



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

Corporate 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](http://www.commissaries.com)

---

**Release Number:** 93-10  
**Date:** October 7, 2010  
**Contact:** Kevin Robinson, public affairs specialist  
**Tel.:** (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8773  
**E-mail:** [kevin.robinson@deca.mil](mailto:kevin.robinson@deca.mil)

## Commissary shoppers give DeCA its highest mark yet in 2010 customer service survey results

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

**NOTE:** *To see photographs related to commissary customer service, visit*  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/commissary/sets/72157625114656636/>.

**FORT LEE, Va.** – Helpful employees, quality meat and convenient hours topped the list of what commissary customers enjoy about their stores, according to the 2010 Commissary Customer Service Survey. Nearly 21,000 shoppers rated DeCA an overall 4.68 score on a scale of 1 to 5, a slight increase from last year’s previous all-time high of 4.67.

“We must be on target with our delivery of this valued benefit, when our customers respond like this,” said Thomas E. Milks, acting DeCA director and CEO. “DeCA continues to receive higher marks in all areas. But I particularly enjoy the complimentary feedback our employees are receiving. They work hard every day in our stores. This is high praise coming from the greatest customers in the world.”

DeCA conducted this year’s survey over a 10-day period, beginning July 6, at its commissaries worldwide. Customers answered 14 questions about commissary performance in surveys distributed during their morning, midday and evening shopping trips, allowing DeCA to capture responses from all their shoppers. The questions focused on areas such as savings and prices; product quality, selection and availability; store hours; employee customer service; décor

and appearance; and the checkout process. Commissary analysts crunched the results by store, zone and region to produce reports on trends, year-to-year comparisons and patron demographics. This information gives the agency a better idea of who is shopping and what they think of their benefit.

The 2010 score is based on 20,945 responses using a 5-point rating scale, ranging from 1, “very poor,” to 5, “very good.” The response rate was 87.3 percent. The overall tally is a weighted average of the 14-item scores based on store sales:

| <b><u>CCSS Item Scores</u></b>                                  | <b><u>2007</u></b> | <b><u>2008</u></b> | <b><u>2009</u></b> | <b><u>2010</u></b> |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Low prices/overall savings                                   | 4.60               | 4.60               | 4.66               | 4.67               |
| 2. Well stocked, full shelves                                   | 4.49               | 4.50               | 4.57               | 4.60               |
| 3. Convenient hours   | 4.64               | 4.63               | 4.70               | 4.70               |
| 4. Entrance/sales area/restrooms cleanliness                    | 4.61               | 4.62               | 4.65               | 4.69               |
| 5. Produce quality/selection                                    | 4.52               | 4.54               | 4.61               | 4.62               |
| 6. Meat quality/selection                                       | 4.63               | 4.64               | 4.72               | 4.73               |
| 7. Deli quality/selection                                       | 4.58               | 4.59               | 4.65               | 4.65               |
| 8. Bakery quality/selection                                     | 4.53               | 4.53               | 4.60               | 4.61               |
| 9. Other food items (dry goods, frozen foods & dairy) selection | 4.61               | 4.61               | 4.69               | 4.69               |
| 10. Store layout and time required to shop                      | 4.61               | 4.61               | 4.66               | 4.68               |
| 11. Checkout waiting time                                       | 4.57               | 4.56               | 4.65               | 4.65               |
| 12. Attractive displays/store décor                             | 4.58               | 4.58               | 4.66               | 4.67               |
| 13. Courteous, friendly and helpful employees                   | 4.76               | 4.76               | 4.81               | 4.82               |
| 14. Overall satisfaction (How did we do?)                       | 4.72               | 4.72               | 4.78               | 4.78               |
| <i>*Percent change from 2009 to 2010.</i>                       |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| <b>Overall Score</b>  | <b>4.60</b>        | <b>4.61</b>        | <b>4.67</b>        | <b>4.68</b>        |

The top three items receiving the highest ratings were repeats from last year: “courteous, friendly and helpful employees” at 4.82, “overall satisfaction” at 4.78, and “meat quality and selection” at 4.73. The highest item increases from last year’s survey were “entrance/sales area/restrooms cleanliness” (0.9 percent), “well stocked, full shelves” (0.7 percent) and “store layout and time required to shop” (0.4 percent).

“The score generated in this survey is a measure of our ability to deliver the commissary benefit, and we include it in our strategic plan,” said Barry White, an operations research analyst at DeCA headquarters. “After all, giving the best service possible to our patrons is at the core of what we do as an agency.”

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.

"This survey is our annual report card from customers," Milks said. "With these results, we can track our performance and make the adjustments that make the commissary benefit even better."

**-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 more than \$4,400 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.*