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2016 CPD Motor Vehicle Stops: Percentages

This memo is a brief commentary on Columbia Police Department motor vehicle stops in 2106. The Tables accompanying this memo come from pages 237 and 238 of the Attorney General's Annual Report, presented to the City Council at their November 6, 2017 meeting, consisting of a 13-page summary from the City Manager along with a 600+ page appendix.

I have prepared four tables, two with percentages calculated by column totals and two calculate by row totals. In each, I have flagged in red the numbers that are substantially greater than those for the total distribution and in blue those that are substantially less.

Table 1 looks at how "races"¹ differed in how they distributed across stops, comparing White, Black, Hispanic and all people of color. In this table, boldface numbers compare white versus black discrepancies.

As compared with the distribution for the total number of stops, we see that Blacks were much more likely than Whites to be stopped. Blacks and Hispanics were more likely than whites to be arrested.

When we look at the reason for stops, Hispanics were more likely, and Blacks less likely to be stopped for *moving violations* than was the case for the total distribution. Whites were more likely than Blacks to be stopped for moving violations. For *equipment violations*, Hispanics were less likely to be stopped. There were no differences for other "races". *License violations* were more common for Blacks and all people of color. Blacks were more likely to experience investigative stops as compared with Whites and Hispanics had more of these stops as compared with the total.

The only other area where there were substantial differences from the total distribution by "race" was with respect to gender and age. Hispanic males were more likely, and Hispanic females less likely to be stopped. Hispanics in their thirties were more likely to experience stops.

Please Note: The City Manager's memo opined that greater poverty meant Blacks drove older, more defective cars and this resulted in more stops for equipment violations. These data show very small differences between Blacks and Whites that marginally show a lower rate of equipment related stops for Blacks.²

¹ We must note that the concept of race has no ontological reality, although as an epistemological social construct it is of great importance in our culture. This is part of what systemic racism means.

² "One example of how the Vehicle Stops Report fails to take into account the impact of other legitimate factors on racial disparities is the impact of poverty. In Columbia, black people experience significantly higher levels of unemployment and poverty compared to white people. According to most recent five-year estimate data, black people experienced family poverty rates of 28.9 percent and unemployment rates of 11.9 percent, whereas white people experienced family poverty rates of 6.9 percent and unemployment rates of 3.7 percent.

Table 2 compares “races” as they distributed based on searches. Table 1 showed Blacks were more likely to be searched than were Whites. Here we look at the distribution holding the total number of searches constant.

As compared with the total distribution of searches, White drivers were more likely to consent to searches, they were less likely to be searched for drug and alcohol odor. Hispanics and all people of color were more likely to be searched because of drug and alcohol odor. Comparing White and Black drivers who were searched, White drivers were more likely to experience consent searches and searches because of drug dog alerts, and less likely because of drug and alcohol odor. Black drivers were more likely to be searched because of drug and alcohol odor, incident to arrest and “other” reasons.³

As compared with the total distribution, Black drivers were more likely to be searched. White drivers were more likely to have both themselves and the vehicle searched. Comparing White and Black drivers searches of all kinds were more likely for Blacks.

Searches of Black drivers were of shorter duration than for White drivers.

With respect to contraband, drugs and alcohol were almost twice as likely to be found with White drivers as compared with the total. Among Blacks and all people of color the incidence of drugs and alcohol was substantially lower than for the total distribution.

As compared with the total distribution, White drivers were less likely to be arrested for outstanding warrants or traffic violations. Blacks were less likely to be arrested for drug violations, DWI/BAC. or property offenses. Hispanics were more likely to be arrested for traffic violations and less likely to be arrested for outstanding warrants, drug violations or “other” violations.

Table 3 returns to looking at the distribution of motor vehicle stops, this time based on the row totals. 62.7% of all stops involved White drivers and 31.2% Black drivers. Just over half the searches were of White drivers and 45.5 % were of Black drivers, a distribution very similar to that for arrests. Comparing these figures with the distribution of “races” in the city population shows Whites were less likely to be stopped and Blacks more likely to be stopped

“This is relevant to the discussion of vehicle stops because “equipment” and “license” stops are impacted by a person’s economic means. A person in poverty may not have the financial ability to pay for vehicle repairs (i.e. broken taillight, nonfunctioning turn signal, etc.) or license their vehicle (i.e. cannot afford to pay vehicle sales tax or other associated costs, do not have the funds to get their vehicle in proper working order to pass a vehicle inspection, etc.). Also, it is perceived that people of less economic means are more likely to drive older cars in need of equipment repairs. Therefore, it can be concluded that people in poverty are at a greater risk of being the subject of a vehicle stop for equipment and license reasons. This point is especially important considering the fact that equipment and license stops accounted for 62.88 percent of all vehicle stops in Columbia in 2016. Taking this information into consideration, it can be seen how factors not accounted for in the vehicle stops data can impact the racial disparities.” (City Manager’s Memo: *Vehicle Stops and Listening Tour Summary*, November 6 City Council Meeting, p. 4)

³ With regard to drugs and alcohol, this suggests that objective identification of probable cause targeted White drivers, while subjective identification targeted Black drivers.

As compared with all stops every reason for stops, every stop outcome, stops for both genders and stops at all ages, a lower percentage of Whites and a higher percentage of Blacks were stopped than their distribution in the population would suggest.

In this, and the next, table, we compared “races” to the distribution of total stops. Those that show a substantially greater percentage than the total have a green background. Those that are substantially less have a yellow background.

Black and all drivers of color were more likely to be stopped for license or investigative reasons. White drivers were more likely to get a citation. Black and other drivers were more likely to have no action as a result of the stop.

Stops on interstate highways were more likely to involve White drivers, as were stops on county roads.⁴

There were no differences in age categories other than older Black drivers were less likely to be stopped.

Table 4 looks at the distribution of searches by “race.” Relative to their share of the city population, searches were disproportionately of Black drivers⁵

With the exception of searches lasting more than half an hour (of which there were 8 instances), **for every cause of search, for every category of search, for every duration of search, for every type of contraband found, and for every charge at the point of arrest, Blacks showed a higher percentage than their share of population.**

Relative to White drivers, Black drivers were more likely to be searched in the categories of drug and alcohol odor and suspicion of a weapon. Black drivers were more often found with currency or a weapon defined as contraband, and they were more likely to be charged with resisting arrest.

Relative to Black drivers, White drivers were more likely to be searched as a result of a drug dog alert; they were more likely to be subject to search of the driver or car/property, but less likely both; they had longer searches, were more likely to be found with “other” contraband and were more likely to be charged with drug violations, offense against person, DWI/BAC, property offenses, and “other” offenses.

Conclusion

What the data show is that **people of color, predominantly those defined as “Black”, were more likely to be stopped, and more likely to be searched on every dimension measured in the report, except in two small categories.**

This looks like a pattern that, at the very least, merits deeper investigation. There is work to be done.

⁴ There were only 18 stops on county roads, so these figures may not be meaningful.

⁵ I failed to color-code those numbers on the table. The 50.8% of searches that were of White drivers should be colored blue. The 40.4% that were of Black drivers should be red.

1

Motor Vehicle Stops, Columbia Police Department, 2016

percentages based on total stops

Indicators		Total	White	Black	Hispanic	All POC
Stops		11819	7416	3691	197	3888
Searches %		11.4	9.2	16.0	15.2	15.0
Arrests		11.2	7.0	12.6	11.2	11.5
Statewide Population %						
Local Population %						
Disparity Index		NA	0.8	3.1	0.6	
Contraband Hit Rate		39.8	40.2	39.4	40.0	
Arrest Rate		8.7	7.0	12.6	11.2	
Reason for Stop %	Moving	41.0	43.1	35.1	46.7	39.8
	Equipment	35.3	36.2	34.2	27.4	33.7
	License	27.6	24.1	35.4	29.9	33.5
	Investigative	3.0	2.4	4.0	5.1	
Stop Outcome	Citation	11.0	11.9	9.3	9.1	
	Warning	86.1	86.7	84.6	83.8	
	No Action	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.5	
Location of Stop	Interstate hwy	4.9	5.5	4.0	7.6	
	US Highway	3.2	3.5	2.6	3.6	
	State Highway	44.8	46.1	41.5	41.5	
	County Road	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	
	City Street	47.0	44.8	51.9	47.2	51.6
Driver Gender	Male	59.6	57.3	61.2	73.6	63.3
	Female	40.4	42.7	38.7	26.4	
Driver Age	17 and under	2.5	2.5	2.6	3.0	
	18-29	52.1	50.6	54.3	49.7	
	30-39	20.0	18.9	21.8	26.4	
	40 and over	25.4	27.9	21.4	20.8	

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Motor Vehicle Stops, Columbia Police Department, 2016

percentages based on total searches

Indicators		Total	White	Black	Hispanic	All POC
Searches #		1346	884	612	30	662
Probable Cause/ authority to Search	Consent	39.7	43.9	35.3	43.3	35.5
	Inventory	2.1	2.0	2.3	0.0	2.1
	Drug/Alcohol odor	21.1	13.5	28.4	36.6	29.0
	Incident to arrest	20.7	19.4	22.7	22.7	22.1
	Plain View Contraband	7.5	8.2	7.0	6.7	6.8
	Suspicion of Weapon	5.3	4.2	6.7	0.0	6.5
	Drug-dog Alert	9.1	11.5	6.8	3.3	6.5
What Searched	Other	2.9	2.6	3.1	3.3	3.2
	Driver	2.5	2.1	6.0	3.3	2.3
	Car/Property	10.3	8.8	9.2	13.3	9.2
	Driver & Property	87.1	66.4	88.7	83.3	88.5
Search Duration	0-15 minutes	88.4	65.8	92.8	80.0	91.8
	16-30 minutes	11.0	10.6	7.2	20.0	8.1
	31+ minutes	0.6	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contraband	Drugs/Alcohol	44.7	86.7	36.6	43.3	36.6
	Currency	0.6	0.1	1.3	0.0	1.1
	Weapon	3.5	2.1	4.1	3.3	4.2
	Stolen Property	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.8
	Other	1.6	1.8	0.8	0.0	0.8
Arrest Charge	Outstanding Warrant	40.0	30.4	42.2	16.7	40.8
	Drug Violation	45.2	41.5	36.1	30.0	36.4
	Resist Arrest	1.7	1.2	2.0	0.0	1.8
	Offense Against Person	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.0	0.6
	Traffic Violation	52.1	35.2	56.8	63.3	58.9
	DWI/BAC	11.0	12.6	5.2	10.0	5.6
	Property Offense	2.0	1.9	1.4	0.0	1.5
	Other	11.1	9.8	9.6	3.3	9.5



Motor Vehicle Stops, Columbia Police Department, 2016

Indicators		Total	White	Black	Other	All POC
percentages based on row totals						
Stops		11819.0	62.7	31.2	6.0	37.3
Searches		1346.0	50.7	45.5	3.7	49.2
Arrests		1028.0	50.7	45.1	4.9	50.0
Statewide Population %						
Local Population %			79.7	10.0	10.3	20.3
Disparity Index			0.8	3.1		
Contraband Hit Rate			40.2	39.4		
Arrest Rate		8.7	7.0	12.6		
Reason for Stop %	Moving	4848.0	65.9	26.7	7.4	34.2
	Equipment	4171.0	64.4	30.3	5.3	35.6
	License	3261.0	54.8	40.1	5.1	45.2
	Investigative	350.0	51.7	41.7	6.6	45.2
Stop Outcome	Citation	1299.0	67.7	26.5	5.9	32.3
	Warning	10172.0	63.2	30.7	6.1	36.8
	No Action	30.0	40.0	46.7	13.3	60.0
Location of Stop	Interstate Hwy	579.0	70.4	25.4	4.1	29.5
	US Hwy	376.0	69.4	28.0	4.8	33.6
	State Hwy	5290.0	64.6	28.9	6.4	35.3
	County Road	18.0	83.3	16.7	0.0	16.7
	City Street	5556.0	59.6	34.4	5.9	40.3
Driver Gender	Male	7042.0	60.4	32.1	7.5	39.6
	Female	4777.0	66.2	29.9	3.9	33.8
Driver Age	17 and Under	298.0	63.4	32.2	4.4	36.6
	18-29	6155.0	60.9	32.5	6.5	39.0
	30-39	2367.0	59.3	33.9	6.8	40.7
	40 and over	2999.0	69.1	26.3	4.6	30.9

> % of population

< % of population

> % of stops

< % of stops

(4)

Motor Vehicle Stops, Columbia Police Department, 2016

Indicators		Total	White	Black	Other	All POC
Searches #		1346	50.8	45.5	3.7	49.2
Probable Cause/ authority to Search	Consent	535	56.0	40.4	3.4	43.8
	Inventory	28	50.0	50.0	0.0	50.0
	Drug/Alcohol odor	284	32.4	61.2	6.3	67.5
	Incident to arrest	279	47.7	49.8	2.5	52.3
	Plain View Contraband	101	55.4	42.6	2.0	44.6
	Suspicion of Weapon	72	40.3	56.9	2.8	59.7
	Drug-dog Alert	122	64.8	34.4	0.8	35.2
	Other	39	46.2	48.7	5.1	53.8
What Searched	Driver	34	55.9	38.2	5.9	44.0
	Car/Property	139	56.1	40.2	3.6	43.8
	Driver & Property	1173	50.0	46.3	3.7	50.0
Search Duration	0-15 minutes	1190	48.9	47.7	3.4	51.1
	16-30 minutes	148	63.5	29.7	6.8	36.5
	31+ minutes	8	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contraband	Drugs/Alcohol	502	51.8	44.6	3.6	48.2
	Currency	8	12.5	87.5	0.0	0.0
	Weapon	47	40.4	53.2	6.4	59.6
	Stolen Property	11	54.5	45.5	0.0	0.0
	Other	21	76.2	23.8	0.0	0.0
Arrest Charge	Outstanding Warrant	539	49.9	47.9	2.2	50.1
	Drug Violation	608	60.4	36.3	3.5	39.8
	Resist Arrest	23	47.8	52.2	0.0	0.0
	Offense Against Person	12	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0
	Traffic Violation	701	44.4	49.6	6.0	55.6
	DWI/BAC	148	75.0	21.6	3.4	25.0
	Property Offense	27	63.0	33.3	3.7	37.0
	Other	150	58.0	39.3	2.7	42.0

> % of population

< % of population

> % of searches

< % of searches