



Bureau of Justice Statistics Fact Sheet

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Traffic Stop Data Collection Policies for State Police, 2004

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As of October 2004, 29 of the Nation's 49 State law enforcement agencies whose primary duties include highway patrol required their traffic patrol officers to record motorists' race or ethnicity during traffic stops. Twenty-two State agencies required officers to record race or ethnicity data for all officer initiated stops, and seven in more limited circumstances.

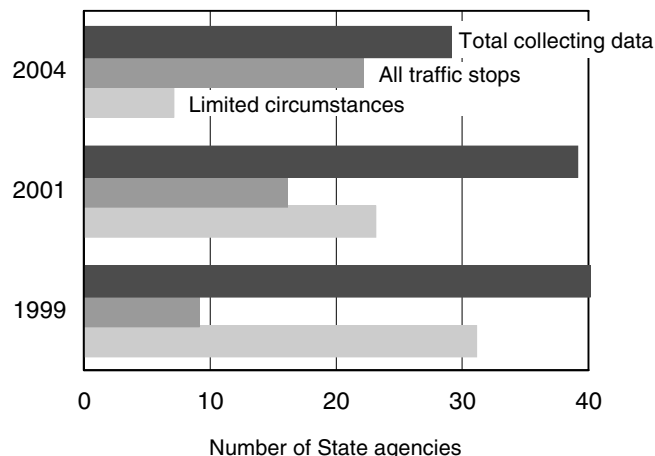
The 22 State police agencies collecting race or ethnicity data for all traffic stops represent an increase of 6 States since 2001 and 13 States since 1999.* Among the 20 agencies that did not require traffic patrol officers to collect race or ethnicity data in 2004, 14 agencies previously reported collection of race or ethnicity data in 2001.

In addition to traffic patrol units, 12 of the 29 State agencies reported that specialized units (such as investigative units) were also required to collect race or ethnicity data.

State policies for collecting racial data during traffic stops

As of October 2004, 29 of the 49 State police agencies with patrol duties required officers to collect the race or

In 2004, 22 State police agencies required their officers to collect race or ethnicity data for all traffic stops, an increase of 6 agencies since 2001 and 13 agencies since 1999



ethnicity of drivers under the following traffic stop-related scenarios:

All officer initiated traffic stops — 22 agencies collected the arrestee's race or ethnicity.

Traffic citation — 18 States recorded the race or ethnicity of the driver during stops in which a traffic citation was issued.

Arrest from a traffic stop — 17 agencies collected the arrestee's race or ethnicity.

Search of vehicle or occupant — 14 State police agencies collected the driver's race or ethnicity if a search was conducted.

Use-of-force encounter during traffic stop — 13 State agencies collected the motorist's race or ethnicity when force was used during the stop.

Reactive traffic stops — 8 State agencies collected the motorist's race or ethnicity during reactive stops (for

*See *Traffic Stop Data Collection Policies for State Police, 1999* (NCJ 180776) and *Traffic Stop Data Collection Policies for State Police, 2001* (NCJ 191158).

example, in response to an accident or DUI check point) (table 2).

Mandate for data collection

In some cases State law enforcement agencies have been mandated to implement their data collection practices by State law or Federal consent decree, while other data collection policies were enacted because of an internal State police policy.

Of the 22 State police agencies with procedures that require the collection of race or ethnicity data for each stop, 7 agencies responded to a State law or Executive Order, 6 implemented an internal policy, 4 responded to both a State law or Executive Order and an internal policy, and 1 (California) collected data voluntarily in response to a court action.

One agency (Maryland) responded to both a State law or Executive Order and consent decree, 1 (New Jersey) was acting in accordance with both internal police agency policy and a Federal consent decree, and 1 (Rhode Island) collected data in response to both a State law or Executive Order and a court action.

Among the seven State police agencies that required the collection of race or ethnicity data on some, but not all, stops, most (5) did so as part of an internal police policy and/or State law or executive order. The remaining two agencies collected race or ethnicity data on a voluntary basis.

Collection of additional data items

For those State police agencies which were required to collect race or ethnicity data at least under some circumstances, other data elements were also frequently collected (table 1).

In addition to race or ethnicity data, half or more of the State police agencies required law enforcement officers to record one or more of the following: the identity of the officer; the gender of the motorist; the type of enforcement action taken; and the date, time, and location of the traffic stop.

Data collection format

The most common format to collect race or ethnicity of motorists, used by 24 agencies, was the paper-based form filled out by the officer at the scene. Sixteen agencies used paper forms only, six used paper forms and electronic means (laptop computers, mobile data terminals, or other on-line methods), and two used paper forms and verbal transmission via radio.

A total of 10 State agencies used laptop computers, mobile data terminals (MDT), or other on-line methods to collect race/ethnicity data. Three of the agencies used electronic methods exclusively.

Five agencies reported that they verbally relayed the information to a radio communication dispatch. One agency used radio exclusively.

Two agencies reported the use of mounted video surveillance in conjunction with other methods.

Eighteen agencies in 2004 reported the use of a standardized collection form for data on race or ethnicity of motorists stopped.

Determination of race or ethnicity

Most agencies (27) relied on their officers' observation of the driver's race or ethnicity as the method of determining the race or ethnicity of the motorist. Officer observation was the exclusive method in 15 State agencies.

Twelve agencies also used information on motorist race or ethnicity from the State Bureau of Motor Vehicles or equivalent agency. This method was used exclusively by two agencies.

Table 1. Agencies that required the collection of information in addition to the driver's race or ethnicity, 2004

Data item	Number of States collecting data
Type of enforcement action taken	27
Gender of motorist	26
Date, time, and location of stop	24
Identity of officers involved in stop	24
Initial reason for the stop	23
Search conducted	23
Age of motorist	21
License number of vehicle stopped	21
Residency of motorist	17
Description of vehicle stopped	16
Use of force	11

Eleven agencies also used information provided orally by the motorist. None of the State agencies used this method alone.

Nine of the State agencies used all three sources (officer observation, motorist self identification, and Bureau of Motor Vehicle data) to determine the driver's race or ethnicity.

Accessibility of the data on race or ethnicity

Among the 29 State police agencies that collected race or ethnicity information on at least some kinds of traffic-related stops, almost all (26) stored these data electronically. Ten stored the data using only electronic means, and 16 used both electronic and paper-based storage. Three agencies used paper storage only.

Seventeen agencies that collected race or ethnicity data linked their traffic stop data to other law enforcement information systems such as dispatch information, citations, officer logs, or bureau of motor vehicle records.

The Racial Profiling Data Collection Resource Center at Northeastern University

In June 2001, the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), awarded a grant to Northeastern University to create a web-based Racial Profiling Data Collection Resource Center. The website is designed to be a central clearinghouse for police agencies, legislators, researchers, and others to access information about current data collection efforts, legislation and model policies, and methods for collecting and analyzing data. The website can be found at the following URL:

<www.racialprofilinganalysis.neu.edu>

Twenty-two of the 29 State police agencies that collected race or ethnicity data under at least some traffic stop circumstances, made their data available to the public. Nine agencies published reports based on the data.

Six agencies made their data available on the Internet. Nine agencies reported that the data were only made available to the public upon request.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Lawrence A. Greenfeld is Director.

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Table 2. Circumstances during traffic stops in which State police agencies required troopers to collect race or ethnicity data about motorists, by State, 2004

	Officer-initiated stops	Reactive traffic stops	Stops resulting in citation	Stops resulting in arrest	Vehicle or occupant searches	Officer use of force	No stops
Alabama	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Alaska							■
Arizona	■						
Arkansas							■
California	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Colorado							■
Connecticut	■						
Delaware	■		■	■	■	■	
Florida	■						
Georgia							■
Idaho							■
Illinois	■						
Indiana	■		■	■		■	
Iowa							■
Kansas							■
Kentucky							■
Louisiana							■
Maine			■	■			
Maryland	■						
Massachusetts			■	■	■		
Michigan	■						
Minnesota							■
Mississippi	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Missouri	■		■	■	■	■	
Montana			■	■	■	■	
Nebraska	■						
Nevada							■
New Hampshire							■
New Jersey	■	■	■	■	■	■	
New Mexico							■
New York							■
North Carolina	■						
North Dakota							■
Ohio	■						
Oklahoma							■
Oregon	■						
Pennsylvania	■		■	■	■		
Rhode Island	■	■	■	■	■	■	
South Carolina			■	■	■	■	
South Dakota							■
Tennessee			■	■			
Texas	■	■	■	■	■		
Utah			■				
Vermont							■
Virginia		■	■	■	■	■	
Washington	■	■	■	■	■	■	
West Virginia	■						
Wisconsin							■
Wyoming							■
Total	22	8	18	17	14	13	20

Note: Hawaii and the District of Columbia do not have a formal State police agency.