



# The San Francisco Police Department City Report

We do science  
to promote justice.



Center For  
**POLICING  
EQUITY**

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# **The San Francisco Police Department is Committed to Enhancing Equity & Improving Community Trust**

In 2017, SFPD joined the Center for Policing Equity's **National Justice Database (NJD)**, a national initiative for data collection and analysis of police behavior. As part of its participation, SFPD shared data on its stops, searches, and use-of-force incidents.

Since 1982, SFPD has been overseen by the Department of Police Accountability, a civilian oversight agency that investigates complaints against officers, conducts periodic audits, and makes policy recommendations regarding police practices.

The Department also has a Community Engagement Division to which officers are assigned full-time to proactively engage with the community through relationship building events, participation in events, and working with community leaders.

The Center for Policing Equity partnered with the San Francisco Police Department to examine policing practices and behavior from 2014 to 2018 as part of the National Justice Database (NJD) project. CPE examined the incidences of vehicle stops, pedestrian stops, and use of force in order to:

- Identify any racial disparities in police interactions with civilians
- Determine if disparities were caused by inequitable practices or other factors
- Identify any attitudinal dispositions by officers or within the department that may be risk factors for inequitable practices

CPE analyzed data provided by SFPD to generate this report. Findings and recommendations are summarized in the following pages.



Results of the study did show racial disparities in SFPD interactions with community members during the study period. Key findings include:

The per-capita stop rate of Black drivers was over 2.5 times higher than the per capita stop rate for White drivers or Latinx drivers, and 4 times higher than for Asian drivers.

Black residents were estimated to be nearly 19 times more likely to have force used on them compared to White residents in the same neighborhood, and Latinx residents were almost twice as likely as White residents.

(controlling for neighborhood crime rate, poverty rate, and the share of the Black population)

Use-of-force incidents were 1.2 times more likely to involve pointing a firearm when the community member was Black rather than White.

Between 2016 and 2018, the overall count of use-of-force incidents and the racial disparity in per-capita risk of force declined.

What does this mean?



## Recommendations

- **Adopt** a unified policy on data collection. CPE recommends SFPD adopt a single, comprehensive policy addressing collection of data on stops in compliance with the Racial and Identity Profiling Act of 2015 (RIPA).
- **Expand** the definition of reportable force. CPE recommends SFPD expand the definition of reportable force in Department General Order 5.01 (Use of Force) to include all force used to overcome resistance, regardless of injury.

## Recommendations

- **Collect** more detailed use-of-force information. CPE recommends SFPD collect and share more detailed data on use-of-force incidents. In particular, we recommend that the SFPD collect and analyze data in a tabular format to facilitate ease of statistical analysis.
- **Utilize COPS Stop Data Guidebook.** CPE recommends the SFPD implement the recommendations of RIPA compliance outlined in the COPS Stop Data Guidebook.



## Recommendations

- **Require** supervisor review of stop records. CPE recommends the SFPD require officers to submit brief daily narratives to their supervisors about stops conducted.



- **Update policy on drawing firearms.** CPE recommends that the SFPD update Department General Order 5.01 (Use of Force) to clarify the circumstances in which an officer may draw a firearm.

## Recommendations

- **Identify** situational risk factors for discrimination. CPE recommends SFPD train its officers and supervisors on the situational risk factors that can increase the likelihood of racially disparate behavior.



## Situational Risk Factors for discrimination are:

- **Organizational risk factors**, or operational processes, policies, practices, cultural norms, and expectations of behavior that leave agencies vulnerable to inequitable policing practices. Two of the most common organizational risk factors in policing are lack of clear, specific directives on how law enforcement officers should interact with the public, and underdeveloped systems of accountability. Behavioral science research shows that people are more likely to behave equitably when the expectations for their behavior are clear and unambiguous.
- **Strategic risk factors**, or decisions that law enforcement agencies make with the goal of promoting public safety that may have unintended consequences of exacerbating inequities and burdensome practices. For example, deployment decisions or enforcement priorities that disproportionately burden particular communities may create or exacerbate disparities in stops and use of force.
- **Intrapersonal risk factors**, or situations, beliefs, and attitudes that increase the likelihood an individual officer will consciously or unconsciously treat people inequitably. For example, behavioral science research reveals people are more likely to be influenced by biases when they are hungry, tired, or multitasking. People are also more likely to behave in inequitable or violent ways when they perceive that their authority or masculinity has been challenged.
- **External risk factors**, which exist outside of a police department and are, therefore, outside of the department's direct control, but with direct implications on policing practices. One common external risk factor is lack of social services for people living with severe mental illness, substance use disorder, and homelessness.



## Wins

# Ways in Which The SFPD Proactively Enhances Equity Already

*The SFPD has described the following equity initiatives above and beyond those evaluated by CPE as part of the NJD project:*

Breaking the cycle of gun violence in communities.

Assistance and resources to members of the community in their native languages.



**The SFPD works with community organizations and businesses to designate Safe Places throughout the city by placing decals in their entrances.**

- Safe Place Program (LGBTQ Community)
- Restorative Justice Program
- Language Access Services
- *The SFPD also interacts with community youth in the Community Safety Initiative program and the Youth Career Academy.*



**Thank you**

**for supporting CPE's  
data-driven solutions that  
communities want and  
law enforcement can stand behind**

