

# Ballard Business Crime & Safety Survey Results

## November 2020

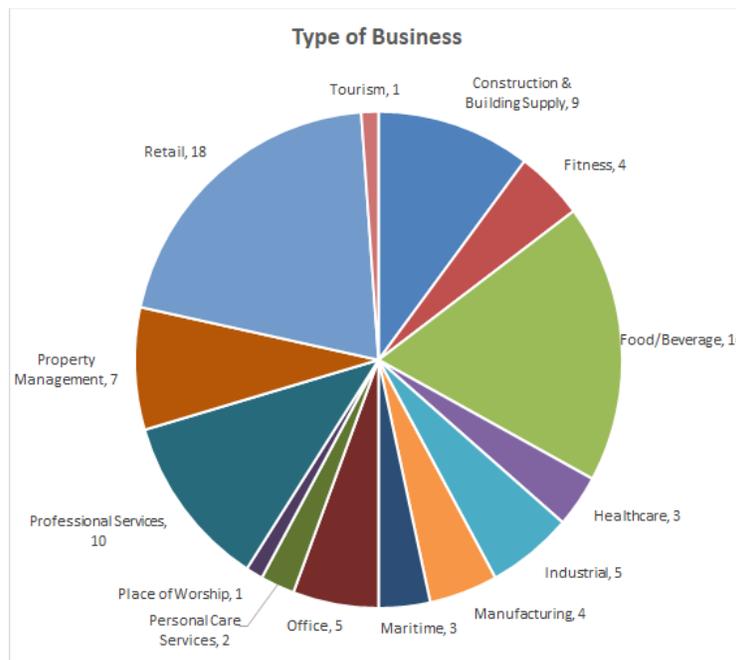
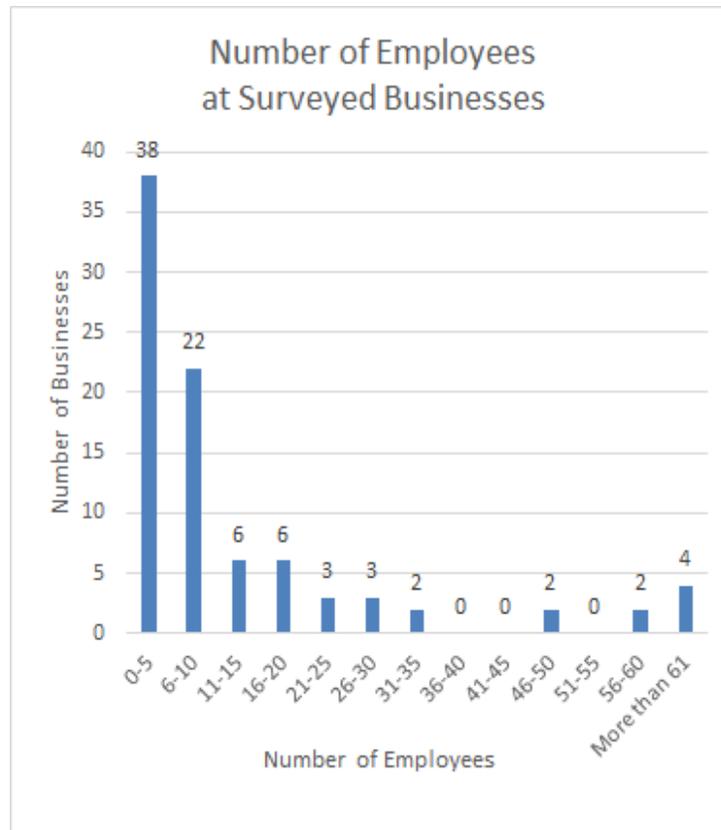
The Ballard Alliance, Ballard Brewed Coalition, and the North Seattle Industrial Association, partnered to create a brief crime and safety survey for Ballard businesses. The goal of the survey was to get an accurate understanding about the impacts of crime and the effects of safety concerns of Ballard businesses over the past six months. Specific survey responses are kept confidential and shared only in the aggregate unless a business owner had a specific story or incident they wished to share publicly.

### Business Demographics

88 Ballard businesses from various industries responded to the survey with 1422 combined employees.

Type of Business	# of Businesses	% of Respondents
Construction & Building Supply	9	10.2%
Fitness	4	4.5%
Food/Beverage	16	18.2%
Healthcare	3	3.4%
Industrial	5	5.7%
Manufacturing	4	4.5%
Maritime	3	3.4%
Office	5	5.7%
Personal Care Services	2	2.3%
Place of Worship	1	1.1%
Professional Services	10	11.4%
Property Management	7	8.0%
Retail	18	20.5%
Tourism	1	1.1%

## Business Demographics (cont.)

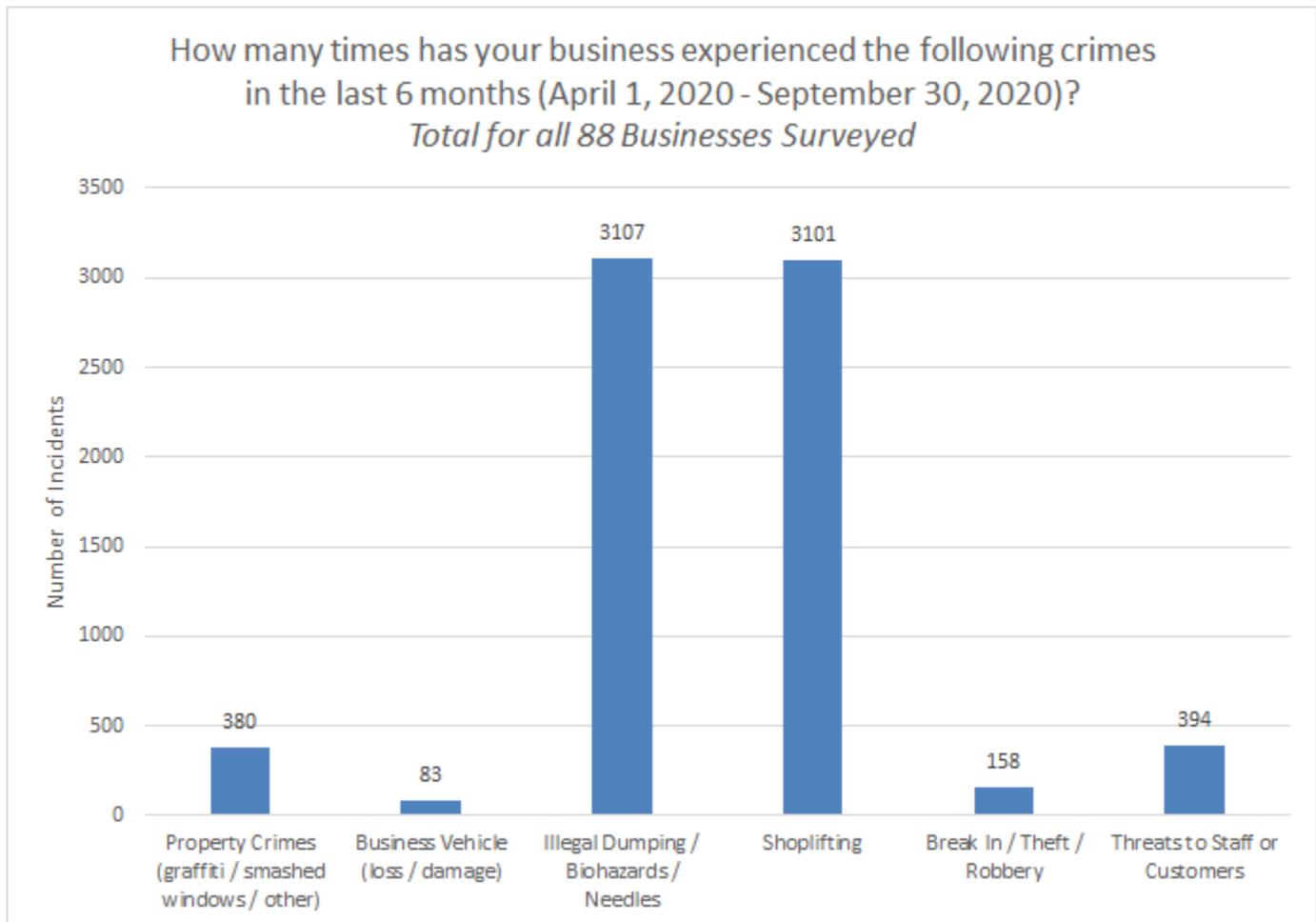


## Number of Crimes

The question was asked:

*How many times has your business experienced the following crimes in the last 6 months (April 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020)?*

<b>How many times has your business experienced the following crimes in the last 6 months (April 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020)?</b> <i>Total for all 88 businesses surveyed</i>	
Property Crimes (graffiti / smashed windows / other)	380
Business Vehicle (loss / damage)	83
Illegal Dumping / Biohazards / Needles	3107
Shoplifting	3101
Break In / Theft / Robbery	158
Threats to Staff or Customers	394
<b>Total</b>	<b>7223</b>



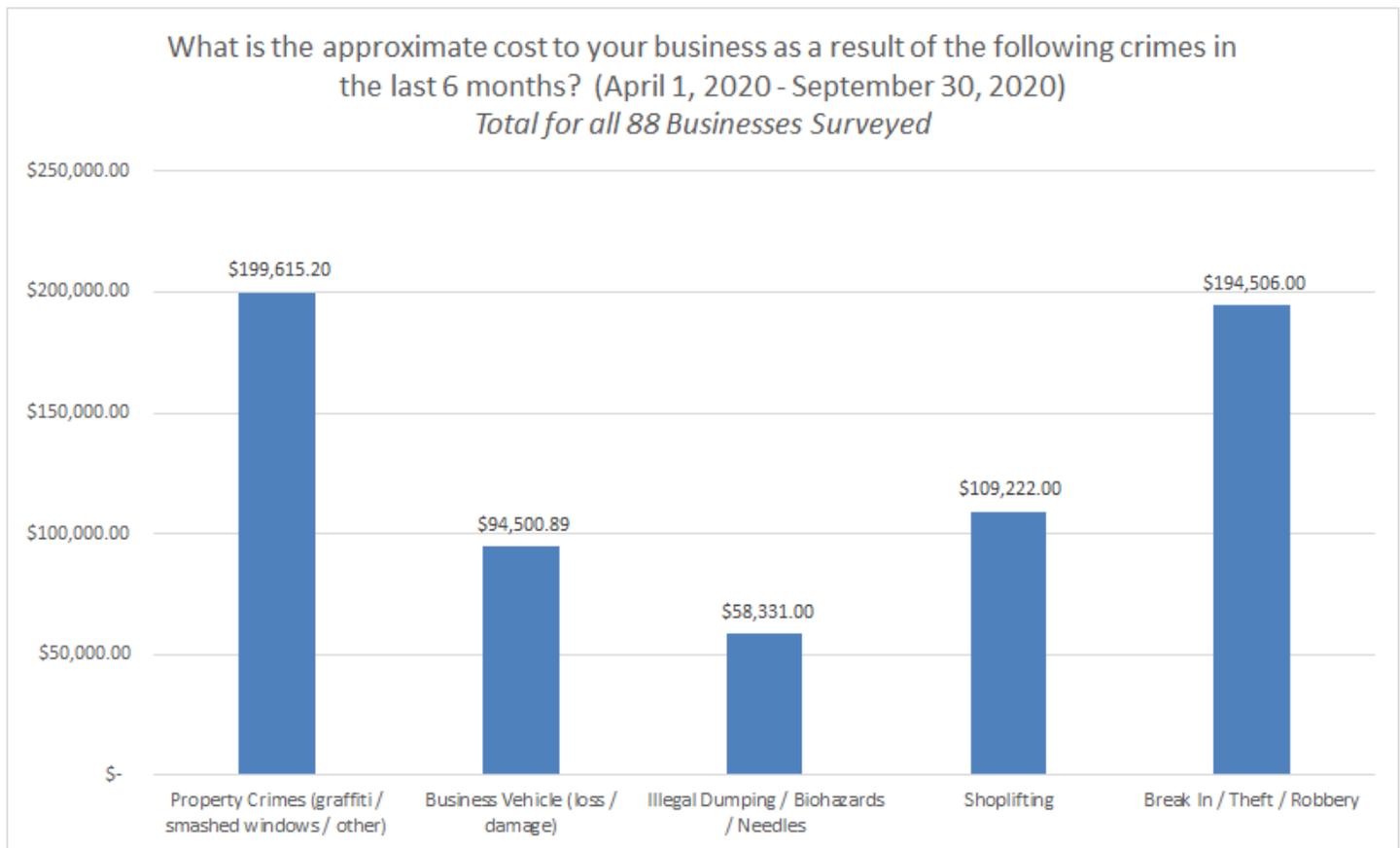
With 7,223 total incidents reported, there was an average of **over 40 crimes per day** experienced by these 88 Ballard businesses during the last 6 months.

## Cost of Crimes

The question was asked:

*What is the approximate cost to your business as a result of the following crimes in the last 6 months (April 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020)?*

<b>What is the approximate cost to your business as a result of the following crimes in the last 6 months (April 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020)?</b> <b><i>Total for all 88 businesses surveyed</i></b>	
Property Crimes (graffiti / smashed windows / other)	\$199,615.20
Business Vehicle (loss / damage)	\$94,500.89
Illegal Dumping / Biohazards / Needles	\$58,331.00
Shoplifting	\$109,222.00
Break In / Theft / Robbery	\$194,506.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$656,175.09</b>



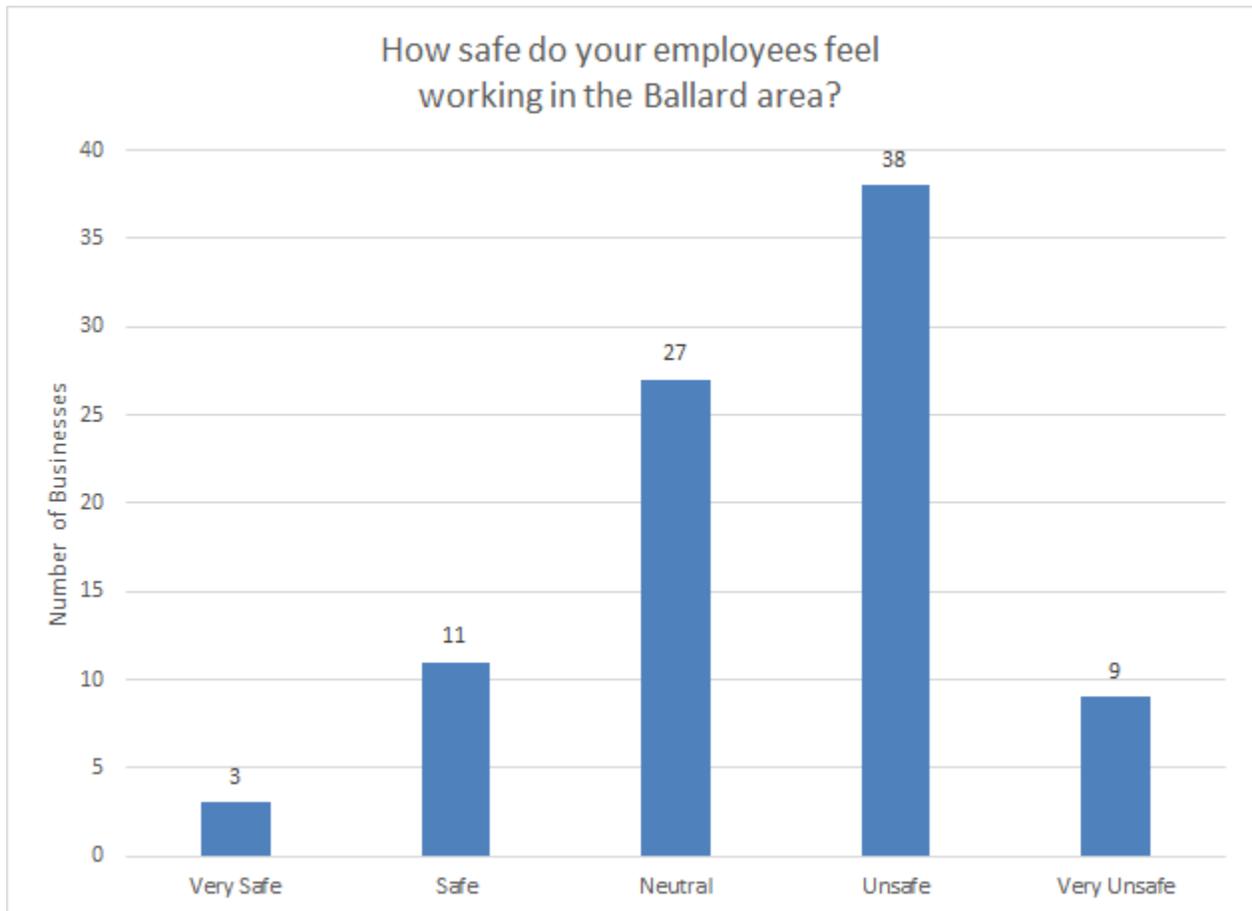
Beyond the surveyed costs, a number of businesses commented that they had large additional expenses in the tens of thousands of dollars for security improvements. These include installing new security systems, fencing, locks, bars on windows, and other safety measures. Private security has also been hired by a number of businesses and is a very expensive recurring cost. Businesses who report their losses to insurance have experienced increased premiums and deductibles.

# Safety

The question was asked:

*How safe do your employees feel working in the Ballard area?*

How safe do your employees feel working in the Ballard area?				
Very Safe	Safe	Neutral	Unsafe	Very Unsafe
3	11	27	38	9
3.4%	12.5%	30.7%	43.2%	10.2%

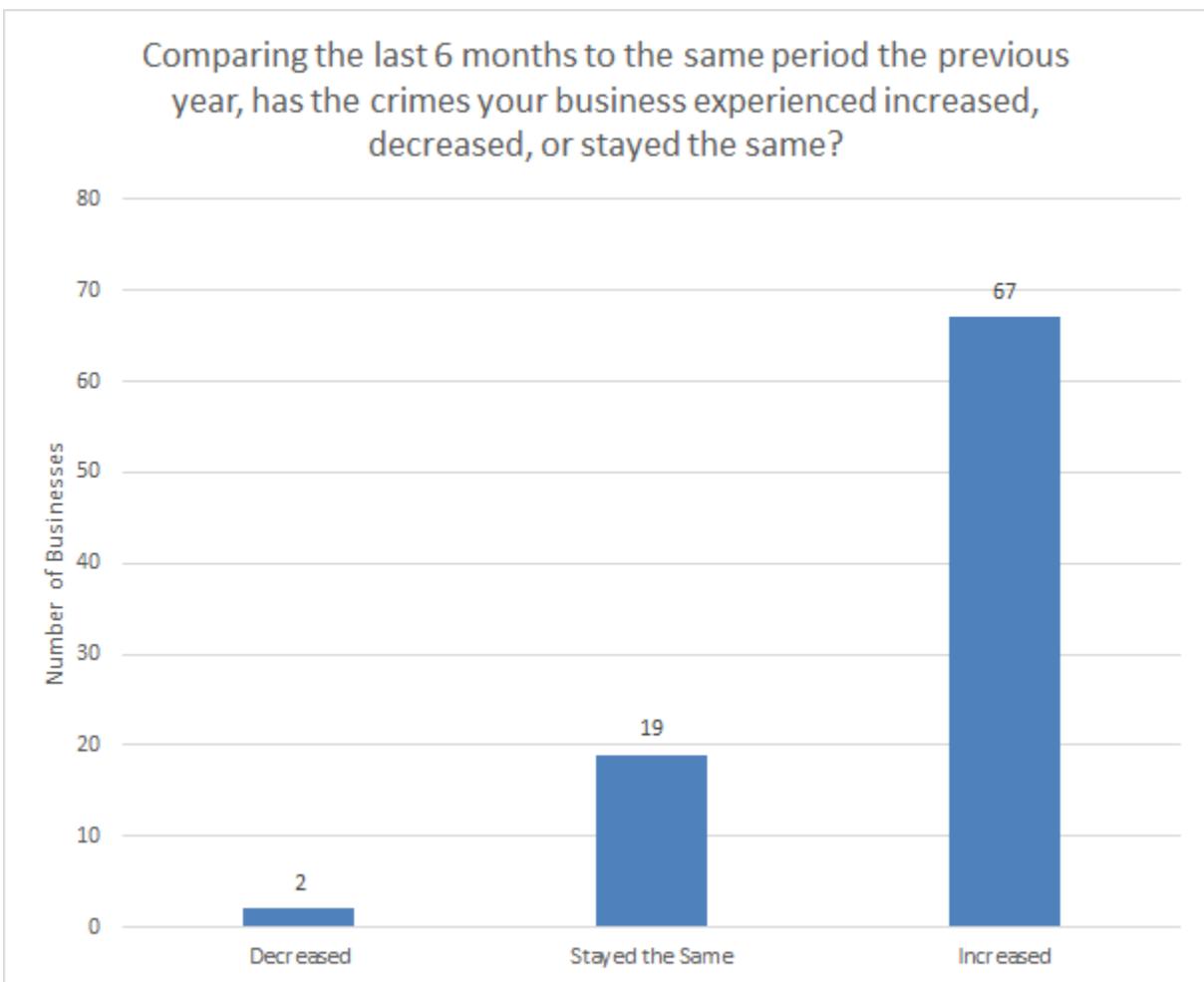


## Change in Crime

The question was asked:

*Comparing the last 6 months (April 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020) to the same period the previous year (April 1, 2019 - September 30, 2019), has the crimes your business experienced increased, decreased or stayed about the same?*

Comparing the last 6 months to the same period the previous year, has the crimes your business experienced increased, decreased, or stayed the same?		
Decreased	Stayed the Same	Increased
2	19	67
2.3%	21.6%	76.1%

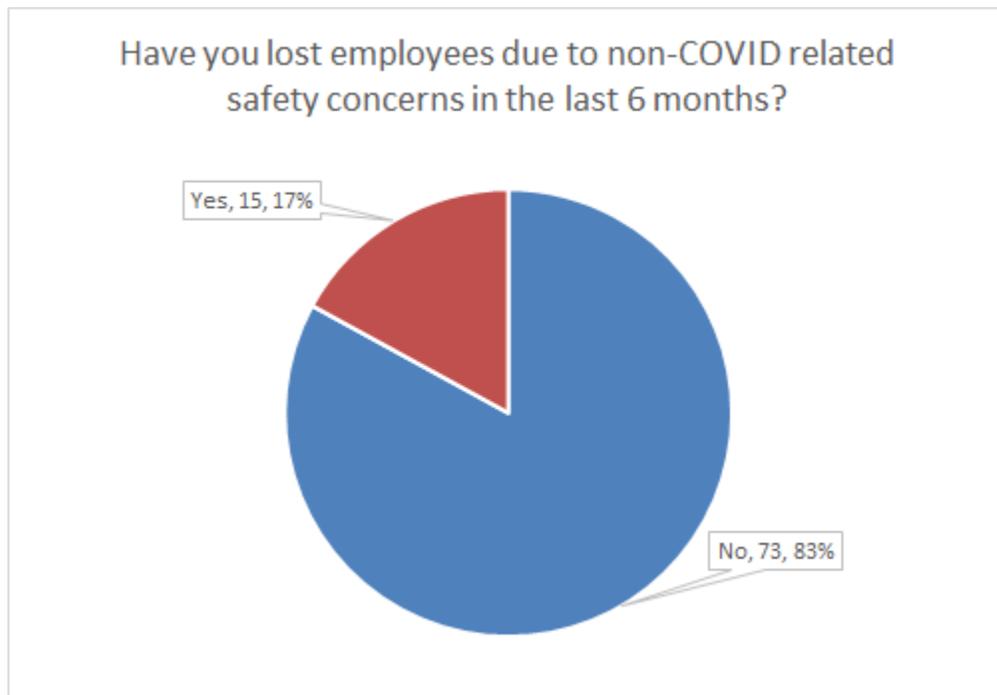


## Loss of Employees

The question was asked:

*Have you lost employees due to non-COVID related safety concerns in the last 6 months (April 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020)?*

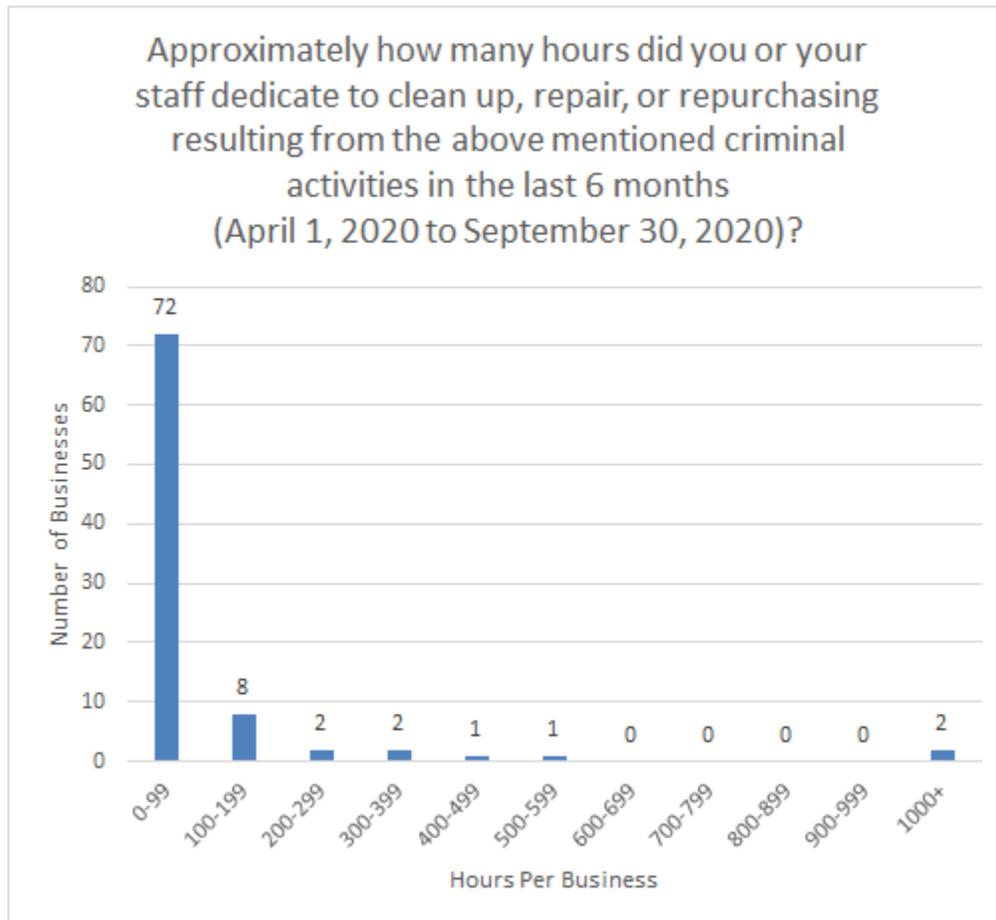
Have you lost employees due to non-COVID related safety concerns in the last 6 months (April 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020)?	
No	Yes
73	15
83.0%	17.0%



## Additional Hours

The question was asked:

*Approximately how many hours did you or your staff dedicate to clean up, repair, or repurchasing resulting from the above mentioned criminal activities in the last 6 months (April 1, 2020 to September 30, 2020)?*



Cumulative total from all 88 businesses was 7192 hours,  
an average of over 81 hours per business.

## List of Crimes (Summary)

The question was asked:

*Please list the specific crimes your business has experienced in the last 6 months (April 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020).*

The surveyed businesses shared a long list of various crimes committed, summarized below:

Many businesses have experienced doors and points of entry damaged and broken. Countless reports of attempted and successful break-ins with related property theft of tools and equipment, electronics, product, registers and safes, and much more. One business had a burglary attempt by melting a window with a blow torch. Another business had their electrical utility box broken into and electricity cut, causing a loss of their perishable products. Many businesses have had their fencing cut or rammed by vehicles to get through, and other costly security equipment destroyed. From the exterior, a number of businesses have experienced utility theft of electrical and water hook-ups or their utility connections damaged, including dangerous situations of cut gas lines. There has been destruction and theft of outdoor patio furniture, lighting, and plants, and reports of arson, dumpster fires, and outdoor furniture set on fire. One business had a backpack bomb thrown through their window and another experienced a drive-by shooting into business windows.

Employee and customer's personal vehicles and business work vehicles are regularly prowled, damaged, broken into, and stolen. Vehicles have their windows smashed, locks broken, property inside stolen, vehicle batteries stolen, gas siphoned, steering ignition column broken, wires cut, keyed, graffiti, and other forms of vandalism. Boats have been stolen, vandalized and had batteries stolen. Bicycles either locked outside or brought inside the business have been stolen.

There is evidence, confirmed sighting, or video footage of individuals sleeping on business property, squatting in vacant buildings, and drug use on property with drug paraphernalia and needles left or dumped on property. One business had an employee get a needle poke while picking up trash that landed the employee in the ER followed by a month long treatment. Businesses have experienced recurring illegal dumping of bedding materials, clothes, biohazards, and all types of garbage on their property. Many shopping carts full of garbage are left on business property. Trespassing and vandalism to building exterior and interior was a common experience. There were countless reports of graffiti that included racial slurs, anti-semitic words and symbols, hate speech, and targeted messages at the vandalized businesses and their employees. Many businesses have employees regularly arrive to find defecation and urination on property, especially near points of entry, and sometimes even occurring while the business is open and in sight of staff and customers.

Individuals are loitering right outside businesses while open, verbally harassing customers and employees, even children. Customers have been blocked from entry or exit from businesses. There have been instances of public nudity, fornication and prostitution directly in front of businesses. Individuals have entered businesses inebriated or high on drugs, and sometimes wielding weapons. Individuals who have been asked to leave have refused, screamed, physically fought back, and destroyed property. Specific incidents include an unstable individual with a gun who would not leave, a knife being thrown at an employee, and a bowling pin being thrown through a window at an employee. Shoplifting and purposeful destruction of product in front of staff and customers is a common occurrence for some businesses, and done repeatedly by the same individuals. Employees have been yelled at, verbally harassed, and received threats of assault, kidnapping, and death threats. Employees have been followed to their bus stops or their houses with threats of violence.

Male and female employees have been sexually harassed, spit on, assaulted, and in some instances assaulted with a weapon.

## Incident to Share

The question was asked:

*Do you have a specific incident or story you would like to describe in more detail, that may be publicly shared and associated with your business?*

“The safety issues are most pressing upon my tenants who operate Restaurants. It is unsafe in the evenings when workers are going home. Even the simple tasks of taking out the recycling is fraught with danger.”

- *Ballard Space LLC*

“On 9/15/20 Asst Store Manager Scott was assaulted by a habitual shoplifter in our store. This person also was continuously stalking and harassing one of our store clerks. Scott was hit in the jaw with a blow from the shoplifter, which resulted in the lower right jaw/neck being bruised, and also whiplash. This person was apprehended by the police, and refused to speak to the officers and did not have any identification. He was fingerprinted, and it turned out that this individual has a long violent criminal past, and had four felony warrants out on him. He had also skipped bail on over \$120k in bail bonds. This supports our suspicion that many more individuals that are camped out in the Commons park most likely have criminal pasts, as evident by the amount of shoplifting that takes place in our store.”

- *Bartell Drugs*

“As resident managers of our building, we are responsible for building maintenance and security. The instances of package theft, package stashing, vehicle prowls, door pry marks, building access, trash dumping, and needles are all just too numerous to remember. Some police reports have been filed for the obvious breaking and entering incidents but tracking the times when I notice new pry marks on the door or fence slats missing is just exhausting.”

- *Canal Place Apartments*

“Had a drug addicted woman (I know she's a druggie because I've seen her using drugs on the sidewalk where she often sleeps) scream pornographic obscenities' at myself and others and about 3 weeks ago she threw a bowling pin (yeah) through our window trying to hit an employee in the head. [REDACTED] has been an ongoing and continuing problem for our business and because of her "status" as a street person there is nothing the Police can do other than offer sympathy.”

- *Carter Motor's Inc.*

“Because we have an ally behind our building we constantly are getting large items and trash dumped by our dumpster, including a dead dog, needles, and at least three times a week human waste.”

- *City Lights Sign Company*

“One night, [REDACTED] got into our loading dock (which has now been fenced up) and spent about 4 hours doing drugs and spray painting our truck orange (I have video & pictures). Then when she left another individual came in and took a shit and walked off with some fittings we keep in the truck. Right before dawn another couple came in on bikes and did more drugs and left once one of our employees arrived around 7am.”

- *Covich-Williams*

“An individual jumped over barbed wire on top of the fence and jumped onto the shed roof, forcibly removed the roof vent and kicked in the rest of the roof to wiggle into the shed, set off the alarm then broke the roll up door to escape. SPD was non-responsive to the alarm company. Residential neighbors called SPD because of noise forcing the door open. SPD finally comes out but no suspect because it took too long for them to respond.”

- *Kemly Electric Inc*

“Break in on 7/15/20. Stole many items including a checkbook. When they attempted to use the checks the next day we were contacted by the bank who also called the police. Police did not show up at the bank in time. We provided police with vehicle information of the individual who attempted to use checks and there has been no follow up or arrest.”

- *Lagunitas Brewing Co. - Seattle*

"The cost of doing business in Ballard for these crimes does not include making sure that we have more people on staff during the evening hours, it also does not include the fact that we do not sell clothing any longer because people steal it and there's nothing we can do about it."

- *Ballard Consignment*

"On 9/26 our fence was run over by an RV causing over a thousand dollars in damage. From our camera footage we identified the RV parked 6 blocks away. After 3 days the police responded and told us all they could do was knock on the door. In September we lost over a thousand dollars a week to crime every week."

- *Ballard Industrial*

"It has gotten SO BAD that we're now installing gates at all four driveways (\$75,000) and are bidding out a fence for our whole perimeter (\$100,000+)."

- *Fremont Brewing*

"Break-in to building, then destroyed door handles to enter individual businesses. Then stole different items from the offices. Needles in the bathrooms."

- *M4 Development Group*

"There's just so much needle and waste dumping..."

- *MG Chiropractic LLC*

"One incident, I had a homeless gentleman come into the store (very impaired by some type of substance) he refused to leave when asked as we are not doing dine in. Escalated to the point we had to close the store once we got him out. He started trying to smash our windows with his metal water bottle and ram his body into our front doors. The police were called more than 10 times during the entire incident, it took more than 4 hours for them to arrive. We did not feel safe trying to leave the building with him outside. He passed out on the side of the building in our parklet shortly before the police arrived. After the police got him to leave, we found that he had defecated inside the parklet. Shortly after the police left he came back and did the same thing trying to break the windows and doors. We had to call the police again. Thankfully this time they arrived quickly."

- *Mighty-O Donuts*

"Another incident would be a homeless woman in the area who frequently comes in to all the surrounding business. She is very aggressive. Every time she comes in, she immediately goes to steal something, whether a mug, tshirts, juice coffee beans etc. she is known to steal from the 7-11 across the street, as well. We have called for help getting her removed, as when she is asked to leave she tries to get in our faces, but the police never show up in time. This has happened more than 10 times in the past 6 months with this customer alone."

- *Mighty-O Donuts*

"We had another incident where a gentleman came in with a gun strapped to his leg, stating that someone was following him, and asking to stay inside. He was very clearly mentally unstable, and was hiding under one of our counters. We called the police, but they did not come in until the gentleman decided to leave (2hrs or more). When the officer came in after, he said that they had been circling outside, but didn't want to come in and confront him and make things more dangerous for my staff. However this situation was terrifying for all of us not knowing what this man would do."

- *Mighty-O Donuts*

"Most recently a different homeless woman pulled the fire alarm at the apartment next door to my store. While residents were evacuating, she rolled a luggage cart into my store and just started loading it up with merchandise and yelling and screaming."

- *Mighty-O Donuts*

"On a daily basis for the past 7+ months we find needles outside the business, and in the parklet. Daily we have to pick up trash that people have dumped. I'm not talking about a soda can. It is literally blankets, pillows, clothing, food containers

etc. several times weekly we have to ask people to not live in the parklet. We have padlocks on our trash bins as a deterrent, but people still crack them open and search the trash leaving a gigantic mess. Our A frames signs for our business have been stolen or vandalized on multiple occasions. Our 3 minute pick up signs have been bent and smashed. The light up O outside the business has been broken, the parklet has new graffiti all the time.”

- *Mighty-O Donuts*

“After working with REACH to help an individual who was camping near our property, this individual was found to have vandalized our property repeatedly. From slinging human waste on the building to graffiti including the latest incident using racist language. This individual has been known to harass staff and cause issues with our guests.”

- *National Nordic Museum*

“Someone was shooting up drugs with a needle at our main entrance door to our office. Blood was dripping down his arm onto our entryway. When asked to leave became violent so we went back inside and locked the door calling the police. He left shortly after leaving needles.”

- *O'Hara Corporation*

“We had holes cut in our fence with thousands of dollars of tools stolen . . . Generally we have things stolen all the time, anything that is not bolted to the ground will be stolen. We installed Guardian Security Cameras and an inside security system which was a great cost to our business. But it still doesn't stop the crime.”

- *O'Hara Corporation*

“One incident includes theft of an entire light package for a new construction project.”

- *Olsen Anderson Construction L.L.C.*

“We are located directly across the street from the Leary Triangle encampment and affiliated RVs that sell drugs and sex 24 hrs a day. Aside from the verbal threats and abuse our employees have had to deal with while trying to earn a living and feed their families there has been the added stress of the camp treating our yard as if it is their dump. Bags were being heaved over our wall in an attempt to get them into our construction waste dumpster but almost always would miss the mark and get stuck between the dumpster and the wall or fall under the dumpster, both places that are not accessible. Our employees would not come to work for several weeks because the number of garbage bags trapped under and behind our dumpster was producing a horrific smell and a massive health safety issue. Our gated yard smelled like rotting food, urine and feces because rats were opening up garbage bags and spreading waste under our dumpster which we could only clean after bimonthly pickup and between next drop off. This occurred during peak Summer heat and the smell was so bad my office staff refused to come in for several weeks as our HVAC system was not able to fully remove the stench from the air. The city will not help us with this illegal dumping issue and refuses to assist us with the needles and human waste because it is on "private property". They seem to have no regard for the fact that they are responsible for a public health and safety nuisance that is causing this harm to us and creating an extremely hazardous work environment.”

- *Phinney Ridge Painting & Home Services*

“Our office is an outpatient physical therapy clinic serving many different people. We also have a very large Medicare population that cannot park too far away. Even younger patients with crutches cannot park very far away. All of the parking around Leary triangle is taken up by people living in the triangle. Let alone, some of our patients do not feel safe coming to our clinic due to the presence of the Leary triangle. It is very hard to put a dollar amount to the loss of business because of this, but it is a daily subject of conversation.”

- *Salmon Bay PT*

“We recently had to install a security fence and barbed wire in our back alley parking spot to deter vandals from breaking into our back door, shooting up and leaving needles behind for my staff to pick up, defecating on our property, rummaging through our trash/recycling, defacing our walls with graffiti, etc. This fence was at a \$3K cost to us during an economic crisis. We even had someone break open our electric utility box and cut electricity to our building overnight. We lost a significant amount of perishable foods because of it.”

- *Skål Beer Hall*

"Calling the police is an exercise in futility. In the 3 times we've called 911 from threats of violence they've shown up 4.5 hours after the call or not at all."

- *Skål Beer Hall*

"I've had staff and guests verbally abused and threatened by the homeless out in our beer garden. One guest was spit upon. My staff is scared to walk home at night and always leave in pairs. With businesses now all forced to close at 11pm, it's a ghost town."

- *Skål Beer Hall*

"With our COVID guidelines, I am supposed to have my garage door up and doors open. I am often alone at the studio by myself in the dark. I don't feel physically safe while following the COVID guidelines. Further, we are supposed to move workouts outside when possible. We have done this, but I'm often picking up trash from encampment residents and checking for needles. We also get light harassment from those residents while working out outdoors. I am often worried it will escalate at some point and I worry about the safety of clients. With the doors open due to COVID, I don't feel safe leaving my team alone working at the studio. When I would be able to end my day, I am now spending extra hours at the studio because I don't want to leave them alone here with the doors open to risks."

- *Upbeats*

"Multiple incidents of needles/gloves being flushed down the toilet and clogging the plumbing system."

- *Wang Brothers Investments LLC (landlord)*

"We have had multiple cars/rv's parked at the end of our business on the public street that have not been removed by the city or ticketed for parking illegally. There are a constant stream of people coming and going defecating on our property and dumping needles, and refuse. We have had multiple people under the influence passed out or wander into our active shipyard during business hours. It has become a safety hazard for us and we have seen zero action from the city we pay taxes to."

- *Western Towboat Co.*

## **Additional Notes from Businesses**

Many businesses commented that they have had to add additional staff hours, which comes at a cost, so employees are not working or closing alone.

One business owner mentioned that while their staff feels relatively safe, we did not ask about customers safety concerns. They stated that their customers do not feel safe and they are losing customers over both personal safety and vehicle crime concerns.

One business now has a maintenance employee whose entire job is repairing and maintaining the exterior of their building from daily property crime.

A few businesses shared that they are considering leaving Ballard and moving their business out of Seattle because of the rise in crime, added expenses and time, and personal safety concerns. One business owner listed a number of industrial businesses who have recently moved out of Seattle because of the increased property crime they had experienced.

**Selection of Pictures Shared by Businesses**



**Selection of Pictures Shared by Businesses (cont.)**



**Selection of Pictures Shared by Businesses (cont.)**

