

2005 BPD Traffic Stop Data Collection Review

In 2005, the Bloomington Police Department collected information on 10,505 traffic stops conducted by the Department. Of these stops, 9,828 qualify for analysis by the Illinois Department of Transportation and Northwestern University. The following table shows the results from 2005 and some comparisons to the 2004 results.

	Caucasian		Minority	
Stops				
Total Stops	7616		2212	
Percent of Stops	77.5		22.5	
Estimated Minority Driving Population in %			13.51	
Ratio				
			1.67	
Reason for Stop				
	Caucasian	%	Minority	%
Total	7616		2212	
Moving Violation	5618	73.8	1349	61.0
Equipment Violation	1181	15.5	538	24.3
License/Registration	814	10.7	325	14.7
Outcomes				
	Caucasian	%	Minority	%
Total	7616		2212	
Citation	5848	76.8	1558	70.4
W. Warning	1210	15.9	425	19.2
V. Warning	1209	15.9	229	10.4
Searches				
	Caucasian	%	Minority	%
Total Drivers	7616		2212	
Consent Searches	54	0.71%	48	2.17%
2004 Search %				
	1.01%		2.92%	
Change				
	-29.70%		-25.68%	

Overall ratio (includes BOLO's)	1.68
2004 Overall ratio (includes BOLO's)	1.81
Difference	-0.13
2004 State Report Ratio (No BOLO's)	1.76
2005 State Report Ratio (No BOLO's)	1.67
Difference	-0.09
Percentage Change	-5.3

The State of Illinois does not count investigative traffic stops in their statistics. An example of an investigative traffic stop would be after a bank robbery, a vehicle and suspect description is given. Any vehicle that fits that description may be stopped. This stop would not be counted as it is investigative in nature, not for a traffic violation. The BPD collects statistics on all traffic stops to ensure due process is followed on all stops.

As we can see from the above tables, the ratios from 2004 to 2005 stayed about the same. The official state ratio did drop about 5%. This ratio may change based on the result of the special census currently being conducted, which could change the minority population percentage of Bloomington.

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The area of most change is in consent searches. Of the 48 minorities who consented to a search of their vehicle, 36 (71%) had 'extensive criminal histories'. This is an instant background check officers use during a traffic stop. Extensive criminal histories show that the person stopped had criminal histories for more than traffic violations or youthful transgressions, such as violent crimes. 11 had gang member hits and 12 were currently on parole. Conversely, 34 (63%) of the Caucasians had extensive criminal histories. One had a gang hit and one had a parole hit.

While minorities are 3 times as likely to be asked for a consent search, a review of their criminal backgrounds shows that BPD officers are asking for consent searches based on criminal history, not racial bias.

The results for 2005 show that more traffic stops were conducted than the previous year. Thus, the BPD did not 'de-police' from traffic stops. Stops of minorities did fall somewhat, and the changes in the Census data will alter the results as far as the ratio is concerned. Consent searches of minorities were constant from both years in terms of number of persons searched. However, the rate at which minorities consented to a vehicle search dropped 25% last year.

Minorities still are stopped more for equipment violations than Caucasians. This also helps to explain why minorities are given more warning than Caucasians. Most likely there is an economic influence at work.

Contraband was found in 15.3% of all searches. The hit rates between Caucasians and minorities were almost identical this year, 15.2% for Caucasians and 15.4% for minorities.

Minority * Contraband Found Crosstabulation

		Contraband Found		
		No	Yes	Total
Non-Minority	Count	347	62	409
	% within Minority	84.8%	15.2%	100.0%
	% within Contraband Found	46.1%	45.6%	46.0%
Minority	Count	406	74	480
	% within Minority	84.6%	15.4%	100.0%
	% within Contraband Found	53.9%	54.4%	54.0%
Total	Count	753	136	889
	% within Minority	84.7%	15.3%	100.0%
	% within Contraband Found	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The next table is for the Type of Violation. Caucasians are generally pulled over for speeding, while minorities tend to get pulled over for 'Other' violations. Minorities tend to get stopped more for equipment and registration violations, which are not categories defined by the State for

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the Type of Moving Violation field. This causes more 'Other' entries for the Type of Moving Violation.

Type of Moving Violation * Minority Crosstabulation

			Minority		Total
			Non-Minority	Minority	
Type of Moving Violation	Speeding	Count	4118	805	4923
		% within Type of Moving Violation	83.6%	16.4%	100.0%
	Improper Lane Use	Count	236	107	343
		% within Type of Moving Violation	68.8%	31.2%	100.0%
	Seat Belts	Count	223	60	283
		% within Type of Moving Violation	78.8%	21.2%	100.0%
	Traffic Control Device	Count	615	196	811
		% within Type of Moving Violation	75.8%	24.2%	100.0%
	Follow Too Close	Count	13	2	15
		% within Type of Moving Violation	86.7%	13.3%	100.0%
	Other	Count	2337	1115	3452
		% within Type of Moving Violation	67.7%	32.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	7542	2285	9827
		% within Type of Moving Violation	76.7%	23.3%	100.0%

Overall, we are in the same position as a year ago. The results neither conclusively confirm nor vindicate accusations of profiling, but they certainly are not a cause for concern. Fewer minorities were stopped in 2005 in terms of their representation in the local population. This is despite knowing that this benchmark is wrong. The proportion of minorities submitting to consent searches dropped considerably. A closer look shows that persons who submit to consent searches have lengthy criminal histories regardless of their race or ethnicity. There are no areas of concern that cannot be explained, thus showing the training and professionalism of the BPD officers, as they do not systematically profile drivers based on their race.