

**ILLINOIS TRAFFIC STOP STUDIES 2004 - 2009  
SIX YEAR SUMMARY  
URBANA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

2009 Estimated Urbana Driving Population: 69.38% Caucasian 30.62% Minorities

**Statistical Data from Illinois Traffic Stop Study Reports for Years 2004 – 2009:**

**1.) Number of Annual Traffic Stops (six year average):**

54.14% or 2012 stops in Urbana are Caucasian  
45.86% or 1704 stops in Urbana are Minorities

Summary: Urbana police stops of Caucasians are 15% less than their proportion of the driving public while Urbana police stops of minorities are 15% higher than their proportion of the driving public. If Minorities were stopped in proportion to their percent of the driving public, there would have been 5009 fewer minority stops during the past six years.

**2.) Traffic Stop Ratio:**

1.12 – This is the six year average ratio figure for the State of Illinois. It compares the stops of minority drivers in Illinois with the estimated minority driving population in Illinois. A ratio number of 1.00 would mean Caucasians and Minorities are stopped in the same proportion that they make up the driving public.  
1.49 – Urbana’s six year average ratio.  
1.47, 1.49, 1.56 –Urbana’s ratio numbers for the last three years.

Summary: During the last six years Minorities are 49% more likely to be stopped by Urbana police than a Caucasian driver. Urbana’s ratio has shown an upward trend for three consecutive years. 71% of the police agencies in Illinois had a ratio LESS than Urbana’s 2009 figure.

**3.) Average Traffic Citations (six year average):**

57% or 1148 of Caucasian stops are “ticketed” each year  
61% or 1036 of Minority stops are “ticketed” each year

Summary: When stopped, Minorities are 4% more likely to receive a ticket by Urbana police than a Caucasian. Another perspective of the above statistics is that Minorities receive 47% of the citations while being only 31% of the driving public.

**4.) Average Percent of Consent Searches Requested (last five years average):**

0.36% of all Caucasians stops result in a request for a search  
0.80% of all Minority stops result in a request for a search

Summary: Minorities are two times more likely to be requested by Urbana police to consent to a vehicle search than a Caucasian.

**5.) Founded Consent Searches (last six years average):**

55% of Caucasian searches are founded  
25% of Minority searches are founded

Summary: Contraband is found twice as often in Caucasian vehicle searches than Minority vehicle searches.

## CONCLUSION:

Six years of data collection by the State of Illinois has provided state and local communities with credible and reliable data upon which to analyze state and local traffic stops for racial bias and profiling. The public can now be more confident and informed in drawing conclusions because the data quantity is more substantial, aberrations can be identified and dismissed, and longitudinal patterns and trends tend to surface.

Traffic stop statistics are generally influenced by two primary factors: *driver behavior and police officer behavior*. Excessively bad minority driving behavior or noncompliance with the law can possibly explain traffic stop disparities. On the other hand, racially biased policing of minorities could also explain traffic stop disparities.

Since Urbana's disparity is evident and significant, one must ask what is the cause?

Can we assume Urbana's minority drivers are inherently poorer and/or more noncompliant drivers than minority drivers statewide? Statewide statistics do not support such a proposition. The statewide ratio of 1.12 suggests that minorities are 12% more likely to be stopped than their Caucasian counterparts. Yet Urbana's ratio of 1.56 suggests that Urbana minorities are 56% more likely to be stopped than their Caucasian counterparts. This 42% difference simply cannot be attributed solely to Urbana minority drivers being that significantly worse or noncompliant than all other minority drivers in the state. In all likelihood Urbana's minority drivers are no better or no worse than minority drivers throughout the state.

The disparity in local Caucasian and minority traffic stop statistics can also be explained by police officer behavior. There are three possibilities. 1.) Urbana police officers could be policing Caucasian drivers more leniently when enforcing traffic laws, thus producing proportionally fewer stops and citations. 2.) Urbana police officers could be racially biased when enforcing traffic laws with minorities, thus producing proportionally higher stops and citations. 3.) Urbana police officers could be employing a combination of the behaviors described in #1 and #2.

Regardless, all three policing behaviors listed above are racially motivated and guided. Urbana's traffic stop statistics unequivocally show this racial disparity between Caucasian and minorities drivers.

The conclusion is self-evident, racial bias likely does influence Urbana police officers' discretion when enforcing local traffic laws.

Hopefully this information will be seen as an opportunity to improve local policing practices and behaviors so that all populations living in Urbana are treated fairly and equitably under the law.