

2006 BPD Traffic Stop Data Collection Review

In 2006, the Bloomington Police Department collected information on 11,704 traffic stops conducted by the Department. Of these stops, 10,987 qualify for analysis by the Illinois Department of Transportation and Northwestern University. The following table shows the results from 2006 (those records sent for State analysis) and some comparisons to the 2005 results.

	Caucasian	Minority
Stops		
Total Stops	8579	2408
Percent of Stops	78.1	21.9
Estimated Minority Driving Population in %		13.51
Ratio		1.62

Reason for Stop	Caucasian	%	Minority	%
Total	8579		2408	
Moving Violation	5482	63.9	1403	58.3
Equipment Violation	1944	22.7	619	25.7
License/Registration	1153	13.4	386	16.0

Outcomes	Caucasian	%	Minority	%
Total	8579		2408	
Citation	6469	75.4	1724	71.6
W. Warning	1386	16.2	446	18.5
V. Warning	724	8.4	238	9.9

2006 Searches	Caucasian	Minority
Total Drivers	8579	2408
Vehicle Consent Searches	53	30
Percent of Drivers Consenting To Vehicle Search in 2006	0.62%	1.25%
2005 Vehicle Consent Search %	0.71%	2.92%

2006 Driver Consent Searches	81	97
2006 Driver Consent Searches %	0.94%	4.03%
2005 Driver Consent Searches	65	87
2005 Driver Consent Searches %	0.90%	3.90%

2005 Overall ratio (includes BOLO's)	1.68
2006 Overall ratio (includes BOLO's)	1.61
Difference	-0.07
2005 State Report Ratio (No BOLO's)	1.67
2006 State Report Ratio (No BOLO's)	1.62
Difference	0.05
Percentage Change	-2.9

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The State of Illinois does not count *investigative* traffic stops in its statistics. For example, following a bank robbery, a vehicle and suspect description is given. Any vehicle that fits that description may be stopped. Such a stop would not be counted, because 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 can be seen in the tables above, the ratios from 2005 to 2006 stayed about the same. The official state ratio dropped almost 3% to 1.62. In 2004, the ratio of minorities stopped to their supposed driving population was 1.76. This represents a drop of 8% over three years. These ratios must be examined in the context that IDOT uses the 2000 United States census population of 64,808 persons in Bloomington. A special census in 2006 shows the actual population to be 75,000. *It is widely reported in research articles that the use of census data in the analysis of traffic stop data is unreliable and should be avoided if possible.*

The area of most change is in **consent searches**. Of the 97 minority motorists who consented to a search of their vehicle, 72 (73%) 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. Six had gang member hits and six were on parole at the time of the stop. Conversely, 44 (49%) of the Caucasians had extensive criminal histories. Four had outstanding warrants at the time of the traffic stop.

While minorities are three 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 race.*

Overall, we are in the same position as the past few years. The results neither conclusively confirm nor vindicate accusations of profiling, but they certainly are **not** cause for concern. Fewer minorities were stopped in 2006 in terms of their representation in the local population for the third straight year. *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 BPD officers, as they do not systematically profile drivers based on their race.