

Bias-Based Policing

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Policy Statement

The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office strives to provide services to its community with due regard for the racial, cultural or other differences of those it serves.

Persons Affected

All law enforcement and corrections deputy sheriffs.

Definitions

Bias-based policing – The inappropriate reliance on race, ethnicity or national origin as a factor in deciding whether to take law enforcement action or to provide service.

Bias-Based Policing Prohibited

Bias-based policing is strictly prohibited. However, nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit a deputy from considering factors such as race or ethnicity in combination with other legitimate factors to establish reasonable suspicion or probable cause (e.g., suspect description is limited to a specific race or group).

Other Profiling Prohibited

The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office also condemns the illegal use of an individual or group's attire, appearance or mode of transportation, including the fact that an individual rides a motorcycle or wears motorcycle-related paraphernalia, as a factor in deciding to stop and question, take enforcement action, arrest or search a person or vehicle with or without a legal basis under the United States Constitution or Washington State Constitution ([RCW 43.101.410](#)).

Responsibilities

Deputies

Reason for Detention

Any deputy who detains a person shall be prepared to articulate sufficient reasonable suspicion that justifies the detention.

Documentation

To the extent that written documentation would otherwise be completed, the involved deputy should include those facts that gave rise to the deputy's reasonable suspicion or probable cause for the detention. Nothing in this policy shall require any deputy to document a contact that would not otherwise require reporting.

Identification

Deputies shall provide their name and personnel number to citizens upon request.

Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for diligently monitoring those individuals under their command for any behavior exhibited that may conflict with this policy. Supervisors shall handle any alleged or observed violation of this policy in accordance with agency complaint procedures.

Chief Inspector

Each year, normally in January, the Chief Inspector shall review the Sheriff's Office's efforts to prevent bias-based policing and submit an overview to the Sheriff. In preparing this report, the Chief Inspector should review available demographic data related to traffic stops, as well as existing policies, practices, training and complaints. The data should be analyzed for any patterns or other possible indicators of bias-based policing ([RCW 43.101.410\(f\)](#)).

This overview should not contain any identifying information regarding any specific complaint, citizen or deputy.

Training

Sheriff's Office employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with and consider racial and cultural differences among members of the community.

Initial Training

All newly-commissioned law enforcement and corrections deputies shall attend training on the subject of bias-based policing. Training received at a recently-attended criminal justice training academy may fulfill this requirement.

Refresher Training

All commissioned deputies shall complete approved refresher training every five years (or sooner, if deemed necessary) in order to keep current with changing racial and cultural trends.

Training Documentation Required

All training received by employees relating to bias-based policing will be documented in employee training records in accordance with agency training procedures.