system. However based on the internal survey only 47.5% are pleased with the current system, 27.9% are neutral. Communication and keeping those informed could improve department buy in of the system.

The current system provides a good baseline to start, but it does produce cracks in the foundation of this organization. The research indicated that some members receive an annual report from the current EMS Response Follow-up program and the administration doesn't. This is a total disregard to the chain of command and creates discord among the ranks. Overall there is no training that comes from the current program and would seem as though it is a waste of time and money. If there is money spent then there had better be some applicable results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Norwich Township Fire Department current system has provided the department with some data that it provides excellent EMS service. However the information has not been shared with all of the department members. Therefore the following recommendations will address the release of information from the EMS response cards. First, EMS Coordinator or his designee shall release an annual report of the findings from the EMS response cards. Keeping Norwich members informed may enhance a better morale. Secondly, the EMS coordinator or appointed duty officer shall conduct quarterly meetings with each shift member to update them on their personal run feedback.

For future readers one important factor to consider is making sure that the feedback is presented in a positive professional manner. By doing this the individual feedback report will be perceived as training or recognition, and not punitive as such.

Using the existing survey as a foundation, ask the existing EMS committee for input on expanding the questions to include specific procedures, performance, and overall success of treatment. Verify with State of Ohio EMS Board that questions are legal and conform to all HIPPA rights. With the potential expansion of the card system, the research showed that most customer service surveys were between 6 to 10 questions, it would be advisable to stay within that range to respect any respondents time.

Future readers should be aware of time constraints when developing a survey. We all have been on the phone, internet, or stopped on the street for a quick survey and fifteen minutes later we are still participating in the survey. Keeping it short will also give some validity to your project. Organizations will gain respect from respondents because you valued their time.

To keep the department in touch with the community another recommendation from this author will be to conduct three post emergency medical response calls to randomly selected individuals on a daily basis. As it stands right now the department is receiving approximately ten percent return of the cards handed out. Each of the three stations would make one phone call a day, which over the course of one calendar year would generate 1095 phone calls. The questions asked during these post incident calls would come from the EMS committee of Norwich Township. Based on past run totals this would put Norwich Township in the area of 30 – 40 % post run contact.

One final recommendation that will be made is for Norwich Township to make available to all of its customers and citizens an on line survey. The department currently has a web site, and the cards that are handed out could be made available to them on line. This also could generate comments that are more specific in nature do to the accessibility to the internet these days. The only issues needing addressed to accomplish this would be a couple of hours to copy the cards and put them on the web site, and for the members of the department to make conscious efforts to promote the web site to those people they come into contact with.

All recommendations made from the research have very little impact on the department's annual budget. What is required is proper training, presenting the potential changes to the department members in a positive manner and understanding their concerns. Plus a grass roots campaign needs to be initiated to educate the community that these tools assist Norwich Township in focusing on continued improvement for community benefit.

REFERENCES

- Brunacini, A. V. (1996). Essentials of fire department customer service. Stillwater, OK; Fire Protection Publications.
- Connealy, C. (1998). The Need For A Customer Service Program In The Houston Fire Department. (Applied Research Project) Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy, Executive Fire Officer Program
- Greek, H. L. (2002). Fire Rescue Service Delivery, The Customers Perspective. (Applied Research Project) Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy, Executive Fire Officer Program
- Hinton, T. (1991). The Spirit Of Service. Dubuque, IA: Kendal/Hunt Publishing
- Kinoshita, C. (1999). A Customer Satisfaction Survey For The Orange County Fire Authority. (Applied Research Project) Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy, Executive Fire Officer Program
- Krajic, C. (2001). A Customer Satisfaction Survey For The North Port Fire Rescue District. (Applied Research Project) Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy, Executive Fire Officer Program
- Levitt, T. (1994). The Manager's Tool Kit: Practical Tips for Tackling 100 On-the-Job Problems. Ontario, Canada: Stoddard Publishing Co., Ltd.
- Marcucci, R. E. (2000, September). Do You Know How Well Your Fire Department Is Doing? American Fire Journal, pp. 16-17
- McCarthy, H. E. (2006). Designing A Customer Satisfaction Survey To Evaluate Service Delivery By The Longmont Fire Department. (Applied Research Project) Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy, Executive Fire Officer Program

Pacelli, V. (2006). Hospital Security Department's Rx: Change.

Retrieved December 2008:

<http://www.campussafetymagazine.com/Articles/?ArticleID=38>

Self, Dr. J. T. (1997). The Customer of Tomorrow – Improving Customer Service.

Retrieved June 2008 via from: <http://www.sideroad.com/cs/column38.html>

Smith, J. S. (August 1997). Customer Service: Two View Implementing Of Customer Service. Fire Engineering, p.26

Stanford, L. (2001). Developing A Customer Satisfaction Measurement Tool For The Raleigh Fire Department. (Applied Research Project) Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy, Executive Fire Officer Program

Sutter, S. C. (2001). Evaluation Of The NLTFPD Customer Satisfaction Program. (Applied Research Project) Emmitsburg, MD: National Fire Academy, Executive Fire Officer Program

Wallace, M. (2000, February). Managing Moments of Truth. Fire Engineering, pp. 136-138

APPENDIX 1 – COPY OF NORWICH TOWNSHIP EMS RESPONSE CARDS

Norwich Township Fire Department
Service Response Card

- 1. How do you rate the manner in which your call for service was received by our dispatcher?
 Excellent Satisfactory Fair Poor
- 2. How would you rate the quality of service by the EMS providers who responded?
 Excellent Satisfactory Fair Poor
- 3. Was the service prompt and professional?
 Excellent Satisfactory Fair Poor
- 4. Were the employees courteous and helpful?
 Excellent Satisfactory Fair Poor
- 5. Please comment on any Fair or Poor marks. Add any questions, comments, or suggestions. You may also contact the EMS Coordinator, Vince Papa, at 614-876-7694.

Shift:
 Vehicle:
 Code #:

Norwich Township Fire Department
 EMS Response Follow-Up
 Attn: Vince Papa, EMS Coordinator
 5181 Northwest Parkway
 Hilliard, Ohio 43026

APPENDIX 2 - EMS RUN FOLLOW-UP SURVEY FOR OFE NETWORK

Plus charts and graph results associated with survey for OFE network

In corresponding order 1 thru 15

EMS run follow-up survey for OFE Network

Survey Introduction

Several agencies across the country utilize post EMS run surveys for the purpose of quality assurance and improvement. The purpose of this survey is to gather data related to how your department operates, gathers the data and utilizes the findings.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey.

1

What is your department's current level of service?

- ALS service and transport agency
- BLS service and transport agency
- First Responder that uses an outside transport agency
- Fire only - no EMS or third party agency

2

From the list below, select the approximate population of the community you serve.

- Less than 1000
- 1,000 to 10,000
- 10,000 to 50,000
- 50,000 to 100,000
- Greater than 100,000

3

Does your department conduct post EMS run surveys?

- Yes
- No

4

EMS run follow-up survey for OFE Network

How long has your department's survey program been in place?

- 0 - 3 years
- 4 - 7 years
- 8 - 11 years
- 12 years or more

5

What method of feedback is used to conduct the survey?

- Mailer
- Phone Interview
- Personal Interview
- Online or through your agencies website
- Other (please specify)

6

How is your mailer distributed?

- Left with the patient on every run
- Mailed to every patient
- Mailed to a predetermined percentage of patients
- Other (please specify)

7

Does your department utilize a prepaid mailer?

- Yes
- No

8

EMS run follow-up survey for OFE Network

What percentage of the mailer do you get returned?

- 0 - 20%
- 21 - 40%
- 41 - 60%
- 61 - 80%
- 81 - 100%

9

What is the budgeted amount for your mailer?

- \$0.00 - \$500.00
- \$500.01 - \$1000.00
- \$1000.01 - \$2000.00
- \$2000.01 or more

10

How does your agency currently analyze the survey data?

- Computer database
- Hand written summary
- Outside agency
- No current analysis

11

Does your department utilize the survey data for training purposes?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

12

EMS run follow-up survey for OFE Network

Have there been any protocol changes and/or internal procedural changes that resulted from your EMS survey?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

13

Overall do you know how your department rates with your community?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

14

How many questions does your survey consist of?

- 1 to 5
- 6 to 10
- more than 10

15

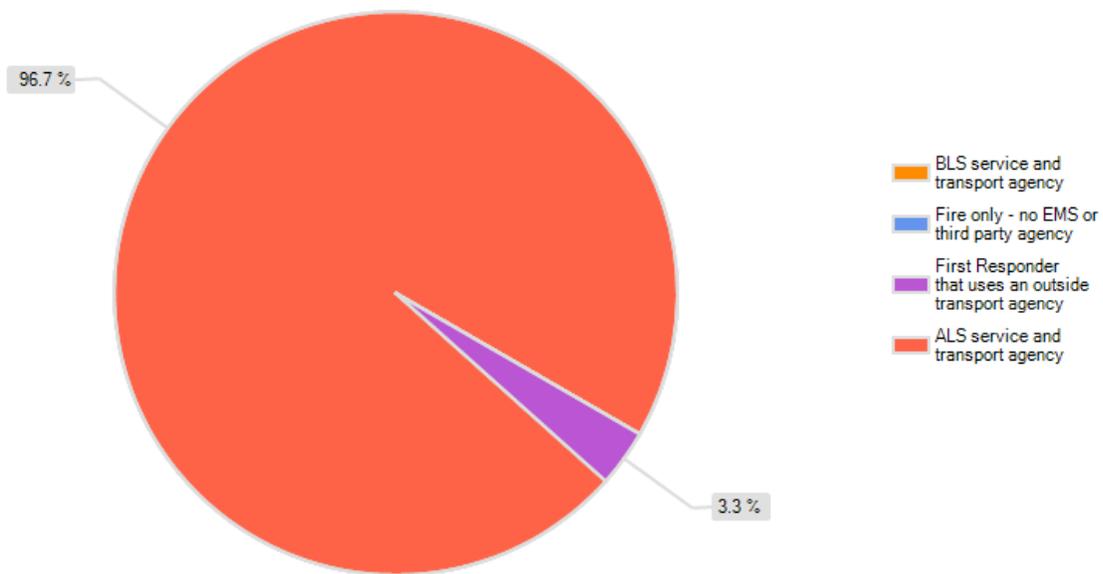
Based on the results of your post EMS run survey, where does your department rate. Using the following scale, (On a scale of 1 - 5; with 1 being very dissatisfied, 2 - dissatisfied, 3 - OK, 4 - pleased, 5 - very pleased).

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

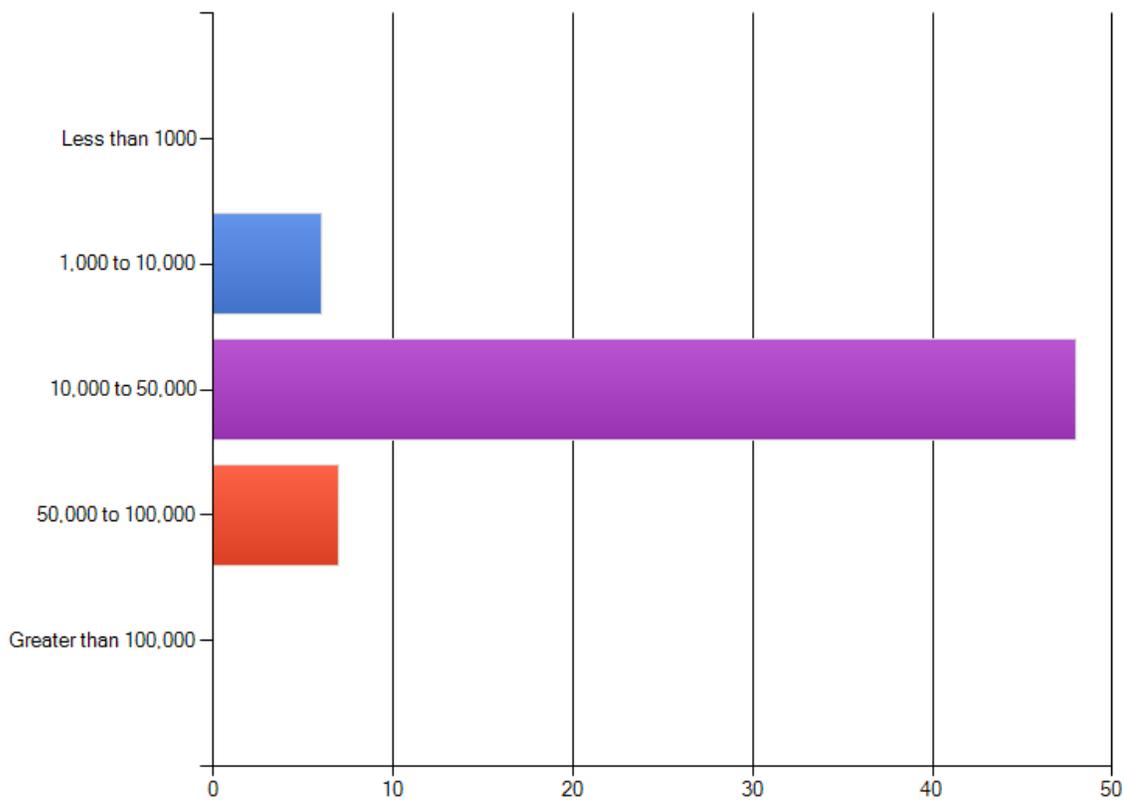
Thank You

Thank you for your time, participation and effort in this survey. All the information will be used in an applied research project for the Ohio Fire Chief's OFE program. The information obtained will remain private and confidential, as only a summary of the results will be used in the research.

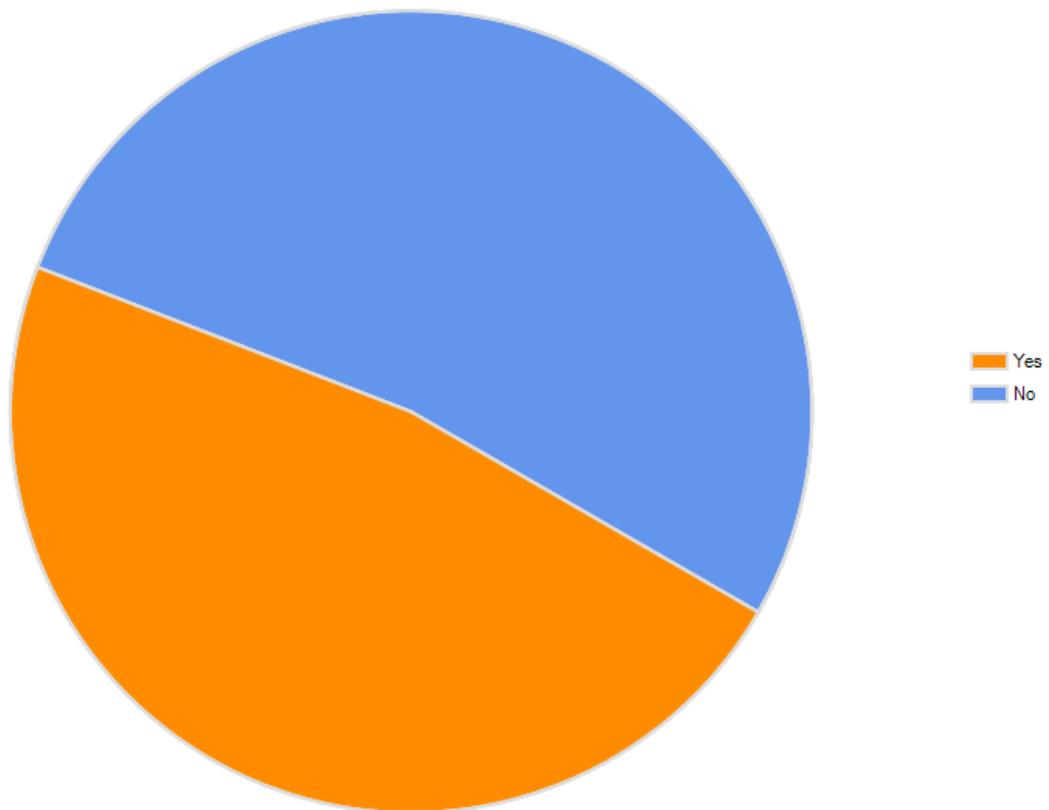
What is your department's current level of service?

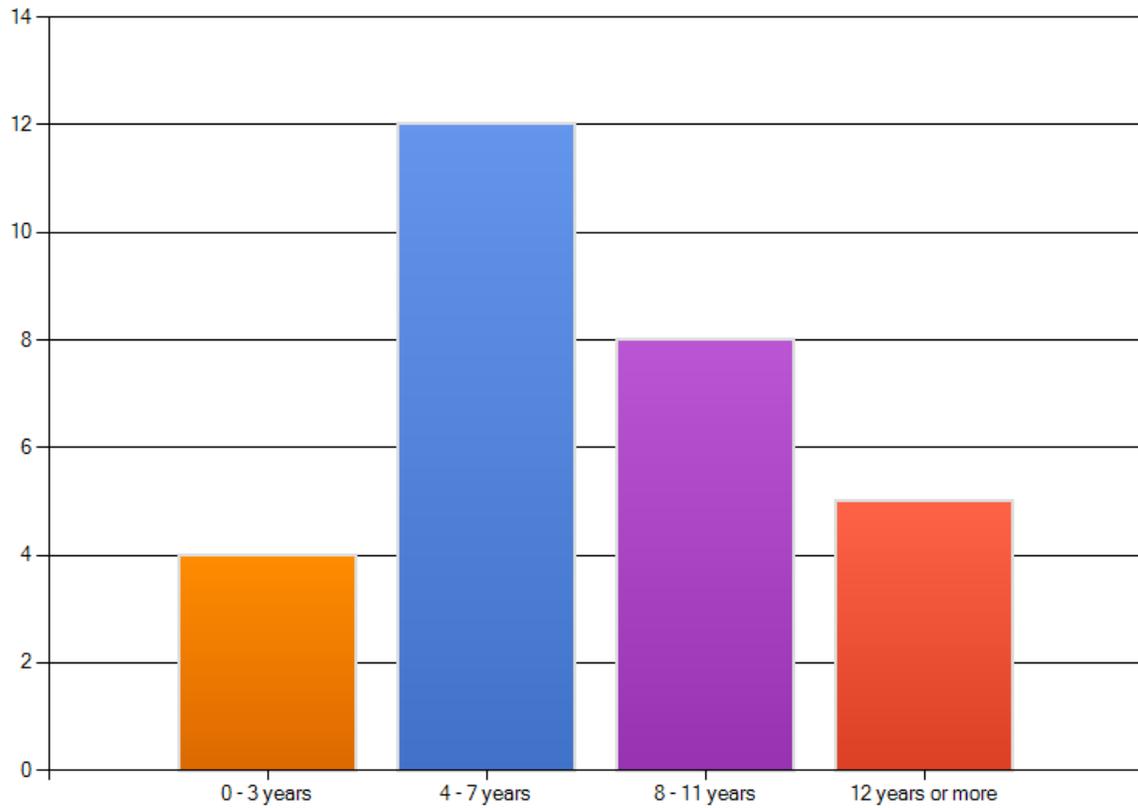


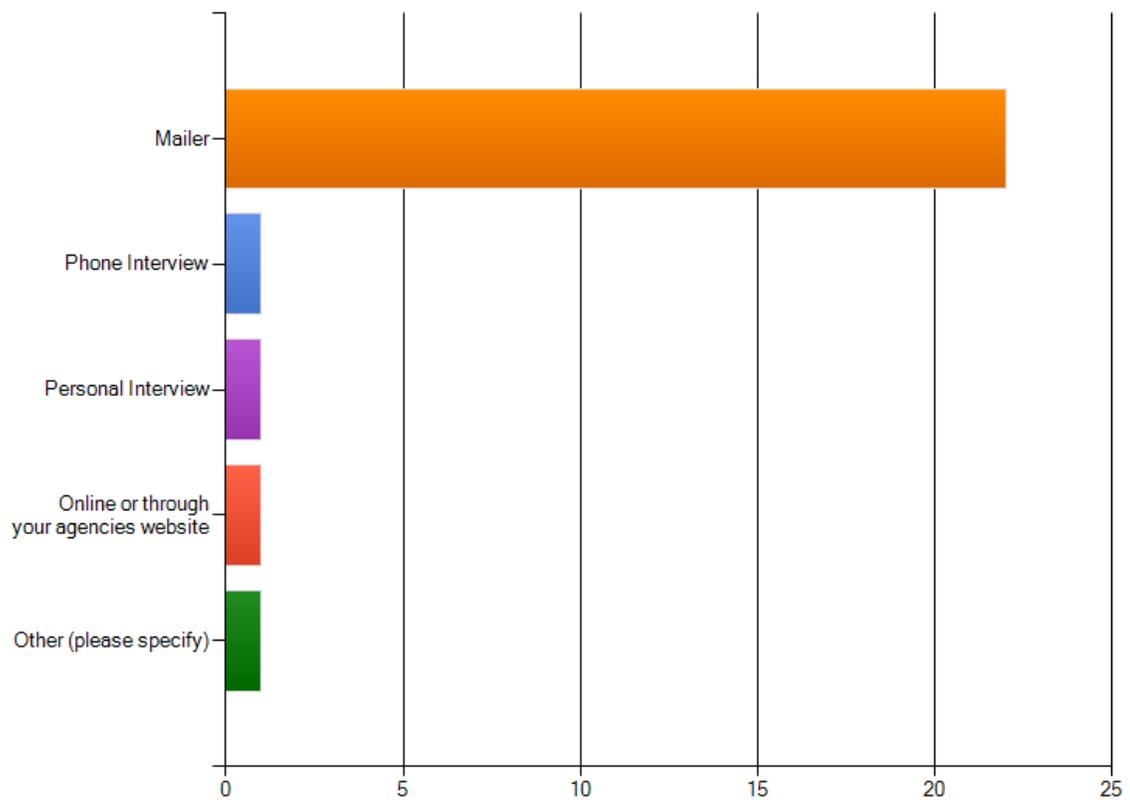
From the list below, select the approximate population of the community you serve.



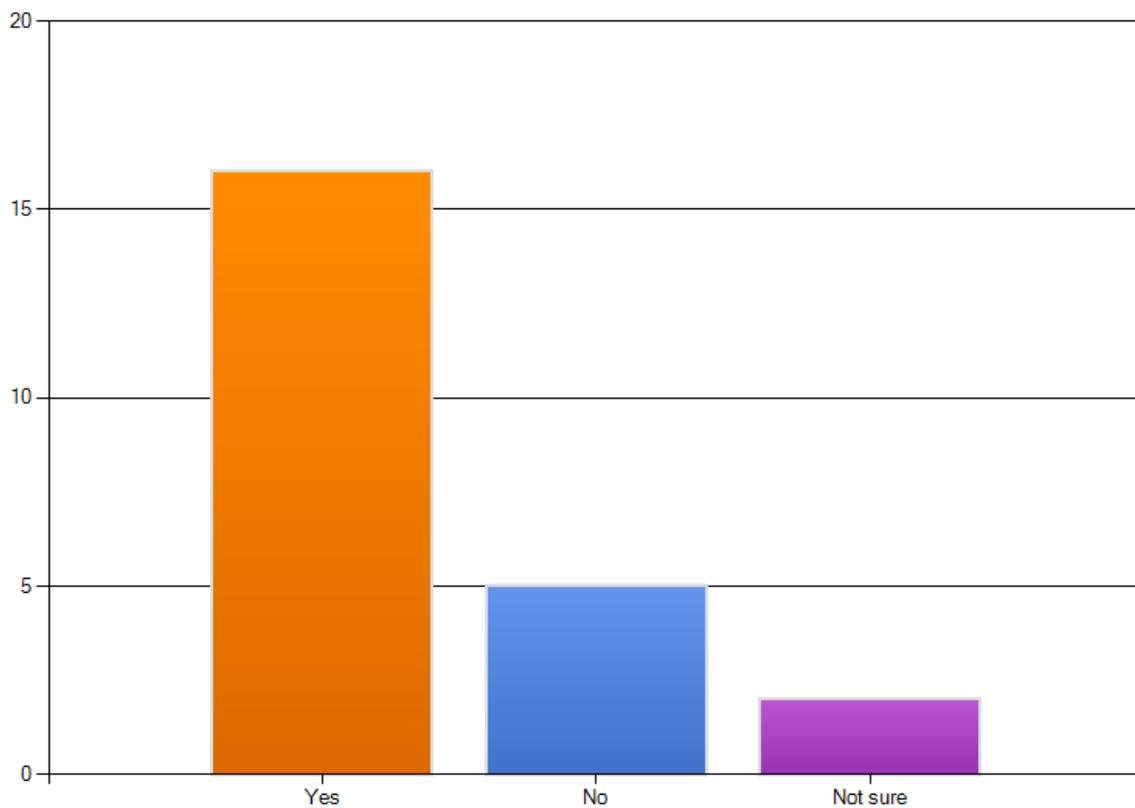
Does your department conduct post EMS run surveys?



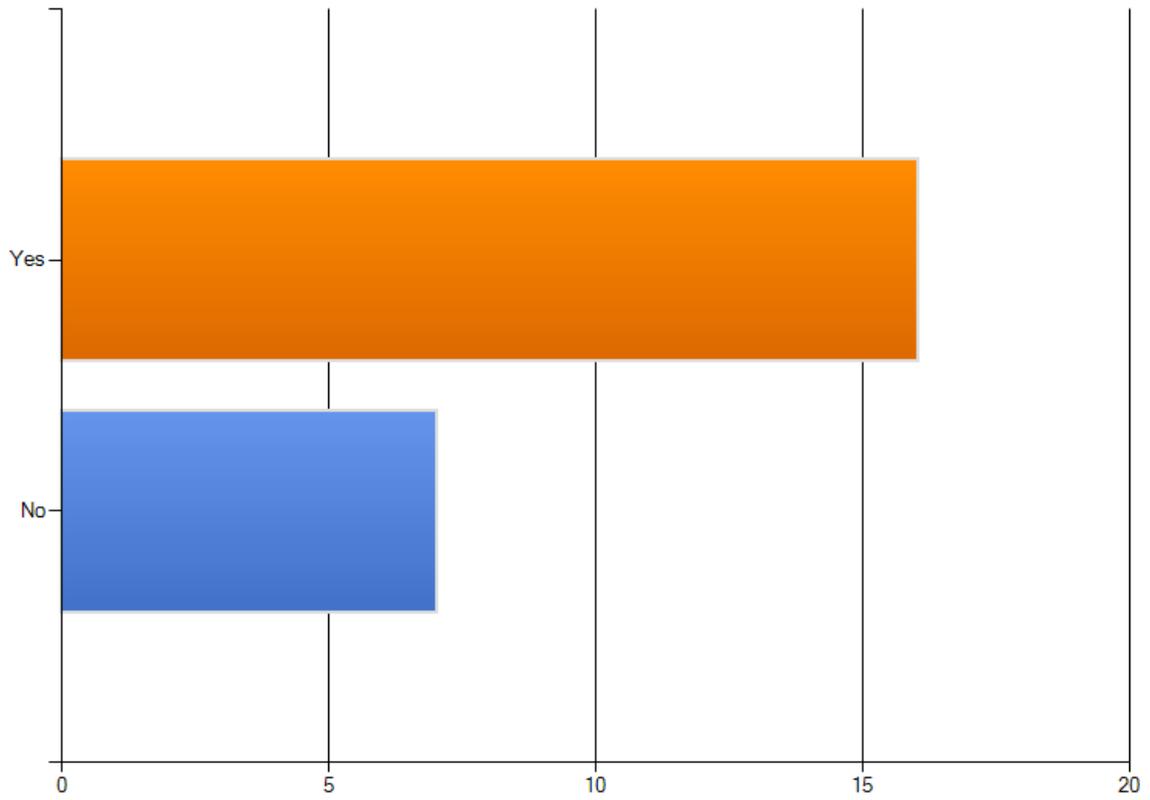
How long has your department's survey program been in place?

What method of feedback is used to conduct the survey?

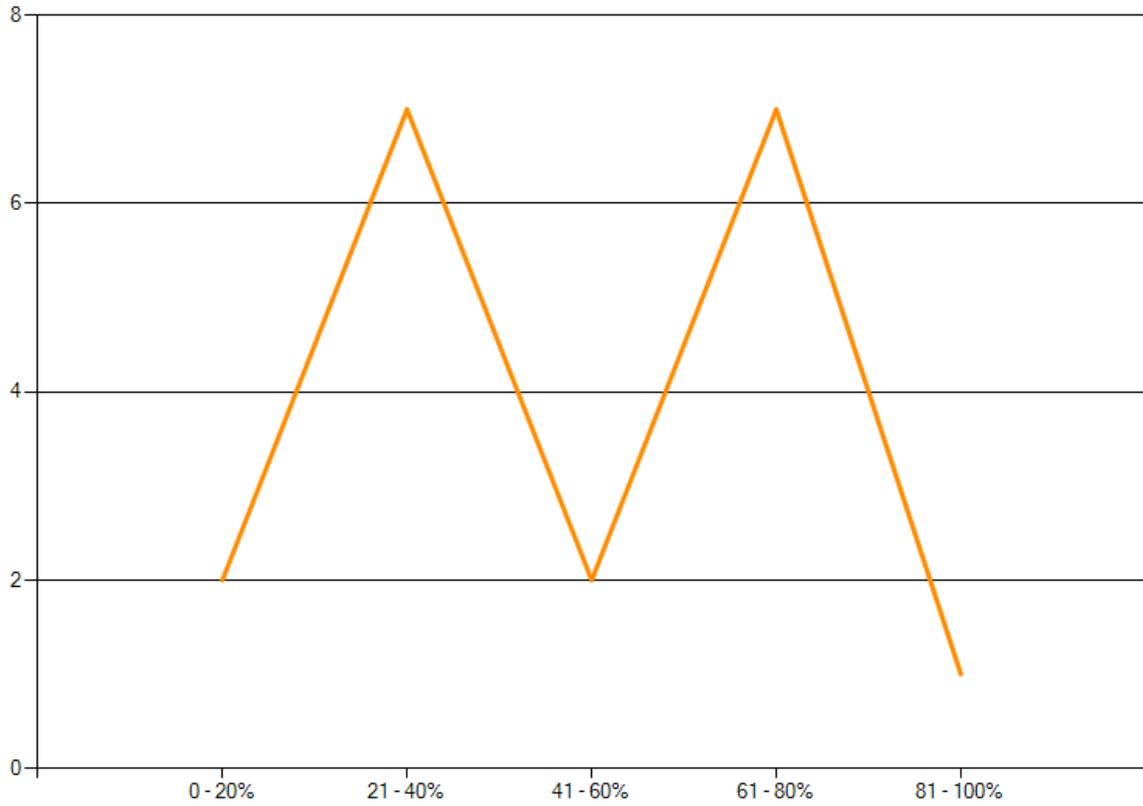
Does your department utilize the survey data for training purposes?



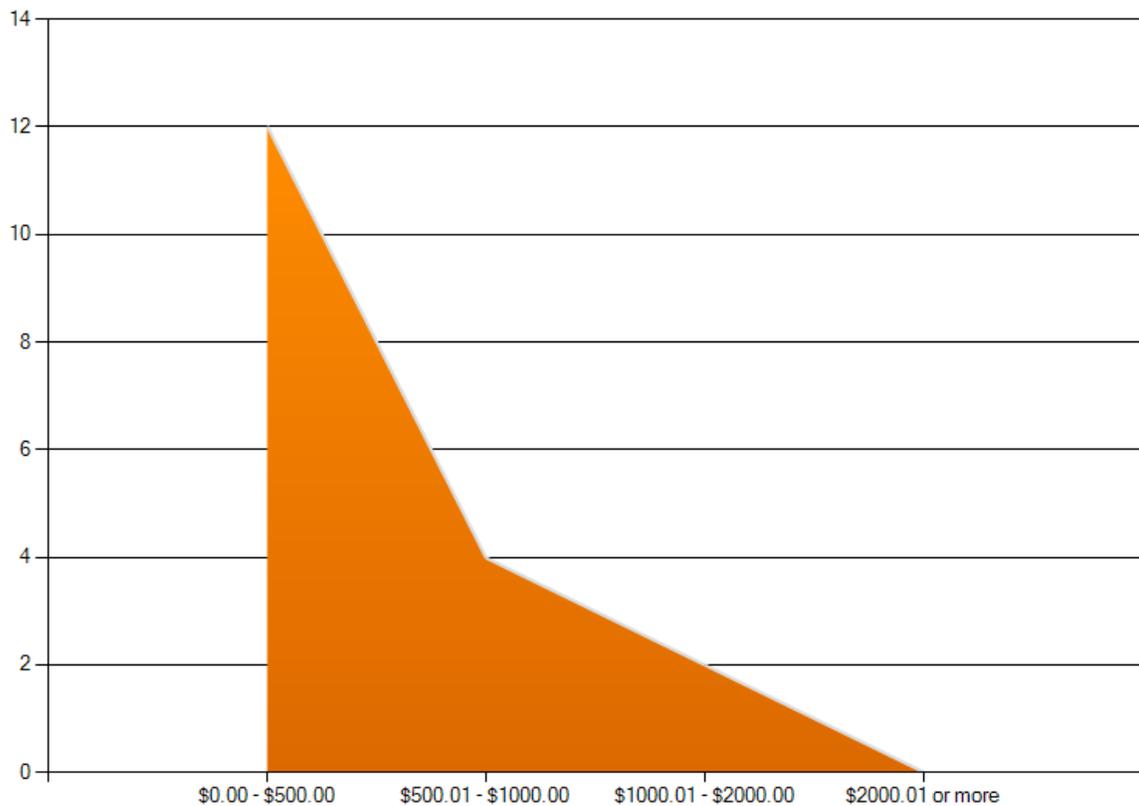
Does your department utilize a prepaid mailer?



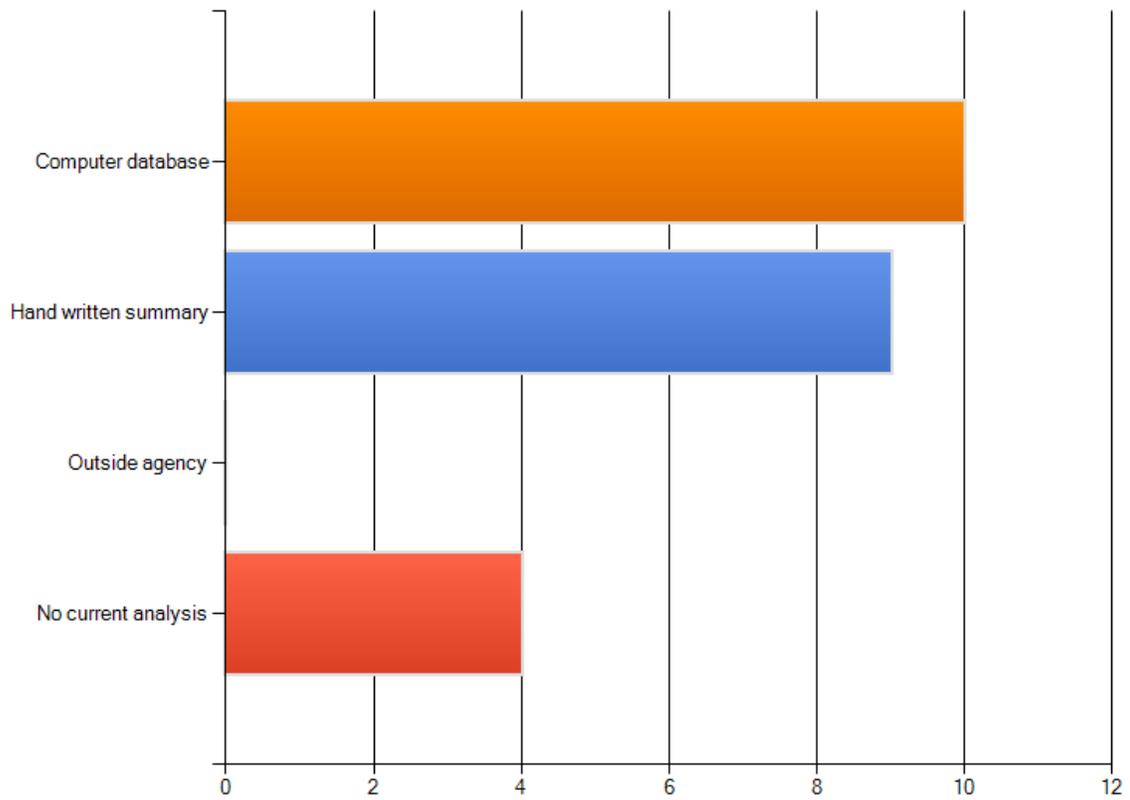
What percentage of the mailer do you get returned?



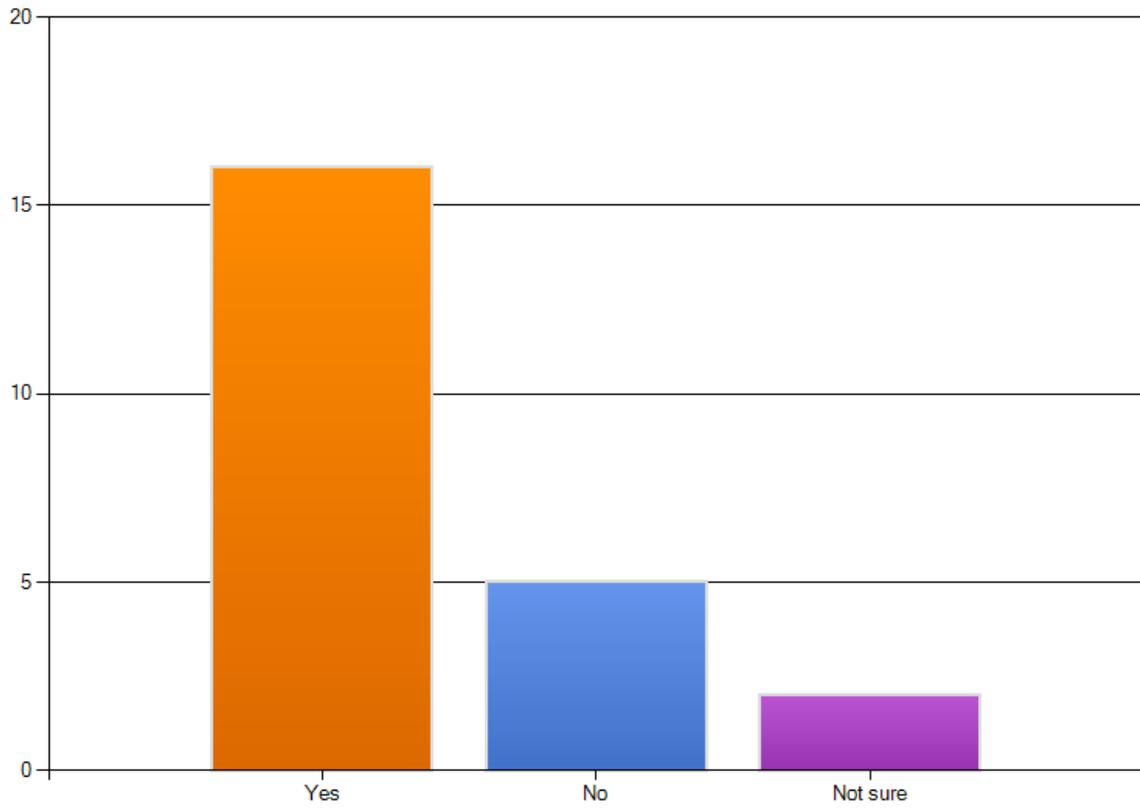
What is the budgeted amount for your mailer?



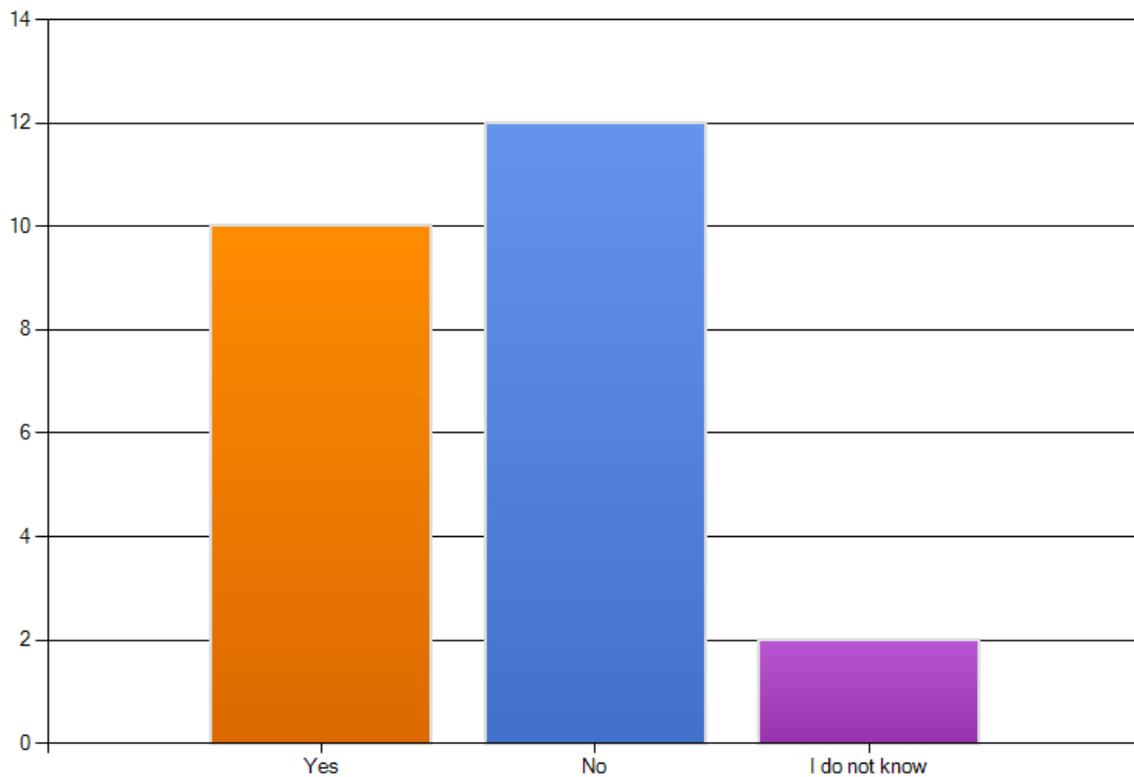
How does your agency currently analyze the survey data?



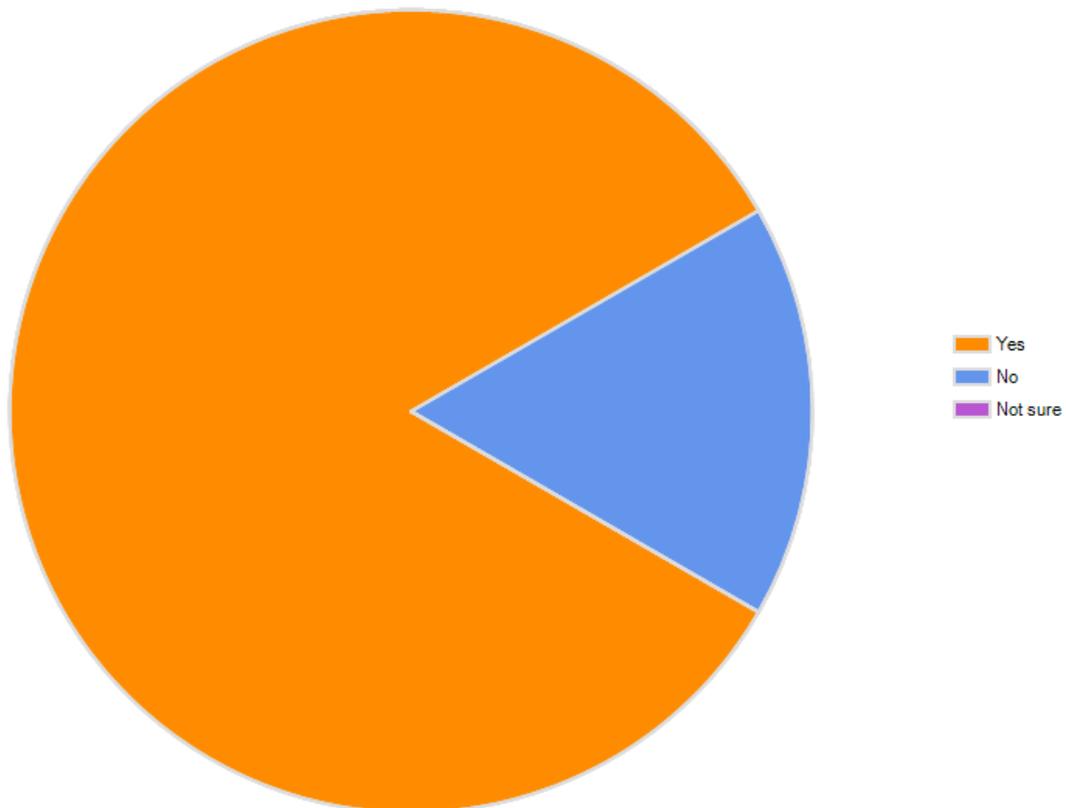
Does your department utilize the survey data for training purposes?

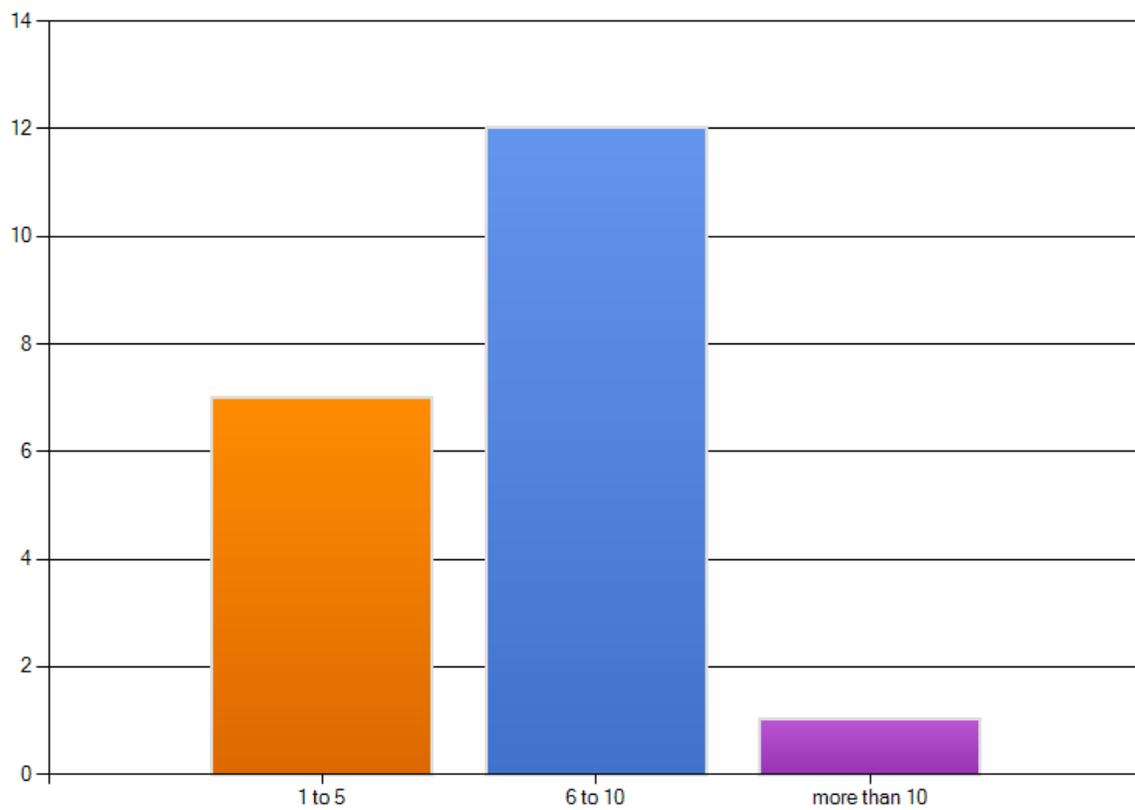


Have there been any protocol changes and/or internal procedural changes that resulted from your EMS survey?

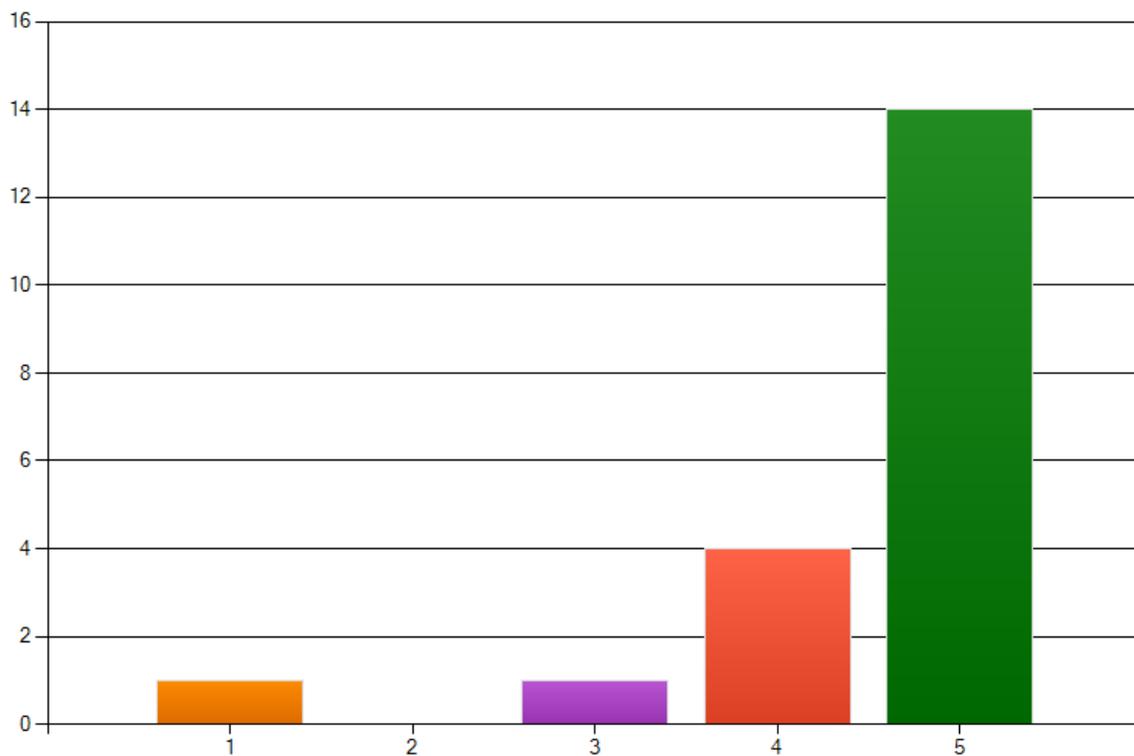


Overall do you know how your department rates with your community?



How many questions does your survey consist of?

Based on the results of your post EMS run survey, where does your department rate. Using the following scale, (On a scale of 1 - 5; with 1 being very dissatisfied, 2 - dissatisfied, 3 - OK, 4 - pleased, 5 - very pleased).



APPENDIX 3 – NORWICH TOWNSHIP EMS RUN REPSONSE CARD SURVEY

Plus graphs and charts results associated with Norwich Township Survey

In corresponding order 1 thru 11

Norwich Township EMS Run Response Card Survey

1. EMS Run Survey

The following survey is being used as a research tool for EMS Run Follow-up procedures.

2. Default Section

1. Have you received any feedback from the current EMS Response Card System in which you participated? (if no skip to #4)

- YES
- NO

2. Was the feedback positive?

- YES
- NO

3. Was the feedback negative?

- YES
- NO

4. Have you received any other verbal or written feedback from an EMS run in which you participated? (if no skip to #7)

- YES
- NO

5. Was the feedback positive?

- YES
- NO

6. Was the feedback negative?

- YES
- NO

7. Have you be given any report or summary of the findings from the EMS response cards since its inception?

- YES
- NO

Norwich Township EMS Run Response Card Survey

8. Would you benefit from an annual report?

- YES
- NO
- DON'T CARE

9. Do you feel the current system promotes department policy or protocol changes?

- YES
- NO
- UNSURE

10. Should the data collected from a customer service follow-up play a factor in making any potential policy or protocol changes?

- YES
- NO
- NO OPINION

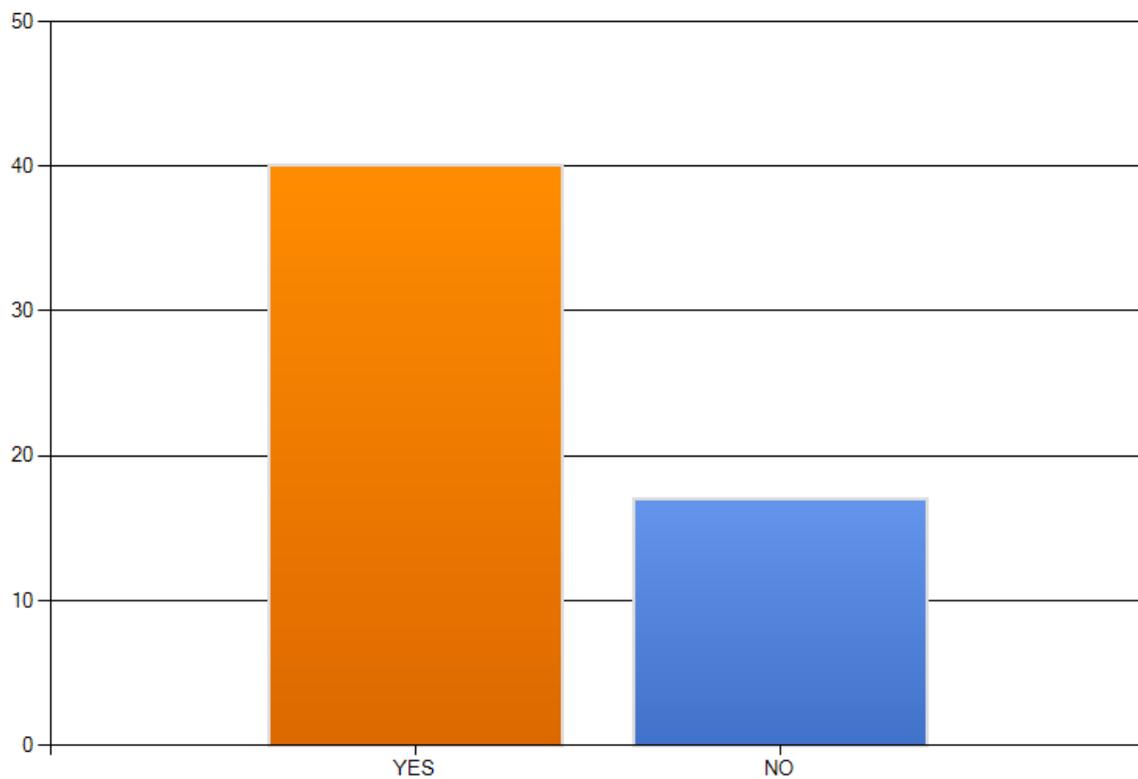
11. Based on your personal experience, how would you rate the current system in place:

- very dissatisfied
- dissatisfied
- neutral
- pleased
- very pleased

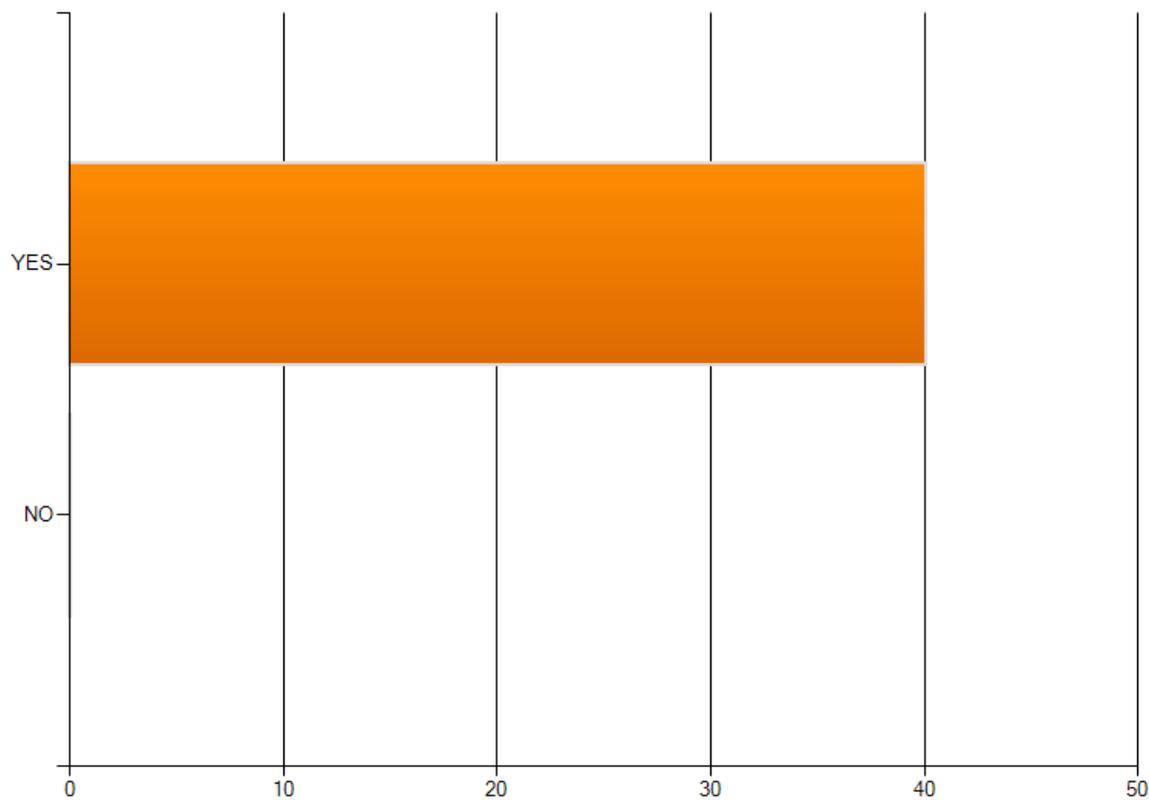
3. Thank You

Thank You for your participation in this survey for a research project. The results will also be used to enhance our current system.

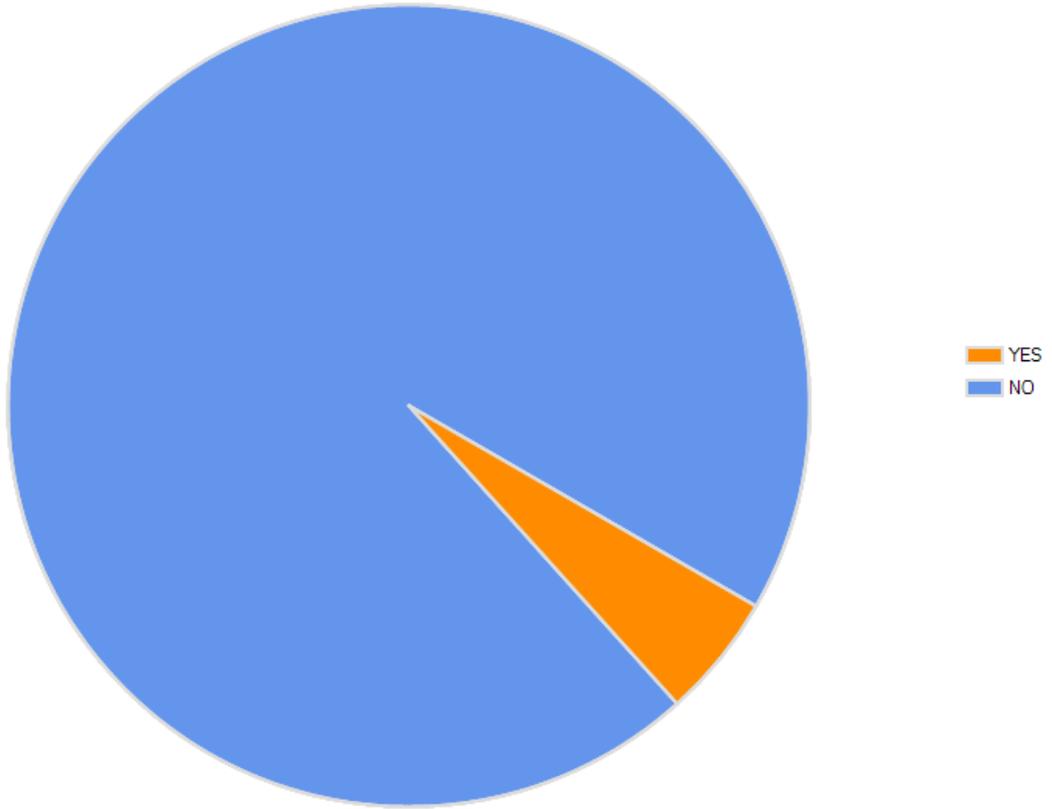
Have you received any feedback from the current EMS Response Card System in which you participated? (if no skip to #4)



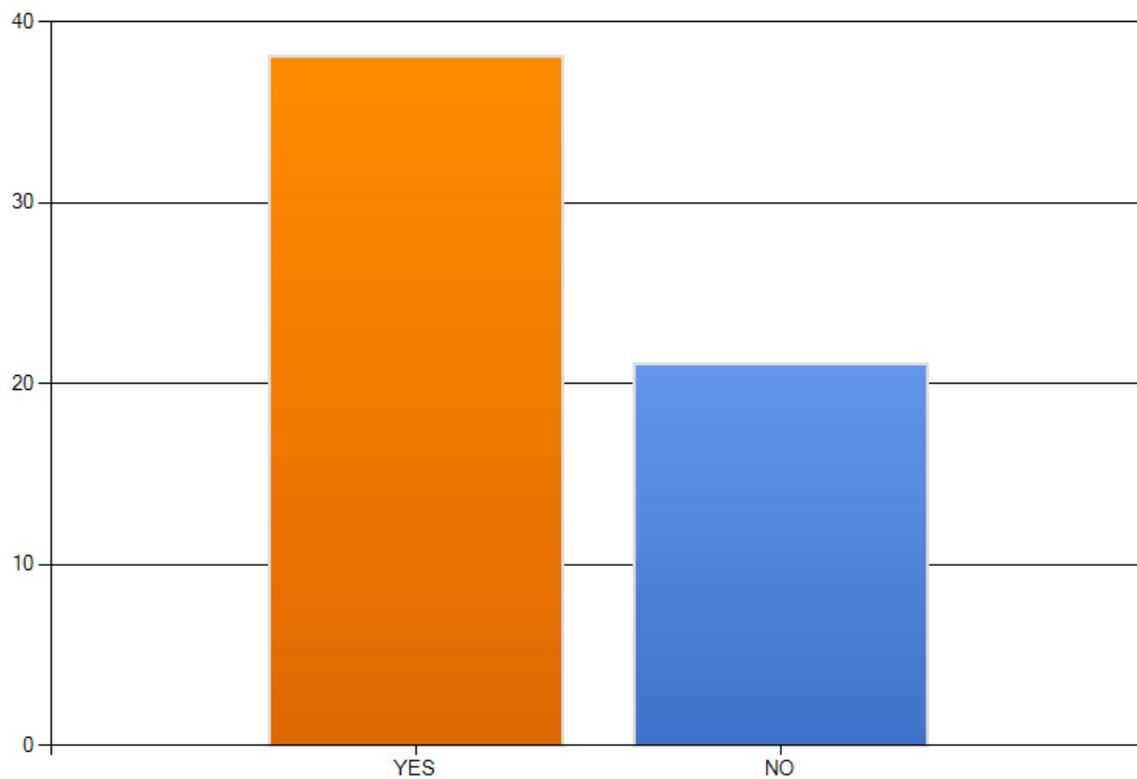
Was the feedback positive?



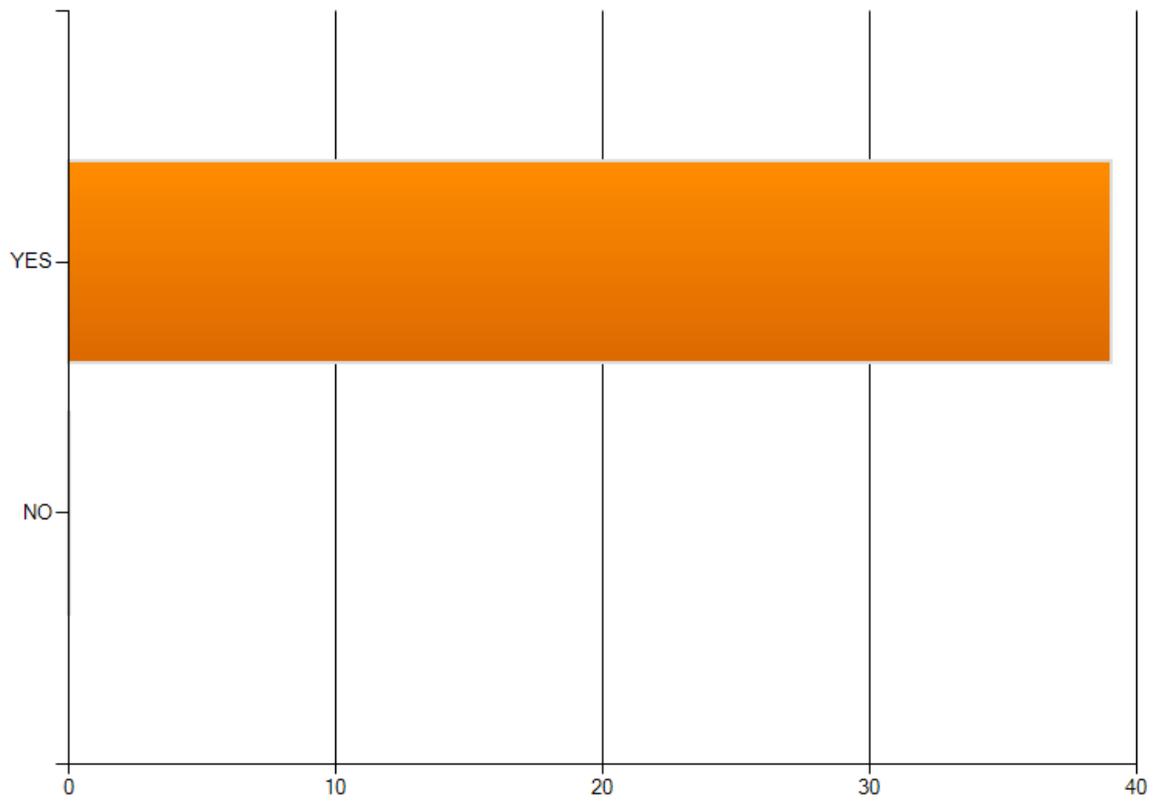
Was the feedback negative?



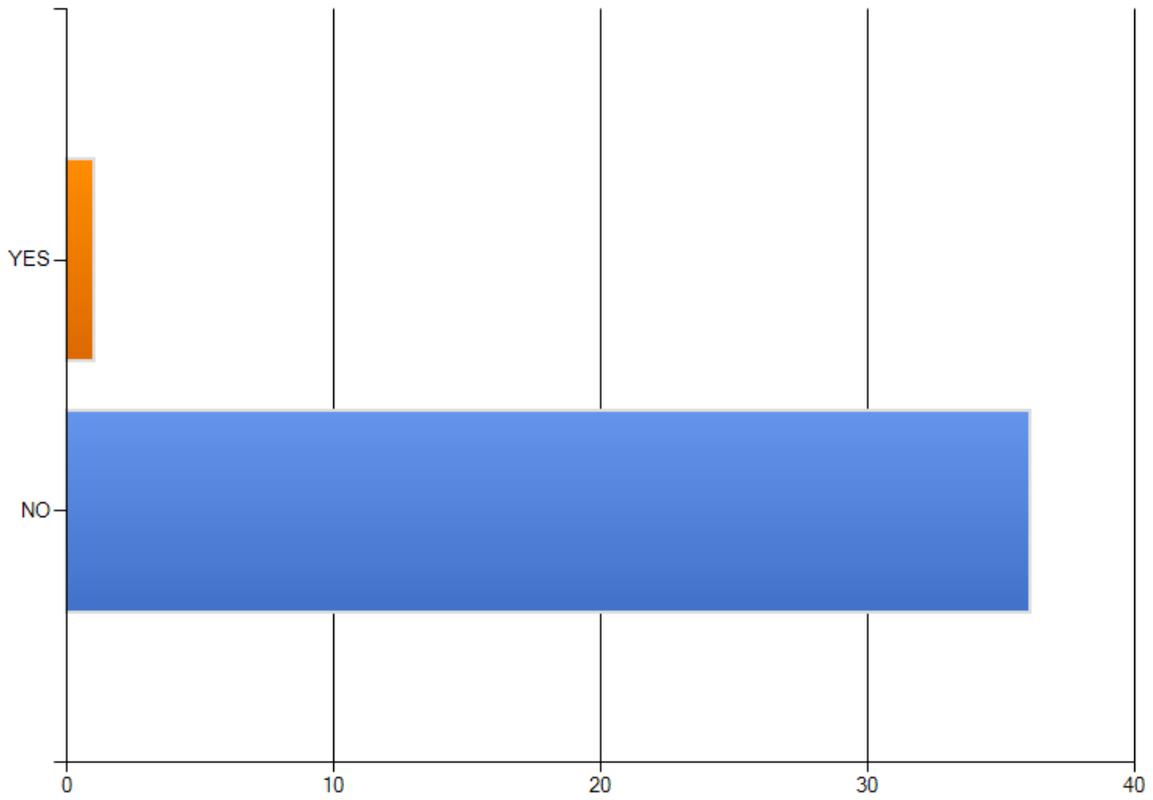
Have you received any other verbal or written feedback from an EMS run in which you participated? (if no skip to #7)



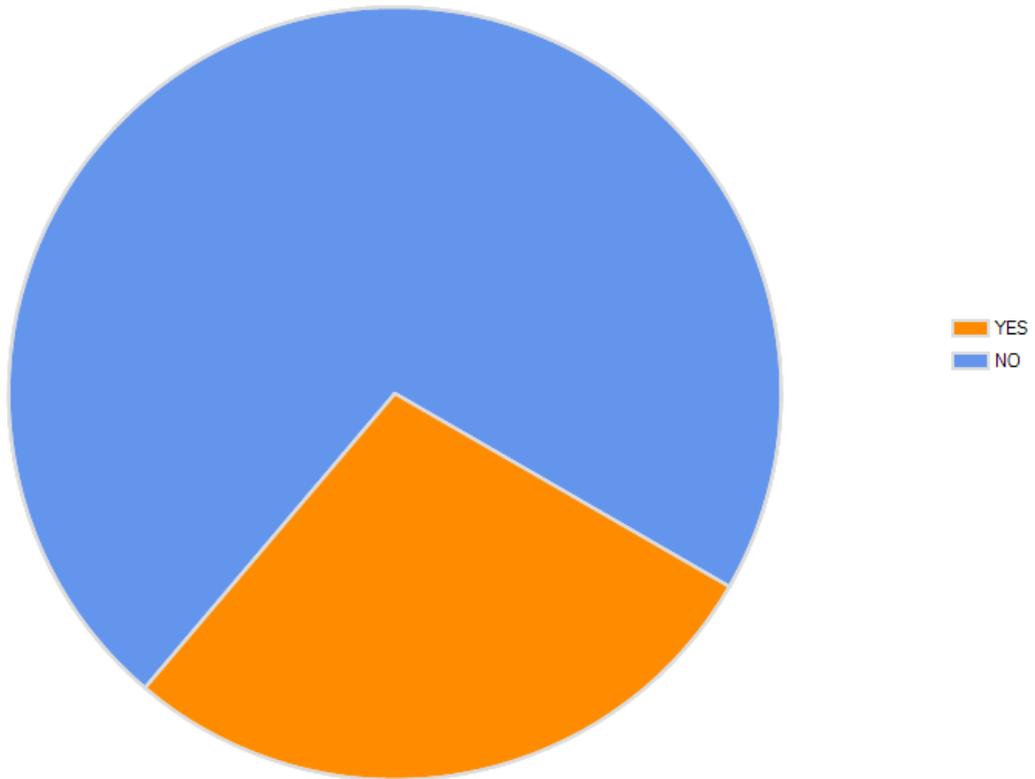
Was the feedback positive?



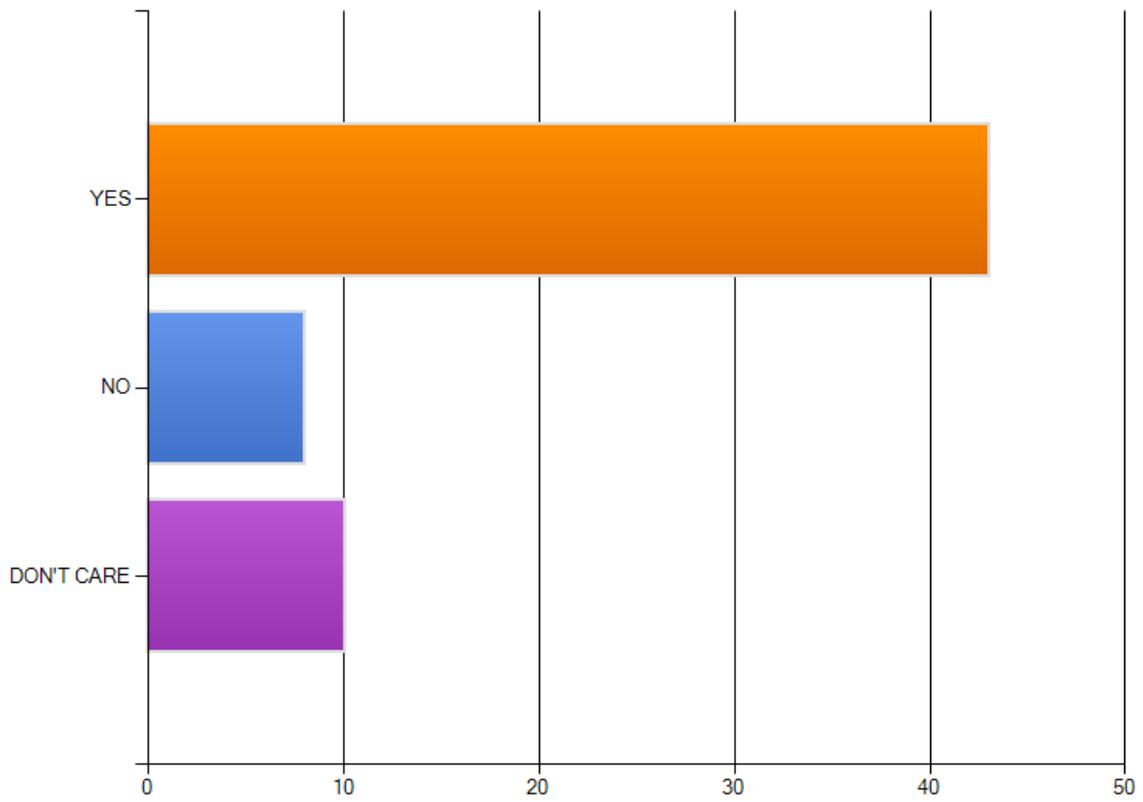
Was the feedback negative?



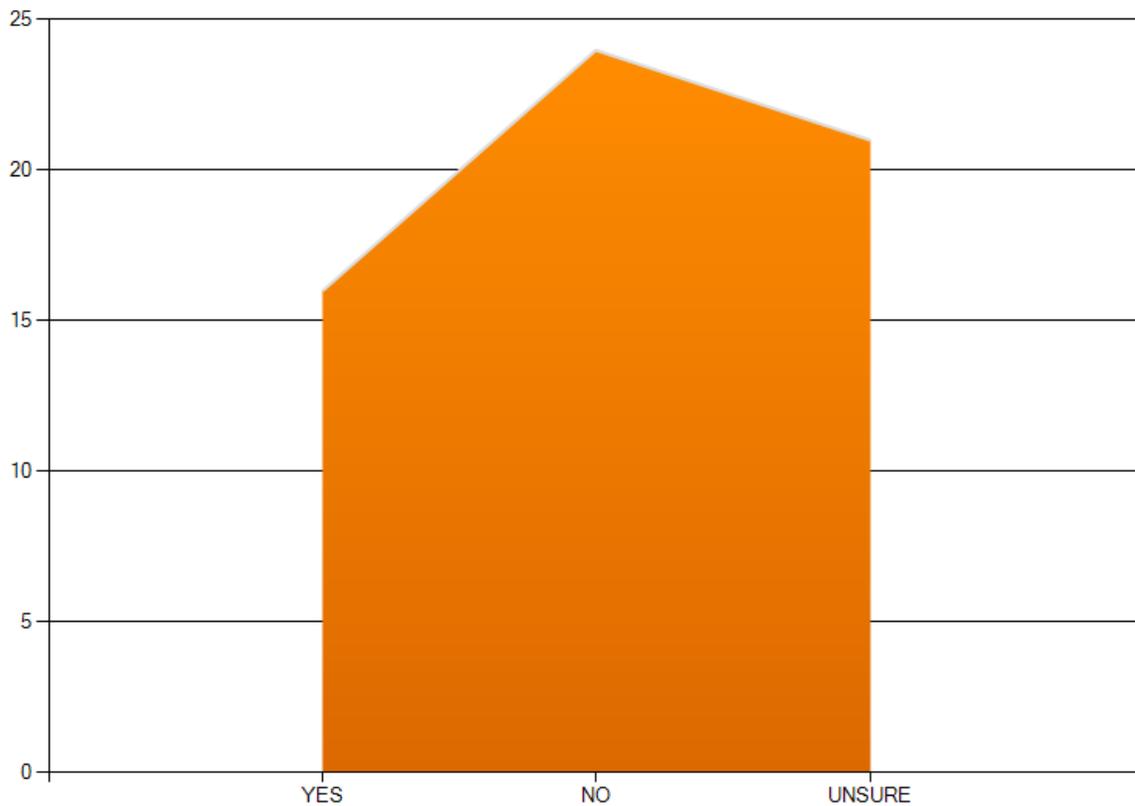
Have you be given any report or summary of the findings from the EMS response cards since its inception?



Would you benefit from an annual report?



Do you feel the current system promotes department policy or protocol changes?



Should the data collected from a customer service follow-up play a factor in making any potential policy or protocol changes?

