

Bias-Based Profiling Policy

Bias-based profiling occurs when a police officer applies his or her own personal, societal, or organizational biases or stereotypes when making decisions or taking police action, and the reason for that decision or action is because of a person's race, ethnicity, background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age, culture or other personal characteristic, rather than due to the observed behavior of the individual or the identification of the individual as having been, currently being, or about to be engaged in criminal activity. Bias-based profiling can be unintentional or intentional.

What is the Fernandina Beach Police Department's policy on bias-based profiling?

It is the policy of the Fernandina Beach Police Department to protect the constitutional rights of all people, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical handicap, religion or other belief system or physical characteristic; and to treat each person with respect and dignity. We reinforce this philosophy within our Mission Statement, while our policies and practices help to ensure that we safeguard the public trust at all times. We utilize in-car video and audio to capture the interaction between police officers and motorists, and we systematically review these contacts on a monthly basis as a quality control measure. We are careful to consider our officer's words as well as body language and tone, to analyze each encounter in light of desired outcomes. We also record the race and gender of each motorist stopped so that we can discern trends and tendencies from one officer to another. The Fernandina Beach Police Department will not accept or tolerate bias-based profiling.

Discriminatory enforcement practices can alienate our citizens, foster distrust of police in the community, invite media scrutiny, legislative action and judicial intervention, and potentially lead to allegations of constitutional and civil rights violations. As we perform our duties, it is imperative that we afford all citizens their fundamental rights to equal protection under the law. We utilize modern policing techniques and technology to accomplish our goals, and we are always willing to embrace training opportunities to increase our likelihood of success.