



**Contacts between
Police and the
Public**
*A Survey of Contacts
in 2006 and 2007*

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Contacts between Police and the Public in Utah

A Survey of Contacts in 2006 and 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present study is designed to replicate for Utah the findings of a national survey on contacts between police and the public conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), United States Department of Justice, in 2002 and again in 2005. A total of 2,892 residents of Utah—1,625 women and 1,267 men—at least 16 years of age were telephoned by a private survey firm and asked questions about contacts they had with the police during the last year. The sample includes 998 members of a racial or ethnic minority (34.5% of the sample). The average age of the respondents was 47.7 years.

All Contacts

- 27% of the respondents reported a face-to-face contact with the police in the last year, compared with 19% in the 2005 national survey. 45% of contacts were police-initiated.
- The overall rate of reported contact was higher for men—29% compared to 26% of women. Men also had a higher rate of police-initiated contacts—15% of men vs. 10% of women.
- Non-minorities reported a higher contact rate than minorities—30% for non-minorities vs. 22% for minorities. The difference was reduced for police-initiated contacts—13% for non-minorities compared to 11% for minorities.
- While individuals 35 to 54 years of age had the highest overall rate of contact, the youngest age group (16 to 34 years olds) had the highest rate of police-initiated contacts.

Type of Contact

- The most common reason for a contact was reporting a problem to the police—11% of Utah respondents said they reported a problem, almost twice the 2005 national rate.
- The next most common reason for a Utah contact was as a driver in a traffic stop—6% of the Utah respondents reported they were a driver in a traffic stop compared to the 2005 national rate of 9%.
- Demographic characteristics and type of contact:
 - Men were more likely to be the driver in a traffic stop and more than three times as likely to be contacted by the police as part of a criminal investigation.
 - Non-minority individuals were more likely to be the driver in a traffic stop than minorities, and were more likely to report a problem to the police. Minorities, however, were more than twice as likely to be contacted on suspicion of a crime.
 - 35 to 54 year olds had a higher rate of traffic stops, reporting a problem to the police, and contact during a criminal investigation. 16 to 34 year olds were four times as likely as the other age groups to be contacted on suspicion of a crime.
 - Among the 16 to 34 year olds, non-minority respondents were more than twice as likely to be the driver in a traffic stop. On the other hand, minority respondents in the

16 to 34 year old age group were almost three times as likely to report a contact in which they were a criminal suspect than the non-minority respondents of a similar age.

Appropriateness of Police Behavior

- 87% of the Utah respondents who experienced contact with the police reported the police behaved appropriately compared to the 2005 national rate of 90%.
- Police behavior during police-initiated contacts was rated lower than in respondent-initiated contacts—81% gave an appropriate rating for police-initiated contacts versus 92% for respondent-initiated contacts.
- Police behavior was rated lower overall by minority respondents—81% of minorities vs. 89% of non-minorities said the police behaved appropriately. This was especially true in police-initiated contacts, where 72% of minorities gave favorable ratings compared to 85% for non-minorities.

Arrest

- 40 individuals in the survey reported they were arrested by the police during the past year (1.3%).
- Men, younger respondents, and minority respondents were more likely to report being arrested. Among 16 to 34 year olds, minority respondents were more than three times as likely to report an arrest as non-minorities of a similar age—more than half of the 40 total arrests were reported by minority 16 to 34 year old respondents.

Police Search

- 8.6% (68 individuals) of those reporting a police contacts said they were searched by the police (includes person or vehicle searches).
- Men, younger respondents, and minorities were more likely to report being searched. Among 16 to 34 year olds, minority respondents were almost three times as likely to report being searched as non-minority 16 to 34 year olds.

Police Use of Force

- 6.8% (53 individuals) of those with a police contact reported the police used force or threatened to use force during the contact.
- Men, younger respondents, and minorities were more likely to report the police used force. Within the younger group (16 to 34), minority respondents were more than twice as likely to report the police used force compared to non-minorities in this age group.
- 72% of the respondents who said the police used force also said that they felt the force was excessive. Younger individuals and minority respondents were more likely to report that the police use of force was excessive.

BACKGROUND

The mission of the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) is to promote broad philosophical agreement about the objectives of the criminal and juvenile justice system in the state; to provide a mechanism for coordinating the functions of various branches and levels of government concerned with criminal and juvenile justice; and to coordinate statewide efforts to reduce crime and victimization in Utah. To accomplish these goals, the Commission includes a diverse membership representing a wide range of organizations concerned with justice issues in Utah. The CCJJ Research and Data Unit conducts and coordinates research on pertinent criminal justice issues and serves as the Statistical Analysis Center for the state of Utah.

Funding for this project and report was provided by the Utah State Legislature during the 2007 General Session.

Purpose of the Study

The present study is designed to replicate for Utah the findings of a national survey on contacts between police and the public conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), United States Department of Justice, in 2002 and again in 2005. The Utah study used the survey designed by BJS as the basis for its questionnaire and comparisons will be made between the results of the Utah survey and the national survey.

The study is designed to provide estimates for the following questions:

1. What is the rate of contact between Utah police and residents? Does this rate differ by gender, age, and minority status?
2. What type of contacts occur between the police and public in Utah?
3. What are the outcomes of the contacts? Do outcomes differ by gender, age, and minority status?

Survey Respondents

A survey firm experienced in telephone surveys in Utah conducted the study under contract with CCJJ in the Fall of 2007. A sample of telephone numbers representing all counties in the state was purchased and used with Random Digit Dialing technology to contact potential respondents. In addition, a special sample which concentrated on zip codes in Salt Lake and Weber Counties with high minority populations was used to increase the response rate for minority residents of the state.

Survey respondents were asked about their contacts with the police in the last year. The survey

	<i>Non-minority</i>		<i>Minority</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	
<i>Percent of Respondents</i>	43.7%	56.3%	44.0%	56.0%	2,892
<i>Average Age (years)</i>	50.78	52.91	38.66	40.36	47.7

firm provided a final sample of 2,892 residents which includes 1,267 men (43.8%) and 1,625 women (56.2%) of which 998 (34.5%) were of a racial or ethnic minority group. Table 1 provides a description of the survey respondents. The distribution of the sample by race and ethnicity is displayed in Table 2. Because of the small number of individuals in each of the race and ethnicity categories, results for minority respondents will be grouped for the remainder of the report.

White, not Hispanic	65.5%
Hispanic	18.2%
African American	4.2%
Asian American	2.7%
Pacific Islander	1.8%
Native American	2.6%
Other or Multiple	5.0%

Minority respondents were significantly younger than the non-minority respondents. Because of this bias, some of the results will be reported by age groups.

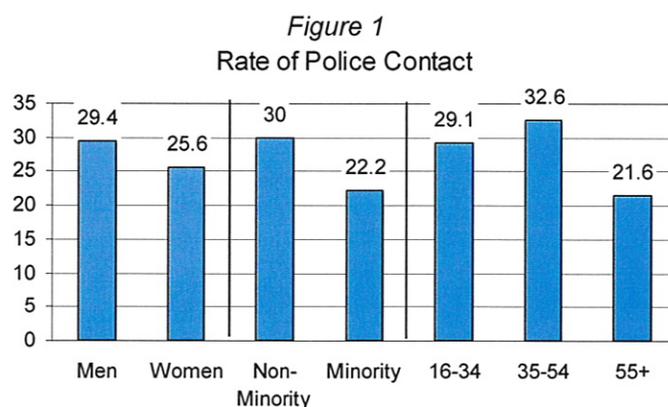
Rate of Contact

27.3% (789) of the survey respondents reported to surveyors that they had a face-to-face contact with the police during the last year. The overall rate in the 2005 national survey was 19%. Utah residents have a higher rate of contact with the police than the nation as a whole.

	Non-Minority		Minority		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
Total	32.7%	27.8%	23.2%	21.5%	27.3%
Age					
16 to 34	38.5%	32.7%	25.7%	22.7%	29.1%
35 to 54	38.1%	33.5%	25.6%	25.5%	32.6%
55 plus	25.5%	22.0%	15.4%	14.8%	21.6%

The rate of contacts was higher for men and non-minorities. 29.4% of men and 25.6% of women reported a contact with the police. Non-minorities reported a contact rate of 30.0% compared with 22.2% for minorities. Figure 1 shows overall contact rates by demographic characteristics, while Table 3 breaks these rates down further.

The average age of respondents who had a police contact was 44.4 years compared to 48.9 for those not reporting contact. The highest percentage of contact occurred for individuals 35 to 54 years of age. On the other hand, younger individuals (16 to 34) were more likely to have a contact initiated by the police (16.0% vs. 13.3% for those 35 to 54 and 8.7% for those 55 years and older). The average age of respondents with a police-initiated contact was 42.0 years (compared to 46.4 for citizen-initiated contact).



48.8% of the respondents who had a contact with the police reported multiple contacts (29% reported multiple contacts in the 2005 national survey). The likelihood of having multiple

contacts was similar to the general patterns, with men (54.2% vs. 44% for women) and those 35 to 54 years of age (56.4% vs. 47.0% for 16 to 34 and 43.6% for those over 55) having more multiple contacts. This rate did not vary by race/ethnicity (48.3% non-minority, 50.0% minority).

Reason for Contact

The respondents who had a police contact were asked to provide information about the reason for the contact. If the respondent reported more than one contact, he or she was asked to describe the most recent contact. See Figure 2 and Table 4 for a summary of rates for each contact type.

Respondents were asked to pick the type of contact that best described the context of their most recent interaction with the police from the following set of options:

- Driver in a traffic stop
- Passenger in a traffic stop
- Traffic accident
- Reported a crime or problem to the police
- Police providing assistance or service
- Police investigating a crime
- Person suspected of wrongdoing by the police
- Other

Figure 2

Reason for Contact with the Police

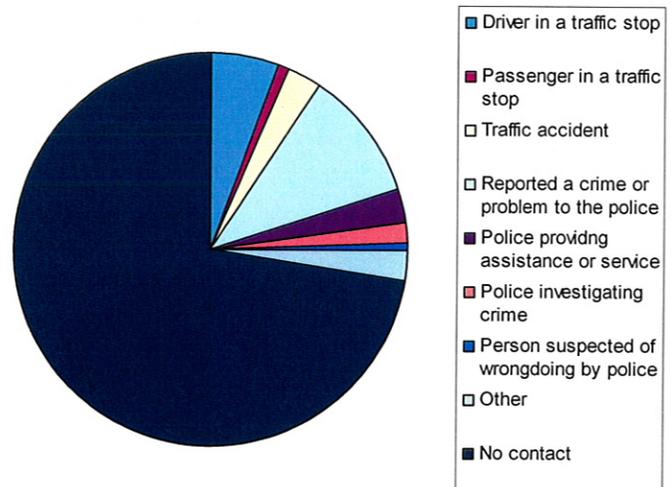


Table 4
Reason for Face-to-Face Contact

	% of Contacts	% of Total Sample
Traffic Contacts	33.6%	9.1%
Driver	20.4%	5.6%
Passenger	2.8%	0.8%
Accident	10.4%	2.8%
Other Contacts	66.4%	18.2%
Reported problem to police	39.0%	10.7%
Police providing assistance or service	11.0%	3.0%
Police investigating crime	5.3%	1.5%
Person suspected of wrongdoing by police	2.7%	0.7%
Other	8.4%	2.3%

Reporting a crime or problem to the police. The most common reason for a contact between a Utah resident and the police was reporting a crime or problem to the police. 10.7%

of the total number of respondents said their most recent contact involved reporting a crime or problem to the police, which is more than twice the 2005 national rate. Of the 789 respondents who said they had a contact, 39.0% were reporting a crime or problem. 23.7% of such respondents in the 2005 national survey indicated they were reporting a crime or problem. Thus, Utah survey respondents were much more likely to report a crime or problem to the police.

Driver in a traffic stop. The next most common reason for a contact between the police and public was as a driver in a traffic stop. 20.4% of the reported contacts were the result of traffic stops and 5.6% of the total number of respondents reported a traffic stop. In the 2005 national survey, almost 9% of respondents were stopped by the police, with 41% of all contacts involving a traffic stop. Thus, Utah survey respondents were less likely to report traffic stops than national survey respondents.

Differences in contact rates by demographic characteristics—Rate of survey respondents. The rates of different types of contacts for all respondents were related to demographic characteristics (see Table 5 below). Men were more likely than women to report being the driver in a traffic stop, with 6.9% of the men surveyed reporting a traffic stop compared to 4.6% of the women. Men were also more likely to be contacted by the police as part of a criminal investigation, with 2.4% of men indicating they were contacted by the police for the purposes of a criminal investigation compared to less than 1% (0.7%) of women.

Race and ethnicity were related to the type of contact respondents had with the police. Non-minority individuals were more likely to be the driver in a traffic stop (6.4% vs. 3.9% for minority respondents). However, minorities were more likely to report being a passenger in a traffic stop. Minorities were less likely to report a problem to the police (7.9% for minorities vs. 12.1% for non-minorities). While the number of responses was very low, minorities were more

than twice as likely to report they were contacted as a result of being a suspect in a crime (1.2% for minorities vs. 0.5% for non-minorities).

Table 5
Reason for Face-to-Face Contact by Demographic Characteristics
Percent of All Survey Respondents

	Male	Female	Non-Minority	Minority	16 to 34 years	35 to 54 years	55 and older
Traffic Contacts							
Driver	6.9%	4.6%	6.4%	3.9%	5.7%	6.6%	4.6%
Passenger	0.6%	0.9%	0.5%	1.2%	1.4%	0.7%	0.4%
Accident	3.1%	2.6%	3.0%	2.5%	3.0%	3.3%	2.3%
Other Contacts							
Reported problem to police	10.3%	11.0%	12.1%	7.9%	10.3%	13.2%	8.8%
Police providing assistance	2.7%	3.3%	3.5%	2.0%	2.8%	3.7%	2.6%
Police investigating crime	2.4%	0.7%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	2.4%	0.8%
Person suspected by police	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%	1.2%	1.6%	0.4%	0.3%
Other	2.9%	1.9%	2.4%	2.1%	3.0%	2.2%	1.8%

Age also had an impact on police contacts. The middle age group, 35 to 54 year olds, had a higher rate of traffic stops. They also had a higher rate of contacts where they were reporting a problem to the police or where the police were providing the individual with assistance. 35 to 54 year olds also had a higher rate of contacts with the police during a criminal investigation. The youngest age group, 16 to 34 year olds, was four times as likely to be contacted by the police as a suspect in a crime.

Differences in contact rates by demographic characteristics—Rates for respondents reporting a contact. Similar patterns among demographic groups are revealed when only the 789 individuals who reported a police contact are examined. Table 6 shows the percent within this group who reported each type of contact. Men who had a police contact were more likely than women to be the driver in a traffic stop or to be contacted by the police as part of a criminal investigation, while women with police contacts were more likely to report a crime or a problem to the police.

Table 6
Reason for Face-to-Face Contact by Demographic Characteristics
Percent of Respondents Reporting a Contact

	Male	Female	Non-Minority	Minority	16 to 34 years	35 to 54 years	55 and older
Traffic Contacts							
Driver	23.3%	17.8%	21.5%	17.6%	19.5%	20.3%	21.5%
Passenger	2.1%	3.4%	1.8%	5.4%	4.8%	2.0%	1.7%
Accident	10.5%	10.3%	10.1%	11.3%	10.4%	10.1%	10.7%
Other Contacts							
Reported problem to police	34.9%	42.8%	40.4%	35.6%	35.5%	40.5%	40.9%
Police providing assistance	9.1%	12.7%	11.8%	9.0%	9.6%	11.5%	12.0%
Police investigating crime	8.0%	2.9%	4.9%	6.3%	4.4%	7.4%	3.7%
Person suspected by police	2.4%	2.9%	1.6%	5.4%	5.6%	1.4%	1.2%
Other	9.6%	7.2%	7.9%	9.5%	10.4%	6.7%	8.2%

Non-minorities who had a contact were more likely than minorities to report being the driver in a traffic stop or to report a problem to the police (see Table 6). Minorities were more likely to report they were a passenger in a traffic stop or a suspect in a crime.

The 16 to 34 year olds had the lowest rate of reporting a problem to the police and the highest rate of being a suspect in a crime. 35 to 54 year olds reported more contacts with the police when the police were investigating a crime.

Figures 3 through 6 summarize the demographic characteristics of the four contact types with statistically significant differences in these characteristics.

Figure 3

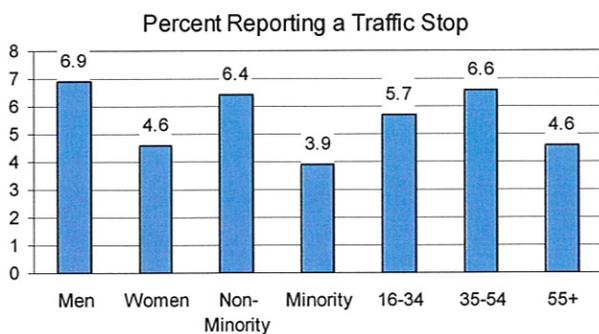


Figure 4

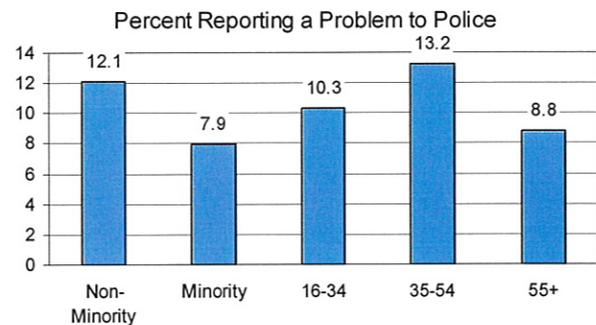


Figure 5

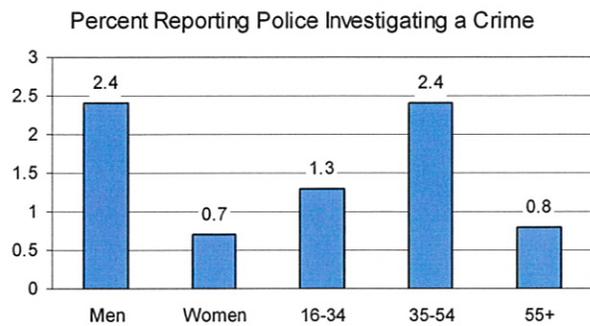
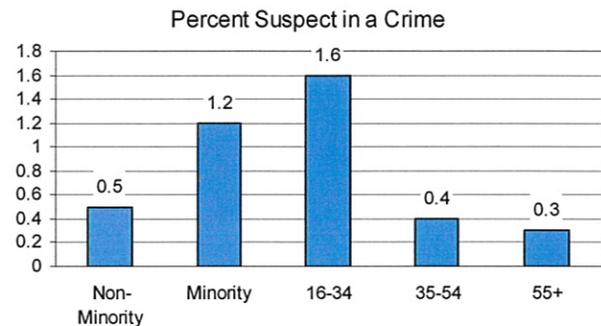


Figure 6



Differences in contact rates by age and race and ethnicity—Base rates. Table 7

shows the percent of the age and minority subgroups which reported each type of contact with the police. Among the 16 to 34 year olds—the group with the highest rate of police-initiated contact—non-minority respondents reported a higher rate of traffic stops than the minority respondents (8.5% for non-minority compared to 3.3% for minority respondents). Non-minority 16 to 34 year olds also had a higher rate of reporting a problem to the police than minority 16 to 34 year olds. Minority respondents within this youngest age category reported a much higher rate of contact with the police in which they were the suspect in a crime (2.3% compared to 0.8% for non-minority respondents).

Age	16-34		35-54		55 and over	
	Non-Minority	Minority	Non-Minority	Minority	Non-Minority	Minority
Traffic Contacts						
Driver	8.5%	3.3%	7.4%	4.7%	4.8%	4.1%
Passenger	0.8%	1.9%	0.5%	1.1%	0.5%	--
Accident	3.4%	2.7%	3.6%	2.6%	2.4%	2.0%
Other Contacts						
Reported problem to police	13.2%	7.9%	14.7%	9.9%	9.7%	5.7%
Police providing assistance	3.9%	1.9%	4.4%	2.2%	2.7%	2.0%
Police investigating crime	1.3%	1.3%	2.7%	1.8%	0.7%	1.2%
Person suspected	0.8%	2.3%	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%	--
Other	3.3%	2.7%	1.9%	3.0%	2.3%	--

Differences in contact rates by age and race and ethnicity—Respondents reporting a contact. Table 8 shows the relationship between age and minority status and contact type for the 789 individuals who reported some type of contact. Among the 16 to 34 year old age group, minority respondents were less likely than non-minorities to report they had been the driver in a traffic stop. On the other hand, among the 16 to 34 year olds, minorities were much more likely than non-minorities to report a contact in which the police were investigating a crime or as a suspect in a crime (14.8% versus 5.9% for non-minorities).

Table 8
Percent of Total Face-to-Face Contacts by Reason by Age and Race and Ethnicity

Age	16-34		35-54		55 and over	
	Non-Minority	Minority	Non-Minority	Minority	Non-Minority	Minority
Traffic Contacts						
<i>Driver</i>	24.3%	13.9%	20.8%	18.6%	20.5%	27.0%
<i>Passenger</i>	2.2%	7.8%	1.3%	4.3%	2.0%	--
<i>Accident</i>	9.6%	11.3%	10.2%	10.0%	10.2%	13.5%
Other Contacts						
<i>Reported problem to police</i>	37.5%	33.0%	41.2%	38.6%	41.5%	37.8%
<i>Police providing assistance</i>	11.0%	7.8%	12.4%	8.6%	11.7%	13.5%
<i>Police investigating crime</i>	3.7%	5.2%	7.5%	7.1%	2.9%	8.1%
<i>Person suspected</i>	2.2%	9.6%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	--
<i>Other</i>	9.5%	11.3%	5.3%	11.4%	9.8%	--

Traffic Stops

5.6% of the respondents reported that their most recent contact with the police was as a driver during a traffic stop. Those reporting a traffic stop were younger on the average (44.8 years) than those who did not (47.91 years). Among the traffic stops, the most common reason reported for the stop was speeding (47.8%), followed by a stop sign or traffic light violation (11.8%).

Table 9
Demographics of Traffic Stops

	Total	Men	Women
<i>Total</i>	161	54.0%	46.0%
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>			
<i>Non-minority</i>	122	54.9%	45.1%
<i>Minority</i>	39	51.3%	48.7%
<i>Average Age</i>	44.82	44.71	44.95

Respondents were asked if they were given a ticket during the traffic stop. Traffic tickets were issued in 64.6% of the Utah stops compared to 57.4% in the 2005 national survey.

While a slightly higher percentage of men reported receiving a ticket (71.8% vs. 62.3% for women), this outcome did not vary significantly across demographic characteristics.

Respondents were asked if the police had a legitimate reason for stopping them. For those who were involved in a traffic stop, 81.2% of Utah residents answering the question said they believed the police had a legitimate reason for stopping them. The 2005 national survey found a slightly higher rate—86% of respondents thought the police had a legitimate reason for stopping them. This outcome also did not vary across demographic characteristics.

	Total
Speeding	47.8%
Vehicle Defect	10.6%
Record Check	3.1%
Seatbelt Violation	1.2%
Illegal Turn or Lane Change	9.3%
Stop Sign/Traffic Light Violation	11.8%
Other	11.1%
Don't Know	5.0%

Respondents who received a ticket were slightly less likely to think that the police had a legitimate reason for stopping them. 74% of those who were ticketed said the police had a valid reason for the traffic stop.

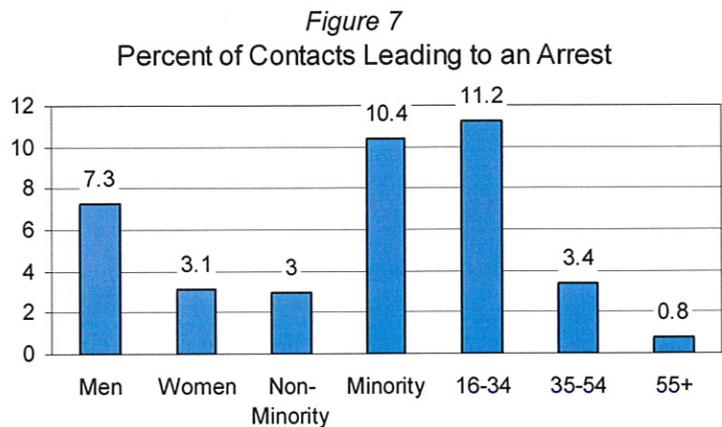
Arrest

Respondents were asked if they were arrested during their contact with the police. 5.1% (40 overall in the sample) of the respondents reporting a contact indicated they were arrested at some during the contact. Men, younger individuals, and minority respondents were significantly more likely to report being arrested during a contact with the police (see Table 11 and Figure 7).

	% of Contacts
Sex	
Male	7.3% (27)
Female	3.1% (13)
Race/Ethnicity	
Non-Minority	3.0% (17)
Minority	10.4% (23)
Age	
16-34	11.2% (28)
35-54	3.4% (10)
55+	0.8% (2)

The most striking difference occurs for minority respondents within the younger (16 to 34) age group: 18.3% of young minority respondents reported being arrested (vs. 5.1% of young non-minorities). The arrest rate did not exceed 3.5% in any other combination of age

and minority status. The majority of arrests (21 out of 40) were reported by these minority respondents between 16 and 34 years of age. The 2005 national survey only reported arrests that occurred during a traffic stop; however, they found that, in a traffic stop, men and younger individuals were more likely to be arrested.



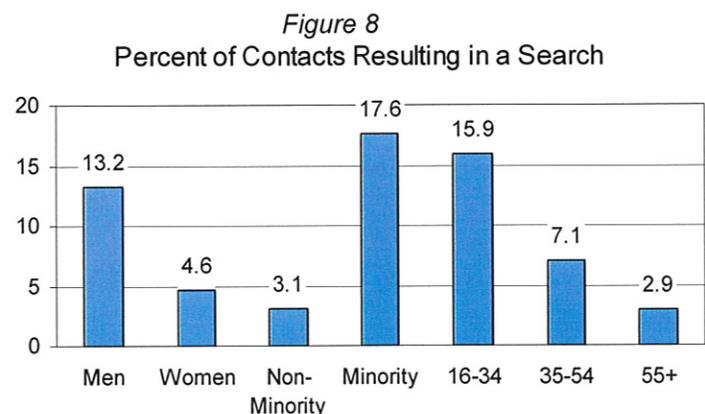
Police Search

Respondents reporting a contact with the police were asked if they or their vehicle were searched (only those reporting a traffic stop were asked about vehicle searches). 8.6% (68 overall in the sample) of the respondents reported experiencing a search of some kind. According to these respondents, incriminating evidence such as drugs or weapons was found in 22.7% of these searches.

Table 12
Searched

	% of Contacts
Sex	
Male	13.2% (49)
Female	4.6% (19)
Race/Ethnicity	
Non-Minority	5.1% (29)
Minority	17.6% (39)
Age	
16-34	15.9% (40)
35-54	7.1% (21)
55+	2.9% (7)

Men were more likely than women to be searched (13.2% vs. 4.6%), and minorities were more likely than non-minorities to be subject to a search (17.6% vs. 5.1%). Age also significantly influenced the likelihood of being searched, with youngest respondents (16 to 34) being the most likely to be searched (15.9%). As with arrest, minority respondents between the ages of 16 and 34 were by far the most



likely to report being searched during a police contact (24.3% vs. 8.8% non-minorities within this age group, with the next highest rate at 11.6% for minorities 35 to 54 years of age). Similar patterns were found in the 2005 national survey, with a higher rate of searches for men, younger individuals, and minority respondents.

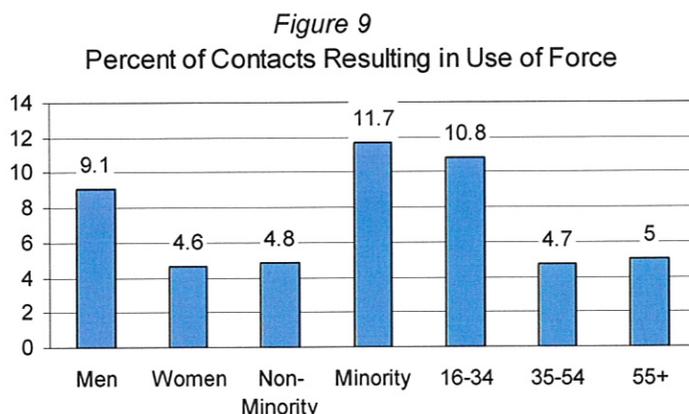
Younger individuals were more likely to report that the search had yielded evidence of a crime. 25.6% of 16 to 34 year olds who were searched reported incriminating evidence was found, compared to 20.0% of 35 to 54 year olds, and 14.3% of those 55 and older.

Non-minorities were much more likely to report that a search yielded evidence of a crime, with 32.1% of the non-minority respondents who were searched indicating that incriminating evidence was found compared to 15.8% of minority respondents.

Police Use of Force

All respondents who reported contact with the police were asked if the police used or threatened to use force during the contact. 6.8% (53 overall in the sample) reported the police used or threatened to use force. As with arrests and searches, men, younger individuals, and minority respondents were the most likely to report the police used or threatened to use force (see Table 14 and Figure 9). Additionally, a similar pattern emerged

	Percent
Sex	
Male	9.1% (34)
Female	4.6% (19)
Race/Ethnicity	
Non-minority	4.8% (27)
Minority	11.7% (26)
Age	
16-34	10.8% (27)
35-54	4.7% (14)
55+	5.0% (12)



pointing to 16 to 34 year old minority respondents reporting the greatest likelihood of experiencing police force (16.5%); no other combination of age and minority status exceeded 7.1%. Similar patterns were found in the 2005

national survey, with a higher rate of searches for men, younger individuals, and minority respondents.

71.7% of the respondents who experienced force or the threat of force felt the police used excessive force. Table 15 shows this broken down by demographic characteristics. While the absolute numbers within this category are small, there is a clear trend for minority and younger respondents (those who report a higher likelihood of experiencing police force) to feel that the force used against them by the police was excessive.

Table 14
Force Was Excessive

	Percent
Gender	
Male	70.6%
Female	73.7%
Race/Ethnicity	
Non-minority	63.0%
Minority	80.8%
Age	
16-34	81.5%
35-54	64.3%
55+	58.3%

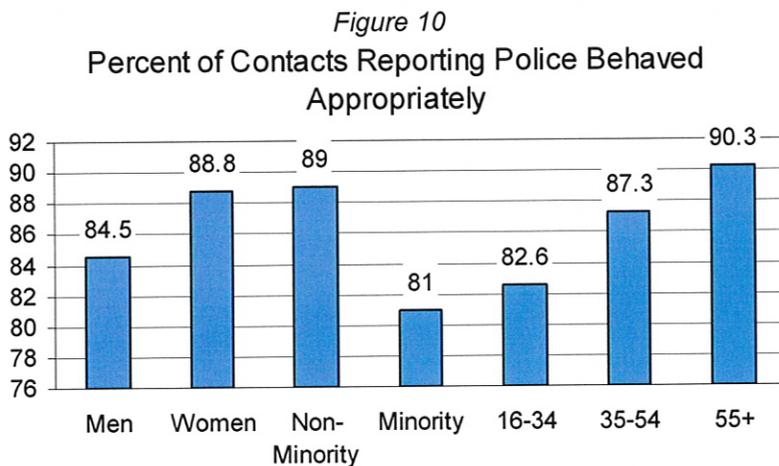
Perception of Appropriateness of Police Behavior

Respondents who had contact with the police were asked if they thought the police behaved appropriately during the interaction. The large majority responded that the police acted properly (86.7%); however, this rate is somewhat lower than the national rate of 90.4% in the 2005 survey. These ratings varied by the type of contact the individual had with the police. Respondents were less likely to rate police behavior in police-initiated contacts favorably (80.8%) than they were in contacts that were self-initiated (91.8%).

Table 15
Percent Responding Police Behaved Appropriately

	Total	Police-Initiated Contact	Respondent-Initiated Contact
Total	86.7%	80.8%	91.8%
Sex			
Men	84.5%	79.6%	89.2%
Women	88.8%	82.2%	93.8%
Race/Ethnicity			
Non-Minority	89.0%	84.7%	92.6%
Minority	81.0%	72.0%	89.7%
Age			
16-34	82.6%	76.3%	90.9%
35-54	87.3%	82.1%	90.4%
55 and Over	90.3%	85.4%	94.2%

Figure 10 shows demographic differences in ratings of the appropriateness of police behavior. Younger individuals were less likely to regard police behavior as appropriate, with a favorable rating by 82.6% of the 16 to 34 year olds compared to 90.3% of those 55 and older. This also varied according to whether the respondent was a member of a race/ethnicity



minority group, especially when the contact was initiated by the police. Minority respondents were generally less likely to rate police behavior as appropriate (81% vs. 89% for non-minorities), and this discrepancy is magnified

in police-initiated contacts only (72% vs. 84.7% for non-minorities).

Out of the 96 individuals who were searched, arrested, and/or subjected to police force, 92 provided a rating of the appropriateness of police behavior. Only 48.9% of these 92 respondents reported the police behaved appropriately during their interaction.

Summary and Conclusions

The results of Utah's police contact survey are generally similar to the 2002 and 2005 national survey results. As with the national survey, overall contact rates are higher for men than women, and for younger than older individuals. Utah differs in having a higher contact rate for non-minority respondents than respondents who reported being members of a racial or ethnic minority. The national survey found no difference in general contact rates based on racial or ethnic status.

Another difference between the Utah results and national survey was that the most common reason for contact between the police and the public in Utah was the person reporting

a crime or problem to the police. Other statistics support the idea that Utahns are more likely than residents of other states to report crime. Utah's reported property crime rate has been above the national average for most of the last 20 years. One explanation is that property crime is more common in Utah. A different explanation, which is consistent with the current study, is that residents of Utah report property crimes more than individuals in other parts of the country.

Like the national studies, the Utah survey found that respondents who had contact with the police generally saw police behavior as appropriate. However, like the national studies, young, male, minority Utahns were less likely to view the police as behaving appropriately.

As in the national studies, the Utah survey also found that young, male, minority individuals were more likely to report being arrested, searched, or subjected to police force than older, female, or non-minority respondents. This appears to be a common trend across the country, and the results of the survey point to several topics that could be addressed in police training. For example, simple awareness of the potential for differential treatment of individuals who are young, male, and from a minority racial/ethnic group (especially when these factors are in combination) could go a long way to addressing this issue.

While it is important to acknowledge that these results are all based on self-report by respondents (with the potential for bias that this involves), the results largely match those found in the larger national survey. It is also difficult to truly know if the contacts involving males, younger individuals, and minority groups were objectively more serious, though analysis of many different types of contact points to a larger trend. Thus, the issue of differential treatment within police contacts involving various subgroups of the population is a national issue that we also find here in Utah, and it may be an important one to address.

On the other hand, Utah's high rate of citizen involvement in the justice process (e.g., reporting crimes and other problems to the police), combined with high ratings of police behavior in citizen-initiated contacts, points to a rather cooperative relationship between the police and the public here that may surpass other states. It is important, then, to take both the positive areas and those in need of improvement when moving forward on issues involving interactions between the police and the public.