



Race & Identity Based Data Collection Strategy

Understanding Strip Searches in 2020
Methodological Report
Toronto Police Service

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Introduction

This report provides detailed description of the data sources, methodologies, definitions and supplementary findings of the race and identity-based data analysis of the Strip Search data collected by the Toronto Police Service (Service) over the period January 1 to December 31, 2020. It complements the “[Understanding Use of Force & Strip Searches in 2020: Detailed Report](#)” (Detailed Report) dated June 2022, and is intended for those interested in learning more about how the Service prepared and analysed the data in addition to useful contextual information to better understand the reported findings.

This supplementary report represents the first in a methodological series of interaction-specific academic reports, the series evolving once additional police interactions are added under the Race and Identity-Based Data Collection Strategy (R.B.D.C. Strategy). Findings for 2020 data should be considered the baseline for trend analyses going forward.

The methodological series targets an audience of academics, researchers and people who are interested in a more nuanced understanding of policing operations, data and methodologies used. It is also part of a [broader package of documents](#) for any law enforcement agency or police service interested in implementing a race and identity-based data initiative to identify, monitor and address racial disparities in policing outcomes. This package contains the following resources:

- ***‘The Race and Identity-Based Data Collection Strategy: Integral part of the Toronto Police Service’s commitment to equity, transparency and accountability’*** – strategic document that lays out the key elements and principles guiding the R.B.D.C. Strategy.
- ***‘Data Analysis Framework for Racial Equity’*** – general framework guiding the analyses under the R.B.D.C. Strategy.
- ***‘Understanding Use of Force & Strip Searches 2020’*** – a detailed report of findings in Phase 1 of the R.B.D.C. Strategy.

This report is organized into the following sections:

- ‘Background and Context’ introduces the legislative and operational context relevant to ground the findings presented in the public report.
- ‘Principled Approach to Strip Search Analysis’ describes the key research questions and approach to co-develop hypotheses to identify racial disparities that can support actionable insights.
- ‘Data Sources, Limitations & Analytical Considerations’ describes where the data comes from, how it was collected and managed, and implications for analyses.

- ‘Methodology’ describes the multiple benchmark approach, definitions and disproportionality indices, as well as statistical considerations made in conducting analyses.
- ‘Summary of Key Findings’ discusses the insights provided in the Service’s public report and the impacts of the report for the Service, Members, and communities.
- ‘Open Data and Open Analytics’ provides a high-level description of data publicly available to those interested in conducting their own analyses.

Background and Context

On September 19, 2019, the Toronto Police Services Board (Board) approved the *Race-Based Data Collection, Analysis and Public Reporting Policy*¹ (Board Policy) dated September 2019, to identify, monitor and address systemic racial disparities in policing. The Policy is guided by the legal principles of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and Ontario’s *Anti-Racism Act, 2017*; it also aligns with Ontario’s [Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism](#) (also known as Ontario’s *Anti-Racism Data Standards*) established under s. 6(1) of the *Anti-Racism Act, 2017*.

To implement the Board Policy, the Service developed the R.B.D.C. Strategy that employs a staged approach. Phase 1 commenced in January 2020 with the collection of race perception data for Use of Force interactions. The Service went one step further and included Strip Searches in response to the Office of Independent Police Review Director (O.I.P.R.D.) report *Breaking the Golden Rule: A Review of the Police Strip Searches in Ontario*². Phase 2 commenced in January 2021 to include other police interactions, such as arrests, apprehensions, and diversions.

Understanding Police Search of Persons in Arrests

Service Procedure 01-02 *Search of Persons* governs and outlines possible risk factors for the search of persons; however, the decision as to what type of search is appropriate must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

There are four levels of searches: protective, frisk, strip search, and body cavity (see Appendix A for definitions). All search of persons must be done sequentially, meaning that lower levels of searches must be completed and there must be reasonable justification for

¹ Toronto Police Services Board. (2019). *Race-Based Data Collection, Analysis and Public Reporting Policy*. <https://www.tpsb.ca/policies-by-laws/board-policies/177-race-based-data-collection-analysis-and-public-reporting>

² Office of Independent Police Review Director. (2019). *Breaking the Golden Rule: A Review of the Police Strip Searches in Ontario*. <https://www.oiprd.on.ca/news/systemic-reviews/>

higher levels of searches before they may occur. The definition of strip search used by the Service is:

A thorough search of a person's clothing and non-physical search of the body that will often require removal or rearrangement of some, or all, of the person's clothing to permit a visual inspection of a person's private areas: namely the genitals, buttocks, breasts or chest, body cavity, and/or undergarments; the mouth was excluded from this definition despite being a bodily cavity.

(R. vs. Golden 2001 SCC 83)

Appendix A and B provides definitions of search of persons and a visual that illustrates the arrest and search of person process. Officers contemplating a strip search of a person shall consider several circumstances. These are outlined in the [R.B.D.C. Story Map](#).

Changes to Search of Persons Policy and Procedures

In October 2020, the Service revised the Procedure 01-02, *Search of Persons*. The changes address office accountability, training, and data management. Some of these changes include:

- All protective and frisk searches are captured on **audio and video**, wherever possible, to allow for transparency and accountability.
- All strip searches must be **authorized by a supervisor** and documented.
- Update of the information captured during a strip search.
- All strip searches must be **audited at a divisional and senior management level**.
- All officers must complete a robust training module of search of persons including a review of case law.

Principled Approach to Strip Search Analysis

The Strip Search analysis is guided by a Data Analysis Framework for Racial Equity (Analysis Framework), which is a principled approach to data analysis and reporting. The Analysis Framework informs all analyses conducted under the R.B.D.C. Strategy for consistency, transparency and accountability in how we use data for equity purposes.

The principles articulated in the general framework are applied to guide the analysis of strip search incidents. We start with translating the key research questions under the Analysis Framework to the specific context of strip searches.

Key Research Questions

The main purpose of analyses is to identify whether there are any racial disparities in police strip searches and the different circumstances that may be factors influencing disparities. It is important to keep in mind that findings of racial disparities alone do not necessarily indicate conclusive evidence of systemic racial bias. We need to dig deeper, possibly using other data sources and methods, to get to the root cause of differences so that we can take appropriate actions for real and lasting change.

Data analysis should help us assess whether, and to what extent, racial disparities exist in decisions to strip search in interactions with the public and within the policing dynamics and contexts in which strip searches can occur. The following research questions guide the analysis of strip searches:

1. Are there racial disparities in reported strip search incidents?
 - Racial disproportionalities (comparisons within the same racial group): To what extent, if any, are certain racial groups over-represented in strip searches?
 - Racial disparities (comparisons between different racial groups): To what extent, if any, are certain racial groups more likely than others to experience a strip search?
2. To what extent, if any, are there racial disparities in the *outcomes* of strip searches, such as items found?
3. To what extent are there changes in strip search patterns as a result of changes to policies and procedures?

Co-developing Hypotheses

We collaborated with Service members, stakeholders and the R.B.D.C. Community Advisory Panel to delve deeper into the key questions and ground analyses in operational realities and community perspectives. We co-developed specific hypotheses through ongoing engagements (see Appendix C) and took an iterative approach to analyses, as described in the Analysis Framework, by reviewing findings together, raising new questions, and going back to the data to try to answer them. In this process, we identified whether data was available to answer these questions and took note of data gaps for improvements to our data collection processes.

This approach aligns with the broader Service commitments to innovation and investments that bring greater value to public safety, transparency, and accountability as part of comprehensive police reforms.

Data Sources, Limitations & Analytical Considerations

Before a person may be subject to a strip search, they must first be arrested for a violation of law or by-law. They must also be booked into custody at a police station as an intermediate outcome in the pathway to a strip search. Occurrence records are a valuable source of information about incidents, containing crucial details about situations and individuals who were arrested. These records are generated by officers, following an arrest, and capture information, which is required to be collected as part of policing procedures.

The data used for analyses of strip searches comes from the Records Management System (R.M.S.), which is used to record information about arrests and strip searches. The Service supplemented this data with Division level crime trends from the Service's Public Safety Data Portal.

For meaningful race-based analyses of strip searches, the Service disaggregated perceived race categories as the primary variable of interest. The data includes all incidents of arrests, which occurred between January 1 and December 31, 2020.

Protecting Privacy

All personal information collected by the Service is authorized under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990*. The Service sought and obtained court authorization under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (Y.C.J.A.)* to use anonymized youth records for statistical purposes. The City of Toronto [By-Law 689-2000](#) sets a retention schedule for records of the Service and the Board. The *Anti-Racism Act, 2017*, and Anti-Racism Data Standards also contains guidance to ensure that personal information accessed and used for anti-racism purposes under the *Anti-Racism Act, 2017* are managed and protected responsibly.

The Board Policy directs the Service to consult with the Information and Privacy Commissioner on its data practices under the R.B.D.C. Strategy. The collection of race in occurrence records supports robust analyses that are governed by clear policies and procedures that protect against unauthorized use of data. It allows the Service to be responsive to the needs of communities for evidence-based approaches to equity in policing, and to meet the purposes of the Board Policy.

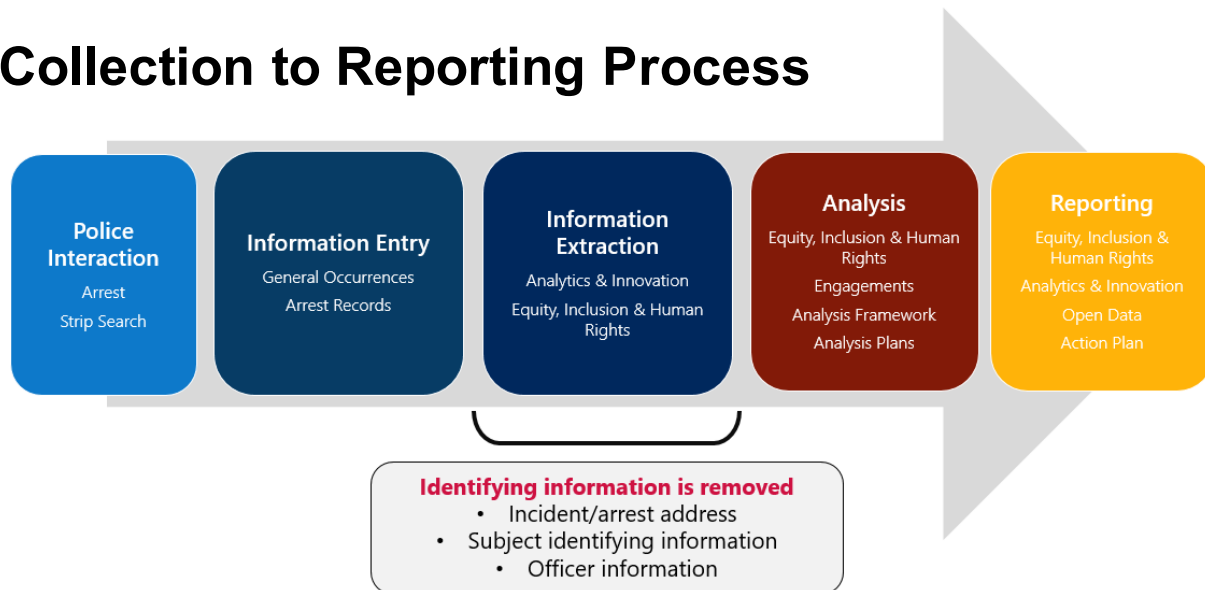
For the purposes of the R.B.D.C. Strategy, information from the R.M.S. was anonymized, extracted and prepared for analyses. In consultations with the Community Advisory Panel, stakeholders, and Service Members, the Service identified the necessary data to extract to support analyses. The Analytics & Innovation (A.&I.) and the Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights (E.I.H.R.) units worked together to identify what information was available, useful and relevant to understand strip search incidents.

All personal identifiers, such as names, birthdates, badge numbers, etc. were removed prior to the data being used for analyses (**Figure 1**). Other identifiers that could be used to re-identify records, such as occurrence numbers, person entity numbers, etc. were replaced with randomly generated unique identifiers to ensure that personal information remained protected while using only pertinent information for analyses. This is consistent with data minimization principles promoted by the Information and Privacy Commissioner and the Anti-Racism Data Standards.

The Service developed a secure, privacy-protecting procedure to temporarily link anonymized information from occurrence records for analyses. The data source is kept separately in secure folders accessible only to designated E.I.H.R. staff members responsible for managing and using the data under the R.B.D.C. Strategy.

Figure 1 Process to anonymize information and protect personal privacy

Collection to Reporting Process



Data Opportunities and Limitations

The R.M.S. used by the Service, Versadex, was introduced in 2013 and replaced systems previously used to gather and manage occurrence and arrest records. Versadex includes applications that are integrated to allow information to be entered in different ways from different sources: mobile reporting terminals in police cars and desktop applications at police stations; and provides information from the computer assisted dispatch system used by Communications Services when responding to calls from the public. Combined, these applications contribute to the collection of information in records of incidents to which police respond or are engaged in during the course of their duties to enforce the law and promote public safety.

Changes in Search of Persons procedures, policies, definitions and training all affect how we count and interpret trends over time. The O.I.P.R.D. report *Breaking the Golden Rule:*

A Review of the Police Strip Searches in Ontario highlighted the challenges of the lack of standardized definitions of strip searches and collection of information about searches conducted by police services across Ontario. The Service has been routinely collecting and publicly reporting strip search trends since the implementation of Versadex in 2013. **Table 1** shows the year-over-year trends in strip searches as reported in the Service's [Annual Statistical Reports](#).

Table 1: Trends in Strip Searches (Level 3 Search), 2013-2019

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Counts	22,607	19,760	20,261	17,808	16,710	15,753	14,676

Note: The most updated counts for each year are used to reflect improvements in queries and data quality.

On January 1, 2020, the Service updated the way that race-based data is collected in the R.M.S. to align with the Anti-Racism Data Standards and to support robust analyses under the R.B.D.C. Strategy. In October, new search procedures took effect and a revised Search of Persons information template was introduced to enhance transparency, accountability and supervision in search decisions.

Through the comprehensive collection of race information in the R.M.S., the Service was able to broaden analyses of strip searches and other outcomes within the context of policing practices in order to identify, monitor and address any systemic racial disparities.

For the purposes of the R.B.D.C. Strategy and strip search analyses, the Service, working with the Community Advisory Panel and Service Members, identified relevant, quality data needed to provide nuance and depth in understanding strip searches and factors that may influence differences in outcomes by race group. In assessing the quality of the data for use in analyses, the Service identified the following issues to consider and note for future improvements to training, data collection and extraction:

- More reliable linkage of bookings with search of persons modules.
- Train officers to avoid creating duplicate records for same arrest incident or booking event.
- Improve how items found are recorded in a strip search for greater accuracy.

A particular issue that impacted what we could analyse related to challenges with linking information from booking records to the search of persons module. Though all individuals searched were booked at the station following their arrest, issues with queries used to link records of booking and searches resulted in 545 (or 7.7%) strip searches that did not have associated booking information. This affected youth records in particular and meant that booking data was unreliable for that population.

Methodology

This section describes how the Service used the data accessed for the R.B.D.C. Strategy to answer the questions identified in its hypothesis-development process. Analytic decisions reflect underlying assumptions about how policing works and impacts how we understand disparities. To be transparent in our approach, we outline how we define benchmarks and why and how we construct variables to reflect operational realities and support meaningful insights. We begin with a discussion of using police administrative data for analyses.

Working with Administrative Data

Our interest in this research is to understand policing as a system and its impacts on the population that is policed. Using police administrative data means that we are working with data that was collected to meet operational needs and as such, reflect working definitions, processes and outcomes designed for case management purposes, investigations and other policing functions. Under the R.B.D.C. Strategy, we are accessing and using this data for another purpose - statistical analyses - to understand policing outcomes recorded for different groups of people. It is necessary to critically examine and understand the data systems and assess them for quality, completeness, and comprehensiveness³ before determining what can be used and what are the data gaps, as discussed in the previous section.

As we are working with data from police operations, common statistical approaches such as statistical tests based on parametric or non-parametric methods are not applicable. The benefit of using police administrative data is that information is collected for all individuals in the interactions of interest (see scope of analyses below). We are therefore not making inferences based on samples and will not generalize the results to a broader population.

Scope of Analyses

The scope of strip search analyses includes all those who were arrested between January 1 and December 31, 2020.

In 2020, there were 31,979 arrests and 17,096 bookings of persons (or 54.5% of arrests). Of those, there were 7,114 strip searches, or 22.2% of all arrests and 41.6% of all bookings. An individual may be arrested, booked or strip searched more than once; hence these figure do not reflect unique individual experiences, but rather incidents of arrests, bookings and strip searches. We also looked at unique individual experiences to

³ Hand, D.J. (2018) Statistical challenges of administrative and transaction data. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A*, 181: 555-605.

understand if repeated arrests affected the chances of experiencing strip searches, particularly for certain offences such as drug-related or weapons offences.

Significance of Search Policy Change in October: As described earlier, these changes took effect on October 14, 2020. All officers received training about the new policy and procedures starting in August/September. Following the change, there were 354 strip searches from October to December 2020, representing 5% of strip searches that year. Accordingly, the analyses using 2020 data that follows and is published in the Detailed Report (June 2022), largely represents pre-policy trends and patterns.

Collecting Information about Race

Race is a social construct that has tangible impacts on people's lives. It can influence people's experiences and relationships with others as well as shape our perspectives of the world and each other. As such, how someone understands 'race,' whether their own or someone else's, can be complex and include different dimensions, such as physical characteristics, style of dress, accent or language, place of origin, etc. Ideas and understandings of race may change over time and in different situations.

For the purposes of identifying and understanding systemic racial bias in strip search decisions, 'race' is collected as officers' perception of an individual's race, based on their observations. This is defined in the Board Policy as well as Service procedure 16-07, *Collection, Analysis and Reporting of Race and Identity-Based Data*. The Anti-Racism Data Standards (section 7) sets out the rationale for perception of race information to help understand potential racial biases in decision-making.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of individuals who experienced a strip search by race, as perceived by officers. The largest group in strip search incidents was White people (45.5%), followed by Black people (31.2%). There 497 (or 7%) of strip searches for which perceived race was either unknown or used legacy values such as 'Brown' or 'Asian.'

Table 2: Individuals involved in strip search incidents by race, 2020

	Strip Search	
	Count	%
Black	2, 223	31.2%
East/Southeast Asian	295	4.1%
Indigenous	286	4.0%
Latino	126	1.8%
Middle Eastern	206	2.9%
South Asian	241	3.4%
White	3, 240	45.5%
Unknown or Legacy Value	497	7.0%
Total	7, 114	

Treatment of Missing Data

Only records with valid data for specific variables are included when conducting analyses using those variables. For example, there were 14,148 (or 44.2%) arrests for which there was no valid arrest location information; these were excluded from location analyses, but included in the other analyses.

Racial Disproportionality and Disparity Indices

The central analytic tools used to identify, track and monitor systemic racial biases are racial disproportionality and racial disparity indices,⁴ the recommended approach under Ontario's *Anti-Racism Act, 2017* and data standards. The analyses focuses on specific outcomes, such as strip searches to understand disparate impacts of police decision-making. Findings of racial disproportionalities or disparities on their own do not prove that there is racial profiling or that racial biases are the cause; however, they do indicate areas where we need to address why people are experiencing different outcomes, and how to ensure fair and equitable policing.

A racial disproportionality refers to the over or under-representation of a race group compared to their presence in the reference population (benchmark). A racial disparity refers to unequal outcomes in a comparison of one race group to another race group. Please refer to the Analysis Framework for more detail.

We use these indices to understand differences in strip search incidents and answer questions such as:

- Disproportionality: Are some groups more or less likely to have a strip search (outcome) relative to their presence in arrests (benchmark population)?
- Disparity: Are some groups more likely to be strip searched after taking into account primary offences in which they have been involved?

As discussed below, we use the arrested population as the reference population to calculate strip search rates and disproportionalities by race group.

Defining and Using Benchmarks

Benchmarks are used to properly understand and estimate racial disproportionalities and disparities in use of force decisions. It is important to identify an appropriate comparison group (i.e., benchmark) that best approximates the population-at-risk for that outcome (Tregle et al., 2018). In order to interpret the meaning of racial disproportionalities and disparities, we define outcomes as results of a series of discrete decision points within

⁴. This approach is used by researchers to examine many different outcomes that people experience in their interactions with numerous institutions and systems. Racial disproportionality and disparity indices have been used to understand differences experienced across a person's life cycle, from maternal health and quality of pre-natal care to childhood outcomes, access to quality education, employment, treatment in the criminal justice system, to risk of chronic illness and access to end of life care.

the context of a police interaction and how decisions at different points in a pathway contributes to strip search outcomes. This allows us to identify specific levers for change associated with arrest and strip search decisions and outcomes.

To understand racial disproportionalities in strip searches, we treat it as an outcome that flows from a series of decision points that begin with a police-civilian interaction, such as calls for service or police investigations of incidents. There may be differences by race in the dynamics, which influence each distinct decision point in the strip search pathway:

1. Officer is dispatched to an incident and investigates
2. Officer makes decision to arrest a person
3. Officer makes decision to book a person (rather than release at scene)
4. Officer determines that a strip search is needed

To understand racial disproportionalities in strip search incidents, we take a multiple benchmark approach⁵:

- a. Population experiencing an enforcement action
- b. Population arrested

These benchmarks define the appropriate, relevant reference population against which to compare differences in outcomes in the strip search process within the overall policing context (see [R.B.D.C. Story Map](#)). We look at where disproportionalities occur by comparing first, who has been arrested by police (against their proportion in the enforcement action population) and second, once arrested, who was booked into custody and who experienced a strip search. Disproportionalities at each point of the arrest process are additive.

A multiple benchmark approach not only supports a more precise view of where and when disparities by race occur, but also helps us narrow down the decision points on which to focus for actionable insights and implementation of concrete changes to address disparities in outcomes. Below, we describe each benchmark and discuss its limitations when used on its own.

Population experiencing enforcement actions: Police arrest and search is contingent upon an interaction with a member of the public in the first place. Looking at this population addresses the question of differential involvement in incidents or behaviours, which raise community or individual safety concerns that are more likely to come to police attention, either through calls for service by members of the public or through officer-initiated activities. These incidents are often recorded in systems as occurrence

⁵ Cesario, J., Johnson, D., and Terrill, W. (2018). *Is there evidence of racial disparity in police use of deadly force? Analyzes of officer-involved fatal shootings in 2015-2016*. Social Psychological and Personality Science; Goff, P.A., Lloyd, T., Geller, A., Raphael, S. and Glaser, J. (2016) *The Science of Justice: Race, Arrests and Police Use of Force*, Center for Policing Equity, <https://policingequity.org/what-we-do/research/the-science-of-justice-race-arrests-and-police-use-of-force>

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records, by police officers acting in their capacity to enforce a serious violation of a law or by-law or to protect public safety.

For the purposes of these analyses, the enforcement action population includes those who: are arrested (for any reason), receive a ticket for serious provincial offences, receive a caution or summons, and apprehensions or diversions. It also includes those who are recorded as persons in crisis, suspects and subjects, and youth equivalents. This excludes parking tickets and routine traffic or pedestrian tickets.

Another benefit of this benchmark is that the data from which we derive this benchmark allows us to look at the individual level to understand who was involved in police interactions and how often they experienced enforcement actions (**Table 3**).

Table 3: Breakdown of enforcement action population by race group, 2020

	Enforcement Actions	
	Count	%
Black	24,064	24.4%
East/Southeast Asian	6,971	7.1%
Indigenous	2,264	2.3%
Latino	2,534	2.6%
Middle Eastern	4,850	4.9%
South Asian	5,633	5.7%
White	39,948	40.5%
Unknown	12,316	12.5%
Total	98, 580	

Note: These counts include individuals who may have more than one enforcement action interaction in 2020.

Limitations: There is often no comprehensive data on the entirety of daily interactions police have with the public and that can be broken down by race. For example, in 2020, there were 692,837 police interactions with the public as a result of calls for service, traffic and pedestrian stops and other policing activities. For the majority of those interactions, there were no further police enforcement actions. For example, officers may take information about an incident of concern, but there is no subject information, or only a verbal warning. In most cases, routine traffic or pedestrian tickets are issued using the municipal form, which does not collect race. In these cases, race information is often not available to enable disaggregated analyses.

As a result, a serious shortcoming with this benchmark is that police enforcement actions and arrests may *all* be the outcomes of systemic differences due to external factors as well as possible systemic biases contributing to some of those differences.

Using this benchmark to understand downstream outcomes like strip searches is an improvement to narrow the scope of police sphere of influence, and estimate more

accurately the magnitude of racial disparities in arrests and strip searches.⁶ The multiple benchmark approach attempts to account for these different sources of disparities so that we can understand the specific impacts at different decision points with greater accuracy (see next section).

Population experiencing arrests: Not everyone who experiences an enforcement action is arrested as a result of police response to calls for service or officer-initiated activity. In 2020, there were 31,979 arrests, making up 32.4% of police enforcement actions. The arrested population provides a clearer picture of who may experience a strip search following being taken into custody.

Table #4 shows the race breakdown for the arrested population as well as those booked into custody. The largest group of people arrested are White people who made up 42.6% of those arrested, followed by Black people (27%). They were also the largest two groups among those booked into custody. The proportions by race among those arrested and booked are very similar. There was a slightly higher proportion of Black people booked (28.5%) than arrested (27%).

Given the small differences in the racial compositions of arrest and booked populations and the unreliability of bookings data in 2020, we do not use it as a benchmark to understand strip searches for this year's report. Going forward for Phase 2 analyses we will explore arrests, releases and diversions with more depth.

Table 4: Breakdown of arrested and booked population by race group, 2020

	Arrested individuals		Booked into Custody	
	Count	%	Count	%
Black	8, 648	27.0%	4, 885	28.6%
East/Southeast Asian	2, 054	6.4%	1, 037	6.1%
Indigenous	999	3.1%	583	3.4%
Latino	808	2.5%	476	2.8%
Middle Eastern	1, 507	4.7	741	4.3%
South Asian	1, 742	5.4%	901	5.3%
White	13, 607	42.6%	7, 185	42.0%
Unknown	2, 612	8.2%	1, 288	7.5%
Total	31, 977		17, 096	

Note: There were 2 records for which race data was blank and excluded from the table.

Source: RBDC-ARR-TBL-001, TPS Public Safety Data Portal

⁶ Knox, L., Lowe, W. and Mummolo, J. (2020). Administrative Records Mask Racially Biased Policing. Available at SSRN: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3336338

Summary of Findings

On June 22, 2022, the Service presented the first report of Phase 1 of the Race and Identity-Based Data Collection Strategy. The report and accompanying open analytics and story map are published on the Service's website: <https://www.tps.ca/race-based-data-collection/>

As a result of a collaborative process that was hypothesis-driven and focused on producing actionable insights, the report highlighted four key findings for strip searches:

1. Strip search rates varied throughout 202 and were significantly reduced following changes in Search policy and procedures in October 2020.
2. Indigenous, Black and White people were over-represented in strip searches relative to their proportion in arrests. After policy changes, there was no longer any over-representation of Indigenous people in strip searches.
3. There were differences by race after accounting for repeat arrests, and arrests related to drug and weapons offences.
4. There were differences in strip search rates across the city where arrests took place.

These findings give us new insights on strip searches and the impacts of policy and procedures on outcomes. As a result, the Service has a better understanding of search of persons practices and effective changes to reduce disparities in controlled situations such as the arrest and search process.

In light of these findings, the Service identified and made further improvements to enhance accountabilities, boost supervision and coaching of officers, training and other measures such as developing robust monitoring and performance metrics to monitor and transparently report progress. The Service commits to continuing to engage with affected communities and Members on further areas for action.

The rest of this report provides further details on the findings above and supplementary results for a deeper look into the data. Readers can access open analytics and related summary data through the Service's Public Safety Data Portal (P.S.D.P.).

Actionable Insights Using Multiple Benchmarks

Using multiple benchmarks allows us to treat strip searches as part of a decision pathway, starting with an arrest. This approach lets us identify the impacts of each decision-point on final outcomes of interest – in this case strip search.

There are many factors which could increase the risk for some groups in having police contact, including structural and historical barriers to economic and social well-being, including lack of access to quality healthcare and housing, poor educational outcomes, poverty, etc. These are known risk factors for involvement in the criminal justice system

and is a heavier burden carried by historically marginalized groups, such as Indigenous and Black communities. Impacts of systemic racial discrimination extends beyond individual outcomes and can affect the life experiences of families and communities across generations. It manifests in greater involvement in activities that are criminalized and considered unlawful or harmful to the safety and well-being of individuals, their families and the broader community.

On the other hand, disparities in police arrest decisions may also be the result of policing practices, policies, and procedures that result in disadvantages for some groups and increased enforcement within communities. The practices of policing may lead to differential treatment of people when engaged in similar activities due to conscious or unconscious stereotypes, assumptions and other biases.

For this analyses, it is a critical to identify the relative risks for some groups in experiencing an arrest. This helps us to understand and address the causes that bring police to the scene and to work with communities, stakeholders and partners to meet community safety needs and advance fair policing.

The first column in **Table 5** shows the racial disproportionalities in strip search when compared to the enforcement action population. When compared to their presence in police-civilian interactions resulting in enforcement, Indigenous people were 1.7 times over-represented in strip searches, Black people were over-represented by 1.3 times and White people were over-represented by 1.1 times. Other groups were less likely to experience a strip search following an enforcement interaction with police. While this gives us a broad picture of risk of strip search experienced by different groups when they come into contact with police, this is not a realistic picture, as only about a third of people who interact with police are arrested, and an arrest has to occur before a strip search would be considered.

The next two columns break this down into the two different components to show the relative risk for each race group in a) having an arrest compared to their presence in the enforcement action population and b) in strip search upon being arrested. Highlighted numbers show where there is an over-representation in each outcome for different groups; a disproportionality index greater than 1 means that the group is over-represented in that outcome.

This approach revealed a distinct pattern that affects Indigenous, Black, and White persons who are arrested and searched. For these groups, their over-representations in strip searches are reflected in the greater chances of being arrested as well as greater chances of strip search following an arrest. Other groups were more or less proportional in arrests following a police interaction, and once arrested, were less likely to be strip searched. In future analyses, we will include booking data for a more precise understanding of strip search outcomes for those who are arrested *and* booked.

Table 5: Racial Disproportionalities Using the Multiple Benchmark Approach

	Ratio of Strip Search to Enforcement Actions Population	RELATIVE RISK	
		Arrests	Strip Search
Indigenous People	1.74	1.35	1.29
Black People	1.28	1.11	1.16
White People	1.12	1.05	1.07
Middle-Eastern People	0.59	0.96	0.62
East/Southeast Asian People	0.58	0.90	0.64
Latino People	0.69	0.96	0.72
South Asian People	0.60	0.95	0.63

In the Detailed Report (June 2022), we showed monthly trends in arrests, bookings and strip searches, showing the impact of the provincial State of Emergency measures introduced in mid-March in response to the initial waves of the COVID pandemic (page 75). Importantly, we saw the influence of the revised Search of Persons procedural change from October 2020 onwards, leading to a 90% decrease in strip search rates and the elimination of Indigenous over-representation in strip search decisions in 2021 (page 77).

We presented findings to help understand strip search patterns by arrest location defined by Divisional boundaries (page 80 and 81) and crime rates broken down by particular types of offences (page 72), and relationship to local demographics (page 82). We also looked at factors that may vary by race group and influence strip searches, such as the frequency of arrests (page 78), type of primary offence related to the arrest (page 79), and reasons for the search (page 86).

An analysis of items found on pages 84 & 85 shows that there was a positive relationship between rates of strip searches and items found in those strip searches by type of primary offence; that is, they go up or down together. This relationship held whether the arrests involved White or Black people, indicating that there was little evidence of systemic biases in decisions to strip search when taking into account type of offences. The exception was for arrests related to weapons and homicide-related offence, where those involving Black people were more likely to involve a strip search (47.5%) than White people (37.6%) but lower chances of items found (37.8% vs 50%). Search decisions appear to be more effective for arrests involving White people, yielding higher items found.

In the next sections, we present additional findings in strip search patterns and describe the open data to enable members of the public, researchers and organizations to explore the data on their own.

Supplementary Findings

This section presents and discusses additional findings to supplement the Detailed Report (June 2022). It provides greater details about strip searches to support further insights into baseline trends that reflect the outcome of practices prior to the Search of Persons procedure changes.

Racial disproportionalities by gender and youth status

In the Detailed Report (June 2022) (pages 71 & 76) and in the previous sections of this report, we saw the racial breakdown of strip searches and disproportionalities relative to arrests. How do these patterns look like for men and women and for youth? We looked at gender disparities in strip searches by race and whether racial disproportionalities look different for arrests involving youth aged 17 and under.

To conduct analyses by gender of person arrested, we used the “sex” field completed by officers to compare against strip search data. The Service is working in assessing and revising how gender information is collected in the R.M.S. For the purposes of this analyses, we rely on the “sex” field, which includes “male”, “female” and “unknown.” We may assume that trans people were identified by officers as either male or female, and a proportion of those may be misgendered as a result.

As part of the Service’s Gender Diversity and Trans Inclusion Initiative, many forms used by the Service, including the new Search of Person section, were updated to include non-binary options. In 2020, there were 33 trans and non-binary strip searches conducted. However, as the “sex” field associated with the arrest still does not include non-binary or transgender options, we cannot compare against the “Trans and non-binary” search information.

In general, women made up 19.2% of all those arrested and about 16.5% of those strip searched. **Tables 6** and **7** show the race breakdown and disproportionalities for men and women separately. Among women, those who were Indigenous and White made up a greater proportion of arrests and strip searches compared to men of the same group, while Black women made up a smaller proportion of arrests and strip searches compared to Black men.

When looking at racial disproportionalities within groups of men and women, we see that White and Indigenous women were over-represented in strip searches by 1.2 times, relative to their arrests. Among men, Black and Indigenous men were more likely to be strip searched compared to their presence in arrests. These findings suggest that the overall over-representation of White people in strip searches may be driven by those involving women, while the over-representation of Black people are occurring among men.

Table 6: Racial breakdown of women who were arrested and strip searched, 2020

WOMEN	Arrested		Strip Searched		Disproportionality in Strip Search
	Count	%	Count	%	
White Women	2,998	48.9%	698	59.6%	1.22
Black Women	1,482	24.1%	239	20.4%	0.85
East/Southeast Asian Women	334	5.4%	23	2.0%	0.36
Indigenous Women	291	4.7%	68	5.8%	1.22
Latina Women	109	1.8%	10	0.9%	0.48
Middle-Eastern Women	187	3.0%	15	1.3%	0.42
South Asian Women	252	4.1%	26	2.2%	0.54
Unknown or Legacy Value	484	7.9%	92	7.9%	1.00
Total	6,137		1,171		

Table 7: Racial breakdown of men who were arrested and strip searched, 2020

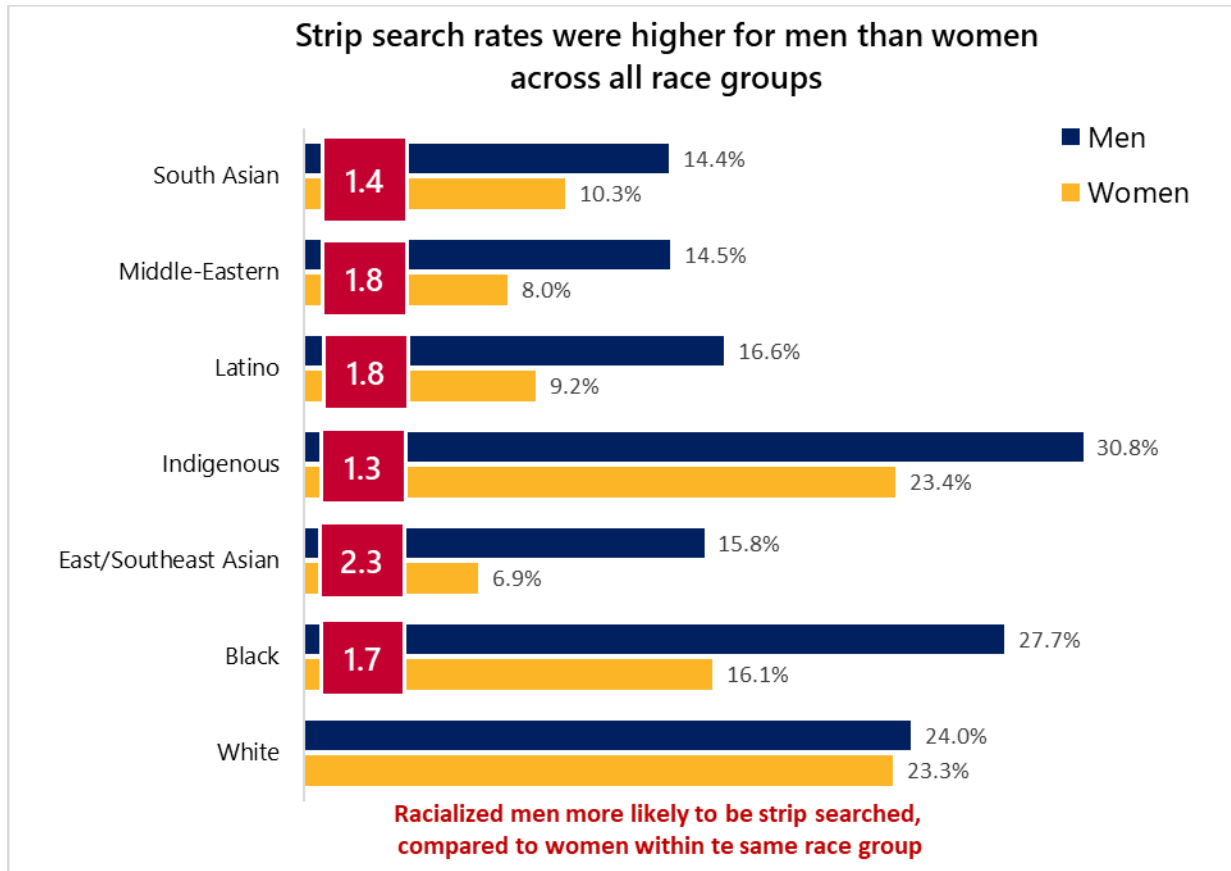
MEN	Arrested		Strip Searched		Disproportionality in Strip Search
	Count	%	Count	%	
White Men	10,606	41.1%	2,542	42.8%	1.04
Black Men	7,166	27.7%	1,984	33.4%	1.20
East/Southeast Asian Men	1,720	6.7%	272	4.6%	0.69
Indigenous Men	708	2.7%	218	3.7%	1.34
Latino Men	699	2.7%	116	2.0%	0.72
Middle-Eastern Men	1,320	5.1%	191	3.2%	0.63
South Asian Men	1,490	5.8%	215	3.6%	0.63
Unknown or Legacy Value	2,125	8.2%	405	6.8%	0.83
Total	25,834		5,943		

Note: There were 6 arrests for which sex was marked as “unknown”; these were excluded from the tables.

These findings show us the racial disproportionalities within gender groups. What about gender disparities in strip searches within race groups? Are there gender differences in strip searches for arrests involving different race groups? In general, strip search rates were higher for men (23%) compared to women (19.7%).

Figure 1 compares strip search rates (number of strip searches divided by arrests) for men and women within each race group. It shows that there are gender disparities where men were more likely to be strip searched compared to women for every race group except White people. Gender disparities were highest for East/Southeast Asian people (2.3) and lowest for White people (1.03).

Figure 2: Gender disparities (men compared to women) by race group, 2020

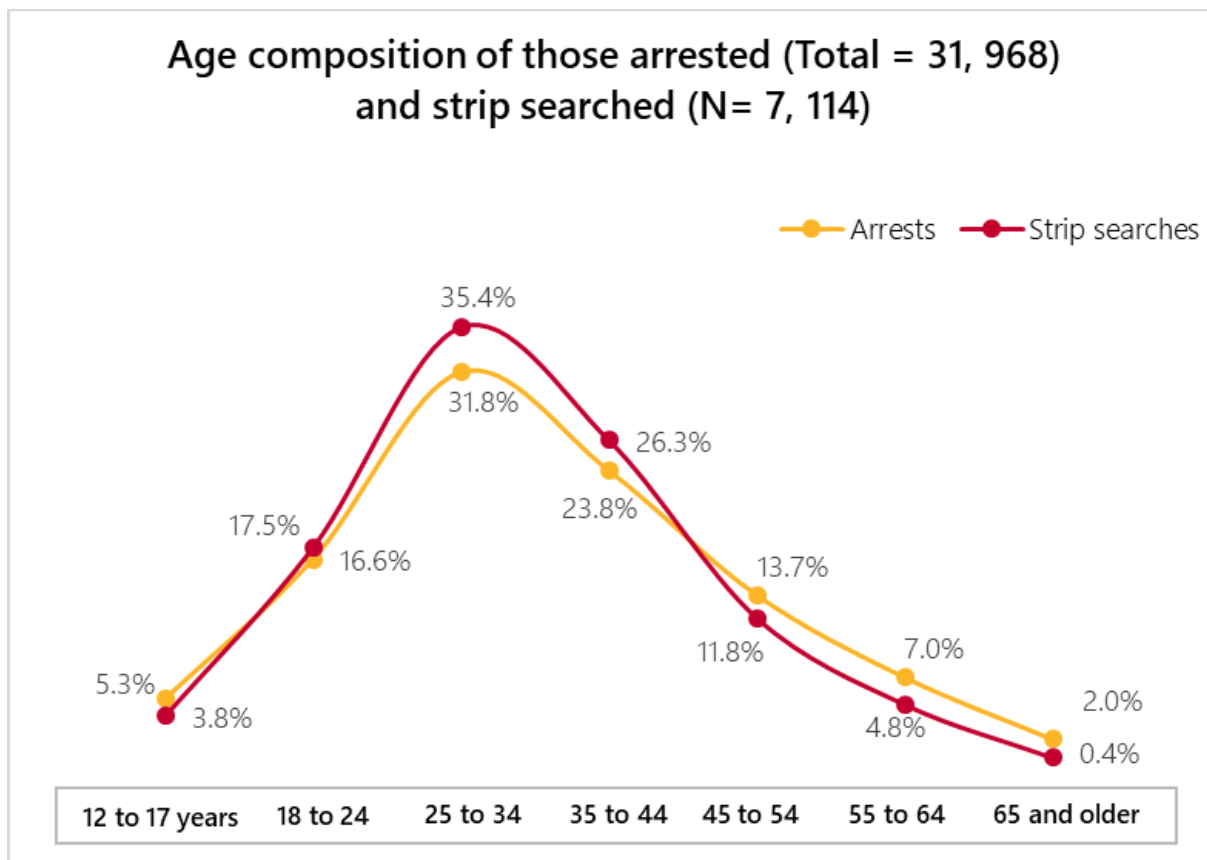


These gender differences and variations between race groups may be due to differences in the types of offences and circumstances of arrests. A deeper analysis of gendered dynamics may help us better understand these patterns.

We also looked at how many youth were arrested and how many were strip searched following an arrest. Youth is defined as anyone who was aged 17 and younger at the time of the arrest. This is consistent with the definition of youth under the Y.C.J.A which governs the administration of justice for youth. As all youth data collected by police services is protected under the Y.C.J.A and its use is restricted, the Service secured court authorization to use anonymized youth data for statistical purposes under the R.B.D.C. Strategy. This analysis, though limited, helps us to identify trends pertaining to youth experiences and how we can improve procedures to minimize harmful effects.

We start by comparing age trends in arrests and strip searches. There were 1,681 youth aged 17 and under who were arrested in 2020 and 271 who were strip searched. As shown in **Figure 2**, people aged between 12 and 17 years made up 3.8% of those strip searched, even though they made up 5.3% of those arrested in 2020. Overall, youth were less likely to be strip searched when they were arrested. Middle-aged and adults aged 54 and older were also less likely to be strip searched. Adults aged 18 to 44 were over-represented in strip searches relative to their proportion in arrests.

Figure 3: Proportion of age group among those arrested and strip searched, 2020

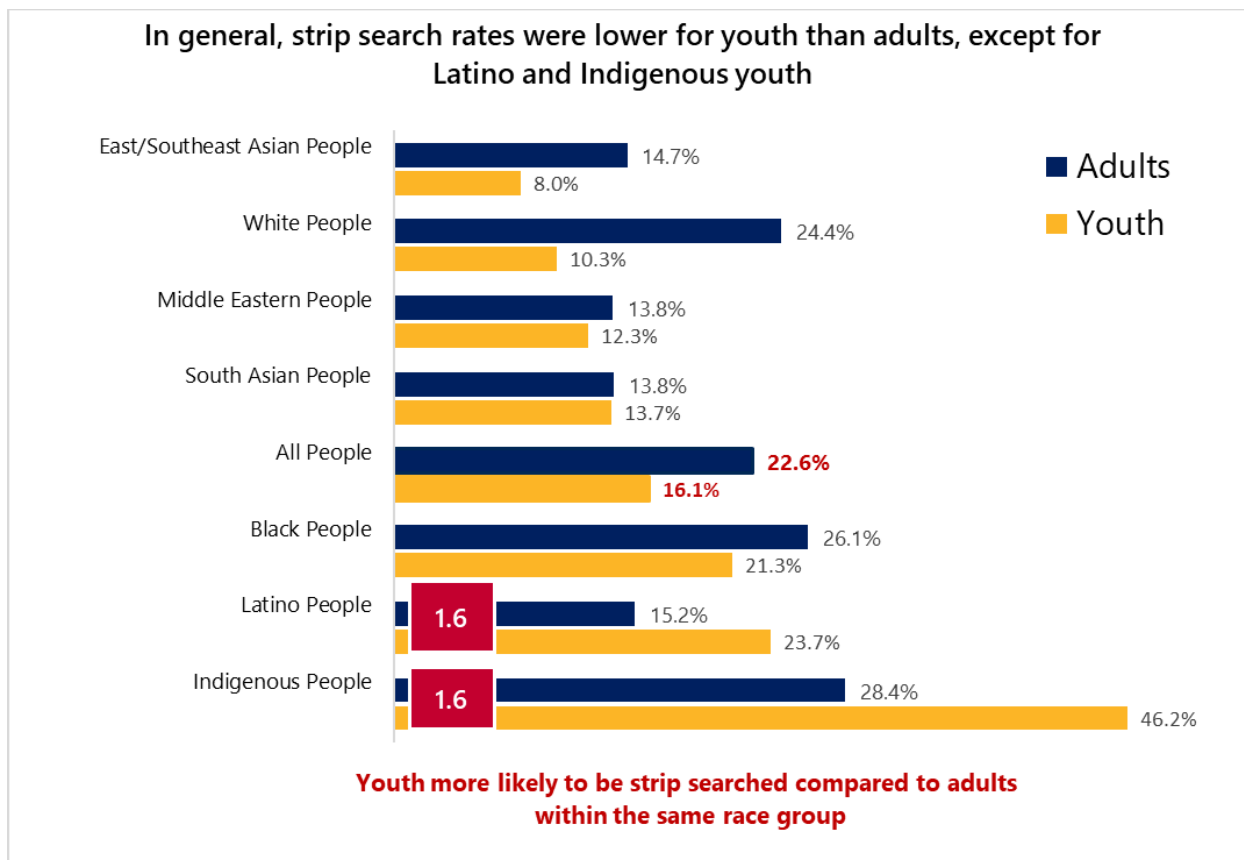


Next, we provide a breakdown in strip search rates by race to see if the general trend for youth is reflected across different populations. Are all youth less likely to experience a strip search when they are arrested or are there differences by race group?

Figure 3 shows that when comparing adults and youth for different race groups, we see that Latino and Indigenous youth had higher strip search rates and they were each 1.6 times more likely than adults to be strip searched, relative to their race group’s proportion in arrests. Indigenous youth had the highest strip search rates at 46%, or 6 out of 13 of those arrested; while 9 out of 38 Latino youth arrested were strip searched.

South Asian youth arrested were almost equally as likely to be strip searched as adults (i.e., in 14% of arrests). The gap between youth and adults strip searched was largest for White and East/Southeast Asian people, where youth were 58% and 46% less likely to be strip searched than adults. To a lesser extent, Black youth were also less likely to be strip searched compared to adults.

Figure 4: Comparing strip search rates for youth and adults by race group, 2020



These findings suggest we need to do more to understand youth experiences in arrests and strip searches and how to remedy these trends. While the numbers reflected in the experiences of Indigenous and Latino youth may be small, it is still cause for concern when strip search rates are high and involve vulnerable groups.

As shown in the Detailed Report (June 2022), there is evidence that the changes in the Search of Persons procedure made a significant difference in search of person trends, beginning with a dramatic drop in strip search rates for all race groups. The impacts of the Search of Persons procedure can already be seen in these findings. This report and the Detailed Report (June 2022) provide baseline results against which we can compare and monitor progress as the Service makes necessary changes to how it interacts with the public while protecting community safety.

Next, we describe the open data that will empower people to explore the trends and use the data to answer pertinent questions about arrests and strip searches. This includes data that covers a full year of post-policy changes in 2021.

Open Data and Open Analytics

The publication of race and identity-based data is part of the Service's commitments under the Board's Policy and response to the 81 recommendations for Police Reforms. Providing open data to the public is one way the Service is transparent and accountable to the communities we serve while protecting privacy, and is part of the Service's Open Data Program that provides ongoing releases of open data for public safety, awareness, greater openness and transparency in policing.

Information about the R.B.D.C. Strategy, story map, public reports, open analytics and open data can be accessed through the Toronto Police Service website at <https://www.tps.ca/race-based-data-collection/> or directly from the Public Safety Data Portal at <https://data.torontopolice.on.ca/pages/race-based-data>.

Appendices

Appendix A: Search of persons definitions

Protective Search (Formerly Level 1) – This is used generally during Investigative Detention and involves a limited search of a person who has been detained by police when there is reasonable belief the person poses a safety risk. The scope of the search is limited to exterior patting of clothing such as pockets, waistband or areas that may reasonably conceal such items as weapons or implements that may be used as weapons, usually with open hands to maximize the ability to detect weapons through clothing. This search may also be described as a “safety search”, as that is the purpose and objective.

Frisk Search (Formerly Level 2) – This is used generally for Search Incident to Arrest and means a more-thorough search that may include emptying and searching pockets as well as removal of clothing, which does not expose a person’s undergarments, or the areas of the body normally covered by undergarments. The removal of clothing such as belts, footwear, socks, shoes, sweaters, extra layers of clothing, or the shirt of a male would all be included in a frisk search. A frisk search may be commenced in the field and concluded at the station.

A frisk search conducted incident to arrest includes the area within the immediate control of the arrested person; common law also typically supports searching the entirety of a motor vehicle when a person was arrested in or moments after exiting it.

Members shall make every effort to video and audio record all frisk searches. Members are also required to articulate the justification for the manner and circumstances under which these searches are conducted. For the purposes of this definition, “Pat Down Search” means the same as, “Frisk Search”.

Strip Search (Formerly Level 3) – *R. vs. Golden 2001 SCC 83* established that which constitutes a strip search and what types of circumstances may justify one. A strip search includes all steps in protective and frisk searches as well as a thorough search of a person’s clothing and non-physical search of the body. That will often require removal or rearrangement of some, or all, of the person’s clothing to permit a visual inspection of a person’s private areas: namely the genitals, buttocks, breasts or chest, body cavity, and/or undergarments; the mouth was excluded from this definition despite being a bodily cavity.

The Supreme Court noted that strip searches “represent a significant invasion of privacy and are often humiliating, degrading and traumatic” and therefore require “a higher degree of justification in order to support the higher degree of interference with individual freedom and dignity.”

When considering whether a strip search is justified, the Supreme Court stated, “In addition to reasonable and probable grounds justifying the arrest, the police must establish reasonable and probable grounds justifying the strip search,” and “the police must establish they have reasonable and probable grounds for concluding that a strip search is necessary in the particular circumstances of the arrest.”

NOTE: The mere fact that portions of a person's body normally covered by undergarments are exposed because of the way the person was dressed when taken into custody does not constitute a strip search, if the removal of such clothing was not caused by the police (i.e. the arrest of a naked person does not in itself constitute a strip search).

Body Cavity Search (Formerly Level 4) - means a search of the rectum or vagina. This may only be conducted by medical professionals.

Appendix B: Arrest and Search of Persons Process

Search of Persons Process:

Calls about an incident or potential offence come to the attention of police through:

Officer decisions & potential outcomes:



Give warning



Issue ticket / fine



Caution / diversion



Lay charge(s)



Release at scene



Take into custody



Release from custody



Hold for bail

Officer investigates an individual they reasonably suspect has committed an offence



Investigative detention: gathers information from the individual involved.



Calls in or enters individual's information into mobile terminal to verify identity and check for any outstanding warrants or previous records.

Officer affects an arrest



Individual is informed of their rights to counsel and reason for arrest.



Protective search is conducted incident to an arrest for officer and subject safety, to locate evidence or items to prevent escape.

If not released at scene, officer takes individual to the station



The individual is **frisk searched**, provided access to counsel, and arrest process continues at the station.



Officer-in-Charge (OIC) determines continued detention and Booking information is entered into the records management system.

If officer has reasonable grounds to justify a **strip search**, OIC reviews & approves request



OIC ensures that individual understands reason for **strip search**.



OIC ensures the information is entered into a **Search Template**, in the records management system. Information entered includes reasons for search and items found.



Reactive Interaction call for service



Proactive Interaction (including vehicle/subject stop)



Investigation

Appendix C: Co-Developing Questions With Communities and Members

No.	Theme	Questions Asked	Asked By	Data Source	Is Data Available?	Status
1	Officer Demographics	Are younger or less experienced officers more likely to use force against racialized communities?	Community Members	Enforcement action data, Personnel data	No	Cannot Complete
2	Situational Factors	Do more people going to night clubs and bars in downtown divisions resulting in higher UOF in these areas?	Community Members	Enforcement, arrest and use of force report data	Yes	Complete
3	Unit Based	Does divisional leadership, culture, and practices lead to differences in strip searches and use of force?	Community & Service Members	N/A	No	Cannot Complete
4	Accountability	Do officers who use force more often show biases in how they used force?	Community Members	Historical use of force report data	No	Cannot Complete
5	Situational Factors	Do people with bail compliance checks and warrants more likely to experience use of force or strip searches?	Community & Service Members	Enforcement, arrest and use of force report data	Yes	Complete
6	Situational Factors	Are there differences in arrests and incidents for some racial groups that may result in lower uses of force or strip searches?	Community & Service Members	Enforcement actions and arrest data	Yes	Complete
7	Accountability	Would identifying officers lead to increased accountability and lower uses of force?	Community Members	Professional Standards	Outside of the RBDC Scope	

No.	Theme	Questions Asked	Asked By	Data Source	Is Data Available?	Status
8	Neighbourhood	Do certain areas of the city have higher use of force and strip search rates?	Community & Service Members	Enforcement action data	Yes	Complete
9	Neighbourhood	Are there differences across the city in use of force and strip searches that reflect higher proportions of racialized communities in certain neighbourhoods?	Community & Service Members	Enforcement action and census population data	Yes	Complete
10	Unit Based	Certain police units are more likely to have use of force or strip searches based on how often they interact with the public and the nature of specific assignments (i.e., drug squad, guns and gangs, E.T.F., etc.)	Community & Service Members	Enforcement action incidents, Personnel data	Not at this time	N/A
11	Situational Factors	What proportion of use of force comes from (reactive) calls for service rather than (proactive) officer-initiated activities?	Community & Service Members	Enforcement action data	Yes	Complete
12	Neighbourhood	Are rates of use of force or strip searches higher in areas where violent crime is higher or where there are more calls for service received?	Service Members	Enforcement action data, Open Data Portal	Yes	Complete
13	Outcomes	Are certain groups over searched and no items are found?	Community & Service Members	Arrest and search data	Yes	Complete
14	Unit Based	Are use of force more likely where there is higher officer fatigue or under-staffing in Divisions?	Service Members	Use of force report data, Fatigue Scoring/Shift Schedules	Not at this time	N/A

No.	Theme	Questions Asked	Asked By	Data Source	Is Data Available?	Status
15	Officer Demographics	Do officer demographics, such as race, gender or age, influence the likelihood that they will use force more often?	Community & Service Members	Enforcement action data, Personnel data	No	Cannot Complete
16	Person characteristics	Are people who have repeated interactions with police are more likely to experience use of force or strip searches? Does the nature of repeated interactions matter (i.e., frequent mental health incidents or arrests)?	Service Members	Enforcement action data	Yes	Complete
17	Person characteristics	Do people who are resistant or aggressive during police encounters more likely to experience a reportable use of force?	Service Members	Enforcement action data	Not at this time	Cannot Complete
18	Person characteristics	Do people who are intoxicated or under the influence of drugs more likely to experience a reportable use of force or strip search?	Service Members	Enforcement action data	Yes	Complete
19	Situational Factors	Are reportable uses of force more likely to be associated with arrests than with other types of enforcement activities?	Service Members	Enforcement action data	Yes	Complete
20	Situational Factors	Is use of force more likely in situations where weapons were found or perceived to be present?	Service Members	Use of force report data	Yes	Complete
21	Person characteristics	Do police encounters involving men more likely to be associated with a reportable use of force and does this relationship vary by race?	Community Members	Enforcement action data	Yes	Complete

No.	Theme	Questions Asked	Asked By	Data Source	Is Data Available?	Status
22	Person characteristics	Encounters involving younger subjects are more likely to be associated with a reportable use of force, and this relationship is moderated by race such that age has a stronger effect for some groups than for others.	Community Members	Enforcement action data	Yes	Complete
23	Person characteristics	Encounters involving subjects identified with mental health issues are more likely to be associated with reportable uses of force, and this may vary by race	Community Members	Enforcement action data	Yes	Complete
24	Person characteristics	Are officers who respond to incidents with sparse information more likely to use force when they arrive, as officers may be more likely to rely on cognitive bias in dynamic and stressful situations?	Service Members	Enforcement action data, use of force report data, officer notes	Not at this time	N/A