

“Survey Says” Results of Fire Protection Industry Survey April 2006

Recently, NICET contacted approximately 10,000 people from the NICET database who were involved in the fire protection industry and asked them to complete a short demographic survey. The purpose of the survey is to gather information on the parameters of fire protection from the NICET perspective. There is little data available on engineering technicians and still less for those engineering technicians working in the more passive aspect of fire protection; i.e., fire alarm systems, automatic sprinkler system layout, special hazards suppression systems and inspection and testing of water based systems.

Some respondents questioned the use of the data. NICET intends to use this data to promote and serve the fire protection personnel that we work with and for. Further NICET plans to use the vehicle of short, more focused surveys to help with program design, to find the concerns that arise in the field, and to establish a hub for information about the field of engineering technicians who work in fire protection.

From the results of the survey, we can say that the typical NICET fire protection engineering technician has more than 15 years of work experience (see Graph 1), is involved primarily with systems layout or design (see Graph 2), works on the east coast (see Graph 3) for a company of 100 or more persons (see Graph 4), is at least a high school graduate (see Graph 5), has earned certification (see Graph 6) most likely from NICET (see Graph 7), and would like to see more such surveys (see Graph 8).

We cannot extrapolate that these categories apply to all engineering technicians who work in fire protection, but as we accumulate data, we can compare them to other relevant demographic data and see how the NICET fire protection engineering technician measures up. For example, all the survey participants have some familiarity with NICET, thus it is not unexpected that over 90% of the respondents would be certified (many by NICET). A recent (2003) salary survey prepared by ASCET and published in their newsletter (Certified Engineering Technician, Nov/Dec, 2005, pp. 11-15) shows 86.13% of the respondents were certified and of that number and 75.18% were certified by NICET.

If we filter the data by experience, we find similarities throughout the respondents. Of those with 15 or more years of experience;

- 77% had more than 10 years experience in fire alarm systems,
- 72% had more than 10 years experience in automatic sprinklers,
- 40% had less than 1 year of experience in CCTV,
- 25% work primarily in system layout and design,
- 23% are company managers,
- 14% are project managers, and



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96% are certified.

The same trend holds true for those with 1 to 5 years of experience who also mainly work in fire alarm systems and in automatic sprinklers. However, there are some differences in the area of responsibility that may well disappear with increased experience; for example by contrast with the 15 or more years of experience, only

49% work in system layout and design,
6% work as project managers
6% work as company managers.

Data from the survey show that the majority of respondents have worked for ten or more years in Fire Alarm Systems and in Automatic Sprinkler Systems (see Graphs 9 and 10). The difference in beginning and senior practitioners in Special Hazard Suppression Systems and in Burglar Alarm Systems is less distinctive (see Graphs 11 and 12). Fewer people worked extensively in the newer fields of CCTV and Process Control (see Graphs 13 and 14).

The survey shows that most respondents work on the east coast, with more working in the northeast than the southeast (see Graph 3). This is not unexpected: there are more people in the northeast than in the southeast. However, the north central part of the country is lagging only slightly behind in terms of the number of workers in that region. Oddly, in the fire alarms area, the younger practitioners work more in the south east; indicating perhaps that the industry as a whole is moving away from a saturated northeast to the southeast and from there to the north central region. This is a geographic trend NICET will be watching.

According to the NICET survey, fire protection engineering technicians are an educated group. The percentage of people who had completed high school was 99%. For the entire population, the percentage who completed high school is 85, according to U.S. Census Bureau News, March 28, 2005 tables released on the Internet titled Educational Attainment in the United States: 2004.

Over half of the respondents indicated they would like to see more of such surveys and over 500 listed areas of questions they were interested in (see Graph 8). Those areas divided into questions that were related to careers, education and training, professional development and what salary, benefits, wage structure is the industry norm; other questions were more company/industry specific dealing with fire alarms, special hazards, sprinklers, company size, number of contracts held; still others dealt with the role of the AHJ, the use and abuse of standards and codes; some were specific to certification and the NICET programs; still others didn't know or had no opinion or were not sure what they'd be interested in seeing.



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NICET is happy to announce that for those who wanted to know who uses NICET, there are data on our new website at this link; <http://www.nicet.org/candidates/whouses.cfm>. If you know of other states, jurisdictions, regions or areas that are not listed, please let us know and we will add them.

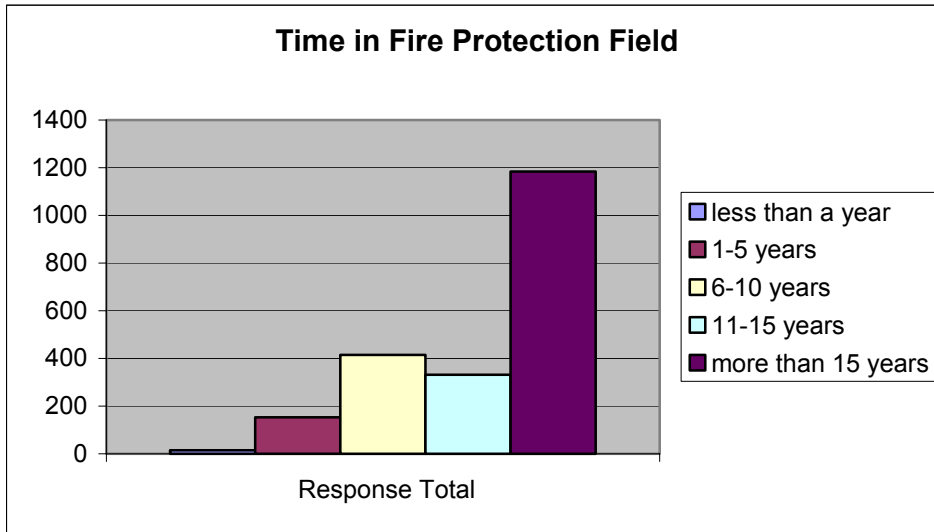
NICET plans to conduct more such surveys in the future and to publish the results. Through this means, NICET hopes to help you and to help our programs target your needs. We appreciate your participation in these surveys.

If you have any questions or comments, or if you would like to be included in future surveys, please feel free to address them to tech@nicet.org.

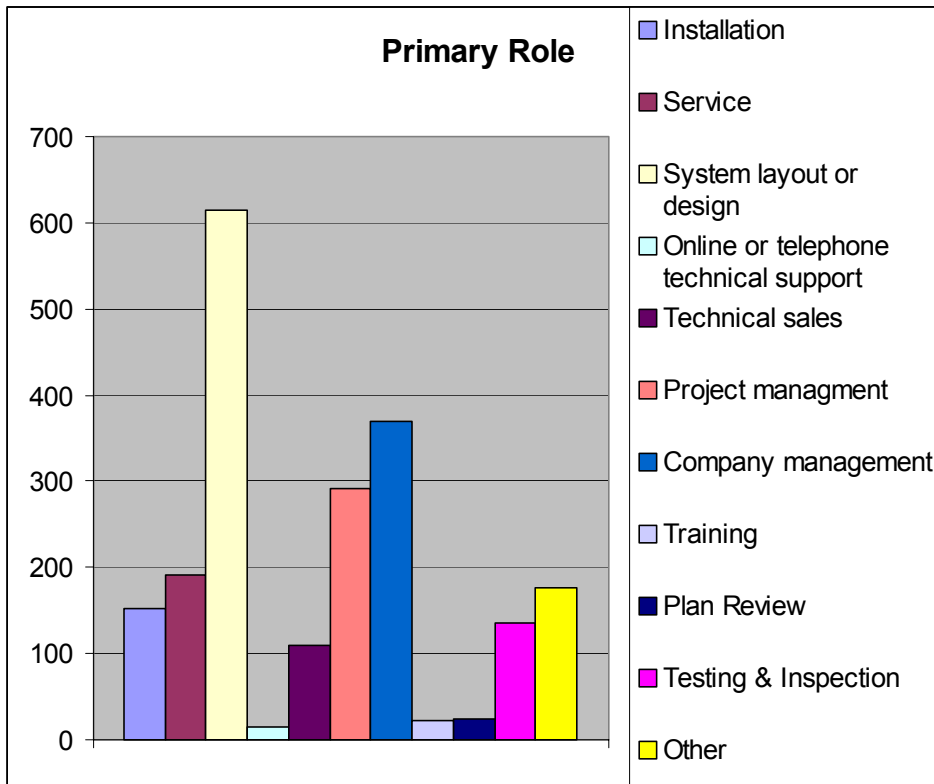


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Graphs to Accompany Article "Survey Says"

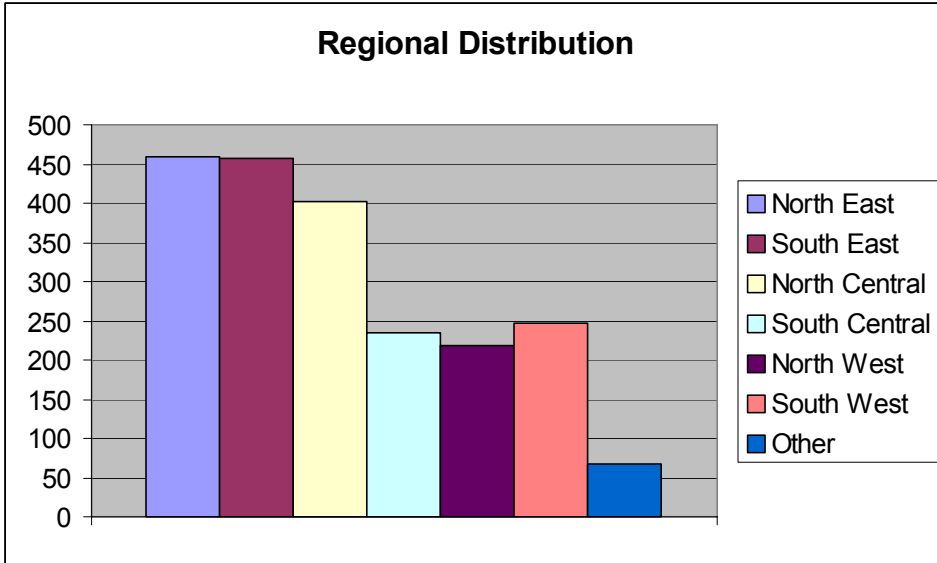


Graph 1: Time in Field (2099 respondents)

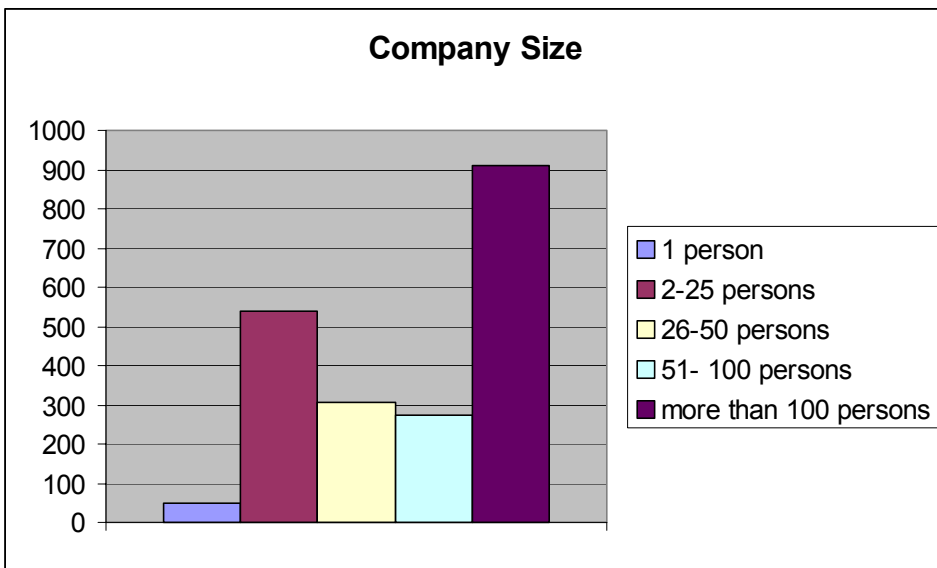


Graph 2: Primary role (2102 respondents)



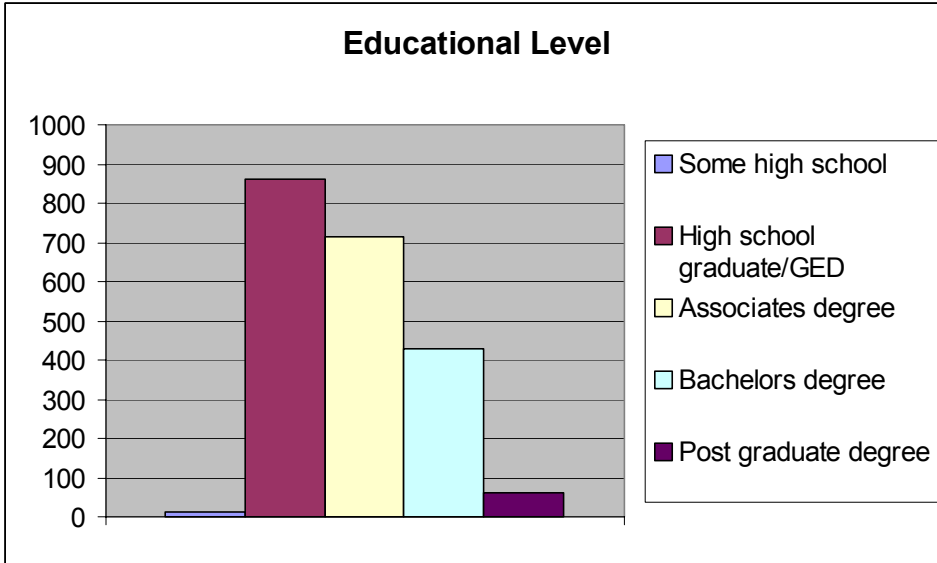


Graph 3: Where do you work? (2086 respondents)

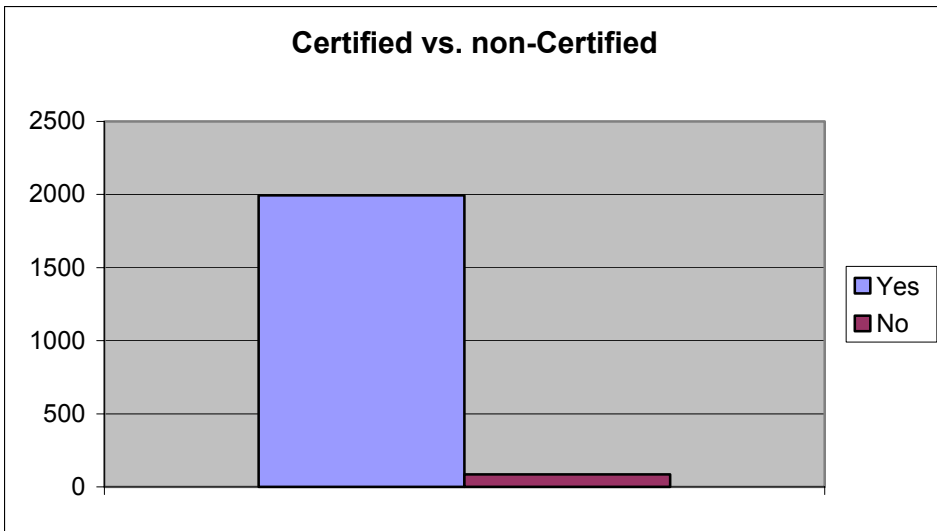


Graph 4: Company Size (2079 respondents)



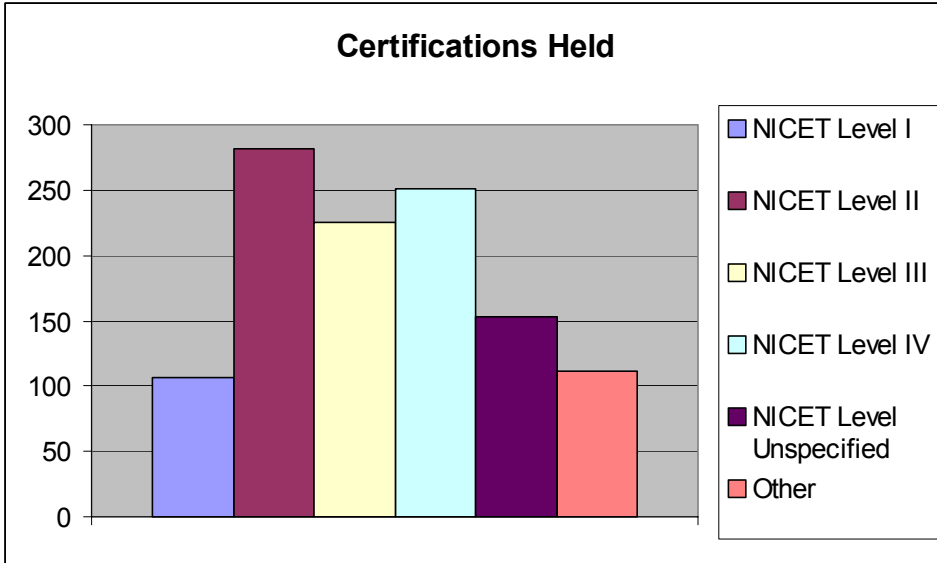


Graph 5: Educational Level (2080 respondents)

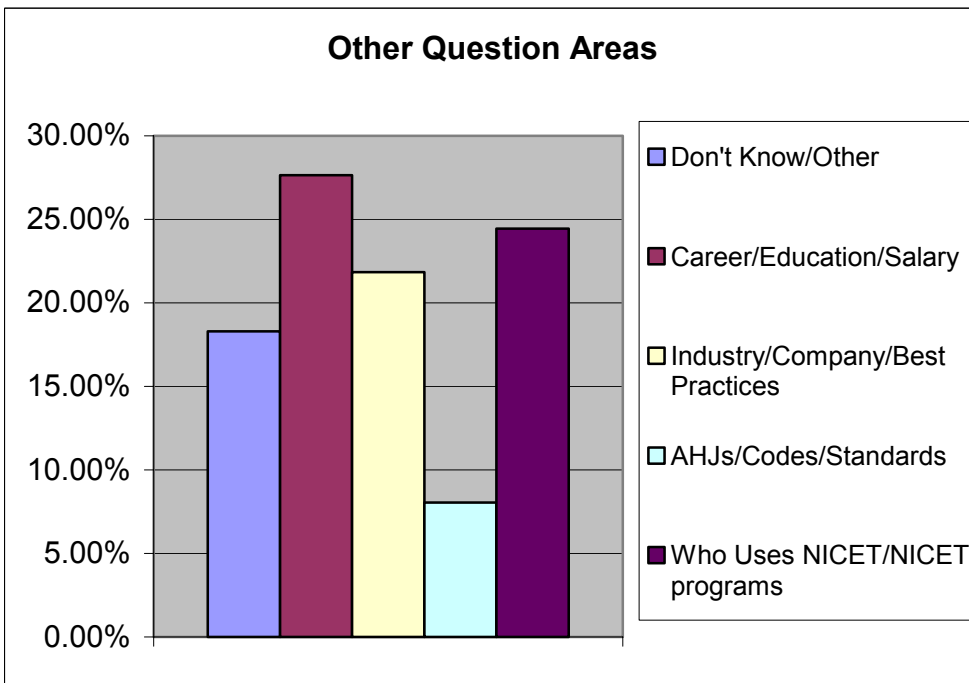


Graph 6: Certified vs. non-Certified (2080 respondents)



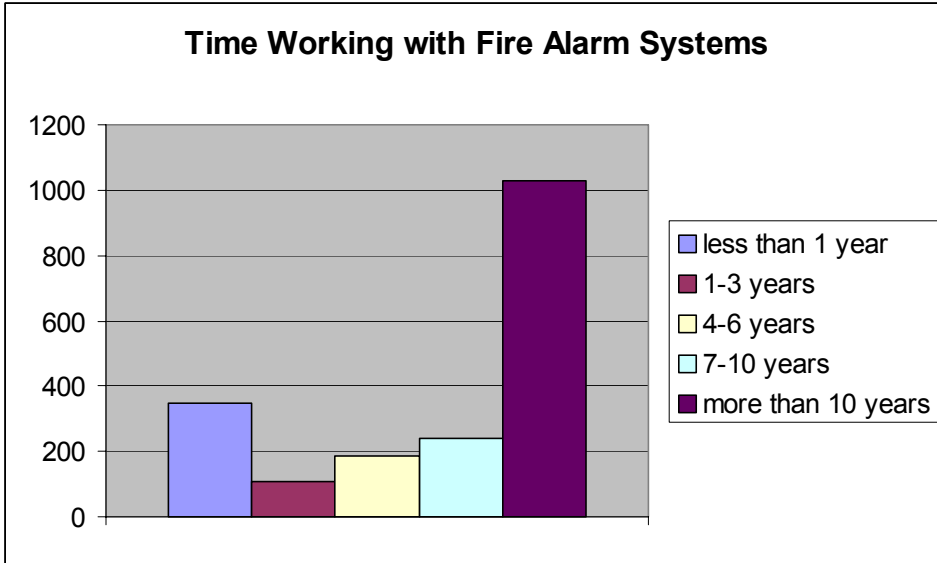


Graph 7: NICET Certifications Held (975 respondents)

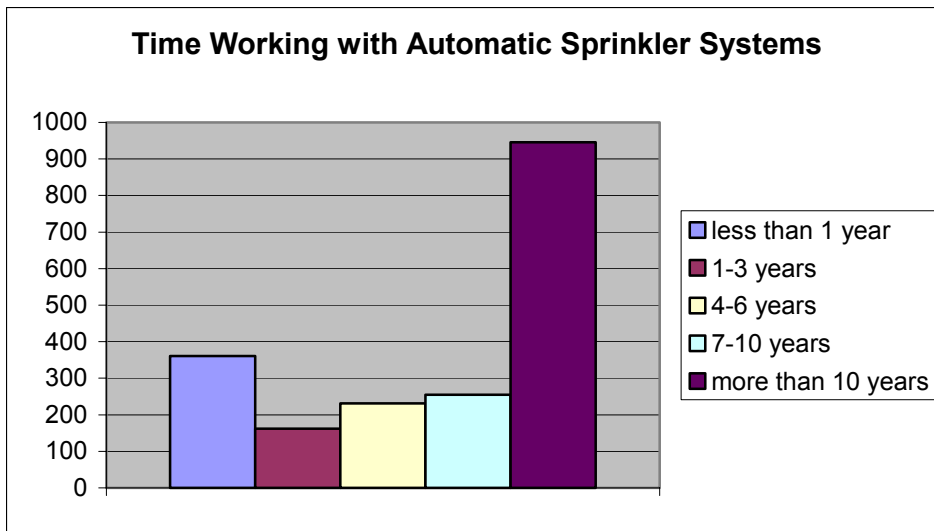


Graph 8: What Questions would you like to see on future surveys (570 respondents)



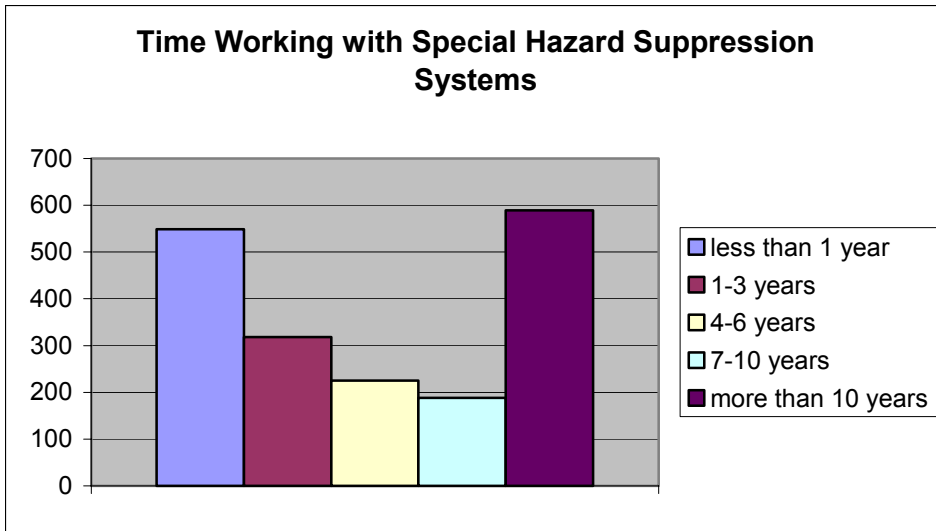


Graph 9: Time Working with Fire Alarm Systems (1910 Respondents)

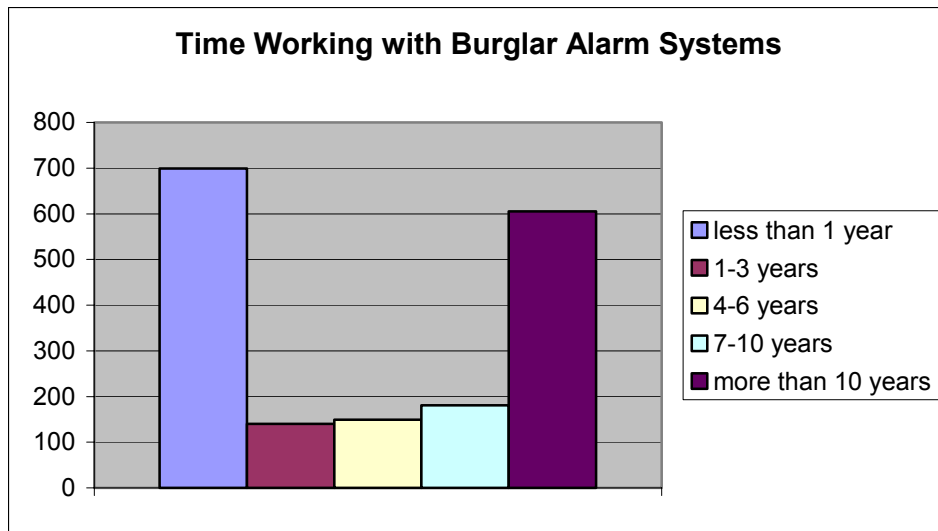


Graph 10: Time Working with Automatic Sprinkler Systems (1955 respondents)



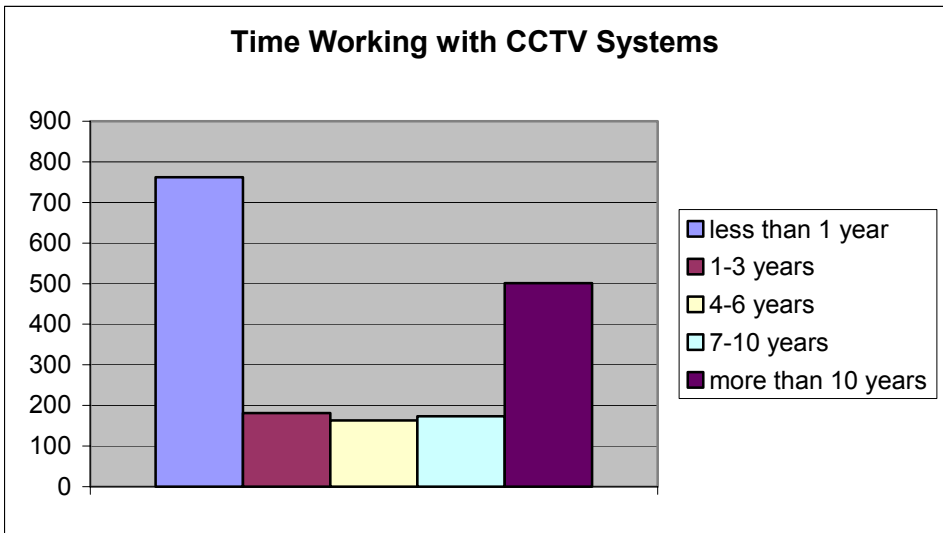


Graph 11: Time Working with Special Hazard Suppression Systems (1869 respondents)

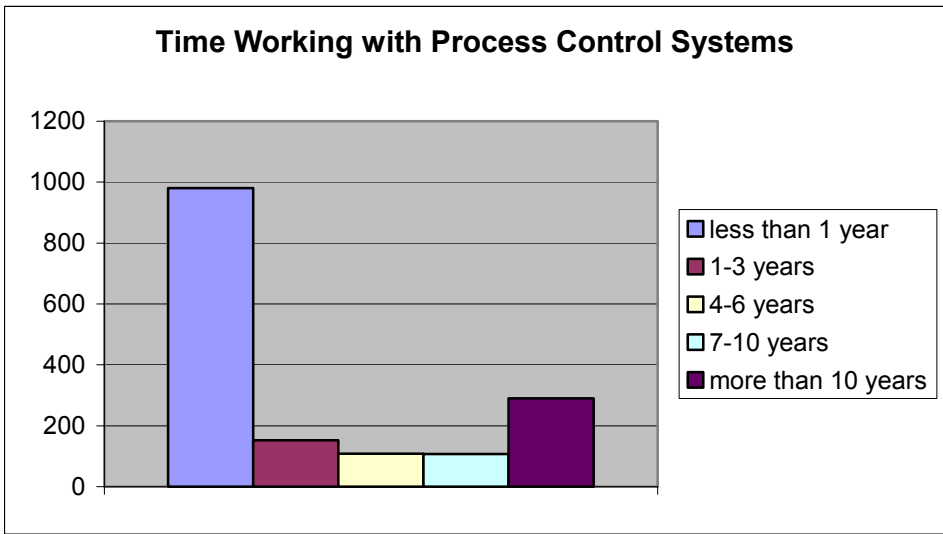


Graph 12: Time Working with Burglar Alarm Systems (1774 respondents)





Graph 13: Time Working with CCTV Systems (1780 respondents)



Graph 14: Time Working with Process Control Systems (1637 respondents)

