

CITY OF OAKLAND



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Police Department

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January 15, 2013

Dear community member,

Much needed and public conversation has recently occurred regarding crime reduction strategies and best law enforcement practices. Given the seriousness of crime in Oakland, my efforts to increase safety through prevention, intervention and enforcement are needed and expected. It is my obligation to use lawful tools, respectfully and professionally, to police within our communities. This is why it is important for me to address the issue of "Stop and Frisk," a concept that is often mischaracterized or poorly explained.

First, and most importantly, the City of Oakland and the Oakland Police Department firmly and unequivocally stand with our community against racial profiling. The practice is wholly unacceptable and clearly prohibited by our training, policies, and by law. While the term "Stop and Frisk" has become synonymous with unlawful, systematic racial profiling, the true and obvious expectation of any law enforcement agency is to interact with citizens when and where required and take appropriate action to prevent or resolve criminal activity. In contrast to "Stop and Frisk" racial profiling criticisms, these interactions cannot be arbitrary; in the words of the United States Supreme Court, "An investigative stop must be justified by some objective manifestation that the person stopped is, or is about to be, engaged in criminal activity." In order to prevent the crimes which we, as a community, detest, my officers will continue to contact, detain or arrest those suspected of committing criminal offenses, and search for weapons and contraband where and when supported by law. The Departmental policy on this topic, Training Bulletin I.O-2, has long been available to the public.

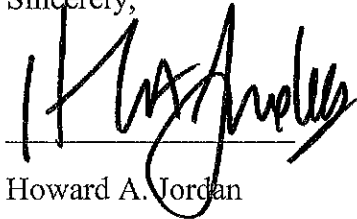
But I acknowledge that the issue is not this simple. Often, a police department may carry out absolutely lawful activities but be met with controversy, friction and accusation in the end. Results have shown that it is the officer's professional demeanor, patience, and explanation for police activity or encounter that sets the difference between oppositional and productive encounters. Although bound at times to be adversarial, all police interactions are opportunities for my officers to demonstrate value and professionalism. As soon as circumstances permit, it is incumbent on my officers to communicate and explain the cause or reason for their encounter or search.

Furthermore, as Chief of Police, I am committed to police practices that build community relationships and trust; I firmly believe that every police contact is an opportunity to create understanding and worth in the eyes of the community. "Zero-tolerance" policing is not a strategy I employ or find valuable to these ends. Strategies and enforcement developed from

objective evidence, intelligence and data should focus on those individuals or groups deserving of law enforcement's attention, and not on community members who happen to be proximate.

As a community, these issues are deserving of our time, focus and attention; crime affects all of us, and it is our obligation as a City to address crime as effectively and efficiently as possible, as well as in ways which promote law enforcement's legitimacy within the community it serves. Racial profiling and zero-tolerance policing strategies erode public confidence and respect rather than strengthen. Ensuring Constitutional policing is a priority for me and this Department, and I will not institute ANY policies that slow our progress in this effort. I am deeply committed to initiatives that promote my vision of stronger community collaboration, respectful policing practices, and a better, safer Oakland for us all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Howard A. Jordan", written over a horizontal line.

Howard A. Jordan

Chief of Police