

# 2010 ANNUAL CITIZEN SURVEY



**A Survey of Citizen Attitudes  
Concerning the Springfield Police Department**  
February 2010

Conducted by:  
**The Springfield Police Department**



## **INTRODUCTION**

The Springfield Police Department Long Range Plan includes as one of its goals that the Department use “periodic surveys to determine citizen attitudes, areas of concern and issues. Each year the Department conducts a written survey to measure citizen attitudes toward the Department and safety in the community. Several questions on the survey have been consistent over the years, and are therefore useful for identifying trends in citizen attitudes toward the Police Department.

## **DESCRIPTION OF METHODOLOGY**

This year’s survey consisted of 20 questions designed to allow the community to rate the services of the Police Department and the effectiveness of the Department’s response to calls for service. Respondents were asked about their perceptions of safety in their home, neighborhood, and the city in general; changes in crime rates and the Department’s ability to respond; and priorities for using available resources. Also, respondents were asked how aware they were of certain services provided by the Department, including Neighborhood Watch, Safety Town, Bicycle Patrol, Hispanic Community Outreach efforts, Citizen Police Academy and Traffic Team responses to driving complaints.

On February 1, 2010 surveys were mailed to Springfield addresses chosen at random from the residential address database. Random addresses were chosen as the data source for this year’s survey instead of registered voter lists, in the hopes of eliciting more responses from renters and young people, who are in general less likely to vote than stereotypical homeowners. Of the 900 surveys sent out, 71 were undeliverable because the residence was unoccupied. Within three weeks, a total of 205 (24.7%) were completed and returned. This rate of return is comparable to other mailed surveys conducted in recent years by the Department, although it is slightly lower than expected return rates for mailed surveys in general (25% to 40%).

## **RESULTS OVERVIEW**

Not all respondents answered all questions. In the following summary, all calculations are based upon the number of respondents actually answering the question unless otherwise indicated.

The first series of questions are intended to ask the respondents how we, as a Department, are doing in providing services.

**Question 1** asked: “Have you, or any member of your household, called the Springfield Police Department for assistance within the last year?”

39.9% of respondents indicated that they had called for police assistance, and 60.1% said they hadn't.

**Question 2** asked respondents to “rate the Springfield Police Department in the following areas:” and listed eight areas to be evaluated. Each area was rated on a scale from excellent to poor. The average of all answers fell in the excellent to good range. “Ability to handle serious situations” (92.8%) and “Professional competence” (91.9%) rated the highest, while “Preventing Crime” (75.3%) and “Speed of Response” (85.8%) rated the lowest.

**Question 3** asked “How satisfied are you with the service provided by the Springfield Police Department?” 91% of respondents indicated they are satisfied or very satisfied, with 9% reporting they are unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the Department’s service.

**Question 4** asked respondents what their primary source of information is about the Springfield Police Department. 58% of respondents indicated that either the television or the newspaper is their primary information source. 32% indicated that either personal contact or friends and neighbors are their primary source, and less than 6% indicated that either radio or internet is a primary information source.

The second section of the survey is intended to measure perceptions of community safety.

**Questions 5 and 6** asked how likely respondents felt it would be that the Springfield Police Department would catch persons who committed crimes against persons and crimes against property, respectively.

Respondents were much more confident that offenders committing crimes against persons would be caught (87% indicating it was at least likely) than offenders committing crimes against property (59% indicating it was likely).

**Question 7** asked a series of questions regarding how safe the respondent felt in their neighborhood and home during the day and at night; and how safe they felt generally in other parts of the city. As one might expect, respondents felt most safe at home during the daytime, with 99% feeling safe or very safe, and only 1% indicating feelings of being only unsafe. Nighttime produced only slightly lower results, with 92% indicating feelings of safe or very safe and 7% reporting feeling unsafe and only 1% feeling very unsafe.

Respondents also felt generally quite safe in their own neighborhoods during the day, with 96% feeling safe or very safe. At night, 67% reported feeling very safe or safe.

When asked about the city as a whole, 75% of respondents reported feeling safe or very safe, 23% reported feeling unsafe and only 2% reported feeling very unsafe in other parts of the city.

**Question 8** asked respondents to consider how the danger from crime, the Department's speed of response, and the Department's follow up efforts have changed over the last 5 years.

58% of respondents feel that crime danger is greater than it was 5 years ago, 50% feel that the Department responds faster compared to the same period, and 44% feel that follow up efforts are greater.

The third survey section attempts to measure the expectations and priorities of the community, and asks respondents about their awareness of specific programs.

**Question 9** asked respondents to rank on a scale of importance five non-emergency services provided by the Department. Of the choices given, investigating suspicious conditions and addressing suspicious behavior, such as loitering, were ranked as the most important, while nuisance complaint such as barking dogs, and removal of abandoned vehicles were least important. An interesting note on this question is that abandoned vehicles and barking dogs consistently rate low in priority on annual surveys, while in actual practice the department receives more complaints about cars and dogs than any other single issue.

**Question 10** was intended to explore the expectations respondents have of the Department in responding to different types of incidents. The question describes six types of incidents and asked respondents to indicate which of five levels of response would be most appropriate, given the available resources of the Department.

93% of respondents indicated that emergency response (sending a Police Officer immediately) was most appropriate for situations involving threats to someone's life or property. 62% felt that incidents involving stolen property should have an officer sent as soon as they are available. Community Service Officers are seen as being the most appropriate resource for parking, animal control issues, and neighborhood disputes. The Detective Bureau is perceived as being primarily focused on following up on criminal matters and investigating drug activity. Telephone reports are always reported as a less-preferred option to other resources, but score most favorably on parking or animal control issues (27%) and neighborhood disputes (21%).

**Question 11** asked respondents how aware they were of 9 different services provided by the Springfield Police Department.

Of the services listed, Neighborhood Watch and the School Resource Officer programs were the most well-known, with 69% and 60% of respondents, respectively, indicating they knew of them. Bicycle Patrol was also known by nearly half of respondents, with 48% indicating awareness that the Department patrols on bicycles. The program with the lowest level of recognition is the Hispanic Community Services program, with 13% of respondents indicating they were aware of the service.

**Questions 12 through 19** collect demographic data on the respondent pool. This data is useful for determining how successful the survey method is in capturing a cross section reflective of the entire Springfield community.

The typical respondent is between 50 and 64 years old, and has lived in Springfield for more than ten years. The majority are homeowners (71%) who are retired (35%) or working in a professional capacity (23%). A majority of the respondents were females (57%), and 26% indicated that they have dependant children living in their household.

**The final question** asked the respondent to make one recommendation to the Springfield Police Department about how to improve services to the community. About 60% of respondents included comments ranging from positive feedback to criticisms of the Department.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The results of this survey are consistent with the results from previous years. Community satisfaction with the Police Department remains high, and respondents feel relatively safe in their homes and neighborhoods. The addition of police officers and community service officers has significantly improved the Department's ability to respond to calls quickly, and to follow up on crimes when they occur.

**CITIZEN ATTITUDES SURVEY  
 SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT  
 February 2010**

## HOW ARE WE DOING?

1. Have you, or any member of your household, called or had contact with the Springfield Police Department for assistance within the last year?  
 Yes       No

2. Please rate the Springfield Police Department in the following areas:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Ability to handle/resolve serious situations				
Speed of response when called				
Respect for individual's rights				
Professional competence				
Appropriate use of force				
Protection of the community				
Preventing crime				
Equal treatment of all individuals regardless of race/ethnicity				

3. How satisfied are you with the service provided to you by the Springfield Police Department?

Very Satisfied       Satisfied       Unsatisfied       Very Unsatisfied

4. What is your primary source of information about the Springfield Police Department?

Newspaper     Television     Radio     Friends/Neighbors     Personal Contact     Internet

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

5. How likely do you think it is that offenders who commit crimes against other people, such as assaults, rapes, robberies or homicides, will be caught by the Springfield Police Department?

Very Likely       Likely       Unlikely       Very Unlikely

6. How likely do you think it is that offenders who commit crimes against property, such as theft, vandalism or burglary, will be caught by the Springfield Police Department?

Very Likely       Likely       Unlikely       Very Unlikely

*(Continued on Back)*

7. How safe do you feel.....

walking in your neighborhood during the day?

Very Safe     Safe     Unsafe     Very Unsafe

walking in your neighborhood at night?

Very Safe     Safe     Unsafe     Very Unsafe

in your home during the day?

Very Safe     Safe     Unsafe     Very Unsafe

in your home at night?

Very Safe     Safe     Unsafe     Very Unsafe

generally, in parts of the city away from your own neighborhood?

Very Safe     Safe     Unsafe     Very Unsafe

8. Compared to five (5) years ago (or when you first moved here),  
do you feel that.....

the danger from crime in the city of Springfield has become:

Greater     Less

the speed of response by the Department has become:

Greater     Less

the follow up efforts by the Department have become:

Greater     Less

## EXPECTATIONS AND PRIORITIES

9. The Springfield Police Department's highest priorities are to respond immediately to emergency situations such as crimes against persons, in-progress property crimes and abuse/neglect of children or the elderly. The Department also endeavors to proactively respond to "neighborhood nuisance" issues. Please rank the following services in order of importance to you and your family, with 1 being the highest and 5 being the lowest priority (use each number only once).

- \_\_\_\_\_ Address nuisance complaints, such as loud parties or barking dogs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Investigate suspicious behavior such as loitering
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ticket and/or remove abandoned vehicles
- \_\_\_\_\_ Investigate suspicious conditions such as open doors or broken windows
- \_\_\_\_\_ Strictly enforce traffic regulations, such as headlight use, speeding or running stop signs

10. Please indicate with check marks how the Police Department should *best* use available resources for the following types of incidents. Please do not use any single resource more than twice.

	<b>Incident</b>					
	Threats to life or property	Stolen or damaged property	Follow-up on crimes	Parking Enforcement/Animal Control Services	Ongoing neighborhood disputes	Possible drug activity
<b>Resources</b>						
Emergency Response (Officers respond immediately)						
Police Officer as soon as available						
Community Service Officer						
Detective Bureau Investigation						
Over the phone reporting						

11. Please indicate with a check mark which of the following services offered by the Springfield Police Department you were aware of:

<b>Service</b>	Knew about this service	Was not aware of this service	Where did you hear about this service/program?
Neighborhood Watch			
Safety Town for Preschoolers			
Hispanic Community Outreach Coordinator			
School Resource Officers in High Schools			
Citizen Police Academy			
Traffic Team/ neighborhood traffic issues			
Bicycle Patrol			
Provide assistance with Crime Prevention			
Neighborhood Dispute Resolution			

(Continued on Back)

# DEMOGRAPHICS

*All of the questions in this section are entirely optional. Answering them will help us measure how well our services are applied to all members of our community, but your survey will be included in our results regardless. Thank you!*

12. How long have you lived in Springfield?

- Less than 1 year     1-5 years     5-10 years     More than 10 years (or all my life)

13. How old are you?

- Under 18     18-24     25-34     35-49     50-64     65 or Older

14. Please indicate your Gender:

- Male     Female

15. How would you classify your work?

- Professional     Clerical/Technical     Student  
 Blue collar     Retired     Other occupation  
 Homemaker     Currently unemployed     Disabled

16. What is your educational level?

- Less than high school     Post High School Education/Training  
 High school diploma     College Graduate

17. With which racial or ethnic group do you most closely identify?

- Asian     Black/African-American     Native American  
 Caucasian/White     Hispanic     Other

18. Please check all that apply.

- Homeowner     Employed in Springfield     Business Owner  
 Renter     Employed elsewhere

19. Do you have dependent children, under the age of 18, living in your household?

- Yes     No

20. If you could make one recommendation to the Springfield Police Department about how they could improve services to your community, what would it be? (If you need more space, please feel free to continue your answer on a blank sheet of paper)

*Thank you for participating in our survey*

N= 205 Response Rt. = 24.7%

**Q1 Contact?**

<b>Yes</b>	79	39.9%
<b>No</b>	119	60.1%
<b>Null</b>	7	

	92.8%	85.8%	88.3%	91.9%	89.1%	87.3%	75.3%	87.5%
	<b>Q2 Ability</b>	<b>Speed</b>	<b>Respect</b>	<b>Competence</b>	<b>Use of Force</b>	<b>Protection</b>	<b>Crime Prevention</b>	<b>Equal Trtmnt</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	73	69	78	86	70	70	48	79
<b>Good</b>	81	76	73	73	69	75	77	61
<b>Fair</b>	9	18	15	13	12	18	30	14
<b>Poor</b>	3	6	5	1	5	3	11	6
<b>Null</b>	39	36	34	32	49	39	39	45

**Q3 How Satisfied**

<b>Very Satisfied</b>	72	39.1%
<b>Satisfied</b>	95	51.6%
<b>Unsatisfied</b>	14	7.6%
<b>Very Unsatisfied</b>	3	1.6%
<b>Null</b>	21	

**Q4 Info Source**

<b>Television</b>	67	34.0%
<b>Newspaper</b>	55	27.9%
<b>Radio</b>	7	3.6%
<b>Friends/Neigh</b>	27	13.7%
<b>Personal Contct</b>	37	18.8%
<b>Internet</b>	4	2.0%
<b>Null</b>	8	

**Q5**

**Person Crimes**

<b>Very Likely</b>	47	24.1%
<b>Likely</b>	122	62.6%
<b>Unlikely</b>	25	12.8%
<b>Very Unlikely</b>	1	0.5%
<b>Null</b>	10	

**Q6**

**Property Crimes**

<b>Very Likely</b>	25	12.9%
<b>Likely</b>	90	46.4%
<b>Unlikely</b>	70	36.1%
<b>Very Unlikely</b>	9	4.6%
<b>Null</b>	11	

	95.9%	67.3%	99.0%	92.3%	74.6%
<b>Q7</b>	<b>Neigh Day</b>	<b>Neigh Night</b>	<b>Home Day</b>	<b>Home Night</b>	<b>Other Neighs</b>
<b>Very Safe</b>	95	33	113	83	16
<b>Safe</b>	94	99	82	98	128
<b>Unsafe</b>	8	55	2	14	44
<b>Very Unsafe</b>	0	9	0	1	5
<b>Null</b>	8	9	8	9	12

<b>Q8</b>	<b>Crime Dngr</b>		<b>Speed Rspnse</b>		<b>Follow Up</b>	
<b>Greater</b>	120	58.5%	103	50.2%	91	44.4%
<b>Less</b>	56	27.3%	45	22.0%	50	24.4%
<b>Null</b>	29	14.1%	57	27.8%	64	31.2%

<b>Q9 Priorities</b>	632	478	758	379	495
	<b>Nuisance</b>	<b>Susp. Beh</b>	<b>Aband. Veh</b>	<b>Susp. Cond.</b>	<b>Enf. Traffic</b>
<b>1</b>	20	43	11	77	60
<b>2</b>	25	57	16	62	34
<b>3</b>	50	53	27	26	41
<b>4</b>	63	23	36	15	31
<b>5</b>	32	14	98	8	24
<b>Null</b>	15	15	17	17	15
	<b>4th Priority</b>	<b>2nd Priority</b>	<b>5th Priority</b>	<b>1st Priority</b>	<b>3rd Priority</b>

<b>Q10 Resources</b>	<b>Threats to Life</b>	<b>Stolen Prop</b>	<b>Follow Up</b>	<b>Parking/AC</b>	<b>Neigh Disp</b>	<b>Drug Activity</b>
<b>Emergency Resp</b>	167	17	4	1	7	45
<b>Officer when Avail</b>	7	85	29	14	39	54
<b>CSO</b>	3	15	42	79	64	9
<b>Detective Inv.</b>	1	31	61	1	3	38
<b>Phone Report</b>	2	16	21	36	30	15
<b>Null</b>	25	41	48	74	62	44

<b>Q11 Service Aware</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Null</b>	<b>% Yes</b>
Neigh Watch	143	33	29	69.8%
Safety Town	40	128	37	19.5%
Hisp. Out Coord	26	141	38	12.7%
SRO Prog	124	51	30	60.5%
CPA	60	106	39	29.3%
Traffic Team/Neigh	50	121	34	24.4%
Bicycle Patrol	99	70	36	48.3%
Crime Prevention	74	95	36	36.1%
Neigh Dispute Res.	38	131	36	18.5%

#### **Q12 How Long?**

<b>Less than One</b>	9	4.5%
<b>One to Five</b>	28	13.9%
<b>Six to Ten</b>	22	10.9%
<b>More than Ten</b>	142	70.6%
<b>Null</b>	4	2.0%

#### **Q13 Age**

<b>Under 18</b>	0	0.0%
<b>18-24</b>	6	3.0%
<b>25-34</b>	17	8.5%
<b>35-49</b>	48	23.9%
<b>50-64</b>	62	30.8%
<b>65 or Older</b>	68	33.8%
<b>Null</b>	4	

#### **Q14 Gender**

<b>Male</b>	83	43.2%
<b>Female</b>	109	56.8%
<b>Null</b>	13	

#### **Q15 Work**

<b>Professional</b>	46	23.0%
<b>Blue Collar</b>	21	10.5%
<b>Homemaker</b>	12	6.0%
<b>Clerical/Tech</b>	18	9.0%
<b>Retired</b>	69	34.5%
<b>Unemployed</b>	6	3.0%
<b>Student</b>	5	2.5%
<b>Other Occupation</b>	14	7.0%
<b>Disabled</b>	9	4.5%
<b>Null</b>	5	

#### **Q16 Education**

<b>Less than HS</b>	4	2.0%
<b>High School</b>	70	35.7%
<b>Post HS Training</b>	57	29.1%
<b>College Grad</b>	65	33.2%
<b>Null</b>	9	

#### **Q17 Race**

<b>Asian</b>	4	2.0%
<b>White</b>	176	89.3%
<b>Black</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Hispanic</b>	9	4.6%
<b>Native Amer</b>	5	2.5%
<b>Other</b>	3	1.5%
<b>Null</b>	8	

<b>Q18</b>		
<b>Homeowner</b>	137	71.0%
<b>Renter</b>	56	29.0%
<b>Null</b>	12	

<b>Work In:</b>		
<b>Springfield</b>	38	48.7%
<b>Elsewhere</b>	40	51.3%
<b>Null</b>	127	

<b>Business Owner?</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	15	7.3%
<b>No</b>	190	92.7%

<b>Q19 Children?</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	52	25.9%
<b>No</b>	149	74.1%
<b>Null</b>	4	

<b>Q20 Comments?</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	121	59.0%
<b>No</b>	84	41.0%