

Survey of Past ALERRT Participants

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Introduction

Since the inception of the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training program in 2002, more than 22,000 law enforcement personnel from across the country have received the ALERRT active shooter training. The ALERRT Center has received more than \$7 million in funding to conduct this training. Participants are pre and post-tested on knowledge when taking the course and these tests suggest substantial gains in knowledge. Students also complete evaluations at the end of the course and these evaluations are overwhelmingly positive. Yet, no research to date has attempted to assess how the training impacts the participants once they return to work. This survey was conducted to help fill this gap in knowledge.

Method

Sample. ALERRT has attempted to systematically collect the e-mail addresses of all of the participants that it trains. These e-mail addresses are then stored in a database. At the time that the survey began, there were 5257 emails in the database. A first request to complete the survey was sent out in January of 2009. This initial request was followed by 10 reminders asking the past participants to complete the survey. The last responses were received in May of 2009. A total of 1786 past participants completed the survey. The response rate was 34%.

Survey Design. Tracy Dalrymple, a graduate assistant working at the ALERRT Center, designed the survey with input from other ALERRT center personnel and the author of this report. The survey was administered over the internet and consisted of three main sections. A total of 34 questions were asked of the respondents. The sections were day-to-day policing, confidence, and whether or not ALERRT training should be mandatory. The questions were all

forced alternative choice in nature and include a mix of dichotomous (yes/no) and Likert-type items. Space was provided for additional comments, but this option was rarely utilized. The comments are therefore not addressed in this report. The specific questions are presented in the results section of this report and the appendix contains a copy of the actual survey.

Results

The results section of this report is segmented based upon the three sub-sections of the survey. The data are presented in tabular form where appropriate and visual charts of the responses are presented at the end of the results section.

Day-to-Day Policing

The five yes/no questions asked in the day-to-day policing section of the survey are presented in Table 1. As can be seen, the vast majority of the respondents indicated that they used ALERRT taught skills in their day-to-day policing activities, that ALERRT improved their tactical mindset, and that the ALERRT program better prepared them for their work. The majority also indicated that they had changed or added to the equipment that they carried in their on duty vehicle as a result of ALERRT training. Two five-point questions were also asked in this section. The first asked how frequently they utilized the ALERRT skills. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they utilized the skills on a daily or weekly basis. The second question asked how often the respondents carried their weapon off duty as a result of the ALERRT class. Fifty-five percent of the respondents indicated that they carried their weapons either more often or significantly more often in response to this question.

Table 1. Day-to-Day Policing Yes/No Questions

	Yes	No
Have you used the skills learned in the ALERRT class in your day-to-day policing?	1587 (93.5%)	110 (6.5%)
Have you changed or added equipment to your vehicle while on duty as a result of the ALERRT class?	965 (57.9%)	701 (42.1%)
Do you feel that you have a better tactical/policing mindset as a result of the ALERRT class?	1616 (97.1%)	48 (2.9%)
Has your participation in ALERRT training better prepared you for day-to-day police work?	1613 (94.1%)	50 (2.9%)
Would you want to take more courses offered through the ALERRT program?	1625 (94.8%)	41 (2.5%)

Confidence

The second section of the survey dealt with the impact of ALERRT training on the participants' confidence levels in five key areas. These were tactical ability, the ability to respond to an active shooter, respond to deadly force encounters, safely handle their weapons, and handle high risk situations. As can be seen in Table 2, the majority of respondents indicated that the ALERRT training had increased their confidence in these key areas. Also only one of the respondents indicated that the training reduced their confidence. This section also asked two yes/no questions. The first asked respondents if they felt more confident in their abilities as a police officer as a result of alert training. Ninety-six percent of the respondents indicated yes. The second question asked the respondents if the ALERRT class had improved the respondents' ability to identify areas for improvement. Almost 95% of the respondents answered yes to this question.

Table 2. Confidence Five Point Questions

	Increased Significantly	Increased	No Change	Decreased	Decreased Significantly
Tactical Ability	560 (34.3%)	1001 (61.3%)	72 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Respond to active shooter	921 (56.5%)	658 (40.3%)	52 (3.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Deadly force encounters	612 (37.6%)	853 (52.4%)	163 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Safely handle your weapon	506 (31.1%)	674 (41.5%)	444 (27.3%)	1 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Handle high risk situations	1573 (91.7%)	61 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

Mandated Training

The mandated training section of the survey dealt with two primary issues. The first was whether or not ALERRT type training should be mandated. Five yes/no questions addressed this issue. The responses to these questions are presented in Table 3. As can be seen, the respondents overwhelmingly supported the idea of mandating ALERRT type training. Almost 90% of those who supported mandated active shooter training also thought that the ALERRT program specifically should be adopted.

Table 3. Yes/No Questions Regarding Mandatory Training

Question	Yes	No
Should TCLEOSE mandate standardized active shooter training for the basic peace officer curriculum?	1486 (93.2%)	108 (6.8%)
Do you believe that ALERRT specifically should be adopted by TCLEOSE?*	1399 (89.0%)	68 (4.3%)
Should active shooter training be added as a requirement for all current peace officers?	1483 (93.2%)	109 (6.8%)
Should there be a refresher course covering the skills learned from the ALERRT class?	1565 (97.5%)	40 (2.5%)
Should force on force training be mandatory for all peace officers?	1517 (95.8%)	66 (4.2%)

Note: * = 105 responses not reported as they indicated that training should not be mandated in the previous question.

The second issue dealt with in the mandated training section of the survey attempted to identify whether or not the participants thought that their home agencies provided training that was adequate in key areas that are covered by the ALERRT training program. The participant's responses to these questions are presented in Table 4. Questions were phrased in such a way that "yes" responses indicated that respondent felt that he or she had received adequate training from his or her home department. Roughly 1/3 to 1/2 of the respondents indicated that the training provided by their home departments was deficient depending upon the specific area.

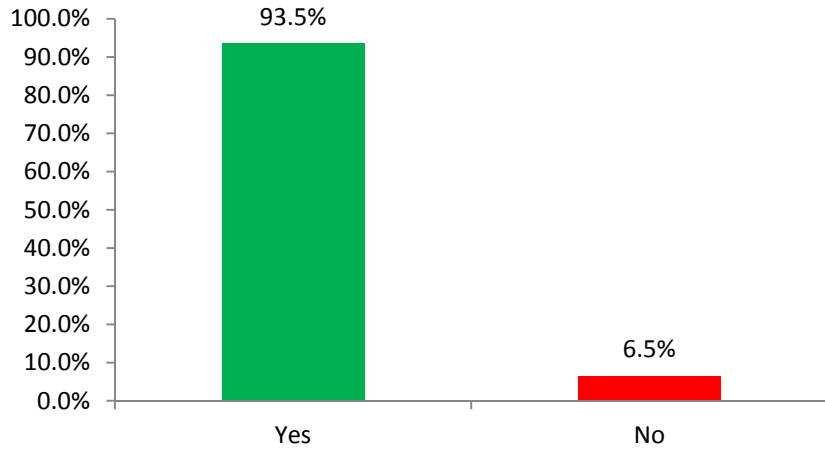
Table 4. Questions about the adequacy of the training provided by respondents' home department.

Question	Yes	Uncertain	No
Mindset	782 (45.6%)	276 (17.5%)	516 (32.8%)
Dynamic Room Entry	652 (41.2%)	252 (15.9%)	677 (42.8%)
Active Shooter Response	756 (44.1%)	246 (15.6%)	576 (36.5%)
Tactical Firearms	777 (49.3%)	273 (17.3%)	537 (33.4%)
Approaching and Breaching	528 (33.5%)	307 (17.9%)	742 (47.1%)
Threat of Terrorism	507 (32.2%)	361 (22.9%)	708 (44.9%)
IED Awareness	391 (24.7%)	344 (21.7%)	848 (53.6%)
Off Duty Response	394 (25.1%)	330 (21.0%)	847 (53.9%)
Force on Force Training	652 (41.4%)	298 (18.9%)	624 (39.7%)
Deliberate Searching	638 (40.6%)	311 (19.8%)	623 (39.6%)
Low Light	611 (38.8%)	275 (17.4%)	690 (43.8%)
Communication	753 (43.9%)	293 (18.7%)	522 (33.3%)

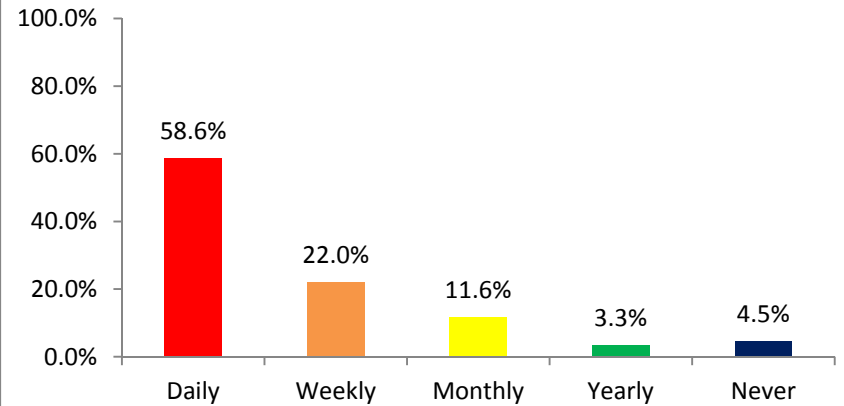
Charts

The following 10 pages graphically depict the respondents' answers to each of the questions asked on the survey.

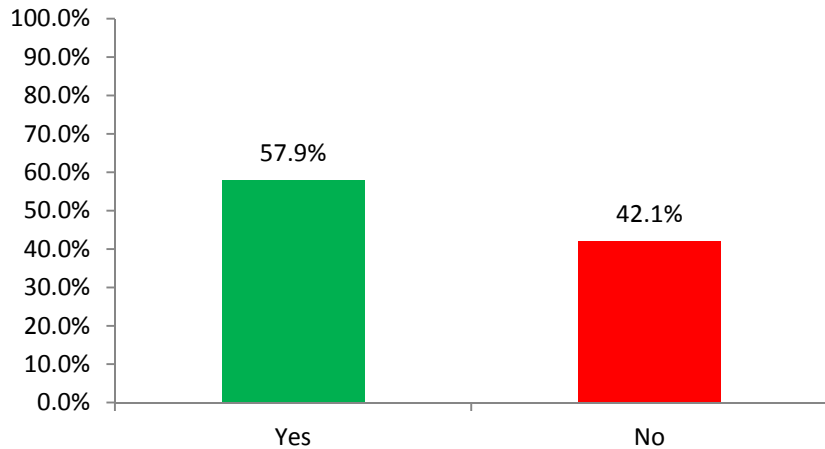
Have you used the skills learned in the ALERRT class in your day-to-day policing?



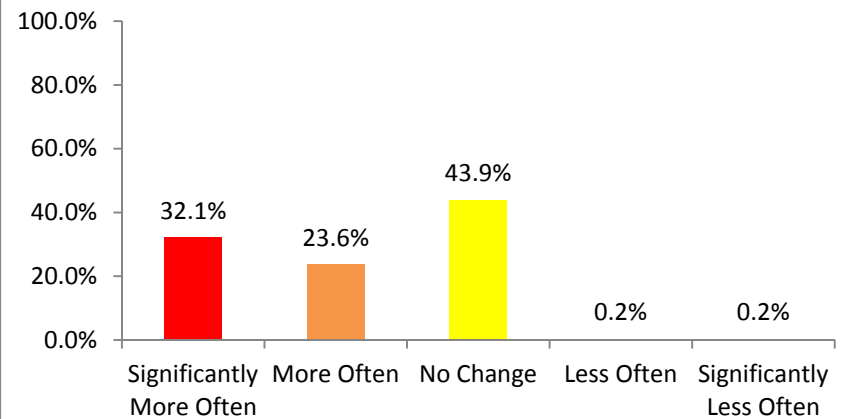
How often do you use the skills taught in the ALERRT class?



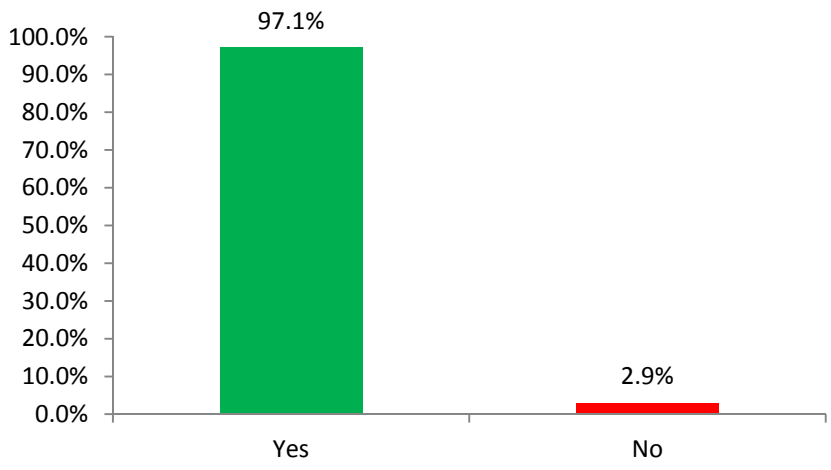
Have you changed or added equipment to your vehicle while on duty as a result of the ALERRT class?



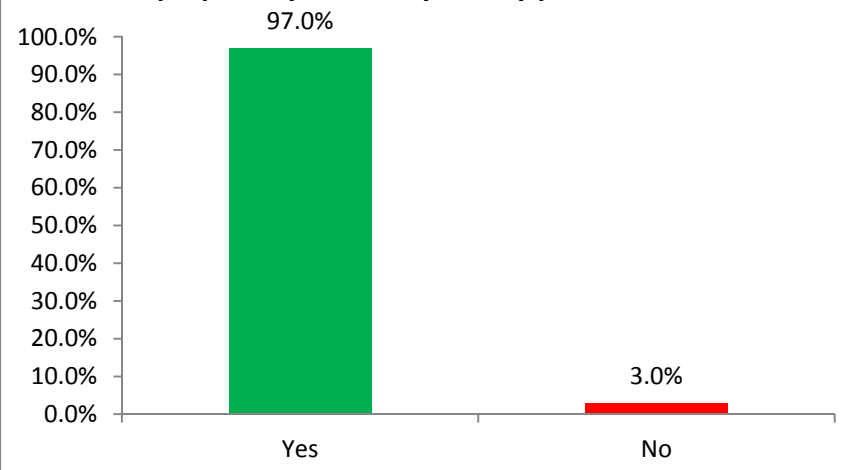
After Completion of the ALERRT class, do you carry your weapon off duty:



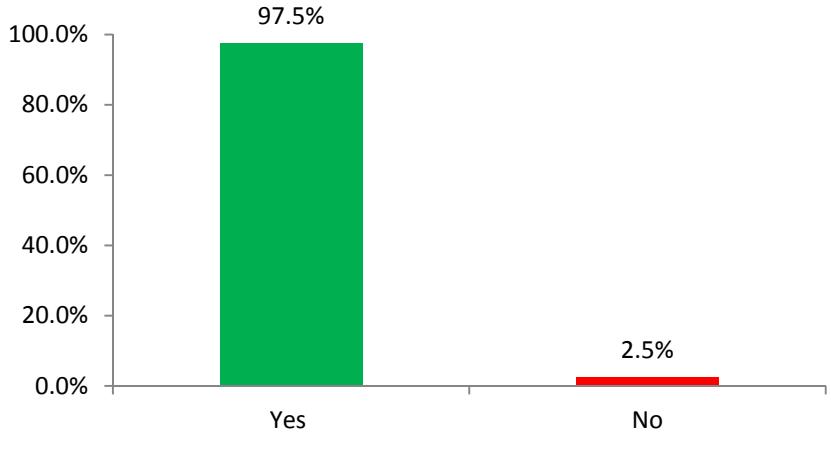
Do you feel that you have a better tactical/policing mindset as a result of the ALERRT class?



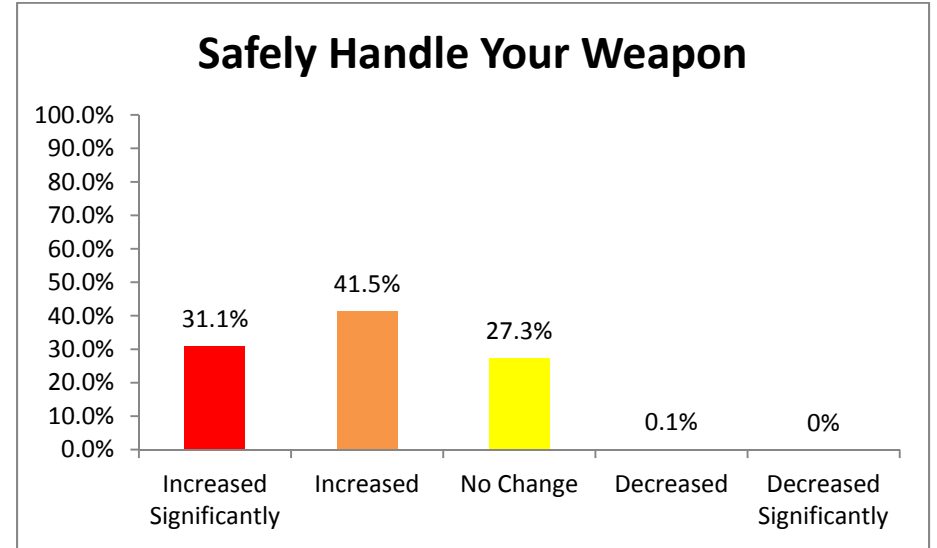
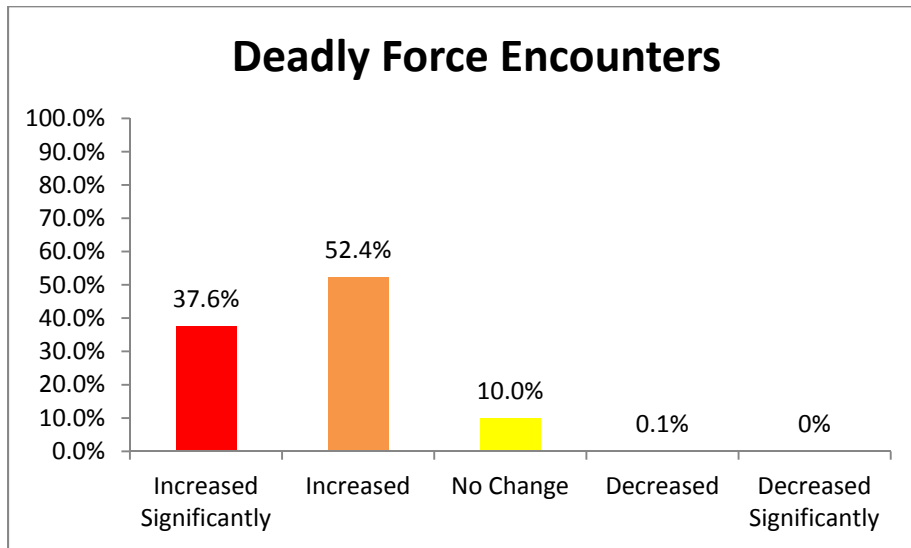
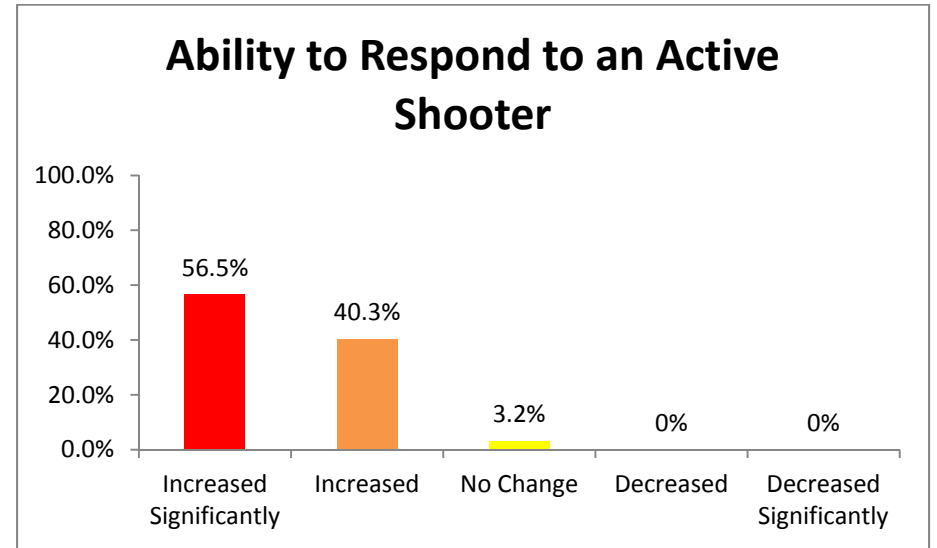
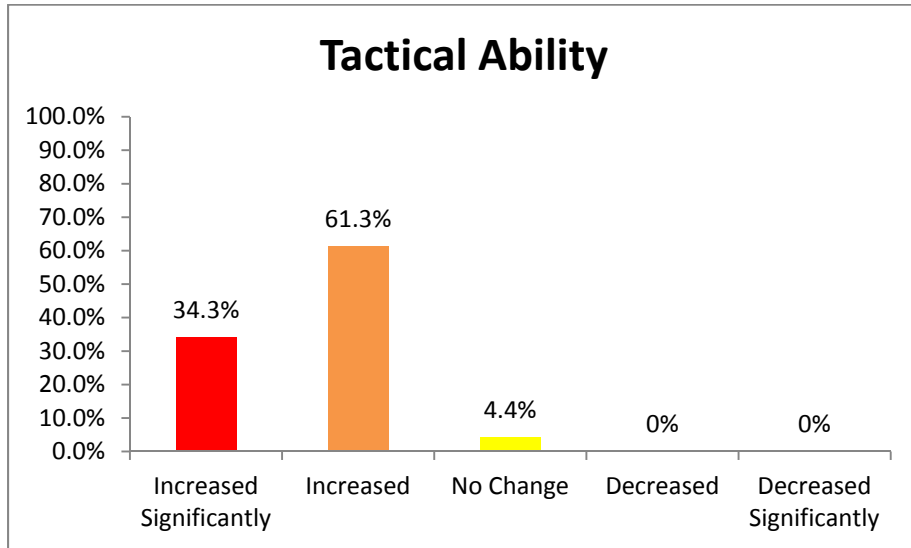
Has your participation in ALERRT training better prepared you for day-to-day police work?



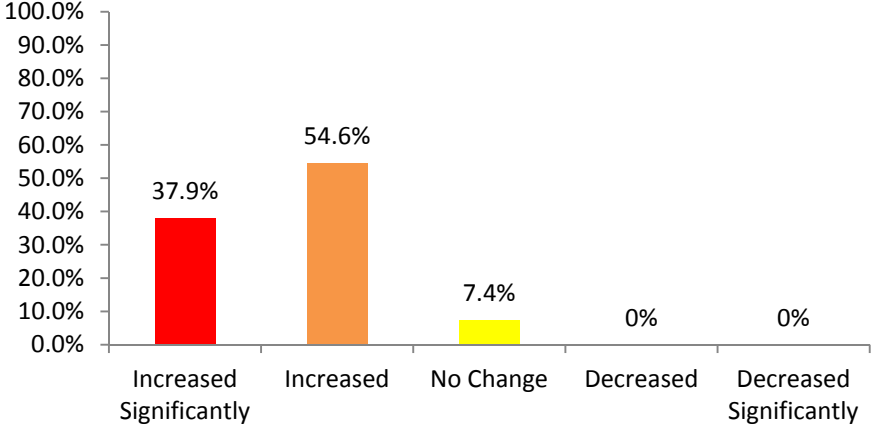
Would you want to take more courses offered through the ALERRT program?



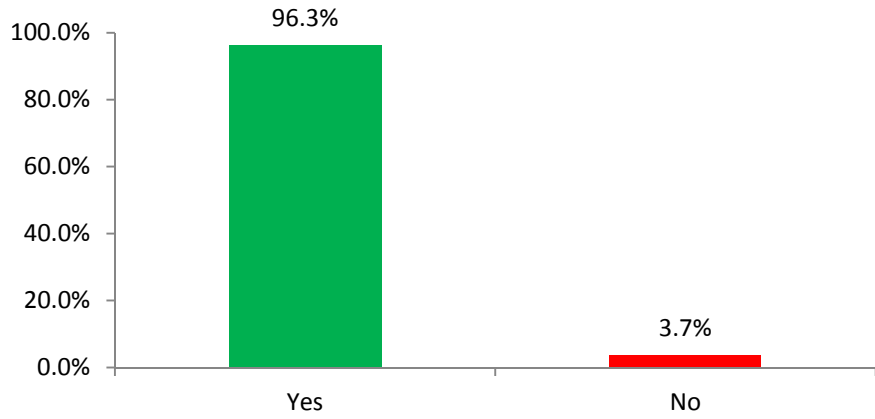
The next five tables address how the participant's confidence level has changed in the specified area as a of the ALERRT training.



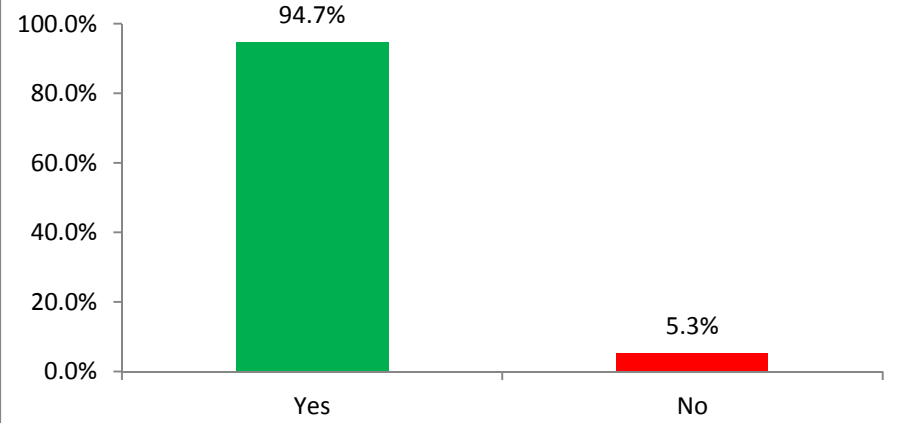
Handling High Risk Situations



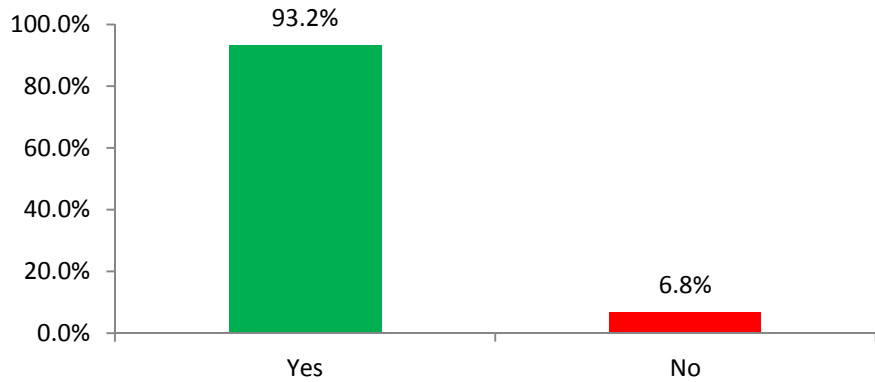
Do you feel more confident in your abilities as a police officer as a result of alert training?



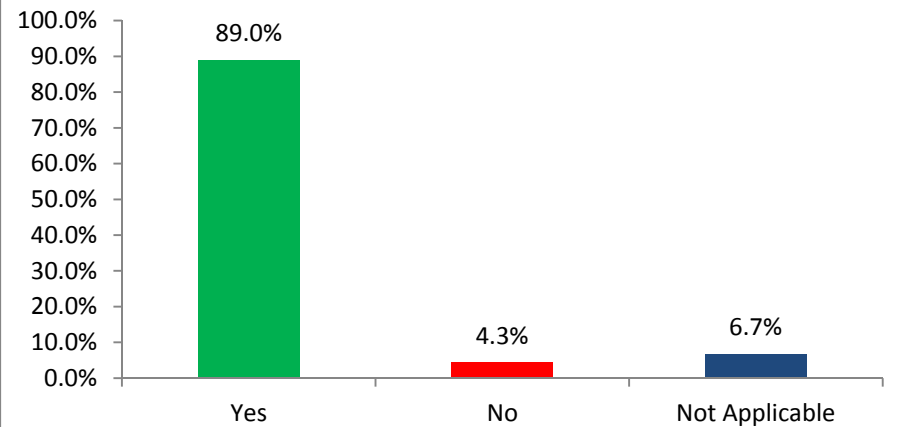
As a result of the ALERRT class, have you been better able to identify personal areas for improvement?



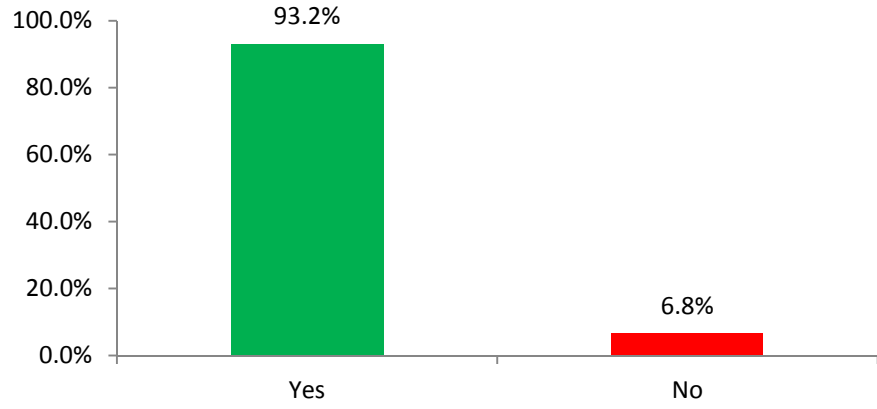
Should TCLEOSE mandate a standardized active shooter training for the basic peace officer curriculum?



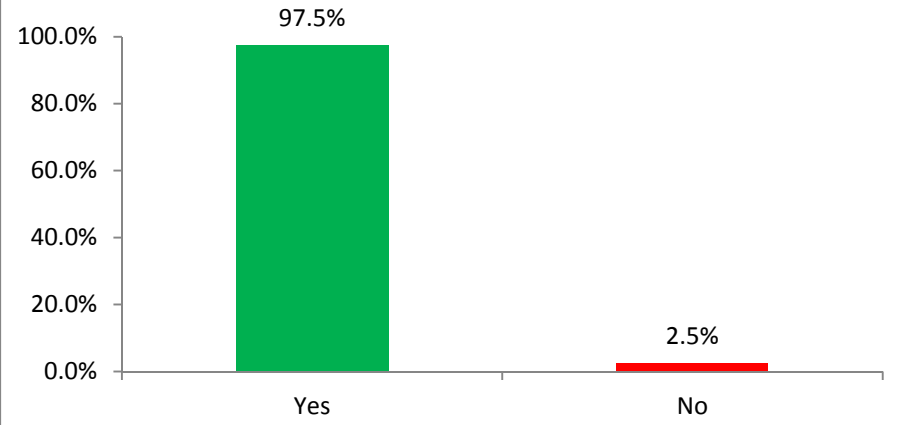
Do you believe that the ALERRT training specifically should be adopted by TCLEOSE for training peace officers?



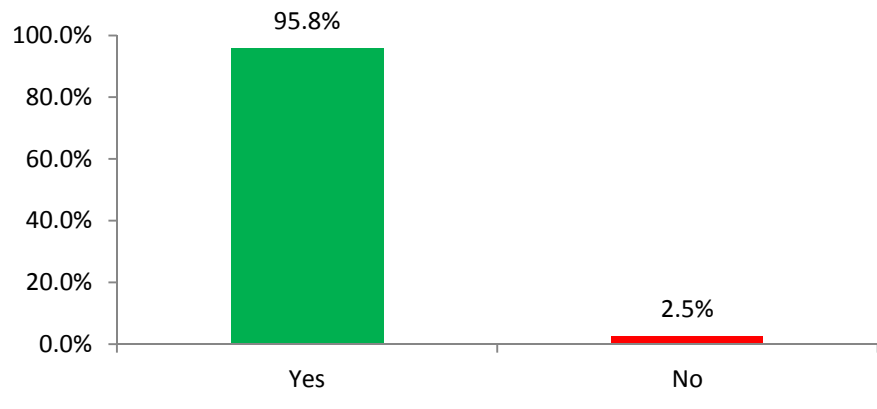
Should active shooter training be added as a requirement for all current peace officers?



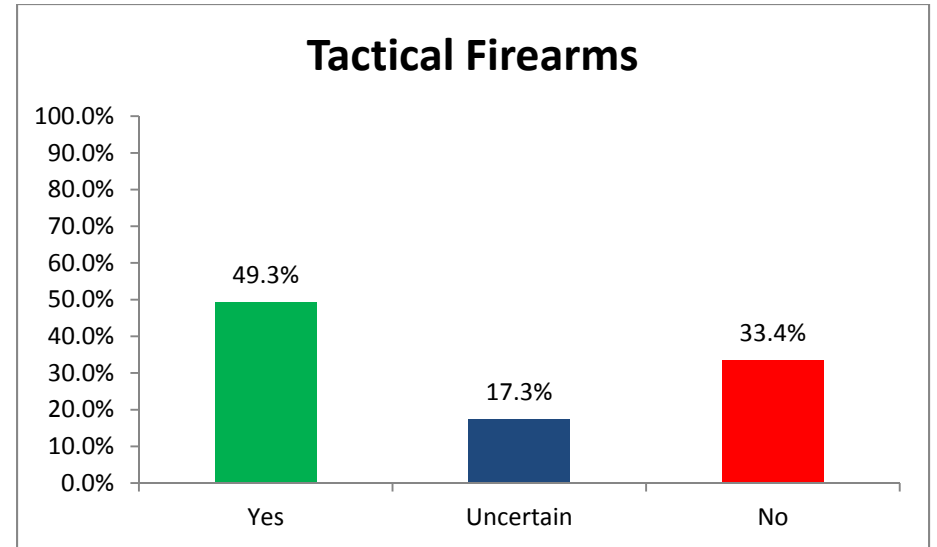
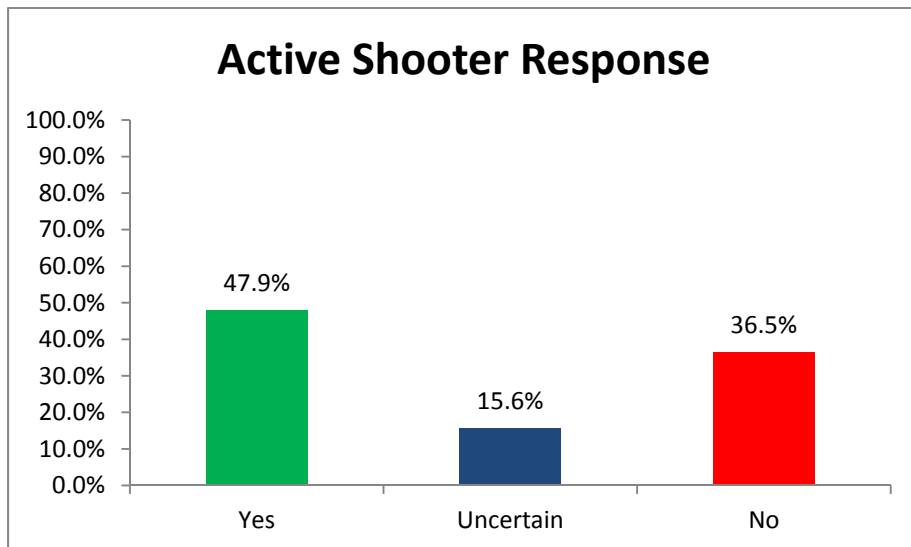
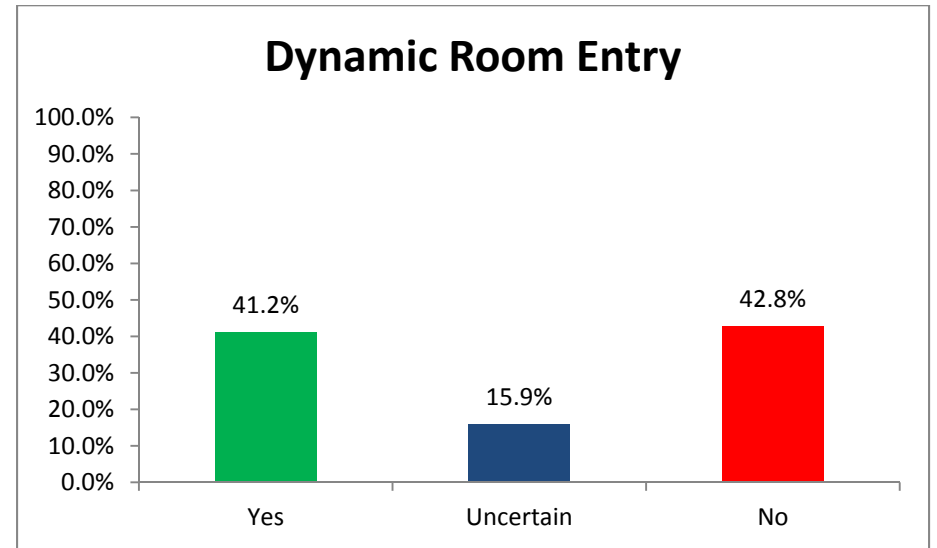
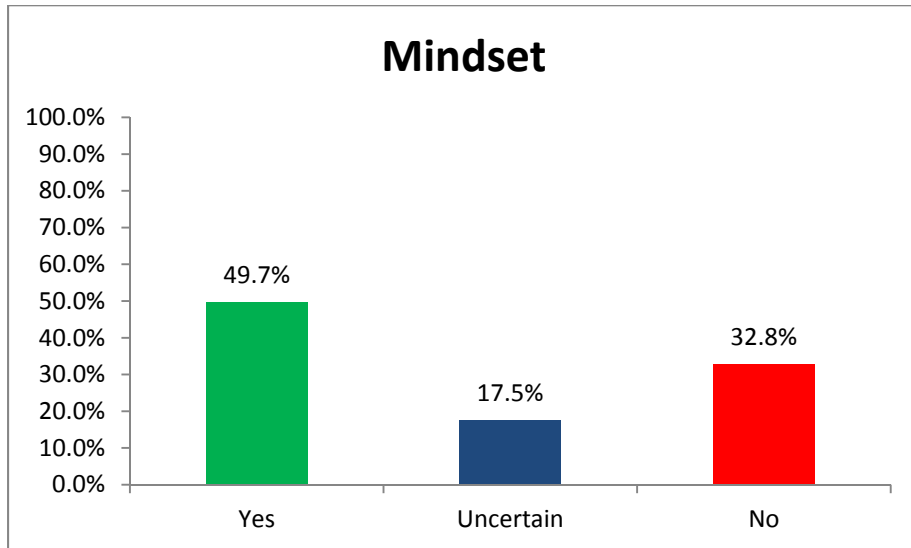
Should there be a refresher course covering the skills learned from the ALERRT class?



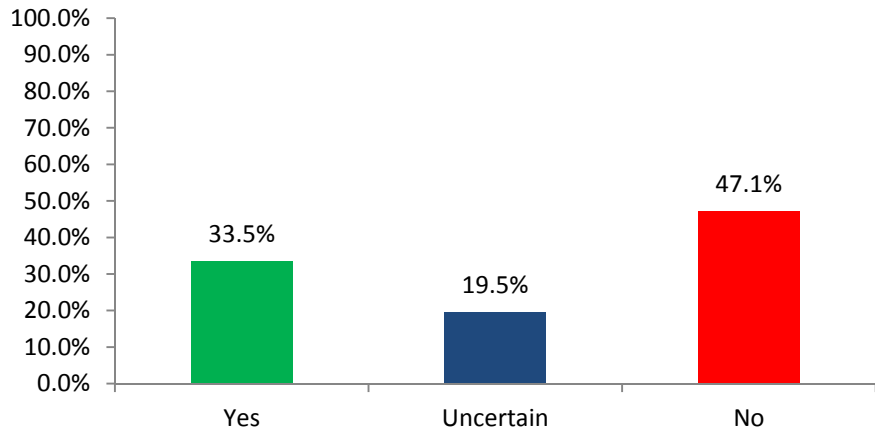
Should force on force training be mandatory for peace officers?



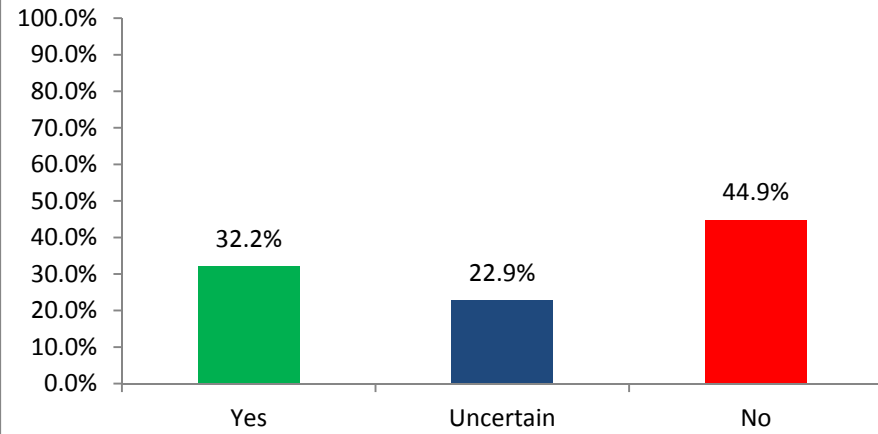
The next 12 charts address whether or not the participants felt that the training that was provided by their own departments met the demands of their jobs in the specified areas.



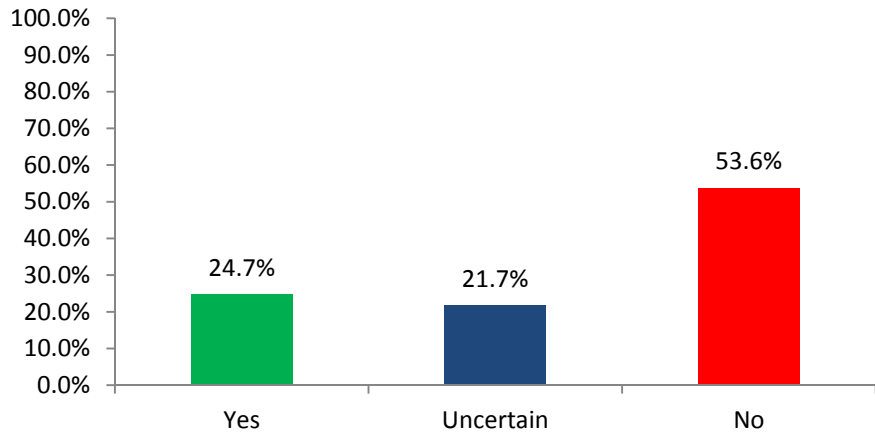
Approaching and Breaching



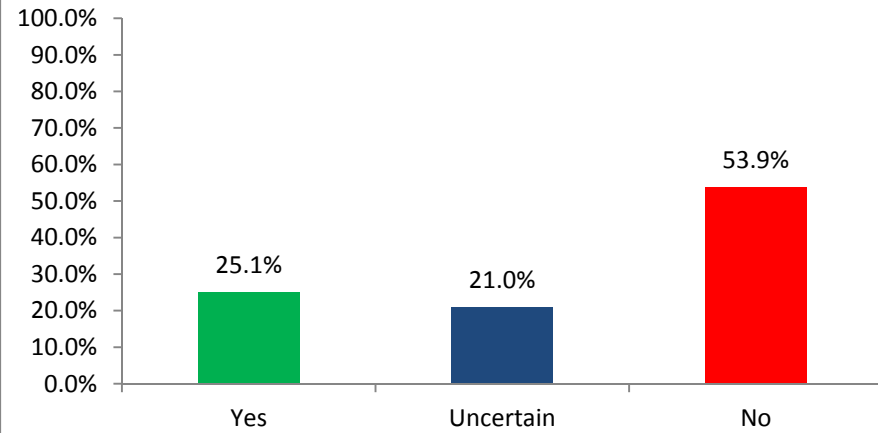
Threat of Terrorism



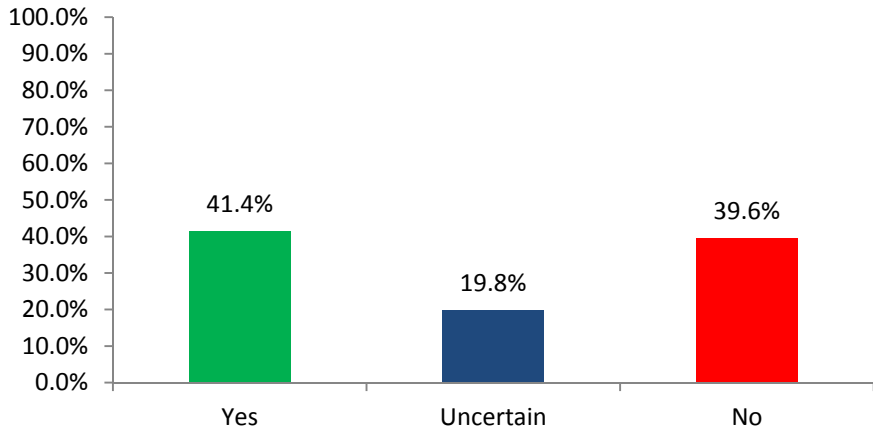
IED Awareness



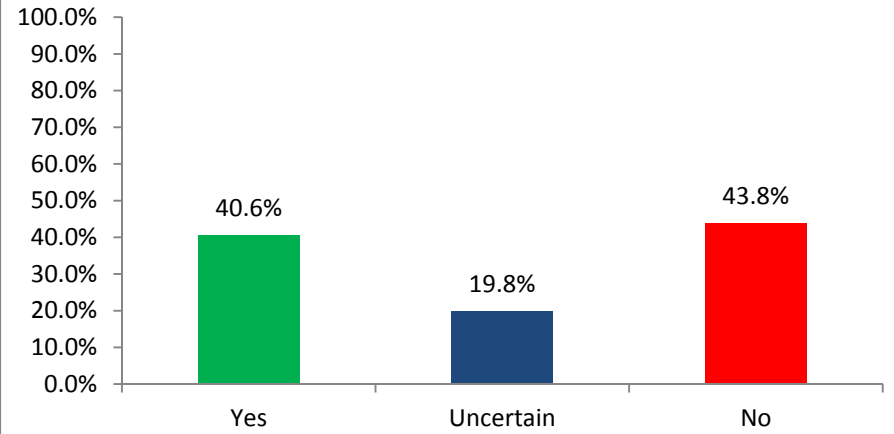
Off Duty Response



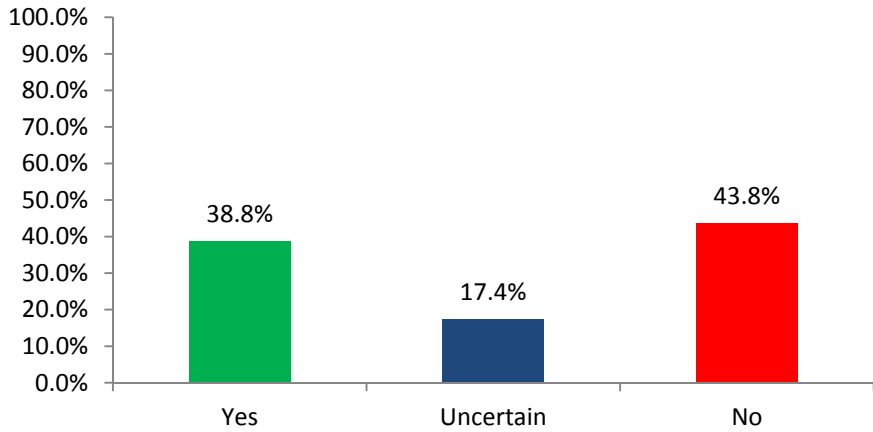
Force on Force Training



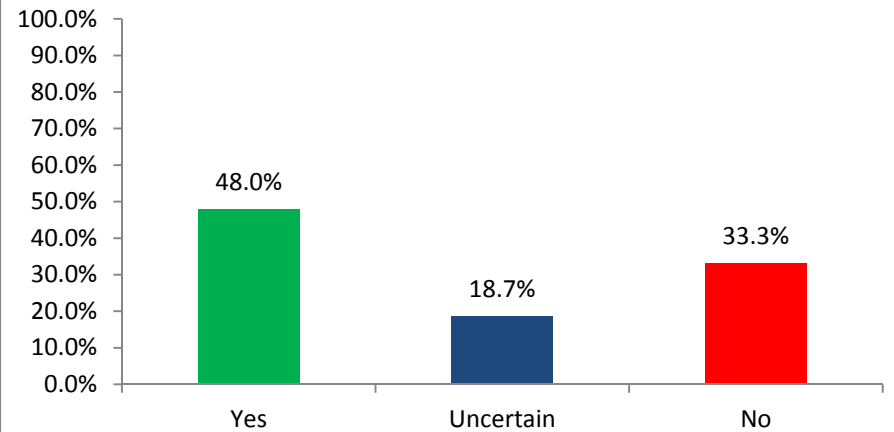
Deliberate Searching Concepts



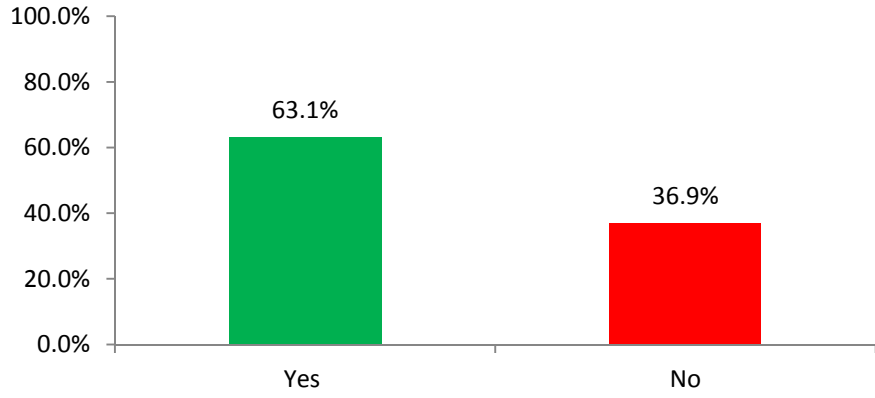
Low Light



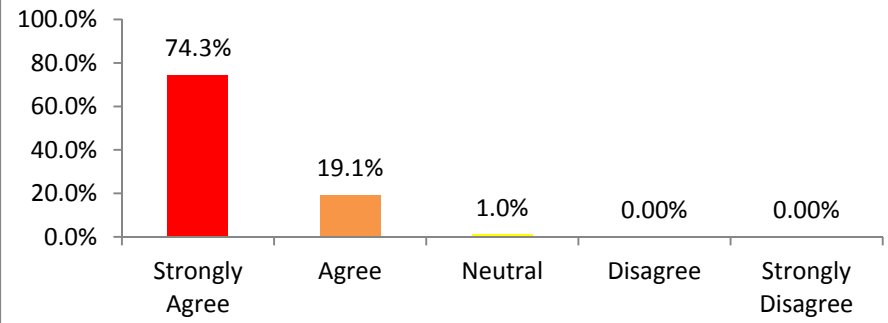
Communication



Looking back to before you took the ALERRT class, do you feel that your personal preparation and training was sufficient to prepare you for the day-to-day demands of your job?



ALERRT teaches skills that are essential for law enforcement officers



Discussion

Regarding day-to-day policing activities, almost all officers indicated that they had used skills learned at the ALERRT training in their police work. Eighty percent said that they used ALERRT skills on a daily or weekly basis. The majority also indicated that they had added or changed the equipment that they carried in their vehicle and carried their weapons more when off-duty as a result of the ALERRT training. Almost all of the participants indicated that they had a better tactical mindset and that they were better prepared for day-to-day police work as a result of the ALERRT training.

ALERRT training also appears to have boosted the confidence of about 90% of the participants' in every area that was covered by the survey. Specifically, the participants were more confident in their tactical abilities, ability to respond to an active shooter, deal with deadly force encounters, safely handle their weapons, and handle high risk situations.

About 90% of the participants felt that active shooter training should be a mandated part of police officer training and that ALERRT specifically should provide the mandated training. More than 90% of the participants felt that force on force training should be mandatory for police officers. Depending upon the specific area covered by the question, between 1/3 to 1/2 of the participants felt that their own agency's training was not sufficient to meet the demands of their jobs.

Taken together the results of this survey overwhelmingly supported the ALERRT program. Participants reported frequent use of the skills taught and increased confidence both generally and in the critical areas which the ALERRT program is designed to address. The skills taught also seem to address deficiencies in the training provided by many of the participants'

home agencies. Participants also showed overwhelming support for making active shooter training a mandatory part of peace officer training.

Of course every study has limitations. It is possible that the low response rate (34%) in this study skewed the results. Those who responded may have been more supportive of ALERRT than those who did not. Of course, given that the participants were contacted by e-mail and the addresses utilized were often several years old, it is possible that many of the addresses were simply bad. The data was also self-reported by the participants. No attempt was made to verify the answers given by the participants. It is therefore possible that they did not give accurate or truthful responses. Future research should consider using observational measures to either bolster or refute the findings of this survey.

Appendix