City of Austin
Austin Police Department

2015 Annual
Racial Profiling Report

February 2016

Introduction

This report contains data regarding motor vehicle stops made by Austin Police Department police officers during 2015. The department maintains a strong stance against racial profiling; its policy and practice is to provide law enforcement services and to enforce the law equally and fairly without discrimination toward any individual(s) or group. The City of Austin has a citizen complaint process where any allegations of profiling can be brought forward for investigation.

The report contains the following:

- Motor vehicle stops - by year and by race/ethnicity
- Searches resulting from those stops - by year, by type and by race/ethnicity
- Search results ("hit rate") - by year and by race/ethnicity

Reporting Changes

The methodology used to report 2015 results changed from prior years. We now include motor vehicle stops and resulting searches where the subject's race/ethnicity was identified as "other" on the citation form or arrest record. These events account for 2% of all stops and 1% of all searches.

In prior years, these stops and searches were excluded because we could not identify the subject's race/ethnicity with certainty. It is assumed that in most of these cases, the officer recorded the subject's race/ethnicity as "other" or left that field blank because the subject's race/ethnicity was not apparent to the officer. Regardless of the reason, those events are now included in our racial profiling data and report.

To allow for meaningful comparisons from year to year, we reran prior year results using this same methodology and included them throughout this report.
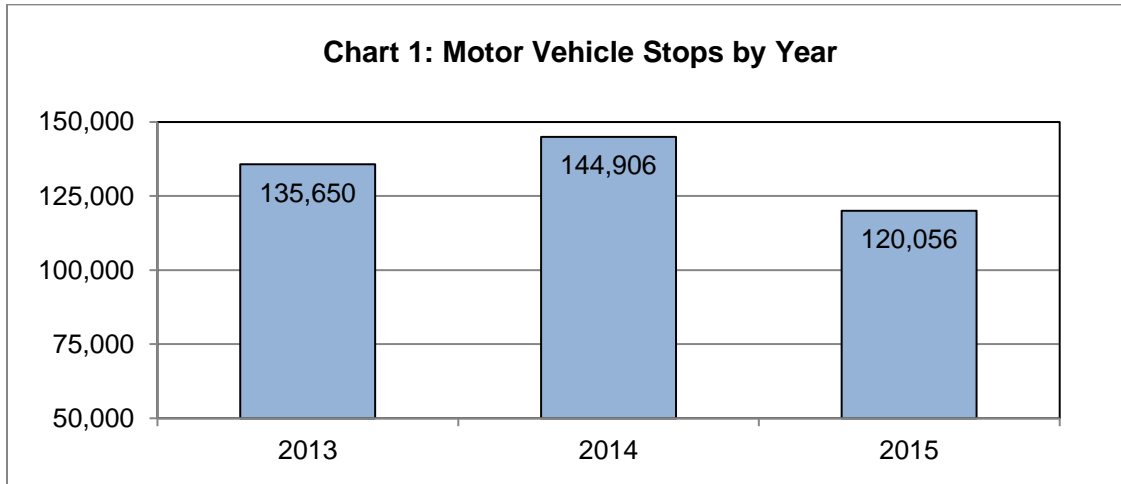
Motor vehicle stops

Austin police officers made 120,056 motor vehicle stops in 2015. These are stops that resulted in a citation or an arrest. This compares to 144,906 in 2014. The primary reason for a motor vehicle stop is a traffic violation such as speeding, an illegal turn, or expired registration.

Motor vehicle stops decreased 17% from 2014 to 2015, likely due to several reasons. First, patrol staffing levels declined from 88% in 2014 to 81% in 2015. This means that in 2015, 81% of patrol positions were filled and 19% were vacant.

A second factor is the significant decrease in the time patrol officers have available for proactive and community policing. This proactive – or community engagement – time represents the time officers are not responding to calls for service. Community engagement time dropped from 19% in 2014 to 17% in 2015.

As a consequence of these factors, the number of traffic citations declined from 133,742 in 2014 to 110,847 in 2015, a 17% reduction. This is the same reduction seen in total motor vehicle stops.
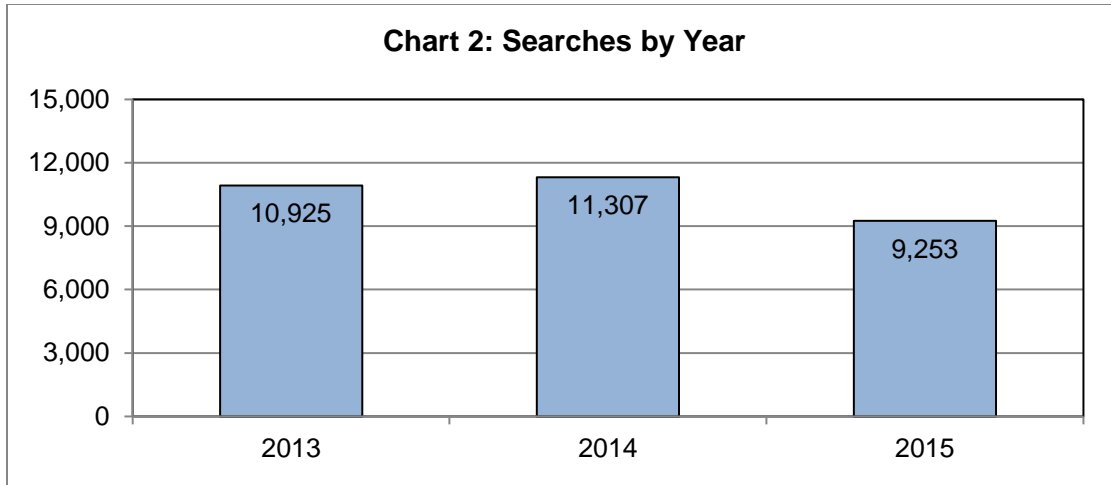
Chart 1: Motor Vehicle Stops by Year

Year	Stops
2013	135,650
2014	144,906
2015	120,056

The distribution of stops by race/ethnicity in 2015 was similar to that seen in 2014.

Table 1: Motor Vehicle Stops by Race/Ethnicity

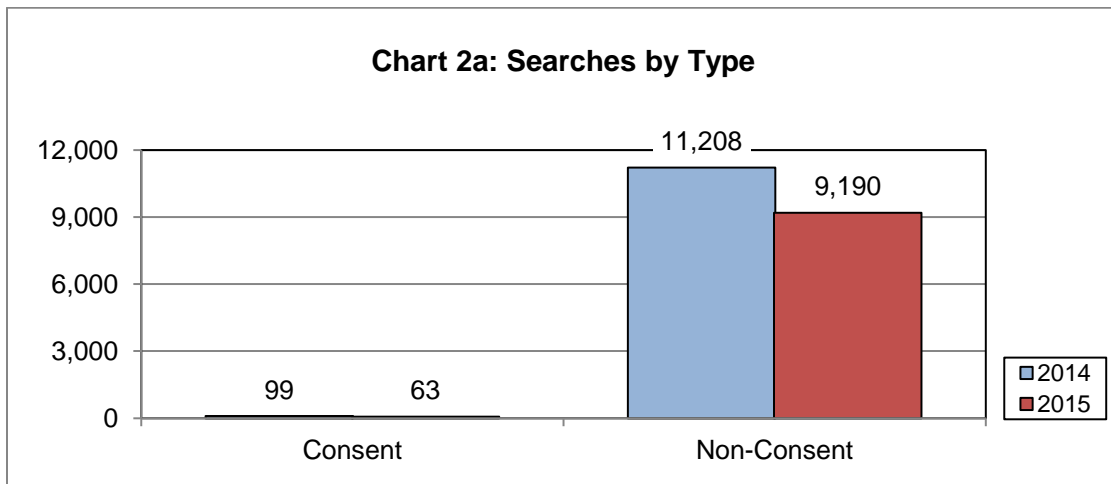| Race/Ethnicity	2015 Stops		2014 Stops	
	count	% of total	count	% of total
White	59,699	50%	75,218	52%
Hispanic	37,702	31%	43,794	30%
Black	14,753	12%	17,178	12%
Asian	3,715	3%	4,267	3%
Middle Eastern	1,655	1%	1,948	1%
Native American	52	0%	63	0%
Other	2,480	2%	2,438	2%
Total	**120,056**	**100%**	**144,906**	**100%**

Searches resulting from motor vehicle stops

The number of searches resulting from motor vehicle stops decreased 18%: from 11,307 in 2014 to 9,253 in 2015. This 18% drop in searches mirrors the 17% drop in motor vehicle stops. The search rate (searches as a percent of stops) remained steady at 8% in both 2014 and 2015.

Chart 2: Searches by Year

Year	Searches
2013	10,925
2014	11,307
2015	9,253

Searches that result from motor vehicle stops can be categorized as **consent or non-consent searches**:

- **Consent searches** occur when the officer asks for permission to conduct the search and the citizen consents to be searched. Under most circumstances, a driver must give permission for a search in writing before a consent search can be initiated.

- **Non-consent searches** occur after an arrest or if the officer develops probable cause. Probable cause requires reasonable grounds to suspect a person has committed or is committing a crime and gives an officer the legal authority to search without consent.

The following shows the distribution of total searches by type for 2014 and 2015.

Chart 2a: Searches by Type

Type	2014	2015
Consent	99	63
Non-Consent	11,208	9,190

Consent searches decreased from 2014 to 2015, continuing the downward trend seen from 2013 to 2014. Department policy reinforces that officers should be deliberative when making search decisions:

> *Officers should be aware that overuse of the consent search can negatively impact the Department's relationship with our community and only request a consent search when they have an articulable reason why they believe the search is necessary and likely to produce evidence related to an investigation.*

Non-consent searches decreased from 2014 to 2015, but remained the same proportion (99%) of total searches.

Searches resulting from motor vehicle stops: by race/ethnicity

The tables below show the number of searches by race/ethnicity and type (consent, non-consent). Percentages show the distribution of searches by type for each race/ethnicity. Although searches decreased from 2014 to 2015, the distribution across race/ethnicity remains stable.

Table 2a: Search Types by Race/Ethnicity (2015)

Race/Ethnicity	Consent Search		Non-Consent Search		Total Searches	
	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total
White	10	0%	2,828	100%	2,838	100%
Hispanic	30	1%	3,943	99%	3,973	100%
Black	19	1%	2,209	99%	2,228	100%
Asian	0	0%	109	100%	109	100%
Middle Eastern	0	0%	41	100%	41	100%
Native American	0	0%	5	100%	5	100%
Other	4	7%	55	93%	59	100%
Total	**63**	**1%**	**9,190**	**99%**	**9,253**	**100%**

Table 2b: Search Types by Race/Ethnicity (2014)

Race/Ethnicity	Consent Search		Non-Consent Search		Total Searches	
	count	% of total	count	% of total	count	% of total
White	36	1%	3,438	99%	3,474	100%
Hispanic	36	1%	4,854	99%	4,890	100%
Black	24	1%	2,702	99%	2,726	100%
Asian	0	0%	97	100%	97	100%
Middle Eastern	0	0%	51	100%	51	100%
Native American	0	0%	8	100%	8	100%
Other	3	5%	58	95%	61	100%
Total	**99**	**1%**	**11,208**	**99%**	**11,307**	**100%**

Searches resulting from motor vehicle stops: "hit rates"

Productive searches or "hits" are searches where contraband is found (e.g., drugs or weapons). The table below shows that, for all searches, productivity increased from 31% in 2014 to 32% in 2015.

Table 3: Search Hit Rates – ALL Searches

Race/Ethnicity	2015			2014		
	Hits	Searches	Hit Rate	Hits	Searches	Hit Rate
White	898	2,838	32%	1,002	3,474	29%
Hispanic	1,230	3,973	31%	1,467	4,890	30%
Black	784	2,228	35%	1,003	2,726	37%
Asian	34	109	31%	18	97	19%
Middle Eastern	8	41	20%	12	51	24%
Native American	1	5	20%	2	8	25%
Other	10	59	17%	16	61	26%
Total	**2,965**	**9,253**	**32%**	**3,520**	**11,307**	**31%**

Because consent searches involve increased officer discretion and judgment (as compared to non-consent searches), it is important to examine consent search hit rates separately.

The table below shows that consent searches continue to produce hit rates that exceed those of all searches. One caution: consent search hit rates are based on much smaller counts than total searches, so conclusions should be made cautiously. Regardless, the relatively high hit rates across races/ethnicities suggests that profiling is not occurring.

Table 4: Search Hit Rates – CONSENT Searches

Race/Ethnicity	2015			2014		
	Hits	Searches	Hit Rate	Hits	Searches	Hit Rate
White	7	10	70%	14	36	39%
Hispanic	8	30	27%	12	36	33%
Black	6	19	32%	17	24	71%
Other	1	4	25%	0	3	0%
Total	**22**	**63**	**35%**	**43**	**99**	**43%**