



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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Shoppers give commissaries high marks for service

By Rick Brink,

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NOTE: To access photos related to the Defense Commissary Agency's 2011 Commissary Customer Service Survey, go to

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/commissary/sets/72157627858538323/>.

FORT LEE, Va. – For the third year in a row, commissary shoppers have given the Defense Commissary Agency an all-time high score when asked about their stores' performance, according to the 2011 Commissary Customer Service Survey.

Nearly 21,000 shoppers gave their commissary an overall score of 4.72 out of a possible 5 rating. The annual survey asked them to rate 14 items relating to customer service, ranging from prices and product selection to checkout waiting time and employee helpfulness. While the results are extremely gratifying to DeCA Director and CEO Joseph H. Jeu, he noted the survey more importantly gives the agency direction on how to efficiently improve customer service.

“Our customers are giving us another hearty slap on the back for a job well done in delivering the commissary benefit, and I can't overstate what an accomplishment it is to be so highly rated by our customers,” Jeu said. “But the survey doesn't end there, because it also provides a statistical basis to help us decide where and how to make improvements.”

The 4.72 score is a significant improvement over 2010's 4.68 and 2009's 4.67, both previously all time highs, according to Barry White, a DeCA Headquarters operations research analyst who conducts the survey. The scores ranged from 4.64 (Bakery quality and selection) to 4.84 (Courteous employees).

Major contributors to the high overall score were “courteous, friendly and helpful employees,” at 4.84, and “Overall satisfaction,” at 4.82.” Categories with the highest positive changes were “Well stocked shelves,” and “Selection of products. Since 2007, the CCSS score has improved 2.6 percent.

“Improvements were reported in all areas of customer service,” White said. “We’re now working on completing detailed reports for management on results by service area, and we’ll provide demographic information about our customers, their personal comments and what matters most to them. We will also look at our strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.”

DeCA conducted the survey over a 10-day period, beginning July 12, at all of its commissaries worldwide. Customers answered 14 questions about commissary performance in surveys distributed during morning, midday and evening hours, allowing DeCA to capture responses from all types of shoppers. DeCA analyzes the results by store, zone and area, producing reports on trends, year-to-year comparisons and patron demographics to give the agency a better idea of who is shopping and what they think of their benefit.

The 2011 score is based on 20,814 responses using a 5-point rating scale, ranging from 1, “very poor,” to 5, “very good.” The response rate was 90 percent. The overall score is a weighted average of the 14-item scores based on store sales; the item scores and overall score are weighted by commissary sales.

<u>CCSS Item Scores</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>%*</u> <u>Change</u>
1. Low prices/overall savings	4.60	4.60	4.66	4.67	4.69	0.4%
2. Well stocked, full shelves	4.49	4.50	4.57	4.60	4.65	1.1%
3. Convenient hours	4.64	4.63	4.70	4.70	4.74	0.9%
4. Entrance/sales area/restrooms cleanliness	4.61	4.62	4.65	4.69	4.72	0.6%
5. Produce quality/selection	4.52	4.54	4.61	4.62	4.66	0.9%
6. Meat quality/selection	4.63	4.64	4.72	4.73	4.77	0.8%
7. Deli quality/selection	4.58	4.59	4.65	4.65	4.69	0.9%
8. Bakery quality/selection	4.53	4.53	4.60	4.61	4.64	0.7%
9. Other food items (dry goods, frozen foods & dairy) selection	4.61	4.61	4.69	4.69	4.74	1.1%
10. Store layout and time required to shop	4.61	4.61	4.66	4.68	4.71	0.6%
11. Checkout waiting time	4.57	4.56	4.65	4.65	4.68	0.6%
12. Attractive displays/store décor	4.58	4.58	4.66	4.67	4.70	0.6%
13. Courteous, friendly and helpful employees	4.76	4.76	4.81	4.82	4.84	0.4%
14. Overall satisfaction (How are we doing?)	4.72	4.72	4.78	4.78	4.82	0.8%
<i>*Percent change from 2010 to 2011</i>						
Overall Score	4.60	4.61	4.67	4.68	4.72	0.9%

From its inception in 1991, DeCA has surveyed its customers. It first used an Air Force system known as the Customer Service and Evaluation System, which 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 an important tool to measure our performance as judged by those we serve," Jeu said. "We're very good, but we are always striving to improve and enhance the commissary benefit. That's a challenge we gladly embrace as we serve those who defend our nation's freedom."

-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 amounting to thousands of dollars annually. For current savings figures for various groups – single member up to a family of seven – visit <http://www.commissaries.com>. 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.*