



**Report on the Responses to the January 1, 2014 to June 30, 2014
Customer Satisfaction Survey for
Bureau of Forensic Fire and Explosives Analysis**

The following derives its data from a survey of seven questions sent to customers who submitted samples to the Bureau during the period from January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2014.

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AN ASCLD/LAB-International ACCREDITED LABORATORY
(SINCE July 20, 2010 in the subdisciplines of Explosives, Analysis of Unknowns, and Fire Debris)

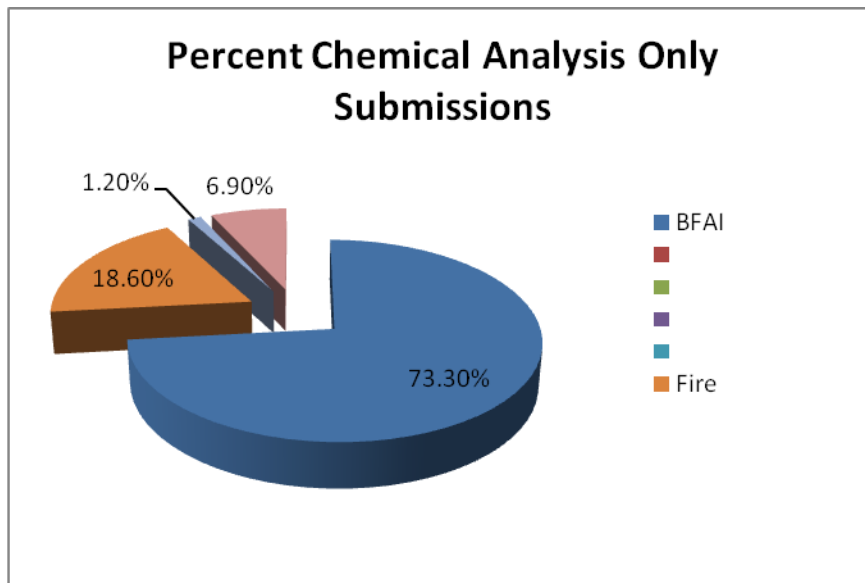
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Submitters:

During the survey period, a total of one hundred fifty-two (152) submitters were identified. Seven (7) individuals had their emails returned as they were no longer with those agencies. They represented eighteen (18) Fire Departments, five (5) Police Departments, nine (9) Sheriff’s Offices, twelve (12) BFAI Field Offices, the Florida Department of Corrections, Florida Highway Patrol, Division of Insurance Fraud, Department of Agriculture and the State Attorneys Office. The majority of physical evidence submissions (73.3%) were made by detectives from the Bureau of Fire and Arson Investigations (BFAI). Approximately 79.3% of submissions from Sheriff’s Offices were for identification of hazardous chemicals seized during clandestine drug laboratory investigations. BFAI was responsible for 100% of Digital Image Submissions which are not considered in the table below. Internal Bureau created samples necessary for quality assurance, instrument validation, and proficiency evaluations were redacted from the totals.

Type of Agency	Number of Separate Agencies/Field Offices	Number of Submitters by Agency Type	Percent of physical evidence (chemical) Submissions
BFAI	12	73	73.3%
Fire Dept.	18	43	18.6%
Police Dept.	5	8	1.2%
Sheriff's Office	9	20	6.9%
Other (State Agencies)	8	8	0.0%
Totals	52	152	100%



Of the non-BFAI submitting agencies, six (6) were identified as submitting thirty (30) or more samples each (these were from five (5) fire departments and one (1) sheriff's office).

Agency	Samples
Miami Fire Department	81
Lake County Sheriff	67
Palm Beach County Fire Rescue	60
Hillsborough Co. Fire Marshal	60
Tampa Fire Rescue	30
Pasco County Fire Rescue	30

A breakout of the physical evidence submissions made by our largest customer, the Bureau of Fire and Arson Investigations, indicates that the average number of chemical analysis submissions per detective who submitted physical evidence items in the target time frame (seventy-three (73) detectives) was 17.07 samples per detective. The field office with the greatest number of chemical analysis submissions was Jacksonville followed by Fort Myers. The average number of digital image case submissions per detective who submitted Digital Image Cases in the target time frame (fifty-five (55) detectives) was 21.9 cases per detective. The field office with the highest number of Digital Image Case submissions was Jacksonville followed by Orlando.

Field Office	Samples	DI Cases
Jacksonville	257	233
Fort Myers	144	108
Tampa	131	94
Orlando	124	142
Plantation	114	73
Pensacola	99	124
Lake Wales	87	112
West Palm Beach	80	55
Tallahassee	73	90
Daytona	50	10
Ocala	49	69
Panama City	38	94
Totals	1246	1204

The top ten (10) individual submitters of fire debris analysis requests are listed in the following table:

Detective	FO	Samples
Joseph Pietrafesa	West Palm Beach	53
Larry Brazile	Jacksonville	49
Tony Grice	Pensacola	46
Tom White	Jacksonville	37
Hector Noyas	Tampa	37
Randy St. Clair	Tampa	34
J. Baker	Jacksonville	33
David Young	Jacksonville	32
James Little	Jacksonville	32
M. Vitta	Orlando	32

The top nine (9) individual submitters of digital image cases are listed in the following table:

Detective	FO	DI Cases
Robert Harvey	Orlando	57
Larry Brazile	Jacksonville	45
Tony Grice	Pensacola	43
James Little	Jacksonville	42
Patrick Roush	Pensacola	40
Nicholas Incontrera	Orlando	36
Chris Scovotto	Tallahassee	35
Anthony Mozealous	West Palm Beach	34
Dion Saint	Panama City	31

The Survey:

The Bureau's Customer Satisfaction Survey was in an electronic format and was sent to one hundred fifty-one (151) of the identified submitters after subtracting those whose emails were indicated as being undeliverable. A survey return percentage above 25% of those sent is considered "significant". A total of sixty-eight (68) of the customers (45.03%) provided responses for at least one of the five (5) BFFEA services listed before the survey deadline. Some customers who utilized more than one of our services provided responses for those services as well.

BFFEA services which the customers were asked to rank individually:

- Fire Debris Analysis
- Explosives Analysis
- Unknown Chemicals Analysis
- Digital Image Archival
- Forensic Video Examination

If a customer did not use a service, they did not provide responses. Each of the five (5) services was assessed by four (4) attributes:

- Level of satisfaction with the work product
- Usefulness of the work product in closing cases
- Impact on the investigator or their agency if the service were no longer available
- Quality of any personal contact with BFFEA staff

Again, if the customer did not wish to address a particular attribute they were allowed to pass without ranking it.

The ranking scale for all attributes was:

- Very High
- High
- Neutral
- Low
- Very Low

Thus there are different numbers of respondents for each of the attributes in each of the five services. A table showing the number of respondents for each service:

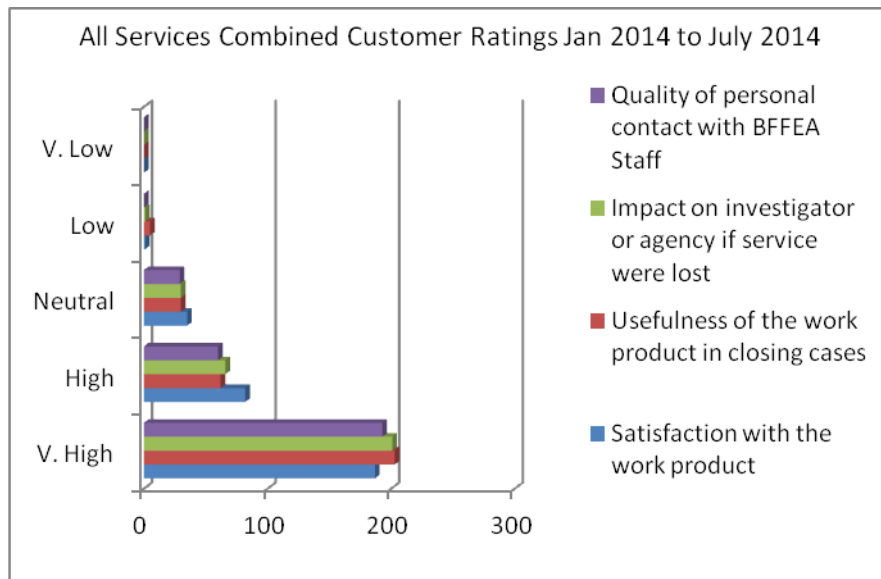
Respondents	Raw	Percent responding to a portion of the survey
Maximum number that responded to a portion of the survey	106	100.00%
Maximum respondents to issues on fire debris service	97	91.51%
Maximum respondents to issues on explosives service	53	50.00%
Maximum respondents to issues on chemical unknown service	59	55.66%
Maximum respondents to issues on digital imaging service	57	53.77%
Maximum respondents to issues on forensic video service	39	33.96%

Overview of All Services

If all responses for the survey are merged regardless of the service category a comprehensive view of the Bureau’s overall performance is created with the greatest weighting toward the chemical analyses that compose the bulk of our service requests. The following tables and graphs show the statistical customer perception of each of the four attributes for all services combined:

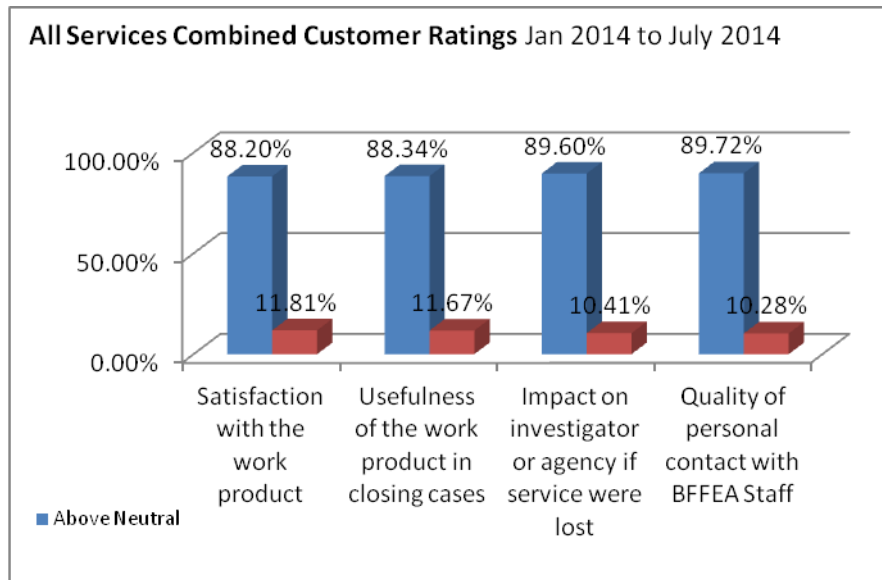
All Services Merged	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Total
Attribute	V. High	High	Neutral	Low	V. Low	Response
Satisfaction with the work product	187	82	35	1	0	305
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	203	62	30	5	0	300
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	201	66	30	1	0	298
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	193	60	29	0	0	282

All Services Merged	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Ranking	V. High	High	Neutral	Low	V. Low
Satisfaction with the work product	61.31%	26.89%	11.48%	0.33%	0.00%
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	67.67%	20.67%	10.00%	1.67%	0.00%
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	67.45%	22.15%	10.07%	0.34%	0.00%
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	68.44%	21.28%	10.28%	0.00%	0.00%



The scope of this evaluation by customers is examined by combining the percent of responses that rank the attributes at “Very High” and “High” against all the responses that rank the attributes at “Neutral”, “Low”, or “Very Low”. This evaluation period shows similar percentages in the percentages of “Very High” and “High” rankings compared with the previous evaluation period. All ratings of “Very High” plus “High” are between 88.2% and 89.72% and is a significantly positive reflection of the value our customers place on our services and staff.

All Services Merged	Percent	Percent
Ranking	V.High + High	Neutral, Low, + V.Low
Satisfaction with the work product	88.20%	11.81%
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	88.34%	11.67%
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	89.60%	10.41%
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	89.72%	10.28%



This comprehensive ranking of all services by attributes shows that 88% or more of our customers rank each of the attributes (satisfaction, usefulness of the product, impact, and personal contact) at “High” or “Very High”. If we examine the statistics for the highest rating of only “Very High” the Bureau scores from above 61% to almost 69% for each attribute.

Each of the services is evaluated separately by the four attributes to determine areas where potential improvements may be possible. The number of work units associated with each service is listed below. The category “Explosives” includes both explosive determinations as well as the determinations for unknown chemicals. This will be broken down further when the services are discussed.

07/01/2013 to 12/31/2013	Film SR	Fire Debris Samples	QA/QC	Explosives	Images	Video	Total
Work Units	101	1770	1631	1227	1205	18	5952

Fire Debris Analysis Service

Fire debris analysis is the primary service provided by the Bureau. The individual samples and associated quality assurance analyses compose 56.7% (3,651 of 6,437) of the total number of work units processed by the Bureau in the last six months of 2013. Fire debris analysis, where we examine material from the fire scene for trace amounts of ignitable liquids possibly used to accelerate a fire, is accomplished with the use of gas chromatography-mass spectrometry.

Of all forensic sub-disciplines under the general category of “Trace Evidence,” fire debris is notoriously difficult to analyze. Ignitable liquids are complex mixtures of organic chemicals. In a sample of fire debris, these are intermingled with additional complex mixtures of organic chemicals (some of which are the same as some of the components of ignitable liquids) coming from the fire debris. The level of scrutiny required is high and the guidelines for what can be determined are described by the American Society for Testing and Materials E1618, “Standard Test Method for Ignitable Liquid Residues in Extracts from Fire Debris Samples by Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry”. The number of negative determinations in fire debris analysis is higher than other disciplines either because the ignitable liquid did not survive the fire, was not on the sample submitted, or the components recovered do not meet the requirements of the Bureau SOP using ASTM recommendations. For July 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013, the BFFEA had the following fire debris analysis determinations:

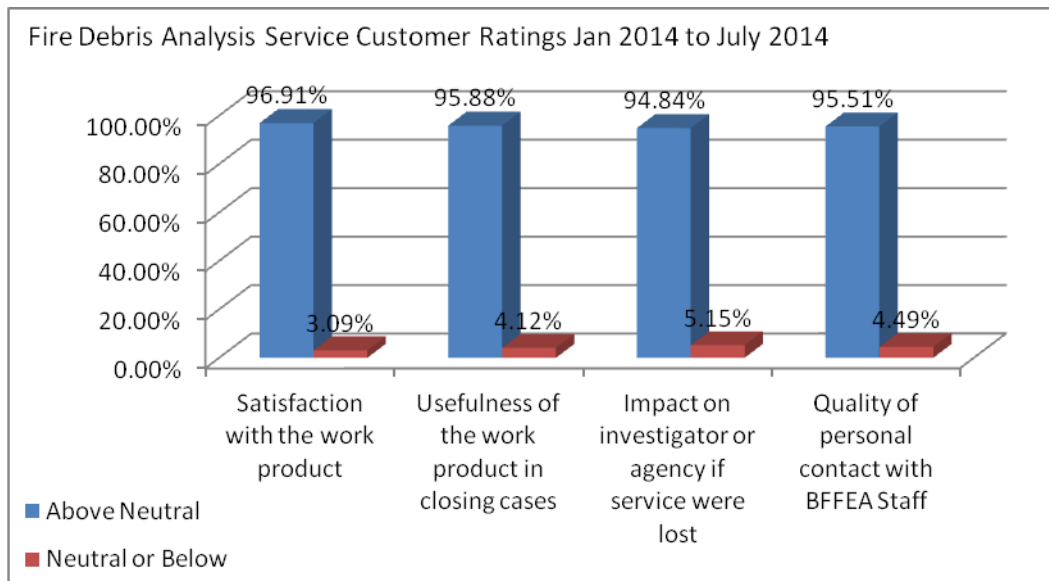
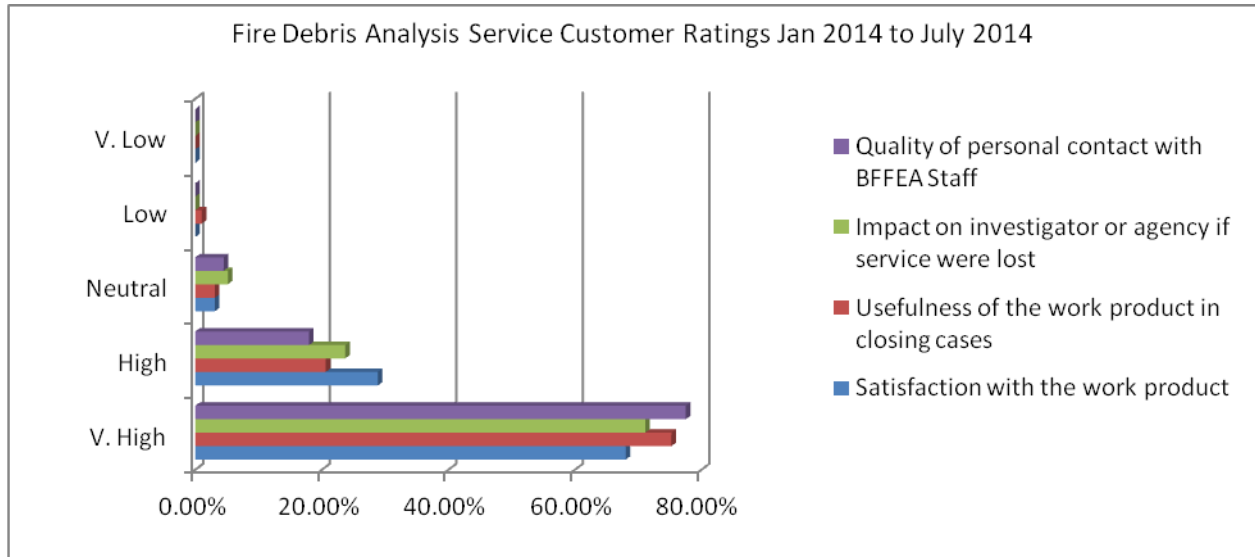
Description of Finding (per ASTM E1618)	Percent
No Ignitable Liquid Determined	58.56%
Gasoline and Gasoline Mixtures	29.24%
Petroleum Distillates and Distillate Mixtures	5.81%
Terpenes, Turpentine & Miscellaneous	3.59%
Isoparaffinic Products	1.03%
Aromatic Products	0.70%
Oxygenated Products	0.59%
Naphthenic/Paraffinic Products	0.16%
Normal Alkane (Normal Paraffinic) Products	0.05%

Our customers provided the following responses concerning their view of fire debris analysis service:

Fire Debris Service	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Ranking	V. High	High	Neutral	Low	V. Low
Satisfaction with the work product	68.04%	28.87%	3.09%	0.00%	0.00%
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	75.26%	20.62%	3.09%	1.03%	0.00%
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	71.13%	23.71%	5.15%	0.00%	0.00%
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	77.53%	17.98%	4.49%	0.00%	0.00%

Again, the scope of this evaluation by customers is more impressive when the statistics are examined by simply viewing the percent of responses that rank the attributes at “Very High” plus “High” against all the responses that rank the attributes at “Neutral” or lower.

Fire Debris Service	Percent	Percent
Ranking	V.High + High	Neutral, Low, or V.Low
Satisfaction with the work product	96.91%	3.09%
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	95.88%	4.12%
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	94.84%	5.15%
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	95.51%	4.49%



When over 95% of customers rank the usefulness of the work product to close their case investigations at “Very High” or “High” it is clear that the fire debris analysis provided by BFFEA is a necessary component to fire investigation in the State of Florida.

Explosives/Unknown Chemicals Analysis Service

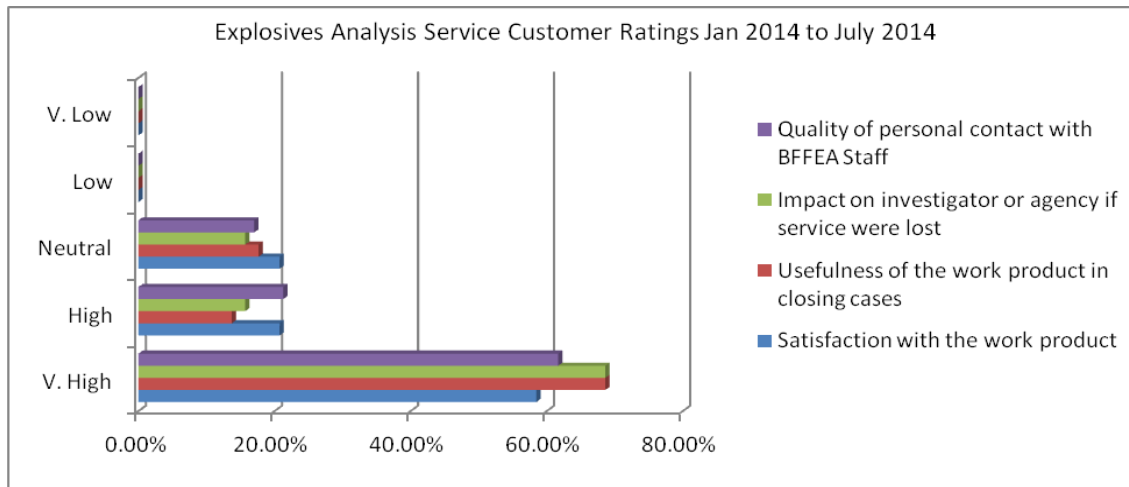
The determination of explosives, explosive residues, or unknown chemicals typically requires the use of multiple instruments on multiple sub-samples. Fire debris only requires a single analysis by gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS). Organic (compounds with a carbon atom “backbone”) explosives, residues and unknown chemicals may require multiple separate analyses by GC-MS, Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR), and/or Ion Mobility Spectrometry (IMS). Inorganic (compounds without the carbon atom backbone and that typically dissociate into positively and negatively charged ions) explosives, residues and unknown chemicals may require multiple separate analyses by ion chromatography- mass spectrometry (IC-MS), FTIR, Raman Spectroscopy, and/or X-Ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy (XRF). In addition, all explosives, residues and unknown chemicals typically require additional various classic wet chemical “spot” tests and determination of pH (level of how acidic or basic a liquid may be).

The Bureau’s statistics currently combine all explosives, explosive residues, and unknown chemicals (true unknowns as well as chemicals from clandestine drug laboratories) under the single heading of “explosives.” Originally the Bureau only had the identification of the unknown chemicals as a minor task and incorporated them into the more numerous explosives determinations.

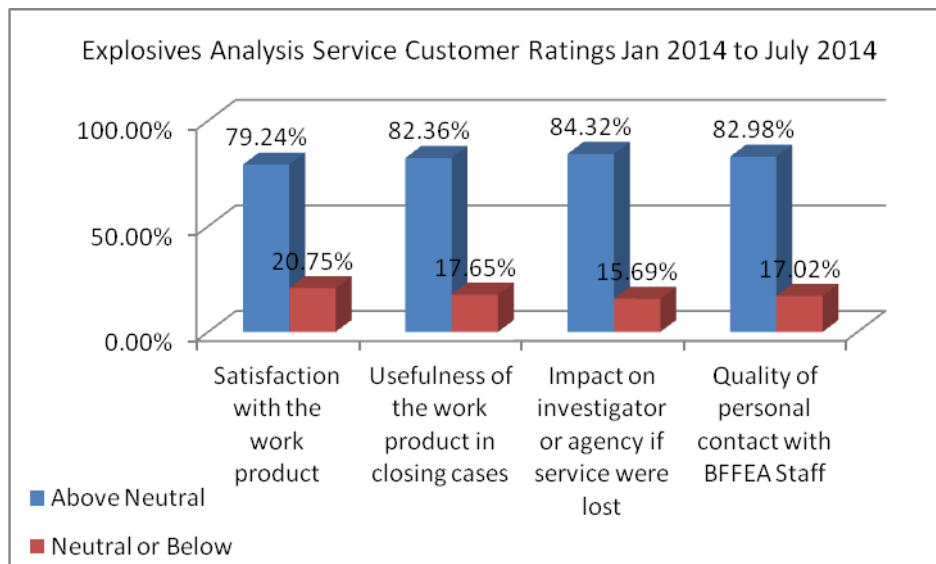
This is not the case today. Because no other State laboratory performing testing of this type is available for investigators and that Florida Statutes criminalize possession of the chemicals used to construct a clandestine drug laboratory (FS 893.033(2), FS 893.13 (g), FS 893.135(1)(f)1, and FS 893.149(1)) there has been a steady increase in the number of these submissions. Of the twelve hundred twenty-seven (1227) “explosives” analyses completed by the Bureau from January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2014, only 17.3% or two hundred twelve (212) were for actual explosives while 82.7% or one thousand fifteen (1015) were for unknown chemicals identification. This section will report the customer satisfaction rankings for the explosives analysis while unknown chemicals analysis will be covered in the next section.

Explosives Service	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Ranking	V. High	High	Neutral	Low	V. Low
Satisfaction with the work product	58.49%	20.75%	20.75%	0.00%	0.00%
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	68.63%	13.73%	17.65%	0.00%	0.00%
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	68.63%	15.69%	15.69%	0.00%	0.00%
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	61.70%	21.28%	17.02%	0.00%	0.00%

To appreciate the scope of this evaluation by customers we will again examine the statistics by simply viewing the percent of responses that rank the attributes at “Very High” plus “High” against all the responses that rank the attributes at “Neutral” or lower.



Explosives Service	Percent	Percent
Ranking	V.High + High	Neutral, Low, or V.Low
Satisfaction with the work product	79.24%	20.75%
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	82.36%	17.65%
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	84.32%	15.69%
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	82.98%	17.02%

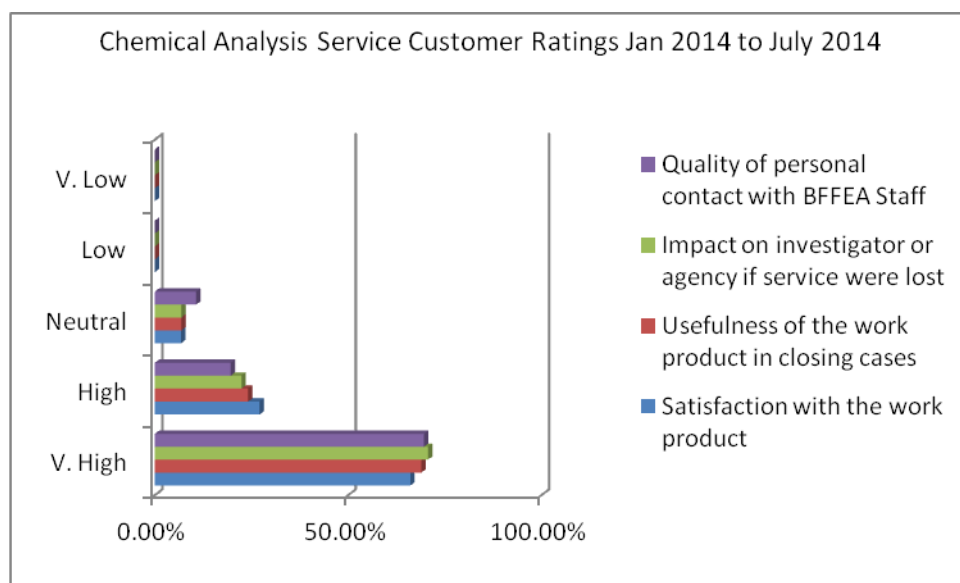


Overall, the ratings of “Very High” and “High” are similar to the previous review period. As with the previous review period a drop in favorable ratings to “neutral” and lower. Discussions with customers revealed that delays caused by equipment problems had affected their perceptions and skewed them to neutral. With the current work product rated at “Very High” and “High” by 79.24% of our customers it is clear we are performing well above expectations.

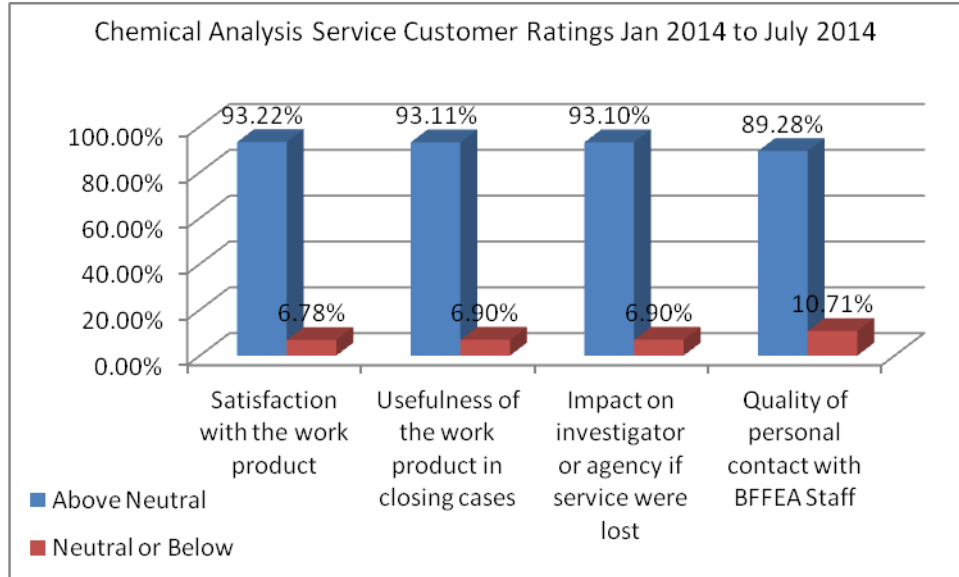
Unknown Chemicals Analysis Service

As was discussed at the beginning of the section on Explosives Analysis, the twelve hundred twenty-seven (1227) “explosives” analyses completed by the Bureau from January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2014 can be broken down into only 17.3% or two hundred twelve (212) for actual explosives while 82.7% or one thousand fifteen (1015) were for unknown chemicals identification. In addition, organic based unknown chemicals may require multiple separate analyses by GC-MS, Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR), or Ion Mobility Spectrometry (IMS). Inorganic based unknown chemicals may require multiple separate analyses by ion chromatography- mass spectrometry (IC-MS), FTIR, Raman Spectroscopy, or X-Ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy (XRF) and will require screening by various classic wet chemical “spot” tests and determination of pH (level of how acidic or basic a liquid may be).

Unknown Chemicals Analysis Service	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Ranking	V. High	High	Neutral	Low	V. Low
Satisfaction with the work product	66.10%	27.12%	6.78%	0.00%	0.00%
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	68.97%	24.14%	6.90%	0.00%	0.00%
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	70.69%	22.41%	6.90%	0.00%	0.00%
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	69.64%	19.64%	10.71%	0.00%	0.00%



Unknown Chemicals Service	Percent	Percent
Ranking	V.High + High	Neutral, Low, or V.Low
Satisfaction with the work product	93.22%	6.78%
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	93.11%	6.90%
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	93.10%	6.90%
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	89.28%	10.71%



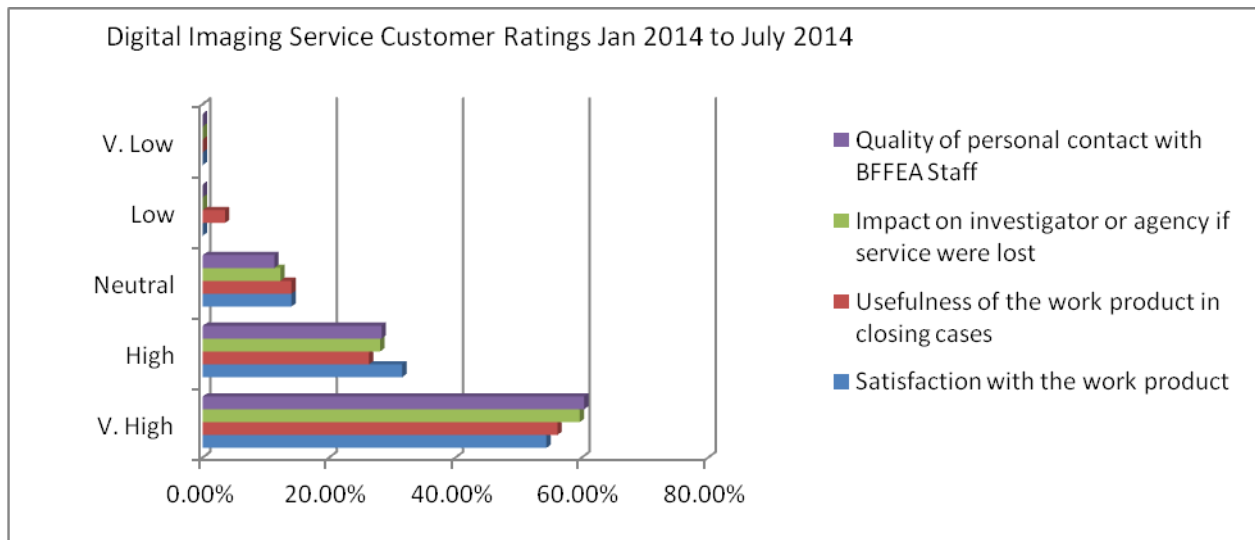
As with the Explosives Analysis Service, our customer ratings in the previous review period had shifted to the center with a small increase of customers rating the attributes as “Neutral” in all of the attributes except the one assessing the impact on the investigator should the laboratory not be available to them. The current review period saw the shift upward to levels seen in much earlier reviews and is attributable to the same issues affecting the “explosives” section of analyses. With all attributes at 89% or higher for “Very High” and “High” it indicates the vast majority of our customers have a strong positive view of the work we offer.

Digital Image Processing Service

As was stated earlier, this service is only performed for the investigators from the Bureau of Fire and Arson Investigations (BFAI). We act as the central repository for images from scene investigations. The images are uploaded by Detectives in the field to a server noted as “PhotoDump”. Each Detective has access to his file folder. Supervisors have access to their subordinate staff. Once the Detectives upload their files onto their field and ACISS servers, the files are automatically transferred to the laboratory’s archive server. On occasion, Detectives will need the reverse process where archived images will be restored to their field servers for their use in investigations or for courtroom presentations.

Items sent after May 2012, are stored on a server that is backed up each night on a remote secondary server for Disaster Recovery purposes. This service includes transfer and archival of digital images plus fulfilling requests for reproduction of archived photographs and images. This comprises 20.25% of the work units processed by the Bureau from January 1, 2014 to June 30, 2014 (1,205 of 5,952 units). A total of seventy-eight (78) BFAI Detectives authorized the transfer of their images from the PhotoDump server to our central secure archive. With forty-one (41) of them responding to this section of the survey it would appear that the majority (52.6%) of the Detectives from our largest customer base are heeding to our requests for completion of the survey.

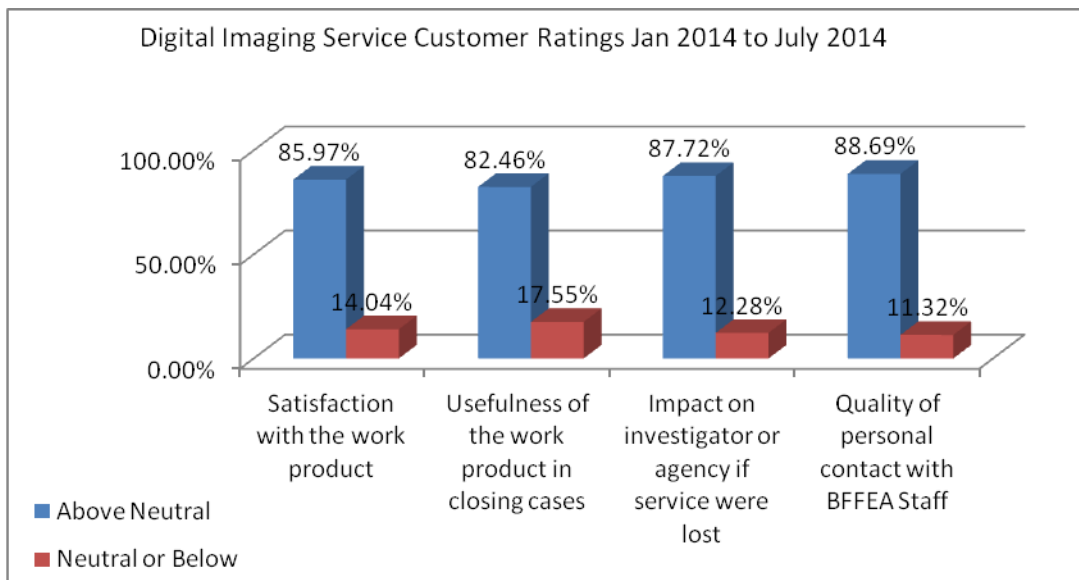
Digital Imaging Service	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Ranking	V. High	High	Neutral	Low	V. Low
Satisfaction with the work product	54.39%	31.58%	14.04%	0.00%	0.00%
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	56.14%	26.32%	14.04%	3.51%	0.00%
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	59.65%	28.07%	12.28%	0.00%	0.00%
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	60.38%	28.30%	11.32%	0.00%	0.00%



For the four attributes ranked in this service, the percent of “Neutral” or ”Low” rankings is similar to the immediately previous reporting period. This would indicate that of those responding, the value to ascribe to our service was high.

Because there is minimal interaction between laboratory staff and investigators once the items are archived, investigators may have a greater tendency to view the work in this service area as meeting their needs or “Neutral”. This is seen in the table and chart below.

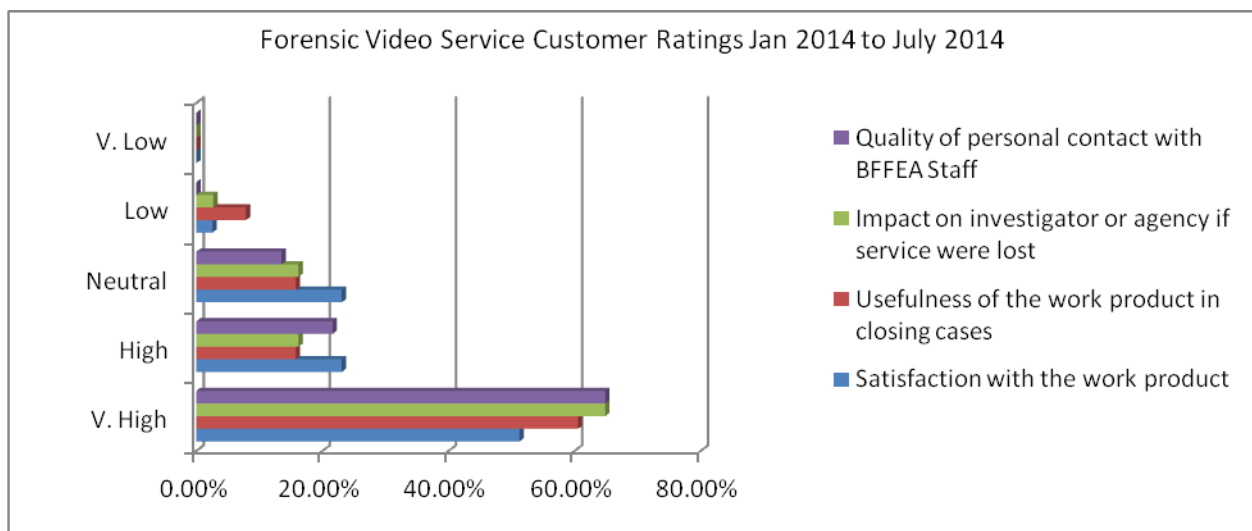
Digital Imaging Service	Percent	Percent
Ranking	V.High + High	Neutral, Low, or V.Low
Satisfaction with the work product	85.97%	14.04%
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	82.46%	17.55%
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	87.72%	12.28%
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	88.69%	11.32%



Forensic Video

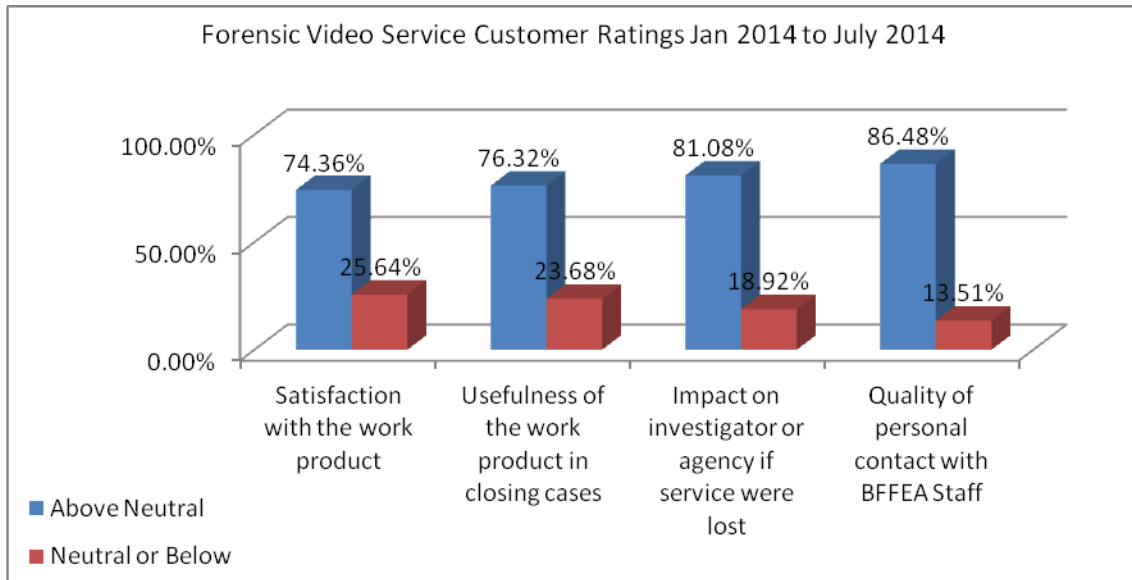
For the review period all reports were issued as reports from the BFAI detective who performed the examinations. BFFEA provides the facility, equipment, and an analyst in training to assist in this service area. .

Forensic Video Service	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Ranking	V. High	High	Neutral	Low	V. Low
Satisfaction with the work product	51.28%	23.08%	23.08%	2.56%	0.00%
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	60.53%	15.79%	15.79%	7.89%	0.00%
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	64.86%	16.22%	16.22%	2.70%	0.00%
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	64.86%	21.62%	13.51%	0.00%	0.00%



The value of the service and the information it can provide to the investigator is acknowledged by the customers. However, the ability to process and manage video is severely limited by the quality of the original camera that captured the image or the resolution of the data as it was stored. A low quality and low resolution camera will not capture images with sufficient detail that they have value. At the same time the storage capacity of digital systems can become an issue even when a high quality camera is used. In order to increase the number of hours of video that can be recorded on a drive or tape, the owner of the security system will lower the resolution. Thus, it is common to not be able to provide the investigator with all the information requested or to completely process the video. These are the direct component causes whereby this service has higher “Neutral” and “Low” rankings. However, while the value of the service itself was only ranked from 74% to just over 81% “High” and “Very High”, the ratings for the quality of contact with the personnel in the section was almost 87% “High” and “Very High”.

Forensic Video Service	Percent	Percent
Ranking	V.High + High	Neutral, Low, or V.Low
Satisfaction with the work product	74.36%	25.64%
Usefulness of the work product in closing cases	76.32%	23.68%
Impact on investigator or agency if service were lost	81.08%	18.92%
Quality of personal contact with BFFEA Staff	86.48%	13.51%



The Survey:

Input and comments from the customers were solicited in the last two questions. This report will provide an overview or synopsis of the most pertinent findings.

Question 6: Are there any BFFEA personnel you would like to identify regarding their work or contacts with you (positive or negative)?

There were no negative comments listed. Only positive comments were made. There were thirteen (13) comments praising Bureau staff in general for their willingness to assist customers in answering various questions and their degree of professionalism. Several staff members were listed specifically. All had positive comments about their ability, willingness to help, or professionalism. They are:

- Perry Koussiafes (Mike) (3)
- Carl Lugviel (2)
- Reggie Hurchins (1)
- Lance Tomkins (1)

Other members of staff who were not specifically named have only minimal, or no contact, with customers.

Question 7: Do you have any general comments or complaints regarding the work, personnel, or consultations? Do you have any suggestions for improvements we can make or additional services you would like to see?

While the majority of the comments provided were positive commendations and praise for the Bureau and staff, four (4) comments need to be addressed. The responses *in italics* are the comments of Chief Chasteen:

1. Have an employee scan the item received, which would then automatically send a message to senders email letting them know that the item was received at the lab.

It may be possible to add this service for our customers. The issue is with our time and manpower as we are currently quite short staffed. Once our staffing has been restored to a full complement of analysts, we may be able to have the submission sheet showing input at the lab as well as our photographs of the evidence received sent to the submitting agent.

2. I had evidence returned without the results paperwork included and no results were emailed to me. This happened twice. I contacted your agency immediately and everything was handled quickly.

Our analytical process has two components. The first is the extraction of the physical evidence to remove any ignitable liquid from the debris. The second process is the analysis of the extract by GC/MS. We typically return the evidence to the submitting agent/agency when the extraction is complete. This is often several days before we have completed and interpreted the GC/MS analysis. It is therefore common for the evidence to be returned before the analysis is complete and the report issued. If you have received the evidence back and have not received a report within ten (10) days, please feel free to call me at the lab and I will investigate the issue. In some cases, the issue is one where the interpretation of the data is complicated by the deterioration of the ignitable liquid, the degradation of the components in the pattern, or obtaining a relevant comparison reference sample. Those situations may often delay the issuing of a report well past our average turnaround time.

3. Consistent turnaround time. Sometimes it can be 8 to 10 days, then three to four weeks.

The issue of the turnaround time for a case depends on several factors. The first is the number of samples in the case. The second is the complexity of the recovered ignitable liquid (if one is present). The third is the analyst assigned to the case. And a fourth is the operability of our instrumentation.

For the first factor, the number of samples within a case increases the time the analyst must devote to the analysis of that case. Many of our cases are single sample cases. Others may contain eight or more samples. When our analysts are assigned cases, they are assigned a batch with about thirty (30) samples. This could be thirty (30) one sample cases, or one (1) thirty sample case, or anything in between. The issue is that the analyst has multiple samples and cases to work on which consume his or her time.

The second factor is affected by what we recover when we extract the sample or the types of tests to be performed. For fire debris cases, analysis is done using a GC/MS instrument. Explosives and chemical analyses require multiple analyses using multiple instruments and methods. The instruments we use do not automatically evaluate the data and return an answer to us. The analyst must examine the data and compare it with data from known samples to evaluate if a conclusion can be made. In many cases the instrument clearly shows that either nothing is present or will show a data pattern that is clear and which completely matches the expected patterns seen in a standard reference sample. Those instances will have a short turnaround. When the pattern is severely affected by background interferences, deterioration of the chemical present, degradation of chemical components, or the lack of a suitable reference standard, the turnaround time will be increased.

While all our analysts are trained in fire debris analysis, each is an individual and will have certain procedures and ways of working that are unique to their training and experience. Our SOP's encourage uniformity is the application of decisions to data, but is not so rigidly structured that an individual analyst cannot exercise some discretion in the review and interpretation of the data. Some analysts take a greater amount of time to review and interpret data than others. Additionally, once an analyst completes their analysis, the case is not complete until another analyst completes both a technical review and administrative review of all the data and approves that the report may be transmitted. This third issue introduces a level of variability in the time it takes and analyst to complete a case. There are some cases where the initial thought is to call the results negative, but the analyst sees markers in the data which require them to make additional tests or evaluations and delay the issuing of a report. Another problem is that we lost an analyst in mid 2014 who has yet to be replaced. Even after they are replaced, the new analyst must have a period of training and competency testing before being allowed to analyze casework. The human factor will also have those times when an analyst is assigned casework, but will have unexpected leave time, training, or court which requires them to be away from the laboratory and their casework placed on hold until their return.

The fourth factor is one where we are vulnerable. The most common analyses we perform are using the GC/MS instrument. We have three and try to replace the oldest every four to five years so we avoid obsolescence. We have a vigorous internal maintenance program and have preventive maintenance and emergency repair contracts for instruments as well. Some instruments we use for explosives and unknown chemical analyses are one of a kind and we do not have a backup instrument. Invariably there are problems which we cannot anticipate and an instrument has to be taken offline until they are repaired and checked out before being used in casework. Sometimes repairs can be affected quickly and at other times the repairs require more time while waiting for service engineers or parts to arrive. In 2013, one of our key items of equipment was offline for several months while we waited for its repair.

In general our average turnaround is seven (7) to eight (8) days. As this is an average, there will be some of the simpler and more direct cases which can be completed in less time and others which are more complex or which encounter problems with personnel or instruments may take longer.

4. Do we have a Standardized Power Point highlighting all of the Bureaus within the Division (i.e. Lab, Investigations, Inspections and Bomb teams) that we can use as a PR tool for Outreach Programs? Also any Promotional trinkets that can be used during presentations? Just a thought.

The laboratory does not have a budget for purchase and distribution of promotional “trinkets” and such items are typically prohibited from purchase using State funds. While I agree that such items would be good to have, we simply do not have the wherewithal to provide them.

There have been several general PowerPoint’s highlighting each bureau and its capabilities. One is currently being worked on for update and it may be possible to add it to the SFM website so it can be used as you describe.

This ends the report on the responses to the survey for January 1, 2014 to June 30, 2014.

This report may be used in the Bureau’s Business Plan, Management Review, or to answer other questions regarding a statistical evaluation of the bureau’s customers or their opinions on the quality of service received.