

Survey of
Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department
Operational Employees:

*Attitudes, Concerns and Opinions Relating to the
Provision of Emergency Medical Services*



District of Columbia

Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor
February 11, 2007



Survey of DC Fire and EMS Operational Employees

During December 2007, the Office of the City Administrator conducted a survey of operational employees working in the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. Conducting periodic confidential and anonymous employee surveys was one of the recommendations contained in the September 2007 report of the Mayor's Task Force on Emergency Medical Services.¹

How was the survey conducted?

Each of the employees invited to participate received an email from the City Administrator's office with a link to an online survey. To limit opportunities for inflating or otherwise manipulating the results, the survey software limited responses to the email addresses on the invitation list. Each email address could respond no more than once to the survey. Participants were assured of confidentiality and were given a guarantee that taking the survey would have no negative repercussions for them. (See appendix for text of email sent to employees).

The survey was available to employees to participate in from December 7 to December 23, 2007.

In addition to the email notification, The DC Fire/EMS Department sent out a departmental order from the Chief explaining the survey and encouraging participation. Announcements were made also over the radio and station PA systems at the start of each shift for eight days.

Who was surveyed?

The survey population was 1,787 personnel and was defined as all employees of the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department who are responsible or potentially responsible for providing operational service: all firefighters, firefighter/EMTs, firefighter/paramedics, single-role EMTs, and single-role paramedics.

Do the survey responses constitute a statistically valid random sample of the DC Fire/EMS Department's operations staff?

The survey responses do *not* constitute a random sample. Although we have a much larger sample size² than what would be required to obtain statistically valid results, we *cannot* draw conclusions about employees of the DC Fire and EMS Department as a whole because the

¹ Recommendation 3g: "Chief shall periodically conduct confidential, anonymous surveys of Department employees (both single-role and dual-role) regarding their attitudes, concerns, and opinions relating to the Department's provision of emergency medical services. The first survey shall be completed no later than December 31, 2007." See [the EMS Taskforce Final Report](#), p. 29.

² For a population of 1,787, a sample size of 450 would be large enough to ensure results within +/- 3 percentage points with a 95% confidence level. See the [Sample Size Calculator](#) from Creative Research Systems.

sample is not random. Since participation in the survey was voluntary, employees themselves chose whether to respond. Consequently, the survey results suffer from *self-selection bias*³—that is, they over-represent employees who had a reason to communicate to the Department, and they under-represent employees who chose not to participate. While the responses give us a good indication of why some employees chose to respond, we do not know why other employees stayed on the sidelines. Due to this selection bias, *one cannot project the results of the survey on to the agency as a whole*, though one can draw insights from the portion of employees who chose to respond. Therefore, the analysis that follows limits observations to the respondents rather than the agency as a whole.

What questions did the survey ask?

The survey had five major parts. For a complete view of the survey, refer to Appendix 2.

- The first part sought to obtain helpful demographic information about respondents, including sex, race/ethnicity, level of EMS certification, date certified at that level and date first certified, and amount of time spent doing EMS. The section below, Who responded to the Survey?, contains the answers to these questions.
- The second part contained 25 questions on a five-value Likert scale⁴ asking participants to agree or disagree with statements about the Department in four topic areas: management/leadership, working conditions, quality of EMS care, and training. Each of these topics has its own section.
- The third part made use of the Gallup Q¹² questions to determine employee engagement in the workplace. This part also used a five-value Likert scale.
- The fourth part asked participants to indicate three things they need to do a good job in delivering EMS care, and then to provide three reasons why they get satisfaction from providing EMS care.
- The final part gave participants an opportunity to provide whatever comments they wanted agency management to consider.

³ Wikipedia suggests that self-selection bias may occur “whenever the group of people being studied has any form of control over whether to participate. Participants' decision to participate may be correlated with traits that affect the study, making the participants a non-representative sample. For example, people who have strong opinions or substantial knowledge may be more willing to spend time answering a survey than those who don't.” See entry on [selection bias](#).

⁴ A Likert scale is a type of response scale that seeks to measure positive or negative response to a statement. The five values on the scale used in the survey were strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree.

Who responded to the survey?

Of the 1,787 employees who received invitations to take the survey, 781 responded, a response rate of 44 percent.

Gender. The survey population included 204 females, slightly more than 11 percent of total surveyed. Females responded at a higher-than-average rate than males—47 percent vs. 43 percent.

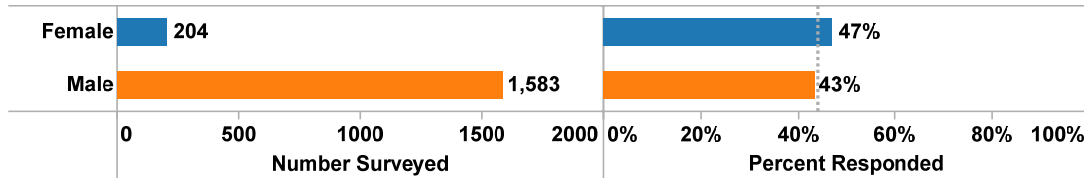


Figure 1 - Participation by Gender

Race/Ethnicity. The survey population was 50 percent African-American, 48 percent White, and two percent Hispanic. White participants had a 55 percent response rate, African Americans had a 32 percent response rate, and Hispanics had a 62 percent response rate.

Age. Surprisingly, those in the 20 to 24 age group, who would be expected to be most comfortable taking an on-line survey, had the lowest response rate, at 33 percent. The highest response rate came from the small number of respondents ages 60 and up, and from the 30 to 34 age group.

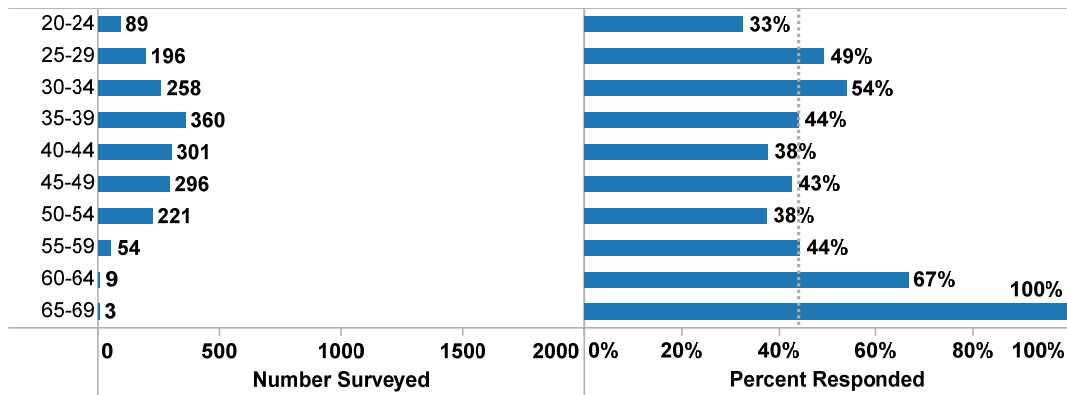


Figure 2 - Participation by Age

Medical Certification Level. The medical certification levels of respondents lines up fairly closely to the certification levels of the operational staff. The majority of respondents indicated a medical certification level of EMT-Basic, which is in line with the operational staff. EMT-Paramedics are somewhat over-represented with 16 percent of the respondents. Six percent of respondents were lateral transfers from single-role to multi-role.

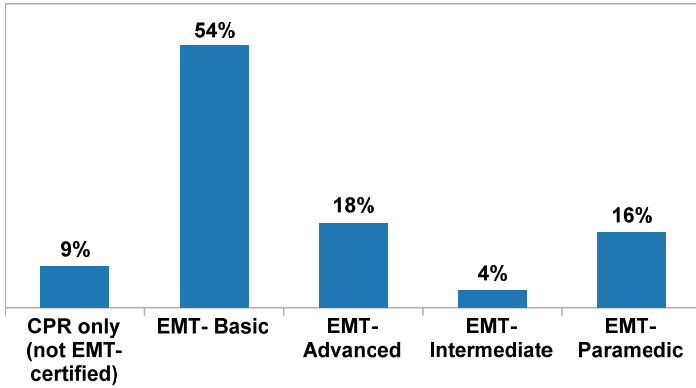


Figure 3 – Medical Certification Level of Respondents

Year of Current/First Medical Certification. Respondents indicated a range of EMS experience. Around two-thirds received their first EMS certification more than ten years ago, but only 53 percent reached their current level of certification prior to 1997.

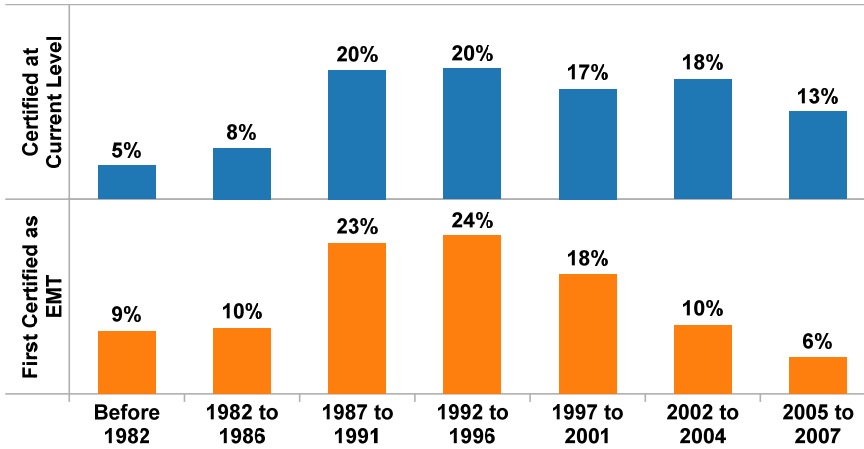


Figure 4 - Certification Dates of Respondents

Direct Participation in EMS Care. In answer to the question, “How often do you assume a direct role in pre-hospital emergency medical care?” 54 percent of respondents said “very often.” Only eight percent said never or almost never.

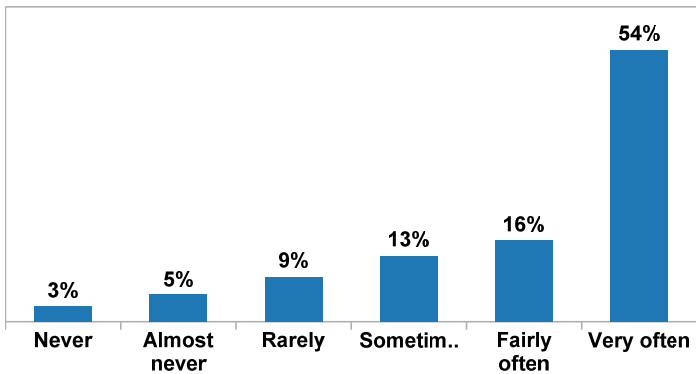


Figure 5 - Direct Participation by Respondents in EMS Care

Management/Leadership

The respondents provided helpful feedback to the Department’s leadership on how effectively management is directing the EMS function. Just under half of the respondents agree that the department’s leadership is committing time and resources to improve EMS delivery. The highest number, 62 percent, feel they get adequate support and oversight for performing emergency medical care. Regarding communication, two-thirds of respondents disagreed that the Department has an effective program to educate the public on EMS. Members were split on their view of the frequency and effectiveness of EMS internal communications. Close to half of respondents (48 percent) indicated they are not getting enough feedback on EMS job performance. Only 25 percent of respondents felt that DC Fire/EMS is consistently fair when dealing with employees, while close to 60 percent disagreed.

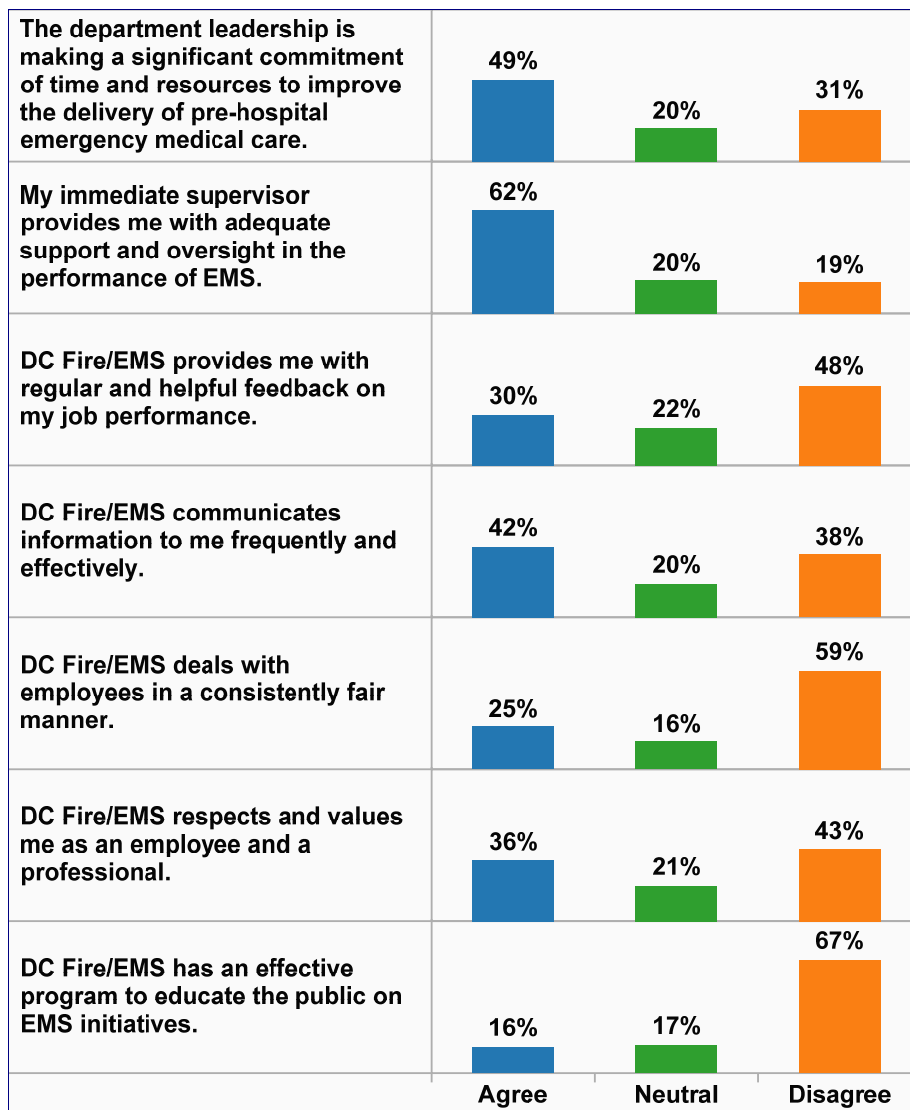


Figure 6 – Management/Leadership Questions

Working Conditions⁵

A healthy 80 percent of respondents are satisfied with the teams they are assigned to. The 13 percent who are not satisfied are split more or less evenly across the different job classes. While 68 percent of respondents said they have the tools and equipment needed to do their EMS jobs, 47 percent also reported experiencing problems with EMS equipment or supplies in the past 30 days.

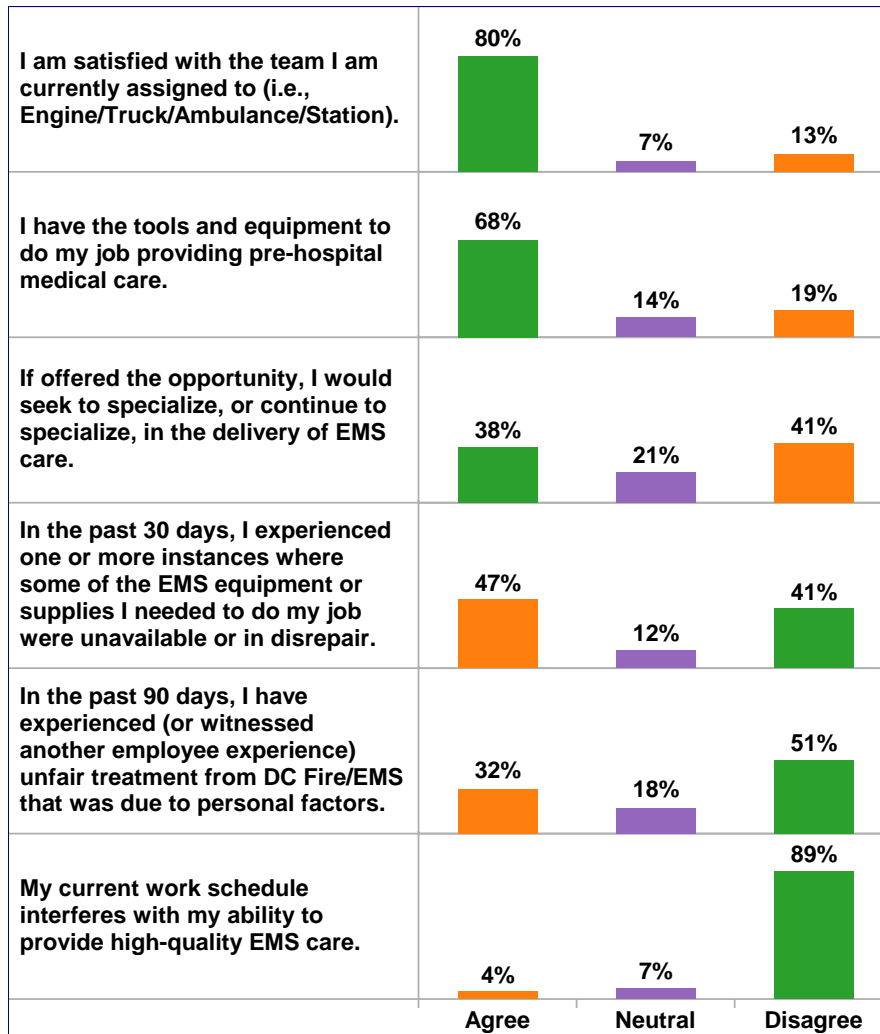


Figure 7 - Working Conditions Questions

⁵ In the charts, the green bar color indicates a positive response, orange a negative response. The last three questions in this section are the only ones in the survey where agreement would cast a negative light on the Department’s performance. The statement on specialization in EMS delivery does not have a value one way or the other.

Quality of EMS Care

The Department has focused its efforts recently on improving the quality of EMS care. Yet at this stage, only 40 percent of respondents believe that DC Fire/EMS is taking the right steps to improve the quality of EMS care. Close to half the respondents (48 percent) disagree that DC Fire/EMS field supervision is contributing significantly to improving pre-hospital care. While three-quarters of respondents claim to be getting enough patient interactions to stay sharp, 7 percent say they are not, and 6 percent indicated that the question did not apply to them.

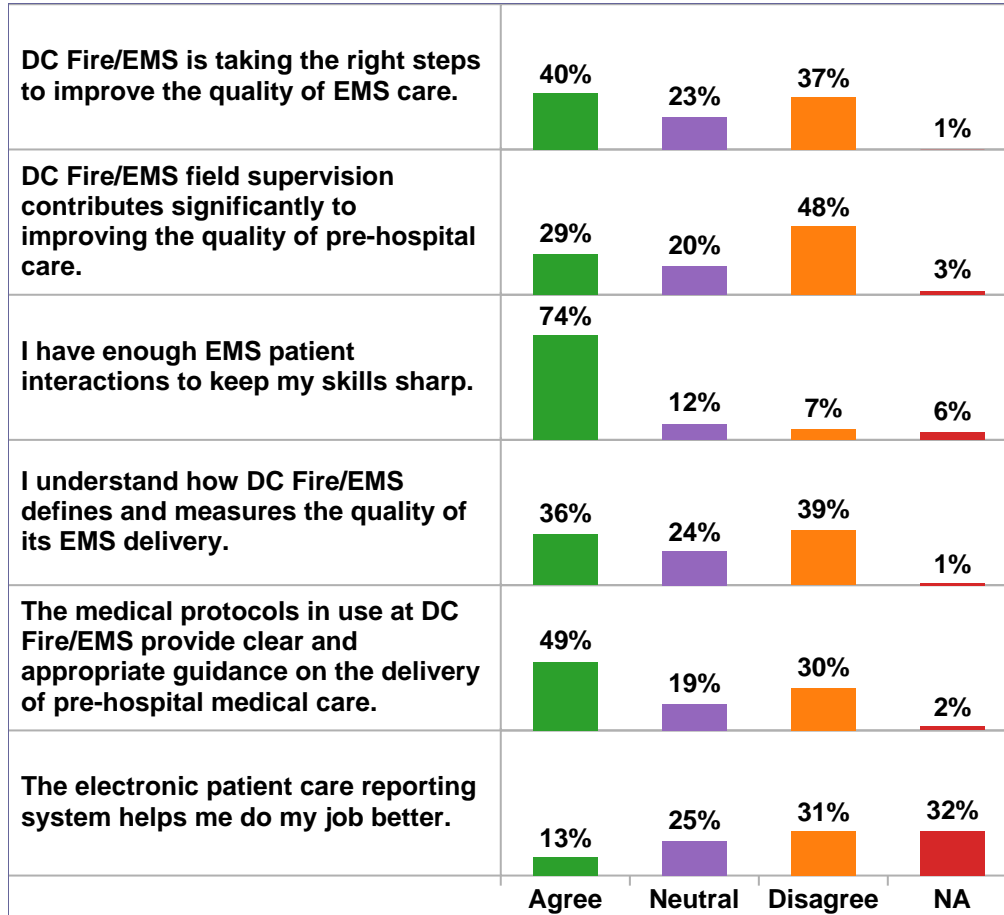


Figure 8 - Quality of EMS Care Questions

Only a little more than one third of respondents claim to understand how the Department defines and measures EMS quality. Half of respondents agree that the medical protocols the Department uses provide clear and appropriate guidance in the field, but 30 percent disagreed. Very few respondents agreed that the new Toughbook-based electronic care reporting system is helping them to do their jobs better. About a third disagreed, and another third felt the statement was not applicable to them, indicating that the roll-out of the ePCR program is not yet complete. About 20 percent of the comments in this section addressed dissatisfaction with elements of the ePCR system.

Training

Over 70 percent of respondents agreed that they have the training needed to do a good job in providing EMS care. A much lower percentage, only 43 percent, expressed satisfaction with the EMS training received from the Department. Some respondents commented that they sought training outside of the Department’s offerings in order to ensure high-quality training.

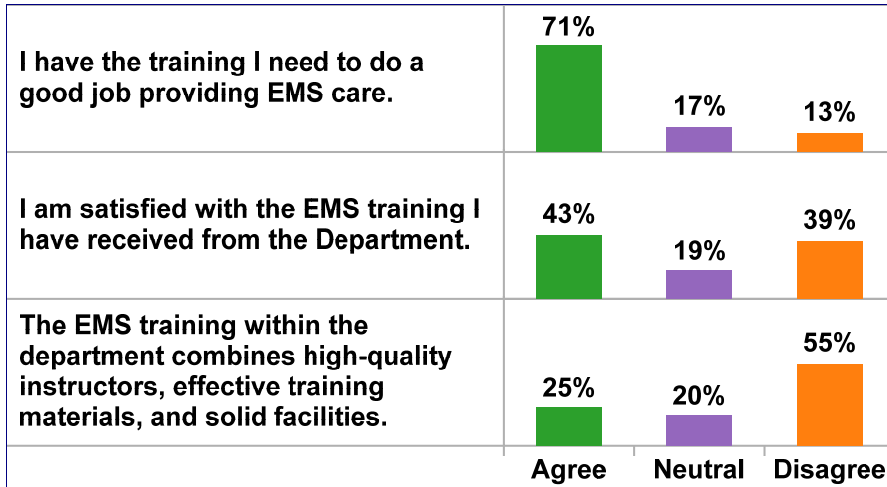


Figure 9 - Training Questions

Employee Engagement

The employee engagement section of the survey is taken from the “Gallup Q¹²” approach that has been used in many organizations. Overall, more respondents agreed with the 12 statements in this section than disagreed, but some statements had more positive responses than others. In particular, three statements had agreement figures of 70 percent or more: knowing what is expected of me at work, with 88 percent; having a caring supervisor, with 72 percent; and committed associates, with 71 percent.

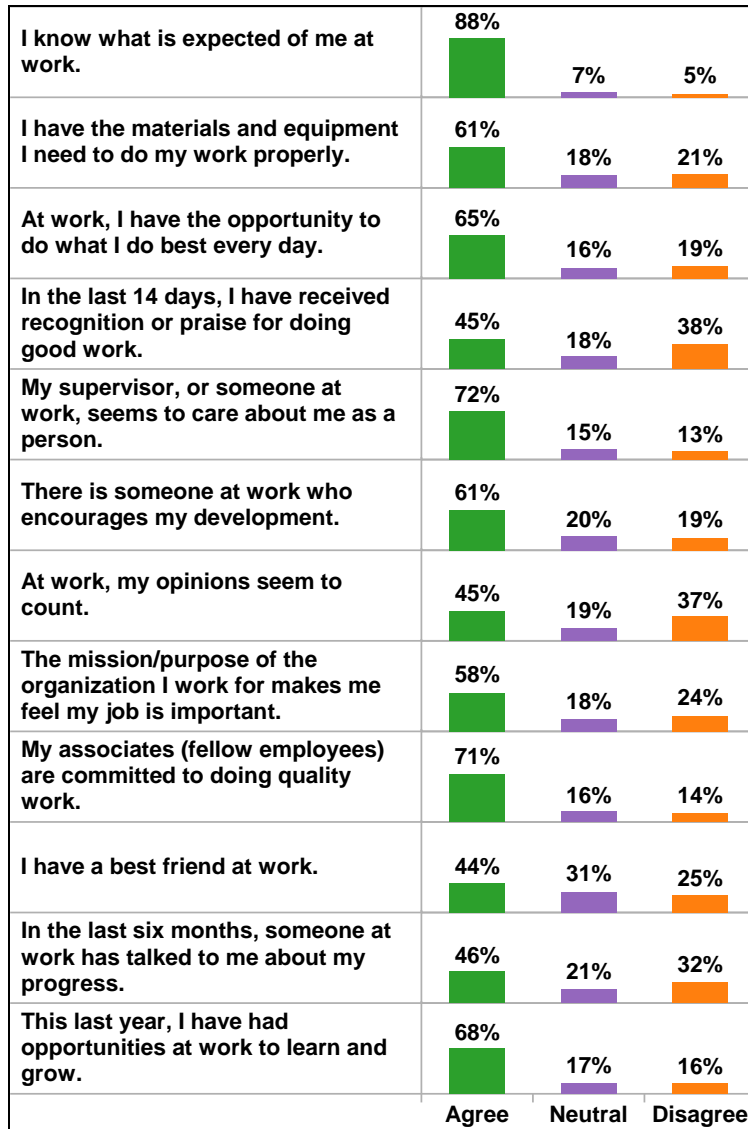


Figure 10 - Employee Engagement Questions

At the other end of the scale, four questions fell below the 50 percent threshold: having a best friend at work (44 percent), receiving recognition for doing good work (45 percent), having

opinions count (45 percent), and having someone to talk to about career progress (46 percent).⁶

⁶ Two questions were modified slightly from the standard Gallup Q¹² wording in order to adapt to terminology and conditions specific to the DC Fire/EMS Department context: The recognition for praise question originally stated, “In the last 7 days, ...” but was extended to 14 days to reflect the Department’s shift schedule. The mission/purpose question originally stated, “The mission/purpose of my company...”; the word “company” was changed to “organization that I work for,” as the term “company” in the Fire/EMS service refers to a vehicle or work unit. Gallup’s [website](#) has more information on the Gallup Q12.

What’s Required to Do a Good Job

The survey asked, “What are the three most important things you need to do a good job in providing EMS care? (These may be things currently in place or things you would like to see in the future).” The two leading answers were training/education (49 percent of respondents) and equipment (41 percent)⁷. Rounding out the top five were management support and leadership (17 percent), call screening and dispatching (16 percent) and ambulance staffing (15 percent). “Call screening” covers concerns that the Department provides transport in situations that are not emergencies, many of which, members felt, could be identified and screened out at dispatch, or could be addressed through improved public education or demand reduction initiatives.

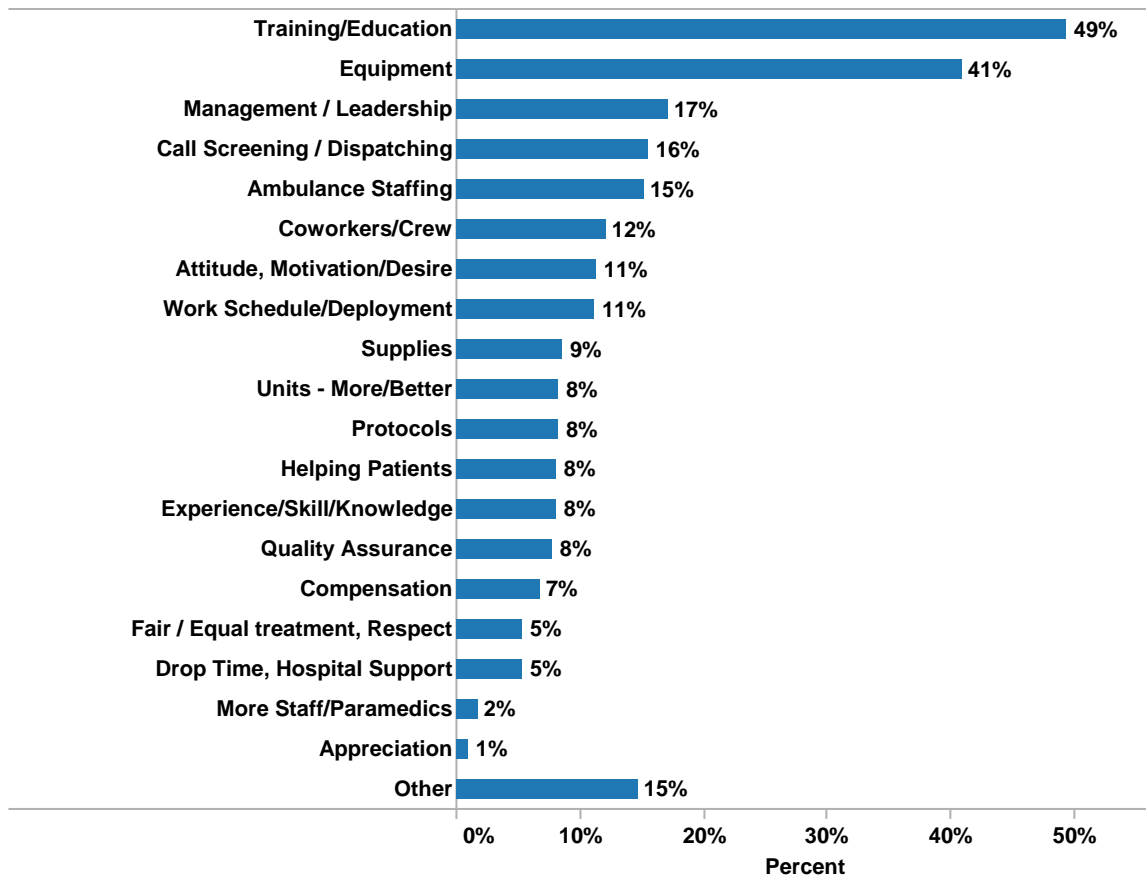


Figure 11 - What’s Required to Do a Good Job

⁷ Because each respondent could list three things, the total of responses exceeds 100 percent. A total of 579 respondents gave one or more responses to this question.

What's Required for Job Satisfaction

The survey asked, “What are the three things that you require for job satisfaction as it relates to EMS? (Or what parts of EMS keep you motivated to do a good job?).” The leading answer given was helping patients, with 32 percent. Compensation (pay and benefits) came next, at 19 percent. Ambulance staffing, the fifth selection on the what’s-needed-to-do-a-good-job list above, shows up in third place on the job satisfaction list.

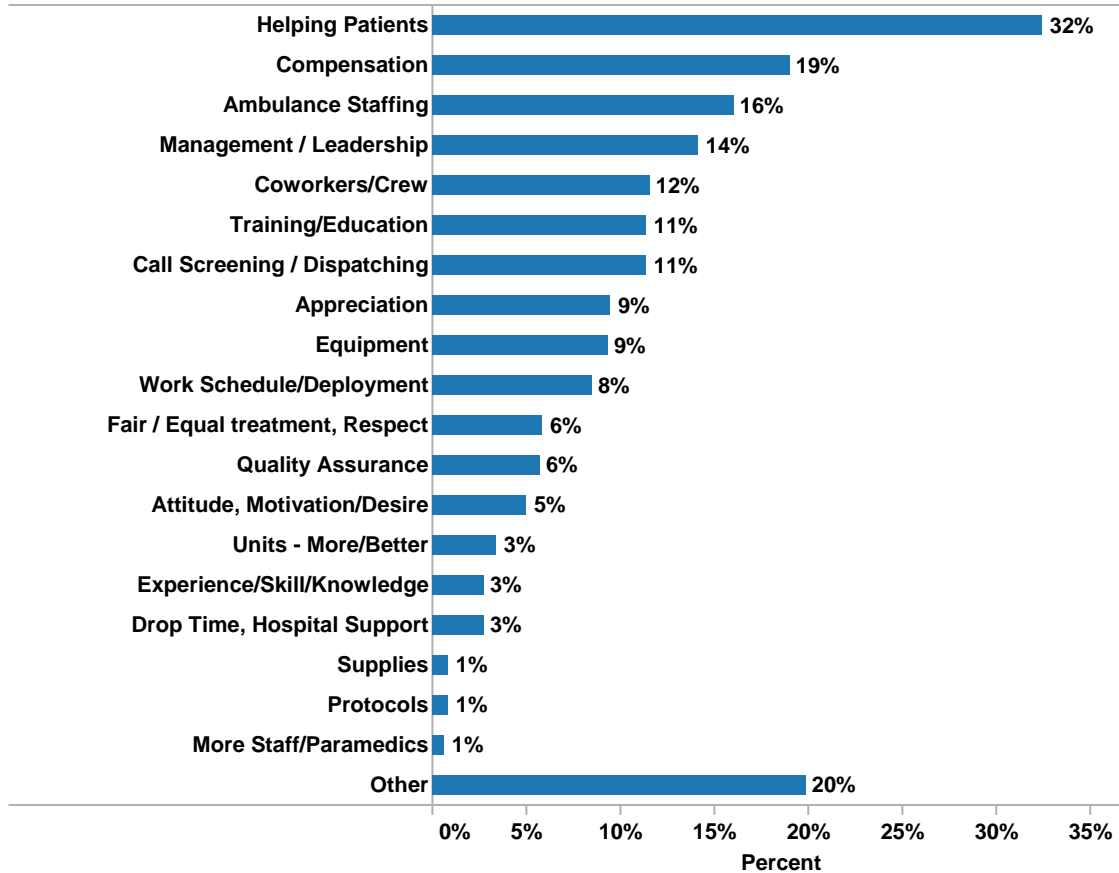
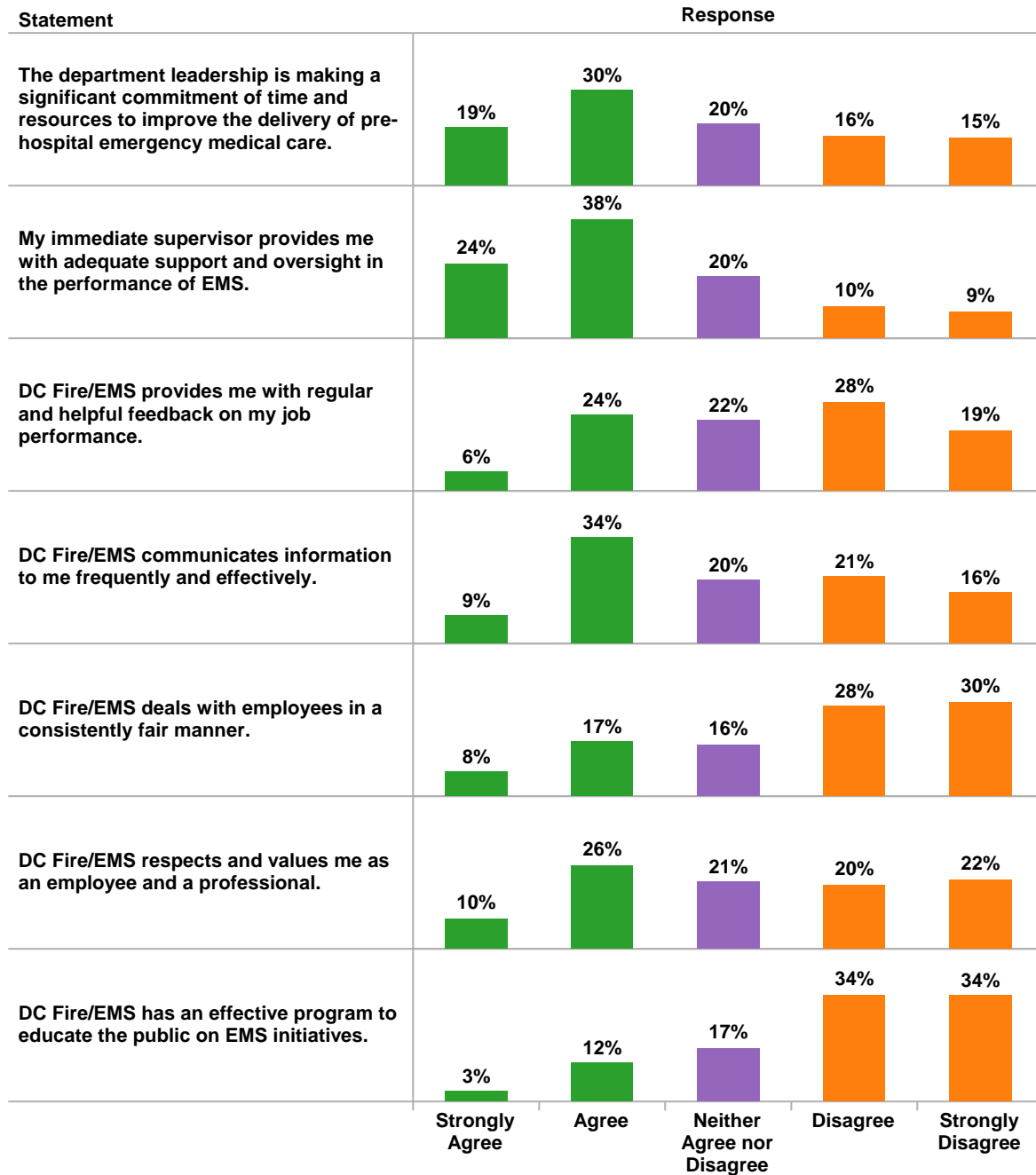


Figure 12 - What's Required for Job Satisfaction

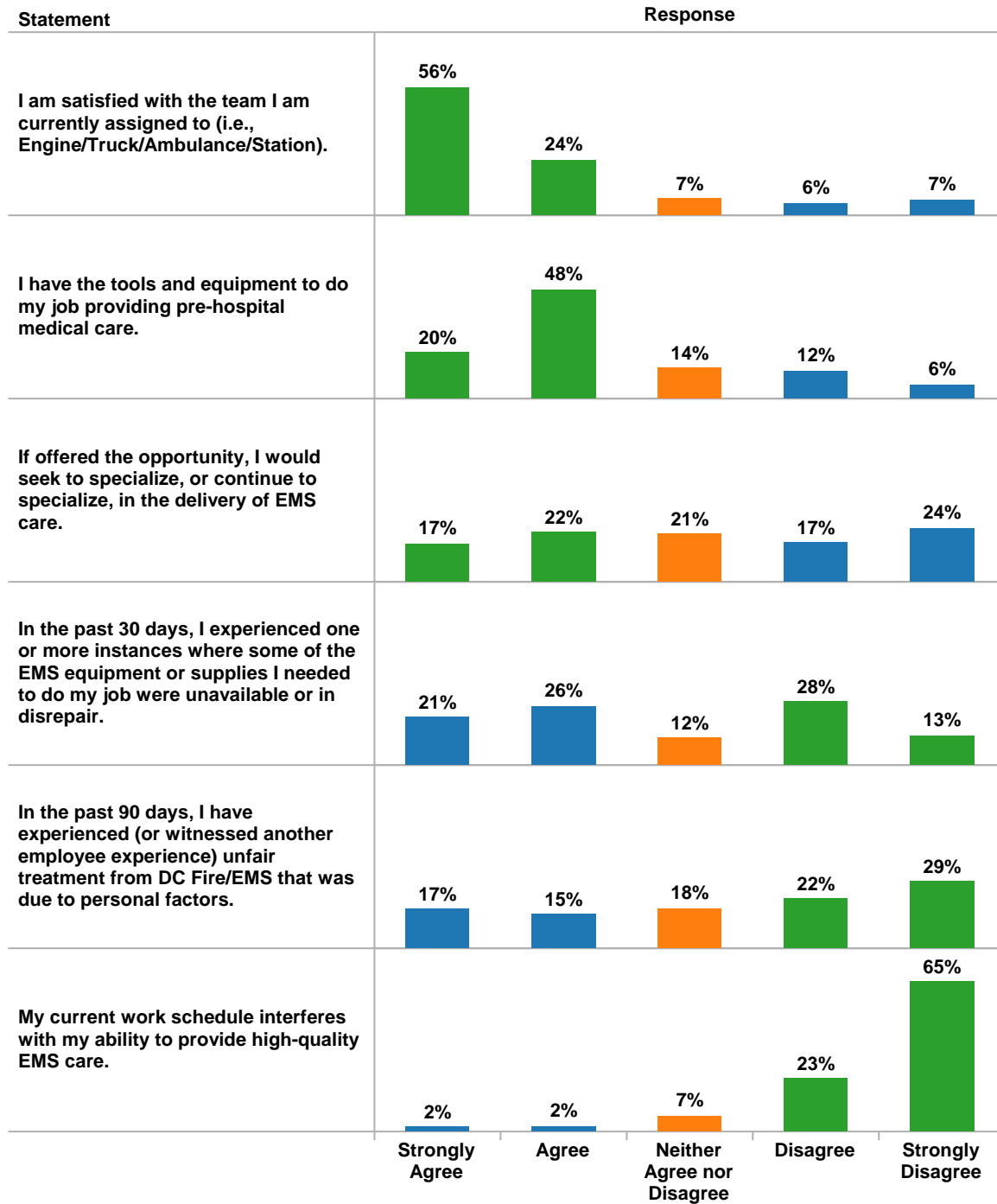
Appendices

1. Detailed tables of responses.
2. PDF of Survey Form
3. Text of email message sent to participants
4. Text of Fire/EMS Department memo sent to employees

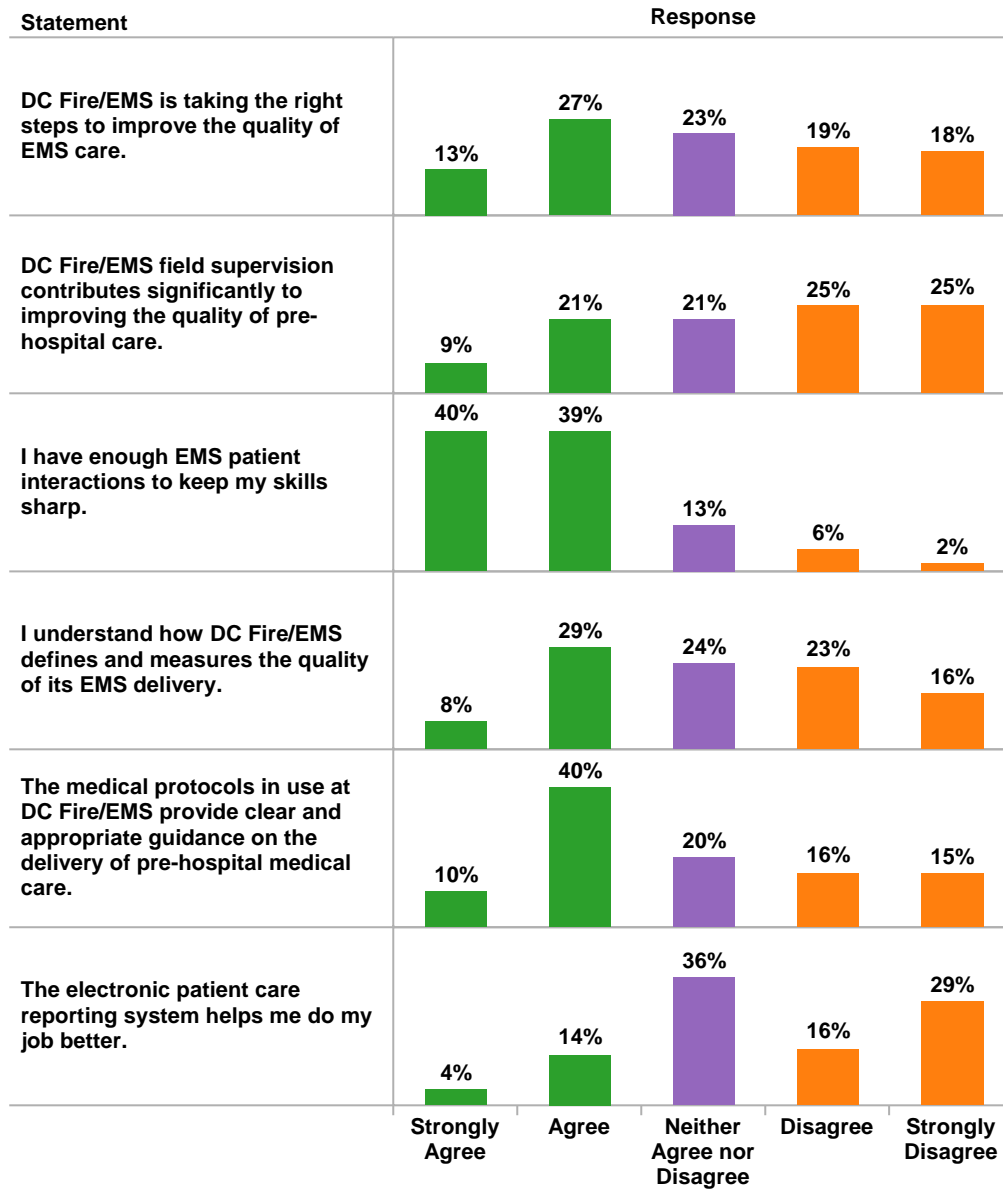
Management/Leadership



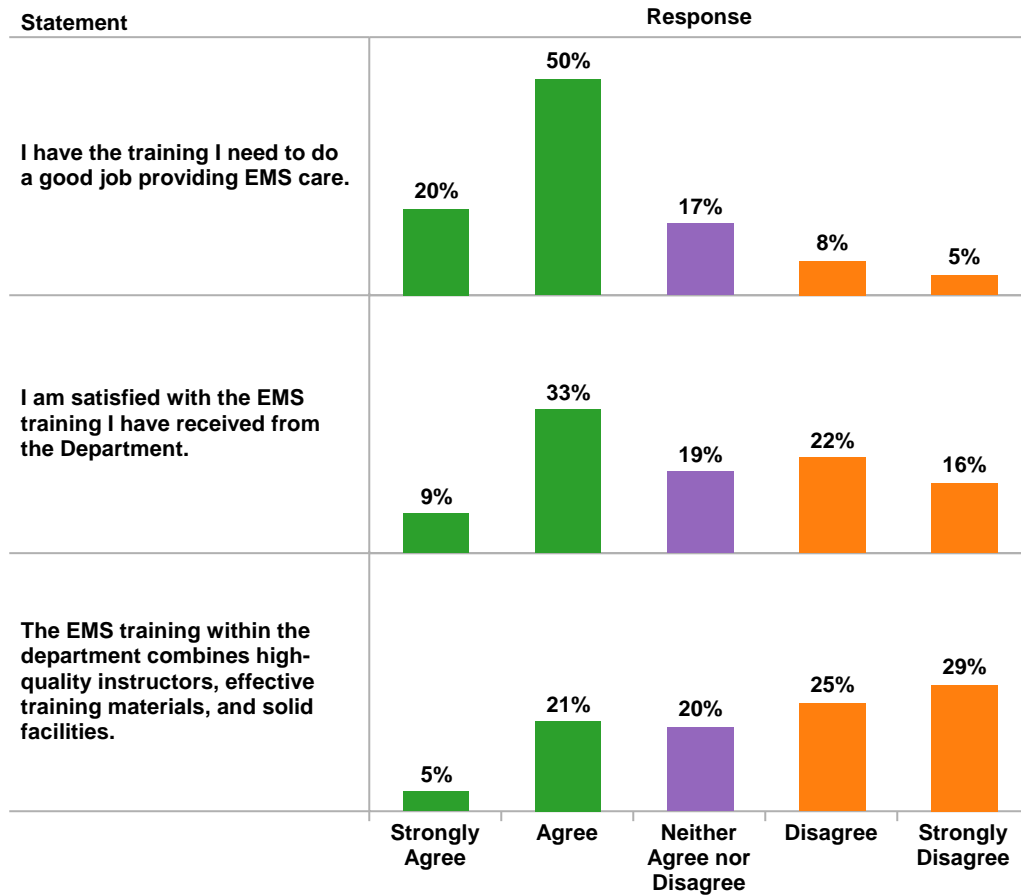
Working Conditions



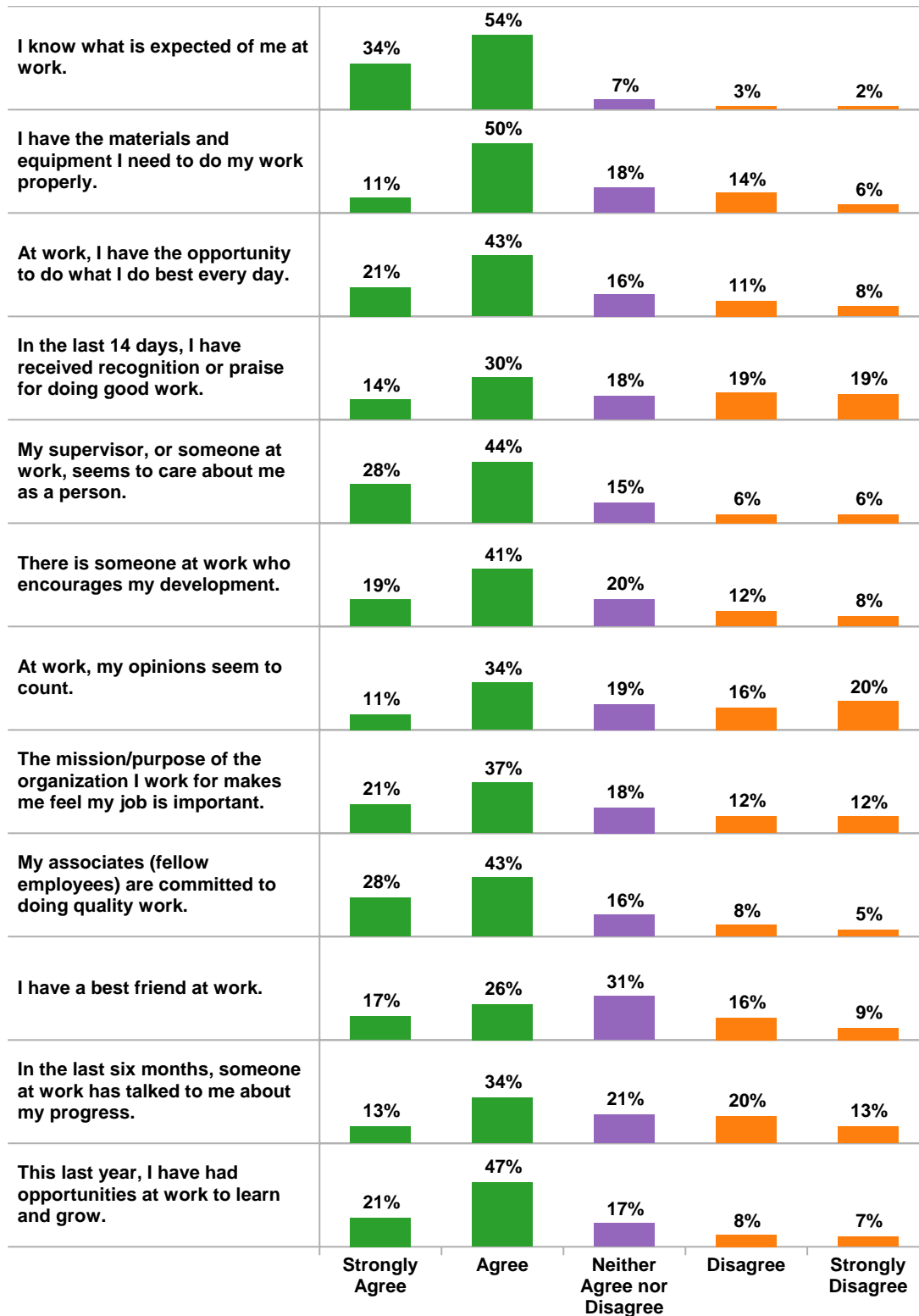
Quality of EMS Care



Training



Employee Engagement



EMS Survey

1. Preface

Welcome to the DC Fire and EMS Emergency Medical Services provider survey. In order to ensure the confidentiality of your responses, the Office of the City Administrator is conducting this survey on behalf of the DC Fire and EMS Department. While the results of the survey will be shared with the Fire and EMS Department in summary form, no information identifying individual survey respondents will be shared with any member of the DC Fire and EMS Department.

In order to ensure that each member of the operational staff responds to the survey no more than one time, the program will record that you have responded to the survey, based on your email address. We will use your email address to add job-related information (years of service, job title) from the PeopleSoft human resources system. Once this process is complete, we will discard the email address, so there will be no identifying information in the dataset used to analyze the survey results.

You should be able to complete the survey in 15 to 25 minutes. We encourage you to answer all of the questions, but you have the option of skipping any question you don't want to answer. If you need to take a break, click the Exit Survey button in the upper right hand corner. Use the email link to return to the survey.

2. Background

1. Gender

Female

Male

2. Age

24 and
under

25 to 29

30 to 34

35 to 39

40 to 44

45 to 49

50 to 54

55 and
over

3. Race/Ethnicity

Black, not of
origin

White, not of
Hispanic origin

Hispanic

Asian or Pacific
Islander

Other

Other (please specify)

3. Level of EMS Certification

4. What is your current level of medical certification?

CPR only (not EMT-certified) EMT-Basic EMT-Advanced EMT-Intermediate EMT-Paramedic

If none of these apply, please explain

5. How often do you assume a direct role in pre-hospital emergency medical care?

Very often Fairly often Sometimes Rarely Almost never Never

6. Were you a lateral transfer (from single-role EMS to multi-role Fire/EMS)?

Yes

No

4. EMT Certification Dates

7. In what year were you first certified at your current level?

Before 1982 1982 to 1986 1987 to 1991 1992 to 1996 1997 to 2001 2002 to 2004 2005 to 2007

8. If you have EMT-Basic certification or higher, in what year were you first certified at the EMT-Basic level? (May include time before you were hired by DC Fire/EMS.)

Before 1982 1982 to 1986 1987 to 1991 1992 to 1996 1997 to 2001 2002 to 2004 2005 to 2007

5. Management

9. Read the following statements and indicate whether you agree with them. For each statement, you can choose strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. If the statement doesn't apply to you, choose "Not Applicable to Me".

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable to Me
DC Fire/EMS provides me with regular and helpful feedback on my job performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The department leadership is making a significant commitment of time and resources to improve the delivery of pre-hospital emergency medical care.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My immediate supervisor provides me with adequate support and oversight in the performance of EMS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DC Fire/EMS communicates information to me frequently and effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DC Fire/EMS has an effective program to educate the public on EMS initiatives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DC Fire/EMS deals with employees in a consistently fair manner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DC Fire/EMS respects and values me as an employee and a professional.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide any comments

6. Working Conditions

10. Read the following statements and indicate whether you agree with them. For each statement, you can choose strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. If the statement doesn't apply to you, choose "Not Applicable to Me".

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable to Me
In the past 30 days, I experienced one or more instances where some of the EMS equipment or supplies I needed to do my job were unavailable or in disrepair.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
My current work schedule interferes with my ability to provide high-quality EMS care.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I have the tools and equipment to do my job providing pre-hospital medical care.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
If offered the opportunity, I would seek to specialize, or continue to specialize, in the delivery of EMS care.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I am satisfied with the team I am currently assigned to (i.e., Engine/Truck/Ambulance/Station).	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
In the past 90 days, I have experienced (or witnessed another employee experience) unfair treatment from DC Fire/EMS that was due to personal factors (including but not limited to race, gender, age, sexual orientation).	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ

Please provide any comments

7. Quality

11. Read the following statements and indicate whether you agree with them. For each statement, you can choose strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. If the statement doesn't apply to you, choose "Not Applicable to Me".

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable to Me
I have enough EMS patient interactions to keep my skills sharp.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
The medical protocols in use at DC Fire/EMS provide clear and appropriate guidance on the delivery of pre-hospital medical care.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
DC Fire/EMS is taking the right steps to improve the quality of EMS care.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
DC Fire/EMS field supervision contributes significantly to improving the quality of pre-hospital care.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
The electronic patient care reporting system helps me do my job better.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I understand how DC Fire/EMS defines and measures the quality of its EMS delivery.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ

Please provide any comments

8. Training

12. Read the following statements and indicate whether you agree with them. For each statement, you can choose strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. If the statement doesn't apply to you, choose "Not Applicable to Me".

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable to Me
The EMS training within the department combines high-quality instructors, effective training materials, and solid facilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the training I need to do a good job providing EMS care.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the EMS training I have received from the Department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide any comments

9. Employee Engagement

13. For the following statements, please select whether you strongly agree, agree, have a neutral opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree. When answering, please refer to your entire scope of work.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have a best friend at work.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
In the last 14 days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
There is someone at work who encourages my development.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
At work, my opinions seem to count.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
The mission/purpose of the organization I work for makes me feel my job is important.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I know what is expected of me at work.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
My associates (fellow employees) are committed to doing quality work.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ
I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work properly.	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ	jñ

10. Open-ended

14. What are the three most important things you need to do a good job in providing EMS care? (These may be things currently in place or things you would like to see in the future)

A

B

C

15. What are three things that you require for job satisfaction as it relates to EMS? (Or what parts of EMS keep you motivated to do a good job?)

A

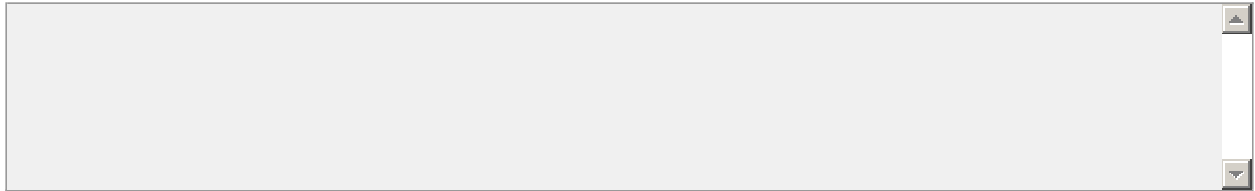
B

C

11. Conclusion

This is the final page of the survey. If you have any final remarks or observations, please include them below. Otherwise, click the done button and you're finished. Thank you for taking the time to respond. We will tabulate and share the results by December 31, 2007.

16. Final remarks or observations

A large, empty text input field with a light gray background and a thin border. On the right side, there are two small, square buttons: the top one has an upward-pointing arrow and the bottom one has a downward-pointing arrow, indicating scroll functionality.

To: Participants

From: phil.heinrich@dc.gov

Subject: EMS Survey Body: In its final report, the Mayor's EMS Task Force recommended that the Fire/EMS Chief conduct periodic confidential surveys of Department employees regarding their attitudes, concerns, and opinions relating to the Department's provision of emergency medical services. To meet this obligation and ensure confidentiality, the Office of the City Administrator is conducting the survey on behalf of the Fire/EMS Chief.

Here is the link to the survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

You have until midnight December 22, 2007 to complete the survey.

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address, so please do not forward this message. You can complete the survey using a computer at your work location, or at home, or from any computer connected to the internet. The survey tool is designed so that employees can log out of the survey if they are dispatched on a run, and resume completion later without losing their work. You can even resume from another computer at another location, if that proves necessary.

While participation in this survey is voluntary, we strongly encourage you to use this opportunity to provide helpful feedback to the Department. All responses are completely confidential. The results of the survey will be shared with the Fire and EMS Department in summary form only. No information identifying individual survey respondents will be shared with any member of the DC Fire and EMS Department. No negative action will be taken against any employee for their participation or non-participation in this survey.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Phil Heinrich in the Office of the City Administrator at phil.heinrich@dc.gov or (202) 478-9214.

Thanks for your participation!

Please note: Don't click the link below unless you want to be removed from future surveys. The link for the survey is above.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>



MEMORANDUM



Series 2007	Number 247	Originating Unit OFC	Effective Date December 7, 2007	Expiration Date December 23, 2007
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Subject:

Confidential Employee Survey

In its final report, the Mayor's EMS Task Force included the following recommendation (number 3f): "The Chief shall periodically conduct confidential, anonymous surveys of Department employees regarding their attitudes, concerns, and opinions relating to the Department's provision of emergency medical services. The first survey shall be completed no later than December 31, 2007."

To meet this obligation and ensure confidentiality, the Office of the City Administrator is conducting the survey on behalf of the Fire/EMS Chief.

The survey is being distributed via email, beginning December 7, 2007, to all operational FEMS employees. In order to access the survey, employees will need to login to their DC Government email account and open the email titled: "EMS Survey" from Mr. Phil Heinrich in the Office of the City Administrator. The survey should be completed by midnight December 22, 2007.

The survey is electronic, and can be completed within 15-25 minutes from any computer that is connected to the Internet. Employees can complete the survey using the workstations in their firehouses, or they can choose to complete the survey from a personal computer while off duty. The survey tool is designed so that employees can log out of the survey if they are dispatched on a run, and resume completion later without losing their work.

While participation in this survey is voluntary, we strongly encourage you to use this opportunity to provide helpful feedback to the Department. All responses are completely confidential. The results of the survey will be shared with the Fire and EMS Department in summary form only. No information identifying individual survey respondents will be shared with any member of the DC Fire and EMS Department. No negative action will be taken against any employee for their participation or non-participation in this survey.

Officers shall inform all employees of the survey and provide them with an opportunity to access their DC government email accounts from the station computers.

Operational employees who are unable to access their DC Government email accounts should contact the IT Servus HelpDesk at (202) 671-1566 for assistance. If an operational employee is able to access their DC Government email, but has NOT received a survey, or has other questions about the survey, they should contact Phil Heinrich in the Office of the City Administrator at phil.heinrich@dc.gov or (202) 478-9214 during normal business hours for assistance.

Thomas L. Rubin
FOR: Dennis L. Rubin
Fire/EMS Chief