



Contacts Between Police and the Public, 2015

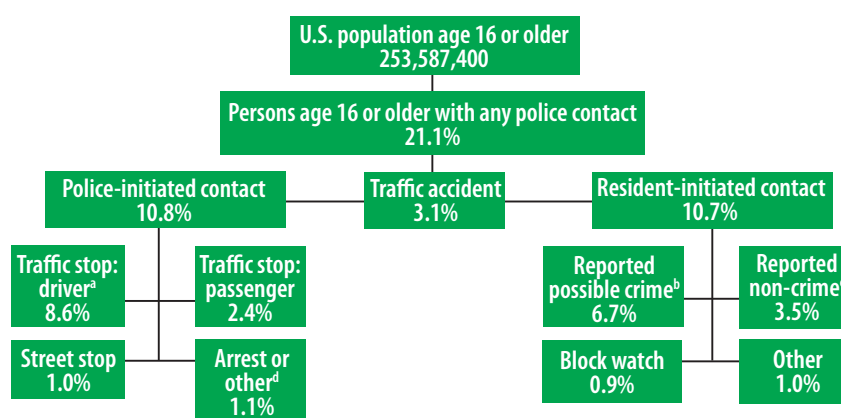
Elizabeth Davis and Anthony Whyde, *BJS Statisticians*
Lynn Langton, Ph.D., *former BJS Statistician*

In 2015, an estimated 21% of U.S. residents age 16 or older—about 53.5 million persons—had experienced some type of contact with the police during the prior 12 months (**figure 1**). This was down from 26% of residents in 2011.

A similar percentage of residents experienced police-initiated (10.8%) or resident-initiated (10.7%) contact. The most prevalent specific types of contact with police occurred when drivers were pulled over during a traffic stop (8.6% of residents experienced this) or when residents reported a crime, disturbance, or suspicious activity to police (6.7% of residents).

Findings described in this report are based on data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' 2015 Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS), a supplement to the National Crime Victimization

FIGURE 1
Percent of U.S. population age 16 or older who had any police contact, by type of contact and reason, 2015



Note: Details may not sum to totals because respondent could indicate yes to multiple reasons. See appendix table 1 for estimates and standard errors.

^aDenominator excludes persons who never drive.

^bIncludes residents who reported any kind of crime, disturbance, or suspicious activity to police.

^cIncludes residents who reported an emergency not perceived to be a crime, such as a medical emergency or a traffic accident in which they were not involved, to police.

^dIncludes residents who reported an arrest as the sole type of contact with police, occurring outside of the context of a traffic stop, street stop, or traffic accident, such as the police going to a resident's home or place of work to execute an arrest warrant. A contact that involved arrest as an outcome of another type of contact is counted in the initial type of contact.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The portion of U.S. residents age 16 or older who had experienced contact with the police in the preceding 12 months declined from 26% in 2011 to 21% in 2015, a drop of more than 9 million people (from 62.9 million to 53.5 million).
- The number of persons experiencing police-initiated contact fell by 8 million (down 23%), the number of persons who initiated contact with the police fell by 6 million (down 19%), and the number experiencing contact from traffic accidents did not change significantly.
- Whites (23%) were more likely than blacks (20%) or Hispanics (17%) to have contact with police.
- Police were equally likely to initiate contact with blacks and whites (11% each) but were less likely to initiate contact with Hispanics (9%).
- Police were more likely to initiate contact with males (12%) than with females (9%), while females (11%) were more likely to initiate contact with police than males (10%).
- When police initiated the contact, blacks (5.2%) and Hispanics (5.1%) were more likely to experience the threat or use of physical force than whites (2.4%), and males (4.4%) were more likely to experience the threat or use of physical force than females (1.8%).

Survey (NCVS). The NCVS collects information from a nationally representative sample of persons age 12 or older in U.S. households. The PPCS was designed to collect information from those 16 or older on contact with police during the 12 months prior to the interview.

Residents were asked about instances when they sought help from police (resident-initiated contacts) and when police approached or stopped them (police-initiated contacts). Resident-initiated contacts with police included reporting a crime, disturbance, or suspicious activity; reporting a non-crime emergency, such as a medical emergency; participating in a block watch or other anti-crime programs; or approaching or seeking help from police for another reason. Police-initiated contacts included being stopped by police while in a public place or a parked vehicle (i.e., street stop), being stopped by police while driving a motor vehicle

(i.e., traffic stop), riding as a passenger in a car that was stopped by police, being arrested, or being stopped or approached by police for some other reason. The PPCS also collected data on contacts resulting from a traffic accident.

Females were more likely to initiate contact with police than males

Overall, a higher percentage of males (22%) than females (20%) experienced police contact (table 1). This was driven by a higher percentage of police-initiated contacts among males (12%) than females (9%). In comparison, females (11%) were more likely to initiate contact with police than males (10%). The percentage of traffic accidents reported to police was similar for males and females (3%).

TABLE 1

Number and percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older with any police contact, by type of contact and demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	U.S. population age 16 or older	Any contact		Police-initiated contact		Resident-initiated contact		Traffic accident	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	253,587,400	53,469,300	21.1%	27,415,900	10.8%	27,060,200	10.7%	7,950,500	3.1%
Sex									
Male*	122,968,400	27,038,300	22.0%	15,339,100	12.5%	12,537,300	10.2%	3,978,300	3.2%
Female	130,619,000	26,431,000	20.2 †	12,076,800	9.2 †	14,523,000	11.1 †	3,972,200	3.0
Race/Hispanic origin^a									
White*	164,813,500	37,334,200	22.7%	18,426,800	11.2%	19,678,600	11.9%	5,295,600	3.2%
Black	31,056,200	6,146,400	19.8 †	3,509,800	11.3	2,715,900	8.7 †	1,055,400	3.4
Hispanic	39,697,500	6,680,700	16.8 †	3,571,400	9.0 †	3,164,300	8.0 †	1,047,000	2.6 †
Other ^b	18,020,200	3,307,900	18.4 †	1,907,900	10.6	1,501,400	8.3 †	552,500	3.1
Age									
16–17	8,467,700	1,188,300	14.0% †	853,300	10.1% †	218,100	2.6% †	239,300	2.8% †
18–24*	30,236,400	8,248,000	27.3	5,798,600	19.2	2,748,700	9.1	1,618,800	5.4
25–44	84,178,900	19,998,800	23.8 †	10,908,500	13.0 †	9,959,800	11.8 †	3,005,700	3.6 †
45–64	83,750,600	17,290,700	20.6 †	7,503,500	9.0 †	9,972,100	11.9 †	2,172,300	2.6 †
65 or older	46,953,700	6,743,400	14.4 †	2,351,900	5.0 †	4,161,400	8.9	914,400	1.9 †

Note: Details may not sum to totals because respondent could indicate yes to multiple reasons. See appendix table 2 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, unless specified.

^bIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Whites (23%) were more likely to experience police contact than blacks (20%), Hispanics (17%), and persons of other races (18%).¹ A similar percentage of whites and blacks had police-initiated contact (11%). However, whites (12%) were more likely to initiate contact with police than blacks (9%) and Hispanics (8%).

Persons ages 16 to 17 and those ages 65 or older were least likely to have contact with police (14%). Persons ages 18 to 24 were most likely to have any contact with police (27%) and were most likely to experience police-initiated contact (19%).

Overall, there was no statistically significant difference in the percentages of police-initiated contacts by household income (**table 2**). However, persons in the highest income group of \$75,000 or more per year were more likely to initiate contact with police (12%) than the lowest income group of less than \$25,000 per year (10%). Across all types of contact, persons residing in cities with a population of 1 million or more persons (14%) were less likely to have contact with police than those residing in cities or towns with fewer than 100,000 persons (22%).

¹White, black, and other race categories exclude persons of Hispanic or Latino origin.

TABLE 2
Number and percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older with police contact, by type of contact, household income, and city population size, 2015

Household income/ city population	U.S. population age 16 or older	Any contact		Police-initiated contact		Resident-initiated contact		Traffic accident	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	253,587,400	53,469,300	21.1%	27,415,900	10.8%	27,060,200	10.7%	7,950,500	3.1%
Household income									
\$24,999 or less*	52,290,500	10,679,200	20.4%	5,795,200	11.1%	5,222,600	10.0%	1,669,400	3.2%
\$25,000–\$49,999	68,168,600	13,630,500	20.0	7,191,200	10.5	6,783,700	10.0	1,962,000	2.9
\$50,000–\$74,999	46,475,800	9,818,700	21.1	4,941,400	10.6	4,987,800	10.7	1,443,600	3.1
\$75,000 or more	86,652,400	19,341,000	22.3 †	9,488,100	10.9	10,066,100	11.6 †	2,875,500	3.3
City population^a									
99,999 or fewer*	182,904,500	39,569,200	21.6%	20,722,400	11.3%	19,438,000	10.6%	6,016,300	3.3%
100,000–499,999	37,841,500	8,309,400	22.0	3,953,600	10.4 ‡	4,442,000	11.7 †	1,275,000	3.4
500,000–999,999	12,644,600	2,703,900	21.4	1,387,600	11.0	1,567,200	12.4 †	307,900	2.4 †
1 million or more	20,196,800	2,886,900	14.3 †	1,352,200	6.7 †	1,613,000	8.0 †	351,300	1.7 †

Note: Details may not sum to totals because respondent could indicate yes to multiple reasons. See appendix table 3 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

^aBased on incorporated place (for example, a city, town, village, or borough), or Census-designated place when the resident does not reside within an incorporated place.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Blacks were more likely to be pulled over in traffic stops than whites and Hispanics

Being a driver in a traffic stop was the most common form of police-initiated contact. Of the 223.3 million U.S. drivers age 16 or older, 8.6% experienced a stop as the driver of a motor vehicle.² A greater percentage of males (10.2%) than females (7.0%) were pulled over as the driver in a traffic stop (**table 3**). Blacks (9.8%) were more likely than whites (8.6%) and Hispanics (7.6%) to be the driver in a traffic stop. Across age groups, drivers ages 18 to 24 (14.8%) were most likely to be pulled over.

²The driving population includes persons age 16 or older who reported driving at least a few times per year or those who were stopped as the driver during a traffic stop.

About 6 million (2.4%) U.S. residents age 16 or older were passengers in a motor vehicle during a traffic stop by police. Younger persons ages 16 to 17 (4.7%) and ages 18 to 24 (6.3%) were more likely to be a passenger in a traffic stop than older persons.

Overall, 1.0% of persons age 16 or older experienced one or more street stops while in a public place or parked vehicle. A higher percentage of blacks (1.5%) experienced street stops than whites (0.9%) and Hispanics (0.9%). Younger persons ages 16 to 17 (1.8%) and ages 18 to 24 (2.4%) were more likely to experience a street stop than older residents.

TABLE 3
Number and percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older with police-initiated contact, by type of contact and demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Total driving population	Traffic stop: driver		Total population	Traffic stop: passenger		Street stop ^a		Arrest ^b		Other ^c	
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	223,315,400	19,204,500	8.6%	253,587,400	5,964,100	2.4%	2,503,700	1.0%	814,800	0.3%	1,946,700	0.8%
Sex												
Male*	110,771,600	11,270,900	10.2%	122,968,400	2,693,500	2.2%	1,591,000	1.3%	541,300	0.4%	1,072,600	0.9%
Female	112,543,800	7,933,500	7.0 †	130,619,000	3,270,600	2.5 †	912,700	0.7 †	273,500	0.2 †	874,100	0.7 †
Race/Hispanic origin^d												
White*	151,530,700	13,041,000	8.6%	164,813,500	3,865,900	2.3%	1,494,300	0.9%	430,000	0.3%	1,409,200	0.9%
Black	24,772,700	2,416,700	9.8 †	31,056,200	788,200	2.5	452,100	1.5 †	155,800	0.5 †	172,600	0.6 †
Hispanic	32,212,200	2,448,300	7.6 †	39,697,500	912,700	2.3	370,400	0.9	137,400	0.3	198,700	0.5 †
Other ^e	14,799,700	1,298,500	8.8	18,020,200	397,200	2.2	186,900	1.0	91,700	0.5 †	166,200	0.9
Age												
16–17	4,537,700	374,000	8.2% †	8,467,700	400,000	4.7% †	152,200	1.8%	20,000	0.2% †!	54,000	0.6% !
18–24*	25,228,600	3,726,300	14.8	30,236,400	1,898,200	6.3	734,400	2.4	211,300	0.7	240,200	0.8
25–44	77,640,500	7,980,100	10.3 †	84,178,900	2,163,400	2.6 †	888,200	1.1 †	389,600	0.5 †	687,000	0.8
45–64	77,278,900	5,516,800	7.1 †	83,750,600	1,098,900	1.3 †	571,000	0.7 †	176,000	0.2 †	696,400	0.8
65 or older	38,629,700	1,607,200	4.2 †	46,953,700	403,600	0.9 †	157,900	0.3 †	17,900	<0.1 †!	269,100	0.6 ‡

Note: See appendix table 4 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

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

^aWhile in a public place or parked vehicle.

^bIncludes residents who reported an arrest as the sole type of contact with police, occurring outside of the context of a traffic stop, street stop, or traffic accident. A contact that involved arrest as an outcome of another type of contact is counted in the initial type of contact.

^cIncludes residents who were approached by police for any other reason, such as police serving a summons or stopping to assist with car trouble.

^dExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, unless specified.

^eIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indian and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

A greater percentage of residents contacted police in 2015 to report a potential crime than a non-crime emergency

An estimated 6.7% of U.S. residents age 16 or older initiated contact with police on one or more occasions to report a crime, disturbance, or suspicious activity, while 3.5% initiated contact to report a non-crime emergency, such as a medical emergency or a traffic accident in which they were not involved (table 4). Females (7.0%) were more likely than males (6.3%) to report a crime, disturbance, or suspicious activity

to police. There were no differences between males and females in the percentages reporting a non-crime emergency (about 3.5% each).

Regardless of whether it was a crime or non-crime emergency, residents ages 25 to 44 and ages 45 to 64 were more likely to contact police than persons in other age categories. Whites were more likely than blacks, Hispanics, and persons of other races to contact police to report a crime, a non-crime emergency, or to seek help for some other reason.

TABLE 4
Number and percent of residents age 16 or older who initiated contact with police, by type of contact and demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Reported possible crime ^a		Reported non-crime ^b		Block watch		Sought help/other	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	16,928,100	6.7%	8,841,900	3.5%	2,366,200	0.9%	2,478,400	1.0%
Sex								
Male*	7,758,600	6.3%	4,213,100	3.4%	1,136,000	0.9%	1,129,600	0.9%
Female	9,169,500	7.0 †	4,628,800	3.5	1,230,200	0.9	1,348,800	1.0
Race/Hispanic origin^c								
White*	12,065,800	7.3%	6,611,800	4.0%	1,722,500	1.0%	1,910,000	1.2%
Black	1,659,000	5.3 †	794,400	2.6 †	339,200	1.1	228,600	0.7 †
Hispanic	2,186,400	5.5 †	948,200	2.4 †	212,400	0.5 †	206,600	0.5 †
Other ^d	1,016,900	5.6 †	487,600	2.7 †	92,100	0.5 †	133,200	0.7 †
Age								
16–17	90,500	1.1% †	95,000	1.1% †	33,200	0.4% !	21,700	0.3% † !
18–24*	1,794,500	5.9	861,600	2.8	83,100	0.3	249,500	0.8
25–44	6,533,300	7.8 †	3,497,900	4.2 †	608,200	0.7 †	816,500	1.0
45–64	6,186,300	7.4 †	3,228,300	3.9 †	1,008,800	1.2 †	966,800	1.2 †
65 or older	2,323,400	4.9 †	1,159,100	2.5	632,900	1.3 †	423,900	0.9

Note: See appendix table 5 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

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

^aIncludes residents who reported any kind of crime, disturbance, or suspicious activity to police.

^bIncludes residents who reported an emergency not perceived to be a crime, such as a medical emergency or a traffic accident in which they were not involved, to police.

^cExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, unless specified.

^dIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Police contacts in 2011 compared to 2015

The number and percentage of residents age 16 or older with any police contact decreased from 2011 (26%) to 2015 (21%), a decline of 9.5 million people (**table 5**). With the exception of traffic accidents, which did not change significantly, police contact decreased across all reasons for contact. The number of persons experiencing police-initiated contact fell from 35.4

million in 2011 to 27.4 million in 2015. The number of persons experiencing resident-initiated contact fell from 33.5 million in 2011 to 27.1 million in 2015. Police contact also decreased across all demographic characteristics (**table 6**). The percent of persons with police contact declined among Hispanics (down 24%), blacks (down 23%), and whites (down 16%).

TABLE 5

U.S. residents age 16 or older with police contact, by reason for contact, 2011 and 2015

Reason for contact	2011*		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Any	62,936,500	26.1%	53,469,300	21.1% †
Police-initiated contact	35,425,000	14.7%	27,415,900	10.8% †
Driver during traffic stop ^a	26,166,300	12.3	19,204,500	8.6 †
Passenger during traffic stop	7,121,600	3.0	5,964,100	2.4 †
Street stop ^b	2,935,100	1.2	2,503,700	1.0 †
Arrested ^c	1,618,200	0.7	814,800	0.3 †
Other	3,889,700	1.6	1,946,700	0.8 †
Traffic accident	7,433,700	3.1%	7,950,500	3.1%
Resident-initiated contact	33,501,100	13.9%	27,060,200	10.7% †
Reported possible crime	19,737,100	8.2	16,928,100	6.7 †
Reported non-crime emergency	12,566,200	5.2	8,841,900	3.5 †
Block watch	3,489,700	1.4	2,366,200	0.9 †
Other	2,916,400	1.2	2,478,400	1.0 †

Note: Details may not sum to totals due to residents experiencing multiple types of contact. See appendix table 6 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

^aBased on driving population, which was 212,298,849 persons in 2011 and 223,315,375 persons in 2015.

^bWhile in a public place or parked vehicle.

^cFor 2015, this only includes residents who reported an arrest as the sole type of contact with police, occurring outside of the context of a traffic stop, street stop, or traffic accident. In 2011, the context of arrest was not specified.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2011 and 2015.

Continued on next page

Police contacts in 2011 compared to 2015 (continued)

TABLE 6

U.S. residents age 16 or older with any police contact, by demographic characteristics, 2011 and 2015

Demographic characteristic	2011*		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	62,936,500	26.1%	53,469,300	21.1% †
Sex				
Male	32,134,500	27.2%	27,038,300	22.0% †
Female	30,802,000	25.0	26,431,000	20.2 †
Race/Hispanic origin^a				
White	45,308,900	27.1%	37,334,300	22.7% †
Black	7,159,400	25.8	6,146,400	19.8 †
Hispanic	6,927,800	22.2	6,680,700	16.8 †
Other ^b	3,540,500	23.5	3,307,900	18.4 †
Age				
16–17	1,429,900	17.7%	1,188,300	14.0% †
18–24	9,801,400	34.1	8,248,000	27.3 †
25–44	24,904,300	30.2	19,998,800	23.8 †
45–64	20,328,900	24.7	17,290,700	20.6 †
65 or older	6,471,900	16.2	6,743,400	14.4 †

Note: See appendix table 7 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, unless specified.

^bIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2011 and 2015.

Frequency of contact in 2015

For the first time in the Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS), residents who reported police contact in the 2015 PPCS were asked the number of times they experienced each type of contact during the past 12 months. This new addition to the survey allows the Bureau of Justice Statistics to estimate the frequency of contacts with police by type of contact in addition to the prevalence of each type of contact.

In 2015, residents age 16 or older had nearly 76 million contacts with police. The most common reasons for police contact were reporting a crime, disturbance, or suspicious activity to police (about 23.1 million

contacts), being pulled over as the driver in a traffic stop (22.7 million), and reporting a non-crime emergency (more than 12 million) ([table 7](#)).

Overall, 31% of residents who had police contact experienced multiple contacts of the same type (not shown). Eighteen percent of residents who reported a crime or suspicious activity and 15% who reported a non-crime emergency contacted police more than once during the year. Residents were more likely to be pulled over multiple times as the driver in a traffic stop (13%) than stopped multiple times in a street stop (9%).

TABLE 7

Frequency of police contact during prior 12 months for U.S. residents age 16 or older, by type of contact and race/Hispanic origin, 2015

Type of contact	All races/Hispanic origin ^a		White ^{b*}		Black ^b		Hispanic	
	Number of contacts	Percent with multiple contacts	Number of contacts	Percent with multiple contacts	Number of contacts	Percent with multiple contacts	Number of contacts	Percent with multiple contacts
Reported possible crime ^c	23,107,600	18.4%	16,395,300	17.7%	2,273,800	19.4%	2,865,800	20.1%
Reported non-crime emergency ^d	12,050,200	14.7	8,741,516	14.1	1,232,400	15.4	1,361,800	15.5
Driver during traffic stop ^e	22,734,500	12.8	15,205,900	11.8	3,121,600	18.0 †	2,850,300	13.6
Passenger during traffic stop	6,807,500	9.3	4,360,700	8.6	962,000	13.4	1,030,500	8.1
Street stop ^f	2,966,100	9.3	1,599,100	7.2	763,200	17.0 †	404,000	8.2
Traffic accident ^g	8,111,300	4.1	5,366,200	3.8	1,078,100	3.2	1,101,600	6.1

Note: See appendix table 8 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

^aIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

^bExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin.

^cExcludes 7% of all persons; 7% of whites; 5% of blacks; and 8% of Hispanics with missing information about number of contacts.

^dExcludes 5% of all persons; 6% of whites; 7% of blacks; and 4% of Hispanics with missing information about number of contacts.

^eExcludes the 2% of all persons; 2% of whites; 1% of blacks; and 3% of Hispanics with missing information about number of contacts.

^fExcludes the 9% of all persons; 10% of whites; 5% of blacks; and 9% of Hispanics with missing information about number of contacts.

^gExcludes 2% of all persons; 2% of whites; 1% of blacks; and 1% of Hispanics with missing information about number of contacts.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Most recent contact

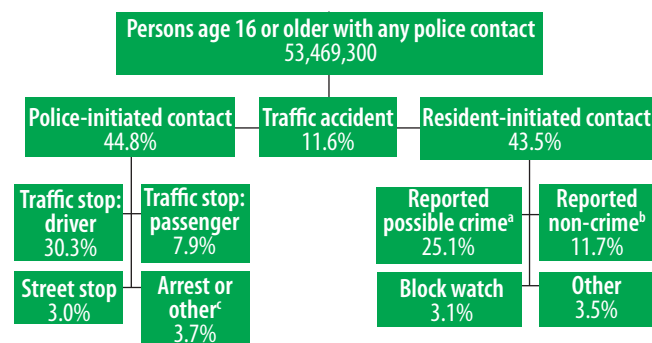
A greater percentage of blacks than whites experienced police-initiated contact during their most recent contact

Residents surveyed in 2015 who experienced any contact with police were asked more detailed questions about the nature of their most recent contact.³ A similar percentage experienced police-initiated contact (45%) during their most recent contact as those who experienced resident-initiated contact (43%) (**figure 2**). A smaller percentage (12%) indicated that their most recent contact with police was during a traffic accident.

³Unless otherwise noted, the remainder of the report focuses on the most recent police contact of residents.

FIGURE 2

Percent of U.S. population age 16 or older who had any police contact, by type of most recent contact and reason, 2015



Note: Includes 0.1% of respondents who indicated they had contact with police but did not know what was their most recent contact. See appendix table 9 for standard errors.

^aIncludes residents who reported any kind of crime, disturbance, or suspicious activity to police.

^bIncludes residents who reported an emergency not perceived to be a crime, such as a medical emergency or a traffic accident in which they were not involved, to police.

^cIncludes residents who reported an arrest as the sole type of contact with police, occurring outside of the context of a traffic stop, street stop, or traffic accident, such as the police going to a resident's home or place of work to execute an arrest warrant. A contact that involved arrest as an outcome of another type of contact is counted in the initial type of contact. Also includes residents who were approached by police for any other reason, such as police serving a summons or stopping to assist with car trouble.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Males (50%) were more likely than females (40%) to have their most recent contact be initiated by police, while females (48%) were more likely than males (39%) to have initiated contact with police (**table 8**). Compared to other racial groups, whites were the least likely to have a police-initiated contact (43%) and most likely to have a resident-initiated contact (46%). Younger persons ages 16 to 17 were about four times as likely to have their most recent contact with police be initiated by police (68%) as to initiate that contact themselves (17%). Meanwhile, persons age 65 or older were almost twice as likely to initiate their most recent contact with police (57%) as to have police initiate it (31%).

TABLE 8

Percent of contact initiated by police and residents age 16 or older, by type of most recent contact and demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Police-initiated contact	Resident-initiated contact	Traffic accident
Total	44.8%	43.5%	11.6%
Sex			
Male*	49.9%	38.8%	11.2%
Female	39.6 †	48.2 †	12.1
Race/Hispanic origin ^a			
White*	43.1%	45.6%	11.2%
Black	49.8 †	36.8 †	13.4 †
Hispanic	47.5 †	40.1 †	12.2
Other ^b	49.3 †	38.3 †	12.4
Age			
16–17	68.1% †	16.8% †	15.1%
18–24*	60.4	25.8	13.7
25–44	47.5 †	41.1 †	11.3 †
45–64	37.9 †	51.3 †	10.8 †
65 or older	31.4 †	56.7 †	11.9

Note: Details may not sum to totals because of rounding. See appendix table 10 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, unless specified.

^bIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Among persons who experienced a police-initiated contact as their most recent contact, most (67%) were the driver in a traffic stop (**table 9**). Also among those whose most recent contact was police-initiated, males (8%) were more likely than females (5%) to have that

contact be a street stop, blacks (9%) were more likely than whites (6%) to have it be a street stop, and persons ages 16 to 17 were more likely to experience a street stop than any other age group.

TABLE 9
Demographic characteristics of U.S. residents age 16 or older for whom the most recent contact was police-initiated, by type of contact, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Total	Driver during traffic stop*	Passenger during traffic stop	Street stop ^a	Arrest ^b	Other
Total	100%	67.5%	17.6%	6.7%	1.9%	6.3%
Sex						
Male*	100%	70.5%	13.3%	7.7%	2.4%	6.1%
Female	100%	63.6 †	23.2 †	5.3 †	1.3 †	6.7
Race/Hispanic origin^c						
White*	100%	68.7%	16.7%	6.1%	1.6%	6.8%
Black	100%	64.5 †	19.3	9.1 †	2.6	4.4 †
Hispanic	100%	64.7 ‡	20.9 †	7.4	2.1	4.9 ‡
Other ^d	100%	66.2	17.0	5.8	3.3	7.7
Age						
16–17	100%	38.3% †	40.4% †	15.2% †	1.9% !	4.2% !
18–24*	100%	60.3	25.2	8.9	2.3	3.4
25–44	100%	70.2 †	16.2 †	5.8 †	2.2	5.6 †
45–64	100%	72.5 †	12.0 †	5.7 †	1.6	8.2 †
65 or older	100%	67.9 †	15.2 †	4.8 †	0.7 † !	11.5 †

Note: See appendix table 11 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

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

^aIncludes persons for whom the most recent contact with police during the past 12 months involved being stopped on the street or in public, but not in a moving motor vehicle.

^bIncludes residents who reported an arrest as the sole type of contact with police, occurring outside of the context of a traffic stop, street stop, or traffic accident. A contact that involved arrest as an outcome of another type of contact is counted in the initial type of contact.

^cExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, unless specified.

^dIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Traffic stops were more likely to be perceived as legitimate when police gave a reason for the stop

The vast majority (95%) of drivers who experienced a traffic stop indicated that police gave a reason for the stop (**table 10**). The primary reason police gave for pulling over a driver was speeding (41%). Most drivers stopped for speeding said the stop was legitimate (91%) and that police behaved properly (95%). Other leading reasons drivers were pulled over included vehicle defects (12%), record checks (10%), illegal turns or lane changes (7%), and stop sign or spotlight violations (7%).

TABLE 10
Drivers' perceptions of legitimacy of traffic stops and police behavior, by reason given for stop and police behavior, 2015

Reason for traffic stop	Total ^a	Reason for stop was legitimate	Police behaved properly
Police did not give reason*	2.1%	36.7%	56.0%
Police gave reason	95.4% †	83.7% †	91.9% †
Speeding*	40.9	90.7	95.5
Vehicle defect	12.2 †	85.3 †	90.3 †
Record check	9.8 †	87.7 ‡	93.1
Stop sign/light violation	7.3 †	70.5 †	90.0 †
Illegal turn/lane change	6.8 †	75.6 †	91.5 †
Seatbelt violation	3.2 †	76.4 †	85.8 †
Cellphone violation	1.7 †	74.4 †	91.6
Roadside sobriety check	1.4 †	78.0 †	86.9 ‡
Other reason	6.3 †	61.0 †	82.5 †
Multiple reasons	5.8 †	84.0 †	85.8 †

Note: Includes persons who were the driver during a traffic stop during their most recent contact with police. See appendix table 12 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

^aDetails will not sum to 100% due to missing data for about 2.5% of cases. Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

In 2% of traffic stops the police did not give a reason for the stop. The percentages of drivers who perceived the stop to be legitimate (37%) and who thought that police behaved properly (56%) were lower in these stops than when police gave a reason.

Hispanic drivers (92%) were less likely to be given a reason for being pulled over than whites (96%) (**table 11**). Drivers age 65 or older were less likely than younger drivers to be given a reason for the traffic stop. When police gave a reason for the stop, black (73%) and Hispanic (80%) drivers were less likely to perceive the traffic stop to be legitimate than white drivers (86%).

TABLE 11
Drivers' perception of traffic-stop legitimacy, by reason given and resident demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Police gave reason		Police did not give reason	
	Total ^a	Stop was legitimate	Total ^a	Stop was legitimate
All drivers in traffic stops	95.4%	83.7%	2.1%	36.7%
Sex				
Male*	94.9%	83.2%	2.4%	33.6%
Female	96.1 ‡	84.5	1.7	43.0
Race/Hispanic origin ^b				
White*	96.1%	86.2%	1.8%	46.3%
Black	94.5	72.7 †	3.1	25.7 †
Hispanic	92.3 †	80.4 †	3.4	19.0 †!
Other ^c	95.8	83.8	1.8 †	36.0 †
Age				
16–17	97.5%	89.6%	0.6% †	<0.1 †
18–24*	96.5	86.6	1.5 †	20.1% †!
25–44	95.5	82.6 †	2.4	38.1
45–64	96.2	82.9 ‡	1.9	36.1
65 or older	89.9 †	84.3	3.3 ‡	50.3 †!

Note: See appendix table 13 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

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

^aTotals will not sum to 100% due to missing data for about 2.5% of cases.

^bExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, unless specified.

^cIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

About half of all drivers pulled over in a traffic stop received a ticket

An estimated 49% of drivers in traffic stops received a ticket, 36% received a warning, 13% received no enforcement action, and 4% were searched or arrested (table 12). During a traffic stop, males (5%) were more likely than females (2%) to experience a vehicle or personal search or be arrested. There were no other significant differences between males and females in the type of enforcement actions resulting from traffic stops.

Regardless of sex or race and Hispanic origin, drivers stopped in a traffic stop were more likely to receive a ticket than any other type of enforcement action or no enforcement action. Drivers who were white were less likely to receive a ticket and more likely to get a warning than drivers who were Hispanic or some other race. Hispanics (8%) were less likely than black (15%) and white (14%) drivers to be let go without enforcement action following a traffic stop.

Drivers ages 45 to 64 (16%) and 65 or older (19%) were more likely to experience no enforcement action from a traffic stop than younger drivers ages 18 to 24 (9%) and 25 to 44 (11%). Drivers ages 16 to 17 (51%) were more likely to get a warning than drivers in other age groups younger than age 65. Drivers ages 18 to 24 (52%) were more likely to get a ticket than drivers ages 16 to 17 (38%, 90% confidence level) and drivers age 65 or older (35%).

TABLE 12

Outcomes of traffic stops, by driver demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Total	No enforcement action ^a	Enforcement action ^a		
			Warning ^b	Ticket	Search or arrest ^c
All drivers in traffic stops	100%	12.7%	36.1%	48.8%	3.7%
Sex					
Male*	100%	13.4%	35.1%	48.7%	4.7%
Female	100%	11.8	37.4	49.0	2.3 †
Race/Hispanic origin^d					
White*	100%	13.5%	38.0%	46.4%	3.3%
Black	100%	14.6	33.6	49.9	4.4
Hispanic	100%	7.7 †	32.9 †	56.4 †	5.0
Other ^e	100%	11.0	27.0 †	57.9 †	4.5
Age					
16–17	100%	11.4% !	50.7% ‡	38.0% ‡	<0.1 † !
18–24*	100%	9.1	37.9	51.8	5.5%
25–44	100%	11.0	35.2	50.8	4.8 †
45–64	100%	15.7 †	33.1 ‡	49.1	2.2 †
65 or older	100%	18.8 †	42.8	35.0 †	1.0 † !

Note: Enforcement actions may not sum to total as respondents may be in more than one category. See appendix table 14 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

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

^aDenominator includes about 1.2% of cases with missing data.

^bIncludes written or verbal.

^cSearch includes personal or vehicle. Denominator includes about 1.5% missing or unknown cases as a result of recoding respondents' most recent contacts.

^dExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, unless specified.

^eIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Traffic stops were more likely to result in a ticket when the police gave a reason for the stop than when they did not

A traffic stop was more likely to result in no enforcement action when drivers were not given a reason for the stop (35%) compared to when they did get a reason (12%) (**table 13**). Thirty-one percent of drivers who were not given a reason for the traffic stop were given a warning and 20% received a ticket. When police gave a reason, 36% of the drivers received a warning and 50% received a ticket.

Drivers who were stopped for a roadside sobriety check (72%) were more likely to have the stop result in no enforcement action than drivers stopped for all other reasons. Warnings were most likely among those who were stopped for vehicle defects (64%). A greater percentage of drivers received tickets for cellphone violations (74%), seatbelt violations (70%), and speeding (66%) than drivers stopped for all other reasons.

TABLE 13
Outcomes of traffic stops, by reason for stop, 2015

Reason for traffic stop	Total	No enforcement action ^a	Enforcement action ^a		
			Warning ^b	Ticket	Search or arrest ^c
Police did not give reason*	100%	35.4%	31.0%	19.8%	14.5%
Police gave reason	100%	12.3% †	36.5%	49.8% †	3.5% †
Speeding*	100%	2.4	30.9	66.0	1.7
Cellphone violation	100%	4.1 †	22.4 ‡	73.6	0.5 † †
Stop sign/light violation	100%	6.2 †	40.3 †	52.3 †	2.1 †
Illegal turn or lane change	100%	8.0 †	45.5 †	45.2 †	2.7 †
Seatbelt violation	100%	10.1 †	20.0 †	69.9	2.2 †
Vehicle defect	100%	17.0 †	63.6 †	18.3 †	5.1 †
Record check	100%	29.8 †	35.4	34.1 †	2.0 †
Roadside sobriety check	100%	72.1 †	18.4 †	4.3 † †	8.9 ‡ †
Other	100%	39.1 †	23.5 †	29.9 †	12.9 †
Multiple reasons	100%	14.3 †	37.0 ‡	45.4 †	8.4 †

Note: Enforcement actions may not sum to total as respondents may be in more than one category. See appendix table 15 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

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

^aDenominator includes about 1.5% of cases with missing data.

^bIncludes written or verbal.

^cSearch includes personal or vehicle.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Most drivers believed police behaved properly during traffic stops

Among all drivers who experienced a traffic stop, 94% of those who received a warning, 92% of those with no enforcement action, 90% who received a ticket, and 67% who experienced a search or arrest, felt that police behaved properly (**table 14**). Regardless of enforcement action, there were no significant differences in how males and females perceived police behavior during traffic stops. Hispanics (89%) were less likely to believe police behaved properly when the traffic stop resulted in a warning than whites

TABLE 14
Drivers' perception that police behaved properly during traffic stops, by outcome of stop and driver demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Portion thinking police behaved properly ^a			
	No enforcement action ^a	Warning ^b	Ticket	Search or arrest ^c
All drivers in traffic stops	92.2%	93.9%	89.8%	67.0%
Sex				
Male*	92.4%	93.1%	90.6%	70.0%
Female	91.8	94.9	88.6	58.1
Race/Hispanic origin ^d				
White*	92.7%	94.8%	90.8%	70.5%
Black	88.3	92.2	85.1 †	68.5
Hispanic	90.4	88.8 ‡	88.2	62.8
Other ^e	96.9	95.5	91.6	47.5 †
Age				
16–17	94.4% †	>99.9% †	85.4%	<0.1% † †
18–24*	92.1	94.8	92.0	70.0
25–44	92.6	92.0	89.1	67.9
45–64	91.2	94.1	90.2	55.2
65 or older	93.3	97.0	86.8	>99.9 † †

Note: See appendix table 16 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

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

^aDenominator includes about 1.4% of respondents who did not receive all enforcement action questions as a result of recoding their most recent contact.

^bIncludes written or verbal.

^cSearch includes personal or vehicle. Denominator includes about 1.8% of respondents for whom data on at least one of these enforcement actions was missing as a result of recoding their most recent contact.

^dExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, unless specified.

^eIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

(95%, 90% confidence level). Blacks (85%) were less likely than whites (91%) to indicate that police behaved properly when the traffic stop resulted in a ticket.

Whites were more likely than blacks and Hispanics to say police behaved properly during street stops

Sixty percent of residents who were stopped by police in a street stop thought the reason was legitimate, and 81% believed police behaved properly (table 15). Street stops could occur when police stopped residents for one or more of the following reasons:

- the resident was suspected of something
- the resident matched the description of someone for whom police were looking
- police were seeking information about another person
- police were investigating a crime
- police were providing a service or assistance to the resident
- the resident was with someone who either matched the description of someone for whom police were looking or was suspected of something
- some other reason.

Residents' perceptions of the legitimacy of the street stop and whether police behaved properly varied by demographic characteristics. Females (69%) were more likely than males (55%) to perceive the street stop as legitimate. Females (88%) were also more likely than males (77%) to believe that police behaved properly. A greater percentage of whites (68%) than blacks (50%) and Hispanics (44%) indicated the street stop was legitimate. Whites (89%) were also more likely than Hispanics (73%) and blacks (59%) to believe police behaved properly.

TABLE 15

Residents' perception of street-stop legitimacy and if police behaved properly during a street stop, by resident demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Stop was legitimate ^a	Police behaved properly ^b
All residents in street stops	60.3%	81.2%
Sex		
Male*	55.5%	77.4%
Female	69.2 †	88.2 †
Race/Hispanic origin^c		
White*	67.8%	89.1%
Black	50.1 †	59.0 †
Hispanic	44.3 †	73.4 †
Other ^d	52.4	83.9
Age		
16–17	53.2%	81.0%
18–24*	56.3	85.0
25–44	60.7	79.9
45–64	61.5	76.5
65 or older	80.3 †	88.9

Note: See appendix table 17 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

^aDenominator includes about 15% of cases with missing data.

^bDenominator includes approximately 1% of respondents who reported they did not know if police behaved properly.

^cExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, unless specified.

^dIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of residents who experienced a street stop said that police gave a reason for the stop (**table 16**). Residents were more likely to believe the stop was legitimate when police gave a reason for the stop (79%) than when no reason was given (26%). Persons given a reason (87%) were also more likely to believe that police behaved properly than those who were not given a reason (45%). Residents were more likely to believe that the reason for a street stop was legitimate when police were providing a service or assistance (95%), the resident was with someone who matched the description of a person of interest (95%), or police were seeking information about another person (94%), than when police stopped the resident because he or she was suspected of something (70%).

A greater percentage of those stopped in street stops received warnings than tickets

Forty-six percent of residents who experienced a street stop had no resulting enforcement action (**table 17**). Among those that experienced an enforcement action, a greater percentage received a warning (21%) than were given a ticket (10%), searched (9%), or arrested (4%). A lower percentage of persons whose street stop resulted in some type of enforcement action (75%) believed police behaved properly than those whose street stop did not result in an enforcement action (87%). Persons who were ticketed (75%), searched

(46%), or arrested (56%) were less likely to believe police behaved properly than persons who received a warning (89%).

TABLE 17
Residents' perceptions of whether police behaved properly, by outcomes of street stops, 2015

Outcome	Total ^a	Police behaved properly ^b
All street stops	100%	81.2%
No enforcement action*	46.5%	86.7%
Any enforcement action	38.8% †	75.1% †
Warning*	21.1	88.8
Ticket	10.3 †	75.1 ‡
Search	9.4 †	46.2 †
Arrest	4.1 †	56.4 †!
Missing	14.7%	~

Note: Details may not sum to totals due to missing data or persons reporting more than one enforcement action. See appendix table 19 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

~Not applicable.

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

^aDenominator includes approximately 15% missing cases as a result of recoding respondents' most recent contact.

^bDenominator includes approximately 1% of respondents who did not know if police behaved properly.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

TABLE 16
Reasons police gave for street stops, by residents' perception of legitimacy and if and police behaved properly, 2015

Reason for street stop	Percent of stopped persons		
	Total ^a	Reason for stop was legitimate	Police behaved properly
All street stops	100%	60.3%	81.2%
No reason given*	11.8	25.8	45.1
Any reason ^b	72.6 †	78.9 †	87.2 †
Suspected you of something*	25.5	70.3	82.2
Matched you to the description of someone they were looking for	4.8 †	57.7	87.2
Seeking information about another person	13.4 †	93.5 †	93.0 †
Investigating a crime	16.1 †	80.6	91.9 ‡
Providing a service or assistance to you	13.2 †	94.6 †	97.2 †
Someone you were with matched the description of someone they were looking for or was suspected of something	4.7 †	94.6 †	83.2
Some other reason	27.8	78.6	83.1
Missing	15.6	~	~

Note: Based on persons for whom the most recent contact with police involved being stopped by police while in a public place or a parked vehicle, but not while driving or riding in a moving vehicle. See appendix table 18 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

~Not applicable.

^aDenominator includes about 15% for whom this data was missing as a result of recoding their most recent contact.

^bDetails may not sum to totals because respondents could indicate multiple reasons for the stop.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Nonfatal threat or use of force

The 2015 Police-Public Contact Survey included questions about police threats and use of nonfatal force (1) at any point during the year and (2) during the most recent contact. The measure of threatened or used force during the year was based on—

- respondents' affirmative answers to the question: "During any of your EARLIER contacts with police in the last 12 months, did the police USE or THREATEN TO USE force against you?"
- the respondent indicating that the police threatened or used force during the most recent contact (see next paragraph for definition used in this report).

The measure of threatened or used force during the most recent contact was based on respondent answers to a series of questions about police actions during the contact. For this report, the police threatened or used force if they took one or more of the following actions:

- threatening to use force
- handcuffing
- pushing, grabbing, hitting, or kicking
- using a chemical or pepper spray
- using an electroshock weapon
- pointing a gun
- using some other type of force.¹

Among the 53.5 million U.S. residents age 16 or older who had contact with police during the prior 12 months (as of 2015), nearly 1 million (2%) experienced threats or use of force (**table 18**). Males (3%) were more likely

¹ Respondents were additionally asked whether the police shouted at them, cursed at them, threatened to arrest them, or threatened them with a ticket. Such actions were excluded from this report.

TABLE 18

Residents who experienced nonfatal threats or use of force during contacts with police, by demographic characteristics and whether the action was perceived to be necessary or excessive, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Persons age 16 or older with any police contact	At any time during the year		Number of residents with police-initiated contact as most recent contact	Most recent police-initiated contact ^{a,b}		
		Experienced force ^c			Experienced force ^d	Force perceived to be—	
		Number	Percent			Necessary	Excessive
Total	53,469,300	985,300	1.8%	30,195,900	3.3%	30.2%	48.4%
Sex							
Male*	27,038,300	735,100	2.7	16,522,500	4.4	28.2	50.1
Female	26,431,000	250,200	0.9 †	13,673,400	1.8 †	36.2	43.4
Race/Hispanic origin							
White* ^e	37,334,200	485,700	1.3	20,282,400	2.4	32.4	42.7
Black ^e	6,146,400	201,100	3.3 †	3,886,200	5.2 †	32.0	59.9 ‡
Hispanic	6,680,700	203,100	3.0 †	3,986,400	5.1 †	20.8	52.5
Other ^{e,f}	3,307,900	95,500	2.9 †	2,040,900	4.7 †	35.5 !	43.8
Age							
16–17	1,188,300	24,300	2.0 !	988,900	2.5 !	35.3 !	22.1 !
18–24*	8,248,000	261,100	3.2	6,107,600	4.3	28.2	49.2
25–44	19,998,800	473,100	2.4	11,757,400	4.0	34.1	44.0
45–64	17,290,700	222,900	1.3 †	8,422,100	2.6 †	24.4	58.5
65 or older	6,743,400	4,000	0.1 † !	2,919,900	0.1 † !	<0.1 † !	>99.9 † !

Note: See appendix table 20 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

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

^aIncludes persons stopped by police during the last 12 months for whom the most recent contact involved being stopped by police in a street stop, as a driver or a passenger in a traffic stop, arrested, in a traffic accident reported to police, or approached by police for another reason.

^bDenominator includes approximately 0.6% of respondents for whom this data was missing as a result of recoding their most recent contact.

^cIncludes threatening use of force, pushing or grabbing, handcuffing, hitting or kicking, using chemical or pepper spray, using an electroshock weapon, pointing a gun, and persons reporting the use or threat of force during the most recent contact or any earlier contacts in the last 12 months.

^dIncludes threatening use of force, pushing or grabbing, handcuffing, hitting or kicking, using chemical or pepper spray, using an electroshock weapon, or pointing a gun.

^eExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin.

^fIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Continued on next page

Nonfatal threat or use of force (continued)

to experience threat of force than females (1%). Blacks and Hispanics (3% each) were more likely than whites (1%) to experience the threat or use of force.

About 3% of residents experienced the threat or use of force during the most recent contact with police. Of those, about 30% felt that the action was necessary, while 48% felt that it was excessive. There was no significant difference between males and females in the perception of such contact as being necessary or excessive. Blacks who experienced the threat or use of force (60%) were more likely than whites (43%) to perceive it as excessive (90% confidence level).

Less than 1% of residents (0.3%) experienced *threatened* force by police during the most recent contact. About 2% experienced handcuffing, and 1% experienced a more severe form of physical force, such as hitting or kicking, or having a gun pointed at them (**table 19**).

The majority of those who experienced the threat of force (84%) perceived the action to be excessive, as did most of those who were pushed, grabbed, hit, or kicked (78%), or had a gun pointed at them (65%). Handcuffing was the least-likely police action for residents to perceive as excessive (28%).

TABLE 19

Percent of residents who experienced nonfatal threats or use of force during their most recent police-initiated contact or traffic accident, by type of action and whether the force was perceived to be necessary or excessive, 2015

Type of force	Percent of residents who experienced threat or use of force ^{a,b}	Threat or use of force perceived to be—	
		Necessary	Excessive
Threat of force	0.3% †	<0.1% †!	83.5%†
Handcuff*	1.8	45.3	27.9
Push/grab/hit/kick	0.7 †	15.1 †!	78.3 †
Pepper spray	<0.1 †!	<0.1 †!	<0.1 †!
Shock	<0.1 †!	<0.1 †	>99.9 †!
Point gun	0.3 †	15.0 †!	65.2 †

Note: See appendix table 21 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

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

^aFor residents who reported experiencing more than one type of nonfatal force in their most recent contact, the most severe form of force was counted. For this report, the order of severity from least to most severe was threat of force, handcuff, push/grab/hit/kick, pepper spray, electroshock weapon, and point gun.

^bDenominator includes approximately 0.6% or respondents for whom this data was missing as a result of recording their most recent contact and approximately 0.1% of respondents who indicated that police used some other type of force.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

The majority of residents who contacted police thought that police improved the situation

Among those who initiated their most recent contact with police, there was no statistically significant difference in the reason why males and females initiated contact. A similar percentage of whites and blacks (56% each) who initiated contact with police during their most recent contact did so to report a crime (**table 20**). Hispanics (67%) were more likely than both whites and blacks to report a crime during their most recent contact. Blacks (12%) were

more likely than whites (7%) and Hispanics (5%) to participate in block watch with police during their most recent contact. Residents ages 16 to 17 (45%) were less likely than those ages 18 to 24 (63%, 90% confidence level) and 25 to 44 (60%, 90% confidence level) to report a crime or suspicious activity to police during their most recent contact. There was no significant difference across age groups in the percentages of those who reported non-crime emergencies to police during their most recent contact.

TABLE 20
Percent of residents who initiated their most recent contact with police, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Total	Reported possible crime	Reported non-crime emergency	Block watch	Other
Total	100%	57.8%	26.9%	7.2%	8.1%
Sex					
Male*	100%	57.4%	27.2%	7.6%	7.8%
Female	100%	58.1	26.6	6.9	8.4
Race/Hispanic origin^a					
White*	100%	56.3%	28.0%	7.1%	8.6%
Black	100%	56.4	24.1 ‡	12.1 †	7.3
Hispanic	100%	66.5 †	22.4 †	4.9 †	6.2 †
Other ^b	100%	62.4 †	26.1	4.2 †	7.3
Age					
16–17	100%	45.4% ‡	33.6%	14.1% †!	6.9%!
18–24*	100%	62.7	27.2	2.2	7.9
25–44	100%	60.0	28.2	4.5 †	7.3
45–64	100%	57.2 ‡	26.3	7.8 †	8.6
65 or older	100%	52.5 †	24.6	13.9 †	9.0

Note: See appendix table 22 for standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

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

^aExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, unless specified.

^bIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

More than 9 in 10 (91%) residents who contacted police to request assistance said they were more or as likely to contact police again in the future (**table 21**). The vast majority (83%) of residents were satisfied with the police response during their most recent contact and felt that police responded promptly (83%) and behaved properly (89%). More than half (59%) indicated that police improved the situation.

Hispanics who contacted police to request assistance were less likely than whites to believe that police responded promptly, improved the situation, or behaved properly. Hispanics (76%) were also less likely than whites (85%) to be satisfied with the police response. Compared to whites (92%), lower percentages of blacks (90%), Hispanics (88%), and persons of other races (89%) indicated they were more or as likely to contact police in the future.

TABLE 21
Residents' perception of police response and behavior during contacts to request assistance, by demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Perception from residents that police—			Resident was—	
	Responded promptly ^a	Improved situation ^b	Behaved properly ^c	Satisfied ^d	More or as likely to contact police again ^e
All residents who requested assistance	82.7%	59.5%	89.5%	83.3%	91.4%
Sex					
Male*	82.9%	58.5%	90.7%	83.5%	91.8%
Female	82.6	60.2	88.5 †	83.1	91.1
Race/Hispanic origin^f					
White*	84.1%	60.3%	90.0%	84.7%	92.3%
Black	83.9	59.3	90.7	83.6	89.6 ‡
Hispanic	75.4 †	55.9 †	86.5 †	75.8 †	88.3 †
Other ^g	78.0 †	55.5 ‡	86.6 ‡	80.5 ‡	88.7 ‡
Age					
16–17	89.8%	71.1%	89.8%	82.1%	93.0%
18–24*	84.3	65.8	92.5	82.6	90.8
25–44	80.6	58.2 †	87.7 †	81.4	91.1
45–64	83.1	58.8 †	89.9 ‡	84.3	91.6
65 or older	85.4	59.4 †	90.7	85.8	91.9

Note: See appendix table 23 for estimates and standard errors.

*Comparison group.

†Significant difference from comparison group at the 95% confidence interval.

‡Significant difference from comparison group at the 90% confidence interval.

^aDenominator includes approximately 4% of respondents who reported they did not know if police responded promptly.

^bDenominator includes approximately 21% of respondents who reported they did not know if the situation improved after contacting police. See appendix table 23 for estimates and standard errors of those who did not know if the situation improved.

^cDenominator includes approximately 4% of respondents who reported they did not know if police behaved properly.

^dDenominator includes approximately 1% of respondents who reported they did not know if they were satisfied with the police response.

^eDenominator includes approximately 2% of respondents who reported they did not know how likely they would be to contact police in the future.

^fExcludes persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, unless specified.

^gIncludes Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders; American Indians and Alaska Natives; and persons of two or more races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

Methodology

The Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS) is a supplemental survey to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which collects data on crime against persons age 12 or older from a nationally representative sample of U.S. households. The NCVS sample includes persons living in group quarters (such as dormitories, rooming houses, and religious group dwellings) and excludes persons living in military barracks and institutional settings (such as correctional or hospital facilities) and homeless persons. (For more information, see *Methodology in Criminal Victimization, 2015*, NCJ 250180, BJS web, October 2016.)

Since 1999, the PPCS has typically been administered every 3 years, but the 2015 PPCS was delayed one year to further improve the instrument after the 2011 redesign (see *Changes to the Police-Public Contact Survey in 2015*, BJS website). The survey is administered at the end of the NCVS interview to persons ages 16 or older within households sampled for the NCVS. Proxy responders are not eligible to receive the PPCS. The 2015 data collection was the first administration that allowed persons who completed their NCVS interview in a language other than English to be eligible for the PPCS.

The 2015 PPCS was administered between July 1, 2015, and December 31, 2015. The survey asked respondents if they had experienced different types of specific police contacts during the prior 12 months. For instance, persons interviewed in July 2015 were asked about contacts that occurred between August 2014 and July 2015. Persons who reported contact were asked to describe the nature of the contact and, if more than one contact occurred, their most recent contact during the period. To simplify the discussion, the report describes all contacts reported during the 12 months prior to the interviews as 2015 contacts.

PPCS nonrespondents consisted of persons whose households 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 was 81% and the person response rate, which is based on persons in responding households, was 83%. In 2015, PPCS interviews were obtained from 70,959 of the 74,995 individuals age 16 or older in the NCVS sample (95%). A total of 4,036

nonrespondents were excluded from the 2015 PPCS as noninterviews or proxy interviews. Non-interviews included respondents not available for the interview and those who refused to participate (3,380 persons). The remaining 656 were proxy interviews representing household members who were unable to participate due to a physical, mental, or other reason.

To produce national estimates on police-public contacts, sample weights were applied to survey data so that the respondents represented the entire population, including nonrespondents. After adjustment for nonresponse, the sample cases in 2015 were weighted to produce a national population estimate of 253,587,400 persons age 16 or older.

Despite nonresponse adjustments, low overall response rates may still result in biased estimates if nonrespondents have characteristics associated with the outcomes of interest that differ from respondents. The Office of Management and Budget guidelines require a nonresponse bias analysis to be conducted when the overall response rate for a survey is below 80%. Accordingly, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and the U.S. Census Bureau conducted a nonresponse bias analysis for the 2015 PPCS, comparing distributions of respondents and nonrespondents and nonresponse estimates across various household and demographic characteristics. The analysis also examined the impact of any differences on key PPCS estimates.

Findings from the analysis did not suggest the presence of nonresponse bias in the data. The models created for the assessment did not detect strong evidence that the differences between respondents and nonrespondents had a significant impact on estimates of police contact. However, where the models suggested that differences between respondents and nonrespondents were at least weakly related to variables of interest, these variables were related to police-initiated contacts, as opposed to resident-initiated contacts. While there was no statistical evidence of nonresponse bias, persons involved in police-initiated contacts may have been somewhat less likely to respond to the PPCS than those without police-initiated contacts.

Standard error computations

When national estimates are derived from a NCVS sample, caution must be used when comparing one estimate to another or comparing estimates over time. Although one estimate may be larger than another, estimates based on a sample have some degree of

sampling error. The sampling error of an estimate depends on several factors, including the amount of variation in the responses and the size of the sample. When the sampling error around an estimate is taken into account, estimates that appear different may not be statistically different.

One measure of the sampling error associated with an estimate is the standard error, which may vary from one estimate to the next. Generally, an estimate with a small standard error provides a more reliable approximation of the true value than an estimate with a large standard error. Estimates with relatively large standard errors are associated with less precision and reliability and should be interpreted with caution.

To generate standard errors around numbers and estimates from the NCVS, the U.S. Census Bureau produced generalized variance function (GVF) parameters for BJS. The GVFs take into account aspects of the NCVS complex sample design and represent the curve fitted to a selection of individual standard errors based on the Jackknife Repeated Replication technique. The GVF parameters were used to generate standard errors for each point estimate (e.g., numbers, percentages, and rates) in this report.

BJS conducted tests to determine whether differences in estimated numbers, percentages, and rates in this report were statistically significant once sampling error was taken into account. The primary test procedure was the Student's t-statistic, which tests the difference between two sample estimates. Caution is required when comparing estimates not explicitly discussed in this report.

Data users can use the estimates and the standard errors of the estimates provided in this report to generate a confidence interval around the estimate as a measure of the margin of error. The following example illustrates how standard errors may be used to generate confidence intervals:

According to the PPCS, in 2015 an estimated 12.5% of male U.S. residents age 16 or older experienced some type of police-initiated contact during the year (see table 1). Using the SPSS Complex Samples Package, a standard error of 0.27 was determined for the estimate (see appendix table 2). A confidence interval around the estimate was generated by multiplying the standard errors by ± 1.96 (the t-score of a normal, two-tailed distribution that excludes 2.5% at either end of the distribution). Therefore, the 95% confidence interval around the estimate is $12.5 \pm (0.27 \times 1.96)$ or 12.0 to

13.0. In other words, if BJS used the same sampling method to select different samples and computed an interval estimate for each sample, it would expect the true population parameter (males who experienced some type of police-initiated contact) to fall within the interval estimates 95% of the time.

In this report, BJS also calculated a coefficient of variation (CV) for all estimates, representing the ratio of the standard error to the estimate. CVs provide a measure of reliability and a means for comparing the precision of estimates across measures with differing levels or metrics.

Changes to the Police-Public Contact Survey in 2015

For the 2015 instrument, BJS enhanced the screening portion that is used to collect high-level information on each type of contact residents had with police. BJS expanded the screener to ask respondents who reported contact about the number of times each type of contact occurred during a 12-month period. The 2011 PPCS asked a single question about the total number of face-to-face contacts with police during the prior year. This could include contacts occurring in social or routine settings (such as contacts with a neighbor who is an officer), in addition to contacts identified through the survey screener, which did not allow for the number of contacts to be attributed to particular types of contact. The revision in 2015 made it possible to generate an incident rate in addition to a prevalence rate, which is important for measuring disparities in the criminal justice system and understanding the frequency of contact between police and the public.

The 2015 PPCS administered use-of-force questions to all respondents, regardless of the type of contact experienced during their most recent interaction with police. The 2011 instrument asked use-of-force questions only of respondents whose most recent contact was a traffic or street stop or those with more than one contact. This did not allow for an overall estimate of use of force by police in all types of contact in 2011. By asking all respondents about use of force in 2015, it was possible to generate an overall rate of persons who had force used against them during the prior 12 months.

To improve coverage and accuracy, the 2015 PPCS was administered to NCVS respondents who received the NCVS in a language other than English. Since

its inception in 1996, the PPCS was administered to English-speaking respondents only, thereby creating an issue with nonresponse bias particularly among the Hispanic population. In 2015, 4.3% of PPCS interviews were conducted in a language other than English. Of these, 86% were in Spanish.

Missing data for most recent contact

The PPCS screener was divided into two sections with the first series of questions asking about different types of resident-initiated contact and the second asking about different types of police-initiated contact. After each series of questions, respondents were given the opportunity to report any other contacts that were

not already asked about. U.S. Census Bureau field representatives recorded all of these responses as “other-specify” text responses even though a large portion of them fitted into preexisting categories. For the current analysis, other-specify responses were recoded into the correct screener categories when possible. However, this affected how the respondent answered questions about the most recent contact. In some instances, respondents should have been administered the questions about the nature of their traffic or street stop but were skipped out of that series of questions. For traffic stops, 2.5% of respondents were missing data about the most recent contact, and for street stops, 14.7% were missing data about the most recent contact.

APPENDIX TABLE 1

Estimates and standard errors for figure 1: Percent of U.S. population age 16 or older who had any police contact, by type of contact and reason, 2015

Reason for contact	Estimate	Standard error	
		Number	Percent
Any	53,469,324	998,696	0.30%
Police-initiated contact	27,415,891	617,902	0.20%
Traffic stop: driver	19,204,454	447,052	0.16
Traffic stop: passenger	5,964,058	223,034	0.08
Street stop	2,503,691	131,084	0.05
Arrest or other	2,715,329	124,763	0.05
Traffic accident	7,950,529	216,355	0.08%
Resident-initiated contact	27,060,210	560,931	0.19%
Reported possible crime	16,928,086	383,674	0.13
Reported non-crime	8,841,928	259,485	0.09
Block watch	2,366,182	117,969	0.05
Other	2,478,435	105,856	0.04

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 2

Standard errors for table 1: Number and percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older with any police contact, by type of contact and demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	U.S. population age 16 or older	Any contact		Police-initiated contact		Resident-initiated contact		Traffic accident	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	3,642,096	998,696	0.30%	617,902	0.20%	560,931	0.19%	216,355	0.08%
Sex									
Male	1,801,367	552,138	0.35%	385,799	0.27%	316,404	0.22%	145,223	0.11%
Female	1,945,590	537,568	0.33	323,368	0.22	326,515	0.22	144,035	0.10
Race/Hispanic origin									
White	2,647,491	742,753	0.32%	435,694	0.22%	449,287	0.22%	165,020	0.09%
Black	872,270	252,583	0.67	182,687	0.49	134,365	0.40	76,617	0.24
Hispanic	1,381,122	285,587	0.56	188,492	0.40	150,114	0.35	77,563	0.18
Other	575,823	154,572	0.73	107,234	0.52	97,204	0.52	51,545	0.27
Age									
16–17	275,021	94,639	1.01%	76,517	0.82%	32,817	0.38%	41,864	0.49%
18–24	742,115	300,725	0.77	248,810	0.66	140,810	0.41	98,634	0.31
25–44	1,325,716	431,294	0.40	281,559	0.30	263,700	0.27	121,113	0.13
45–64	1,307,572	373,907	0.37	215,257	0.23	256,058	0.27	95,061	0.11
65 or older	834,131	195,756	0.33	99,590	0.19	140,346	0.26	56,019	0.11

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 3

Standard errors for table 2: Number and percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older with police contact, by type of contact, household income, and city population size, 2015

Household income/ city population size	U.S. population age 16 or older	Any contact		Police-initiated contact		Resident-initiated contact		Traffic accident	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	3,642,096	998,696	0.30%	617,902	0.20%	560,931	0.19%	216,355	0.08%
Household income									
\$24,999 or less	1,160,898	339,969	0.51%	242,897	0.40%	188,767	0.33%	102,982	0.19%
\$25,000–\$49,999	1,408,753	390,392	0.44	234,827	0.29	234,585	0.29	113,345	0.16
\$50,000–\$74,999	1,043,794	305,113	0.49	196,992	0.36	182,345	0.33	82,668	0.18
\$75,000 or more	1,662,675	445,376	0.42	272,553	0.28	278,964	0.29	120,471	0.13
City population									
99,999 or fewer	3,305,500	865,579	0.32%	536,890	0.24%	481,364	0.20%	188,581	0.09%
100,000–499,999	1,379,617	376,597	0.64	209,989	0.43	237,103	0.45	90,228	0.22
500,000–999,999	932,904	213,609	1.16	139,010	0.83	135,009	0.86	40,669	0.28
1 million or more	1,454,173	223,449	0.84	126,092	0.55	139,886	0.54	46,233	0.21

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 4

Standard errors for table 3: Number and percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older with police-initiated contact, by type of contact and demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Total driving population	Traffic stop: driver		Total population	Traffic stop: passenger		Street stop		Arrest		Other	
		Estimate	Percent		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total	3,437,393	447,052	0.16%	3,642,096	223,034	0.08%	131,084	0.05%	67,043	0.03%	106,102	0.04%
Sex												
Male	1,694,709	306,489	0.23	1,801,367	130,230	0.10	106,741	0.09	58,327	0.05	74,375	0.06
Female	1,742,684	219,209	0.17	1,945,590	140,850	0.10	65,889	0.05	35,593	0.03	62,859	0.05
Race/Hispanic origin												
White	2,490,084	321,223	0.18	2,647,491	151,207	0.09	88,135	0.05	46,776	0.03	90,173	0.05
Black	746,463	139,106	0.48	872,270	79,712	0.24	54,683	0.17	29,262	0.09	27,927	0.09
Hispanic	1,140,644	149,671	0.38	1,381,122	81,633	0.20	53,569	0.13	24,450	0.06	33,487	0.08
Other	504,046	81,041	0.50	575,823	50,728	0.27	30,756	0.17	21,519	0.12	28,574	0.16
Age												
16–17	189,637	49,040	1.00	275,021	51,821	0.59	31,372	0.37	11,170	0.13	17,218	0.20
18–24	655,452	183,549	0.61	742,115	130,621	0.38	74,355	0.24	37,772	0.13	36,473	0.12
25–44	1,282,048	221,387	0.25	1,325,716	106,789	0.12	70,524	0.08	42,501	0.05	53,636	0.06
45–64	1,269,825	176,455	0.21	1,307,572	63,294	0.08	49,905	0.06	26,704	0.03	56,538	0.07
65 or older	731,089	76,315	0.18	834,131	35,753	0.07	26,604	0.06	7,416	0.02	30,964	0.06

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 5

Standard errors for table 4: Number and percent of residents age 16 or older who initiated contact with police, by type of contact and demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Reported possible crime		Reported non-crime		Block watch		Sought help/other	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	383,674	0.13%	259,485	0.09%	117,969	0.05%	105,856	0.04%
Sex								
Male	222,192	0.17%	164,918	0.13%	68,158	0.06%	73,248	0.06%
Female	240,183	0.17	152,109	0.11	73,101	0.06	69,693	0.05
Race/Hispanic origin								
White	306,947	0.16%	205,105	0.11%	95,468	0.06%	90,970	0.05%
Black	95,960	0.30	67,832	0.21	44,826	0.15	33,634	0.11
Hispanic	114,647	0.28	75,007	0.18	34,641	0.09	30,549	0.08
Other	71,403	0.40	52,320	0.28	20,073	0.11	23,001	0.13
Age								
16–17	21,821	0.25%	22,469	0.26%	15,754	0.19%	12,677	0.15%
18–24	111,773	0.34	76,627	0.25	22,716	0.07	38,130	0.12
25–44	207,125	0.22	132,548	0.15	53,896	0.06	52,831	0.06
45–64	185,149	0.21	129,114	0.15	67,092	0.08	62,026	0.07
65 or older	91,480	0.18	68,797	0.14	59,256	0.13	36,486	0.08

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 6

Standard errors for table 5: U.S. residents age 16 or older with police contact, by reason for contact, 2011 and 2015

Reason for contact	2011		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Any	1,955,357	0.35%	998,696	0.30%
Police-initiated contact	1,163,463	0.26%	617,902	0.20%
Driver during traffic stop	871,735	0.22	447,052	0.16
Passenger during traffic stop	320,078	0.12	223,034	0.08
Street stop	162,768	0.06	131,084	0.05
Arrested	123,345	0.05	67,043	0.03
Other	205,418	0.07	106,102	0.04
Traffic accident	343,960	0.12%	216,355	0.08%
Resident-initiated contact	1,071,090	0.26%	560,931	0.19%
Reported possible crime	666,599	0.19	383,674	0.13
Reported non-crime emergency	439,354	0.15	259,485	0.09
Block watch	211,488	0.08	117,969	0.05
Other	151,586	0.05	105,856	0.04

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2011 and 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 7

Standard errors for table 6: U.S. residents age 16 or older with any police contact, by demographic characteristics, 2011 and 2015

Demographic characteristic	2011		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,955,357	0.35%	998,696	0.30%
Sex				
Male	1,027,530	0.41%	552,138	0.35%
Female	1,020,036	0.42	537,568	0.33
Race/Hispanic origin				
White	1,468,211	0.38%	742,753	0.32%
Black	424,386	0.98	252,583	0.67
Hispanic	382,335	0.81	285,587	0.56
Other	217,484	0.99	154,572	0.73
Age				
16–17	109,087	1.25%	94,639	1.01%
18–24	475,371	0.98	300,725	0.77
25–44	850,608	0.52	431,294	0.40
45–64	678,588	0.50	373,907	0.37
65 or older	271,575	0.46	195,756	0.33

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2011 and 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 8

Standard errors for table 7: Frequency of police contact during prior 12 months for U.S. residents age 16 or older, by type of contact and race/Hispanic origin, 2015

Type of contact	All races/Hispanic origin		White		Black		Hispanic	
	Number of contacts	Percent with multiple contacts	Number of contacts	Percent with multiple contacts	Number of contacts	Percent with multiple contacts	Number of contacts	Percent with multiple contacts
Reported possible crime	583,935	0.57%	473,310	0.66%	135,266	2.18%	156,599	1.65%
Reported non-crime emergency	390,447	0.74	318,681	0.80	92,179	2.91	98,078	2.28
Driver during traffic stop	578,227	0.59	451,674	0.65	165,332	2.00	156,060	1.68
Passenger during traffic stop	271,779	0.88	204,548	0.96	79,104	3.26	82,524	1.89
Street stop	160,055	1.35	108,420	1.49	68,649	4.37	46,813	3.23
Traffic accident	303,874	0.50	233,503	0.58	84,855	1.27	85,994	1.71

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 9

Standard errors for figure 2: Percent of U.S. population age 16 or older who had any police contact, by type of most recent contact and reason, 2015

Reason for most recent contact	Standard error
Any	~
Police-initiated contact	0.54%
Driver: traffic stop	0.45
Passenger: traffic stop	0.26
Street stop	0.17
Arrest or other	0.18
Traffic accident	0.30%
Resident-initiated contact	0.52%
Reported possible crime	0.41
Reported non-crime	0.32
Block watch	0.18
Other	0.16
Unknown	0.02%

~Not applicable.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 10

Standard errors for table 8: Percent of contact initiated by police and residents age 16 or older, by type of most recent contact and demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Police-initiated contact	Resident-initiated contact	Traffic accident
Total	0.54%	0.52%	0.30%
Sex			
Male	0.69%	0.64%	0.43%
Female	0.70	0.69	0.41
Race/Hispanic origin			
White	0.60%	0.60%	0.35%
Black	1.45	1.40	0.92
Hispanic	1.34	1.34	0.79
Other	1.79	1.86	1.21
Age			
16–17	3.18%	2.33%	2.65%
18–24	1.38	1.18	0.87
25–44	0.77	0.78	0.47
45–64	0.75	0.77	0.47
65 or older	1.02	1.15	0.71

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 11

Standard errors for table 9: Demographic characteristics of U.S. residents age 16 or older for whom the most recent contact was police-initiated, by type of contact, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Driver during traffic stop	Passenger during traffic stop	Street stop	Arrest	Other
Total	0.68%	0.52%	0.36%	0.20%	0.35%
Sex					
Male	0.92%	0.62%	0.56%	0.31%	0.44%
Female	0.97	0.86	0.49	0.22	0.50
Race/Hispanic origin					
White	0.78%	0.62%	0.39%	0.21%	0.45%
Black	1.85	1.75	1.34	0.68	0.78
Hispanic	2.02	1.55	1.23	0.50	0.91
Other	2.61	1.99	1.32	1.00	1.51
Age					
16–17	4.23%	4.51%	3.00%	1.23%	1.66%
18–24	1.63	1.55	0.99	0.56	0.59
25–44	1.04	0.79	0.53	0.30	0.47
45–64	1.13	0.75	0.58	0.32	0.71
65 or older	1.70	1.33	0.81	0.31	1.34

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 12

Standard errors for table 10: Drivers' perceptions of legitimacy of traffic stops and police behavior, by reason given for stop and police behavior, 2015

Reason for traffic stop	Total	Reason for stop was legitimate	Police behaved properly
Police did not give reason	0.26%	5.53%	6.16%
Police gave reason	0.38%	0.66%	0.43%
Speeding	0.89	0.81	0.56
Vehicle defect	0.54	1.82	1.41
Record check	0.55	1.60	1.55
Stop sign/light violation	0.43	3.03	1.87
Illegal turn/lane change	0.38	2.77	1.77
Seatbelt violation	0.30	3.64	3.30
Cellphone violation	0.22	6.19	3.54
Roadside sobriety check	0.23	5.41	4.77
Other reason	0.41	3.41	2.51
Multiple reasons	0.40	2.34	2.34

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 14

Standard errors for table 12: Outcomes of traffic stops, by driver demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	No enforcement action	Enforcement action		
		Warning	Ticket	Search or arrest
All drivers in traffic stops	0.59%	0.86%	0.92%	0.30%
Sex				
Male	0.77%	1.12%	1.14%	0.47%
Female	0.81	1.24	1.31	0.35
Race/Hispanic origin				
White	0.67%	1.01%	1.12%	0.34%
Black	1.75	2.59	2.64	1.02
Hispanic	1.28	2.10	2.26	1.01
Other	2.03	2.81	3.36	1.35
Age				
16–17	4.27%	6.56%	6.88%	>0.01
18–24	1.43	2.25	2.29	0.99%
25–44	0.75	1.19	1.19	0.52
45–64	1.22	1.47	1.56	0.37
65 or older	1.84	2.36	2.27	0.60

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 13

Standard errors for table 11: Drivers' perception of traffic-stop legitimacy, by reason given and resident demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Police gave reason		Police did not give reason	
	Total	Stop was legitimate	Total	Stop was legitimate
All drivers in traffic stops	0.38%	0.66%	0.26%	5.53%
Sex				
Male	0.53%	0.91%	0.37%	6.67%
Female	0.48	0.87	0.31	8.70
Race/Hispanic origin				
White	0.38%	0.70%	0.24%	7.04%
Black	1.23	2.33	0.98	12.91
Hispanic	1.61	1.95	1.08	9.75
Other	1.24	2.47	0.85	21.80
Age				
16–17	1.95%	4.15%	0.64%	>0.01%
18–24	0.89	1.62	0.58	13.29
25–44	0.54	0.92	0.41	7.80
45–64	0.64	1.16	0.47	11.39
65 or older	1.48	1.89	0.87	14.28

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 15

Standard errors for table 13: Outcomes of traffic stops, by reason for stop, 2015

Reason for traffic stop	No enforcement action	Enforcement action		
		Warning	Ticket	Search or arrest
Police did not give reason	5.76%	5.44%	4.11%	4.78%
Police gave reason	0.58%	0.88%	0.95%	0.32%
Speeding	0.37	1.24	1.29	0.34
Cellphone violation	2.21	4.94	5.16	0.50
Stop sign/light violation	1.42	2.79	2.89	0.93
Illegal turn/lane change	1.41	3.07	2.98	1.08
Seatbelt violation	2.39	3.29	3.74	1.26
Vehicle defect	1.98	2.39	2.05	1.27
Record check	3.09	2.68	2.53	0.69
Roadside sobriety check	5.95	4.80	2.56	4.11
Other	2.76	2.73	2.98	2.15
Multiple reasons	2.03	3.45	3.29	2.03

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 16

Standard errors for table 14: Drivers' perception that police behaved properly during traffic stops, by outcome of stop and driver demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Portion thinking police behaved properly			
	No enforcement action	Warning	Ticket	Search or arrest
All drivers in traffic stops	1.25%	0.70%	0.69%	4.26%
Sex				
Male	1.66%	0.97%	0.90%	4.58%
Female	1.79	1.00	1.20	8.72
Race/Hispanic origin				
White	1.18%	0.73%	0.77%	4.65%
Black	5.11	2.35	2.71	12.81
Hispanic	4.41	3.29	2.24	10.34
Other	3.06	2.57	2.36	15.20
Age				
16–17	5.75%	>0.01	7.92%	>0.01
18–24	4.80	1.59%	1.67	8.51%
25–44	2.00	1.20	1.14	5.41
45–64	1.83	1.43	1.18	9.04
65 or older	2.68	1.22	2.71	>0.01

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 17

Standard errors for table 15: Residents' perception of street-stop legitimacy and if police behaved properly during a street stop, by resident demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Stop was legitimate	Police behaved properly
All residents in street stops	2.74%	2.29%
Sex		
Male	3.50%	3.09%
Female	4.12	3.02
Race/Hispanic origin		
White	3.39%	2.09%
Black	7.34	7.01
Hispanic	7.20	6.63
Other	11.65	8.14
Age		
16–17	11.46%	8.29%
18–24	5.75	4.26
25–44	4.33	3.82
45–64	4.91	4.24
65 or older	7.63	6.41

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 18

Standard errors for table 16: Reasons police gave for street stops, by residents' perception of legitimacy and if police behaved properly, 2015

Reason for street stop	Percent of stopped persons		
	Total	Reason for stop was legitimate	Police behaved properly
All street stops	~	2.38%	1.95%
No reason given	1.92%	6.93	8.49
Any reason	2.57	2.69	2.06
Suspected you of something	2.38	5.28	4.19
Matched you to the description of someone they were looking for	1.20	12.55	8.54
Seeking information about another person	1.97	3.25	3.48
Investigating a crime	2.13	6.10	3.62
Providing a service or assistance to you	1.87	2.84	1.71
Someone you were with matched the description of someone they were looking for or was suspected of something	1.01	5.25	10.24
Some other reason	2.49	4.34	3.79
Missing	2.5	~	~

~Not applicable.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 19**Standard errors for table 17: Outcomes of street stops by perception that police behaved properly, 2015**

Outcome	Total	Police behaved properly
All street stops	~	1.95%
No enforcement action	2.83%	2.73
Any enforcement action	2.67	3.89
Warning	2.17	3.64
Ticket	1.85	6.82
Search	1.75	9.58
Arrest	1.12	13.74
Missing	2.02	~

~Not applicable.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 20**Standard errors for table 18: Residents who experienced nonfatal threats or use of force during contacts with police, by demographic characteristics and whether the action was perceived to be necessary or excessive, 2015**

Demographic characteristic	Persons age 16 or older with any police contact	At any time during the year		Number of residents with police-initiated contact as most recent contact	Most recent police-initiated contact		
		Experienced force			Experienced force	Force perceived to be—	
		Number	Percent			Percent	Necessary
Total	998,696	74,277	0.13%	649,600	0.23%	3.20%	3.51%
Sex							
Male	552,138	63,004	0.22	388,272	0.37	3.66	4.06
Female	537,568	34,301	0.13	348,227	0.24	6.55	6.60
Race/Hispanic origin							
White	742,753	51,452	0.14	461,083	0.25	4.70	4.50
Black	252,583	33,752	0.54	194,060	0.84	7.50	7.66
Hispanic	285,587	36,167	0.51	209,932	0.85	5.48	8.36
Other	154,572	23,497	0.69	115,175	1.12	11.47	12.66
Age							
16–17	94,639	12,478	1.03	85,289	1.24	26.39	20.06
18–24	300,725	45,098	0.55	248,610	0.73	7.02	8.33
25–44	431,294	48,030	0.23	300,496	0.39	4.19	4.52
45–64	373,907	27,091	0.15	228,594	0.31	5.93	7.38
65 or older	195,756	2,796	0.04	115,645	0.10	~	~

~Not applicable.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 21

Standard errors for table 19: Percent of residents who experienced nonfatal threats or use of force during their most recent police-initiated contact or traffic accident, by type of action and whether the force was perceived to be necessary or excessive, 2015

Type of force	Percent of residents who experienced threat or use of force	Threat or use of force perceived to be—	
		Necessary	Excessive
Threat of force	0.07%	~	9.46%
Handcuff	0.17	4.55%	3.92
Push/grab/hit/kick	0.11	5.08	5.81
Pepper spray	~	~	~
Shock	0.01	~	~
Point gun	0.06	8.22	11.35

~Not applicable.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 22

Standard errors for table 20: Percent of residents who initiated their most recent contact with police, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Reported possible crime	Reported non-crime emergency	Block watch	Other
Total	0.67%	0.64%	0.39%	0.37%
Sex				
Male	0.96%	0.96%	0.53%	0.56%
Female	0.87	0.80	0.46	0.47
Race/Hispanic origin				
White	0.77%	0.73%	0.45%	0.41%
Black	2.43	2.10	1.71	1.29
Hispanic	1.91	1.64	0.80	0.97
Other	2.79	2.72	1.20	1.41
Age				
16–17	8.60%	8.75%	5.71%	4.76%
18–24	2.64	2.53	0.76	1.30
25–44	1.09	0.94	0.49	0.58
45–64	1.05	0.95	0.58	0.58
65 or older	1.54	1.34	1.31	0.82

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.

APPENDIX TABLE 23

Estimates and standard errors for table 21: Residents' perception of police response and behavior during contacts to request assistance, by demographic characteristics, 2015

Demographic characteristic	Perception from residents that police—			Resident was—		Unknown if situation improved	
	Responded promptly	Improved situation	Behaved properly	Satisfied	More or as likely to contact police again	Estimate	Standard error
All residents who requested assistance	0.53%	0.67%	0.43%	0.50%	0.42%	21.3%	0.57%
Sex							
Male	0.82%	1.04%	0.60%	0.79%	0.60%	21.9%	0.92%
Female	0.68	0.86	0.60	0.67	0.54	20.7	0.70
Race/Hispanic origin							
White	0.57%	0.81%	0.51%	0.60%	0.44%	21.6%	0.66%
Black	1.57	2.41	1.35	1.74	1.44	21.4	1.87
Hispanic	1.78	1.90	1.51	1.66	1.36	18.6	1.70
Other	2.47	2.82	1.97	2.23	1.82	22.4	2.40
Age							
16–17	5.08%	8.23%	5.71%	7.00%	4.15%	9.7% !	5.03%
18–24	2.18	2.42	1.41	2.14	1.50	17.7	2.05
25–44	0.93	1.18	0.76	0.94	0.65	22.0	0.99
45–64	0.84	1.10	0.65	0.82	0.66	22.4	0.93
65 or older	1.12	1.59	1.02	1.14	0.93	19.7	1.25

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

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Police-Public Contact Survey, 2015.



The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice is the principal federal agency responsible for measuring crime, criminal victimization, criminal offenders, victims of crime, correlates of crime, and the operation of criminal and civil justice systems at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels. BJS collects, analyzes, and disseminates reliable statistics on crime and justice systems in the United States, supports improvements to state and local criminal justice information systems, and participates with national and international organizations to develop and recommend national standards for justice statistics. Jeffrey H. Anderson is the director.

This report was written by Elizabeth Davis, Anthony Whyde, and Lynn Langton. Shelley Hyland and Connor Brooks verified the report.

Caitlin Scoville and Jill Thomas edited the report. Steve Grudziecki produced the report.

October 2018, NCJ 251145



NCJ251145

Office of Justice Programs
Building Solutions • Supporting Communities • Advancing Justice
www.ojp.usdoj.gov