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Contacts between Police and the Public, 2005

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An estimated 19% of U.S. residents age 16 or older had a face-to-face contact with a police officer in 2005, a decrease from 21% of residents who had contact with police in 2002. Contact between police and the public was more common among males, whites, and younger residents. Overall, about 9 out of 10 persons who had contact with police in 2005 felt the police acted properly.

Of the 43.5 million persons who had face-to-face contact with police in 2005, 29% had more than one contact. The most common reason for contact with police in both 2002 and 2005 involved a driver in a traffic stop. Other frequent reasons for contact included reporting a crime to police or being involved in a traffic accident.

Reason for contact	Percent of all contacts	
	2002	2005
Traffic-related contacts	53%	56%
Driver during traffic stop	37	41
Passenger during traffic stop	3	3
Traffic accident	13	12
Reported problem to police	26	24
Other reasons	21	20

Nearly 18 million persons — or 41% of all contacts in 2005 — indicated that their most recent contact with police was as a driver in a traffic stop. This represented about 8.8% of drivers in the United States, a percentage unchanged from 2002. Stopped drivers reported speeding as the most common reason for being pulled over in 2005. Approximately 86% of stopped drivers felt they were pulled over for a legitimate reason.

In both 2002 and 2005, white, black, and Hispanic drivers were stopped by police at similar rates, while blacks and Hispanics were more likely than whites to be searched by police. About 5% of all stopped drivers were searched by

White, black, and Hispanic drivers were stopped by police at similar rates; blacks and Hispanics were searched by police at higher rates than whites

Race/Hispanic origin of resident	Percent of drivers stopped by police		Percent of stopped drivers searched by police	
	2002	2005	2002	2005
Total	8.8%	8.8%	5.0%	4.8%
White	8.8	8.9	3.5	3.6
Black/African American	9.2	8.1	10.2	9.5
Hispanic/Latino	8.6	8.9	11.4	8.8

police during a traffic stop. Police found evidence of criminal wrong-doing (such as drugs, illegal weapons, or other evidence of a possible crime) in 11.6% of searches in 2005.

Police issued tickets to more than half of all stopped drivers and arrested about 2.4% of drivers. Male drivers were 3 times more likely than female drivers to be arrested, and black drivers were twice as likely as white drivers to be arrested. Drivers stopped for speeding (71%) or for a seat-belt violation (74%) were more likely to be ticketed than drivers stopped for other reasons, such as an illegal turn or lane change (58%), a record check (34%), or a vehicle defect (32%).

Of the 43.5 million persons who had contact with police in 2005, an estimated 1.6% had force used or threatened against them during their most recent contact, a rate relatively unchanged from 2002 (1.5%). In both 2002 and 2005, blacks and Hispanics experienced police use of force at higher rates than whites. Of persons who had force used against them in 2005, an estimated 83% felt the force was excessive.

These findings are based on the Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS), which documents contacts between police and the public age 16 or older, including details about the most recent contact during the year.

Face-to-face contacts with police were more common among males, whites, and younger residents

Males (21.1%) were more likely than females (17.2%) to have contact with police in 2005 (table 1). Whites (20.2%) experienced contact with police officers at higher rates than blacks (16.5%) and Hispanics (15.8%). These differences are consistent with findings from the 2002 PPCS.

Whites made up 71% of the U.S. population age 16 or older but 76% of persons who had a police contact in 2005. Black residents age 16 or older made up about the same percentage of persons having police contact (10%) as their percentage of the U.S. population in 2005 (11%).

In general, younger persons had higher rates of contact with police than older persons. Persons ages 18 to 24 had the highest percentage of contact with police (29.3%) in 2005, while persons 65 or older had the lowest (8.3%). The 2002 survey also found that younger residents were more likely than older residents to have contact with police.

Table 1. Percent of U.S. population who had contact with police in 2002 and 2005, by demographic characteristics

Characteristic of resident	Percent of U.S. population age 16 or older who had contact with police	
	2002	2005
Total	21.0%	19.1%
Gender		
Male	23.0%	21.1%
Female	19.2	17.2
Race/Hispanic origin		
White ^a	22.1%	20.2%
Black/African American ^a	19.3	16.5
Hispanic/Latino	17.5	15.8
Other ^{a,b}	16.2	15.2
Two or more races ^a	--	27.6
Age		
16-17	20.8%	20.8%
18-24	31.7	29.3
25-34	25.2	23.2
35-44	23.1	20.4
45-54	20.3	19.0
55-64	15.6	14.5
65 or older	9.7	8.3
Estimated number	45,278,880	43,537,370

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding. See *Methodology* for the distribution of the number of police contacts and the U.S. population.

--Not available. See *Methodology* for more information.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic origin.

^bIncludes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

Among persons age 16 or older with at least one face-to-face police contact in 2005, the average age was 39. Half of all residents who had police contact were under 37 (not shown in table).

43.5 million residents had at least one contact with police in 2005

In 2005, 43.5 million persons had at least one contact with police. An estimated 71.5% had just one contact, 17.5% had two contacts, and the remaining 11% had 3 or more contacts with police in 2005 (table 2). The total number of contacts was 71.1 million, with an average of 1.6 face-to-face contacts per resident.

Teenagers and young adults were twice as likely as older residents to have multiple contacts with police. An estimated 20% of persons age 55 or older who had contact with police reported having more than one contact in 2005 (not shown in table). By comparison, nearly 40% of persons age 16 to 24 who had contact with police indicated that they had multiple contacts.

Table 2. Number of contacts between police and the public in 2005, by demographic characteristics

Characteristic of resident	Total number of contacts (in millions)	Percent who had contact with police —			Average number of contacts per resident
		1 time	2 times	3 times or more	
Total	71.1	71.5%	17.5	11.0	1.6
Gender					
Male	39.2	70.0%	17.7	12.3	1.7
Female	32.0	73.3%	17.2	9.5	1.6
Race/Hispanic origin					
White ^a	52.6	71.7%	17.3	11.0	1.6
Black/African American ^a	8.6	70.1%	17.7	12.2	2.0
Hispanic/Latino	6.5	70.7%	18.4	10.9	1.6
Other ^{a,b}	2.5	75.4%	16.8	7.9	1.4
Two or more races ^a	1.0	60.6%	21.4	18.0	2.0
Age					
16-17	4.2	67.4%	17.6	15.0	2.4
18-24	15.6	60.2%	22.3	17.5	1.9
25-34	14.6	72.5%	16.7	10.8	1.6
35-44	14.3	73.4%	17.4	9.2	1.6
45-54	12.3	73.2%	17.2	9.6	1.5
55-64	6.3	77.8%	14.2	8.0	1.4
65 or older	3.9	83.2%	11.8	5.1	1.4

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

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic origin.

^bIncludes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

The most common reason for contact with police was a traffic stop

Survey respondents who had face-to-face contact with police were asked to describe the nature of the contact. Respondents who had more than one contact with police were asked to describe only their most recent contact. In both 2002 and 2005, more than half of the contacts with police were the result of a traffic stop or accident (table 3).

The most common reason for contact was as a driver during a traffic stop, accounting for about 4 out of 10 contacts. Traffic accidents accounted for an additional 13% of all contacts in 2002 and 2005. The second most frequent reason for contact with police was to report a crime or problem, accounting for about 1 in every 4 contacts.

Reason for most recent contact	U.S. population age 16 or older who had contact with police	
	2002	2005
Total	100%	100%
Traffic-related contacts	52.8%	56.3%
Driver during traffic stop	37.1	40.9
Passenger during traffic stop	2.7	2.9
Traffic accident	13.0	12.5
Other contacts	47.2%	43.7%
Person reported crime/problem to police	26.4	23.7
Police provided assistance or service	7.2	6.2
Police investigating crime	5.8	5.6
Person suspected of wrong-doing by police	2.6	2.8
Other reason*	5.3	5.3
Estimated number	45,278,880	43,537,370

Note: Data were based on the most recent contact with police in 2005. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.
*Includes a small percentage of cases in which the reason for contact was unknown.

Reason for most recent contact	Percent who felt police acted properly during the contact, by race/Hispanic origin			
	Total ^a	White ^b	Black/African American ^b	Hispanic/Latino
Total	90.4%	91.6%	82.2%	87.9%
Traffic accident	95.6	95.6	95.3	96.8
Police provided assistance or service	95.5	96.1	96.0	91.8
Person reported crime or problem to police	92.8	93.4	87.9	92.2
Driver during traffic stop	90.4	91.7	83.7	87.5
Police investigating crime/ person suspected of wrong-doing	76.4	79.7	55.3	73.4

^aInclude persons identifying with other races and two or more races.
^bExcludes persons of Hispanic origin.

Of persons who had contact with police in 2005, 60% indicated their most recent contact was initiated by the police. The remaining 40% were self-initiated (not shown in table).

A majority of residents felt the police acted properly during face-to-face contact

Of persons who had contact with the police in 2005, about 9 in 10 felt the officer or officers behaved properly (table 4). Blacks (82.2%) were less likely than whites (91.6%) to feel the police acted properly during a contact. Racial differences in opinion about police behavior were not found across all types of contacts. No differences were found in the percentages of whites and blacks who felt the police behaved properly when helping with a traffic accident or providing assistance, such as giving directions. Blacks were less likely than whites to believe law enforcement acted properly during traffic stops and contacts occurring because police were investigating a crime or suspected the person of wrong-doing.

The likelihood of being stopped by police did not change from 2002 to 2005

An estimated 17.8 million persons age 16 or older indicated that their most recent contact with police in 2005 was as a driver pulled over in a traffic stop (table 5). These drivers represented 8.8% of the Nation's 203 million drivers. Of persons who had more than one contact that year and

Characteristic of stopped driver	Drivers stopped by police during most recent contact			
	Number (in millions)		Percent	
	2002	2005	2002	2005
Total	16.8	17.8	8.8%	8.8%
Gender				
Male	10.2	11.0	10.6%	10.8%
Female	6.6	6.9	6.9	6.8
Race/Hispanic origin				
White ^a	12.8	13.4	8.8%	8.9%
Black/African American ^a	1.9	1.6	9.2	8.1
Hispanic/Latino	1.6	1.8	8.6	8.9
Other ^{a,b}	0.5	0.8	7.1	8.1
Two or more races ^a	--	0.2	--	12.4
Age				
16-19	1.7	1.5	13.7%	13.2%
20-29	4.7	5.0	14.1	13.7
30-39	3.7	3.8	9.8	10.1
40-49	3.2	3.7	7.8	8.8
50-59	2.1	2.4	6.8	6.8
60 or older	1.4	1.4	3.8	3.6

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding. See *Methodology* for distribution of U.S. driving population.
^aExcludes persons of Hispanic origin.
^bIncludes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.
--Not available. See *Methodology* for more information.

whose most recent contact was not a traffic stop, an estimated 3 million additional drivers were stopped by police in 2005. The resulting estimated total number of drivers stopped by police at least once in 2005 was 21 million (or about 1 in 10 of the Nation's drivers).

Overall, the likelihood of being stopped by police in 2002 and 2005 was about the same. In both years, male drivers were pulled over at higher rates than female drivers, and younger drivers were more likely than their older counterparts to be stopped. Also consistent from 2002 to 2005, white, black, and Hispanic drivers were stopped by police at similar rates.

Speeding was the reason for more than half of all traffic stops

When surveyed drivers were asked what reason the officer gave for the traffic stop, the most frequent reason was speeding, cited by more than half (53.3%) of stopped drivers (table 6). An additional 10.7% of drivers indicated they were stopped for a record check of some sort, such as a check of driver's license, insurance coverage, or vehicle registration. Drivers were also stopped for vehicle defects,

such as a burned out headlight or a loud muffler (9.6%), violations of stop sign or stop light (7.2%), an illegal turn or lane change (5.7%), and seatbelt violations (4.7%). An estimated 2.2% of stopped drivers indicated they were pulled over during a roadside check for drunk drivers.

Table 6. Reasons police gave drivers for pulling them over in 2005

Reason for traffic stop	Percent of stopped drivers
Total	100%
Speeding	53.3%
Vehicle defect	9.6
Record check	10.7
Roadside check for drunk drivers	2.2
Seatbelt violation	4.7
Illegal turn or lane change	5.7
Stop sign/light violation	7.2
Other traffic violation	2.6
Other	3.9

Note: Detail may not add to total because of rounding. Table excludes 2% of stopped drivers who said police had not given a reason for the stop.

Most stopped drivers (86%) felt they had been stopped for a legitimate reason

While the majority of stopped drivers felt police had a legitimate reason for stopping them, driver opinion was not consistent across racial/ethnic categories. White (87.6%) and Hispanic drivers (85.1%) were more likely than black drivers (76.8%) to feel the stop was legitimate.

Driver opinion also varied depending on the reason for the traffic stop. A smaller percentage of black drivers stopped because of a vehicle defect (66.5%) or a record

check (72.2%) felt they were stopped for a legitimate reason compared to white drivers pulled over for the same reasons (90.5% and 91.8%, respectively).

Opinions about the legitimacy of the traffic stop were relatively uniform among white, black, and Hispanic drivers when the reason for the stop was a roadside check for drunk drivers, a seatbelt violation, or an illegal turn or lane change.

Reason for traffic stop	Percent of stopped drivers who felt police stopped them for a legitimate reason, by race/Hispanic origin			
	Total ^a	White ^b	Black/AfricanAmerican ^b	Hispanic/Latino
All reasons	86.2%	87.6%	76.8%	85.1%
Speeding	90.8	91.5	86.3	89.0
Vehicle defect	85.7	90.5	66.5	85.5
Record check	88.6	91.8	72.2	85.4
Roadside check for drunk drivers	81.2	80.3	77.5 ^c	100.0 ^c
Seatbelt violation	84.2	84.0	87.0	82.0
Illegal turn or lane change	81.5	80.5	81.8	83.8
Stop sign/light violation	74.2	77.1	56.8	72.3

^aIncludes persons identifying with other races and two or more races, not shown separately.

^bExcludes persons of Hispanic origin.

^cEstimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Police issued tickets to more than half of stopped drivers

As part of the 2005 survey, drivers were asked about the types of actions police took in order to resolve the traffic stop. Drivers were asked whether they were:

- given a verbal warning, the least serious type of police action resulting from a traffic stop
- issued a written warning, a more serious type of action than a verbal warning
- ticketed, the second most serious type of police action
- arrested, the most serious type of action police could take to resolve the traffic stop.

Of the 17.8 million drivers stopped by police in 2005, 17.7% reported that a verbal warning was the most serious action taken by police during the traffic stop (table 7). An additional 9.1% indicated that receiving a written warning was the most serious action taken.

Of the four types of action police could take to resolve the traffic stop, being ticketed was the most common, reported by 57.4% of stopped drivers. An estimated 2.4% of drivers reported being arrested. For approximately 13.5% of stopped drivers, no enforcement action was taken, meaning they did not receive a verbal or written warning nor were they ticketed or arrested.

The type of action taken by police varied depending on the reason police gave for making the traffic stop. Drivers stopped for a vehicle defect (14.9%) were more likely than speeders (10.1%) to receive a written warning. Speeders (71.1%) and drivers pulled over for a seatbelt violation (74.3%) had the greatest likelihood of receiving a ticket from police. Drivers stopped during a roadside check for drunk drivers (16.4%) were more likely to be arrested than drivers stopped for other reasons. Overall, the majority of drivers stopped during a roadside check (67.8%) indicated that no enforcement action was taken by police.

Table 7. Enforcement actions taken by police during traffic stops in 2005, by the reason for being stopped

Reason for traffic stop	Percent of drivers who were —					
	Total	Arrested	Ticketed	Issued a written warning	Given a verbal warning	No enforcement action was taken
All reasons	100%	2.4	57.4	9.1	17.7	13.5
Speeding	100%	1.1	71.1	10.1	15.0	2.8
Vehicle defect	100%	3.5	32.2	14.9	35.0	14.4
Record check	100%	1.9*	34.1	6.6	12.8	44.5
Roadside check for drunk drivers	100%	16.4	7.9*	--	7.8*	67.8
Seatbelt violation	100%	--	74.3	2.3*	10.9	12.4
Illegal turn or lane change	100%	1.9*	57.9	8.1	22.7	9.4
Stop sign/light violation	100%	2.0*	57.9	10.1	24.9	5.1
Other traffic offense	100%	7.3*	32.1	11.6	25.5	23.5
Other	100%	7.1*	28.8	2.3*	17.1	44.6

Note: Data on whether drivers were arrested, ticketed, or issued a verbal or written warning were known for 96.3% of cases. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

*Estimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

--Less than 0.5%.

Note regarding findings of apparent disparities

The data in this report are from a survey in which U.S. residents were asked about their contacts with police and what police did during those contacts. Among other things, the report documents the percentage of U.S. residents who were pulled over in a traffic stop, and the percentage who were ticketed or searched or arrested. In some cases, such percentages were found to differ between males and females, between older and younger residents, and between the different races. For example, blacks were more likely than whites to be searched during a traffic stop.

However, the apparent disparities documented in this report do not constitute proof that police treat people differently along demographic lines. Any of these disparities might be explained by countless other factors and circumstances that were not taken into account in the analysis.

Police took more serious actions during traffic stops involving males and younger drivers

Male drivers were more likely than female drivers to experience more serious police actions following a traffic stop. Males (3.2%) were nearly 3 times more likely than females (1.1%) to be arrested (table 8). Males (59.2%) were also more likely than females (54.4%) to be ticketed.

Police actions taken during a traffic stop were not uniform across racial and ethnic categories. Black drivers (4.5%) were twice as likely as white drivers (2.1%) to be arrested during a traffic stop, while Hispanic drivers (65%) were more likely than white (56.2%) or black (55.8%) drivers to receive a ticket. In addition, whites (9.7%) were more likely than Hispanics (5.9%) to receive a written warning, while whites (18.6%) were more likely than blacks (13.7%) to be verbally warned by police.

Younger drivers experienced more serious types of actions by police than older drivers:

- Drivers in their twenties (4.8%) were more likely than drivers in their thirties (1.9%) and forties (1.6%) to be arrested during a traffic stop.
- Teenage drivers (60.7%) and drivers in their twenties (58.8%) and thirties (60.8%) were more likely than drivers

in their fifties (52.4%) and drivers age 60 or older (50.4%) to be ticketed by police during a traffic stop.

More than half of searches were conducted with the consent of the driver

More than half (57.6%) of all searches conducted in 2005 were by consent. Consent searches occurred because either the officer asked permission to perform a search and the driver then granted it, or the driver told the officer he/she could conduct a search without the officer first asking for permission.

Search characteristic	Percent of drivers searched by police
Type of search	
With consent	57.6 %
Without consent	42.4
Outcome of search	
Criminal evidence found	11.6 %
No criminal evidence found	88.4
Estimated number	854,990

Note: Data on whether a stopped driver was searched by police were known for 96.3% of cases. Data on whether consent was given and whether evidence was found were known for 92.1% of searched drivers. Number of drivers searched was imputed to account for this missing data.

Table 8. Enforcement actions taken by police during traffic stops in 2005, by demographic characteristics

Characteristic of stopped driver	Percent of drivers who were —					
	Total	Arrested	Ticketed	Issued a written warning	Given a verbal warning	No enforcement action was taken
Total	100%	2.4	57.4	9.1	17.7	13.5
Gender						
Male	100%	3.2	59.2	7.6	16.5	13.4
Female	100%	1.1	54.4	11.4	19.5	13.5
Race/Hispanic origin						
White ^a	100%	2.1	56.2	9.7	18.6	13.4
Black/African American ^a	100%	4.5	55.8	8.4	13.7	17.6
Hispanic/Latino	100%	3.1	65.0	5.9	14.5	11.6
Other ^{a,b}	100%	1.9 ^c	63.6	7.0	16.0	11.5
Age						
16-19	100%	2.2 ^c	60.7	8.7	19.2	9.2
20-29	100%	4.8	58.8	8.1	18.0	10.4
30-39	100%	1.9	60.8	8.1	15.3	13.9
40-49	100%	1.6	56.4	10.0	17.6	14.5
50-59	100%	1.3 ^c	52.4	9.7	19.0	17.5
60 or older	100%	--	50.4	12.2	19.2	18.2

Note: Total includes estimates for persons identifying with two or more races, not shown separately. Data on whether drivers were arrested, ticketed, or issued a verbal or written warning were known for 96.3% of cases. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

--Less than 0.5%.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic origin.

^bIncludes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

^cEstimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

The remaining 42.4% of searches occurred without the consent of the driver. Searches conducted without consent may occur because: 1) the police officer had not asked permission before conducting the search; 2) the officer had asked but the driver refused; or 3) the search was conducted pursuant to an arrest.

About 1 in 10 searches during a traffic stop uncovered evidence of a possible crime

In 11.6% of searches conducted during a traffic stop in 2005, police found drugs, an illegal weapon, open containers of alcohol, or other illegal items. Consent and nonconsent searches turned up evidence of criminal wrong-doing at similar rates.

Rate of police use of force during a traffic stop remained stable from 2002 to 2005

Stopped drivers were asked whether, in their opinion, police had used or threatened to use force against them during the traffic stop. An estimated 0.8% of the 17.8 million persons whose most recent contact with police in 2005 was as a driver in a traffic stop indicated police used or threatened to use force against them (not shown in table). In 2002, the percentage was 1.1%.

Percent of persons experiencing force during a police contact was about the same in 2002 and 2005

All persons who had contact with police, whether as a driver in a traffic stop or for some other reason, were asked if the police officer(s) used or threatened to use physical force against them during the contact. The survey did not define force for the respondent. If persons reported more than one contact that year, they were asked if police used or threatened force against them during just their most recent contact.

An estimated 707,520 persons age 16 or older had force used against them during their most recent contact with police in 2005 (table 9).^{*} This estimate is about 1.6% of the 43.5 million people reporting face-to-face police contact during 2005. The percentage of contacts involving police use of force was relatively unchanged from 2002 to 2005.

In the 2005 PPCS all persons were asked if the police used or threatened to use force against them at any time during the year. An estimated 991,930 persons reported that they experienced force or the threat of force by police at least once in 2005.

^{*}In the report "use of force" includes threat of force unless otherwise indicated.

The likelihood of being searched during a traffic stop was unchanged between 2002 and 2005

In both 2002 and 2005, about 5% of stopped drivers were searched by police during the traffic stop. The 5% includes searches of the vehicle only, the driver only, and both the vehicle and the driver.

In both years, male drivers were more likely than female drivers to be searched by police during a traffic stop.

In 2005 black (9.5%) and Hispanic (8.8%) motorists stopped by police were searched at higher rates than whites (3.6%). The likelihood of experiencing a search did not change for whites, blacks, or Hispanics from 2002 to 2005.

Drivers under the age of 30 (8.4%) had a greater likelihood than drivers age 30 or older (2.7%) of being frisked or having their vehicle searched. In 2005 drivers in the two youngest age categories — teenage drivers (9.5%) and drivers in their twenties (8.1%) — were more likely than drivers in their thirties (3.3%), forties (3.3%), and fifties (2.3%) to experience some type of search.

Due to sample size limitations, analysis could not be done on the likelihood of being searched by the reason for the traffic stop and gender, race, and age differences. See Appendix for more information on sample size on the BJS web site at <www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cpp05.htm>.

Characteristic of stopped driver	Percent of stopped drivers searched by police	
	2002	2005
Total	5.0%	4.8%
Gender		
Male	7.1%	6.8%
Female	1.8	1.6
Race/Hispanic origin		
White ^a	3.5%	3.6%
Black/African American ^a	10.2	9.5
Hispanic/Latino	11.4	8.8
Other ^{a,b}	2.9 ^c	4.6 ^c
Age		
16-19	8.9%	9.5%
20-29	6.6	8.1
30-39	6.4	3.3
40-49	3.4	3.3
50-59	1.5	2.3
60 or older	--	--

Note: Total includes drivers of two or more races, not shown separately.

--Less than 0.5%.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic origin.

^bIncludes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

^cEstimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Among residents who experienced force, 83% felt it was excessive

Most (82.9%) of the 707,520 people experiencing force in 2005 felt the force used by police was excessive. Whites (84.3%) involved in force incidents were not more likely than blacks (81.5%) to feel the force was excessive. Among Hispanics who had force used against them, 85.6% felt it was excessive. The differences between estimates for whites, blacks, and Hispanics were not statistically significant.

Race/Hispanic origin of resident	Among persons who experienced force, those who felt it was excessive	
	Estimated number	Percent
Total	586,610	82.9%
White*	338,380	84.3
Black/African American*	151,720	81.5
Hispanic/Latino	83,160	85.6

Note: Data on whether resident felt force was excessive were reported for 88.9% of the 707,520 cases of police use of force. Number experiencing excessive force was imputed to account for this missing data. Total includes estimates for persons identifying with other races and two or more races, not shown separately.

*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

Table 9. Number and percent of contacts with police in which force was used in 2002 and 2005, by demographic characteristics

Characteristic of resident	Contacts with police in which force was used			
	Number		Percent	
	2002	2005	2002	2005
Total	664,460	707,520	1.5%	1.6%
Gender				
Male	520,180	512,350	2.2%	2.2%
Female	144,280	195,170	0.7	1.0
Race/Hispanic origin				
White ^a	373,850	401,610	1.1%	1.2%
Black or African American ^a	172,660	186,060	3.5	4.4
Hispanic/Latino	102,670	97,190	2.5	2.3
Other ^{a,b}	15,280 ^c	3,350 ^c	1.1 ^c	/
Two or more races ^a	--	19,310 ^c	--	4.0 ^c
Age				
16-19	152,120	158,960	3.5%	3.8%
20-29	230,030	267,990	2.1	2.5
30-39	116,770	137,590	1.2	1.6
40-49	95,290	67,300	1.0	0.7
50-59	49,720	39,930	0.8	0.7
60 or older	20,540 ^c	35,740	/	0.8

Note: Table is based on the resident's most recent contact with police in 2005. Use of force includes threat of force. Detail may not sum to total because of rounding. See *Methodology* for distribution of U.S. population who had contact with police.

--Not available. See *Methodology* for more information.

/^cLess than 0.5%.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic origin.

^bIncludes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

^cEstimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Overall, 14.8% of persons who experienced force were injured during the incident (not shown in table).

The majority (86.9%) of persons involved in police use of force incidents in 2005 felt the police acted improperly (not shown in table). Of those who felt the police acted improperly, 13.1% said they filed a complaint against the police.

Male, black, and younger residents more likely to experience force

The differences found among gender, race, and age groups who experienced force in 2005 were consistent with the 2002 PPCS. Among the persons who had police contact in 2005, females (1.0%) were less likely than males (2.2%) to have had contact with police that resulted in force (table 9). Males accounted for a larger percentage (72.4%) of contacts involving force compared to their percentage of all contacts (53.6%) (table 10).

Blacks (4.4%) and Hispanics (2.3%) were more likely than whites (1.2%) to experience use of force during contact with police in 2005. Blacks accounted for 1 out of 10 contacts with police but 1 out of 4 contacts where force was used.

Persons age 16 to 29 (2.8%) who had contact with police were more likely than those over age 29 (1.0%) to have had force used against them. Persons age 16 to 29 made up a smaller percentage of persons who had a police contact (34.5%) compared to the percentage of persons experiencing force during a contact (60.3%). The median age of those experiencing force was 26.

About 80% of contacts involving force were initiated by police

Persons whose contact was police-initiated (such as a traffic stop) were more likely than those whose contact was not initiated by the police (such as asking police for assistance) to experience police use of force (2.2% versus 0.8%) (not shown in table). Police-initiated contacts were 60.4% of the 43.5 million contacts in 2005, but 81.4% of the 707,520 contacts involving police use of force (table 11).

Persons whom police suspected of criminal wrongdoing or who had contact through a criminal investigation represented a relatively large percentage of the 707,520 force incidents, as compared to their representation of all persons with contact in 2005. Residents suspected of criminal wrongdoing by police accounted for a percentage of the force incidents (23.9%) that was nearly 9 times higher than their portion of all contacts (2.8%) (tables 3 and 11). Persons whose contact occurred because of a criminal investigation accounted for a percentage of force incidents (21.3%), almost 4 times higher than their percentage of all contacts (5.6%).

Table 10. Demographic characteristics of persons who had a police contact in which force was used in 2005

Characteristic of resident	Percent of persons who had contact with police in 2005	
	Total	Contacts in which force was used
Total	100%	100%
Gender		
Male	53.6%	72.4%
Female	46.4	27.6
Race/Hispanic origin		
White ^a	75.7%	56.8%
Black/African American ^a	9.7	26.3
Hispanic/Latino	9.5	13.7
Other ^{a,b}	4.0	--
Two or more races ^a	1.1	2.7 ^c
Age		
16-29	34.5%	60.3%
30 or older	65.5	39.7
Estimated number	43,537,370	707,520

--Less than 0.5%.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic origin.

^bIncludes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

^cEstimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Table 11. Type of and reason for contact with police in which force was used in 2005

	Percent of contacts with police in which force was used
Total	100%
Type of contact	
Police-initiated	81.4%
Not police-initiated ^a	18.6
Reason for contact	
Traffic-related contacts	30.8%
Driver during traffic stop	20.2
Passenger during traffic stop	3.5 ^c
Traffic accident	7.1
Other contacts	69.2%
Person reported crime/problem to police	5.6
Police provided assistance or service	0.9 ^c
Police investigating crime	21.3
Person suspected of wrong-doing by police	23.9
Other reason ^b	17.5
Estimated number	707,520

Note: Data on the type of contact were reported for 98.7% of the 707,520 cases. Use of force includes threat of force. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

^aIncludes contact initiated by the survey respondent or someone other than the police, such as a family member or acquaintance.

^bIncludes a small percentage of cases in which the reason for contact was not specified.

^cEstimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Over half of police use of force incidents involved physical force

Residents who experienced force were asked to describe the type of force used. Among the estimated 707,520 persons who reported that the police used force against them:

- 55% indicated the police actually used some type of physical force, such as pushing, pointing a gun, or using chemical spray (table 12)
- 27.5% reported force was threatened but not actually employed
- 10.1% indicated the officer(s) shouted or cursed at them but did not use or threaten physical force.

An estimated 16.8% of persons experiencing force reported that they did something to provoke the officer to use force, such as threatening the police or resisting arrest (table 13).

About half of persons who had force used against them were searched by police

In 2005 more than half (54.1%) of those who had force used against them by police were searched either before or after the force occurred. Blacks (53.4%) were not more likely than whites (48.5%) to be searched during contacts that involved force. Hispanics (71.9%) were more likely than whites (48.5%) but not more likely than blacks (53.4%) to be searched during contacts involving force. About 8% of persons who experienced force reported that police found

illegal items (such as drugs, an open alcohol container, or a weapon) during the contact (not in a table).

About a third of force incidents resulted in arrest

About 3 in 10 persons who had force used or threatened against them in 2005 were arrested during the incident. Less than half (41.2%) of persons experiencing force were handcuffed during the incident. The higher percentage of persons handcuffed versus arrested during force incidents may be an indication that police use handcuffs to detain people during contact and release them without making an arrest.

Methodology

The 2005 Police-Public Contact Survey was conducted for the Bureau of Justice Statistics during the last 6 months of 2005 by the U.S. Census Bureau as a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The NCVS sample consisted of 80,237 individuals age 16 or older. About 20% of the NCVS sample, or 16,294 individuals, were excluded from the 2005 PPCS as noninterviews or as proxy interviews.

Noninterviews (14,757) included respondents not available for the interview, those who refused to participate, and non-English speaking respondents. (Unlike NCVS interviews, PPCS interviews are only conducted in English). The remainder (1,537) were proxy interviews. A proxy interview may be conducted when a person is unable for physical,

mental, or other reasons to participate. BJS staff determined that proxy interviewees would have difficulty describing the details of any contacts between police and the sampled respondent and decided to exclude them.

In total, the PPCS interviewed 63,943 persons, which represents an 80% response rate among eligible individuals (compared to an overall response rate of 87% for the NCVS). Among the PPCS interviews, 23,761 (37%) were conducted in person and 40,182 (63%) by telephone. The

Table 12. Type of force used or threatened by police in 2005

Type of force used or threatened by police	Percent of contacts with police in which force was used or threatened
Total	100%
Police actually used force^a	55.0%
Pushed or grabbed	43.4
Kicked or hit	8.6
Sprayed chemical/pepper spray	3.4 ^b
Pointed gun	15.2
Used other force	10.0
Police threatened to use force	27.5%
Shouted or cursed at by police	10.1%
Type of force used or threatened was not reported	7.4%
Estimated number	707,520

^aDetail sums to more than 55% because some respondents reported more than one type of actual force.

^bEstimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Table 13. Characteristics of contacts with police in which force was used in 2005, by race/Hispanic origin

Characteristic of contact involving force	Total	Race/Hispanic origin of resident		
		White ^a	Black/African American ^a	Hispanic/Latino
Searched the resident	54.1%	48.5%	53.4%	71.9%
Handcuffed the resident	41.2	36.9	40.9	50.0
Arrested the resident	31.7	30.9	27.1	37.8 ^b
Actions of resident may have caused police to use force	16.8	19.0	11.7 ^b	17.0 ^b
Estimated number	707,520	401,610	186,060	97,190

Note: Use of force includes threat of force. Data on whether resident was searched were reported for 84%; handcuffed for 91.5%; arrested for 91.5%; caused force for 82.4%. Total includes estimates for persons identifying with other races and two or more races, not shown separately.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic origin.

^bEstimate is based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

PPCS sample in 2005, after adjustment for nonresponse, was weighted to produce a national estimate of 228,040,117 persons age 16 or older.

Data collection

Respondents in the 2005 Police-Public Contact Survey were directly interviewed to determine how many had a face-to-face contact with police during the previous 12 months. Data on the number and nature of face-to-face contacts with police were based solely on the personal accounts of these PPCS respondents. Official police records on contacts between police and the public were not used.

Statistical significance

In comparisons indicated in the text, an explicit or implied difference indicates a test of significance was conducted, and the difference was significant at the .05 level. Certain differences were not significant at the .05 level but were significant at the .10 level. The terms "somewhat," "some indication" or "slightly" refer to differences significant at the .10 level. The report also indicates that some comparisons were not different, meaning the difference between the two estimates was not significant at either the .05 or .10 levels.

Standard errors for the percent of drivers stopped by police (table 5) and the percent of persons who experienced force (table 9) by demographic characteristics are provided on page 11. See Appendix for other tables available on the BJS web site at <www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cpp05.htm>.

Racial designations

In 1997 the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) introduced new guidelines for the collection and reporting of race and ethnicity data in government surveys. These methodological changes were implemented for all demographic surveys as of January 1, 2003. Individuals after that date were allowed to choose more than one racial category. In prior years individuals were asked to select a single primary race.

In 2005 the racial categories changed from previous Police-Public Contact Surveys to separately identify residents of two or more races. Racial categories presented in this report now consist of the following: white only, black only, other race only (American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander if only one of these races is given), and two or more races (all persons of any race indicating two or more races). Because about 0.7% of survey respondents identified two or more races, the impact on the rates of police contact for each race is relatively small.

Prior to 2003, individuals were also asked whether they were of Hispanic origin before being asked about their race. In 2005 respondents were asked directly if they were Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino. Individuals who indicated they

Methodology table 1. Number of drivers, persons with face-to-face police contact, and total residents age 16 or older in the United States in 2002 and 2005, by demographic characteristics

Characteristic of resident	U.S. population age 16 or older							
	Total		Contact with police		Driving population ^a		Drivers stopped by police ^b	
	2002	2005	2002	2005	2002	2005	2002	2005
Total	215,536,780	228,040,120	45,278,880	43,537,370	191,735,660	202,539,650	16,783,470	17,825,140
Gender								
Male	103,988,720	110,498,160	23,884,650	23,357,090	95,983,080	101,376,040	10,210,450	10,960,100
Female	111,548,060	117,541,950	21,394,230	20,180,280	95,752,580	101,163,600	6,573,020	6,865,040
Race/Hispanic origin								
White ^c	157,373,710	162,918,330	34,743,450	32,936,290	146,203,930	150,874,020	12,842,250	13,402,680
Black/African American ^c	25,694,070	25,541,550	4,966,390	4,208,490	20,118,090	20,114,980	1,852,090	1,630,770
Hispanic/Latino	23,955,180	26,253,090	4,191,710	4,155,970	18,470,530	20,621,580	1,595,870	1,839,140
Other ^{c,d}	8,513,810	11,592,850	1,377,330	1,757,780	6,943,110	9,454,880	493,260	769,350
Two or more races ^c	--	1,734,290	--	478,850	--	1,474,190	--	183,210
Age								
16-17	8,258,250	8,461,880	1,720,200	1,758,120	5,411,470	5,287,950	487,200	564,310
18-19	8,003,620	8,033,220	2,594,030	2,464,910	6,624,080	6,429,550	1,166,360	978,740
20-24	19,385,230	20,358,200	6,074,820	5,862,590	17,241,050	17,837,370	2,707,710	2,627,730
25-29	17,745,200	20,056,000	4,842,870	4,944,100	16,187,490	18,356,260	1,999,670	2,339,880
30-34	19,564,860	19,631,620	4,573,910	4,274,200	18,204,140	18,317,640	1,765,380	1,928,370
35-39	21,108,220	20,756,790	5,171,390	4,251,700	19,828,440	19,360,090	1,976,040	1,858,570
40-44	23,048,580	22,523,710	5,024,130	4,562,340	21,664,780	21,189,570	1,737,810	1,887,940
45-49	21,111,000	22,464,790	4,470,580	4,548,960	19,795,430	21,109,740	1,497,270	1,817,490
50-54	18,156,610	20,055,130	3,515,570	3,515,110	16,933,350	18,640,620	1,214,760	1,333,630
55-59	14,751,340	17,514,180	2,491,260	2,624,900	13,574,900	16,341,140	859,630	1,059,650
60-64	11,253,810	13,004,310	1,577,380	1,806,400	10,273,390	11,831,210	599,060	686,640
65 or older	33,150,060	35,180,300	3,222,740	2,924,030	25,997,130	27,838,500	772,580	742,200

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

^aIncludes licensed and unlicensed drivers who operate a motor vehicle a few times a year or more.

^bIncludes stops of all types of motor vehicles — for example, motorcycles, buses, and private and commercial cars and trucks — and both personal and business travel.

^cExcludes persons of Hispanic origin.

^dIncludes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

--Not available. See racial designation section for more information.

are of Hispanic origin are categorized under the heading Hispanic or Latino.

Comparing estimates from previous Police-Public Contact Surveys

The Police-Public Contact Survey has been conducted four times: 1996, 1999, 2002, and 2005. In this report, comparisons are exclusively between estimates from the 2002 and the 2005 surveys. See the Appendix for information on the reasons for limiting comparisons to these two years available on the BJS web site at <www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cpp05.htm>.

Methodology table 2. Estimate of 1 standard error for percentages in tables 5 and 9

Characteristic of resident	Percent of drivers stopped by police		Percent of contacts with police in which force was used	
	2002	2005	2002	2005
Total	0.20%	0.20%	0.10%	0.16%
Gender				
Male	0.26%	0.28%	0.18%	0.25%
Female	0.20	0.19	0.09	0.15
Race/Hispanic origin				
White	0.22%	0.22%	0.10%	0.16%
Black/African American	0.42	0.48	0.56	0.69
Hispanic/Latino	0.43	0.45	0.41	0.49
Other	0.49	0.61	0.50	0.19
Two or more races	--	1.66	--	2.69
Age				
16-19	0.71%	0.77%	0.55%	0.68%
20-29	0.39	0.51	0.26	0.44
30-39	0.32	0.41	0.22	0.28
40-49	0.28	0.32	0.19	0.21
50-59	0.34	0.28	0.25	0.18
60 or older	0.18	0.21	0.15	0.22

--Not available. See racial designation section for more information.



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Other BJS reports on police-public contacts

Each of the following publications is available on the BJS website.

Police Use of Force: Collection of National Data, November 1997; <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/puof.htm>>

Contacts between Police and the Public: Findings from the 1999 National Survey, February 2001; <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cpp99.htm>>

Characteristics of Drivers Stopped by Police, 1999, March 2002; <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cdsp99.htm>>

Contacts between Police and the Public: Findings from the 2002 National Survey, April 2005; <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cpp02.htm>>

Characteristics of Drivers Stopped by Police, 2002, June 2006; <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cdsp02.htm>>

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Jeffrey L. Sedgwick is the Director.

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This report in portable document format and in ASCII and its related statistical data and tables are available at the BJS World Wide Web Internet site:
<<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cpp05.htm>>

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Comparing estimates from previous Police-Public Contact Surveys

There are several reasons for limiting comparisons to findings from the 2002 and 2005 surveys. Changes were made to the data collection instrument following the 1999 survey to reduce the overall response burden to survey participants. These changes affected estimates of the reason for contact with police, in particular the number of drivers stopped. In 1999, respondents were asked whether they had been a driver stopped by police at any time during the previous 12 months. Any respondent who had been pulled over in a traffic stop was then included in the count of the number of drivers stopped by police, regardless of whether the traffic stop was their most recent contact with police.

In 2002 and 2005, the survey was changed so that respondents were asked only about their most recent contact with police during the previous 12 months. Respondents whose most recent face-to-face contact was not a traffic stop, but who had been pulled over by police earlier in the year, were not included in the count of the number of drivers stopped. Due to this change in the survey, the estimated number of drivers stopped by police was smaller in 2002 and 2005

than in 1999. Estimates of the characteristics of drivers stopped by police, such as the percentage of drivers searched or the reasons drivers were stopped, were unaffected by these changes, and remain comparable between 1999, 2002, and 2005.

Following the 1999 survey, the measurement of the number of drivers in the United States was modified and the estimate of the likelihood of being stopped by police in 1999 is not directly comparable to estimates in 2002 and 2005. The denominator used to calculate the likelihood of being stopped by police was "licensed drivers" in 1999, as estimated by the U.S. Department of Transportation's 1995 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey. In 2002 and 2005 the denominator was "drivers in the United States," as estimated directly from responses to additional questions included in the 2002 and the 2005 Police-Public Contact Surveys. The denominator change was made to account for all persons who drive, licensed and not licensed, to better approximate the number of persons at risk of being stopped by police. Excluded from the new denominator were licensed drivers who indicated that they never drive.

Appendix table 1. Number of survey respondents in the 2005 Police-Public Contact Survey, by demographic characteristics

Characteristic of resident	All survey respondents	Persons with police contact	Persons against whom force was used	Drivers stopped by police	Stopped drivers searched by police
Total persons	63,943	11,843	166	4,744	189
Gender					
Male	29,125	5,972	116	2,759	160
Female	34,818	5,871	50	1,985	29
Race/Hispanic origin					
White ^a	46,068	9,054	94	3,582	109
Black/African American ^a	6,859	1,076	44	410	31
Hispanic/Latino	7,327	1,135	24	505	37
Other ^{a,b}	3,238	462	1	201	8
Two or more races ^a	451	116	3	46	4
Age					
16-19	3,522	903	33	335	24
20-29	9,431	2,504	55	1,140	83
30-39	11,463	2,398	33	1,026	32
40-49	13,290	2,683	20	1,070	34
50-59	11,340	1,868	13	721	15
60 or older	14,897	1,487	12	452	1

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic origin.

^bIncludes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

Appendix table 2. Estimate of 1 standard error for percentages in table 1

Characteristic of resident	Percent of U.S. population age 16 or older who had contact with police	
	2002	2005
Total	0.37%	0.33%
Gender		
Male	0.45%	0.41%
Female	0.38	0.34
Race/Hispanic origin		
White	0.45%	0.38%
Black/African American	0.58	0.64
Hispanic/Latino	0.57	0.57
Other	0.69	0.77
Two or more races	--	2.72
Age		
16-17	0.94%	1.08%
18-24	0.74	0.93
25-34	0.48	0.58
45-44	0.54	0.47
45-54	0.51	0.42
55-64	0.57	0.43
65 or older	0.35	0.31

-- Not available. See racial designation section for more information.

Appendix table 3. Estimate of 1 standard error for percentages in table on page 7

Characteristic of resident	Percent of stopped drivers searched by police	
	2002	2005
Total	0.35%	0.34%
Gender		
Male	0.53%	0.54%
Female	0.28	0.32
Race/Hispanic origin		
White	0.32%	0.38%
Black/African American	1.52	1.75
Hispanic/Latino	1.27	1.42
Other	1.31	1.64
Age		
16-19	1.44%	1.84%
20-29	0.75	0.95
30-39	0.72	0.59
40-49	0.62	0.57
50-59	0.46	0.62
60 or older	--	0.23

-- No case in the sample.