



*Baltimore Police Department*

*Patrol Response Survey*

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## ***Patrol Response Survey*** ***Baltimore Police Department***

### **Summary**

In 2008, the Baltimore Police Department developed and implemented a community based survey program designed to evaluate the effectiveness of a police officer's response to significant crimes.

This program, called the *Patrol Response Survey*, was founded upon the premise that a victim's experience in a specific crime holds significant impact on their feelings of safety and has resonating impact within the entire community. The manner in which individual police officers handle the response to this crime directly contributes to the entire community's perception of public safety. The *Patrol Response Survey* was designed to objectively evaluate a victim's level of satisfaction with the response, attention, and professionalism provided by responding patrol officers. By measuring this perception of effectiveness, the Baltimore Police Department has gained tremendous insight into the needs of victims, as well as the level of service provided by patrol officers.

The purpose of the *Patrol Response Survey* was to develop a strategy that assisted the Baltimore Police Department in evaluating the quality of effectiveness of patrol officers in response to specific crimes. Traditional mechanisms to evaluate police officer effectiveness are generally narrow in both focus and objectivity and often fail to incorporate a community perspective measurement. The intent of the *Patrol Response Survey* was to breakdown through these traditional evaluations and incorporate community members within the process to measure effectiveness through a structured survey.

The *Patrol Response Survey* was developed by the Baltimore Police Department's Office of the Chief of Patrol and was structured as an on-going, institutionalized program within the Police Department. Since inception, community representatives have administered the survey to 600 crime victims from communities and neighborhoods throughout Baltimore City. The results of these surveys have been data-based and analyzed in a partnership with an independent sociologist from Towson University. This analysis has provided a foundation of information to assist in the creation of future programs, policy and training.

The implementation, findings and future applications of the *Patrol Response Survey* will be described within the following sections: Assessing the Need in Evaluating Police Effectiveness; Administration of the Survey through Community Partnership; Analysis and Recommendations of Significant Findings, and Future Applications.

## Assessing the Need in Evaluating Police Effectiveness

In April 2008, the Baltimore Police Department in partnership with Dr. Christine Eith, an independent sociologist from Towson University, initiated a process to develop a structured community based survey that would assist the Department in measuring the level of effectiveness of patrol officers during response to specific crimes. Initial research revealed that nationally there was limited published analysis or research specifically evaluating police effectiveness and performance from the perspective of a victim. Modern police agencies often quantify effectiveness through the measurement and comparison of crime statistics. Reductions in crime are often used to validate a police department's level of success. However, crime statistics provide very limited insight into the community's perception of police professionalism or a victim's level of satisfaction with the police service. In the publication, *Reducing Fear of Crime in Houston and Newark* (Pate, Wycoff, Skogan, and Sherman: 1986), the Police Foundation found that a community's satisfaction of police services significantly corresponded with a perception of crime and safety. Additional research revealed that there is very limited documented and published measurement processes for evaluating the overall service provided by the police.

The Baltimore Police Department and Dr. Eith worked collectively to create and develop a community driven survey process that evaluated the overall service provided to crime victims by police officers. Through this partnership a twenty (20) question structured survey was developed. The intent of this survey was to provide a measurement tool that offered insight into a victim's perception of police service. The survey was structured to effectively measure the following specific components of police service: (*The full Patrol Response Survey is located in Appendix A*).

- Response Time: Evaluation of the victim's perception concerning the time it took for the officers to arrive on the scene.
- Police Professionalism: Evaluation of the victim's perception concerning the level of professionalism displayed by the responding police officers.
- Police Actions: Evaluation of the victim's perception concerning specific actions taken by police officers.
- Police Follow Up: Evaluation of the victim's perception of police / victim interaction after the initial reporting of the incident.
- Neighborhood: Evaluation of the victim's general perception of crime and public safety within their neighborhood.

The Baltimore Police Department elected to implement this survey by specifically focusing on victims of robbery and burglary incidents. Robberies and burglaries were selected as the targeted crimes due to their encompassing nature of transcending all types of socio-economical neighborhoods and these crimes are often the catalyst for a community's perception of crime.

The structure of the survey included the measurement of specific action events needed to be completed by police officers during initial contact with the victim. The evaluation of the

specific action events allowed the Department to determine that the officers were providing basic required services. Figure 1 represents a sample of questions pertaining to specific actions:

*Did the responding officer:*

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not applicable
a. Arrange for an investigation of the scene of the crime (e.g. fingerprints, or examination of items recovered from the scene)?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
b. Provide you with a complaint number?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
c. Provide you with contact details for officer / detective investigating with the case?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
d. Provide you with a victim's assistance booklet?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
e. Offer advice on crime prevention?	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

Figure 1

The survey also included a series of measurements that evaluated the victim's general level of satisfaction concerning the quality of service provided for specific issues. Figure 2 represents a sample question that evaluated satisfaction.

*Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with how well you were kept informed of progress of your case? Based on a scale of one to five with one being very satisfied and five being very dissatisfied?*

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>9</sub>

Figure 2

The final type of questions within the survey measured the impact that the crime had on the victim and if the victim's overall perception of the police changed as a result of the incident. Through this combination of measurements, the Baltimore Police Department was able to accurately evaluate the actions provided by the responding officer and the impact that these actions, as well as the total experience, had on the perception of the victim.

### **Administering the Survey – Through Community Partnership**

Beginning in April 2008, The Baltimore Police Department administered the survey telephonically by using volunteers from an assortment of community groups and organizations. On a monthly basis, community volunteers were invited to Police Headquarters to participate in the administration of the survey. Prior to this administration, staff from the Baltimore Police Department compiled all the incident reports for robbery and burglary crimes occurring within specific periods of time. The community representatives were provided a brief training period and then attempted to telephonically make contact with all the victims. During the course of fifteen (15) administration sessions, community volunteers made calls in 3,200 crimes and administered the survey to 600 victims (18% participation rate). The results of the survey were then data-based for future analysis.



**Figure 3: Community Volunteer Charlene Bourne contacts a crime victim**



**Figure 4: Sergeant Nicole Bennett assists community volunteer, Jane Reillo in the data-basing survey results (*Baltimore Sun*)**

The use of community groups and neighborhood based organizations was an important element of the administration of the survey. By using these volunteers the Baltimore Police Department attempted to create objectivity while also building upon community partnership. The groups and organizations administering the survey gained powerful insight into both the Department's commitment to professionalism as well as the challenges faced by all crime victims. Over the course of the fifteen (15) administration sessions a wide diversity of community organizations participated. These organizations included: police community council presidents, representatives from neighborhood associations, members from the Baltimore City Council, students from the University of Maryland and Towson University, a senior citizen organization, an R.O.T.C. class from Polytechnic Institute High School and members from the Neighborhood Mediation Center. In total, over 250 community members assisted in the administration of the survey.

## Analysis of Significant Findings

The Baltimore Police Department worked in partnership with Dr Eith to compile the results of the data-based survey responses. The intent of the analysis was to assist the Baltimore Police Department in understanding police officer effectiveness and to create a foundation of information for future training and policy development. The following is a brief summary of analysis and recommendations based on the significant findings: *The analysis of significant findings is calculated on the percentage of responses. Percentages are based on the total number of answered responses per question and are rounded to the nearest whole number. There was an average of 560 responses per question. The complete survey results delineating the percentage of responses and the numerical responses can be found in Appendix B and C.*

**Response Time Findings:** The survey found that 61 % of the victims made notification of the crime through the use of the 911 emergency system. An additional 32 % of victims made notification by calling a non-emergency number and 7 % of the victims through some other mechanism: visiting a police station, finding a police officer in community, etc (*Notification results displayed in Figure 5*). These results were somewhat unexpected. The initial belief was that a significantly higher percentage of victims would have used the emergency 911 system to report the crime.

The analysis of these results offers interesting insight into both victim action and police response. It is commonly understood that the most efficient mechanisms to initiate police response is through the emergency 911 system. However, 32 % of the victims elected not to use this system and instead made notification through a non-emergency telephone call. Predominately these victims used Baltimore City's 311 system. (*Note: Baltimore City uses a non-emergency 311 call center for conditions / complaints related to city services*). This finding suggests that there is a notable level of confusion among victims in what mechanism they should use to report a serious crime.

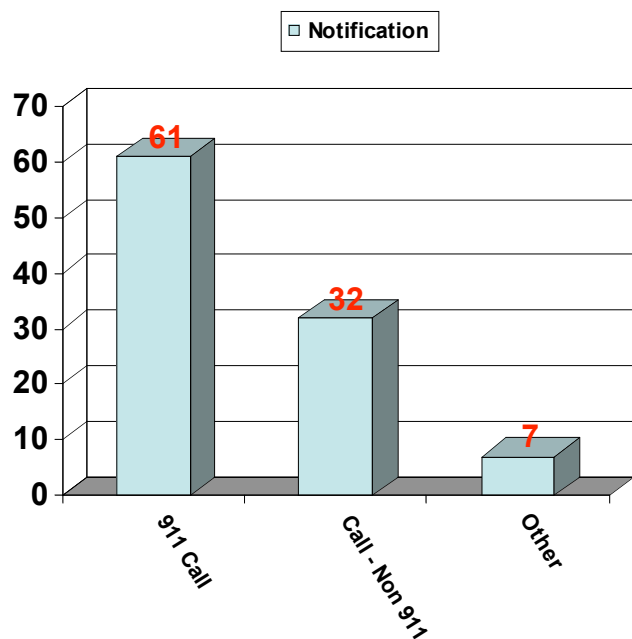


Figure 5

The survey also revealed that based on the victim's recollection, officers arrived on the scene and made contact within ten (10) minutes of notification in 44 % of the incidents and between ten (10) to twenty (20) minutes of notification in 32 % of the incidents. Overall, 76 % of the victims reported that police took less than twenty (20) minutes to respond to their call for a report of a robbery or burglary. Despite these positive findings, it is unclear if the confusion over what telephone number to call is creating an unnecessary delay in some response time.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that Baltimore Police Department implements a continuous community training program that provides orientation on the 911 system and the process for prioritization of police calls for service.

**Police Professionalism:** An important element of the survey was to determine how the victims perceived they were treated by the responding officers. The officer’s level of professionalism was evaluated with a series of questions focusing on qualitative interaction between the victim and officer. This analysis revealed the following:

- 92% of the victims reported that the officers listened to what they had to say.
- 82% of the victims reported that the officers showed concern.
- 93% of the victims reported that the officers treated them politely.
- 87% of the victims reported that the officers made efforts to understand the complete nature of the incident.
- 95 % of the victims reported that the officers looked neat and professional.

Overall, 83% of the victims reported being very satisfied or fairly satisfied in the way that they were treated by the responding officers (*Responses displayed in Figure 6*). These results provide a unique opportunity for the Baltimore Police Department to understand the level of professionalism demonstrated by its’ officers. It should be noted that in the past year the Baltimore Police Department has placed significant emphasis on the promotion of professionalism within the Department.

In 2008, the Baltimore Police Department implemented a training program called *Diamond Standard Training*. Within *Diamond Standard Training* entire shifts of officers are taken off-line and through a team approach are provided intensive instruction on professional police tactics and effective communication skills. Also in 2008, the Department implemented a monthly recognition program called *Excellence in Policing*. The *Excellence in Policing* program recognizes officers demonstrating outstanding levels of police service. Officers selected for the program attend an awards luncheon and receive specialized training.

The positive results surrounding police professionalism found within the survey suggest that this intensive commitment to these programs is establishing a higher standard of professionalism within the Department. It is recommended that professionalism and communication skills remain a priority focus in the development of future training.

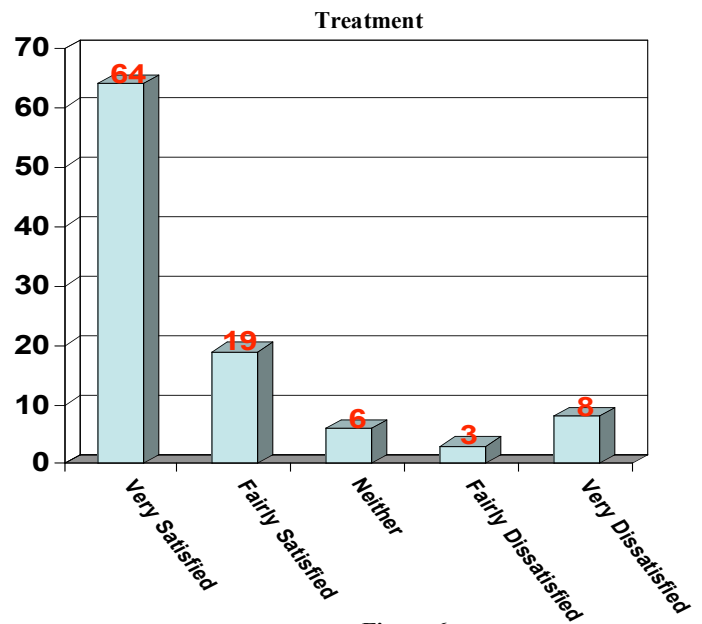


Figure 6

**Police Actions / Follow Up:** A component of the survey was to effectively measure police actions taken by the responding officer after arrival on the scene and during follow up contact with the victim. The purpose of this portion of the survey was to determine, if responding officers initially completed essential functions and if there was additional follow up contact with the victims. The survey revealed that in a significant majority of incidents, officers were completing specific functions during the initial contact.

- 90 % of victims remembered receiving a complaint number.
- 75 % of victims remembered receiving the officer’s contact information.
- 69 % of victims remembered the officer arranging for a further investigation of the incident: finger printing, notifying detectives, etc.

Additionally as a result of the initial contact with police officers, 63 % of the victims reported being very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the actions taken by the police officers. However, the results were varied on questions pertaining to victim assistance. Only 47% of victims reported receiving literature pertaining to victim’s assistance. Additionally, only 41 % of the victims reported receiving any advice concerning crime prevention.

In the series of questions evaluating follow up contact, 63 % of the victims reported they have not received any re-contact or follow up since initially reporting the incident. Additionally, in specific questions measuring the level that victims were kept informed concerning details of their incident the results were mostly unfavorable:

- 62 % of victims were not told if someone was criminally charged in connection with the incident.
- 66 % of victims were not told if any of their personal property was recovered.
- 63 % of victims were unsure if the investigation was still active.

Collectively, only 38 % of the victims reported being very satisfied or fairly satisfied in how well they were kept informed with the progress of their investigation. Whereas, 47 % reported being fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and 15 % of victims remained neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (*Responses displayed in Figure 7*).

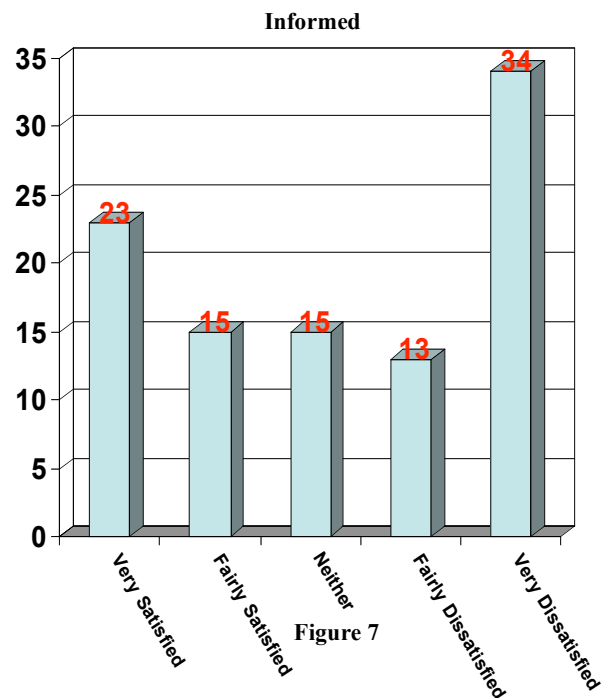


Figure 7

The analysis of these results suggests that Baltimore Police Department should develop strategies and systems that improve upon the total services provided by responding officers and

create better processes that ensure constructive follow up contact with victims. The following recommendations are offered based on these results:

- **Victim Assistance / Crime Prevention Literature:** It is recommended that the Baltimore Police Department develops victim assistance and crime prevention literature that is crime specific. Patrol officers should be trained to provide this information to victims during initial contact. *Note: Based on these findings, in 2009 the Baltimore Police Department created and began distribution of a “Burglary Prevention Toolkit”. This “Burglary Prevention Toolkit” is now distributed to all burglary victims and contains burglary prevention strategies and practical information to protect residential properties. (This “Burglary Prevention Toolkit” can be found in Appendix E).*
- **Follow Up Contact:** It is recommended that internal systems are developed so that victims of significant crimes receive constructive follow up contact from the Department. This follow up contact is an essential component in providing a totality of services to the victim and maintaining long term positive relationships. The Detective Division should continue to conduct follow up investigations in incidents with immediate investigatory leads. However, patrol officers should also be trained in conducting proper follow up investigations and a process should be established where patrol officers re-contact victims in specific periods of time. *Note: Based on these findings, in February 2009 patrol officers assumed the responsibility of conducting follow up investigations on all residential burglaries. The defined purpose of these follow ups is to collect additional investigatory information and to offer crime prevention assistance.*
- **Victim’s Assistance Unit:** It is recommended that the Baltimore Police Department establishes a Victim’s Assistance Unit. This Victim’s Assistance Unit would act as a liaison between the Department and victims of specific crimes. It is recommended that this Victim’s Assistance Unit coordinates support focusing on victim / witness intimidation, trial support, crime prevention, referrals on community based resources, and crisis intervention.

**The Entire Experience:** An important element of the survey was to evaluate the victim’s level of satisfaction concerning the entire level of service and response provided by the officers. The survey found that when taking the entire experience into account, 63% of the victims were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the entire level of service provided by the responding officers (*Responses displayed in Figure 8*). Additionally, 88 % of the victims reported that they believed the officers had handled their incident properly.

When asked about their personal opinions concerning the police department, victims reported that prior to this incident, 72% of victims had a generally high or mixed opinion of the police department. Additionally, 32 % of victims reported that this incident left them with a better opinion of the police department (54 % reported no change in opinion and only 14 % with a less opinion).

The results of this component of the survey are encouraging and also provide an important benchmark to evaluate the implementation of future programs. Despite overall positive findings, there are several specific areas that through policy, training and program implementation that the Baltimore Police Department can improve upon.

Most notably, as described above, are issues related to providing a totality of services and follow up contact / support to victims. To further expand recommendations based on these findings, it is proposed that the Baltimore Police Department develop a series of victim based focus groups to assist the agency in determining additional victim needs.

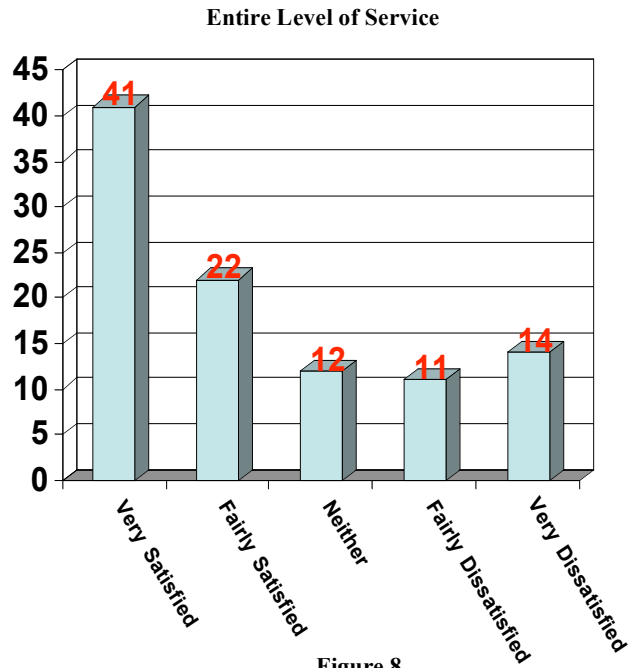


Figure 8

**Neighborhood / Police Presence:** A final component of the survey was to evaluate the victim’s perception of safety within their neighborhood and their perception of police presence. A summary of these findings follows:

- 55 % of victims reported living within their neighborhoods for less than five (5) years.
- 78 % of victims reported feeling safe within their neighborhoods during daytime hours (*Responses displayed in Figure 9*).
- 50 % of victims reported feeling safe within their neighborhoods during nighttime hours (*Responses displayed in Figure 10*).
- 65 % of victims reported feeling or seeing a police presence within their neighborhoods.
- 19 % of victims reported personally knowing police officers that patrol their neighborhoods.

In the last two (2) years, the Baltimore Police Department has developed an increased commitment to a variety of community policing programs. Specifically, the Department has dedicated attention to drastically increasing neighborhood participation in both community meetings and citizen on patrol groups. It is recommended that the Department design a process where victims of crime are specifically encouraged to participate in these programs. This process should use community and neighborhood leaders to facilitate direct contact with victims. These community leaders should be trained to provide support and encourage victim participation in on-going community policing programs.

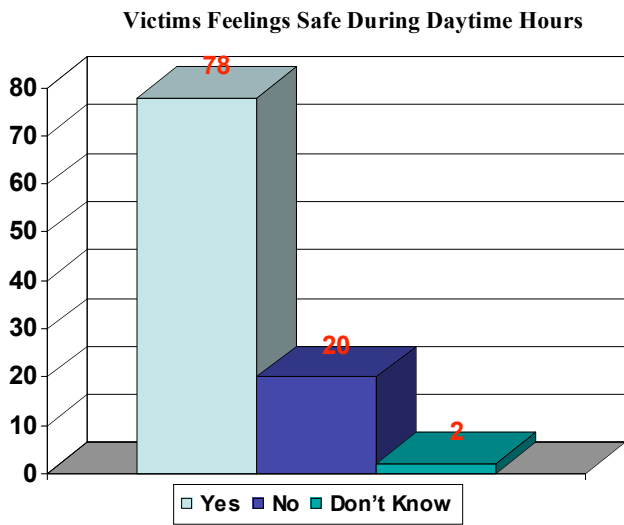


Figure 9

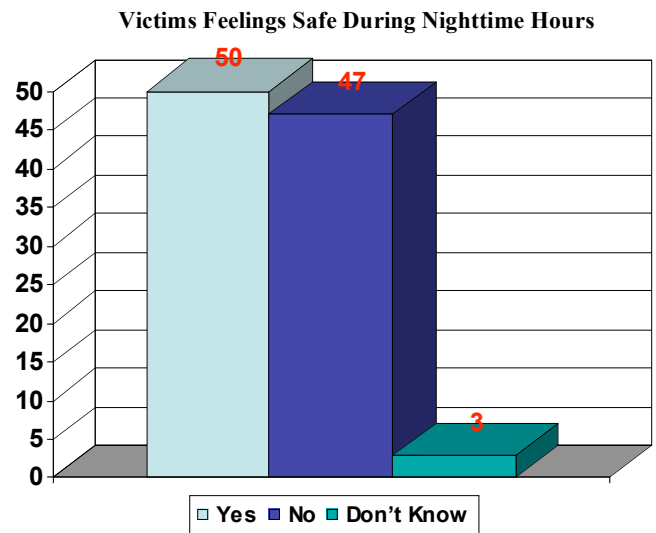


Figure 10

### Future Applications

The *Patrol Response Survey* has been developed as an ongoing institutionalized program within the Baltimore Police Department. Through the regular administration of the survey, the Department will be able to continuously collect data and further enhance community partnerships within the process. As additional data is collected, the Department will have the ability to use future analysis to further evaluate policy, training and program development. A brief composite of future applications follows:

**Neighborhood Relationship Analysis:** With additional data, the *Patrol Response Survey* can be used to evaluate the relationship of police opinion and effectiveness within specific neighborhoods or police posts. This information can be used to identify specific geographic areas that could benefit from improved police / community relations. These areas could then be targeted with specifically designed programs that improve police relationships. *In May 2009, the Patrol Response Survey will be administered by volunteers from a Hispanic based community organization to specifically evaluate responses of Spanish speaking victims.*

**Individual Officer Evaluations:** In the future, the *Patrol Response Survey* will have the ability to evaluate victims' responses as it relates to individual officers. Currently, with each completed survey the responding officer's numerical identification number (sequence number) is captured with the corresponding results. Over time, officers with consistently low results can be quickly identified. These specific officers can be provided with additional training or if appropriate, discipline. *Note: In April of 2009, the Baltimore Police Department will release a training video on the Patrol Response Survey. This video follows actual reported crimes from the initial response through a survey of the incident. The video will be used to educate both police officers and community members on the process as well as reinforce professionalism.*

Additional Response Analysis: Currently, the *Patrol Response Survey* is evaluating police response to reported burglaries and robberies. In the future, the survey can be expanded to evaluate response to other types of crimes or even police calls for service that don't necessitate a formal report. Additional analysis can be completed that evaluates the police response to specific crimes in comparison to other crimes.

Program Evaluation: The *Patrol Response Survey* will also be able to provide an evaluation of the implementation of a specific program. For example, in February 2009 the Department began administering the *Burglary Prevention Tool Kit* to victims of residential burglaries. The survey will be able to determine the effectiveness of this resource in relationship to specific victims.

### **Conclusion**

The *Patrol Response Survey* is an innovative and progressive program designed to evaluate a victim's perception of police effectiveness in response to a specific crime. By using members of the community to assist in the administration of the survey, the Baltimore Police Department has developed a strategy that builds community relationships while creating a foundation of information to assist in creation of future policy and training. This foundation of information offers the Department the unique opportunity to strengthen the level of service provided to all victims and enhance community confidence in public safety. The development and results of the *Patrol Response Survey* is offered by the Baltimore Police Department as a professional evaluation model for all law enforcement agencies.