

**Addison Police Department
Motor Vehicle Contact
Search Analysis**



Rationale

The Addison Police Department has commissioned the analysis of motor vehicle contact search data collected in 2016. The purpose of this analysis is to determine the outcome of searches performed in the course of a motor vehicle stop during a specific period. The current Texas law on racial profiling requires that police agencies collect and analyze data relevant to motor vehicle-related contacts where a citation has been issued or arrest has been made. The law further requires for police agencies to collect search-related data that has emanated from the motor vehicle contacts where a citation has occurred. Agencies are required to identify, among searches, those that are performed when the officer has probable cause (PC) or obtains consent from the citizen in question.

Once the data has been collected, police agencies are required to produce an annual report, by March 1 of each year and present this to their local governing bodies and to TCOLE. The report should contain, among other items, the motor vehicle-related data while controlling for racial/ethnic makeup of motorists. In the past, several entities in the state have filed open records requests on most law enforcement agencies in an attempt to obtain data and subsequently produce annual state-wide reports relevant to motor vehicle-related contacts. These reports have increasingly been focused on searches performed by police officers throughout the state. Specifically, ratio-level analyses have been performed on the data obtained from all participating police departments. Some of the findings introduced in these annual reports have given rise to much debate in Texas on whether or not police searches are racially motivated.

The current analysis is based on sample data obtained from the Addison Police Department in 2016. It should be noted that the police department is under no obligation, by virtue of state or federal law, to commission this study. Rather, it has asked Del Carmen Consulting, LLC, an independent entity, to examine the department search data in an attempt to better understand search patterns with respects to all citizens, particularly minority motorists. The objective here is to determine if local search patterns reflect national trends. It is expected that this analysis will reveal areas of improvement for the Addison Police Department with respect to search-related data collection mechanisms.

Analysis

This particular study presents two levels of analysis. First, search data is examined while controlling for race and ethnicity. The search data presented also contains the frequencies and percentages relevant to the nature of probable cause searches. Further, information is presented relevant to instances where contraband was found in order to determine the outcome of the search (i.e., arrest made).

The second level of analysis includes a comparison of the Addison Police Department search data with the national search data presented in a study, Contacts Between Police and the Public by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics. The comparison of the Addison Police Department's data to national search data may show whether or not the Addison Police Department is consistent in search-related contacts, with most law enforcement agencies nationwide.

Table 1. Search Data Analysis

Addison Police Department Search Data (2016)

Race/Ethnicity	Searches		Consensual Searches		PC Searches	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Caucasian	114	100	32	28	82	72
African American	117	100	33	28	84	72
Hispanic	60	100	12	20	48	80
Asian	6	100	2	33	4	67
Native American	2	100	0	0	2	100
Middle Eastern	0	100	0	0	0	0
Other	5	100	0	0	5	100

* Figure has been rounded

Consent Search Outcome

Table 2. Outcome of Consent Searches (2016)

Race/Ethnicity	Consent Searches		Contraband Found		Contraband Not Found	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Caucasian	32	100	29	91	3	9
African American	33	100	26	79	7	21
Hispanic	12	100	9	75	3	25
Asian	2	100	1	50	1	50
Native American	0	100	0	0	0	0
Middle Eastern	0	100	0	0	0	0
Other	0	100	0	0	0	0

* Figure has been rounded

Discussion:

Overall, the search data collected during the time period specified in 2016, suggests that most searches were performed on African Americans while only a few searches were conducted on Asians, Native Americans and Middle Easterners. Of the searches conducted, most consensual searches were performed on African Americans; this was followed by Caucasians and Hispanics. Further, most of the PC searches were performed on African Americans; Native Americans and Middle Easterners seemed to be the group with the least amount of Consent and PC searches.

It is clear, from the consent search data presented in table 2, that a significant percentage of the consent searches on Caucasians, African Americans and Hispanics produced contraband. This is a positive finding as it shows that most searches produced contraband and therefore were justified.

II) National Data Comparison

Table 3. Comparison of Addison Consensual/non-Consensual Search Data with National Consensual/non-Consensual Search Data

Race/Ethnicity	Addison Consensual Searches	National Consensual Searches	Addison Non-Consensual Searches	National Non-Consensual Searches
	%	%	%	%
Caucasian	28	61	72	39
African American	28	41	72	59
Hispanic	20	54	80	46
Asian	33	n/a	67	n/a
Native American	0	n/a	100	n/a
Middle Eastern	0	n/a	0	n/a
Other	0	52	100	48

Table 4. Comparison of Addison PD Search-Contraband Data with National Search- Contraband Search Data

Race/Ethnicity	Addison PD Searches Producing	National Searches Producing Evidence	Addison PD Searches Not Producing Evidence	National Searches Not Producing Evidence
	%	%	%	%
Caucasian	91	14	9	86
African America	87	3	13	97
Hispanic	92	13	8	87
Asian	67	n/a	33	n/a
Native America	100	n/a	0	n/a
Middle Eastern	0	n/a	0	n/a
Other	100	27	0	73

Discussion:

A few years ago, the United States Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics released a one of a kind study on racial profiling. The study, titled, Contacts Between Police and the Public is based on a national data set obtained from police agencies throughout the nation. In the study, data was presented relevant to traffic contacts, searches, contraband, arrests, and use of force incidents.

In order to establish an adequate baseline for the Addison Police Department's search study, it was determined that the national data introduced in the BJS study would be ideal for comparative purposes. That is, comparing the Addison PD search and contraband data with similar data from police departments nationwide, would highlight areas of concern, if any, with regards to possible bias on searches; particularly those where contraband was not found.

The comparison, as illustrated in tables 3 and 4, was interesting and relevant to the objectives of this study. That is, as suggested in the data, the percentage of consensual searches performed by the Addison Police Department among Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics and "other", is lower than the percentage of consensual searches on Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics and "other" at the national level. Restated, Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics and "other", were less likely to be subject to consensual searches in Addison than in other areas in the United States.

When analyzing non-consensual searches, Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics and "other", were more likely to be searched for reasons other than consent by the Addison Police Department, than agencies in the cities participating in the national study.

With regards to searches that either produced or failed to produce evidence, the data suggested that the percentage of Addison PD's searches, which produced evidence, was significantly higher, than the national average, for Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics and those belonging to the "other" category. The opposite was true for the percentage of individuals belonging to the "other" category. Moreover, the data also suggested that the percentage of Addison PD searches that did not produce evidence was lower than the national average, for Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics and those that belonged to the "other" category (see table 4).

As it is evident in the data discussed in this study, searches conducted by the Addison Police Department appear to produce contraband in instances where this would be expected; this finding is encouraging. In addition, when compared to national trends, the percentage of Addison searches producing contraband, appear to be more significant than those performed by other agencies throughout the United States. It should be noted, however, that the data analyzed was limited in nature in that it was based on a limited time period and with a very small sample; thus, imposing restrictions on the findings. More substantive findings and analyses can be obtained in the near future when multi-annual comparisons are performed.

Although no reputable researcher can offer a blank statement suggesting racial profiling does not take place based on the evidence produced in aggregate form, it is clear that, despite the limitations of data, the findings introduced here with regards to searches, are encouraging. Overall, it is recommended that the Addison Police Department continue to monitor its data; doing this will ensure a more detailed (qualitative) analysis of search-related patterns.

Contact Information

For additional questions regarding the information presented in this report, please contact:

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