



SARASOTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Bias-Based Profiling Policy



Bias-based profiling is the selection of individuals based solely on a common trait of a group. This includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age or culture. **Sarasota Police Department officers are prohibited from engaging in bias-based policing.** Criminal profiling, however, involves the derivation of behavioral characteristics and personality features from crime scene evidence, can be a useful tool in criminal investigations.

It is the policy of the Sarasota Police Department to patrol in a proactive manner, to investigate suspicious persons and/or circumstances, and to enforce motor vehicle laws in a fair and impartial manner. We are here to protect and work with our community. Law enforcement officers are required to use skills developed through observation, training, and experience in order to identify suspicious circumstances, unusual occurrences and violations of law, and to act according to the situation. Therefore, officers focus on a person's conduct or other specific suspect information, and will have reasonable suspicion (supported by articulable facts) that the person contacted has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a violation of the law before a stop is made.

We want to do the right thing. 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 the Constitutional and fundamental right to equal protection under the law. We use accepted investigative tools. Criminal profiling is one of many accepted and necessary law enforcement investigative practices. However, it differs from and should not be confused with bias-based profiling. One is an investigative tool; the other, a discriminatory practice.

How does criminal profiling differ from bias-based profiling? While criminal profiling does add elements (such as gender, race, or ethnicity) to a list of factors scrutinized to identify a suspect, these elements are only parts of several pieces of the puzzle that police must put together to solve crime. They are not used as a sole means of singling out an individual. Criminal profiling can assist us by narrowing the field of potential suspects in major criminal investigations.

The Sarasota Police Department is committed to the equal treatment of all persons, without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, handicap, or age. We consider any complaints regarding employee violations to be serious and deserving of an immediate, fair, and thorough investigation. Any person may file a complaint with the Sarasota Police Department if they feel they have been stopped or searched based on racial, ethnic, or gender based profiling by calling 941-954-7025, by directly contacting a supervisor or front desk personnel, or filling out an online complaint form. All complaints shall be reviewed and the complainant informed of the results within a reasonable amount of time.