



**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE**  
**SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA**

*Working together for a safer community*  
*La sécurité de notre communauté, un travail d'équipe*

## 2012 Public Survey of Policing Services

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**Leger**  
MARKETING



## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

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### Sixth public survey since 1995.

### Survey designed to understand citizens' perceptions of crime, safety and satisfaction with Ottawa Police Service.

#### Context :

The Ottawa Police Service (OPS) commissioned Leger Marketing to conduct public opinion research in the City of Ottawa.

This research is part of a continuous effort on the part of OPS to collect data on public perceptions of its services and Ottawa citizens' views about safety and crime in the city. Previous surveys were held in 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006 and 2008.

#### Objectives:

The objectives of the study were to:

- Understand residents' perception of the level of crime, threats to personal safety, fear and degree of disorder in their community;
- Measure residents' awareness and usage of various OPS programs and services, as well as to gauge their satisfaction with these services;
- Gauge public perception of OPS' performance;
- Capture the public's priorities for police services;
- Measure public confidence in police services; and
- Understand residents' experience with crime and victimization.



## RESEARCH METHODS

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### Survey Approach

This poll was conducted online in the Ottawa area with a representative sample of **3,147 citizens** between **February 10<sup>th</sup> and April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012**.

**A mail-to-web survey of 3,147 Ottawa citizens, between February 10<sup>th</sup> and April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012.**

Residents were invited by OPS via regular mail to take part in the survey. This approach allowed OPS to directly explain the importance of citizens' participation in the survey. Representing a new development from previous OPS surveys, 2012 marks the first time a mail-to-web approach has been used. Respondents were able to complete the questionnaire online, with the possibility of receiving a paper copy to fill out upon request.

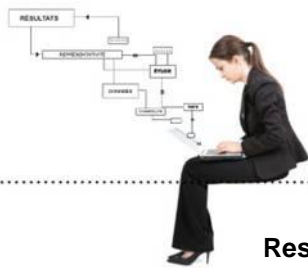
Survey invitations were sent in two identical waves in which 8,000 survey invitation letters were mailed out across all wards. Addresses were drawn randomly from a pool of all available addresses in local listings. A stratified sampling approach was used to ensure that representative data could be collected across all Ottawa Wards and Policing Districts.

Of the 16,000 invitations mailed out, 14,000 were addressed to a random sample of Ottawa households, while another 2,000 were addressed to a targeted oversample of *potential* visible minorities identified by Info Canada, also spread across all wards.

It was deemed important to oversample members of visible minorities in the survey because a simple random sample of all Ottawa citizens may not yield sufficient sample sizes to properly analyze data for this highly important group.

Because personal information on ethnic origin is not available to research firms for obvious confidentiality reasons, Léger Marketing used a random sample list provided by Info Canada that identified *potential* members of visible minorities based on their last name.

While this method has obvious limitations, all respondents were asked a question as part of the survey to confirm their self-identification as members of visible minorities. The additional sample provided by Info Canada was thus a means to maximize the proportion of visible minorities who took part in the survey, but was not deemed to be a random sample of visible minorities in itself.



## RESEARCH METHODS

**Survey invite mailed to 16,000 households**

**Response rate of 20%**

**Findings are representative of the Ottawa population**

### Response Rate

Of the 16,000 invitations mailed out, 536 were returned as invalid addresses and 3,147 surveys were completed, resulting in a response rate of (20.4%).

A response rate of 20.4% is good for a mail out survey, but it remains lower than the 35% rate obtained for the 2008 OPS public survey. This could be explained by a few factors:

- Survey response rates have generally diminished over the past few years due to the proliferation of telemarketing across Canada, creating a certain survey fatigue;
- The 2012 survey used an online interface for survey completion instead of a paper version to be filled out (having to log on to a secure website instead of writing answers on the piece of paper in their hands).

Number of random mail outs	Invalid addresses	Actual returns	Response Rate (Total)
16,000	536	3,147	20.4%

### Margin of Error

A probabilistic sample of 3,147 respondents yields a margin of error of +/- 1.75%, 19 times out of 20.

### Questionnaire, Weighting and Analysis of Results

The survey was comprised of 63 close-ended questions and 21 open-ended or half-open questions for a total of 84. Median survey response time was 28 minutes.

The final, unweighted sample distribution among key demographics closely matched that of the actual population of Ottawa. As is usual for surveys using mail invitations, younger individuals were underrepresented in the sample, but weighting was applied to correct for potential biases.

The final data were weighted by: age, gender, language most often spoken at home, ward population and household size, in order to obtain a fully representative sample of the adult population of Ottawa.

Results in this report are broken down by districts and wards in all instances where significant differences exist. When possible, results of previous years' surveys are presented to track evolution over time.



## KEY INSIGHTS

### Perceptions about Crime in the City and in Neighbourhoods

**Perceptions of crime trends in the city of Ottawa have improved since 2006.**

**Perceptions of crime trends at the neighbourhood level remained the same.**

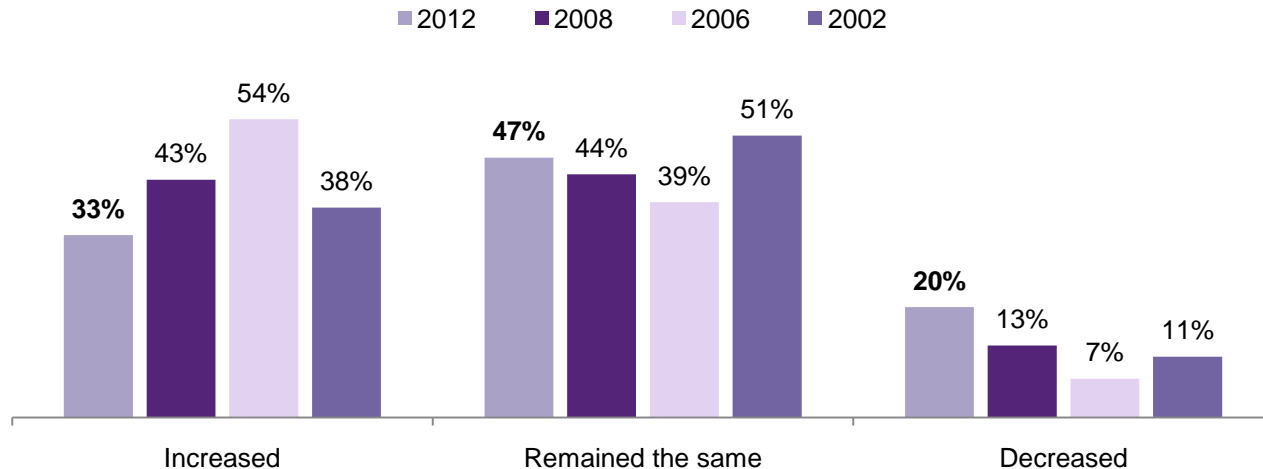
**Perceptions of crime trends in Ottawa have improved since 2006.**

While a third of Ottawa residents (33%) believe that crime in the city has increased over the past three years, this proportion is down from 54% in 2006 and 43% in 2008. Two-thirds of residents (67%) believe that crime levels either decreased (20%) or stayed the same (47%) over the past three years.

**Ottawa residents' views about crime in their neighbourhood (as opposed to city-wide) remained stable in comparison to previous surveys.**

A majority believes that crime has stayed the same (57%), while 22% believe crime increased and another 20% crime decreased in their neighbourhood.

As was found in previous surveys, we also find that a majority of residents (65%) tend to believe that crime is a lesser issue in their neighbourhood compared to others. Residents of the Central East district diverge from this general rule, with only 25% among them believing that neighbourhood crime is relatively lower in the district and 44% thinking that it is higher.



Q1 – In the past three years, do you think crime has decreased, remained the same, or increased across Ottawa? (2012: excluding the “Don’t know” n=2,461)



## KEY INSIGHTS

### Top Safety Concerns in Neighbourhoods and City-Wide

Speeding cars and aggressive driving top the list of citizens' concerns for the city and in their neighbourhood.

Crimes against property are a bigger concern than crimes against a person at the neighbourhood level.

Speeding cars and aggressive driving is the most important concern of citizens for the city as a whole (76%) and for their neighbourhood (64%).

Rounding the top-five concerns at the neighbourhood level, we find that break and enter (58%), vandalism (51%), youth crime (50%) and theft from vehicles (50%).

For the city as a whole, we find that presence of drug dealers (75%), youth crime (71%), street gangs (70%), break and enter (68%), sexual assault (68%) and robbery (68%) as the main concerns.

On average, citizens are more concerned with crime on a city-wide basis (72% average for the top five conditions) than on a neighbourhood (55%) basis.

Ottawa residents are, on average, more concerned about the three major types of crimes (against the person, against property and public disorder) for the city as a whole than in their neighbourhood.

The gap is especially striking with regards to crimes against the person, with 55% of residents on average being concerned about them on a city-wide basis, versus only 28% saying they are concerned about them in their neighbourhood.

When asked which type of crime is their *main* concern for the city and their neighbourhood, residents identify crimes against the person (44%) as the main one for the city, but select crimes against property (41%) as the main one for their neighbourhood.

TOP 5 CONCERNS (Very concerned + Concerned)		Neighbourhood	TOP 5 CONCERNS (Very concerned + Concerned)		City
1	Speeding cars / Aggressive Driving	64%	Speeding cars / Aggressive Driving	76%	
2	Break & Enter	59%	Presence of Drugs/Dealers	74%	
3	Vandalism	51%	Youth Crime	71%	
4	Youth Crime	50%	Street Gangs	70%	
5	Theft from Vehicles	50%	Break & Enter / Sexual Assault / Robbery	68%	

Average Degree of Concern (Top-5)  
Neighbourhood: 55%  
City: 72%



## KEY INSIGHTS

### Feeling of Safety During the Day and After Dark

Ottawa residents feel safe at home, in their neighbourhood and around the city during the day.

However, residents feel less safe in public spaces and on public transit after dark.

**Nearly all Ottawa residents feel safe in their home (97%) or neighbourhood (94%) during the day.**

Ottawa residents do not feel as safe along bike paths and walking trails (73% feeling safe) and while waiting for or using public transit (68%) during the day.

Despite widespread feelings of safety at home and in neighbourhoods for the city as a whole, results show that residents from the Central East district are slightly less likely to report feeling safe at home (90%) and in their neighbourhood (80%) during the day.

**While the vast majority of Ottawa residents (92%) also feel safe at home after dark, this proportion decreases sharply for other locations or situations.**

A majority still feels safe on roads and highways (70%), in their neighbourhood (67%) and in their place of work (60%). However, these proportions are significantly lower than what was found during the day at 82%, 94% and 78%, respectively.

Only a minority of residents feel safe downtown (35%), on public transit (26%), in parks (23%) and along bike paths and walking trails (20%) after dark.

Again, residents from the Central East district are less likely to feel safe at home (84%) and in their neighbourhood (44%) after dark.

Residents from the Rural East (21%) and Rural West (26%) are least likely to feel safe downtown after dark.

FEELING OF SAFETY (Very safe+ Safe)	Day	After Dark
In your home	97%	92%
In your neighbourhood	94%	67%
In parks	85%	23%
Driving on Ottawa roads & highways	82%	70%
Downtown	81%	35%
Your place of work (if in Ottawa)	78%	60%
Along bike paths and walking trails	73%	20%
While waiting for, or using public transit	68%	26%

Central East – Day: 90% / After Dark: 84%

Central East – Day: 80% / After Dark: 44%





## KEY INSIGHTS

### Impact of Safety Concerns on Activities

Ottawa residents feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhood during the day.

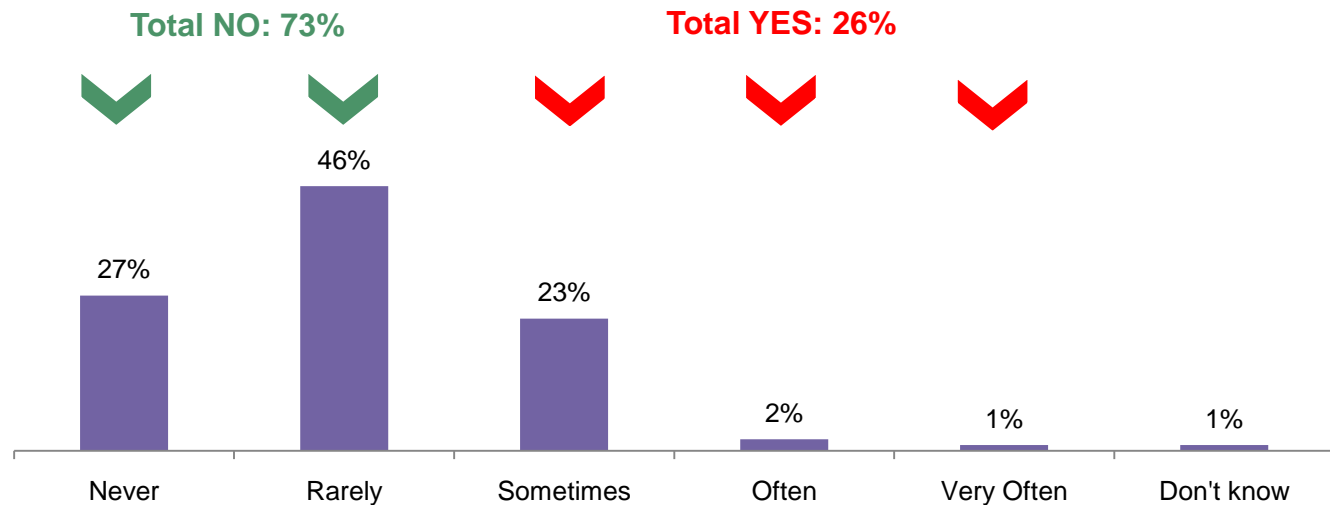
A majority of Ottawa citizens (73%) said that their concerns about crime and personal safety do not keep them from doing activities that they like to do.

The vast majority of Ottawa citizens (96%) feel safe while walking alone in their neighbourhood during the day and another 61% feel safe doing the same after dark.

Residents of the Central East district feel less safe than others, with 87% saying they feel safe walking during the day and only 40% feeling safe when walking after dark.

Overall, the majority of Ottawa citizens (73%) said that their concerns about crime and personal safety do not keep them from doing activities that they like to do.

Nevertheless, this leaves a full quarter of citizens (26%) who believe that these concerns prevent them, at least sometimes, from doing certain activities. Yet very few residents say that this occurs often (2%) or very often (1%).



Q7 – In general, how often would you say that your concerns about crime and your personal safety keep you from doing activities that you like to do? Would you say... (n=3,147)





## KEY INSIGHTS

### Views on Service Quality and Confidence in the Ottawa Police Service

**Satisfaction with the OPS remains very high.**

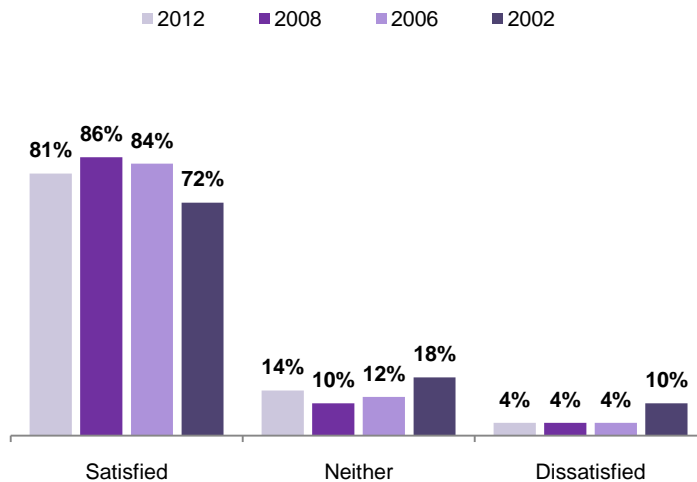
**The quality of service is seen to have remained stable or even improved.**

**Overall satisfaction with the quality of services provided by OPS remains very high, at 81%.**

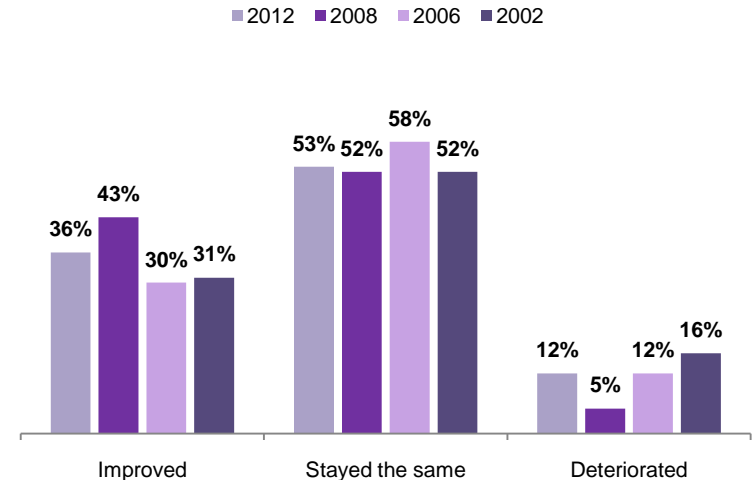
While this number represents a slight decrease from 2008 (86%), it remains high and comparable to 2006 (84%) and is higher than 2002 (72%). Only 4% report being dissatisfied.

**Ottawa residents also believe that the quality of service offered by OPS has improved over the past three years.**

While 36% believe it has improved, only 12% say it has deteriorated. Another 53% say it stayed the same. These results match those from previous surveys, despite a slight decrease in the proportion of those who believe it has improved compared to 2008 (43% in 2008 compared to 36% in 2012).



Q28 – Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of the service provided by the Ottawa Police? (2012: n=2,830 excluding “don’t know”)



Q8 – Has the quality of police service in Ottawa improved, stayed the same or deteriorated in the last 3 years? (2012: n=3,147 excluding “don’t know”)



## KEY INSIGHTS

### Satisfaction Various Points of Contact with the OPS

Satisfaction is also high for those who have had direct contact with the OPS in person or over the phone in the past three years.

**Citizens who have called OPS (emergency and non-emergency) were highly satisfied with the service they received.**

Nine-in-ten (89%) citizens who made an emergency call said they were satisfied with the quality of the service they received during the call, while another 95% agreed that an operator answered promptly and 92% say that person was courteous and professional.

Among those who made a non-emergency call, 87% reported being satisfied with the service they received during that call and similar proportions were satisfied with specific aspects of the service.

**Again, the vast majority (78%) of those who have visited the front desk of a police station reported being satisfied with the service they received.**

More than a quarter of Ottawa citizens (27%) have visited the front desk of an Ottawa police station over the past three years.

**Three-quarters (77%) of those who visited a community police centre were satisfied with the service they received.**

Less than one-in-ten (8%) residents have visited an OPS community police centre in the past three years. Among them, 39% did so to get general police information or make an inquiry, while another 14% said they wanted to talk to a local police officer about an issue in their neighbourhood.

Among those who did not visit a community police centre, 84% say they had no reason to do so, while 10% said they did not know about the services offered and 5% did not know where to find such a centre.

Satisfaction with Various Police Contacts (Strongly Agree + Agree)	
I was satisfied overall with the quality of the telephone service <b>(Emergency call)</b>	<b>89%</b>
I was satisfied overall with the quality of the telephone service <b>(Non-emergency call)</b>	<b>87%</b>
I was satisfied overall with the <b>front desk</b> service	<b>78%</b>
I was satisfied with the service from the <b>Community Police Centre</b>	<b>77%</b>



## KEY INSIGHTS

### Confidence in the Ottawa Police Service and Overall Performance in Ensuring Safety and Security

Ottawa residents have a high degree of confidence in the OPS.

Citizens also believe the OPS performed well in ensuring their safety and security.

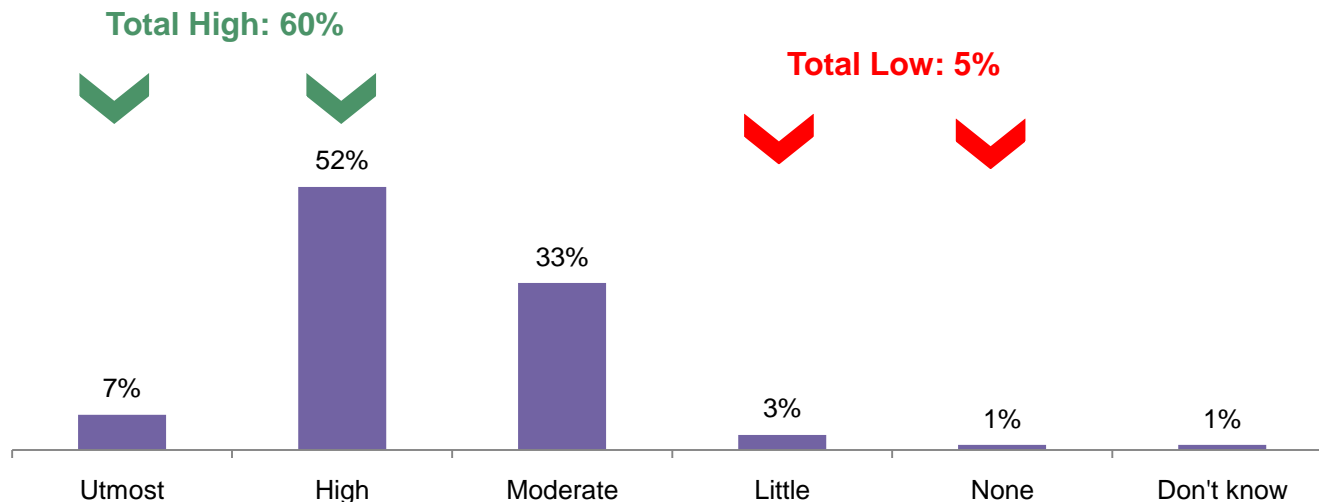
A majority of residents (60%) say they have a high degree of confidence in the OPS, compared to only 5% who say they have a low degree of confidence.

Confidence levels vary markedly across districts, however. Those in the Rural West (67%) and East (65%) districts appear particularly confident, while those in the Central West (46%) and Rural East (49%) districts exhibit lower levels of confidence.

The vast majority of residents (72%) say their level of confidence in the OPS remained the same over the past three years.

Perceptions of OPS performance in ensuring safety and security of citizens is also high and stable over time.

Two-thirds of Ottawa residents (67%) rate OPS performance as good in this regard (compared to 68% in 2008 and 67% in 2006). A further 23% of residents say OPS performance was “average” and only 3% said it was poor.



Q15 – What level of confidence do you have in the Ottawa Police Service? (n=3,147)



## KEY INSIGHTS

### Views on Performance in Specific Areas

Citizens also believe the OPS performed well in providing what can be deemed “core” services for the city as a whole.

However, the OPS did not perform as well in areas involving more direct engagement with citizens in local communities

The OPS is seen to have performed very well in core service areas.

The OPS is seen to perform particularly well in providing services in both French and English (80%), responding promptly to emergencies (75%), ensuring public safety and security at public demonstrations (75%), as well as in enforcing the law (65%).

Residents of the East district appear particularly impressed with the OPS’ performance in core areas, while those in the Central West district are less impressed in general.

However, the OPS is not deemed to be performing as well in areas that relate to direct engagement with citizens at a local level.

There is thus room for improvement in working with residents to solve local crime in neighbourhoods (53%), dealing with problems that really concern people in their neighbourhood (49%), educating the public on how and why the police do things (41%) and in providing police presence on foot or bicycle.

The survey having taken place during the winter, lower rankings for the last item should be interpreted with caution.

CORE SERVICES	EVALUATION OF THE PERFORMANCE (Very Good + Good)		LOCAL ENGAGEMENT	EVALUATION OF THE PERFORMANCE (Very Good + Good)	
	Providing services in both French and English	80%		Working with residents in your neighbourhood to solve local crime	53%
	Responding promptly to emergency calls	75%		Dealing with problems that really concern people in your neighbourhood	49%
	Ensuring public safety and security at public demonstrations	75%		Educating the public on how and why police do the things they do	41%
	Enforcing the law	65%		Police presence on foot or bicycle	34%

Q9A to Q9R – How do you rate the performance of the Ottawa Police Service on each of the following?

Because of the high proportion of “don’t know” for these items, they were removed from the analysis. As a result, base sizes vary.



## KEY INSIGHTS

### Direct Contact with an OPS Officer and Drivers of Perceptions

Satisfaction is also high for those who have had direct contact with the OPS in person or over the phone.

Direct contact with officers, whether seeing them around or having a personal interaction, are key factors that shape perceptions of the OPS.

**More than half of Ottawa citizens (57%) have had at least one direct contact with one or more OPS officers over the past three years.**

Three quarters (75%) of those who reported having had a personal contact with an OPS officer say they were satisfied with the quality or service provided by that officer during their most recent interaction. However, those in the Central East district (61%) are less satisfied.

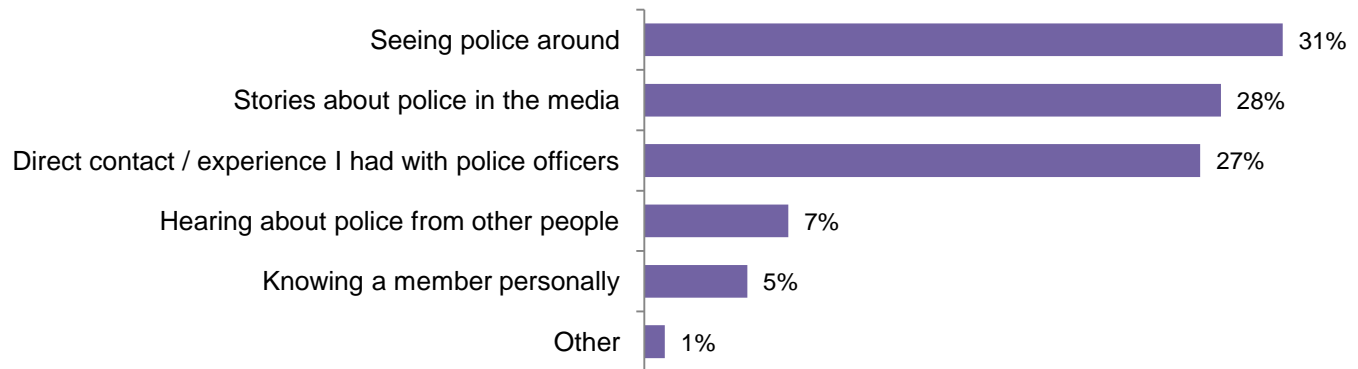
When looking at specific elements of the service experience, citizens are most likely to agree that officers look professional (90%) and are courteous and

professional (71%). However, they are less likely to agree that officers have a caring attitude (56%), treat people fairly (57%) and exercise their duties in a fair and impartial manner (57%).

**Satisfaction with these direct interactions with officers are important for the image of the police force.**

When asked what factors have the most influence on their perception of the OPS, a third of citizens (31%) list “seeing police around” as the most important factor, with another 27% saying that direct contacts or experiences with officers is the dominant factor.

#### Factors Influencing Impressions of the OPS





## KEY INSIGHTS

### Crime Victimization and Types of Crime Committed

Just over one-in-six (17%) residents have been a victim of crime over the past three years.

The proportion of crimes against the person seems to have increased over the past three years.

In all, 17% of Ottawa residents say they have been a victim of crime over the past three years, down from 21% in 2008.

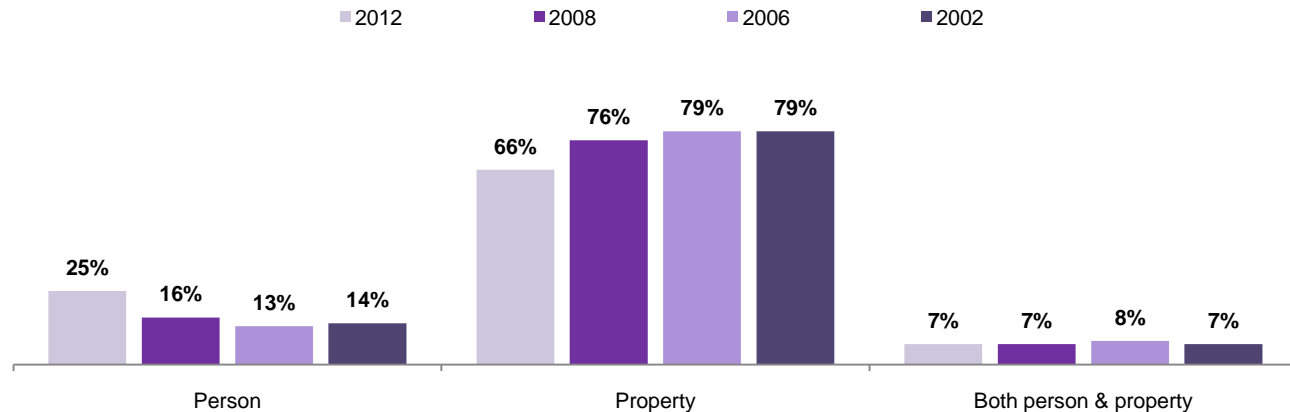
Reported victimization is highest in the River (29%) and Bay (25%) wards.

There has been a slight shift in the balance between crimes against property and those against the person since 2008.

Of those who reported being the victim of a crime, two-thirds (66%) say that this crime targeted property, while 25% say it targeted a person.

The proportion of crimes against the person is up from 16% in 2008 and 13% in 2002 and 2006.

Of all crimes committed in 2012, 5% involved the use of a weapon.



Q33 – Was the crime against a person or against property? (n=525)



## KEY INSIGHTS

### Crimes Reported and Satisfaction with Police Response

Property-related crimes top the list of specific crimes committed in the past three years.

A quarter of victims have not reported the crime to the police.

A majority of victims (55%) were satisfied with the police's response and 20% were dissatisfied.

**The most common types of crime committed related to property, including theft (35%), mischief / vandalism (20%), break and enter (16%).**

Threats and intimidation (13%) and robbery (13%) round up the top-five and were the most frequently cited crimes against the person.

Theft appears to be more prevalent in Bay (65%) and Kitchissippi (56%), while vandalism is more common in Knoxdale-Merivale (38%) and break and enter is more present in Alta Vista (42%).

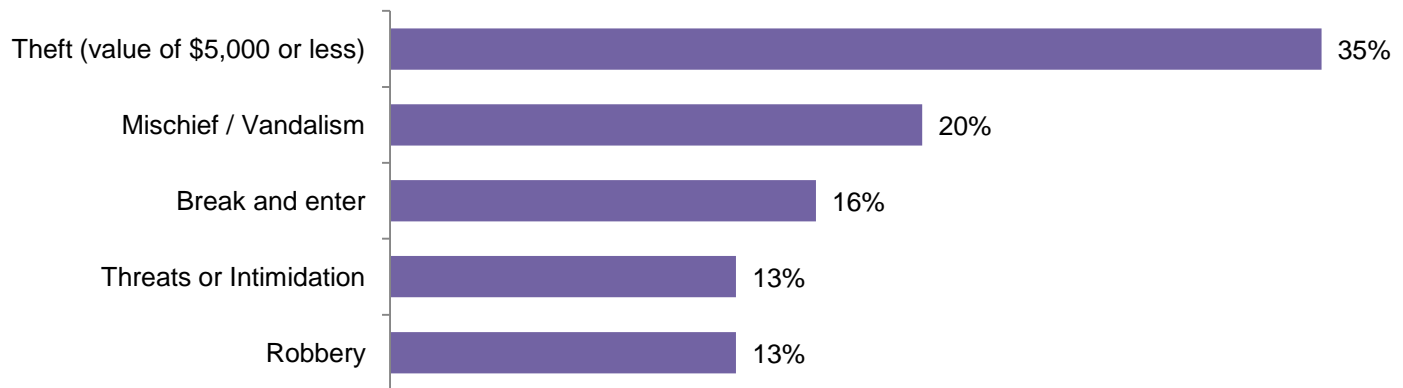
**A quarter of victims (27%) say they have not reported the crime to the Ottawa Police Service.**

Topping the list of reasons why they did not report the crime was that nothing of value was taken or damaged (34%) and that the person did not think the police could do anything (21%).

**A majority of applicable residents (55%) were satisfied with actions taken by police in response to the incident report.**

Residents of the Central West district appear particularly *dissatisfied* (52%) with the actions taken by police.

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of those who reported a crime gave the police a good performance rating on their professionalism in responding to the incident. Only 12% gave them a poor rating on professionalism.



Q34 – Thinking of the most recent incident, what type(s) of crime(s) was (were) committed against you or your immediate family member? (n=525)





## KEY INSIGHTS

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### Awareness of Crime Prevention Programs and Police Phone Numbers

**With the exception of Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers, crime prevention programs are not well-known.**

**Approximately four-in-ten Ottawa citizens (38%) are aware of the responsibilities of the Ottawa Police Service Board.**

**Nearly three-quarters of Ottawa residents are aware of the Neighbourhood Watch (72%) and Crime Stoppers (71%) programs.**

Another three-in-ten are aware of the All Valuables Removed (29%) and Child Print (28%) programs.

By contrast, only a small minority are aware of the Crime Free Multi-Housing (3%), Business Crime Prevention (4%) and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (4%) programs.

Residents of the rural districts are more likely to be aware of the Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stopper programs. However, those from the Central East district are less likely to be aware of both programs and are also more likely to say they are not aware of any program at all (24%).

A full 83% of Ottawa residents say that have not participated in any of the crime prevention programs that involve the Ottawa police.

**Nearly four-in-ten (38%) residents are aware of the responsibilities of the Ottawa Police Service Board.**

However, respondents from the Central East district (52%) and from the Rural West district (47%) are more likely not to be aware of the responsibilities of the Ottawa Police Services Board.

**A majority of Ottawa residents (57%) are aware of the existence of two separate phone numbers for emergencies.**

Awareness is much higher in the Rural East district (70%) and lowest in Central East (48%).

Of the 18% of citizens who say they have made an emergency call during the past three years, three-quarters (72%) used the 911 emergency number, with the remainder (28%) using 613-230-6211.



## KEY INSIGHTS

### Information on Programs and Events in Neighbourhoods

Despite these generally low levels of awareness, most citizens would like to know more about activities and programs offered by the OPS.

**A majority of Ottawa residents would like to receive more information about crime (75%), crime prevention tips and programs (75%) and police events (61%) and meetings (51%) in their community.**

Citizens are less likely to want additional information on Ottawa Police Services Board meetings and initiatives (23%), the three-year OPS business plan (30%) and the OPS Annual Report (30%).

Residents who said they would be interested in receiving information about crime would also be

interested in receiving crime alerts (92%), annual crime statistics by ward (86%) and an “Ottawa Crime” mapping tool (80%).

**The main sources of information on local police activities, programs or events are television (40%), community newspapers (40%) and the radio (35%).**

Other important sources of information are word of mouth (27%), family and friends (21%) and the OPS website (17%).



Q53A to Q53M – To what extent are you interested in the following? (n=3,147)