



ZEPHYRHILLS POLICE DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

To: William Poe, City Manager

Cc:

From: Derek Brewer, Chief

Date: March 22, 2024

Subject: Annual Review of Bias-Free Policing

To comply with the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation (CFA) Standard 2.06M and the Zephyrhills Police Department Policy 01.09 entitled Biased-Free Policing, an annual review for March 1, 2023, through March 1, 2024, has been conducted. As part of the review, the Office of Professional Standards provides information about agency practices concerning traffic stops, the count and disposition of all bias-profiling complaints, and recommended policy, procedure, or training changes.

Records Clerk Lisa Jones provided me with a report from the Tracs operating system of all traffic citations issued by officers of the Zephyrhills Police Department. The information included the ethnicity, race, and gender of those who received citations from the Zephyrhills Police Department. The results were as follows: White (62%), Black (11.5%), Hispanic (20%), and Other (6.5%). Further, sixty-three percent (63%) of males and thirty-seven percent (37%) of females received citations. The percentages above are consistent with the demographic makeup of our city, with no significant statistical difference between our traffic enforcement and the general population of Zephyrhills. Additionally, our traffic enforcement results are relatively similar to our last report.

Operations Commander Lieutenant Nathan Gardner reviewed all formal complaints documented in the Benchmark Analytics and Axon Standards reporting software. Two of the fifteen (15) complaints filed were classified as biased-based. The first complaint stemmed from an incident involving Officer Jonathan Rose on May 4, 2023. Officer Rose conducted a traffic stop (Case number 2023-2529) on a traffic violator for improper turn/change of lane and illegal use of a horn. Officer Rose issued the driver a warning for the infractions, but the violator felt Officer Rose was discriminatory because he thought he was stopped for no reason. The complaint was reviewed by staff and concluded that it was unfounded.

The second complaint resulted from a traffic stop conducted by Officer Jonathan Arocho on February 29, 2024, for illegal tint. Officer Arocho observed the violator's vehicle with a dark window tint that obscured his vision into the car, giving reasonable suspicion that a traffic infraction was occurring. Reasonable suspicion is the facts and circumstances, as presented at the time of the event that would lead a reasonable and prudent person to suspect a violation was committed. The violator felt Officer Arocho was discriminatory because he [Arocho] allegedly told him his tint was legal. Yet, he was still detained for a K-9 to sniff the outside of his vehicle. However, the violator's tint was not legal, as verified by a tint meter.

At the time of the traffic stop, Officer Arocho was detailed to a narcotics interdiction operation, which was focused on roadway enforcement of vehicle-transported narcotics. A K-9 officer was with Officer Arocho when he initiated the traffic stop; thus, there was no unnecessary delay in waiting for a K-9 to arrive. The K-9 sniff occurred while Officer Arocho conducted wants, warrants, and driver's license checks on the violator before he concluded his traffic stop. The violator was not charged or cited for any law violation resulting from the traffic stop. The complaint was reviewed, and it was determined to be unfounded.

The same individual made both bias-based complaints filed against Officer Rose and Officer Arocho during this reporting period.

In September 2020, all police department members received training on bias-free policing from Dr. Lori Fridell and other trainers from Fair and Impartial Policing. They also comply with the FDLE mandatory training requirement for bias-free traffic stops.

A review of Zephyrhills Police Department Standard Operating Procedure 01.09, Bias-Free Policing, was conducted by executive staff on June 21, 2023, to ensure CFA compliance. As a result, minor changes were made to meet CFA standard 2.06M.

Community education is integral to the agency's bias-free policing awareness efforts. Citizens may access the Zephyrhills Police Department's website for community education and awareness about bias-free policing by using a link that describes the agency's policy and guidelines for filing a complaint.

The agency's total calls for service from March 1, 2023, through March 1, 2024, were 33,036. Therefore, based on the calls for service totals and two unfounded complaints of bias-based policing, the goals and objectives of the Zephyrhills Police Department Policy 01.09 are being achieved due to current agency practices. As required by CFA Standard 2.06M and stated in Department Policy 01.09, the summary of this review was placed on the police department's website for public viewing.