



# Contacts between Police and the Public, 2008

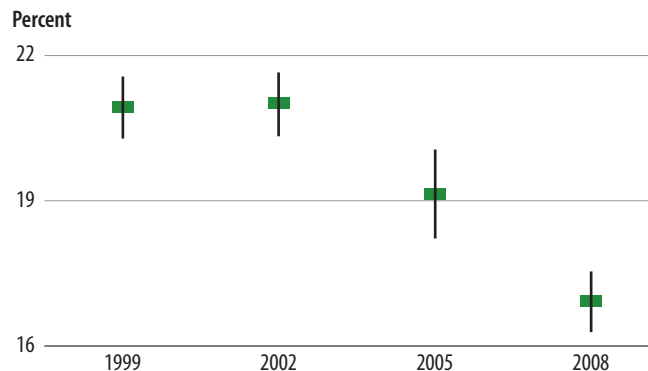
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In 2008, an estimated 16.9% of U.S. residents age 16 or older had face-to-face contact with police. This was a decline from the 19.1% of U.S. residents who reported having contact with police in 2005 and a decrease from the 21% who experienced contact with police in 1999 and 2002 (figure 1).

Between 2002 and 2008, about 5.3 million fewer residents had face-to-face contact with police, down to an estimated 40.0 million from 45.3 million. Among persons who had a face-to-face contact with police in 2008, about 1 out of 4 had more than one contact during the year. The public most commonly came into contact with police when driving a vehicle that was pulled over in a traffic stop. Other frequent reasons for contact with police included reporting a crime to police or being involved in a traffic accident.

The findings described in this report are based on the Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS) that the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) periodically uses to interview all persons age 16 or older in a nationally representative sample of households about their contacts with police during the previous 12 months. The PPCS is a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey. This report summarizes data from the 2008 PPCS and compares findings to the 2002 and 2005 surveys.

**FIGURE 1**  
Percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older who had face-to-face contact with police, 1999–2008



Note: Lines above and below data points represent 95% confidence intervals. The percentage scale along the vertical axis has been adjusted to more clearly reveal the change over time.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older who had face-to-face contact with police declined from 2002 (21.0%) to 2005 (19.1%) and declined again in 2008 (16.9%).
- An estimated 9 out of 10 residents who had contact with police in 2008 felt the police acted properly.
- The most common reason for contact with police in 2008 was being a driver in a traffic stop (44.1%).
- White (8.4%), black (8.8%), and Hispanic (9.1%) drivers were stopped by police at similar rates in 2008.
- Male drivers (9.9%) were stopped at higher rates than female drivers (7.0%).
- In 2008 about 5% of traffic stops led to a search. Police were more likely to search male drivers than female drivers.
- Black drivers were about three times as likely as white drivers and about two times as likely as Hispanic drivers to be searched during a traffic stop.
- During traffic stops in 2008, about 57.7% of searches of the driver only and 60.0% of searches of the vehicle only were conducted with the driver's consent.
- About 36.1% of drivers who were only physically searched and 20.7% of drivers who only had their vehicle searched believed police had a legitimate reason to do so.
- Among persons who had contact with police in 2008, an estimated 1.4% had force used or threatened against them during their most recent contact, which was not statistically different from the percentages in 2002 (1.5%) and 2005 (1.6%).
- A majority of the people who had force used or threatened against them said they felt it was excessive.

**Police-Public Contact Survey interviewed U.S. households about their face-to-face interactions with law enforcement officers**

BJS conducted a pilot test of the PPCS in 1996 as a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The 1996 survey was administered to determine whether the NCVS could serve as a useful method for collecting data on contacts between U.S. residents and the police and to obtain preliminary estimates on this topic. The pilot survey revealed that about 21% of the public experienced face-to-face contact with a police officer at least once during 1996. Survey findings helped to inform the development of an improved questionnaire. In addition to the pilot study, a panel of law enforcement experts reviewed and provided recommendations on the survey procedures and questionnaire.

A revised version of the PPCS was fielded in 1999 among a national sample nearly 15 times as large as the 1996 pilot sample. The 1999 survey included a more detailed set of questions about traffic stops by police, which was the most frequent reason for contact with police. The 1999 survey yielded estimates similar to those in the 1996 survey on the prevalence and nature of contacts between the public and the police.

Since 1999, the PPCS has been administered every 3 years (in 2002, 2005, and 2008) as a supplement to the NCVS. During the survey, U.S. residents age 16 or older were asked whether they had a face-to-face interaction with a law enforcement officer during the 12 months prior to their interview. Survey respondents who said they had face-to-face contact with police were asked to describe the nature and outcome of that contact. Persons who reported more than one instance of face-to-face contact during the year were asked to describe the most recent occurrence.

Contact with police excluded contact by telephone or written correspondence, contact with private security guards, social contact, or contact that occurred because of employment or volunteer work that brought the respondent into regular contact with police. In addition, members of the household who were living in an institution at the time of the interview—for instance, incarcerated persons—were excluded from the PPCS sample. Such exclusions may affect the findings because contact with police leading to incarceration would involve more serious outcomes.

This report summarizes the results of the 2008 PPCS and provides comparative analysis with findings from the surveys conducted in 2002 and 2005. (See *Methodology* for information on the reasons for limiting certain comparisons to these 3 years.) The findings are based solely on the personal accounts of the PPCS respondents. Official police records on contacts between police and the public were not used in the study. Data collected and described in the

report cannot provide a sufficient basis to infer a causal relationship between characteristics of the respondent and police behavior.

In comparisons described in the text, an explicit or implied difference indicates that BJS conducted tests of statistical significance, and the difference was significant at the 95% confidence level or above. Certain differences were not significant at or above the 95% level, but were significant at the 90% confidence level. The terms “somewhat,” “some indication,” “some evidence,” or “slightly” refer to differences significant at the 90% level. (See *Methodology* for more information on confidence intervals and statistical significance tests.)

**Number of persons who had contact with police declined between 2002 and 2008**

In 1999, an estimated 20.9% of U.S. residents age 16 or older experienced face-to-face contact at least once with a police officer. About the same percentage of contact between police and residents (21.0%) occurred in 2002. About 19.1% of residents had face-to-face contact with police in 2005, a decrease from the percentage who had police contact in 2002. In 2008, the percentage of residents who experienced contact with police further decreased to 16.9%.

Overall, about 5.3 million fewer residents had face-to-face contact with police during 2008, compared to the total number who had contact in 2002 (table 1). An estimated 45.3 million residents age 16 or older had police contact in 2002, while about 40.0 million had contact with the police in 2008.

**TABLE 1**  
**Number of U.S. residents age 16 or older who had contact with police, by reason for contact, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Reason for most recent contact	Number (in thousands)			Difference in contacts, 2002–2008	
	2002	2005	2008	Number (in thousands)	Percent change
<b>Total</b>	45,279	43,658	40,015	-5,264	-11.6%
<b>Traffic-related contacts</b>	23,894	24,621	23,708	-186	-0.8%
Driver during traffic stop	16,783	17,920	17,663	880	5.2
Passenger during traffic stop	1,218	1,238	1,146	-72	-5.9
Traffic accident	5,892	5,463	4,898	-993	-16.9
<b>Other contacts</b>	21,385	19,037	16,307	-5,078	-23.7%
Resident reported crime/problem to police	11,960	10,356	8,345	-3,615	-30.2
Police provided assistance or service	3,265	2,720	2,506	-758	-23.2
Police investigating crime	2,615	2,430	2,257	-359	-13.7
Police suspected resident of wrongdoing	1,158	1,231	1,014	-144	-12.4
Other reason*	2,388	2,299	2,185	-203	-8.5

Note: Data are based on the resident’s most recent contact with police in 2002, 2005, and 2008. See appendix table 1 for standard errors. Detail may not sum to total because of rounding.

\*Includes a small percentage of cases in which the reason for contact was unknown.

While the second most common reason for contact with police during this period continued to be reporting a crime or problem, the percentage of all contacts that occurred for this reason decreased from 26.4% in 2002 to 23.7% in 2005 and 20.9% in 2008 (table 2). Nearly 12 million residents said their most recent contact in 2002 was to report a crime or problem to police, compared to about 8.3 million (or 30.2% fewer) residents in 2008. The decline in these contacts accounted for about 3.6 million (69%) of the 5.3 million fewer contacts residents had in 2008 compared to 2002. The drop in the number of residents reporting crimes or other problems to police was consistent with findings from the NCVS that showed a decline in criminal victimization during this period. Between 1999 and 2008, the violent crime rate declined by 41%, and the property crime rate fell by 32%.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Criminal Victimization, 2008*, NCJ 227777, September 2009 (<http://www.bjs.gov>).

**TABLE 2**  
Reason for contact among U.S. residents age 16 or older who had contact with police, 2002, 2005, and 2008

Reason for most recent contact	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>Traffic-related contacts</b>	52.8%	56.4%	59.2%
Driver during traffic stop	37.1	41.0	44.1
Passenger during traffic stop	2.7	2.8	2.9
Traffic accident	13.0	12.5	12.2
<b>Other contacts</b>	47.3%	43.6%	40.8%
Resident reported crime/problem to police	26.4	23.7	20.9
Police provided assistance or service	7.2	6.2	6.3
Police investigating crime	5.8	5.6	5.6
Police suspected resident of wrongdoing	2.6	2.8	2.5
Other reason*	5.3	5.3	5.5
<b>Number of residents with police contact (in thousands)</b>	45,279	43,658	40,015

Note: Data are based on the resident's most recent contact with police in 2002, 2005, and 2008. See appendix table 2 for standard errors. Detail may not sum to total because of rounding.

\*Includes a small percentage of cases in which the reason for contact was unknown.

In 2002, 2005, and 2008, more than half of residents reported that their most recent contact with police was the result of a traffic stop or accident. The most common reason for police contact all 3 years was a person driving a vehicle that police stopped. Overall, the portion of all contacts that occurred as the result of being a driver in a traffic stop increased from 37.1% in 2002 to 41.0% in 2005 and 44.1% in 2008.

Among residents age 16 or older in 2002, the rate of contact that occurred to report a crime or other problem was 5.5% (table 3). This rate decreased to 3.5% in 2008. The rate of contact with police for being a person driving a vehicle that police stopped was 7.8% in 2002 and 7.5% in 2008. The difference between these percentages was not statistically significant.

**TABLE 3**  
Percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older who had contact with police, by reason for contact, 2002, 2005, and 2008

Reason for most recent contact	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	21.0%	19.1%	16.9%
<b>Traffic-related contacts</b>	11.1%	10.8%	10.0%
Driver during traffic stop	7.8	7.9	7.5
Passenger during traffic stop	0.6	0.5	0.5
Traffic accident	2.7	2.4	2.1
<b>Other contacts</b>	9.9%	8.3%	6.9%
Resident reported crime/problem to police	5.5	4.5	3.5
Police provided assistance or service	1.5	1.2	1.1
Police investigating crime	1.2	1.1	1.0
Police suspected resident of wrongdoing	0.5	0.5	0.4
Other reason*	1.1	1.0	0.9
<b>Number of residents age 16 or older (in thousands)</b>	215,537	228,085	236,512

Note: Data are based on the resident's most recent contact with police in 2002, 2005, and 2008. See appendix table 3 for standard errors. Detail may not sum to total because of rounding.

\*Includes a small percentage of cases in which the reason for contact was unknown.

Overall, there was no discernable statistical difference between the number of persons whose most recent contact was as a driver in a traffic stop in 2002 (16.8 million) and 2008 (17.7 million) (table 4). While the difference between the number of male drivers stopped by police in 2002 and 2008 was not statistically significant, the number of female drivers stopped by police increased nearly 12% during this period. The number of white and black drivers stopped by police during their most recent contact did not increase between 2002 and 2008. Among Hispanic drivers, the number of residents stopped by police increased nearly 28%.

A decline in the number of persons whose most recent contact with police was to report a crime or other problem between 2002 and 2008 was found among both males and females. White, black, and Hispanic residents also experienced a drop in the number of face-to-face contacts that occurred from reporting a crime or problem during this period.

**TABLE 4**  
**Number of U.S. residents age 16 or older who had contact with police, by demographic characteristics and reason for contact, 2002 and 2008**

Demographic characteristic	Driver during traffic stop				Resident reported crime/problem to police			
	Number (in thousands)		Difference in contacts, 2002–2008		Number (in thousands)		Difference in contacts, 2002–2008	
	2002	2008	Number (in thousands)	Percent change	2002	2008	Number (in thousands)	Percent change
<b>Total</b>	16,783	17,663	880	5.2%	11,960	8,345	-3,615	-30.2%
<b>Sex</b>								
Male	10,210	10,330	119	1.2%	5,232	3,665	-1,567	-29.9%
Female	6,573	7,333	760	11.6	6,727	4,679	-2,048	-30.4
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>								
White <sup>a</sup>	12,842	12,933	91	0.7%	9,202	6,379	-2,823	-30.7%
Black/African American <sup>a</sup>	1,852	1,845	-8	-0.4	1,347	713	-634	-47.1
Hispanic/Latino	1,596	2,038	442	27.7	1,072	837	-234	-21.9
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	493	710	217	44.0	339	314	-25	-7.4
Two or more races <sup>a</sup>	~	137	~	~	~	102	~	~
<b>Age</b>								
16–17	487	331	-156	-32.1%	292	182	-110	-37.6%
18–24	3,874	3,547	-327	-8.5	1,449	1,122	-327	-22.6
25–34	3,765	4,122	357	9.5	2,466	1,597	-869	-35.2
35–44	3,714	3,620	-94	-2.5	3,050	1,665	-1,385	-45.4
45–54	2,712	3,042	330	12.2	2,457	1,792	-665	-27.1
55–64	1,459	1,978	520	35.6	1,142	1,209	68	5.9
65 or older	773	1,024	251	32.5	1,104	777	-327	-29.6

Note: Data are based on residents whose most recent contact with police in 2002 or 2008 occurred as the result of being a driver in a traffic stop or reporting a crime or problem.

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of two or more races.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

<sup>b</sup>Includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

## Males had contact with police at higher rates than females

The percentage of males experiencing face-to-face contact with police was higher than the percentage of females in 2008 (table 5). Among residents age 16 or older, persons ages 18 to 24 experienced the highest percentage of police contact in 2008. White residents experienced a higher rate of contact with police than black and Hispanic residents in 2008. These differences were consistent with findings from the 2002 and 2005 surveys.

In 2005 the racial categories changed from previous years of the PPCS to separately identify persons of other races (American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders) and those of any race indicating two or more races. In 2005 and 2008, the PPCS found that whites were more likely than Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders to have contact with police. Whites did not have a higher rate of police contact than American Indians and Alaskan Natives in 2005 or in 2008.

Similar patterns were found in the demographic composition of persons who had contact with police in 2002, 2005, and 2008. Males accounted for just over half of all persons who had contact with police during these three years (table 6). White residents made up about three-quarters of contacts, and black residents made up about 1 out of 10 persons who had police contact. Hispanic residents also accounted for about 1 out of 10 persons who had contact with police in 2002, 2005, and 2008.

**TABLE 5**

**Percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older who had contact with police, by demographic characteristics, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Demographic characteristic	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	21.0%	19.1%	16.9%
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	23.0%	21.2%	18.5%
Female	19.2	17.2	15.5
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>			
White*	22.1%	20.3%	17.8%
Black/African American*	19.3	16.5	14.2
Hispanic/Latino	17.5	15.8	15.0
Other*	16.2	15.3	14.0
American Indian/Alaskan Native*	~	25.7	22.1
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*	~	14.4	13.0
Two or more races*	~	27.4	21.0
<b>Age</b>			
16–17	20.8%	20.7%	13.2%
18–24	31.7	29.5	24.9
25–34	25.2	23.2	21.2
35–44	23.1	20.5	18.8
45–54	20.3	19.0	16.7
55–64	15.6	14.6	13.4
65 or older	9.7	8.4	8.2
<b>Number of residents age 16 or older (in thousands)</b>	215,537	228,085	236,512

Note: See *Methodology* for the distribution of the number of police contacts and the U.S. population. See appendix table 5 for standard errors.

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of other races or those of two or more races.

\*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

**TABLE 6**

**Characteristics of U.S. residents age 16 or older with and without face-to-face police contact, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Demographic characteristic	With police contact			Without police contact		
	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	52.8%	53.6%	53.1%	47.0%	47.2%	47.7%
Female	47.2	46.4	46.9	53.0	52.8	52.3
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>						
White <sup>a</sup>	76.7%	75.7%	74.9%	72.0%	70.6%	70.2%
Black/African American <sup>a</sup>	11.0	9.7	9.5	12.2	11.6	11.6
Hispanic/Latino	9.3	9.5	10.3	11.6	11.9	11.9
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	3.0	4.0	4.3	4.2	5.3	5.3
Two or more races <sup>a</sup>	~	1.1	1.1	~	0.7	0.8
<b>Age</b>						
16–17	3.8%	4.0%	2.8%	3.8%	3.6%	3.8%
18–24	19.1	19.2	18.2	11.0	10.9	11.2
25–34	20.8	21.1	21.7	16.4	16.5	16.4
35–44	22.5	20.3	19.8	19.9	18.7	17.4
45–54	17.6	18.5	18.5	18.4	18.7	18.8
55–64	9.0	10.2	11.4	12.9	14.1	15.0
65 or older	7.1	6.7	7.7	17.6	17.5	17.4
<b>Number of residents age 16 or older (in thousands)</b>	45,279	43,658	40,015	170,258	184,417	196,497

Note: See appendix table 6 for standard errors.

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of two or more races.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

<sup>b</sup>Includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

## About a quarter of persons with contact in 2008 had more than one contact during the year

Among persons who had face-to-face contact with police during 2008, about 1 out of 4 (25.1%) experienced contact more than once during the year (table 7). Among the 40.0 million persons who had contact with the police in 2008, nearly 67.0 million encounters occurred with an average of 1.7 contacts per resident who experienced police contact.

A greater percentage of males (26.9%) than females (23.0%) who had police contact in 2008 experienced more than one contact during the year. Among persons who had contact with police in 2008, black residents (28.4%) were somewhat more likely than white residents (24.6%) and more likely than Asian, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders (20.4%) to have multiple contacts. Persons ages 18 to 24 were more likely than older age groups to experience multiple contacts during 2008.

**TABLE 7**  
Number of contacts between police and the public, by demographic characteristics, 2008

Demographic characteristic	Percent who had contact with police—			Average number of contacts per residents who had contact in 2008
	Total	One time	Two or more times	
<b>Total</b>	100%	74.9%	25.1%	1.7
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	100%	73.1%	26.9%	1.7
Female	100%	77.0	23.0	1.6
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>				
White*	100%	75.4%	24.6%	1.7
Black/African American*	100%	71.6	28.4	1.6
Hispanic/Latino	100%	74.0	26.0	1.6
American Indian/Alaskan Native*	100%	70.0	30.0	1.4
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*	100%	79.6	20.4	1.3
Two or more races*	100%	68.8	31.2	1.7
<b>Age</b>				
16–17	100%	69.0%	31.0%	1.6
18–24	100%	67.3	32.7	1.8
25–34	100%	72.0	28.0	1.7
35–44	100%	74.7	25.3	1.7
45–54	100%	78.0	22.0	1.7
55–64	100%	81.7	18.3	1.6
65 or older	100%	86.8	13.2	1.6

Note: Among residents who had contact with police in 2008, data on the number of contacts were reported for 99.7% of cases. Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. See appendix table 7 for standard errors.

\*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

## A majority of survey respondents said they felt the police acted properly during face-to-face contact

As was the case in 2002 (90.1%) and 2005 (90.4%), the vast majority of residents (89.7%) with police contact during 2008 felt the officer or officers acted properly.<sup>2</sup> In addition, about 9 out of 10 (91.8%) residents who experienced a contact in 2008 reported that the police were respectful (table 8).

Overall, most white, black, and Hispanic residents who had contact with police felt the officer or officers acted properly. Opinions about police behavior varied across reasons for contact. For instance, persons who police suspected

<sup>2</sup>Findings come from the 2002 and 2005 Contacts between Police and the Public reports. See *Methodology*.

**TABLE 8**  
Perceptions of police behavior during contact, by reason for contact and race/Hispanic origin of residents, 2008

Reason for contact	All races <sup>a</sup>	Black/African American <sup>b</sup> Hispanic/Latino		
		White <sup>b</sup>	American <sup>b</sup>	Latino
<b>Percent of residents who felt that police acted—</b>				
<b>Respectfully</b>				
<b>All contacts</b>	91.8%	92.7%	87.4%	89.1%
Traffic accident	94.9	95.0	94.6	94.6
Driver during traffic stop	91.6	92.4	86.6	89.8
Resident reported crime/ problem to police	94.1	94.9	93.1	90.8
Police provided assistance or service	95.9	95.6	93.0	98.1
Police investigating crime/ suspected resident of wrongdoing	82.4	84.9	72.8	74.5
<b>Properly</b>				
<b>All contacts</b>	89.7%	90.8%	84.2%	87.2%
Traffic accident	92.6	92.8	91.8	93.4
Driver during traffic stop	90.4	91.7	82.9	89.1
Resident reported crime or problem to police	91.8	92.5	88.9	88.9
Police provided assistance or service	93.9	93.3	95.9	97.8
Police investigating crime/suspected resident of wrongdoing	78.5	82.3	69.6	62.3

Note: Percentages are based on most recent contact with police in 2008. Data on perceptions that police acted respectfully were reported for 98.2% of police contact cases and for perceptions that police acted properly for 98.0%. See appendix table 8 for standard errors.

<sup>a</sup>All races includes estimates for persons identifying with other races or with two or more races, not shown separately.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

of wrongdoing or who had contact through a criminal investigation (78.5%) were less likely than those who had contact with police during a traffic accident (92.6%) to feel police behaved properly. Blacks (69.6%) and Hispanics (62.3%) were less likely than whites (82.3%) to believe police acted properly during contacts that occurred because police were investigating a crime or suspected the person of wrongdoing. For those who had contact with police in the context of a traffic accident, no differences were found in the estimated percentage of whites, blacks, and Hispanics who felt the police acted properly.

### Drivers in 2008 were stopped by police at rates similar to those in 2002 and 2005

In 2008, an estimated 17.7 million persons age 16 or older indicated that their most recent contact occurred as a driver pulled over in a traffic stop (table 9). These contacts include stops of all kinds of motor vehicles—for example, motorcycles, buses, and private and commercial cars and trucks—being used for both personal and business travel.

Of the estimated 209.2 million who drove during 2008, the 17.7 million drivers stopped by police represented 8.4%—nearly 1 out of 12 drivers. An additional 1.7 million individuals were stopped by police at some point during

the 12-month period, but had experienced more recent contact in a different context. In total, an estimated 9.2% of all drivers, about 19.3 million, were stopped at least once by police in 2008.

Overall, drivers in 2008 (8.4%) were stopped by police at a rate similar to that of 2002 (8.8%) and 2005 (8.8%). A greater percentage of male drivers (9.9%) than female drivers (7.0%) were stopped by police during 2008. Drivers between the ages of 16 and 29 had a greater likelihood than other age groups of being pulled over by police. These differences were consistent with findings from the 2002 and 2005 surveys. White (8.4%), black (8.8%), and Hispanic (9.1%) drivers were stopped by police at similar rates in 2008. White, black, and Hispanic drivers were also stopped at similar rates in 2002 and 2005.

In 2008 white drivers (8.4%) were more likely than Asian, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander drivers to be stopped (6.3%), but somewhat less likely than American Indian or Alaskan Native drivers (12.6%) to be stopped by police. The likelihood of being stopped by police in 2005 did not differ significantly among white drivers (8.9%), American Indian or Alaskan Native drivers (11.9%), and Asian, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander drivers (7.9%).

**TABLE 9**  
Drivers stopped by police, by demographic characteristics, 2002, 2005, and 2008

Demographic characteristic	Number of drivers stopped by police during most recent contact (in thousands)			Percent of all U.S. drivers <sup>a</sup>		
	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	16,783	17,920	17,663	8.8%	8.8%	8.4%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	10,210	10,982	10,330	10.6%	10.8%	9.9%
Female	6,573	6,938	7,333	6.9	6.9	7.0
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>						
White <sup>b</sup>	12,842	13,510	12,933	8.8%	8.9%	8.4%
Black/African American <sup>b</sup>	1,852	1,638	1,845	9.2	8.1	8.8
Hispanic/Latino	1,596	1,815	2,038	8.6	8.9	9.1
Other <sup>b</sup>	493	773	710	7.1	8.2	7.0
American Indian/Alaskan Native <sup>b</sup>	~	98	140	~	11.9	12.6
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <sup>b</sup>	~	675	570	~	7.9	6.3
Two or more races <sup>b</sup>	~	184	137	~	12.6	7.9
<b>Age</b>						
16–19	1,654	1,561	1,299	13.7%	13.3%	11.0%
20–29	4,707	4,959	4,850	14.1	13.7	13.0
30–39	3,741	3,842	3,678	9.8	10.2	9.8
40–49	3,235	3,732	3,460	7.8	8.8	8.4
50–59	2,074	2,396	2,605	6.8	6.8	7.0
60 or older	1,372	1,431	1,772	3.8	3.6	4.1

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. See appendix table 9 for standard errors.

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of other races or those of two or more races.

<sup>a</sup>See *Methodology* for information on the U.S. driving population.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

## Speeding was the reason for about half of all traffic stops

The PPCS includes a detailed set of questions for respondents whose most recent contact with police occurred as a driver in a traffic stop. When drivers were asked what reason the officer gave for the traffic stop, the most frequent reason was exceeding the speed limit, cited by about half of drivers stopped in 2002 (54.8%), 2005 (53.7%), and 2008 (50.2%) (table 10). About 1 in 10 drivers were stopped for vehicle defects, such as a burned out headlight or a loud muffler, in 2002 (9.3%), 2005 (9.5%) and 2008 (12.0%).

## Most drivers pulled over by police believed they were stopped for a legitimate reason

An estimated 84.5% of drivers pulled over by police in 2008 felt they had been stopped for a legitimate reason (table 11). More than 80% of stopped drivers in 2002 (84%) and 2005 (86%) also believed police had a legitimate reason for pulling them over in a traffic stop.<sup>3</sup>

In 2008, about 73.8% of black drivers believed police had a legitimate reason for stopping them compared to 86.3% of white and 82.5% of Hispanic drivers. Opinions also varied across reasons for traffic stop. Overall a higher proportion of drivers stopped for speeding (90.0%) believed they were stopped for a legitimate reason compared with those stopped for a vehicle defect (82.6%). These proportions varied by race and Hispanic origin. An estimated 78.7% of black drivers stopped for speeding felt they were pulled over for a legitimate reason, compared to 88.7% of Hispanic and 91.8% of white drivers. Among traffic stops for vehicle defects, black drivers (60.7%) were less likely than Hispanic (84.3%) and white (86.8%) drivers to feel they were pulled over for a legitimate reason.

<sup>3</sup>Findings come from the 2002 and 2005 Contacts between Police and the Public reports. See *Methodology*.

## A majority of stopped drivers were issued a traffic ticket

An estimated 26.7% of stopped drivers received either a written (17.0%) or verbal (9.7%) warning during the traffic stop (table 12). Police issued a traffic ticket to 55.4% of the drivers and arrested 2.6%. No enforcement action was taken for approximately 15.3% of stopped drivers, meaning they did not receive a verbal or written warning nor were they ticketed or arrested.

Police ticketed the majority of drivers stopped for speeding (68.6%), a seat belt violation (70.3%), an illegal lane change (52.7%), or a stop light or stop sign violation (58.4%). By comparison, the majority of drivers stopped during a roadside sobriety check reported having no enforcement action taken (68.5%).

**TABLE 10**  
Reasons police gave drivers for traffic stop, 2002, 2005, and 2008

Reason for traffic stop	Percent of stopped drivers		
	2002	2005	2008
Total	100%	100%	100%
Speeding	54.8%	53.7%	50.2%
Vehicle defect	9.3	9.5	12.0
Record check	11.5	10.6	6.3
Roadside sobriety check	1.3	2.2	2.1
Seatbelt violation	4.4	4.7	4.1
Illegal turn or lane change	4.9	5.7	6.6
Stop sign/light violation	7.1	7.2	8.6
Other reason*	6.7	6.5	10.0
<b>Number (in thousands)</b>	16,234	17,254	17,151

Note: Data on reason for traffic stop in 2002 were reported for 96.9% of traffic stop cases, in 2005 for 96.3%, and in 2008 for 97.1%. Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. See appendix table 10 for standard errors.

\*Includes other reasons for traffic stops, such as reckless driving, improper cell phone usage, and following too closely.

**TABLE 11**  
Drivers' perceptions of traffic stop legitimacy, by race/Hispanic origin and reason for stop, 2008

Reason for traffic stop	Percent of drivers who perceived they were stopped for a legitimate reason			
	All races <sup>a</sup>	White <sup>b</sup>	Black/African American <sup>b</sup>	Hispanic/Latino
All reasons	84.5%	86.3%	73.8%	82.5%
Speeding	90.0%	91.8%	78.7%	88.7%
Vehicle defect	82.6	86.8	60.7	84.3
Record check	89.1	91.6	83.5	82.4
Roadside sobriety check	76.9	73.8	100.0!	78.5!
Seatbelt violation	84.7	84.7	86.6	79.0
Illegal turn or lane change	75.4	72.9	72.3	85.3
Stop sign/light violation	71.3	73.9	66.9	57.5
Other reason <sup>c</sup>	74.7	75.8	64.6	81.3
<b>Number (in thousands)</b>	16,598	12,212	1,666	1,932

Note: Data on reason for traffic stop and whether driver felt stop occurred for a legitimate reason were reported for 93.9% of traffic stop cases. All reasons includes stopped drivers who did not report the reason for the traffic stop, not shown separately. See appendix table 11 for standard errors.

! Interpret data with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

<sup>a</sup>All races includes estimates for persons identifying with other races or with two or more races, not shown separately.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

<sup>c</sup>Includes other reasons for traffic stops, such as reckless driving, improper cell phone use, and following too closely.



Police were equally likely to issue tickets to males (55.9%) and females (54.9%) during a traffic stop (table 13). Males (3.5%) were more likely than females (1.4%) to be arrested following a traffic stop, whereas females were somewhat more likely to receive a written or verbal warning.

A greater percentage of black (4.7%) than white (2.4%) drivers were arrested during a traffic stop. Black drivers (58.3%) were somewhat more likely than white drivers (53.1%) to be ticketed during a stop. An equal percentage of Hispanic (2.6%) and white (2.4%) drivers were arrested following a traffic stop, while a greater percentage of Hispanic drivers (62.9%) than white drivers (53.1%) received

a ticket. In addition, a greater percentage of white drivers (11.2%) received a verbal warning from police, compared to Hispanic (4.5%) and black (6.0%) drivers.

Drivers ages 20 to 29 were more likely than drivers age 50 or older to be ticketed by police during a traffic stop. Drivers ages 20 to 29 (4.4%) were also more likely than drivers ages 40 to 49 (1.5%), 50 to 59 (1.3%), and drivers age 60 or older (1.5%) to be arrested during a traffic stop. Due to sample size limitations, further analysis could not be done on police enforcement actions during traffic stops sorted by reason for stop and drivers' race, sex, and age demographics.

**TABLE 12**  
Enforcement actions taken by police during traffic stops, by reason for stop, 2008

Reason for traffic stop	Number (in thousands)	Percent of drivers who were—					
		Total	Arrested	Ticketed	Issued a written warning	Given a verbal warning	Allowed to proceed with no enforcement action
All reasons	17,596	100%	2.6%	55.4%	17.0%	9.7%	15.3%
Speeding	8,586	100%	1.3%	68.6%	14.4%	11.0%	4.6%
Vehicle defect	2,061	100%	3.4	36.3	28.3	14.1	17.9
Record check	1,076	100%	1.6!	23.9	8.8	4.7	61.1
Roadside sobriety check	367	100%	9.1!	14.7	5.4!	2.3!	68.5
Seatbelt violation	707	100%	1.7!	70.3	13.1	4.4!	10.5
Illegal turn or lane change	1,137	100%	4.0!	52.7	24.0	7.4	11.9
Stop sign/light violation	1,462	100%	1.4!	58.4	23.7	8.5	8.0
Other reason*	1,697	100%	6.6	40.6	18.3	9.4	25.0

Note: Data on the types of enforcement actions taken by police were reported for 99.6% of traffic stop cases. All reasons includes stopped drivers who did not report the reason for the traffic stop, not shown separately. Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. See appendix table 12 for standard errors.

! Interpret data with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

\*Includes other reasons for traffic stops, such as reckless driving, improper cell phone usage, and following too closely.

**TABLE 13**  
Enforcement actions taken by police during traffic stops, by demographic characteristics of drivers, 2008

Demographic characteristic	Number (in thousands)	Percent of drivers who were—					
		Total	Arrested	Ticketed	Issued a written warning	Given a verbal warning	Allowed to proceed with no enforcement action
<b>Total</b>	17,596	100%	2.6%	55.4%	17.0%	9.7%	15.3%
<b>Sex</b>							
Male	10,287	100%	3.5%	55.9%	16.4%	9.0%	15.3%
Female	7,309	100%	1.4	54.9	17.8	10.6	15.3
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>							
White <sup>a</sup>	12,873	100%	2.4%	53.1%	17.7%	11.2%	15.6%
Black/African American <sup>a</sup>	1,841	100%	4.7	58.3	14.8	6.0	16.2
Hispanic/Latino	2,034	100%	2.6	62.9	15.0	4.5	15.0
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	710	100%	0.9!	65.0	15.7	7.5!	10.8
Two or more races <sup>a</sup>	137	100%	4.2!	74.4	12.7!	2.4!	6.2!
<b>Age</b>							
16–19	1,294	100%	2.1%!	56.7%	21.2%	9.2%	10.7%
20–29	4,840	100%	4.4	57.1	15.5	9.3	13.5
30–39	3,665	100%	2.9	60.9	15.4	7.7	13.1
40–49	3,452	100%	1.5	54.8	18.2	9.3	16.3
50–59	2,587	100%	1.3!	50.9	17.6	12.3	18.0
60 or older	1,758	100%	1.5!	46.4	17.7	12.1	22.4

Note: Data on the types of enforcement actions taken by police were reported for 99.6% of traffic stop cases. Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. Separate statistics on the racial categories that make up the other race category are not shown due to too few sample cases to obtain reliable estimates. See appendix table 13 for standard errors.

! Interpret data with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

<sup>b</sup>Includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

## About 5% of drivers were searched during traffic stops

During a traffic stop, police sometimes conducted a search for illicit drugs, open containers of alcohol, stolen property, or other evidence of criminal wrongdoing. In about 5% (870,000) of the traffic stops documented in the 2008 PPCS, police conducted a search of the driver, the vehicle, or both (table 14). The 2008 PPCS data show that—

- Police were more likely to conduct a search of the vehicle or driver in traffic stops with male drivers (7.4%) than female drivers (1.6%).
- Black drivers (12.3%) were about three times as likely as white drivers (3.9%) and about two times as likely as Hispanic drivers (5.8%) to be searched during a traffic stop.
- Drivers ages 20 to 29 (9.0%) were more likely than drivers ages 30 to 39 (4.5%), 40 to 49 (2.5%), or 50 to 59 (2.5%), and drivers 60 or older (1.6%) to be physically searched or have their vehicle searched.

**TABLE 14**  
Stopped drivers who were searched by police, by demographic characteristics, 2002, 2005, and 2008

Demographic characteristic	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	5.0%	4.7%	5.0%
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	7.1%	6.7%	7.4%
Female	1.8	1.5	1.6
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>			
White <sup>a</sup>	3.5%	3.6%	3.9%
Black/African American <sup>a</sup>	10.2	9.5	12.3
Hispanic/Latino	11.4	9.1	5.8
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	2.9!	4.5!	2.1!
Two or more races <sup>a</sup>	~	7.9!	8.6!
<b>Age</b>			
16–19	8.9%	9.8%	7.0%
20–29	6.6	7.9	9.0
30–39	6.4	3.3	4.5
40–49	3.4	3.2	2.5
50–59	1.5	2.2	2.5
60 or older	--	0.2!	1.6

Note: Data on whether police searched a stopped driver or vehicle in 2002 were reported for 98.2% of traffic stops, in 2005 for 96.2%, and in 2008 for 99.5%. Persons of Hispanic origin were excluded from all other race categories. See appendix table 14 for standard errors. Separate statistics on the racial categories that make up the other race category are not shown due to too few sample cases to obtain reliable estimates.

! Interpret data with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

--Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of other races or those of two or more races.

--Less than 0.05%

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

<sup>b</sup>Includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

The 2002 and 2005 surveys also found that about 5% of stopped drivers were searched by police during the traffic stop. Among drivers stopped by police in 2002 and 2005, males were more likely than females and blacks and Hispanics were more likely than whites to be searched during a traffic stop.

## About 1 out of 10 searches conducted during traffic stops uncovered illegal items

Among the estimated 870,000 searches of the driver, vehicle, or both in 2008, about 187,000 were searches only of the driver, 226,000 were searches only of the vehicle, and 458,000 were searches of both the driver and the vehicle (table 15). An estimated 57.7% of driver-only (driver physically searched, frisked, or patted down by police) and 60.0% of vehicle-only searches were consent searches. About 50.8% of searches of both the driver and vehicle were conducted with consent. Consent searches occurred because either the officer asks permission to perform a search and the driver then granted it, or the driver volunteered to allow the officer to conduct a search.

**TABLE 15**  
Type of search conducted by police during traffic stop and the outcome, 2008

Characteristic of search	Driver only	Vehicle only	Both driver and vehicle
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>Type of search</b>			
With consent	57.7%	60.0%	50.8%
Without consent	42.3	40.0	49.2
<b>Outcome of search</b>			
Criminal evidence found	2.1%!	1.6%!	14.3%
No criminal evidence found	97.9	98.4	85.7
<b>Driver's perception of legitimacy</b>			
Search perceived as legitimate	36.1%	20.7%!	21.7%
Search perceived as not legitimate	63.9	79.3	78.3
<b>Number (in thousands)</b>	187	226	458

Note: Data on whether the driver consented to the search were reported for 100% of driver-only searches, 100% of vehicle-only searches, and 94.6% of both driver and vehicle searches. Data on whether evidence was found were reported for 100% of driver-only searches, 96.0% of vehicle-only searches, and 98.9% of both driver and vehicle searches. Data on whether the driver felt that police had legitimate reason for search were reported for 84.2% of driver-only searches, 92.0% of vehicle-only searches, and 91.3% of both driver and vehicle searches. In the "both driver and vehicle" column, drivers who consented to one type of search but not the other were classified as a search without consent. Drivers who experienced a search of both driver and vehicle and felt police had a legitimate reason for one search but not the other were classified as search perceived as not legitimate. See appendix table 15 for standard errors.

! Interpret data with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

Searches conducted without consent may occur because the police officer fails to ask permission before conducting the search, the officer asks but the driver refuses, or the search is conducted as a result of an arrest. Among drivers searched and arrested during a traffic stop, about 42.8% were searched after the arrest, and 57.2% were searched before the arrest (not shown in table).

An estimated 2.1% of driver-only searches and 1.6% of vehicle-only searches conducted in 2008 discovered evidence of criminal behavior (e.g., drugs, illegal weapons, open containers of alcohol, or other illegal items). When both the driver and vehicle were searched, evidence was uncovered about 14.3% of the time. Evidence was discovered in an estimated 8.4% of searches of a vehicle, driver, or both (not shown in table).

No comparisons of the number of searches that yielded criminal evidence were made between drivers of different gender, age, and race categories, as many of the samples on which the separate categories were based were too small to form reliable estimates.

Approximately 1 out of 5 drivers (20.7%) who had only their vehicle searched believed police had a legitimate reason to do so. An estimated 36.1% of drivers who had only their person searched and 21.7% of individuals who had both their person and vehicle searched indicated that police had a legitimate reason to do so.

### Most searches conducted during a traffic stop occurred at night

Overall, a larger percentage of traffic stops documented in the 2008 PPCS occurred during the day (67.3%) (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.) than at night (32.7%) (6 p.m. to 6 a.m.) (table 16). However, a majority of traffic stops involving a search (59.7%) or an arrest (68.1%) occurred at night. Among drivers who experienced the use or threat of force by police during a traffic stop, the percentage of stops that occurred at night (60.5%) was slightly larger than the percentage of daytime stops (39.5%).

### Males, blacks and younger persons were more likely to have a contact with police in 2008 that resulted in the use of force

An estimated 776,000 persons experienced force or the threat of force by police at least once in 2008 (table 17). This total represented an estimated 1.9% of the approximately 40.0 million people experiencing face-to-face police contact during 2008. The 2008 PPCS included detailed questions about use-of-force incidents, including the types of force police might have used and whether the respondent thought the amount of force used or threatened was excessive. Respondents who reported more than one contact during 2008 were asked about the use or threat of force by police during their most recent contact that year.

**TABLE 16**  
Actions taken by police during traffic stops, by time of day, 2008

Actions taken by police during traffic stops	Number (in thousands)	Total	Percent of drivers stopped—							
			During the day				At night			
			All daytime contacts*	6 a.m.–noon	Noon–6 p.m.	Day, time unknown	All nighttime contacts*	6 p.m.–midnight	Midnight–6 a.m.	Night, time unknown
All stops	17,479	100%	67.3%	22.3%	41.3%	3.7%	32.7%	24.3%	8.0%	0.5%
Police searched the driver/vehicle	866	100%	40.3%	13.7%	24.4%	2.2%!	59.7%	34.4%	25.0%	0.4%!
Police arrested the driver	454	100%	31.9	16.5	15.4	--	68.1	35.7	32.5	--
Police used or threatened force	160	100%	39.5	4.7!	28.3	6.5!	60.5	37.6	22.9!	--

Note: Data were based on most recent contact with police in 2008. Data on time of day of traffic stop were reported for 98.9% of all stops, for 99.4% of searches, for 97.1% of arrests, and for 98.3% of stops involving the use or threat of force by police. Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. See appendix table 16 for standard errors.

! Interpret data with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

--Less than 0.05%.

\*Includes cases in which the specific time was unknown.

**TABLE 17**  
U.S. residents age 16 or older who experienced the use or threat of force by police at any time during the year, 2005 and 2008

U.S. residents age 16 or older	2005	2008
<b>Number of residents (in thousands)—</b>		
Who had police contact	43,491	39,914
Experiencing use/threat of force at any time during the year	997	776
<b>Percent of residents who experienced use/threat of force by police among those who had police contact</b>	2.3%	1.9%

Note: Data on residents who experienced the use/threat of force by police at any time during 2005 were reported for 99.6% of police contact cases and in 99.7% for 2008. In the 2002 PPCS, data were not collected on the total number of residents who experienced the use/threat of force by police at any time during the year. Respondents were asked only about whether police used or threatened force during their most recent contact in 2002. See appendix table 17 for standard errors.

During 2008, about 574,000 persons age 16 or older had force used or threatened against them during their most recent contact with police (table 18). This estimate represents about 1.4% of those persons who reported face-to-face contact with police in 2008. The difference between the percentages of contacts involving police use of force in 2002 (1.5%), 2005 (1.6%), and 2008 (1.4%) were not statistically significant.

Males were more likely than females to have force used or threatened against them during their most recent contact with police during 2002, 2005, and 2008. Blacks were more likely than whites or Hispanics to experience use or threat of force in 2008. In 2002 and 2005, blacks and Hispanics were more likely than whites to experience the use or threat of force during contact with police. Individuals between the ages of 16 and 29 were more likely than those age 30 or older to experience contact that resulted in force or the threat of force in 2002, 2005, and 2008. Due to sample size limitations, analysis could not be done on the likelihood of experiencing force according to the reason for the contact and race, sex, and age differences.

### Most persons who experienced force felt it was excessive

Residents who experienced a police contact that involved force were asked if they felt any of the physical force used or threatened against them was excessive. The PPCS did not define excessive for the respondent. Most (74.3% or about 417,000) people whose most recent contact with police in 2008 involved force or the threat of force thought those actions were excessive (table 19). Among persons who had a contact that involved force or the threat of force in 2008, no differences were found in the percentage of white, black, and Hispanic individuals who described the incident as excessive.

### More than half of police use-of-force incidents involved the police pushing or grabbing the individual

Survey respondents who said they experienced the use or threat of force by police in 2008 were asked to describe the incident. Some respondents reported that more than one type of force was used by police. Among respondents who

**TABLE 18**  
**Contacts with police in which force was used or threatened, by demographic characteristics, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Demographic characteristic	Residents experiencing use or threat of force during most recent contact					
	Number (in thousands)			Percent <sup>a</sup>		
	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	664	716	574	1.5%	1.6%	1.4%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	520	514	390	2.2%	2.2%	1.8%
Female	144	202	184	0.7	1.0	1.0
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>						
White <sup>b</sup>	374	406	347	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%
Black or African American <sup>b</sup>	173	183	130	3.5	4.3	3.4
Hispanic/Latino	103	105	68	2.5	2.6	1.6
Other <sup>b,c</sup>	15!	3!	19!	1.1!	0.2!	1.1!
Two or more races <sup>b</sup>	~	19!	11!	~	4.0!	2.4!
<b>Age</b>						
16–19	152	168	78	3.6%	4.0%	2.4%
20–19	230	271	253	2.1	2.5	2.5
30–39	117	135	122	1.2	1.6	1.5
40–49	95	66	61	1.0	0.7	0.8
50–59	50	39	33!	0.8	0.6	0.5!
60 or older	21!	38	27!	0.4!	0.8	0.6!

Note: Table is based on the resident's most recent contact with police that year. Data on use of force by police during most recent contact in 2002 were reported for 99.3% of police contact cases, in 2005 for 99.6%, and in 2008 for 99.8%. Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. See appendix table 18 for standard errors. Separate statistics on the racial categories that make up the other race category are not shown due to too few sample cases to obtain reliable estimates.

! Interpret data with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of two or more races.

<sup>a</sup>See *Methodology* for distribution of U.S. population who had contact with police.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

<sup>c</sup>Includes American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

had force used or threatened against them, an estimated 76.6% reported that police threatened to use force during the incident (table 20). An estimated 75.5% of police-use-of-force incidents involved the officer or officers shouting at the respondent. About half (53.5%) of the police-use-of-force cases involved the respondent being pushed or grabbed by police. About 1 out of 4 (25.6%) respondents who reported that force was used or threatened during the contact said police pointed a gun at them.

Among persons who experienced the use or threat of force by police and characterized it as excessive, about 60% were pushed or grabbed by police. The police kicked or hit the respondent during an estimated 17.2% of incidents involving the threat or use of excessive force.

Overall, about 3 out of 4 (74.3%) persons who experienced the use or threat of force in 2008 felt it was excessive

**TABLE 19**  
Persons who felt the threat or use of force against them by police was excessive, by demographic characteristics, 2008

Demographic characteristic	Percent who felt force was excessive
Total	74.3%
Sex	
Male	76.2%
Female	70.6
Race/Hispanic origin	
White*	72.8%
Black/African American*	70.0
Hispanic/Latino	78.9
Age	
16–29	69.6%
30 or older	80.8

Note: Table is based on the residents most recent contact with police in 2008. Data on police use of excessive force in 2008 were reported for 97.5% of use-of-force cases. The total includes estimates for persons identifying with other races or with two or more races, not shown separately. See appendix table 19 for standard errors.

\*Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

**TABLE 20**  
Types of force used or threatened by police, 2008

Type of force police used or threatened	Percent of contacts with police in which—	
	Force was used or threatened	Excessive force was used or threatened
Pushed or grabbed	53.5%	60.2%
Kicked or hit	12.6	17.2
Sprayed chemical/pepper spray	4.9!	5.6!
Electroshock weapon (stun gun)	4.1!	5.6!
Pointed gun	25.6	28.4
Threatened force	76.6	84.9
Shouted at resident	75.5	76.6
Cursed at resident	39.1	44.0
<b>Number (in thousands)</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>417</b>

Note: Table is based on the residents most recent contact with police in 2008. Percentages do not sum to total because respondents could have reported that police both threatened and used force or that police used more than one type of force. See appendix table 20 for standard errors.

! Interpret data with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

(table 21). Among those persons involved in situations in which force was actually applied by police (e.g., grabbing, hitting, using chemical spray, or pointing a gun), an estimated 80.6% believed the actions were excessive. Of respondents who reported that police only threatened force during the incident, about 74% felt it was excessive. Among individuals who reported the use or threat of force only involved police shouting or cursing at them, 42.9% felt that those actions were excessive.

Individuals who had contact with police were asked about their behavior during the incident. Among persons experiencing police use or threat of force in 2008, an estimated 21.9% reported that they argued with, cursed at, insulted, or verbally threatened the police (table 22). An estimated 11.6% of those involved in a force incident reported disobeying or interfering with the police. About 5% resisted being handcuffed, arrested, or searched by police.

**TABLE 21**  
Persons who felt police threat or use of force against them was excessive, by type of force used or threatened, 2008

Type of force used or threatened	Contacts with police in which force was used or threatened	
	Number (in thousands)	Percent who felt it was excessive
Total	562	74.3%
Police used force*	344	80.6%
Police only threatened force	141	74.3
Police only shouted/cursed at resident	72	42.9!

Note: Table is based on the residents most recent contact with police in 2008. Data on use of excessive force by police in 2008 were reported for 97.5% of use-of-force cases. Total includes respondents who did not report the type of force they experienced, not shown separately. See appendix table 21 for standard errors.

! Interpret data with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

\*Includes police actions such as grabbing, hitting, using chemical spray, or pointing a gun at the respondent.

**TABLE 22**  
Conduct of residents during police contacts in which force was used or threatened, 2008

Conduct of resident during contact involving force	Percent
Resident—	
Engaged in at least one type of behavior*	28.4%
Argued with, cursed at, insulted, or verbally threatened the police	21.9
Disobeyed or interfered with officer(s)	11.6
Resisted being handcuffed, arrested, or searched	4.8!
Tried to get away from police	3.4!
Pushed, grabbed, or hit officer(s)	0.6!
<b>Number (in thousands)</b>	<b>574</b>

Note: Table is based on the residents most recent contact with police in 2008. See appendix table 22 for standard errors.

! Interpret data with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

\*Detail does not sum to total because some respondents reported more than one type of behavior.

Persons police suspected of wrongdoing or who had contact through a criminal investigation represented a relatively large percentage of the force incidents. Individuals police suspected of wrongdoing accounted for 16.6% of the force incidents compared to 2.5% of all contacts (table 23). Persons whose contact occurred during a criminal investigation accounted for 21.6% of force incidents, compared to 5.6% of all contacts.

In 2008, 9.6% of persons who were suspected of wrongdoing by police experienced the use or threat of force (table 24). By comparison, persons who contacted police to report a crime or another problem experienced force or the threat of force less than 1% of the time.

### More than half of persons who had force used or threatened against them were searched by police

About 57% of those who had force used or threatened against them by police were searched either before or after the force occurred (table 25). An estimated 10.4% of persons who experienced the use or threat of force reported that police found illegal items, such as drugs or a weapon (not in table).

**TABLE 23**  
Reasons for contact with police in which force was used or threatened, 2008

Reason for most recent contact	Residents who had contact with police	Contacts with police in which force was used or threatened
Total	100%	100%
<b>Traffic-related contacts</b>	59.2%	40.0%
Driver during traffic stop	44.1	27.9
Passenger during traffic stop	2.9	3.7!
Traffic accident	12.2	8.3!
<b>Other contacts</b>	40.8%	60.0%
Person reported crime/problem to police	20.9	9.0
Police provided assistance or service	6.3	5.7!
Police investigating crime	5.6	21.6
Police suspected resident of wrongdoing	2.5	16.6
Other reason	5.5	7.1!
<b>Number (in thousands)</b>	40,015	574

Note: Table is based on the residents most recent contact with police in 2008. Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. See appendix table 23 for standard errors.

! Interpret data with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

Among individuals who had force used against them in 2008, an estimated 54.3% were handcuffed and 39.9% were arrested during the incident. The higher percentage of persons handcuffed versus those arrested during force incidents may be an indication that police sometimes used handcuffs to detain people during contact and later released them without making an arrest. Overall, 18.9% of persons who experienced force in 2008 were injured during the incident (not in table).

An estimated 83.9% of individuals who experienced force or the threat of force felt that the police acted improperly. Of those who experienced the use or threat of force in 2008 and felt the police acted improperly, 13.7% filed a complaint against the police.

**TABLE 24**  
Contacts with police in which force was used or threatened, by reason for contact, 2008

Reason for most recent contact	Percent of residents who experienced use/threat of force by police among those who had police contact
Total	1.4%
<b>Traffic-related contacts</b>	
Driver during traffic stop	0.9%
Passenger during traffic stop	1.9!
Traffic accident	1.0!
<b>Other contacts</b>	
Resident reported crime/problem to police	0.6%
Police provided assistance or service	1.3!
Police investigated crime	5.5
Police suspected resident of wrongdoing	9.6
Other reason	1.9!

Note: Table is based on the residents most recent contact with police in 2008. Data on use of force by police in 2008 were reported for 99.8% of police contact cases. See appendix table 24 for standard errors.

! Interpret data with caution; estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases, or coefficient of variation is greater than 50%.

**TABLE 25**  
Police actions during contacts with the public in which force was used or threatened, 2008

Police action during contact involving force	Contacts with police in which force was used/threatened	
	Number (in thousands)	Percent
Searched resident/vehicle*	566	57.1%
Handcuffed resident	570	54.3
Arrested resident	574	39.9

Note: Table is based on the residents most recent contact with police in 2008. Data on whether a resident was searched were reported by residents for 98.3% of use-of-force cases, 99.2% of handcuffed, and 100% of arrested. See appendix table 25 for standard errors.

\*Includes searches conducted on the vehicles of drivers stopped by police.

## Methodology

### Data collection

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is an annual survey that collects data on crime against persons age 12 or older from a nationally representative, stratified, multi-stage cluster sample of U.S. households. Since 1999, the Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS) has been administered every 3 years as a supplemental survey to all persons ages 16 or older within households sampled for the NCVS. (For more details on the NCVS, see Survey Methodology for Criminal Victimization in the United States, 2007 at [www.bjs.gov](http://www.bjs.gov).)

The U.S. Census Bureau fielded the 2008 PPCS questionnaire, processed the survey data, and provided estimation specifications. The 2008 PPCS was pretested

in the spring of 2008 and conducted between July 1, 2008, and December 31, 2008. Respondents were asked about their contacts with police during the past 12 months. For instance, persons interviewed in July 2008 were asked about contacts that occurred between August 2007 and July 2008. Those interviewed in August 2008 were asked about contacts between September 2007 and August 2008.

In 2008 the PPCS interviewed 57,978 of the 72,566 eligible individuals in the NCVS sample (table 26). Among the PPCS interviews, 22,301 (38.5%) were conducted in person and 35,677 (61.5%) were by telephone. A total of 14,588 nonrespondents who were excluded from the 2008 PPCS as non-interviews or as proxy interviews. Non-interviews (12,803) included respondents not available for the interview, those who refused to participate, and non-English speaking respondents. (Unlike the NCVS interviews, PPCS

**TABLE 26**  
**Number of U.S. residents age 16 or older in the Police-Public Contact Survey, by demographic characteristics, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Demographic characteristic	All eligible PPCS respondents			PPCS interviews completed			Persons with police contact			Persons against whom force was used or threatened		
	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	93,410	80,237	72,566	76,910	63,943	57,978	15,731	11,843	9,549	209	166	121
<b>Sex</b>												
Male	44,295	38,078	34,733	35,049	29,125	26,962	7,892	5,972	4,856	158	116	79
Female	49,115	42,159	37,833	41,861	34,818	31,016	7,839	5,871	4,693	51	50	42
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>												
White <sup>c</sup>	67,619	56,198	51,717	56,696	46,068	42,792	12,199	9,054	7,361	121	94	79
Black/African American <sup>c</sup>	10,277	8,677	7,401	8,101	6,859	5,840	1,492	1,076	810	46	44	23
Hispanic/Latino	11,341	10,540	9,282	8,929	7,327	6,237	1,542	1,135	921	37	24	14
Other <sup>c</sup>	4,173	4,249	3,536	3,184	3,238	2,625	498	462	357	5	1	3
American Indian/Alaskan Native <sup>c</sup>	~	309	370	--	237	305	~	61	68	~	1	2
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <sup>c</sup>	~	3940	3,166	--	3,001	2,320	~	401	289	~	0	1
Two or more races <sup>c</sup>	~	573	630	--	451	484	~	116	100	~	3	2
<b>Age</b>												
16-17	3,433	3,019	2,667	2,375	1,870	1,623	500	392	219	16	18	4
18-19	2,970	2,599	2,385	2,080	1,652	1,522	680	511	372	25	15	10
20-24	7,244	6,046	5,199	5,565	4,398	3,697	1,733	1,265	953	39	29	27
25-29	7,544	6,467	5,853	6,156	5,033	4,585	1,674	1,239	1,040	30	26	20
30-34	8,655	6,849	5,755	7,187	5,435	4,610	1,690	1,152	926	15	21	11
35-39	9,451	7,487	6,302	7,872	6,028	5,045	1,915	1,246	981	27	12	17
40-44	9,831	8,125	6,537	8,155	6,531	5,190	1,757	1,325	962	19	9	8
45-49	9,188	8,327	7,285	7,650	6,759	5,894	1,619	1,358	1,049	11	11	8
50-54	8,344	7,372	7,118	7,015	6,075	5,810	1,354	1,078	914	8	9	5
55-59	6,645	6,271	6,006	5,668	5,265	5,039	968	790	724	10	4	4
60-64	5,152	4,768	5,030	4,382	4,033	4,241	612	555	516	5	6	5
65 or older	14,953	12,907	12,429	12,805	10,864	10,722	1,229	932	893	4	6	2

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. The Police-Public Contact Survey was administered as a supplement to U.S. residents age 16 or older within households sampled for the National Crime Victimization Survey.

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of other races or those of two or more races.

<sup>a</sup>Driving population totals were based on PPCS respondents who reported operating a motor vehicle a few times a year or more. The driving population also includes a small number of persons who were pulled over by police as a driver in a traffic stop, but who did not report driving a few times a year or more.

<sup>b</sup>Includes stops of all types of motor vehicles (e.g., motorcycles, buses, and private and commercial cars and trucks) for both personal and business travel.

<sup>c</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

interviews are conducted only in English.) The remaining 1,785 were proxy interviews representing household members who were unable to participate for physical, mental, or other reasons. After adjustment for nonresponse, the sample cases in 2008 were weighted to produce a national population estimate of 236,511,832 persons age 16 or older (table 27).

PPCS nonrespondents consisted of persons whose household did not respond to the NCVS (NCVS household nonresponse), persons within an interviewed NCVS household who did not respond to the NCVS (NCVS person nonresponse), and persons who responded to the NCVS but did not complete the PPCS (PPCS person nonresponse). The NCVS household response rate between July and December 2008 was 91%. The NCVS person response rate was 88%, and the PPCS person response rate was 91%. The combined

NCVS and PPCS person response rate was 80%. The overall weighted response rate for the 2008 PPCS (calculated by multiplying the household response rate by the combined NCVS-PPCS person response rate) was 73%.

To produce national estimates on police-public contacts, sample weights were applied to the survey data so that the respondents represented the entire population, including the nonrespondents. Despite the nonresponse adjustments, low overall response rates and response rates to particular survey items can still increase variance in these estimates and produce bias when the nonrespondents have characteristics that differ from the respondents. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines require a nonresponse bias study when the overall response rate is below 80%.

**TABLE 26 (continued)**

**Number of U.S. residents age 16 or older in the Police-Public Contact Survey, by demographic characteristics, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Demographic characteristic	Driving population <sup>a</sup>			Drivers stopped by police <sup>b</sup>			Stopped drivers searched by police		
	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	68,482	57,004	51,715	5,628	4,744	4,160	263	189	180
<b>Sex</b>									
Male	32,529	26,879	24,706	3,288	2,759	2,346	221	160	154
Female	35,953	30,125	27,009	2,340	1,985	1,814	42	29	26
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>									
White <sup>c</sup>	52,616	42,742	39,358	4,326	3,582	3,144	148	109	111
Black/African American <sup>c</sup>	6,339	5,415	4,638	546	410	387	48	31	40
Hispanic/Latino	6,927	5,798	5,118	577	505	451	62	37	24
Other <sup>c</sup>	2,600	2,658	2,190	179	201	146	5	8	3
American Indian/Alaskan Native <sup>c</sup>	~	196	263	~	24	32	~	3	1
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <sup>c</sup>	~	2,462	1,927	~	177	114	~	5	2
Two or more races <sup>c</sup>	~	391	411	~	46	32	~	4	2
<b>Age</b>									
16-17	1,545	1,162	940	146	126	67	9	6	4
18-19	1,715	1,333	1,220	302	209	169	32	18	12
20-24	4,944	3,844	3,240	766	563	472	54	40	45
25-29	5,632	4,612	4,204	685	577	500	39	43	36
30-34	6,705	5,077	4,296	645	503	439	45	21	17
35-39	7,409	5,628	4,755	711	523	442	35	11	21
40-44	7,662	6,159	4,881	584	543	444	22	13	10
45-49	7,181	6,359	5,563	520	527	427	15	21	10
50-54	6,535	5,661	5,404	454	408	368	8	9	12
55-59	5,218	4,907	4,696	325	313	329	4	6	5
60-64	3,980	3,666	3,922	210	213	205	0	1	5
65 or older	9,956	8,596	8,594	280	239	298	0	0	3

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. The Police-Public Contact Survey was administered as a supplement to U.S. residents age 16 or older within households sampled for the National Crime Victimization Survey.

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of other races or those of two or more races.

<sup>a</sup>Driving population totals were based on PPCS respondents who reported operating a motor vehicle a few times a year or more. The driving population also includes a small number of persons who were pulled over by police as a driver in a traffic stop, but who did not report driving a few times a year or more.

<sup>b</sup>Includes stops of all types of motor vehicles (e.g., motorcycles, buses, and private and commercial cars and trucks) for both personal and business travel.

<sup>c</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.



BJS and the Census Bureau compared the distributions of respondents and nonrespondents and nonresponse estimates for various household and demographic characteristics, and examined their impact on the national estimates produced for the 2008 PPCS. The study looked at household-level and person-level response rates and found no significant variation or bias in the rates among various population groups. The largest bias among the household characteristics was in region and type of location in urban areas; however, these biases were reduced in the nonresponse adjustments. The largest bias in person nonresponse was observed in the Hispanic origin characteristics. Nonresponse statistics were also computed for key survey questions from the PPCS, and no evidence of bias was found during the analysis.

### Follow-up interviews

PPCS respondents were asked about their contact with police during the 12 months prior to their interview. Persons who said they had a face-to-face contact during 2008 were asked to describe the nature of the contact. Persons who had more than one contact were asked about only their most recent contact during the time period. Respondents were provided a list of six specific reasons for having contact with police: 1) traffic accident, 2) traffic stop, 3) reporting a crime, 4) police provided assistance, 5) police investigating crime, and 6) the police suspected the resident of wrongdoing. Respondents who reported having contact during a traffic stop were asked whether they were the driver or passenger in the vehicle. Drivers were asked an additional set of questions

**TABLE 27**  
National estimates from the Police–Public Contact Survey, by demographic characteristics, 2002, 2005, and 2008

Demographic characteristic	U.S. residents age 16 or older			Persons with police contact			Persons against whom force was used or threatened		
	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	215,536,780	228,085,340	236,511,830	45,278,880	43,657,900	40,014,950	664,460	716,140	574,070
<b>Sex</b>									
Male	103,988,720	110,527,320	115,059,600	23,884,650	23,407,380	21,241,630	520,180	514,490	390,040
Female	111,548,060	117,558,030	121,452,230	21,394,230	20,250,530	18,773,320	144,280	201,650	184,030
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>									
White <sup>c</sup>	157,373,710	163,210,810	167,989,750	34,743,450	33,065,210	29,951,410	373,850	406,380	346,700
Black/African American <sup>c</sup>	25,694,070	25,572,760	26,667,150	4,966,390	4,226,430	3,788,670	172,660	182,690	130,130
Hispanic/Latino	23,955,180	26,076,370	27,570,380	4,191,710	4,129,510	4,132,420	102,670	104,920	67,810
Other <sup>c</sup>	8,513,810	11,501,660	12,217,290	1,377,330	1,763,800	1,707,420	15,280	3,260	18,850
American Indian/Alaskan Native <sup>c</sup>	~	989,730	1,305,870	~	254,670	288,890	~	^	^
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <sup>c</sup>	~	10,511,930	10,911,420	~	1,509,130	1,418,530	~	^	^
Two or more races <sup>c</sup>	~	1,723,750	2,067,260	~	472,960	435,030	~	18,890	10,580
<b>Age</b>									
16–17	8,258,250	8,475,570	8,565,220	1,720,200	1,753,210	1,130,310	61,520	81,050	23,300
18–19	8,003,620	8,035,700	8,718,540	2,594,030	2,471,970	2,078,710	90,600	86,670	54,980
20–24	19,385,230	20,357,980	20,578,400	6,074,820	5,901,510	5,208,610	145,970	149,040	149,030
25–29	17,745,200	20,066,540	21,409,590	4,842,870	4,913,730	4,782,620	84,060	122,140	103,630
30–34	19,564,860	19,637,600	19,490,390	4,573,910	4,310,160	3,887,800	39,480	77,880	52,250
35–39	21,108,220	20,761,970	20,788,470	5,171,390	4,273,210	4,013,390	77,290	56,950	69,430
40–44	23,048,580	22,527,140	21,284,590	5,024,130	4,579,890	3,897,430	59,950	29,790	31,780
45–49	21,111,000	22,466,380	22,866,590	4,470,580	4,544,500	4,012,020	35,340	35,720	29,320
50–54	18,156,610	20,057,380	21,515,300	3,515,570	3,523,800	3,380,270	17,120	27,260	18,040
55–59	14,751,340	17,514,520	18,634,440	2,491,260	2,640,810	2,693,650	32,600	12,000	14,810
60–64	11,253,810	13,003,800	15,328,060	1,577,380	1,800,660	1,866,810	11,500	21,070	20,770
65 or older	33,150,060	35,180,760	37,332,260	3,222,740	2,944,450	3,063,320	9,040	16,570	6,730

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. The Police–Public Contact Survey was administered as a supplement to U.S. residents age 16 or older within households sampled for the National Crime Victimization Survey.

... No cases in sample.

<sup>^</sup>Separate statistics on the racial categories that make up the other race category are not shown due to too few sample cases to obtain reliable estimates.

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of other races or those of two or more races.

<sup>a</sup>Driving population estimates based PPCS respondents who reported operating a motor vehicle a few times a year or more. The driving population also includes a small number of persons who were pulled over by police as a driver in a traffic stop, but who did not report driving a few times a year or more.

<sup>b</sup>Includes stops of all types of motor vehicles (e.g., motorcycles, buses, and private and commercial cars and trucks) for both personal and business travel.

<sup>c</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

about the reason for being pulled over and the actions taken by police during the stop. A seventh category allowed interviewers to record reasons that did not fall into any of the six specific reasons. Among the 9,549 respondents who had contact with police, 751 reported the reason for contact under this nonspecific category.

Following the data collection, BJS examined these write-in responses to determine if any descriptions fit one of the six categories and, when possible, coded the field into an existing category. This review uncovered 302 responses that indicated the reason for contact was related to a traffic stop. Some of these records lacked sufficient detail to determine whether the respondent was a driver or passenger in a vehicle that had been pulled over by police or was reporting some other type of contact that was connected to a traffic

stop (e.g., paying a speeding ticket). Stopped drivers who were not originally classified under the specific category during the interview did not receive the additional questions about the traffic stop.

To address this potential missing data issue, BJS instructed the Census Bureau to conduct follow-up interviews with 122 of these respondents to seek clarification on the nature of their contact with police. Ninety respondents agreed to complete the follow-up interview. Of the completed interviews, 79 respondents reported that their contact with police occurred as a driver in a traffic stop and completed the additional set of questions regarding the traffic stop.

**TABLE 27 (continued)**  
National estimates from the Police–Public Contact Survey, by demographic characteristics, 2002, 2005, and 2008

Demographic characteristic	Driving population <sup>a</sup>			Drivers stopped by police <sup>b</sup>			Stopped drivers searched by police		
	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008
Total	191,735,660	202,718,120	209,218,860	16,783,470	17,919,880	17,663,080	821,970	816,220	870,440
<b>Sex</b>									
Male	95,983,080	101,472,320	104,459,150	10,210,450	10,982,000	10,329,940	707,290	713,790	757,290
Female	95,752,580	101,245,800	104,759,710	6,573,020	6,937,890	7,333,140	114,680	102,430	113,150
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>									
White <sup>c</sup>	146,203,930	151,211,390	154,113,560	12,842,250	13,509,660	12,933,130	445,360	463,520	499,920
Black/African American <sup>c</sup>	20,118,090	20,160,000	20,871,120	1,852,090	1,638,360	1,844,510	183,710	146,650	225,720
Hispanic/Latino <sup>c</sup>	18,470,530	20,499,820	22,379,170	1,595,870	1,814,890	2,038,100	178,640	158,580	118,110
Other <sup>c</sup>	6,943,110	9,381,290	10,127,790	493,260	772,960	710,310	14,270	33,680	14,880
American Indian/Alaskan Native <sup>c</sup>	~	817,570	1,111,040	~	97,680	140,450	~	^	^
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <sup>c</sup>	~	8,563,720	9,016,750	~	675,270	569,860	~	^	^
Two or more races <sup>c</sup>	~	1,465,620	1,727,220	~	184,010	137,030	~	13,780	11,800
<b>Age</b>									
16–17	5,411,470	5,292,210	4,830,950	487,200	564,440	330,740	31,620	30,880	20,900
18–19	6,624,080	6,465,710	6,946,820	1,166,360	996,300	968,140	113,410	113,830	70,270
20–24	17,241,050	17,857,670	17,910,570	2,707,710	2,639,640	2,578,440	194,150	209,090	255,500
25–29	16,187,490	18,380,850	19,498,730	1,999,670	2,319,350	2,271,630	111,050	171,030	179,120
30–34	18,204,140	18,332,750	18,094,130	1,765,380	1,959,310	1,850,800	129,760	79,560	77,710
35–39	19,828,440	19,367,560	19,547,120	1,976,040	1,882,710	1,826,820	104,180	42,950	86,520
40–44	21,664,780	21,198,320	19,917,380	1,737,810	1,910,910	1,792,900	63,530	49,500	43,090
45–49	19,795,430	21,116,110	21,515,530	1,497,270	1,820,910	1,666,980	43,500	64,960	43,060
50–54	16,933,350	18,658,970	19,928,210	1,214,760	1,345,030	1,374,770	20,100	33,280	46,670
55–59	13,574,900	16,353,850	17,302,130	859,630	1,050,480	1,230,140	10,680	18,030	19,210
60–64	10,273,390	11,841,570	14,115,950	599,060	682,060	748,190	...	3,100	18,320
65 or older	25,997,130	27,852,550	29,611,340	772,580	748,750	1,023,530	...	...	10,080

Note: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. The Police–Public Contact Survey was administered as a supplement to U.S. residents age 16 or older within households sampled for the National Crime Victimization Survey.

... No cases in sample.

<sup>a</sup>Separate statistics on the racial categories that make up the other race category are not shown due to too few sample cases to obtain reliable estimates.

<sup>b</sup>Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of other races or those of two or more races.

<sup>c</sup>Driving population estimates based PPCS respondents who reported operating a motor vehicle a few times a year or more. The driving population also includes a small number of persons who were pulled over by police as a driver in a traffic stop, but who did not report driving a few times a year or more.

<sup>b</sup>Includes stops of all types of motor vehicles (e.g., motorcycles, buses, and private and commercial cars and trucks) for both personal and business travel.

<sup>c</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin.

### Limitations of the estimates

BJS administers the PPCS questionnaire to all persons age 16 or older who reside in U.S. households sampled for the NCVS. The PPCS excludes proxy interviews for a person unable to participate because of physical, mental, or other reasons. BJS staff determined that caregivers and other proxy interviewees would have difficulty describing the details of any contacts with police and decided to exclude them. To the extent that persons who experience contacts with police do not fall into this target population, the PPCS data collection missed certain encounters between the law enforcement officers and members of the public. For instance, this household survey did not interview U.S. residents living abroad, homeless persons, or persons living in military barracks. The PPCS also did not interview persons institutionalized (e.g., incarcerated in a correctional facility) at the time of the interview about their encounters with police during the 12-month reference period. Such exclusions may affect the findings because contact with police leading to incarceration would involve more serious outcomes (e.g., contacts involving an arrest or use of force by police).

The BJS Survey of Inmates in Local Jails (SILJ) collects data from a nationally representative sample of jail inmates on a wide range of topics, including the specific types of force police might have used or threatened to use during the arrest that preceded the inmates' incarceration. An analysis of the 2002 SILJ and 2002 PPCS data found that the percentage of inmates who experienced the use or threat of force at the time of their arrest was about 22%, while the percentage of PPCS respondents who had a contact with police that involved force or the threat of force was about 1.5%.<sup>4</sup> When combining the PPCS and SILJ data, the overall estimated percentage of contacts that involved the threat or use of force in 2002 was 1.7%.

This report describes the prevalence of public contact with the police and the prevalence with which the contact involves traffic stops, searches, and uses of force. It describes the extent to which prevalence rates vary by some of the categories of respondent characteristics or by the nature of the contact. This information is collected and disseminated to inform the public about the nature of interaction between law enforcement officers and the public. However, the data collected and described in this report cannot provide a sufficient basis to infer a causal relationship between characteristics of the respondent and behavior of police. This limitation exists despite the descriptive statistics that seem to show some differences (or no differences) in the prevalence of contacts, stops, searches, or use of force in relationship to the age, race, or sex of the respondent.

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<sup>4</sup>See Hickman, M., Piquero, A., & Garner, J. (2008). Toward a national estimate of police use of nonlethal force. *Criminology & Public Policy*.

### Conducting tests of statistical significance

Persons interviewed through the PPCS sample have a known probability of selection, and their responses can be used to produce national estimates of contacts between police and the public. Since the estimates are based on a sample of the population and not a complete enumeration, these estimates are subject to sampling error (a discrepancy between an estimate and a population parameter based on chance). Sampling error varies by the size of the estimate in relation to the size of the base population, and is reduced by increasing the size of the sample taken from the population.

A standard error is a measure of the sampling error, or the margin of error due to sampling, and can be used as a measure of precision expected from a sample; the smaller the standard error, the more precise or reliable the estimate. Standard errors for selected tables are available at the end of this report.

In general, when comparing estimates between groups, if the difference between two estimates is at least twice the standard error of that difference, there is at least 95% confidence that the two estimates actually differ. Thus, one can conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

All differences discussed in this report were statistically significant at or above the 95% confidence interval unless otherwise indicated. Some differences were not significant at the 95% confidence level, but were significant at the 90% level. The report also indicates that some comparisons were not different, which meant that the difference between the two estimates was not significant at either the 95% or 90% levels. In order to calculate the confidence intervals for the estimated 16.9% of residents who had contact with police in 2008, the calculated standard error of 0.3% was used ([appendix table 5](#)). The 95% confidence interval around this estimate was calculated as plus or minus 1.96 multiplied by 0.3% (or 16.3% to 17.6%). The 95% confidence interval around the percentage of residents who had contact in 2005 was 19.1% plus or minus 1.96 multiplied by 0.5% (or 18.2% to 20.1%). Statistical significance tests found that the difference between these two estimates was statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This means the apparent difference was not simply the result of surveying a sample rather than the entire population.

Significance testing calculations were conducted using statistical programs developed specifically for the PPCS by the U.S. Census Bureau. These programs take into consideration the complex sample design of the PPCS when conducting tests of statistical significance.

### Comparing estimates from the Police-Public Contact Surveys

Certain comparisons were limited in this report to findings from the 2002, 2005, and 2008 surveys for several reasons. 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 reasons for contact with police and information on contacts that occurred while driving a vehicle that was stopped by police. In 1999, respondents were asked to identify the reasons for all of their contacts with police during the previous 12 months and the frequency of those contacts. In addition, any respondent who had been pulled over in a traffic stop in the last year was asked to describe the nature and outcome of the stop. Following the 1999 survey, the data collection instrument was changed so that respondents were only asked to provide detailed information on 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 asked to describe that incident.

Following the 1999 survey, the measurement of the number of drivers in the United States was also modified, making the estimate of the likelihood of being stopped by police in 1999 is not directly comparable to estimates in 2002, 2005, and 2008. 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, 2005, and 2008, the denominator was “drivers in the United States,” as estimated directly from responses to additional questions included in 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.

A number of methodological changes were implemented in the NCVS in 2006. Analyses of the survey data after 2006 indicated that the changes had a relatively small impact on the estimates and that the 2008 estimates are comparable with estimates for 2005. Information on the methodological changes to the NCVS are available online at [www.bjs.gov](http://www.bjs.gov).

Some of the 2005 national estimates in this report differ slightly from those shown in the BJS report *Contacts between Police and the Public, 2005*. The weights for the 2005 PPCS data were revised to reflect a slight change of the NCVS person weights, which were the starting point for the PPCS weights. For instance, the difference between the overall rate of police-public contact from the 2005 report (19.09%) and the revised rate (19.14%) was about 0.05%.

### Other BJS reports on police-public contact

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

- *Police Use of Force: Collection of National Data*, NCJ 165040, November 1997
- *Contacts between Police and the Public: Findings from the 1999 National Survey*, NCJ 184957, February 2001
- *Characteristics of Drivers Stopped by Police, 1999*, NCJ 191548, March 2002
- *Contacts between Police and the Public: Findings from the 2002 National Survey*, NCJ 207845, April 2005
- *Characteristics of Drivers Stopped by Police, 2002*, NCJ 211471, June 2006
- *Contacts between Police and the Public, 2005*, NCJ 215243, April 2007

**APPENDIX TABLE 1**

**Standard errors for number of U.S. residents age 16 or older who had contact with police, by reason for contact, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Reason for most recent contact	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	586,640	875,979	654,917
<b>Traffic-related contacts</b>			
Driver during traffic stop	382,925	581,994	449,121
Passenger during traffic stop	79,554	110,896	90,569
Traffic accident	208,731	285,308	215,081
<b>Other contacts</b>			
Resident reported crime/problem to police	317,192	423,511	294,601
Police provided assistance or service	145,538	183,210	144,105
Police investigating crime	126,999	170,478	135,364
Police suspected resident of wrongdoing	77,136	110,484	84,297
Other reason	120,094	164,559	132,794

**APPENDIX TABLE 2**

**Standard errors for reason for contact among U.S. residents age 16 or older who had contact with police, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Reason for most recent contact	2002	2005	2008
<b>Traffic-related contacts</b>			
Driver during traffic stop	0.7%	1.0%	0.9%
Passenger during traffic stop	0.2	0.2	0.2
Traffic accident	0.4	0.6	0.5
<b>Other contacts</b>			
Person reported crime/problem to police	0.6%	0.8%	0.7%
Police provided assistance or service	0.3	0.4	0.3
Police investigating crime	0.3	0.4	0.3
Police suspected resident of wrongdoing	0.2	0.2	0.2
Other reason	0.3	0.4	0.3

**APPENDIX TABLE 3**

**Standard errors for percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older who had contact with police, by reason for contact, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Reason for most recent contact	2002	2005	2008
<b>Traffic-related contacts</b>			
Driver during traffic stop	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Passenger during traffic stop	0.0	0.0	0.0
Traffic accident	0.1	0.1	0.1
<b>Other contacts</b>			
Resident reported crime/problem to police	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Police provided assistance or service	0.1	0.1	0.1
Police investigating crime	0.1	0.1	0.1
Police suspected resident of wrongdoing	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other reason	0.1	0.1	0.1

**APPENDIX TABLE 4**

**Standard errors for number of U.S. residents age 16 or older who had contact with police, by demographic characteristics and reason for contact, 2002 and 2008**

Demographic characteristic	Driver during traffic stop		Resident reported crime/problem to police	
	2002	2008	2002	2008
<b>Total</b>	382,925	449,121	317,192	294,601
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	289,550	333,333	194,226	180,891
Female	222,988	273,132	226,124	209,297
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>				
White	330,289	378,675	272,457	251,590
Black/African American	102,750	120,036	84,556	68,611
Hispanic/Latino	93,794	127,385	73,585	75,345
Other	46,201	68,473	37,078	42,927
Two or more races	~	27,050	~	22,976
<b>Age</b>				
16-17	45,865	44,190	33,976	31,669
18-24	161,657	177,361	88,415	89,435
25-34	158,853	194,050	122,505	110,202
35-44	157,525	179,539	139,588	112,945
45-54	129,867	161,799	122,211	117,984
55-64	88,779	125,146	76,466	93,485
65 or older	60,388	84,744	74,915	72,144

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of two or more races

**APPENDIX TABLE 5****Standard errors for percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older who had contact with police, by demographic characteristics, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Demographic characteristic	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%
Female	0.6	0.5	0.4
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>			
White	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%
Black/African American	0.9	0.8	0.6
Hispanic/Latino	0.4	0.8	0.6
Other	0.4	1.0	0.8
American Indian/Alaskan Native	~	3.4	2.7
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	~	1.0	0.8
Two or more races	~	2.8	2.1
<b>Age</b>			
16-17	1.0%	1.4%	0.9%
18-24	0.8	1.1	0.8
25-34	0.6	0.9	0.7
35-44	0.6	0.8	0.6
45-54	0.6	0.8	0.6
55-64	0.6	0.7	0.6
65 or older	0.4	0.5	0.4

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of other races or those with two or more races.

**APPENDIX TABLE 6****Standard errors for characteristics of U.S. residents age 16 or older with and without face-to-face police contact, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Demographic characteristic	With police contact			Without police contact		
	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	0.7%	1.1%	0.9%	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%
Female	0.7	1.1	0.9	0.5	0.7	0.5
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>						
White	0.7%	1.0%	0.8%	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%
Black/African American	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3
Hispanic/Latino	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3
Other	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2
Two or more races	~	0.1	0.1	~	0.1	0.1
<b>Age</b>						
16-17	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
18-24	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.3
25-34	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.3
35-44	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.4
45-54	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.4
55-64	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3
65 or older	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of two or more races.

### APPENDIX TABLE 7

#### Standard errors for number of contacts between police and the public, by demographic characteristics, 2008

Demographic characteristic	Percent who had contact with police—	
	One time	Two or more times
Total	0.8%	0.7%
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	1.0%	0.9%
Female	1.0	0.9
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>		
White	0.9%	0.8%
Black/African American	1.9	1.8
Hispanic/Latino	1.8	1.7
American Indian/Alaskan Native	6.1	6.0
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2.6	2.5
Two or more races	5.0	5.0
<b>Age</b>		
16–17	3.3%	3.2%
18–24	1.6	1.5
25–34	1.4	1.3
35–44	1.4	1.3
45–54	1.4	1.3
55–64	1.6	1.4
65 or older	1.6	1.5

### APPENDIX TABLE 8

#### Standard errors for perceptions of police behavior during contact, by reason for contact and race/Hispanic origin of residents, 2008

Reason for most recent contact	All races	Black/African American		Hispanic/Latino
		White	American	
<b>Percent of residents who felt that police acted—</b>				
<b>Respectfully</b>				
All contacts	0.5%	0.5%	1.5%	1.3%
Traffic accident	0.9	0.9	2.7	2.7
Driver during traffic stop	0.7	0.7	2.0	1.7
Resident reported crime/problem to police	0.8	0.8	2.2	2.4
Police provided assistance or service	1.0	1.2	4.2	2.3
Police were investigating crime/person suspected of wrongdoing	1.8	1.9	5.1	5.8
<b>Properly</b>				
All contacts	0.6%	0.6%	1.6%	1.4%
Traffic accident	1.0	1.1	3.2	3.1
Driver during traffic stop	0.7	0.8	2.2	1.8
Resident reported crime or problem to police	0.9	0.9	2.8	2.6
Police provided assistance or service	1.2	1.4	3.2	2.4
Police were investigating crime/person suspected of wrongdoing	1.9	2.0	5.3	6.6

### APPENDIX TABLE 9

#### Standard errors for drivers stopped by police, by demographic characteristics, 2002, 2005, and 2008

Demographic characteristic	Number of drivers stopped by police during the most recent contact			Percent of all U.S. drivers		
	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008
<b>Total</b>	382,925	581,994	449,121	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	289,550	438,681	333,333	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%
Female	222,988	331,342	273,132	0.2	0.3	0.3
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>						
White	330,289	495,744	378,675	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Black/African American	102,750	132,529	120,036	0.5	0.6	0.5
Hispanic/Latino	93,794	141,471	127,385	0.5	0.6	0.5
Other	46,201	82,334	68,473	0.6	0.8	0.6
American Indian/Alaskan Native	~	23,535	27,419	~	2.6	2.3
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	~	75,647	60,283	~	0.8	0.6
Two or more races	~	34,306	27,050	~	2.1	1.5
<b>Age</b>						
16–19	95,855	128,491	97,502	0.7%	1.0%	0.8%
20–29	182,114	268,435	213,812	0.5	0.7	0.5
30–39	158,241	228,338	181,250	0.4	0.6	0.5
40–49	144,731	224,149	174,755	0.3	0.5	0.4
50–59	110,150	168,920	147,476	0.3	0.5	0.4
60 or older	85,506	121,570	117,195	0.2	0.3	0.3

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of other races or those with two or more races.

### APPENDIX TABLE 10

#### Standard errors for reasons police gave drivers for traffic stop, 2002, 2005, and 2008

Reason for traffic stop	Percent of stopped drivers		
	2002	2005	2008
Speeding	1.0%	1.5%	1.2%
Vehicle defect	0.5	0.7	0.7
Record check	0.6	0.7	0.5
Roadside sobriety check	0.2	0.3	0.3
Seatbelt violation	0.3	0.5	0.4
Illegal turn or lane change	0.4	0.5	0.5
Stop sign/light violation	0.4	0.6	0.6
Other reason	0.4	0.6	0.6

**APPENDIX TABLE 11****Standard errors for drivers' perceptions of traffic stop legitimacy, by race/Hispanic origin and reason for stop, 2008**

Reason for traffic stop	Percent of drivers who perceived they were stopped for a legitimate reason			
	All races	White	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino
All reasons	0.9%	1.0%	2.7%	2.2%
Speeding	1.0%	1.0%	3.5%	2.6%
Vehicle defect	2.1	2.3	6.4	4.4
Record check	2.3	2.4	7.2	8.2
Roadside sobriety check	5.1	5.9	0.0	15.2
Seatbelt violation	3.2	3.6	9.4	9.7
Illegal turn or lane change	3.1	3.7	11.2	6.6
Stop sign/light violation	2.9	3.3	9.7	7.4
Other reason	2.6	3.1	7.4	6.2

**APPENDIX TABLE 12****Standard errors for enforcement actions taken by police during traffic stops, by reason for stop, 2008**

Reason for traffic stop	Percent of drivers who were—				
	Arrested	Ticketed	Issued a written warning	Given a verbal warning	Allowed to proceed with no enforcement action
All reasons	0.3%	1.2%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%
Speeding	0.3%	1.4%	1.0%	0.9%	0.5%
Vehicle defect	0.9	2.6	2.4	1.8	2.0
Record check	0.8	3.0	1.9	1.4	3.5
Roadside sobriety check	3.2	4.0	2.5	1.7	5.5
Seatbelt violation	1.0	4.0	2.8	1.7	2.5
Illegal turn or lane change	1.3	3.5	2.9	1.7	2.2
Stop sign/light violation	0.7	3.1	2.6	1.6	1.6
Other reason	1.4	2.9	2.2	1.6	2.5

**APPENDIX TABLE 13****Standard errors for enforcement actions taken by police during traffic stops, by demographic characteristics of drivers, 2008**

Demographic characteristic	Percent of drivers who were—				
	Arrested	Ticketed	Issued a written warning	Given a verbal warning	Allowed to proceed with no enforcement action
<b>Total</b>	0.3%	1.2%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	0.4%	1.4%	1.0%	0.7%	0.9%
Female	0.3	1.6	1.2	0.9	1.1
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>					
White	0.3%	1.3%	0.9%	0.7%	0.9%
Black/African American	1.1	2.8	1.9	1.2	2.0
Hispanic/Latino	0.8	2.7	1.9	1.0	1.9
Other	0.8	4.2	3.1	2.2	2.6
Two or more races	3.6	8.1	6.1	2.8	4.4
<b>Age</b>					
16–19	0.9%	3.3%	2.6%	1.8%	1.9%
20–29	0.7	1.9	1.3	1.0	1.2
30–39	0.6	2.1	1.4	1.0	1.3
40–49	0.4	2.2	1.6	1.2	1.5
50–59	0.5	2.5	1.8	1.5	1.8
60 or older	0.6	2.9	2.1	1.8	2.3



**APPENDIX TABLE 14****Standard errors for stopped drivers who were searched by police, by demographic characteristics, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Demographic characteristic	2002	2005	2008
Total	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%
Female	0.3	0.4	0.3
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>			
White	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%
Black/African American	1.3	1.8	1.8
Hispanic/Latino	1.5	1.6	1.2
Other	1.3	1.7	1.1
Two or more races	~	4.2	5.1
<b>Age</b>			
16–19	1.3%	1.8%	1.6%
20–29	0.7	1.0	1.0
30–39	0.8	0.7	0.8
40–49	0.6	0.7	0.6
50–59	0.5	0.7	0.7
60 or older	0.0	0.3	0.7

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of two or more races.

**APPENDIX TABLE 15****Standard errors for type of search conducted by police during traffic stop and the outcome, 2008**

Characteristic of search	Driver only	Vehicle only	Both driver and vehicle
<b>Type of search</b>			
With consent	7.9%	7.2%	5.4%
Without consent	7.9	7.2	5.4
<b>Outcome of search</b>			
Criminal evidence found	2.2%	1.8%	3.6%
No criminal evidence found	2.3	1.9	3.8
<b>Driver's perception of legitimacy</b>			
Search perceived as legitimate	8.3%	6.1%	4.5%
Search perceived as not legitimate	8.4	6.2	4.6

**APPENDIX TABLE 16****Standard errors for actions taken by police during traffic stops, by time of day, 2008**

Actions taken by police during traffic stops	Percent of drivers stopped—							
	During the day				At night			
	All daytime contacts	6 am–noon	Noon–6 pm	Day, time unknown	All nighttime contacts	6 pm–midnight	Midnight–6 am	Night, time unknown
All stops	1.1%	0.9%	1.1%	0.4%	1.1%	0.9%	0.5%	0.1%
Police searched the driver/vehicle	3.9%	2.6%	3.3%	1.1%	3.9%	3.7%	3.4%	0.4%
Police arrested the driver	4.9	3.8	3.7	0.0	5.0	5.0	4.9	0.0
Police used or threatened force	8.4	3.5	7.7	4.1	8.5	8.3	7.2	0.0

**APPENDIX TABLE 17****Standard errors for U.S. residents age 16 or older who experienced the use or threat of force by police at any time during the year, 2005 and 2008**

U.S. residents age 16 or older	2005	2008
Number of residents experiencing use/threat of force at any time during the year	96,656	72,071
Percent of residents who experienced use/threat of force by police among those who had police contact	0.2%	0.2%

**APPENDIX TABLE 18**

**Standard errors for contacts with police in which force was used or threatened, by demographic characteristics, 2002, 2005, and 2008**

Demographic characteristic	Residents experiencing use or threat of force during most recent contact					
	Number			Percent		
	2002	2005	2008	2002	2005	2008
Total	55,167	78,483	60,539	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	47,680	63,856	48,522	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Female	22,678	36,076	31,828	0.1	0.2	0.2
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>						
White	39,239	55,196	45,385	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Black/African American	25,110	34,010	26,294	0.5	0.8	0.7
Hispanic/Latino	18,731	24,533	18,462	0.4	0.6	0.4
Other	6,675	3,676	9,379	0.5	0.2	0.5
Two or more races	~	9,354	6,947	~	1.9	1.6
<b>Age</b>						
16–19	23,367	32,323	19,946	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%
20–29	29,592	43,118	37,975	0.3	0.4	0.4
30–39	20,130	28,412	25,346	0.2	0.3	0.3
40–49	17,967	18,701	17,458	0.2	0.2	0.2
50–59	12,557	14,006	12,553	0.2	0.2	0.2
60 or older	7,806	13,680	11,429	0.2	0.3	0.2

~Not applicable. The 2002 PPCS did not separately identify persons of two or more races.

**APPENDIX TABLE 19**

**Standard errors for persons who felt the threat or use of force against them by police was excessive, by demographic characteristics, 2008**

Demographic characteristic	Percent who felt force was excessive
Total	4.2%
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	5.0%
Female	7.4
<b>Race/Hispanic origin</b>	
White	5.5%
Black/African American	8.8
Hispanic/Latino	10.7
<b>Age</b>	
16–29	5.7%
30 or older	5.7

**APPENDIX TABLE 20**

**Standard errors for types of force used or threatened by police, 2008**

Type of force police used or threatened	Percent of contacts with police in which—	
	Force was used or threatened	Excessive force was used or threatened
Pushed or grabbed	4.8%	5.4%
Kicked or hit	3.1	4.1
Sprayed chemical/pepper spray	2.0	2.4
Electroshock weapon (stun gun)	1.8	2.4
Pointed gun	4.2	5.0
Threatened force	4.1	4.0
Shouted at resident	4.1	4.7
Cursed at resident	4.6	5.5

**APPENDIX TABLE 21**

**Standard errors for persons who felt police threat or use of force against them was excessive, by type of force used or threatened, 2008**

Type of force used or threatened	Percent who felt force was excessive
Total	4.2%
Police applied force	4.8%
Police only threatened force	8.1
Police only shouted/cursed at resident	12.4

**APPENDIX TABLE 22**

**Standard errors for conduct of residents during contacts with police in which force was used or threatened, 2008**

Conduct of resident during contact involving force	Percent
<b>Resident—</b>	
<b>Engaged in at least one type of behavior</b>	4.2%
Argued with, cursed at, insulted, or verbally threatened the police	3.9
Disobeyed or interfered with officer(s)	3.0
Resisted being handcuffed, arrested, or searched	1.9
Tried to get away from police	1.6
Pushed, grabbed, or hit officer(s)	0.7

**APPENDIX TABLE 23**

**Standard errors for reasons for contact with police in which force was used or threatened, 2008**

Reason for most recent contact	Residents who had contact with police	Contacts with police in which force was used or threatened
<b>Traffic-related contacts</b>	0.9%	4.6%
Driver during traffic stop	0.9	4.2
Passenger during traffic stop	0.2	1.7
Traffic accident	0.5	2.5
<b>Other contacts</b>	0.8%	4.7%
Person reported crime/problem to police	0.7	2.6
Police provided assistance or service	0.3	2.1
Police investigating crime	0.3	3.8
Police suspected resident of wrongdoing	0.2	3.4
Other reason	0.3	2.3

**APPENDIX TABLE 24**

**Standard errors for contacts with police in which force was used or threatened, by reason for contact, 2008**

Reason for most recent contact	Percent of residents who experienced use/threat of force by police among those who had police contact
<b>Total</b>	0.1%
<b>Traffic-related contacts</b>	
Driver during traffic stop	0.2%
Passenger during traffic stop	0.9
Traffic accident	0.3
<b>Other contacts</b>	
Resident reported crime/problem to police	0.2%
Police provided assistance or service	0.5
Police investigating crime	1.1
Police suspected resident of wrongdoing	2.1
Other reason	0.6

**APPENDIX TABLE 25**

**Standard errors for police actions during contacts with the public in which force was used or threatened, 2008**

Police action during contact involving force	Percent
Searched resident	4.8%
Handcuffed resident	4.8
Arrested resident	4.6

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The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. James P. Lynch is the director.

This special report was written by Christine Eith and Matthew R. Durose. The U.S. Census Bureau fielded the questionnaire, processed the survey data, and provided estimation specifications. Joseph Swiderski assisted with data processing. Alexia Cooper, Erika Harrell, Sheri Simmons, and Erica Smith verified the report.

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This report in PDF and in ASCII and its related statistical data and tables are available at the website: <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=2229>.