

## Racial- or Bias-Based Profiling

### 401.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance to department members and establishes appropriate controls to ensure that employees of the Bellingham Police Department do not engage in racial- or bias-based profiling or violate any related laws while serving the community.

#### 401.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Bias-based policing** - An inappropriate reliance on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, disability or affiliation with any non-criminal group (protected characteristics) as the basis for providing differing law enforcement service or enforcement.

### 401.2 POLICY

The Bellingham Police Department is committed to providing law enforcement services to the community with due regard for the racial, cultural or other differences of those served. It is the policy of this department to provide law enforcement services and to enforce the law equally, fairly and without discrimination toward any individual or group.

Race, ethnicity or nationality, religion, sex, sexual orientation, economic status, age, cultural group, disability or affiliation with any other similar identifiable group shall not be used as the basis for providing differing levels of law enforcement service or the enforcement of the law.

### 401.3 RACIAL- OR BIAS-BASED PROFILING PROHIBITED

Racial- or bias-based profiling is strictly prohibited. However, nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit an officer 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).

#### 401.3.1 OTHER PROFILING PROHIBITED

The Bellingham Police Department 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](#)).

### 401.4 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITY

Every member of this department shall perform his/her duties in a fair and objective manner and is responsible for promptly reporting any known instances of racial- or bias-based profiling to a supervisor.

# Bellingham Police Department

Bellingham PD WA Policy Manual

## *Racial- or Bias-Based Profiling*

---

### 401.4.1 REASON FOR DETENTION

Officers detaining a person shall be prepared to articulate sufficient reasonable suspicion to justify the detention, independent of the individual's membership in a protected class.

To the extent that written documentation would otherwise be completed (e.g., arrest report, Field Interview card), the involved officer should include those facts giving rise to the officer's reasonable suspicion or probable cause for the detention, as applicable.

Nothing in this policy shall require any officer to document a contact that would not otherwise require reporting.

### 401.4.2 REPORTING TRAFFIC STOPS

Each time an officer makes a traffic stop, the officer shall report any demographic information required by the Department ([RCW 43.101.410](#)).

## **401.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY**

Supervisors shall monitor those individuals under their command for any behavior that may conflict with the purpose of this policy and shall handle any alleged or observed violation of this policy in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.

- (a) Supervisors should discuss any issues with the involved officer and his/her supervisor in a timely manner.
- (b) Supervisors should periodically review MDT data and any other available resource used to document contact between officers and the public to ensure compliance with this policy.
  - 1. Supervisors should document these periodic reviews.
  - 2. Documentation that captures a potential instance of racial- or bias-based profiling should be appropriately retained for administrative investigation purposes.
- (c) Supervisors shall initiate investigations of any actual or alleged violations of this policy.
- (d) Supervisors should ensure that no retaliatory action is taken against any member of this department who discloses information concerning racial- or bias-based profiling.

## **401.6 STATE REPORTING**

Subject to any fiscal constraints, the Deputy Chief of Operations should review available data related to traffic stops, including demographic data, existing procedures, practices and training, as well as complaints. The data should be analyzed for any patterns or other possible indicators of racial- or bias-based profiling and included in an annual report for the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs ([RCW 43.101.410\(3\)](#)).

# Bellingham Police Department

Bellingham PD WA Policy Manual

## *Racial- or Bias-Based Profiling*

---

### **401.7 TRAINING**

Each member of this department will be required to complete an approved refresher training course every five years, or sooner if deemed necessary, in order to keep current with changing community trends ([RCW 43.101.410](#)).