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## Black Drivers Searched More Often, Feds Say

By Donna Leinwand  
USA Today

(April 30) - Police are more likely to search black and Hispanic drivers than white drivers, according to a Justice Department study released Sunday.

Black drivers are three times as likely and Hispanic drivers are twice as likely to be searched as white drivers, the study shows. The data show that a similar percentage of drivers of each ethnicity was stopped, 8%-9% in 2005.

Police stopped 18 million drivers in 2005 and found evidence of a crime in about 12% of the searches, according to the report by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics.

"It tells us that there are a lot of things that need closer examination," says Dennis Parker, director of the racial justice program for the American Civil Liberties Union.

"People of all races and ethnicities are stopped at the same rate. It is after the stop that disparities appear."

Matthew Durose, the author of the study, said the survey did not address the reason why police conducted the searches.

"There are countless reasons or circumstances that could lead police to conduct a search after making a traffic stop," Durose said. "There's really no way for us to say this is clearly evidence of racial profiling."

The findings are based on interviews with 63,943 people as part of the Police-Public Contact Survey conducted in 2005 for the Justice Department by the Census Bureau. The people surveyed were asked whether they had face-to-face contact with police in the past year.

The study found that 19% - nearly 1 in 5 people - had personal contact with a police officer in 2005, down from 21% in 2002, the first year of the study.

Young, white men were most likely to have contact with police, the survey found.

More than half the people surveyed said their contact with police involved a traffic stop or accident.

In both 2002 and 2005, police stopped white, black and Hispanic drivers at similar rates.

Police action taken after the initial stop differed among genders, and among black, Hispanic and white drivers.

Male drivers were three times more likely than female drivers to be arrested, the study found.

Black drivers were twice as likely to be arrested, at 4.5%, than white drivers, at 2.1%, the study showed.

About 3.1% of Hispanic drivers were arrested after a traffic stop.

More Hispanic drivers received tickets than white or black drivers: two thirds, compared with 56% of white and black drivers.

Black and Hispanic drivers were less likely than white drivers to say police behaved properly during a traffic stop, the survey found.

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