



## Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Contacts between Police and the Public

## Findings from the 1999 National Survey

**In 1999 C**

**21% of U.S. residents had a contact with police**

**52% of contacts were in traffic stops**

**19% of contacts were to report a crime**

**Under 1% of contacts involved police use of force**

**10% of white drivers were stopped**

**12% of black drivers were stopped**

**9% of Hispanic drivers were stopped**

**84% of drivers considered stop legitimate**

**U.S. Department of Justice**  
**Office of Justice Programs**  
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## **Findings from the 1999 National Survey**

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## U.S. Department of Justice

Bureau of Justice Statistics

BJS statisticians Patrick A. Langan, Lawrence A. Greenfeld, Steven K. Smith, Matthew R. Durose, and David J. Levin wrote this report. Mike Wajda, BJS student intern, coded data from the interviewers' forms. Robert J. Kaminski provided information on the programs at the National Institute of Justice. Tom Hester and Ellen Goldberg edited and produced the report. Maureen Henneberg provided review.

Numerous people made possible the development and administration of the Police-Public Contact Survey. Staff from the U.S. Census Bureau facilitated the final construction of the questionnaire, managed the field aspect of the data collection, processed the data, and provided the estimation specifications.

In addition, a panel of the American Statistical Association met to review and discuss the survey procedures and questionnaire and subsequently issued a report on its recommendations. Assembled by Mark Cohen, Vanderbilt University, the advisory group included the following scholars: James Lynch, American University Professor of Justice, Law and Society; James Fyfe, Temple University Professor of Criminal Justice; Dennis Kenney, Director of Research at the Police Executive Research Forum; Stephen Mastrofski, George Mason University Professor of Administration of Justice; and Joel Garner, Director of the Joint Center for Justice Studies.

At the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Lee Giesbrecht and David Banks provided helpful advice in the BJS analysis of the 1995 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police, as well as other law enforcement executives and scholars, provided many valuable comments on the survey procedures and questionnaire.

Data presented in this report can be obtained from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data at the University of Michigan, 1-800-999-0960. The archive Internet site can be accessed through the BJS site.

Electronic versions of this and other reports are available from the BJS Internet site:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>

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## Foreword

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This publication represents the annual report to the Congress as required by Section 210402 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. The findings are based upon the largest self-report survey ever conducted among the U.S. resident population about contacts between the public and the police and the outcomes of those contacts. The objective of the survey was to learn more about how often and under what circumstances a traffic stop or other contact becomes problematic.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) initiated surveys of the public on their interactions with police in 1996 with the first *Police-Public Contact Survey*, a pretest among a nationally representative sample of 6,421 persons aged 12 or older. That initial version of the questionnaire revealed that about 20% of the public had a direct, face-to-face contact with a police officer at least once during the year preceding the survey. At that time, BJS estimated that about 1 in 500 residents, or about a half million people, had experienced an encounter with a police officer involving either a threat of force or the actual use of force.

An improved version of the *Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS II)* was fielded during the last 6 months of 1999 among a national sample nearly 15 times as large as the pretest sample in 1996. It yielded nearly identical estimates of the prevalence and nature of contacts between the public and the police. The most recent survey, which obtained data from those age 16 or older, resulted in a finding that about 21% of the public had a direct, face-to-face contact at least once with a police officer during the year. As in 1996, the 1999 survey revealed that during the year about 1 in 500 persons, or about 422,000 persons age 16 or older, experienced a contact with a police officer which involved force or the threat that force would be used.

The PPCS II, because of its much larger sample size, permitted more extensive analysis of demographic differences in police contacts. In addition, the PPCS II added a new and more detailed set of questions about traffic stops by police, the most frequent reason given for a contact with police. Among licensed drivers, an estimated 10% of white drivers, 12% of black drivers, and 9% of Hispanic drivers were stopped by police at least once in 1999.

Overall, most drivers who experienced a traffic stop indicated that they felt the officer had a legitimate reason for making the stop: nearly 9 out of 10 white drivers and 3 out of 4 black drivers described the officer as having had a legitimate reason for the stop. Respondents maintained these perceptions regardless of the race of the officer making the stop. White drivers' assessments of the legitimacy of the stop were the same whether the officer making the stop was white or black. Similarly, black drivers ascribed the same level of legitimacy to stops by white officers and stops made by black officers.

The PPCS provides a new opportunity to learn more about police and citizen contacts. It is reassuring to find that most people, of any race, who have a contact with the police, most often through a traffic stop, evaluate the stop as having been appropriate. Given the high level of attention and interest in police-citizen interactions, BJS expects to continue to collect such data from the public and to supplement this information with new data to be gathered from administrative records of law enforcement agencies and those other public agencies which are primarily responsible for receiving and adjudicating complaints arising from police/citizen encounters.

BJS is grateful for the assistance of the many people who offered their advice and counsel in the construction of the PPCS II questionnaire, the Census Bureau which fielded the survey, and those persons who willingly gave of their time as respondents to participate in this important national effort.

## Highlights

### Prevalence of citizen contact with police

- In 1999 an estimated 43.8 million persons age 16 or older, about 21% of all persons of this age, had at least one face-to-face contact with a police officer. This is approximately the same rate of contact between police and citizens found in 1996 when the Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS) was first administered.

- On a per capita basis in 1999, the rate of police-citizen contact for whites was about 17% higher than for blacks and about 32% higher than for Hispanics. The rate of contact for males was about 20% higher than for females and rates of contact varied inversely with age: those age 18 to 19 experienced a rate of contact 160% above that of those age 50 or older.

- About two-thirds of all persons experiencing a contact with police during 1999 had one contact for a single reason. The remaining third of those with contacts had either multiple contacts or multiple reasons for a single contact.

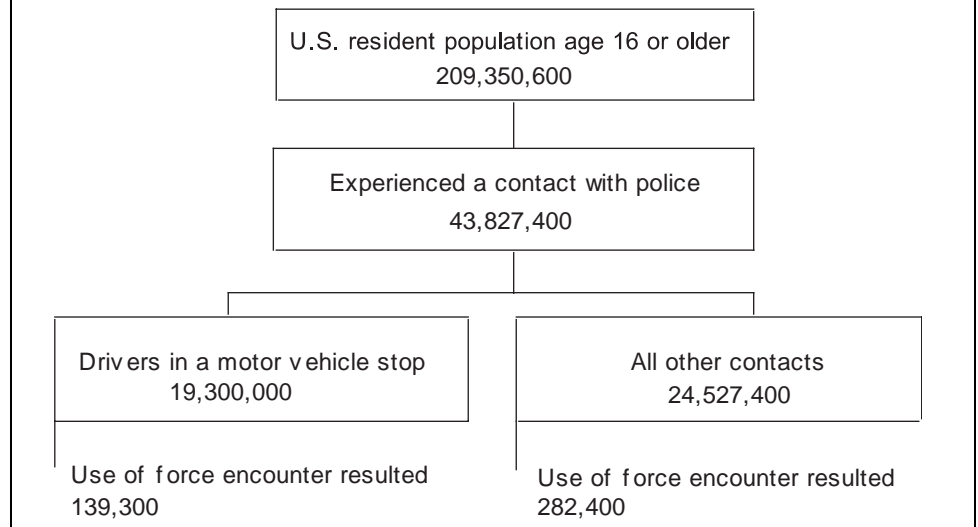
### Reasons for citizen contact with police

- About half of all persons experiencing a contact with police indicated that the reason for the contact was a motor vehicle stop. Being either a passenger or an operator of a motor vehicle was the most common reason given for a contact with police.

- About 1 in 5 persons with a face-to-face contact with a police officer said that they had contacted the police to report a crime.

- About 3% of all respondents with a contact said the contact occurred because the police suspected them of involvement in a crime.

### Overall, less than half of 1% of the population age 16 or older reported they had contact with police and were threatened with or actually experienced force during the contact



- On a per capita basis, as passengers or drivers, whites experienced a rate of contact for traffic stops 6% above the rate estimated for black respondents and 26% above that for Hispanics.

- In 1999 an estimated 113 whites per 1,000 whites in the resident population experienced at least one traffic stop as a driver or passenger. The comparable rate among black residents was 107, and among Hispanics, 90.

- Persons age 18 to 19 had a per capita rate of contact arising from a motor vehicle stop of 225 per 1,000, more than 4 times the rate of traffic stops experienced by those age 50 or older.

- The percentage of the 43.8 million residents with a police contact in 1999:

Motor vehicle stop	52%
Report a crime	19
Ask for assistance	12
Report a neighborhood problem	9
Involved in traffic accident	8
Witness to a traffic accident	5
Witness to a crime	3
Questioned as crime suspect	3
Attend crime prevention meeting	1
Served warrant	1

### Citizen contacts with police in traffic stops

- In 1999 an estimated 10.3% of licensed drivers were pulled over by police one or more times in a traffic stop. The 10.3% represent 19.3 million stopped drivers. The 19.3 million includes 4 million pulled over more than once during the year. An estimated 2.1% of all licensed drivers were stopped two or more times.

- Of the 19.3 million, an estimated 60.8% (11.7 million) were male and 39.2% (7.6 million) were female; 77% (14.9 million) were white, 11.6% (2.2 million) were black, 8.4% (1.6 million) were Hispanic, and 3% (.6 million) were drivers of other races.

- Males (12.5%) were more likely than females (8.2%) to be stopped at least once, and males (2.9%) were more likely than females (1.4%) to be stopped more than once.

- Blacks (12.3%) were more likely than whites (10.4%) to be stopped at least once, and blacks (3.0%) were more likely than whites (2.1%) to be stopped more than once.

- Nearly twenty percent (18.2%) of teenage drivers were stopped at least once.
- Of the 19.3 million stopped drivers, police issued a ticket to 54.2%, carried out a search of some kind (either a physical search of the driver or a search of the vehicle) on 6.6%, handcuffed 3.1%, arrested 3.0%, used or threatened force against 0.7%, and used or threatened force that the driver deemed excessive against 0.5%.
- During the traffic stop, police were more likely to carry out some type of search on a male (9.4%) than a female (2.3%), and more likely on a black (11.0%) or Hispanic (11.3%) than a white (5.4%).

#### **Force in the Police-Public Contact Survey**

Force includes contacts in which the police officer pushed, grabbed, kicked, or hit the citizen. Hitting was defined as striking with a hand or an object held in the officer's hand. Included in the definition of force were police dog bites, spray with pepper spray or a chemical, and a firearm pointed in the citizen's direction. Also included was the threat to carry out any of these types of force.

The survey provided an opportunity for respondents to express their opinion as to whether any police force or threat of force used against them was "excessive." The survey did not define "excessive" for the respondent. Respondents who said they had experienced police use or threat of force were asked whether they felt any of the physical force used or threatened against them was excessive. If a respondent said the force was excessive, he or she was asked about the specific type of physical force considered excessive.

- Police searched the driver or the vehicle of an estimated 1.3 million drivers (6.6% of all stopped drivers). Two-thirds (66.4%) of the 1.3 million searches were without the driver's expressed consent. In nearly 90% (86.7%) of the 1.3 million searches, no drugs, alcohol, illegal weapons, or other evidence of criminal wrongdoing was found. Searches conducted without the driver's consent (12.9%) were not more likely to find criminal evidence than consent searches (14.2%).
- An estimated 11.4% of drivers stopped by police said the reason for the stop was a burned out headlight, a loud muffler, or some other vehicle defect; 9.2% said a check for vehicle registration, insurance coverage, driver's license, or some other record; 2.3% said a roadside check for drunk drivers; 2.3% said police suspected them of something; 51.2% said speeding; and 23.6% said reckless driving, illegal turn, going through a red light, driving too closely, or some other traffic offense.

- The vast majority of drivers stopped by police (84%) said they had been stopped for a legitimate reason, and an even larger majority (90%) felt police had behaved properly during the traffic stop.

#### **Citizen contacts with police involving force or the threat of force**

- During 1999 approximately 422,000 persons age 16 or older were estimated to have had a contact in which police used or threatened to use force against them. This finding on the prevalence of force encounters is similar to the estimated 471,000 persons experiencing force in 1996.
- An estimated 2 in 10 persons experiencing a force encounter reported that the officer issued a threat to use force only.

- The estimate of the number of persons experiencing force or the threat of force equals about 1% (0.96%) of the nearly 44 million people reporting face-to-face contact with police.

- Among those with police contact, blacks (2%) and Hispanics (2%) were more likely than whites (just under 1%) to experience police threat or use of force as a consequence of the contact.

- Respondents reported that police use or threat of force primarily involved the citizen being pushed or grabbed: less than 20% of those experiencing force reported an injury.

- Overall, 57% of persons involved in a police force incident reported that they argued, disobeyed, or resisted the police or that they had been drinking or using drugs at the time.

- An estimated 49% of persons involved in a force contact had charges filed against them — ranging from a traffic offense to resisting arrest to assaulting an officer.

- An estimated three-quarters of the 422,000 persons involved in a police force incident characterized the force as excessive. Whites were as likely as blacks to describe the force encounter as having been excessive. There were not statistically significant differences between whites and Hispanics.

- The vast majority (92%) of persons experiencing threat or use of force said the police acted improperly.

## Police-Public Contact Survey

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Title XXI of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 requires the Attorney General to publish an annual summary of data about the use of excessive force by police. Since that time, the following reports have been published:

*National Data Collection on Police Use of Force* (April 1996, NCJ 160113) summarizes the literature and research available, identifies potential strengths and weaknesses associated with alternative data collection strategies, and identifies a series of steps to acquire both administrative and self-report data.

*Police Use of Force: Collection of National Data* (November 1997, NCJ 165040) provides findings from the first Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS-I) conducted in the spring of 1996 utilizing a nationally representative sample of 6,421 respondents age 12 or older. In addition, the report describes the National Police Use-of-Force Database Project initiated by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) with funding from both the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). This report also included preliminary findings on police-use-of force from a number of NIJ-funded studies.

*Use of Force by Police: Overview of National and Local Data* (October 1999, NCJ 176330) provides initial data from the IACP's National Police Use-of-Force Database Project, presents findings from studies of the use of force in six jurisdictions, and offers new insights into the measurement of suspect resistance in use-of-force encounters. In addition, BJS describes plans for conducting a second national survey during the last half of 1999.

*Traffic Stop Data Collection Policies for State Police, 1999* (February 2000, NCJ 180776) provides an overview of the status of administrative data collection, both manual and electronically accessible data, by State police agencies on traffic stops and the outcomes associated with those stops. The report describes the number of States routinely collecting information on drivers and other vehicle occupants with respect to age, gender, race or ethnicity, and immigration status. The study also describes data collected by these agencies on use-of-force encounters.

Studies of racial and ethnic disparities in police traffic enforcement in New Jersey and Maryland also prompted new interest in national data from the United States on variations in law enforcement practices attributable to race and ethnicity. In addition, the Congress considered a number of proposals addressing the issue of law enforcement integrity, with a particular concern about the need for data to learn more about racial profiling practices (Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Acts of 1999 and 2000).

In June 1999 the President issued an Executive Memorandum to Federal law enforcement agencies requiring them to examine any practices which may be the result of racial profiling.

Together these concerns led BJS to redesign the PPCS-I to gather more detailed information on traffic stops, the most frequent form of police-citizen contact. The Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS) was pretested in the spring of 1999 and was conducted between July 1, 1999, and December 31, 1999, as a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).

The final questionnaire incorporated some elements of the British Crime Survey questions on contacts with police to ensure comparability to the extent possible. Extensive public comment was received, and a panel of law enforcement experts designated by the American Statistical Association's Committee on Law and Justice critiqued the instrument.

### **The 1999 PPCS national sample**

In 1999 the PPCS respondents included all NCVS respondents age 16 or older, with the questionnaire administered following the NCVS screener and incident forms.

During the last 6 months of 1999 in which interviews were conducted, the NCVS sample consisted of 94,717 individuals age 16 or older. Of these, 10,424, or 11%, were NCVS non-interviews, though someone else in the household was interviewed. In addition to those not interviewed for the NCVS, 986 persons either refused to participate in the PPCS or said they were not available for the interview or the interviewer failed to indicate the specific reason for non-interview.



By far the largest reason for not completing the PPCS in 1999, accounting for 2,764 respondents, was the exclusion of the proxy interviews conducted for the NCVS when a person was unable, for physical, mental, or other reasons, to participate. BJS staff determined that caregivers and other proxy interviewees would have difficulty describing the details of any contacts between police and the sampled respondent.

The PPCS failed to interview 14,174 persons and interviewed 80,543; this translates into an 85% response rate for the PPCS, compared to an overall response rate of 89% for the NCVS. Among the PPCS interviews conducted, 24,829 (31%) were in person and 55,672 (69%) were by telephone.

The PPCS national sample, after adjustment for non-response, weights to a national estimate of 209,350,600 persons age 16 and older. Distributions by gender, race, ethnicity, and age parallel the resident population projections (middle-series) published by the Census Bureau ([http://www.census.gov/population/projections/nation/detail/d1999\\_00.pdf](http://www.census.gov/population/projections/nation/detail/d1999_00.pdf)) reflecting the accuracy of the case-level adjustments to the weights:

Characteristic	Resident population	
	Census Bureau projection	PPCS sample
Gender		
Male	48.2%	48.2%
Female	51.8	51.8
Race/ethnicity		
White	74.1%	74.1%
Black	11.4	11.7
Hispanic	10.2	10.2
White	9.3	9.8
Black	0.6	0.2
Other*	0.3	0.1
Other*	4.3	4.0
Age		
16-17	3.8%	3.9%
18-19	3.8	3.8
20-24	8.6	8.7
25-29	8.7	8.8
30-34	9.4	9.5
35-39	10.7	10.8
40-49	19.8	20.0
50 or older	35.3	34.5
Total	210,604,000	209,350,600

\*Other includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, and Alaska Natives.

### Other information on survey methodology

Unless indicated otherwise, differences documented in this report were significant at the .05-level. Certain differences were not significant at the .05-level but were significant at the .10-level. The term "some indication" refers to differences significant at the .10-level.

Regarding racial designations given in the report, "white" refers to non-Hispanic whites, "black" refers to non-Hispanic blacks, and "other races" refers to non-Hispanics in the "other races" category. White Hispanics, black Hispanics, and Hispanics of "other races" are categorized in the report under the heading "Hispanic."

Due to small samples and concerns about confidentiality, the report does not provide separate statistics on each of the racial categories that make up "other races" (Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Native Hawaiians, and Alaska Natives).

## Incidence and prevalence of police-public contact

In 1999 there were just over 209 million U.S. residents age 16 or older. Based on the results of the 1999 Police Public Contact Survey, conducted during the last 6 months of the year, an estimated 43.8 million residents, or about 21% of those age 16 or older, were estimated to have had at least one face-to-face contact for any reason with a law enforcement officer during the year (figure 1).

### Race, Hispanic origin, gender, and age of citizens having face-to-face contact with police

In 1999 rates of contact between residents and the police translate into about 1 person with a contact for every 4.8 residents age 16 or older.

Per capita rates of contact between residents and the police vary by the race and ethnicity of residents. White residents experience contact with law enforcement officers at the highest rate: about 1 person for every 4.5 white, non-Hispanic residents age 16 or older experience a contact. By contrast, about 1 person for every 5.3 black residents had contact, and at a lower rate, about 1 Hispanic for every 6

**In 1999 an estimated 43.8 million residents age 16 or older, about 20.9% of all persons in this age category, had a face-to-face contact with a police officer. Contact between the police and the public varied by race/ethnicity, with white respondents reporting contacts at the highest per capita rates**

Number of residents age 16 or older				
209,350,577				
	White	Black	Hispanic	Other race
	155,182,517	24,505,943	21,276,861	8,385,256
<b>Contact with police</b>	34,294,839	4,629,731	3,550,300	1,352,547
<b>Rate per 1,000</b>	221	189	167	161

Figure 1

had a direct contact with a law enforcement officer. Per capita, the white rate of police-citizen contact is about 17% higher than for blacks and about 32% higher than for Hispanics. Other races, primarily Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, and Alaska Natives, experience contact with police at the lowest rate; on average, there is about 1 person with a contact for every 6.2 persons in the resident population.

Age and sex are also important factors associated with the prevalence of police-citizen contacts (table 1). About 1 male of every 4.4 males age 16 or older had a contact with a police officer in 1999; among women residents age 16 or older, there was about 1 with a contact for every 5.2 females. Males had a per capita rate of contact about 20% higher than that for females.

Contact rates generally vary inversely with age: residents in the youngest age groupings have higher rates of contact with police than those in the oldest age ranges. Residents age 18 to 19 have the highest rates of contact with police: the per capita rate of 343 per 1,000 equals about 1 person of this age with a contact for every 2.9 persons in this age group. By contrast, among those 50 or older, rates of contact equal about 1 person with a contact for every 7.6 persons of this age.

**Table 1. Rate of face-to-face contact between police and residents age 16 or older, by gender and age, 1999**

Population characteristic	Persons age 16 or older			Rate of contact per 1,000 persons
	Contact with police	No contact with police	Total population	
Male	23,135,110	77,733,034	100,868,144	229
Female	20,692,308	87,790,125	108,482,433	191
16 to 17	1,845,977	6,222,534	8,068,511	229
18 to 19	2,705,888	5,193,533	7,899,421	343
20 to 24	5,730,078	12,582,986	18,313,060	313
25 to 29	4,833,335	13,563,021	18,396,356	263
30 to 34	4,833,379	15,015,718	19,849,097	244
35 to 39	5,145,251	17,479,357	22,624,608	227
40 to 44	5,111,473	17,263,649	22,375,122	228
45 to 49	4,179,427	15,385,185	19,564,612	214
50 or older	9,442,611	62,817,173	72,259,784	131
Total	43,827,419	165,523,158	209,350,577	209

Note: Detail may not add to total because of estimation procedures.

**Table 2. Rate of face-to-face contact between police and residents age 16 or older, by characteristic of the location of residence, 1999**

Geographic characteristic	Persons age 16 or older			Rate of contact per 1,000 persons
	Contact with police	No contact with police	Total population	
MSA-central city*	12,244,683	48,847,907	61,092,590	200
MSA-noncentral city*	22,513,679	84,103,050	106,616,729	211
Not MSA*	9,069,056	32,572,201	41,641,257	218
Under 100,000	34,064,252	124,207,444	158,271,696	215
100,000 to 499,999	5,807,156	22,605,072	28,412,228	204
500,000 to 999,999	1,658,163	6,353,897	8,012,060	207
1 million or more	2,297,847	12,356,747	14,654,594	157
Total	43,827,419	165,523,158	209,350,577	209

Note: Detail may not add to total because of estimation procedures.

\*The Office of Management and Budget defines the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as a population nucleus of 50,000 or more, generally having a city, its immediate suburbs, and adjacent communities that are highly integrated socially and economically with the nucleus.

### Size of jurisdiction

Rates of contact between police and citizens also vary inversely with the size of the jurisdiction in which the resident lives (table 2). The smaller the population of the jurisdiction, the higher the rate of contact with police. This finding is illustrated in two ways: residents of central cities reported contacts with police at rates of about 200 persons with contact per 1,000 residents while residents of non-metropolitan or rural areas reported a 9% higher rate. Similarly, residents of jurisdictions with fewer than 100,000 residents had a rate of contact with police which was 37% higher than those residing in jurisdictions of 1 million or more residents.

### Multiple contacts during the year and multiple reasons for a contact

Among the 43.8 million persons having contact with a police officer during the year, many reported more than one contact or a variety of reasons for having contacts. Overall, about two-thirds of those who reported having a contact with a police officer had only the single contact during the year and gave a single reason for that contact (table not shown). The remaining third had combinations of numbers of contacts and reasons for contact during the reference year.

Of the 43.8 million persons with contacts with police:

- 65% had one contact for a single reason, and for half of these, the reason for the contact was a vehicle traffic stop
- an additional 16% of those with contacts had multiple reasons for contacts with police during the year
- an additional 11% said they had multiple contacts during the year but always for the same reason
- 8% had multiple contacts for multiple reasons during the year.

Persons with contacts with police distribute slightly differently with respect to their demographic composition than those who do not report a contact during the year. Those with police contacts are generally more likely to be male, white, and younger than those who do not have contacts with police:

Characteristic	Resident population, age 16 or older	
	With police contact	Without police contact
Gender		
Male	52.8%	47.0%
Female	47.2	53.0
Race/ethnicity		
White	78.2%	73.0%
Black	10.6	12.0
Hispanic	8.1	10.7
Other race	3.1	4.2
Age		
16-17	4.2%	3.8%
18-19	6.2	3.1
20-24	13.1	7.6
25-29	11.0	8.2
30-34	11.0	9.1
35-39	11.7	10.6
40-49	21.2	19.7
50 or older	21.5	38.0
Total	43,827,419	165,523,158

Note: Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Contact between citizens and the police can occur in one of three ways: initiated by a resident, by the police, or by both. Examples of self-initiated face-to-face contacts with a police officer include reporting a crime, asking the officer for assistance or directions, or reporting a neighborhood problem. Examples of police-initiated contact include motor vehicle stops, being questioned by the police about a crime as a suspect, victim, or witness, or attending police-sponsored community meetings on crime prevention. Because up to a third of respondents to the PPCS described multiple contacts for a variety of reasons during the year, some experienced contacts of both types.

Among the 43.8 million persons with contact with the police, an estimated 25.9 million persons (59%) experienced only police-initiated contacts (figure 2). Nearly 12 million (27%) experienced only contacts that they had initiated. The remainder, just over 13% (5.9 million), said that they had both types of contacts with police during the year (table not shown). The percentage of respondents experiencing a police-initiated contact only was inversely related to age. While about 8 in 10 16-to-17 year olds with a face-to-face encounter said that the contacts they had with police had been initiated by the police, just over half of those age 35 and older said that the only contacts they had with police had been initiated by a law enforcement officer.

half of all persons with a police contact during 1999 (table 3). Motor vehicle stops were also most commonly cited among those with two or more contacts during the year. Together, an estimated 22.7 million persons age 16 or older experienced a traffic stop as a driver or passenger during 1999, about 11% of all persons in this age category.

The second most common reason for contact with police was to report a crime, accounting for about 1 in 5 persons with a police contact. About 8.4 million persons, or about 4% of the population age 16 or older, were estimated to have called the police at least once during the year to report a crime.

Overall, about 19% of residents age 16 or older called the police for the same problem at least twice during 1999.

Motor vehicle stops, as either a driver or passenger, was the most frequent reason for contact, cited by more than

**Among persons who had contact with the police in 1999, over 70% of persons ages 16-19, but 55% of those older than 50, had contact that the police initiated**

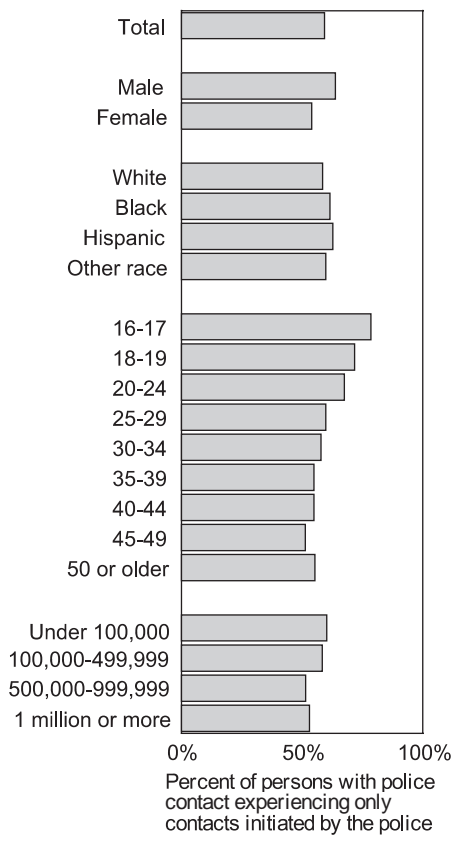


Figure 2

**Table 3. Reasons for contact between the police and public, by the number of contacts of the same type during 1999**

Reason for contact	Contact with police during 1999			Percent of residents with contacts		
	Total	One contact	Two or more contacts	Total	One contact	Two or more contacts
<b>Contact with police:</b>						
<b>Any reason</b>	43,705,120	35,254,550	8,450,573	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Respondent contacted police:</b>						
Report a crime	8,372,814	6,877,313	1,495,501	19.2%	19.5%	17.7%
Witness to a crime	1,393,327	1,027,015	366,312	3.2	2.9	4.3
Ask for assistance	5,226,973	4,116,802	1,110,171	12.0	11.7	13.1
Report a neighborhood problem	4,001,085	2,979,285	1,021,800	9.2	8.5	12.1
Witness to an accident	1,673,709	1,387,291	286,418	3.8	3.9	3.4
Other reasons	4,030,763	3,383,985	646,778	9.2	9.6	7.7
<b>Police contacted respondent:</b>						
Motor vehicle stop <sup>†</sup>	22,731,790	18,100,524	4,631,268	52.0%	51.3%	54.8%
Involved in accident	3,354,807	3,158,257	196,550	7.7	9.0	2.3
Witness to accident	766,413	609,237	157,176	1.8	1.7	1.9
Victim of crime	921,357	792,176	129,181	2.1	2.2	1.5
Witness to crime	1,367,601	1,157,259	210,342	3.1	3.3	2.5
Suspect in crime	1,314,159	1,116,265	197,894	3.0	3.2	2.3
Serve warrant	345,208	232,084	113,124	0.8	0.7	1.3
Crime prevention	614,743	440,187	174,556	1.4	1.2	2.1
Other	5,288,699	4,506,961	781,738	12.1	12.8	9.3

Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because persons may have given more than one reason for a contact between a resident and a police officer.

<sup>†</sup>Includes persons who were either passengers or drivers.

**Table 4. Estimated rate of contact with police per officer, by size of jurisdiction, 1999**

Reason for contact with police	Number of respondents who had contacts with police per officer, by size of jurisdiction				
	All jurisdictions	Under 100,000	100,000-499,999	500,000-999,999	1 million or more
<b>Contact with police: Any reason</b>	70.5	121.8	39.5	28.3	16.8
<b>Respondent contacted police:</b>					
Report a crime	13.5	21.9	8.6	7.9	3.8
Witness to a crime	2.2	3.3	1.7	2.0	0.9
Ask for assistance	8.4	14.1	4.8	3.5	2.8
Report a neighborhood problem	6.4	10.9	3.5	3.7	1.7
Witness to an accident	2.7	4.6	1.8	0.9	0.6
Other reasons	6.5	11.4	3.2	2.5	1.6
<b>Police contacted respondent:</b>					
Motor vehicle stop*	36.5	64.4	19.7	12.6	7.9
Involved in accident	5.4	9.6	3.2	2.0	0.6
Witness to accident	1.2	2.0	0.8	0.8	0.2
Victim of crime	1.5	2.4	0.9	0.9	0.4
Witness to crime	2.2	3.5	1.5	1.4	0.7
Suspect in crime	2.1	3.3	1.7	0.7	0.7
Serve warrant	0.6	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.2
Crime prevention	1.0	1.5	0.7	0.5	0.4
Other reasons	8.5	14.6	4.7	3.5	2.2

Note: Data on the number of sworn officers were obtained from the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics Survey for 1999 and include sworn officers in both local police and sheriff's departments. There were 622,041 full-time sworn law enforcement officers in police and sheriff's departments nationwide in 1999.

\*Includes persons who were either passengers or drivers.

The most common types of recurring reasons for experiencing a contact with police were: to report a neighborhood problem, motor vehicle stops, and attending crime prevention meetings. About a quarter of those who called the police about a neighborhood problem during 1999 said that they called at least twice during the year about their concerns.

The least frequently recurring reason for police contact was to have been involved in a traffic accident. An estimated 3.4 million persons age 16 or older were involved in accidents in 1999, with about 6% of these persons reporting they were involved in two or more accidents during the year.

On a per officer basis, the number of contacts with unique individuals age 16 or older averaged about 71 in 1999. That is, the 622,041 sworn full-time State and local law enforcement officers in the United States had contacts with 43,827,514 persons that year. Officers employed in jurisdictions of less than 100,000 population on average in 1999 had contacts with about 8 times the number of people in traffic stops as those officers employed in jurisdictions of 1 million or more population (table 4). In fact, for most of the categories of reasons for contact, the ratio of contacts to officers in smaller jurisdictions is between 5 and 8 times the rate in the largest jurisdictions.

## Varying rates of contacts

In 1999 an estimated 11.3% of whites age 16 or older experienced at least one traffic stop as a driver or passenger, a rate equal to 113 per 1,000 whites age 16 or older in the resident population (table 5). Blacks and Hispanics experienced traffic stops while drivers or passengers at lower rates, 107 per 1,000 and 90 per 1,000, respectively. Whites were more likely than blacks or Hispanics to call the police to ask for assistance, such as directions, and to report a neighborhood problem. Whites and blacks were equally likely to have called the police during 1999 to report a crime and there were no differences by race/ethnicity in participation in community crime prevention meetings sponsored by the police. In the aggregate, jurisdiction size was inversely related to the rate of contact between police and citizens (table 6).

For blacks age 16 or older, smaller population areas had higher contact levels: black residents of areas with fewer than 100,000 persons had per capita rates of contact which were 22% higher than for persons residing in jurisdictions of 1 million or more population. Among whites and Hispanics, the highest rates of contact with police occurred among residents of jurisdictions with populations of 500,000 to 999,999.

**Table 5. Rate of contact with police per 1,000 residents age 16 or older, by race of persons with contacts and reason for contact, 1999**

Reason for contact with police	Number of respondents who had contacts with police per 1,000 residents age 16 or older				
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Other race
<b>Contact with police: Any reason</b>	209	221	189	167	161
<b>Respondent contacted police:</b>					
Report a crime	40	41	39	32	35
Witness to a crime	7	7	8	5	7
Ask for assistance	25	27	21	17	18
Report a neighborhood problem	19	21	15	13	7
Witness to an accident	8	9	5	4	4
Other reasons	19	21	16	11	14
<b>Police contacted respondent:</b>					
Motor vehicle stop <sup>†</sup>	109	113	107	90	83
Involved in accident	16	18	12	10	10
Witness to accident	4	4	2	2	1*
Victim of crime	4	4	5	5	3*
Witness to crime	7	7	6	6	4*
Suspect in crime	6	6	8	8	5
Serve warrant	2	1	5	1	2*
Crime prevention	3	3	3	2	1*
Other reasons	25	27	25	19	17

Note: Respondents may have described more than one reason for a contact.

\*Estimate was based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>†</sup>Includes persons who were either passengers or drivers.

**Table 6. Number of persons with a face-to-face contact with a police officer per 1,000 persons age 16 or older, by jurisdiction size and race/ethnicity of residents, 1999**

Size of jurisdiction where resided	Number of persons who had contact with police per 1,000 persons age 16 or older				
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Other race
All jurisdictions	209	221	189	167	161
Under 100,000	215	222	198	178	182
100,000 to 499,999	204	227	197	156	131
500,000 to 999,999	207	231	164	221	136
1 million or more	157	179	162	125	129

## Law enforcement employees and contacts with the public

No national data are available from police officers to describe their workload and with whom they come into contact to complement these data drawn from the general population. BJS does, however, collect administrative data on the number of sworn officers. While levels of contact can be calculated relative to the number of sworn officers, it is not known to what

extent such measures may accurately reflect a typical officer's workload and contacts (table 4).

In the aggregate during 1999, an estimated 71 persons age 16 or older had contact with a police officer for each sworn officer employed by State or local law enforcement agencies nationwide.

**Table 7. Number of respondents with contacts with police per 1,000 residents age 16 or older, by reason for contact and age, 1999**

	Number of respondents who had contacts with police per 1,000 residents age 16 or older							
	Total	16 to 17	18 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 and older
<b>Contact with police: Any reason</b>	209	229	343	313	263	235	222	131
<b>Respondent contacted police:</b>								
Report a crime	40	24	51	56	52	50	48	23
Witness to a crime	7	7	9	9	9	9	8	3
Ask for assistance	25	14	19	28	33	34	29	17
Report a neighborhood problem	19	5	9	15	22	27	25	14
Witness to an accident	8	5	13	10	11	10	9	5
Other reasons	19	10	18	18	20	21	27	15
<b>Police contacted respondent:</b>								
Motor vehicle stop <sup>†</sup>	109	130	225	203	155	121	102	54
Involved in accident	16	29	29	21	18	14	15	13
Witness to an accident	4	3*	7	5	4	4	4	2
Victim of crime	4	4	9	9	4	5	4	2
Witness to a crime	7	10	8	11	7	7	8	4
Suspect in crime	6	22	23	16	6	5	5	2
Serve warrant	2	2*	2*	6	2	2	1	0*
Crime prevention	3	4	2*	2	3	4	3	2
Other reasons	25	39	39	29	27	29	30	16

\*Estimates based on 10 or fewer cases.

†Includes persons who were either passengers or drivers.

**Per 1,000 persons, older persons had fewer face-to-face encounters with police officers than younger persons, and those contacts for older persons were less likely to be traffic stops, which were from half to two-thirds of the contacts for age groups under 40**

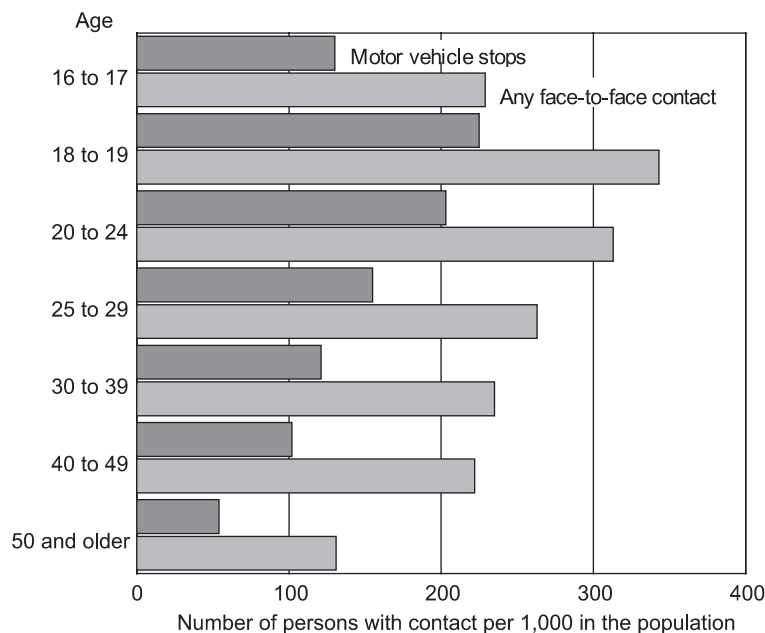


Figure 3

The single most important factor affecting the rate of contact between residents and the police is age, largely due to the age distribution of those persons experiencing a motor vehicle stop (figure 3). Among those ages 18 to 24, the per capita rate of traffic stops is more than double that of persons age 40 or older (table 7). In addition, persons age 16 to 19 self-report an involvement in traffic accidents for which police responded at nearly twice the per capita rate reported in the aggregate for all age groups. Finally, young people, age 16 to 19, describe a rate of contact as a suspect in crime which is nearly 4 times the per capita rate for all age groups.

In other words, for young people, the principal reasons for higher contact with the police are greater exposure to motor vehicle stops, higher involvement in traffic accidents, and greater likelihood of being questioned as a suspect in a crime.

**Possible criminal conduct and contacts with police**

Overall, about 7 out of 1,000 persons in the population age 16 or older reported that they had at least one contact with police during the year for reasons related to possible criminal conduct: They were a suspect in a crime or they were served a warrant by police.

Among subgroups of the population, men were more than twice as likely as women to report such reasons for contact, and blacks reported a higher rate of such contact than whites. Those age 18 to 19 reported a rate of contact for possible criminal contact which was much higher than that reported by persons age 50 or older.

Characteristic of persons who had contact with police	Persons suspected of a crime or served a warrant	
	Number with contact with police per 1,000 residents	Percent of those suspected of a crime
Total	7.1	100.0%
Gender		
Male	10.0	67.3%
Female	4.5	32.6
Race/ethnicity		
White	6.6	68.9%
Black	9.9	16.3
Hispanic	8.2	11.7
Other race	5.7	3.2
Age		
16-17	23.6	12.8%
18-19	24.1	12.8
20-24	19.1	23.4
25-29	7.6	9.3
30-34	6.6	8.8
35-39	6.3	9.5
40-44	6.1	9.2
45-49	4.2	5.4
50 or older	1.8	8.9
Size of jurisdiction where resided		
Under 100,000	6.7	70.5%
100,000-499,999	9.5	18.1
500,000-999,999	7.1	3.8
1 million or more	7.7	7.6

Note: Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding.



## Traffic stops

### Number of drivers pulled over by police in 1999

The number of drivers age 16 or older pulled over by police at least once in a traffic stop in 1999 totaled 19.3 million persons (table 8). The 19.3 million estimate is based on the 1999 Police-Public Contact Survey. The 19.3 million includes stops of all kinds of motor vehicles — for example, motorcycles, buses, and private and commercial cars and trucks — and both personal and business travel.

#### Driver gender

Of the 19.3 million drivers stopped during the year, approximately 11.7 million, or 61%, were male, and 7.6 million, or 39%, were female.

#### Driver race/ethnicity

Of the 19.3 million stopped drivers, nearly 14.9 million, or 77%, were white; 2.2 million or 11.6%, were black; and 1.6 million, or 8.4%, were Hispanic.

### Driver age

Most stopped drivers were adults under age 40. Eleven percent were under age 20, and over 50% were between 20 and 39 years of age. Stopped drivers between ages 40 and 49 accounted for 20% and those age 50 or older, 18%.

### Likelihood of driver being stopped

The 1999 U.S. population totaled 209.4 million persons age 16 or older. An estimated 89%, or 186.3 million, were licensed drivers (table 9). On at least one occasion in 1999, 19.3 million were driving a car or other motor vehicle when it was pulled over by police in a traffic stop. The 19.3 million stopped drivers represent 10.3% of the Nation's 186.3 million licensed drivers. In other words, an estimated 10.3% of all licensed drivers — approximately 1 in 10 — were pulled over by police at least once in 1999.

The 19.3 million stopped drivers included 4 million who were pulled over

**Table 8. Gender, race/ethnicity, and age of drivers stopped by police, 1999**

Demographic characteristic	Drivers age 16 or older stopped by police in 1999	
	Number	Percent
Total	19,277,002	100.0%
Gender		
Male	11,721,808	60.8%
Female	7,555,194	39.2
Race/ethnicity		
White	14,846,114	77.0%
Black	2,231,801	11.6
Hispanic	1,615,088	8.4
Other race	583,999	3.0
Age		
16-19	2,031,789	10.5%
20-29	5,559,921	28.8
30-39	4,525,604	23.5
40-49	3,764,485	19.5
50-59	2,093,557	10.9
60 or older	1,301,646	6.8

2 or more times during the year. The 4 million make up 2.1% of the Nation's 186.3 million licensed drivers, indicating that 2.1% of all licensed drivers — approximately 1 in 50 — were pulled over more than once in 1999.

**Table 9. Gender, race/ethnicity, and age of all drivers and of drivers stopped at least once or more than once in 1999**

Demographic characteristic	U.S. population age 16 or older	Percent with driver's license	Number with driver's license	Drivers stopped at least once in 1999		Drivers stopped more than once in 1999	
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	209,350,577	89%	186,322,014	19,277,002	10.3%	3,990,339	2.1%
Gender							
Male	100,868,144	93%	93,807,374	11,721,808	12.5%	2,707,738	2.9%
Female	108,482,433	85	92,210,068	7,555,194	8.2	1,276,828	1.4
Race/ethnicity							
White	155,182,518	92%	142,767,917	14,846,114	10.4%	2,984,069	2.1%
Black	24,505,942	74	18,134,397	2,231,801	12.3	546,791	3.0
Hispanic	21,276,862	86	18,298,101	1,615,088	8.8	366,625	2.0
Other race	8,385,255	80	6,708,204	583,999	8.7	87,016	1.3
Age							
16-19	15,967,931	70%	11,177,552	2,031,789	18.2%	725,349	6.5%
20-29	36,709,421	90	33,038,479	5,559,921	16.8	1,467,819	4.4
30-39	42,473,705	94	39,925,283	4,525,604	11.3	819,134	2.1
40-49	41,939,735	95	39,842,748	3,764,485	9.4	527,028	1.3
50-59	29,321,592	93	27,269,081	2,093,557	7.7	307,753	1.1
60 or older	42,938,193	80	34,350,554	1,301,646	3.8	144,483	0.4

Note: Detail may not add to total because of estimation procedures.

Sources: "U.S. population ages 16 or older," "Number of drivers stopped at least once in 1999," and "Number of drivers stopped more than once in 1999" are from the BJS 1999 Police-Public Contact Survey; "Percent with driver's license" is from the U.S. Department of Transportation's 1995 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey.

*Driver gender*

Ninety-three percent of males and 85% of females age 16 or older were licensed drivers in 1999. Males (12.5%) were more likely than females (8.2%) to be stopped at least once. Males (2.9%) were also more likely than females (1.4%) to be stopped more than once.

*Driver race/ethnicity and racial profiling*

Among all persons ages 16 or older in 1999, 92% of whites, 74% of blacks, and 86% of Hispanics had a driver's license.

White drivers and Hispanic drivers did not differ significantly in their chances of being stopped at least once in 1999 (10.4% of whites and 8.8% of Hispanics) or in their chances of being stopped more than once in 1999 (2.1% of whites and 2.0% of Hispanics).

There was some indication that black drivers were more likely than white drivers to be stopped at least once in 1999: 12.3% of blacks versus 10.4% of whites. There was also some indication that black drivers were more likely than whites to be stopped more than once that year: 3.0% of blacks versus 2.1% of whites.

Put another way, blacks were 9.8% of licensed drivers but 11.6% of drivers stopped at least once and 13.7% of drivers stopped more than once, while whites were 76.8% of licensed drivers and 77% of those stopped at least once and 74.9% of those stopped more than once. Hispanics were 9.8% of licensed drivers, 8.4% of drivers stopped at least once, and 9.2% of drivers stopped more than once.

In short, survey results indicated that in 1999 blacks had higher chances than whites of being stopped at least once and higher chances than whites of being stopped more than once.

**Table 10. Number of traffic stops in 1999**

Race/ethnicity	Total number of traffic stops in 1999 (in millions)	Percent of drivers stopped					Average number of stops per driver
		1 time	2 times	3 times	4 times	5 times or more	
Total	27.0	79.0%	14.5%	3.3%	1.4%	1.8%	1.4 stops
White	20.7	79.5	14.6	3.1	1.2	1.6	1.4
Black	3.5	74.9	14.9	4.4	2.4	3.4	1.6
Hispanic	2.2	77.0	14.8	4.1	2.7	1.4*	1.4

Note: Drivers of other races not shown separately. Total includes "other races."  
\*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

However, these racial differences are not necessarily evidence that police use race as a factor in deciding whether to make a traffic stop — that is, not necessarily evidence of "racial profiling."

To form evidence of racial profiling, the survey would have to show that (all other things being equal) —

Blacks were no more likely than whites to violate traffic laws, *and*

Police pulled over blacks at a higher rate than whites.

Because the survey has no information on how often people of different races break traffic laws — having only data on how often people are stopped for breaking these laws — analysis of the data from the 1999 Police-Public Contact Survey cannot settle the question of whether or to what extent racial profiling exists. Put another way, the analysis cannot determine whether racial differences in the breaking of traffic laws rather than racial profiling is the reason for the higher rates at which black drivers were stopped by police.

*Driver age*

In 1999, 70% of all persons ages 16 to 19 had a driver's license. Among persons in their twenties, thirties, forties, or fifties, 90% or more had a license. Of those ages 60 or older, 80% were licensed.

The younger the driver, the greater the likelihood that he or she was pulled over by police at least once in 1999: 18.2% of teenage drivers, 16.8% of drivers in their twenties, 11.3% of those in their thirties, 9.4% of those in their forties, 7.7% of those in their fifties, and 3.8% of drivers age 60 or older.

The younger the driver, the greater the likelihood that he or she was pulled over by police more than once in 1999: 6.5% of teenage drivers, 4.4% of drivers in their twenties, 2.1% of those in their thirties, 1.3% of those in their forties, 1.1% of those in their fifties, and 0.4% of those age 60 or older.

**Number of traffic stops in 1999**

The vast majority (79%) of the 19.3 million drivers stopped in 1999 had only one traffic stop that year (table 10). By contrast, 1.8% were stopped by police five or more times. On average, stopped drivers were pulled over 1.4 times. The average was 1.4 times for whites and Hispanics. The average was greater for blacks (1.6).

Police made an estimated 27 million traffic stops in 1999. Whites made up 77.0% of stopped drivers and accounted for 76.7% of traffic stops. Blacks made up 11.6% of stopped drivers and accounted for 13.0% of stops. Hispanics made up 8.4% of stopped drivers and accounted for 8.1% of stops.

**Reason for being stopped**

Surveyed drivers were asked what reason the officer gave for the stop:

Most (51.2%) said "speeding" (table 11).

11.4% said a "vehicle defect" (burned out taillight, loud muffler, and so forth).

2.3% said a "roadside check for drunk drivers." (Police may not stop motorists randomly at roadblocks to search for drugs but may stop motorists randomly to search for drunken drivers.)

9.2% said a "record check" of some sort (for example, a check for driver's license or insurance coverage or vehicle registration).

2.3% said they were stopped because police "suspected them of something" (for example, they were out late at night in a location that attracts people looking for drugs or prostitutes).

22.7% said "some other traffic offense" (seat belt violation, illegal turn, going through a red light or a yellow light or a

stop sign or a pedestrian crossing, following too closely, changing lanes without signaling, reckless driving, lights not on, loud music, curfew violation, throwing a cigarette out a window, and so forth).

A small percentage of stopped drivers (1.6%) said police had not given a reason for the stop.

*Driver gender*

Females were more likely than males to say the reason for the stop was "speeding" (females 54.1%, males 49.3%) or "record check" (females 10.6%, males 8.3%). Males were more likely than females to say "vehicle defect" (males 12.5%, females 9.6%), "driver suspected of something" (males 3.0%, females 1.4%), or "other traffic offense" (males 23.6%, females 21.3%). Otherwise, there were no significant differences between the sexes. For example, males (2.5%) and females (1.9%) were not significantly different in giving "roadside check for drunk drivers" as the reason.

*Driver race/ethnicity*

Whites were more likely than blacks to say the reason for the stop was "speeding" (whites 53.7%, blacks 43.4%), and blacks were more likely than whites to say "other traffic offense" (whites 21.0%, blacks 28.1%). Otherwise, there were no significant differences between blacks and whites. For example, whites (2.5%) and blacks (1.4%) were not significantly different in having "roadside check for drunk drivers" as the reason.

Whites were more likely than Hispanics to say "speeding" (whites 53.7%, Hispanics 42.1%), and Hispanics were more likely than whites to say "vehicle defect" (whites 10.4%, Hispanics 15.4%) or "other traffic offense" (whites 21.0%, Hispanics 27.9%). Otherwise, whites and Hispanics did not differ significantly. For example, the percentage of whites (2.5%) and Hispanics (1.3%) who said "roadside check for drunk drivers" did not differ significantly.

**Table 11. Reasons police gave for stopping vehicle, by gender, race/ethnicity, and age of stopped drivers, 1999**

Characteristic of stopped driver	Reason police gave for traffic stop							
	Total	Speeding	Vehicle defect	Roadside check for drunk drivers	Record check	Driver suspected of something	Other traffic offense	Other
Total	100.0%	51.2%	11.4%	2.3%	9.2%	2.3%	22.7%	0.9%
Gender								
Male	100.0%	49.3	12.5	2.5	8.3	3.0	23.6	0.8
Female	100.0	54.1	9.6	1.9	10.6	1.4	21.3	1.1
Race/ethnicity								
White	100.0%	53.7	10.4	2.5	9.1	2.3	21.0	1.0
Black	100.0	43.4	13.4	1.4*	11.0	2.4	28.1	0.3*
Hispanic	100.0	42.1	15.4	1.3*	9.7	3.0	27.9	0.6*
Other race	100.0	45.6	15.9	1.2*	4.0*	2.3	30.7*	0.3*
Age								
16-19	100.0%	52.3	12.1	0.7	4.4	6.1	23.6	0.8*
20-29	100.0	53.5	13.5	2.0	7.2	2.3	20.8	0.7
30-39	100.0	51.4	11.5	2.1	10.2	1.8	22.2	0.8
40-49	100.0	51.0	10.4	2.6	9.8	1.6	23.4	1.2
50-59	100.0	48.8	8.8	3.8	13.4	1.8	22.6	0.8*
60 or older	100.0	43.1	7.6	3.3	13.2	1.4*	29.9	1.5*
Estimated number	19,277,002	9,889,102	2,197,578	443,371	1,773,484	443,371	4,375,879	173,493

Note: Table excludes 1.6% of stopped drivers who said the police had not given a reason for the stop.

\*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

A small percentage of stopped drivers said police had not given a reason for the stop: 1.5% of whites, 2% of blacks, 2.3% of Hispanics.

*Driver age*

Speeding — The most consistent finding was that drivers in the oldest age category (60 or older) were less likely (43.1%) than drivers in each of the other age categories to give "speeding" as the reason for being stopped.

Vehicle defect — The most consistent finding was that drivers in the oldest age category (60 or older) were less likely (7.6%) than drivers in their teens (12.1%), or twenties (13.5%), or thirties (11.5%) to say "vehicle defect" was the reason.

Roadside check for drunk drivers — The most consistent finding was that teenage drivers (0.7%) were less likely than drivers in each of the older age categories to say "roadside check."

Record check — The most consistent finding was that teenage drivers (4.4%) and drivers in their twenties (7.2%) were less likely than drivers in each of the older age categories to say they were stopped for a "record check."

Driver suspected of something — The only significant differences were between teenage drivers and each of the older age categories. Teenage drivers stopped by police (6.1%) were more likely than each of the others to say that the reason they were stopped was because they were suspected of something.

Other traffic offense — The only significant differences were between drivers age 60 or older and each of the younger age categories. Drivers ages 60 or older stopped by police (29.9%) were more likely than each of the others to

**Driver opinion on being stopped**

The vast majority of drivers pulled over by police (84%) felt they had been stopped for a legitimate reason. Still, opinion was not uniform across the different segments of the population.

*Driver gender*

Females (87%) were more likely than males (82%) to say that the stop was for a legitimate reason.

*Driver race/ethnicity*

The vast majority of blacks stopped by police (74%) felt they had been stopped for a legitimate reason. So, too, did the vast majority of Hispanics (82%). Nevertheless, blacks and Hispanics were less likely than whites (86%) to say the police had a legitimate reason for stopping them.

*Driver age*

There were no significant differences between drivers of one age and drivers of another age in terms of opinion about whether they had been stopped for a legitimate reason.

	Percent of stopped drivers who felt that they had been stopped for a legitimate reason
Total	84%
Gender	
Male	82%
Female	87
Race/ethnicity	
White	86%
Black	74
Hispanic	82
Other race	85
Age	
16-19	84%
20-29	85
30-39	84
40-49	84
50-59	83
60 or older	86

say that the reason they were stopped was for some other traffic offense.

**Traffic tickets**

Police issued a traffic ticket to just over half (54.2%) of the drivers they stopped (table 12). Another 26.4% received a warning, and the remaining 19.4% received neither ticket nor warning. The 54.2% includes 1.6% charged with driving while impaired or intoxicated.

*Driver gender*

Males (55.8%) were more likely than females to be ticketed (51.9%).

*Driver race/ethnicity*

Police were more likely to ticket blacks (60.4%) and Hispanics (65.6%) than whites (51.8%).

Put differently, blacks were 11.6% of drivers stopped by police but 12.9% of ticketed drivers, and Hispanics were 8.4% of stopped drivers but 10.1% of those ticketed, while whites were 77% of stopped drivers and 73.5% of the ticketed ones.

*Driver age*

The younger the driver, the greater the likelihood of a ticket. That is, where significant differences existed between younger and older drivers, they were always in the direction of a greater likelihood of younger drivers being ticketed. For example, teenage drivers (54.5%), and drivers in their twenties (59.0%), thirties (56.5%), or forties (53.9%) were each more likely than either drivers in their fifties (45.7%) or drivers age 60 or older (40.1%).

### Arresting the driver

Three percent of drivers stopped by police were arrested (table 12). Arrests occurred for a variety of reasons, such as —

- Failing a sobriety test
- Having drugs or an illegal weapon on the driver or in the vehicle
- Having an outstanding warrant for arrest
- Assaulting the police officer.

### Driver gender

Males (4.1%) were more likely than females (1.3%) to be arrested.

### Driver race/ethnicity

Blacks (5.2%) and Hispanics (4.2%) stopped by police were more likely than whites (2.6%) to be arrested.

Stated differently, blacks were 11.6% of drivers stopped by police but 19.9% of drivers who were arrested, and Hispanics were 8.4% of stopped drivers

but 11.7% of those arrested, while whites were 77% of stopped drivers and 66.3% of the ones who were arrested.

### Driver age

The younger the driver, the greater the likelihood of an arrest. That is, where significant differences existed between younger and older drivers, they were always in the direction of a greater likelihood of the younger driver being arrested. Teenage drivers (4.2%) and drivers in their twenties (3.4%), thirties (3.8%), or forties (2.6%) were more likely than those in their fifties (1.3%) or older (0.7%).

### Handcuffing the driver

Police handcuffed 3.1% of the drivers they stopped.

### Driver gender

Males (4.3%) were more likely than females (1.2%) to be handcuffed in a traffic stop.

### Driver race/ethnicity

Blacks (6.4%) and Hispanics (5.0%) were more likely than whites (2.5%) to be handcuffed.

Stated another way, blacks were 11.6% of drivers stopped by police but 23.4% of drivers who were handcuffed, and Hispanics were 8.4% of stopped drivers but 13.2% of those handcuffed, while whites were 77% of stopped drivers and 61.8% of the ones who were handcuffed.

### Driver age

The younger the driver, the greater the likelihood of handcuffs being used. That is, where significant differences existed between younger and older drivers, they were always in the direction of a greater likelihood of younger drivers being handcuffed. For example, drivers in each of the age categories below age 60 were more likely than drivers age 60 or older (0%) to be handcuffed. Teenage drivers (4.1%),

**Table 12. What police did during the traffic stop, by gender, race/ethnicity, and age of stopped drivers, 1999**

Characteristic of stopped drivers	What police did during traffic stop							Used excessive force against the driver
	Ticketed the driver	Searched —			Handcuffed the driver	Arrested the driver	Used force against the driver	
		Driver or vehicle	Driver	Vehicle				
Total	54.2%	6.6%	4.3%	5.3%	3.1%	3.0%	0.7%	0.5%
Gender								
Male	55.8	9.4	6.4	7.5	4.3	4.1	1.2	0.8
Female	51.9	2.3	1.2	1.9	1.2	1.3	0*	0*
Race/ethnicity								
White	51.8	5.4	3.5	4.3	2.5	2.6	0.6	0.4
Black	60.4	11.0	8.0	8.5	6.4	5.2	1.5*	1.0*
Hispanic	65.6	11.3	7.0	9.7	5	4.2	1.4*	1.4*
Other	61.9	6.5	3.2	5.4	1.7	2.1	0*	0*
Age								
16-19	54.5	13.3	8.4	11.7	4.1	4.1	2.1	1.4*
20-29	59.0	8.9	6.1	7.1	4.0	3.4	0.9	0.6
30-39	56.5	6.4	4.3	5.2	4	4.0	0.7*	0.6*
40-49	53.9	3.8	2.5	2.6	2.3	2.6	0.3*	0.2*
50-59	45.7	2.7	1.4	2.2	1.3	1.3	0.1*	0*
60 or older	40.1	1.6*	0.7*	0.9*	0*	0.7*	0.2*	0.2*
Estimated number	10,448,135	1,272,282	828,911	1,021,681	597,587	578,310	139,327	99,956

\*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

drivers in their twenties (4.0%), and drivers in their thirties (4.0%) were more likely to be handcuffed than drivers in their fifties (1.3%).

### Police use of force against driver

Based on survey results, 19.3 million drivers were stopped by police at least once in 1999. Surveyed drivers were asked whether, in their opinion, police had used "force" against them (not including handcuffing) at any time during the traffic stop. Approximately 139,000 drivers — or a little over 0.7% of the 19.3 million stopped by police - said "yes."

Surveyed drivers saying police had used force against them were then asked what type of force. The most serious type that a surveyed driver said had been used was police pointing a gun but not firing; the least serious was a verbal threat. From most to least serious, the 10 different types of force that surveyed drivers said police had used were as follows:

1. Police pointed a gun at you but did not fire.
2. Police sprayed you with chemical or pepper spray.
3. Police kicked or hit you with his/her hand or something held in officer's hand, such as a baton.

4. Police pushed or grabbed you in a way that caused pain.
5. Police pushed or grabbed you in a way that did not cause pain.
6. Police threatened you by having a hand on his/her gun.
7. Police threatened to use chemical or pepper spray.
8. Police threatened to kick you or hit you with the officer's hand or with something held in the officer's hand (such as a baton).
9. Police threatened to push or grab you.
10. Police threatened to arrest you or take you to jail or take some other nonviolent action.

### Race of officer in traffic stops

Outcome of traffic stop	Percent of persons stopped					
	All officers		White officers		Black officers	
	White driver	Black driver	White driver	Black driver	White driver	Black driver
Ticketed	51.8%	60.4%	52.1%	60.6%	58.3%	65.9%
Arrested	2.6	5.2	2.6	5.3	1.3	4.6
Driver or vehicle searched	5.4	11.0	5.3	11.2	2.8	10.9
Felt they were stopped for a legitimate reason	86.0	74.0	86.2	72.7	84.8	75.2

The survey uncovered evidence of black drivers' having worse outcomes than whites. The question arises whether blacks' having worse outcomes was true regardless of the officer's race. To answer it, black and white drivers stopped by white officers were compared, and black and white drivers stopped by black officers were compared. Results suggest that the various racial disparities had nothing to do with the officer's race. In other words, blacks generally had a worse outcome whether they were stopped by a white officer or a black officer.

A black driver (60.4%) was more likely than a white (51.8%) to be ticketed. Among drivers stopped by white officers, blacks (60.6%) were more likely than whites (52.1%) to be

ticketed. Though the racial disparity was about as great among drivers stopped by black officers (65.9% of blacks, 58.3% of whites), the disparity was not statistically significant, presumably because of the small sample.

A black driver (5.2%) was more likely than a white (2.6%) to be arrested. In traffic stops by white officers, blacks (5.3%) were more likely than whites (2.6%) to be arrested. The racial disparity was about as great among drivers stopped by black officers (4.6% of blacks, 1.3% of whites), but was not statistically significant, possibly because of the small sample.

A police officer was more likely to conduct a search of the vehicle or the

driver in traffic stops of black (11.0%) than white (5.4%) motorists, and that was true regardless of the officer's race.

Black drivers stopped by police (74.0%) were less likely than whites (86.0%) to have the opinion they had been stopped for a legitimate reason. Among drivers stopped by white officers, blacks (72.7%) were less likely than whites (86.2%) to feel the stop had a legitimate basis. There was also some indication that, among drivers stopped by black officers, black drivers (75.2%) were less likely than whites (84.8%) to say the stop was for a legitimate reason.

“Police shot at you” is not in the list of 10 because, though surveyed drivers were asked if police had done this, none said “yes.” Likewise, “police threatened you with a police dog” and “police actually unleashed a dog on you” do not appear on the list because no one said that police had used either of these forms of force.

#### *Driver gender*

Males (1.2%) were more likely than females (0%) to say police had used force against them.

#### *Driver race/ethnicity*

Police used force against 1.5% of black drivers, 1.4% of Hispanics, and 0.6% of whites, not a significant difference.

#### *Driver age*

The younger the driver, the greater the likelihood that police used force. That is, where significant differences existed between younger and older drivers, they were always in the direction of a greater likelihood of younger drivers experiencing police use of force. For example, drivers in each of the age categories below age 60 were more likely to experience force than drivers age 60 or older (0.2%). Also, drivers in their teens (2.1%), twenties (0.9%), or thirties (0.7%) were more likely than drivers in their fifties (0.1%) to experience force.

#### **Police use of excessive force against driver**

Of the nationally estimated 139,000 drivers saying police had used some type of force (not including handcuffing) against them during a traffic stop, nearly 100,000 felt that the force was “excessive” (table 12). The 100,000 make up about 72% of the 139,000 who said police had used force, and a little over

one-half of 1% of the 19.3 million stopped drivers.

#### *Driver gender*

Males (0.8%) were more likely than females (0%) to say police had used excessive force.

#### *Driver race/ethnicity*

Police used what the drivers believed to be excessive force against 1.0% of blacks stopped and 0.4% of whites stopped, not a significant difference.

Hispanics (1.4%) were significantly more likely than whites (0.4%) to feel that excessive force had been used.

#### *Driver age*

The younger the driver, the greater the likelihood of police using excessive force. That is, where significant differences existed between younger and older drivers, they were always in the direction of a greater likelihood of younger drivers saying that excessive force had been used. For example, drivers in their teens (1.4%), twenties (0.6%), or thirties (0.6%) were more likely than drivers in their fifties (0%) to say excessive force was used. Similarly, drivers in their teens (1.4%) or twenties (0.6%) were more likely than drivers in their sixties (0.2%).

#### **Searching the driver, vehicle, or both**

During a traffic stop police sometimes conduct a search for drugs, open containers of alcohol, stolen property, or other evidence of criminal wrongdoing. The search may be of the vehicle, of the driver, or of both the vehicle and the driver.

In 6.6% of the 19.3 million traffic stops documented in the 1999 national survey, police searched the driver, the

vehicle, or both. The 6.6% represent close to 1.3 million drivers who said they or their vehicle had been searched. Of the nearly 1.3 million searches, 35% were searches just of the vehicle, 20% were searches just of the driver, and the remaining 45% were searches of both the driver and the vehicle.

#### *Driver gender*

Police were more likely to conduct a search of the vehicle and/or the driver in traffic stops of males (9.4%) than females (2.3%).

#### *Driver race/ethnicity*

Black (11.0%) and Hispanic (11.3%) motorists stopped by police were more likely than whites (5.4%) to be physically searched or have their vehicle searched.

In other words, blacks were 11.6% of drivers stopped by police but 19.4% of drivers who were physically searched or whose vehicle was searched, and Hispanics were 8.4% of stopped drivers but 14.4% of those searched, while whites were 77% of stopped drivers and 63.2% of those who had some type of search.

#### *Driver age*

The younger the motorist, the more likely police were to search the vehicle or the driver. That is, where significant differences existed between younger and older drivers, they were always in the direction of a greater likelihood of younger drivers’ being frisked or having their vehicle searched. For example, teenage drivers (13.3%) were more likely than drivers in their twenties (8.9%), who in turn were more likely than drivers in their thirties (6.4%), who in turn were more likely than those in their forties (3.8%).

## Searching the driver

Overall, 4.3% of stopped drivers were physically searched by police. Such body searches often involve little more than the driver being frisked or lightly patted down by the officer. Sometimes though, the search is more invasive, involving, for example, the officer's reaching into the driver's clothing.

### *Driver gender*

Driver searches (as distinct from vehicle searches) were more common among male drivers (6.4%) than female drivers (1.2%).

### *Driver race/ethnicity*

Black (8.0%) and Hispanic motorists (7.0%) were more likely than white motorists (3.5%) to be subjected to a search of the driver.

Put differently, blacks were 11.6% of drivers stopped by police but 21.5% of drivers who were physically searched, and Hispanics were 8.4% of stopped drivers but 13.6% of those physically searched, while whites were 77% of stopped drivers and 62.6% of the ones who were physically searched.

### *Driver age*

The younger the driver, the greater the likelihood of a search of the driver. That is, where significant differences existed between younger and older drivers, they were always in the direction of a greater likelihood of younger drivers being searched. For example, drivers in their twenties (6.1%) were more likely than drivers in their thirties (4.3%), who in turn were more likely than drivers in their forties (2.5%). All drivers, except those in their fifties, were more likely than drivers in the oldest age category (0.7%).

## Driver opinion on whether police acted properly

An estimated 90% of the 19.3 million drivers pulled over by police felt that police had behaved properly during the traffic stop.

### *Driver gender*

There was some division of opinion between the approximately 11.7 million males and 7.6 million females stopped by police. When asked if police had behaved properly or improperly, males (88%) were less likely than females (92%) to say "properly."

### *Driver race/ethnicity*

Of the nearly 14.9 million whites stopped by police, 91% said that police had behaved properly during the traffic stop. That compares to 82% of the 2.2 million blacks stopped, and 87% of the 1.6 million Hispanics stopped. Though vast majorities of blacks and Hispanics felt police had behaved properly, blacks and Hispanics were less likely than whites to hold that opinion.

## *Driver age*

With two exceptions, drivers of one age category were no different from drivers of another age category in terms of opinion about whether police had behaved properly during the traffic stop. The two exceptions were the lower percentages of teenage drivers (87%) and drivers in their twenties (89%) who felt police had behaved properly as compared to drivers in their fifties (92%).

	Percent of stopped drivers who felt that the police had behaved properly during the traffic stop
Total	90%
Gender	
Male	88%
Female	92%
Race/ethnicity	
White	91%
Black	82%
Hispanic	87%
Other	91%
Age	
16-19	87%
20-29	89%
30-39	90%
40-49	90%
50-59	92%
60 or older	91%

## Searching the vehicle

Police searched the vehicle in about 5% of traffic stops (table 12).

### *Driver gender*

Police were more likely to search a vehicle driven by a male (7.5%) than a female (1.9%).

### *Driver race/ethnicity*

Police were more likely to search a vehicle driven by a black (8.5%) or Hispanic (9.7%) than a white (4.3%).

Stated another way, blacks were 11.6% of drivers stopped by police but 18.7% of drivers whose vehicle was searched, and Hispanics were 8.4% of stopped drivers but 15.4% of drivers of searched vehicles, while whites were 77% of stopped drivers and 62.8% of the ones whose vehicle was searched.

### *Driver age*

The younger the driver, the greater the likelihood of a vehicle search. More specifically, where significant differences existed between younger and older drivers, they were always in the direction of a greater likelihood of a vehicle search for the younger drivers.



**Table 13. Type of search of vehicle or driver and the outcome, 1999**

	Search of —					
	Driver, vehicle, or both		Driver		Vehicle	
	Estimated number	Total	Estimated number	Total	Estimated number	Total
<b>All searches</b>	1,272,282	100%	828,911	100.0%	1,021,681	100.0%
<b>Type of search</b>						
With consent	427,487	33.6	217,175	26.2	481,212	47.1
Without consent	844,795	66.4	611,736	73.8	540,469	52.9
<b>Outcome of search</b>						
Evidence found	169,214	13.3	66,313	8.0	128,732	12.6
No evidence found	1,103,068	86.7	762,598	92.0	892,949	87.4

Note: A total of 578,310 drivers had both types of searches. For that reason the sum of the number of searches under the "driver" column and the number under the "vehicle" column is greater than the number under the "driver, vehicle, or both" column. Note also that some of the 578,310 drivers consented to one type of search but not the other. In those cases they were classified as a non-consent search in the "driver, vehicle, or both" column.

To illustrate, vehicles driven by persons in their thirties (5.2%) were more likely to be searched than vehicles driven by persons in their forties (2.6%) or in their fifties (2.2%). Teenage drivers (11.7%) and those in their twenties (7.1%) or thirties (5.2%) or forties (2.6%) or fifties (2.2%) were each more likely than those ages 60 or older (0.9%).

**Searches and racial profiling**

One definition of racial profiling is "using race as a key factor in deciding whether to make a traffic stop." Another definition is "using race as a key factor in deciding whether, during a traffic stop, to search the vehicle or the driver." Survey findings reported above indicated the following about the likelihood of searches and the race or ethnicity of the driver:

1. Black (11.0%) and Hispanic (11.3%) motorists stopped by police were more likely than whites (5.4%) to be physically searched or to have their vehicle searched.

2. Black (8%) and Hispanic motorists (7%) were more likely than white motorists (3.5%) to be subjected to a physical search of the driver.

3. Police were more likely to search a vehicle driven by a black (8.5%) or Hispanic (9.7%) than by a white (4.3%).

However, while the survey data can reveal these various racial disparities they cannot answer the question of whether the driver's race, rather than the driver's conduct at the time or any other specific circumstances surrounding the stop, is the reason the search was conducted. That is because the survey did not include questions about circumstances or driver conduct. For example, having drugs in plain view of police is a circumstance that would normally warrant a legal search of the vehicle. But since the survey did not ask drivers whether any drugs within plain view were in the vehicle, the analysis is necessarily limited.

Police asked permission to search, and the driver —	Police conducted a search	
	Yes	No
Consented	A	D
Did not consent	B	E
Total	C	F

Figure 4

**Limitation of the survey's search data**

Surveyed drivers were asked about any searches that police may have conducted during the traffic stop. Based on answers to these questions, national estimates are made of —

- the number of drivers who were searched ("C" in figure 4)
- the number of searches that were carried out with the driver's permission ("searches with consent," "A") and the number carried out without permission ("searches without consent," "B").

An estimate not available from the survey is the number of traffic stops in which the driver had refused a request to conduct a search and no search was made ("E"). It is unavailable because not all surveyed drivers, but only drivers who said they or their vehicle had been searched, were asked whether the officer had first requested permission ("A" and "B"). Consequently, the survey cannot estimate:

- how often a driver refused a request to conduct a search ("B" + "E")
- the likelihood of police conducting a search after the driver denied permission
- the likelihood of a driver giving consent.

**Search of driver, vehicle, or both**

*Search with or without driver consent*

In some jurisdictions an officer need not have any suspicion to ask for permission to conduct a search. In some, police departments require that the officer have at least a "reasonable suspicion" before asking for permission to conduct a search. In all jurisdictions, if the officer has "probable cause" to believe that the person or the vehicle

contains evidence of a crime, the officer does not need to ask for permission.

Of the 1.3 million searches, a third, or about 427,000, were by consent (table 13). In consent searches the search only occurred after the officer had asked for and had been granted permission from the driver. The remaining two-thirds, or about 845,000, were not by consent; either the officer had not asked permission before conducting the search, which was the case in about 96% of searches without consent, or the officer had asked but the driver reported saying "no" (the other 4% of searches without consent). Physical searches (73.8%) were more likely than vehicle searches (52.9%) to be searches without consent.

#### *Likelihood of search finding criminal evidence*

In 13.3% of the 1.3 million searches, police found drugs, an illegal weapon, open containers of beer, or other possible evidence of a crime. The likelihood of finding criminal evidence was not significantly different between the 845,000 searches without consent (12.9%) and the 427,000 searches with consent (14.2%) (table not shown).

#### *Driver opinion on searches with or without consent*

Most (71%) of the approximately 845,000 drivers subjected to a search of their body or vehicle without consent felt that police had not had a legitimate reason for the search. Most (55%) of the roughly 427,000 drivers who had consented to being physically searched or having their vehicle searched also felt that police had not had a legitimate reason.

### **Search of driver**

#### *Search with or without consent*

Approximately three-fourths (73.8%) of all body searches were without the driver's consent, according to surveyed drivers.

#### *Likelihood of search finding criminal evidence*

Of the 829,000 physical searches, 92% found no criminal evidence, according to surveyed drivers. When evidence was found, it was usually alcohol or drugs.

The likelihood of finding criminal evidence was not significantly different between the 612,000 physical searches without consent (7.8%) and the 217,000 physical searches with consent (8.5%) (table not shown).

#### *Driver opinion on searches with or without consent*

Most (72%) of the approximately 612,000 drivers who were subjected to a physical search without their consent felt that police had lacked a legitimate reason for the search (table not shown). Most (52%) of the roughly 217,000 who had consented to being physically searched also felt that police had not had a legitimate reason.

### **Search of vehicle**

#### *Search with or without consent*

Roughly half of all vehicle searches (52.9%) were without driver consent.

#### *Likelihood of search finding criminal evidence*

Nearly 90% of vehicle searches (87.4%) found no evidence of criminal wrongdoing, according to surveyed drivers. Vehicle searches without

consent (13.1%) were not significantly more likely than searches with consent (12.2%) to uncover evidence (table not shown).

#### *Driver opinion on searches with or without consent*

Most (79%) of the approximately 540,000 drivers who were subjected to a vehicle search without their consent felt that police had lacked a legitimate reason for the search (table not shown). Most (55%) of the roughly 481,000 who had consented to a vehicle search also felt that police had not had a legitimate reason.

### **Interpreting opinion data regarding searches**

Among drivers who did not give consent to being physically searched or to having their vehicle searched, most said police did not have a legitimate reason for the search. Among those who did give consent, again most said police did not have a legitimate reason for the search. To law enforcement officers, the latter might seem contradictory: drivers consenting to a search but then saying the search was not for a legitimate reason. From a legal perspective, the giving of consent can make a search legitimate.

It is not certain what drivers who had given consent meant when they said police did not have a legitimate reason. They were not all necessarily expressing criticism of police. Some who had consented may have merely meant that they had nothing to hide.

### **Small sample sizes**

Up to now, separate statistics were given on each of four categories: physical searches with consent, physical searches without consent, vehicle searches with consent, and vehicle searches without consent. Within each

of the four, it would be desirable to have comparative statistics by gender and race and age — for example, the percentage of white physical searches without consent that found criminal evidence compared to the percentage of black physical searches without consent. But these detailed estimates would be based on samples too small to form reliable statistical comparisons. By combining physical searches and vehicle searches, additional comparisons can be made.

**Searching the driver, vehicle, or both: Gender**

*Search with or without consent*

The proportion of all searches (both physical and vehicle) that were without consent was identical for males (66%) and females (66%) (table 14).

*Likelihood of search finding criminal evidence*

The proportion of male searches finding criminal evidence (14%) was not significantly greater than that of female searches (12%).

**Searching the driver, vehicle, or both: Race/ethnicity**

*Search with or without consent*

Black searches (physical or vehicle) were more likely to be without consent (74%) than white searches (63%) (table 14).

The percentage of all searches that were without the driver's consent was greater in physical or vehicle searches of Hispanics (76%) than whites (63%).

**Table 14. Type and outcome of searches conducted by police during 1999 traffic stops**

Characteristic of drivers who were searched	Search of the driver or the vehicle				
	All searches	Type of search		Outcome of search	
		With consent	Without consent	Evidence found	No evidence found
Total	100%	34%	66%	13%	87%
Gender					
Male	100%	34%	66%	14%	86%
Female	100	34	66	12*	88
Race/ethnicity					
White	100%	37%	63%	17%	83%
Black	100	26	74	8*	92
Hispanic	100	24	76	10*	90
Age					
16-19	100%	34%	66%	21%	79%
20-29	100	37	63	12	88
30-39	100	24	76	8*	92
40-49	100	43	57	17*	83
50-59	100	19*	81	8*	92
60 or older	100	51*	49*	0*	100*
Number	1,272,282	427,487	844,795	169,214	1,103,068

\*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

*Likelihood of search finding criminal evidence*

Searches of white drivers or their vehicles were more likely to find criminal evidence (17%) than searches of blacks (8%), but not significantly more likely than searches of Hispanics (10%).

**Searching the driver, vehicle, or both: Age**

*Search with or without consent*

The percentage of searches that were without consent showed no clear pattern with age.

*Likelihood of search finding criminal evidence*

No comparisons are made between drivers of different ages because many of the samples on which the separate age categories are based are too small to form reliable estimates.

**Table 15. Driver opinion on whether the search was for a legitimate reason, 1999**

Characteristic of drivers who were searched	Percent of drivers who felt the search was legitimate		
	Search of the driver or the vehicle	Search of the driver	Search of the vehicle
Total	34%	35%	34%
Gender			
Male	34%	36%	33%
Female	40	34*	39
Race/ethnicity			
White	39%	40%	39%
Black	17*	22*	15*
Hispanic	33	28*	31
Age			
16-19	30%	35%	30%
20-29	37	35	36
30-39	35	40	30
40-49	31	26*	38
50-59	38*	49*	40*
60 or older	35*	0*	58*

\*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

**Driver opinion on driver, vehicle, or both being searched**

Of the nearly 1.3 million drivers who experienced either a vehicle search, a driver search, or both, an estimated 34% felt the search (or, in some cases, "both searches") was for a legitimate reason (table 15). The remaining 66% did not feel it was for a legitimate reason.

*Driver gender*

Males (34%) were not significantly less likely than females (40%) to have the opinion that the search was for a legitimate reason.

*Driver race/ethnicity*

Blacks (17%) were less likely than whites (39%) to feel that police had a legitimate reason for searching them, their vehicle, or both. Opinion did not differ significantly between whites and Hispanics (33%).

*Driver age*

Opinion that the search was for a legitimate reason generally did not vary with age.

**Driver opinion on being physically searched**

Of the approximately 829,000 drivers who were physically searched, an estimated 35% felt the search was for a legitimate reason. The remaining 65% did not feel it was for a legitimate reason.

*Driver gender*

Males were not significantly different from females in their opinion about being physically searched: 36% of males and 34% of females felt there was a legitimate reason.

*Driver race/ethnicity*

Blacks who were physically searched by police (22%) were less likely than whites (40%) to feel that police had a legitimate reason for making the search. Hispanics (28%) were not significantly less likely than whites to have that opinion.

*Driver age*

Opinion that the physical search was for a legitimate reason did not vary in any uniform way across the ages.

**Driver opinion on vehicle being searched**

Of the 1 million drivers who said their vehicle had been searched by police, 34% felt the search was for a legitimate reason.

*Driver gender*

Males were not significantly different from females in opinion about their vehicle being searched: 33% of males and 39% of females felt there was a legitimate reason.

*Driver race/ethnicity*

Blacks whose vehicle was searched (15%) were less likely than whites (39%) to feel that police had a legitimate reason for the search. Hispanics (31%) were not significantly less likely than whites to have that opinion.

*Driver age*

In general, the older the driver whose vehicle was searched, the greater the likelihood that driver felt the search was for a legitimate reason.

## Police use of force

The 1999 Police-Public Contact Survey asked respondents who said they had a face-to-face contact with police whether the police officer(s) used or threatened to use physical force against them.

During 1999 approximately 422,000 persons age 16 or older said the police used or threatened to use force against them at least once (table 16). This amounts to about 1% of the nearly 44 million people reporting face-to-face police contact during 1999 (table 17). These overall findings are quite similar to those from the 1996 survey, which reported that approximately 500,000 persons age 12 or older experienced police force — also representing about 1% of those persons who reported face-to-face police contact in 1996.

About three-quarters (76%) of those experiencing force in 1999 said the force used or threatened by the police was excessive.\*

Among all persons who had a police contact in 1999, 52.8% were males. However, among those experiencing police use or threat of force, 86.9% were males.

Persons ages 16 to 29 were 34.5% of the estimated 44 million who had a police contact but 68.1% of those experiencing force during a contact. Persons age 32 or less accounted for

\*In this report "use of force" includes threat of force unless otherwise indicated.

about 75% of all persons who reported experiencing police use of force. The median age of those experiencing force was 23. The oldest person reporting use of force in the survey was age 72.

Whites comprised 78.2% of all persons with a police contact, blacks 10.6%, and Hispanics 8.1%. About 59% of those experiencing force were white, 22.6% black, and 15.5% Hispanic.

### Likelihood of experiencing force

Among persons 16 years or older with a face-to-face contact, females (.27%) were less likely than males (1.58%) to have had a contact with police that resulted in force (table 17).

**Table 16. U.S. population age 16 or older who experienced force or threat of force, by gender, race/ethnicity, age, and size of jurisdiction where respondents resided, 1999**

Demographic characteristic	Number of persons with force <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons with force
Total persons with force	421,714 <sup>b</sup>	100.0%
Gender		
Male	366,533	86.9%
Female	55,181	13.1
Race/ethnicity		
White	248,539	58.9%
Black	95,440	22.6
Hispanic	65,530	15.5
Other race	12,205	3.0*
Age		
16-19	129,045	30.6%
20-29	158,195	37.5
30-39	78,007	18.5
40-49	36,857	8.7
50-59	9,630	2.3*
60 or older	9,981	2.4*
Size of jurisdiction where resided		
Under 100,000	278,267	66.0%
100,000-499,999	68,640	16.3
500,000-999,999	13,421	3.1*
1 million or more	61,386	14.6

Note: See Appendix table for distribution of unweighted cases.

<sup>a</sup>Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>b</sup>Question: "On (this/the most recent occasion), did the police officer(s) for any reason use or threaten to use physical force against you, such as grabbing you or threatening to hit you?"

<sup>c</sup>The standard error of the estimate of the total number of persons reporting use of force is 38,270.

**Table 17. Likelihood of force for U.S. population age 16 or older given police contact, by gender, race/ethnicity, age, and size of jurisdiction where respondents resided, 1999**

Demographic characteristic	Persons who reported —		Percent of persons age 16 or older with police contact who reported that police used force or threats
	Face-to-face contact with police <sup>a</sup>	Force used or threatened by police <sup>b</sup>	
Total persons	43,827,419	421,714	0.96%
Gender			
Male	23,135,110	366,533	1.58%
Female	20,692,308	55,181	0.27
Race/ethnicity			
White	34,294,839	248,539	0.72%
Black	4,629,731	95,440	2.06
Hispanic	3,550,300	65,530	1.85
Other race	1,352,547	12,205	0.90*
Age			
16-19	4,551,864	129,045	2.83%
20-29	10,563,413	158,195	1.50
30-39	9,978,629	78,007	0.78
40-49	9,290,901	36,857	0.40
50-59	5,133,674	9,630	0.19*
60 or older	4,308,937	9,981	0.23*
Size of jurisdiction where resided			
Under 100,000	34,069,252	278,267	0.82%
100,000-499,999	5,807,156	68,640	1.18
500,000-999,999	1,658,163	13,421	0.81*
1 million or more	2,297,847	61,386	2.67

Note: Detail may not sum to total because of rounding.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Question: "Were any of these contacts with a police officer in person, that is, face-to-face?"

<sup>b</sup>Question: "On (this/the most recent occasion), did the police officer(s) for any reason use or threaten to use physical force against you, such as grabbing you or threatening to hit you?"

Younger persons age 16 to 29 (1.9%) with police contact were significantly more likely than those over age 29 (.47%) to have had force used against them.

Among those persons age 16 or older with a face-to-face contact, blacks (2.06%) and Hispanics (1.85%) were more likely than whites (.72%) to have reported that the police used or threatened force against them.

*Initiator of the contact resulting in force*

In the vast majority (95.4%) of the 422,000 force cases, the citizens said that the police initiated the face-to-face

**Table 18. U.S. population age 16 or older who experienced force or threat of force, by reason for contact, 1999**

Reason for face-to-face contact	Number of persons with force <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons with force
Total persons with force	421,714	100.0%
Citizen-initiated contact		
Reported a crime	27,512	6.5%
Asked for assistance or information	11,614	2.8*
Reported a neighborhood problem	11,268	2.7*
Other	4,630	1.1*
Police-initiated contact	402,278	95.4%
Traffic-related	165,389	39.2
Citizen was victim of a crime	9,714	2.3*
Citizen witnessed a crime	2,813	0.7*
Citizen was involved in a crime	74,874	17.8
Citizen was suspected of a crime	79,405	18.8
Police had an arrest warrant	11,619	2.8*
Police investigating a crime	23,557	5.6*
Other	34,907	8.3

Note: Percents do not sum to 100 because some respondents reported more than one reason for police contact.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Question: "How would you best describe the reason or reasons for these in-person contacts with the police during the last 12 months?"

contact — most commonly through a traffic-related incident (39.2%) or because the police suspected the citizen of a crime (18.8%) or thought the person was involved in a crime (17.8%) (table 18). Traffic-related force incidents include cases in which the police stopped a motorist and cases in which police responded to an accident.

*Kind of force used*

Among those 422,000 persons who indicated that the police used or threatened to use force against them, 77.5% said police actually used force and 22.5% said force was threatened but not actually employed.

Type of police contact	Number of persons	Percent of persons with force
Total person with force	421,714	100.0%
Force		
Force only	273,599	64.8
Force and threat	53,371	12.7
Threat only	94,744	22.5

Respondents who said they experienced police use of force were asked to describe the type of force. About 72% of the 422,000 persons involved in a force incident said the police pushed or grabbed them (table 19). In about half of these cases the respondent reported experiencing pain. An additional 13.0% said the police threatened to push or grab them.

Among those 422,000 involved in a force-related incident, 15.3% of the persons said the police pointed a gun at them. Other types of force or threats included the use of chemical spray (9.8%) and the threat to fire a gun (5.4%). No person in the survey reported that an officer actually fired a gun at him or her. Likewise, the survey did not contain any respondents who reported being bitten by a police dog.

*Amount of force*

Citizens involved in a force incident were asked if they felt any of the physical force used or threatened against

**Table 19. U.S. population age 16 or older who experienced force or threat of force, by type of force reported, 1999**

Type of force reported	Number of persons with force <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons with force
Total persons with force	421,714	100.0%
Type of force used by police		
Pushed or grabbed without pain	155,477	36.9%
Pushed or grabbed with pain	148,496	35.2
Kicked or hit	42,937	10.2
Sprayed chemical/pepper spray	22,779	5.4*
Pointed a gun	64,645	15.3
Other	9,847	2.3*
Type of force threatened by police		
Pushing or grabbing	54,947	13.0%
Kicking or hitting	34,070	8.1
Chemical/pepper spray	18,452	4.4*
Fire gun	22,573	5.4*
Other	34,174	8.1

Note: Percents do not sum to 100 because some respondents reported more than one type of force or threat of force.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Question: "What type of physical force did the police officer(s) use or threaten to use during (this/the most recent) incident?"

**Table 20. U.S. population age 16 or older who experienced force or threat of force and said it was excessive, by race/ethnicity, 1999**

Race/ethnicity	Number of persons with force <sup>a</sup>	Number of reporting persons force was excessive	Percent who said it was excessive
Total	421,714	321,028	76.1%
White	248,539	181,778	73.1
Black	95,440	68,830	72.1
Hispanic	65,530	58,215	88.8
Other race	12,205	12,205	100.0*

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Question: "Do you feel that any of the physical force used or threatened against you was excessive?"

**Table 21. U.S. population age 16 or older who experienced force or threat of force and said it was excessive, by type of force considered excessive, 1999**

Type of force reported as excessive	Number of persons reporting excessive force <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons reporting excessive force
Total	320,485	100.0%
Type of excessive force		
Pushed or grabbed without pain	91,014	28.4%
Pushed or grabbed with pain	128,702	40.2%
Kicked or hit	28,707	9.0*
Sprayed chemical/pepper spray	22,779	7.1*
Pointed a gun	47,771	14.9%
Other	21,110	6.6*
Type of excessive force threatened		
Pushing or grabbing	17,812	5.6%*
Kicking or hitting	31,987	10.0*
Chemical/pepper spray	15,810	4.9*
Fire gun	12,053	3.8*
Other	24,525	7.7*

Note: Percents do not sum to 100 because some respondents reported more than one type of excessive force. Data are missing for 543 weighted cases.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Question: "Do you feel that any of the physical force used or threatened against you was excessive?"

If answered yes, "Specifically, what type of physical force do you feel was excessive?"

them was excessive. Most (76.1%) of the 422,000 people involved in a police use of force incident said the force was excessive (table 20). Whites (73.1%) involved in force incidents were just as likely as blacks (72.1%) to say the force was excessive. Among Hispanics with force used against them, 88.8% said it was excessive. There was not a statistically significant difference among estimates for whites, blacks, and Hispanics.

Citizens who characterized the incident as police use of excessive force most frequently identified the pushing or grabbing with pain (40.2%) or without pain (28.4%) as excessive (table 21). About three-quarters of those who said

**Table 22. U.S. population age 16 or older injured from police use or threat of force, by race/ethnicity, 1999**

Race/ethnicity	Number of persons reporting—		Percent of persons with force reporting injury <sup>a</sup>
	Use of force	Injury	
Total persons with force	421,714	63,924	15.2%
White	248,539	49,278	19.8%
Black	95,440	7,798	8.2*
Hispanic	65,530	6,848	10.5*
Other race	12,205	0	0*

Note: Zero represents no cases in sample.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Question: "Were you injured as a result of (this/the most recent) incident?" This question was asked only of those who said police used or threatened to use force against them.

**Table 23. U.S. population age 16 or older who experienced police use or threat of force, by type of injury, 1999**

Type of injury	Number of persons injured <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons injured
Total persons injured	63,924	100.0%
Type of injury		
Bruises or cuts	55,146	86.3%
Broken bones or teeth knocked out	5,199	8.1*
Pain in eyes/back	3,970	6.2*
Heart pain	2,224	3.5*
Back injury	2,152	3.4*
Internal injuries	2,083	3.3*
Shoulder injury	2,055	3.2*
Eyes burned	1,604	2.5*

Note: Percents do not sum to 100 because some respondents reported more than one injury.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Question: "Were you injured as a result of (this/the most recent) incident?"

Asked only of those who said they were injured as a result of police force: "Did your injuries include any of the following: \_\_\_ (list)?"

the police officer pointed a gun at them thought it was excessive (not shown in table).

#### *Injuries from force*

Overall, about 15% of the approximately 422,000 persons involved in a force or threat of force incident reported that they were injured as a result of the police action (table 22). Twenty percent of whites, 10.5% of Hispanics, and 8.2% of blacks in force incidents were injured. These differences were not statistically significant.

**Table 24. U.S. population age 16 or older who said they were injured as a result of police use or threat of force, by type of care received, 1999**

Type of care received	Number of persons injured <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons injured
Total persons injured	63,924	100.0%
Type of care received		
Emergency services	21,439	33.5*
Self treatment	12,573	19.7*
Doctor visits	2,152	3.4*
No care received	27,760	43.4*

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Question: "What type of care did you receive for your (injury/injuries)?" Asked only of those who said they were injured as result of police use of force.

The most common type of injury sustained was bruises and cuts — 86.3% of those injured (table 23).

The 64,000 respondents who said they were injured were asked what kind of treatment, if any, they received for their injuries. About 40% of injured persons did not receive any treatment, 33.5% received emergency services, and 19.7% administered self-treatment (table 24).

#### *Characteristics of incident*

About two-thirds of those involved in a force or threat of force incident said the police searched them or their vehicle. About 14% of the persons with force reported that during the course of the force incident the police found an item such as drugs, an open alcohol

**Table 25. U.S. population age 16 or older who had force used against them and were searched, by type of item found on or near them during the incident, 1999**

Type of item	Number of persons with force <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons with force
Total persons with force	421,714	100.0%
Persons with any item found	59,903	14.2%
Weapons	13,297	3.2*
Drugs	32,082	7.6*
Open alcohol container	23,749	5.6*
Illegal fireworks	2,904	0.7*

Note: Included are items found in the vehicles of stopped drivers. Respondents could report more than one item found in a search.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Questions: "Did the police officer(s) find any of the following items in the vehicle \_\_\_\_\_ (list)?" "Did the police officer(s) find any of the following items on or near you \_\_\_\_\_ (list)?"

container, or a weapon on or near them or their vehicle (table 25).

Forty-nine percent of the 422,000 persons involved in a contact with force had at least one kind of charge filed against them — ranging from a traffic offense to assaulting an officer (table 26). A traffic-related offense was one of the most common charges (12%).

Six percent were charged with drunk driving. About 8% were charged with resisting arrest and 3.4% were charged with assaulting a police officer.

#### Officers involved in force incidents

Most incidents involving force had more than one officer present (not shown in table). About 20% of the persons involved in a force incident reported that a single officer was present. The median number of officers involved in a force incident was two.

Most persons (85.4%) involved in force incidents said the officer or a majority of officers was white and 3.6% said the officer or a majority was black (table 27).

**Table 26. U.S. population age 16 or older who experienced force or threat of force, by type of offense charged, 1999**

Type of offense charged	Number of persons with force <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons with force
Total persons with force	421,714	100.0%
Persons with at least one charge filed	205,081	48.6%
Assaulting an officer	14,244	3.4*
Resisting arrest	33,285	7.9
Drug offense	23,716	5.6*
Possession of a weapon	6,936	1.6*
Disorderly conduct	31,199	7.4
Public drunkenness	14,849	3.5*
Traffic offense	49,971	11.8
Drunk driving	24,247	5.7*
Other	62,907	14.9

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Questions: Persons in traffic stop were asked: "During this incident were you: given a warning, given a traffic ticket, tested for drunk driving, charged with driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, questioned about what you were doing in the area?"

All persons with force were asked: "Were you charged with any of the following: assaulting a police officer, resisting arrest, drug offense, possession of a firearm or concealed weapon, disorderly conduct?"

#### Citizen conduct

Persons experiencing force or threat of police force were specifically asked if they thought any of their actions during the incident may have provoked the police officer(s) to use or threaten to use physical force. About 1 in 4 said they did something to provoke the officer:

Race/ethnicity	Number of persons who —		Percent of persons with force
	Experienced force	Said they had provoked the police	
Total	421,714	105,349	25.0%
White	248,539	78,023	31.4
Black	95,440	14,407	15.1
Hispanic	65,530	12,919	19.7

Question: "Do you think any of your actions during (this/the most recent) incident may have provoked the police officer(s) to use or threaten to use physical force?"

**Table 27. U.S. population age 16 or older who experienced force or threat of force, by race of officers involved in incident, 1999**

Reported race of officer(s)	Number of persons with force <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons with force
Total	402,306	100.0%
White	343,506	85.4
Black	14,508	3.6*
Other race	15,335	3.8*
Mixed races	28,957	7.2

Note: Excludes 19,408 cases where race of officer(s) was unknown.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Question: "Was/were the police officer(s) white, black, or some other race?"

Whites were not significantly more likely than blacks to say specifically they did something during the incident to provoke the police officer(s).

Respondents were also asked whether they had engaged in any of the following listed actions during the incident:

#### Verbal

- Argued with or disobeyed the police officer(s)
- Cursed at, insulted, or called the police officer(s) a name
- Said something threatening to the police officer(s)

#### Cooperation

- Resisted being handcuffed or arrested
- Resisted being searched or having the vehicle searched
- Tried to escape by hiding, running away, or being in a high-speed chase

#### Physical resistance

- Grabbed, hit, or fought with the police officer(s)
- Used a weapon to threaten the police officer(s)
- Used a weapon to assault the police officer(s)

#### Other

- Did anything else that might have caused the police officer to use or threaten to use physical force against you.



This question was asked of all persons with force regardless of their response to the above specific question about whether they provoked the police.

Overall, 57.0% reported they had engaged in at least one type of action during the incident such as arguing, disobeying, or resisting the police or using alcohol or drugs (table 28).

Whites (72.7%) involved in a force incident were significantly more likely than blacks (23.6%) to have reported at least one type of action during the incident, including drinking or using drugs. Among Hispanics with force, 52.6% reported they did something during the incident.

A third of those involved in a force incident said they argued with or disobeyed the police officer. Slightly more than 1 in 10 said they cursed or insulted the officer.

Other actions reported by persons experiencing police use of force include resisting arrests or handcuffing (7.2%), trying to escape (5.1%), and fighting

### Attitudes toward the police differ by race

Several sources of public opinion indicate that the police enjoy a generally favorable image among the public. However, differences do exist among black and white citizens regarding their perceptions of the police. Blacks are less likely than whites to express a favorable opinion of the police, to have confidence in the police, or to think the police should use force in any situation.

In 2000 a majority of persons (81%) surveyed in the United States said they had a favorable opinion of their local police as well as the State police or troopers in their area. Whites (85%) were more likely than blacks (58%) to have had a favorable opinion of their local police.<sup>1</sup>

Differences between black and white respondents can also be found when asked about their level of confidence in the police. In a 2000 national survey, 57% of whites said they had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the police, compared to 38% of blacks. Nationally a majority of persons (54%) said they had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the police.<sup>2</sup>

White and black attitudes toward police use of force have consistently differed over the past 25 years as measured by the survey question "[a]re there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve of a policeman striking an adult male citizen?" Surveyed annually over this time period, a larger percentage of whites — about three-quarters — than blacks — about half — responded "yes."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1999, BJS, table 2.34, Gallup Organization, Gallup Poll Monthly, December 1999, no. 411.

<sup>2</sup>Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1999, BJS, table 2.18, Gallup Organization, 2000.

<sup>3</sup>Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1999, BJS, table 2.36, National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1972-1998. Question: "Are there any situations you can imagine in which you would approve of a policeman striking an adult male citizen?"

**Table 28. U.S. population age 16 or older who experienced police force or threat of force, by race and action during the incident, 1999**

Type of conduct	Total		White		Black		Hispanic	
	Number of persons with force <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons with force	Number of persons with force <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons with force	Number of persons with force <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons with force	Number of persons with force <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons with force
Total persons with force	421,714		248,539		95,440		65,530	
<b>Reported at least one of the following actions at time of incident:</b>	240,461	57.0%	180,646	72.7%	22,529	23.6%*	34,448	52.6%*
Verbal								
Argue or disobey officer	152,919	36.3	106,779	43.0	14,526	15.2*	28,777	43.9*
Curse or insult officer	60,755	14.4	34,637	13.9	8,347	8.7*	17,772	27.1*
Verbal threat to officer	38,242	9.1	22,758	9.2*	6,743	7.1*	8,741	13.3*
Cooperation								
Resist arrest or handcuffs	30,506	7.2	14,692	5.9*	2,774	2.9*	13,040	19.9*
Resist search	31,658	7.5*	28,457	11.4*	0	0	3,201	4.9*
Try to escape	21,381	5.1*	18,607	7.5*	2,774	2.9*	0	0
Physical resistance								
Grab, hit, or fight officer	9,994	2.4*	2,240	0.9*	5,835	6.1*	1,918	2.9*
Other								
Other actions to provoke	15,550	3.7*	11,275	4.5*	2,167	2.3*	2,108	3.2*
<b>Use of alcohol or drugs<sup>b</sup></b>	89,313	21.2%	63,864	25.7%	9,543	10.0%*	13,068	19.9%*

Note: Zero represents no cases in sample.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Question: "At any time during (this/the most recent) incident did you: \_\_\_ (list)?"

<sup>b</sup>Questions: "Were you drinking at the time of the incident?" "Were you using drugs at the time of the incident?"

**Table 29. U.S. population age 16 or older who experienced police use or threat of force, by characteristics of force incident, 1999**

	Race/ethnicity				
	Total <sup>a</sup>	White	Black	Hispanic	Other race
Total persons with force	421,714	248,539	95,440	65,530	12,205
Characteristics of force incident					
Person or vehicle searched	65.7%	61.5%	77.4%	68.0%	48.7%*
Handcuffed	52.1	48.8	67.2	43.0	48.7*
Arrested	42.3	45.9	37.1	35.5	48.7*
Citizen said officer(s) acted improperly	91.9	88.5	94.4	100.0	100.0*

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Questions: "Did the police officer(s) search the vehicle?" "At any time during (this/the most recent) incident, did the police officer(s) search you, frisk you, or pat you down?" "At any time during (this/the most recent) incident were you handcuffed?" "Were you arrested?" "Looking back at (this/the most recent) incident, do you feel the police behaved properly or improperly?"

with the police (2.4%). Whites (43.0%) and Hispanics (43.9%) involved in a force or threat of force incident were significantly more likely than black citizens (15.2%) to say that they argued with the police during the incident.

**The median age of persons involved with the police generally declined as the contact became more serious, 1999**

Half the citizens with face-to-face contact with the police were age 36 or younger, 6 years younger than the median for the whole population over age 16. Half the persons who reported experiencing force by a police officer were age 23 or younger.

	Number of persons age 16 or older	Median age
U.S. population age 16 or older	209,350,600	42
Persons with face-to-face contact with police in 1999	43,827,400	36
Motorists stopped	19,277,000	34
Persons searched	1,737,700	25
Persons arrested	1,038,300	27
Persons handcuffed	1,154,200	26
Persons reporting that they experienced force by the police	421,700	23

Respondents were specifically asked if they had been using alcohol or drugs during the force incident. Twenty-one percent of the citizens involved in a force or threat of force incident said they were using drugs and/or alcohol at the time. Whites involved with police force (25.7%) were significantly more likely than blacks (10.0%) to have reported that they had used alcohol or drugs during the incident.

*Force and arrests*

Less than half (42.3%) of the persons who said force was used or threatened against them were arrested during the incident (table 29). Whites (45.9%) who experienced police force were not significantly more likely than blacks (37.1%) or Hispanics (35.5%) to also have been arrested.

*Force and handcuffing*

About half (52.1%) the persons experiencing force were also handcuffed during the incident – including 48.8% of whites, 67.2% of blacks, and 43.0% of Hispanics. These differences were not statistically significant.

**Table 30. U.S. population age 16 or older who experienced force or threat of force and took formal action, by type of formal action taken against police, 1999**

	Number of persons filing a complaint <sup>a</sup>	Percent of persons filing a complaint
Persons who took formal action against police	59,568	100%
Filed complaint with agency employing officer	39,399	66.1
Filed complaint with law enforcement or local government	15,818	26.6
Took other formal action	10,236	17.2*
Local prosecutor's office	2,206	3.7*

Note: Percents do not sum to 100 because some respondents may have taken more than one type of formal action.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Questions: "Did you take any formal action, such as filing a complaint or lawsuit?" "With whom did you file a complaint or lawsuit?"

*Citizen appraisal of police conduct*

The vast majority (91.9%) of the persons involved in police use of force incidents said the police acted improperly (table 29). Whites (88.5%) were nearly as likely as blacks (94.4%) to contend the police acted improperly.

Although the majority of persons with force felt the police had acted improperly, less than 20% of these people (about 59,600) said they took formal action such as filing a complaint or lawsuit with the authorities (table 30).

Those that did file a complaint were most likely (66.1%) to do so with the agency employing the police officer(s) involved in the force incident. Few (3.7%) citizens who took formal action filed a police use of force complaint with their local prosecutor's office.

## Appendix

**Appendix table. Survey respondents who said they experienced force or threat of force, by gender, race/ethnicity, age, and size of jurisdiction where respondents resided, 1999**

Demographic characteristic	All survey respondents	Persons with police contact	Number of persons with force <sup>a</sup>
Total persons	80,543	16,424	138
Gender			
Male	36,378	8,229	115
Female	44,165	8,195	23
Race/ethnicity			
White	60,294	13,031	85
Black	8,282	1,492	27
Hispanic	8,556	1,382	23
Other race	3,411	519	3
Age			
16-19	4,733	1,338	36
20-29	12,432	3,545	51
30-39	16,555	3,934	27
40-49	16,456	3,626	15
50-59	12,233	2,163	4
60 or older	18,134	1,818	5
Size of jurisdiction where resided			
Under 100,000	59,520	12,488	90
100,000-499,999	11,725	2,351	22
500,000-999,999	3,366	677	6
1 million or more	5,932	908	20

<sup>a</sup>Question: "On (this/the most recent occasion), did the police officer(s) for any reason use or threaten to use physical force against you, such as grabbing you or threatening to hit you?"

### Appendix I. Related background publications and current grants

The publications that follow are, in whole or in part, related to police use of force and are among those generated by research supported by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) or BJS either through grants to outside researchers or through studies by in-house staff.

Alpert, Geoffrey P. *Police Pursuit: Policies and Training*. Research in Brief. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ, May 1997. NCJ 164831. (The related 60-minute videotape: Alpert, Geoffrey P. *Police in Pursuit: Policy and Practice*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ. NCJ 161836.)

—. *Helicopters in Pursuit Operations*. Research in Action. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ, August 1998. NCJ 171695.

Bir, Cynthia A. *The Evaluation of Blunt Ballistic Impacts of the Thorax*. Ph.D. dissertation. Wayne State University, 2000.

Edwards, Steven M., John Granfield, and Jamie Onnen. *Evaluation of Pepper Spray*. Research in Brief. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ, March 1997. NCJ 162358.

Fridell, Lorie A., and Antony M. Pate. "Death on Patrol: Killings of American Law Enforcement Officers." *In Critical Issues in Policing: Contemporary Readings*, eds. Geoffrey P. Alpert and Roger G. Dunham. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1997.

Garner, Joel; John Buchanan; Tom Schade; and John Hepburn. *Understanding the Use of Force By and Against the Police*. Research in Brief. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ, November 1996. NCJ 158614. (The related 60-minute videotape: Garner, Joel H. *Use of Force By and Against Police*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ. NCJ 159739.)

Geller, William A., and Hans Toch, eds. *And Justice for All: Understanding and Controlling Police Abuse of Force*. Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, 1995.

Greenfeld, Lawrence A., Patrick A. Langan, and Steven K. Smith. *Police Use of Force: Collection of National Data*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, BJS and NIJ, November 1997. NCJ 165040.

Jefferis, Eric S.; Robert J. Kaminski; Steven Holmes; and Dena Hanley. "The Effect of a Videotaped Arrest on Public Perceptions of Police Use of Force." *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 25(5)(1997).

Kaminski, Robert J., and Eric S. Jefferis. "The Effect of a Violent Televised Arrest on Public Perceptions of the Police: A Partial Test of Easton's Theoretical Framework." *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 21(4)(1998).

Kaminski, Robert J. and Jeffrey Martin. "An Analysis of Police Officer Satisfaction with Defense and Control Tactics." *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 23(2)(2000).

Kaminski, Robert J.; Steven M. Edwards; and James W. Johnson. "The Deterrent Effects of Oleoresin Capsicum on Assaults Against Police: Testing the Velcro-Effect Hypothesis." *Police Quarterly*, 1(2)(1998).

—. "Assessing the Incapacitative Effects of Pepper Spray During Resistive Encounters With Police." *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 22(1)(1999).

Mastrofski, Stephen D.; Roger B. Parks; Albert J. Reiss, Jr.; Robert E. Worden; Christina DeJong; Jeffrey B. Snipes; and William Terrill. *Systematic Observation of Public Police: Applying Field Research Methods to Policy Issues*. Research Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ, December 1998. NCJ 172859.

McEwen, Tom. *National Data Collection on Police Use of Force*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, BJS and NIJ, April 1996. NCJ 160113.

NIJ. *Oleoresin Capsicum: Pepper Spray as a Force Alternative*. Technology Assessment Program. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ, March 1994.

—. *Preliminary Investigation of Oleoresin Capsicum*. Law Enforcement and Corrections Standards and Testing Program. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ, April 1995. NIJ Report 100-95.

—. *Positional Asphyxia — Sudden Death*. National Law Enforcement Technology Center Bulletin. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ, June 1995.

—. *High Speed Pursuit: New Technologies Around the Corner*. National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center Bulletin. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ, October 1996.

—. *Pursuit Management Task Force*. Research Preview. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, August 1998. FS 000225.

NIJ and BJS. *Use of Force By Police: Overview of National and Local Data*. Research Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, October 1999. NCJ 176330.

Pate, Antony M., and Lorie A. Fridell, with Edwin E. Hamilton. *Police Use of Force: Official Reports, Citizen Complaints, and Legal Consequences*. Vols. I and II. Washington, DC: Police Foundation, 1993.

Pinizzotto, Anthony J.; Edward F. Davis; and Charles E. Miller III. *In the Line of Fire: Violence Against Law Enforcement*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, FBI and NIJ, October 1997.

Scrivner, Ellen M. *The Role of Police Psychology in Controlling Excessive Force*. Research Report. Washington, DC: NIJ, 1994. NCJ 146206.

—. *Controlling Police Use of Force: The Role of the Police Psychologist*. Research in Brief. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ, 1994. NCJ 150063.

#### **Current NIJ-supported grants for research**

*The Impact of OC Spray on Respiratory Function in the Sitting and Prone Maximal Restraint Positions*, Grant #98-IJ-CX-0079

*Curbing Police Brutality: A Reanalysis of Citizen Complaints at the Organizational Level*, Grant #98-IJ-CX-0064

*Responding to the Problem Police Officer: An Evaluation of Early Warning Systems*, Grant #98-IJ-CX-0002

*An Analysis of Police Use-of-Force Data*, Grant #95-IJ-CX-0104

*A Multi-Method Study of Police Special Weapons and Tactics Teams*, Grant #2000-IJ-CX-0003

*Applicability of Non-Lethal Weapons Technology in Schools*, Grant #99-9226-VA-IJ

*North Carolina Highway Traffic Study* (on racial profiling, but includes use of force), Grant #99-MU-CX-0022

*Use of Force by the Montgomery County Police Department, 1992-1998*, Grant #98-IJ-CX-0086

*The Phoenix Project: Predictors of Suspect Use of Force*, Grant #98-IJ-CX-0071

*The Force Factor: Measuring Police Use of Force Relative to Suspect Resistance*, Grant #98-IJ-CX-0018

*Impact Munitions Data Base of Use and Effects*, Grant #98-LB-VX-K006

*Police Response to Officer-Involved Shootings*, Grant #97-IJ-CX-0029

*An Evaluation of Oleoresin Capsicum (O.C.) Use by Law Enforcement Agencies: Impact on Injuries to Officers and Suspects*, Grant #97-LB-VX-K018

*Understanding the Use of Force by and against the Police*, Grant #95-IJ-CX-0066