

# How are we doing?



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECOLOGY**  
State of Washington

2014 Survey of Permitted and Inspected Customers

February 2016

## We survey our permitted and inspected customers to measure customer service and find areas for improvement

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is Washington State's primary environmental management and protection agency. Our vision is: *Our innovative partnerships sustain healthy land, air and water in harmony with a strong economy.*

### Surveyed customers include permit applicants and inspected businesses

When a company wants to do business in Washington State they apply for environmental permits that require them to control pollution, safely manage wastes, and protect natural resources and habitat. Ecology then inspects the permitted business to assess their compliance with the permit requirements or other environmental laws or rules.

### We are committed to delivering efficient and effective services

Improving customer service and our regulatory processes are top priorities. To measure our performance, we contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to survey our customers. The survey asks our customers how satisfied they are with:

- ▶ Our service
- ▶ The clarity and timeliness of our permitting and inspection processes
- ▶ Our website

We have conducted this survey every two years since 2002.

## 3,600 customers surveyed

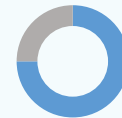
We contracted with NASS to survey customers by phone in August 2014. Customers had applied for a permit or received an inspection between April 2012 and May 2014. We included customers from 18 different permit types and 15 types of inspections in the 2014 survey.



Selected from  
**14,000** customers

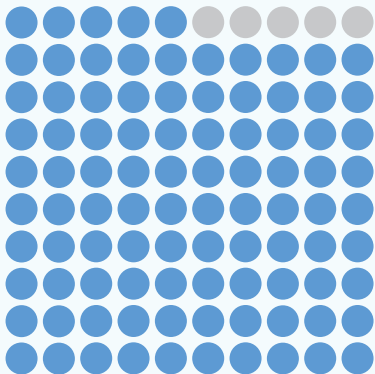


**53%** inspected customers  
**47%** permit applicants



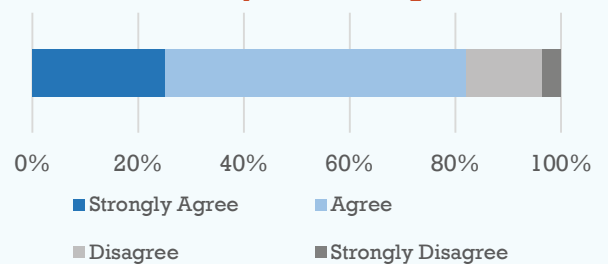
**75%** response rate

## Our staff are helpful and friendly, but could be more innovative in solving problems



**95%**  
of customers  
thought our staff  
were **helpful,  
friendly and  
listened.**

**82%** of customers thought we found  
**innovative ways to solve problems.**



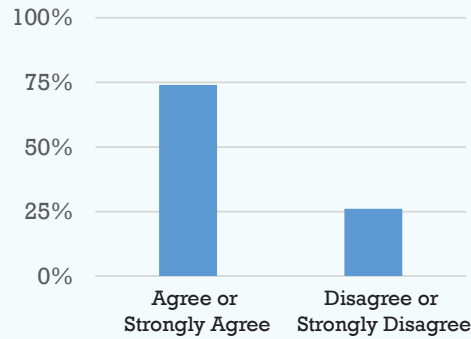
We heard you!

We are finding innovative ways to distribute information. For example, our **Waste 2 Resources Program** developed an online webinar explaining the permitting process, our **Hazardous Waste Program** is making YouTube videos to help explain regulations and reduce violations, and our **Water Quality Program** is developing a YouTube video to answer frequently asked questions.

# Permit and inspection processes are clear and useful, but could be more timely

94%

of customers thought the inspection provided **useful regulatory information** applicable to their facility.

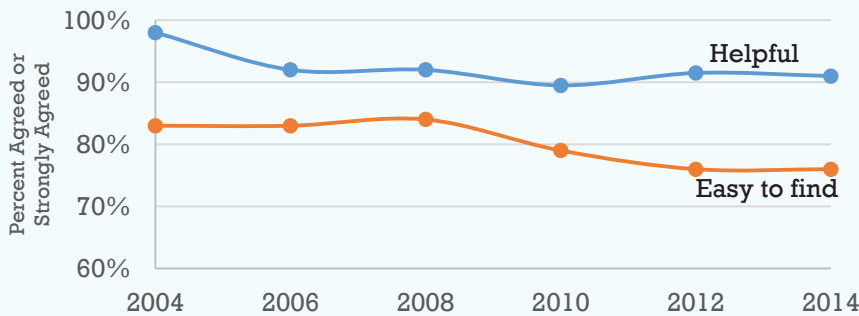


**75%** of permit applicants agreed the **time it took to process their permit was reasonable.**

We heard you!

We now track the time required to process all permits. Knowing how long it takes to process permits will help us identify what permits processes to improve. Also, our **Nuclear Waste Program** is now tracking the time to issue inspection reports and is rededicating resources to reports that are overdue. For inspections, our **Hazardous Waste Program** now notifies some facilities before their inspection and gives them a regulation checklist, allowing facilities to better prepare for their inspection.

# Our website is helpful, but information is hard to find



While over **90%** of customers thought information on our website was **helpful**, only **76%** thought information was **easy to find.**

We heard you!

Six of our environmental programs are updating information on their webpages to make it easier for customers to find the information they need. For examples, check out our **Spills Program's** new "How to Report a Spill" webpage and our **Toxics Cleanup Programs's** "Underground Storage Tank Inspection" webpage.

# We're continuing to measure and improve!

In response to the survey results, our permitting and compliance staff have identified **actions to improve our processes and customer service.** Some examples of what we are working on are listed above. We will continue to track the implementation of each of these improvements.



**18 action items** written by programs



**5 items** already completed



**11 items on-track** to improve customer service by 2017

For more information on the survey or to see the full report, please visit us online <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/quality>