



# BIAS-BASED PROFILING and Proactive Policing

**Palm Beach County  
Sheriff's Office**

**Ric L. Bradshaw, Sheriff**

## **Biased-Based Profiling and Reasonable Suspicion?**

Bias-based profiling is the selection of individuals for enforcement action based solely on a trait common to a group. This includes, but is not limited to race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age, cultural group, or any other identifiable group.

Bias-based profiling often leads to allegations of violations of constitutional and/or civil rights. It undermines legitimate law enforcement efforts, fosters distrust of law enforcement, and invites outside scrutiny of agency practices.

Reasonable suspicion exists when there are articulable facts or circumstances which would lead a reasonable law enforcement officer, faced with the circumstances as they exist at the time, to suspect that a crime was committed, is in the process of being committed, or is about to be committed.

## **What is Law Enforcement Authority?**

Enforcement action, including, but not limited to, vehicle stops, stops and frisks, detention, questioning, investigation, reports, arrests, searches and seized, application of force, and initiation of forfeiture proceeding.

A legitimate objective of law enforcement is to protect the public by enforcing laws in a fair and impartial manner, recognizing both the statutory and judicial limitations of police authority, while protecting the rights of all persons. To this end, enforcement action must be based solely and exclusively of Federal, State, and local laws, and the policies and procedures of Palm Beach County and the The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office.

## **What is Proactive Policing?**

Proactive Policing is the practice of deterring crime and criminal activity by showing law enforcement presence and engaging the public in order to learn their concerns. In contrast, responding to a complaint after a crime has been committed is considered reactive policing.

Proactive policing is part of the community policing approach to problem solving.

Patrol personnel are the most fundamental problem solving and crime reduction resource, and it is imperative that they are engaged in the entire process. Deputies are to be aware of problems occurring in their patrol zones, as well as the surrounding zones, and be engaged in solving those problems.

## **What is the Sheriff's Office policy regarding Bias-Based Profiling?**

It is the policy of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office to treat every citizen with courtesy and respect. The Sheriff's Office is dedicated to protecting the constitutional rights of citizens regardless of race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age, or cultural group.

Deputies are required to use skills developed through training, experience and knowledge in order to identify suspicious circumstances, unusual occurrences and violations of the law and act according to the situation.

Deputies shall patrol in a proactive manner when a belief that a crime was committed, is about to be committed or is in the process of being committed. This proactive approach aids in the detection and apprehension of criminals, maintains the safety of our streets, and protects our citizens and community from crime.

Employees of the The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office shall not, directly or indirectly, participate in bias-based profiling. Any contact, stop, detention, or search based solely on bias-based profiling is prohibited and will not be tolerated.

When officers identify areas that generate repeat calls for service, problem-solving efforts can be initiated. Deputies may increase the time spent on proactive policing in those areas, such as directed patrols, field interviews, traffic stops, contacts with known offenders, contacts with potential victims, etc. This type of proactive policing reduces criminal activity, thereby reducing the number of repeat calls for service.

The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office is committed to improving the quality of life in the community by providing quality services and emphasizing fair treatment.



**For more information or to report  
a complaint of Bias Based Profiling,  
please contact the  
Staff Inspections Division at  
(561) 688-3072.**