

The portion of U.S. residents age 16 or older who had 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.

Police contact by demographic characteristics

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%). Also, 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%).

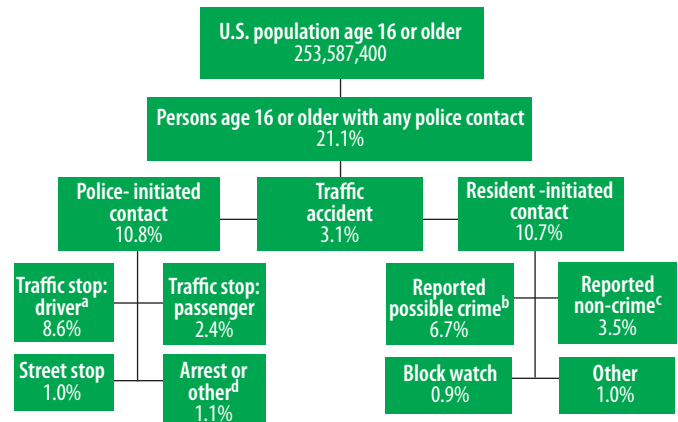
Police-initiated contact

Of the 223.3 million U.S. drivers, 8.6% experienced a stop as the driver of a motor vehicle. A greater percentage of stopped drivers were male (10.2%) than female (7.0%). Blacks (9.8%) were more likely than whites (8.6%) and Hispanics (7.6%) to be the driver in a traffic stop. Overall, 1.0% of persons 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%).

Residents' perceptions of police behavior

The vast majority (95%) of drivers who experienced a traffic stop indicated that police gave a reason for the stop. 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%). In comparison, 60% of residents who were stopped by police in a street stop

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.

^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.

thought the reason was legitimate, and 81% believed police behaved properly.

Non-fatal threat or use of force by police

Two percent of U.S. residents who had contact with police experienced threats or use of force. Among those whose most recent contact was police-initiated, blacks (5.2%) and Hispanics (5.1%) were more likely than whites (2.4%), and males (4.4%) were more likely than females (1.8%), to experience the threat or use of physical force by police.

The full report (*Contacts Between the Police and the Public, 2015*, NCJ 251145), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found at www.bjs.gov.