



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

Office of Communication

1300 E Avenue □ Fort Lee, VA 23801-1800

Tel: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8524 DSN: 687-8000, Ext. 4-8524

FAX: (804) 734-8248 DSN: 687-8248

www.commissaries.com

Release Number: 103-09
Date: October 29, 2009
Contact: Kevin Robinson, public affairs specialist
Tel.: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8773
E-mail: kevin.robinson@deca.mil

DeCA hits all-time high in 2009 customer service survey results

*By Kevin L. Robinson,
DeCA public affairs specialist*

FORT LEE, Va. – Customers are satisfied with their commissary benefit. That’s the message the Defense Commissary Agency received from more than 20,000 shoppers in the 2009 Commissary Customer Service Survey. The overall score of 4.67 (on a scale of 1 to 5) was DeCA’s highest mark ever, representing a rise of 0.06 points over last year’s results.

“It’s wonderful news to hear from our customers that they feel this strongly about their commissary benefit,” said Philip E. Sakowitz Jr., DeCA director and chief executive officer. “These numbers are off the charts – in every category – and it’s a testament to the fine work and dedication of our team members to deliver the best commissary benefit possible to the greatest customers in the world.”

DeCA conducted this year’s survey over 10 days beginning July 8 at its commissaries worldwide. Customers answered 14 questions designed to measure their overall commissary shopping experience. The questions focused on areas such as savings and prices; product quality, selection and availability; store hours; employee customer service; décor and appearance; and checkout procedures. In addition to measuring customer service, the CCSS provides a wealth of demographic data that helps DeCA understand who its customers are, and this helps the agency plan future improvements.

The resulting 21,326 responses were measured on a five-point rating scale, ranging from 1, “very poor,” to 5, “very good.” The survey was administered to commissary customers three

times per day, each day of the survey period. The response rate was 88 percent. The overall tally is a weighted average of the 14 item scores based on store sales:

<u>CCSS Item Scores</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
1. Low prices/overall savings	4.61	4.60	4.60	4.66
2. Well stocked, full shelves	4.48	4.49	4.50	4.57
3. Convenient hours	4.63	4.64	4.63	4.70
4. Entrance/sales area/restrooms cleanliness	4.64	4.61	4.62	4.65
5. Produce quality/selection	4.52	4.52	4.54	4.61
6. Meat quality/selection	4.62	4.63	4.64	4.72
7. Deli quality/selection	4.59	4.58	4.59	4.65
8. Bakery quality/selection	4.52	4.53	4.53	4.60
9. Other food items selection (dry goods, frozen foods and dairy)	4.61	4.61	4.61	4.69
10. Store layout and time required to shop	4.61	4.61	4.61	4.66
11. Checkout waiting time	4.58	4.57	4.56	4.65
12. Attractive displays/store décor	4.58	4.58	4.58	4.66
13. Courteous, friendly and helpful employees	4.77	4.76	4.76	4.81
14. Overall satisfaction (How did we do?)	4.72	4.72	4.72	4.78
Overall Score	4.61	4.60	4.61	4.67

The top three items receiving the highest ratings were “courteous, friendly and helpful employees” at 4.81, “overall satisfaction” at 4.78, and “meat quality and selection” at 4.72. All items rose by at least 0.03 points from the 2008 survey, with 0.09-point jumps in “checkout waiting time,” and 0.08-point increases in “meat quality/selection” and “other food items (dry goods, frozen foods and dairy) selection.”

“These results indicate that our customers continue to have a very positive perception of our commissaries,” said Barry White, an operations research analyst at DeCA headquarters. “Through the CCSS, we gain a better understanding of who is using the benefit and where they are.”

From its inception in 1991, DeCA has surveyed its customers. First, the agency used an Air Force system known as the Customer Service and Evaluation System. This survey measured customer service based on a 100-point rating scale. In 2000, the system was converted to a 5-point scale, modified to fit DeCA’s needs and renamed the Commissary Customer Service Survey.

“We appreciate our customers’ opinion about their benefit and recognize it as a bar that is set for our future performance,” Sakowitz said. “The survey proves that the commissary is worth the trip, today, and we must ensure that it remains so tomorrow.”

- DeCA-

About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,300 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*