

Welcome to the National Crime Victimization Survey Knowledge Corner. This short video will provide an overview of the Police Public Contact Survey, or PPCS, a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey, or NCVS.

Interactions between the police and the public have been of high interest and received frequent media attention in recent years. The PPCS is the sole national source for data on nonfatal police use of force, including excessive force. These data can be used to produce high-level estimates on the number and nature of the public's contacts with police, and characteristics of persons who had some type of contact with police during the year.

The PPCS was established in the 1990s with the passage of the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. This law mandated that the Attorney General collect data on the "use of excessive force by law enforcement officers" and publish an annual summary. In response to the Act, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) designed the PPCS to obtain information directly from the public about their perceptions of excessive use of force by police. This led to the administration of the first PPCS in 1996. In 1999, BJS administered the PPCS with an improved instrument including a new set of questions about traffic stops by police. The PPCS was administered three more times in 2002, 2005, and 2008.

In 2011, BJS redesigned and conducted the PPCS with the goals of providing stronger cues for respondents by using more specific questions about types of contact, gathering more data on voluntary contacts with police, improving the measurement of street stops, and collecting data on the interactions and behaviors between citizens and police. In 2011, a split sample was used to assess the changes made to the PPCS. In 2015, the PPCS was revised again. The screener was expanded to collect the number of each type of contact and whether any contacts ended in arrest. Additionally, questions on officer characteristics were updated to match questions from the NCVS on the race of offenders, and use of force questions were asked of all respondents. 2015 was the first year that the PPCS could be administered in languages other than English. For the 2018 PPCS, BJS added two questions—one aiming to address perceptions of verbal and/or sexual harassment by police, and one aiming to address perceptions that police behaviors were motivated by prejudice or bias against the resident. For the 2020 PPCS, BJS added a question about residents' conduct or actions during police contact.

The PPCS is in the field for six months, and the most recent PPCS was administered from July through December of 2022 with the same questions that were used in the 2020 PPCS. Persons age 16 or older who completed the NCVS were eligible. Respondents answer questions about any contact with police in the past 12 months and more detailed questions about their most recent contact with police. Of the 130,000 NCVS-eligible respondents, 96,500 completed the PPCS for a response rate of 74%.

The PPCS collects information on three main types of contact with police: those initiated by the resident, those initiated by police, and those related to a traffic accident. More specifically, police-initiated contacts include traffic stops where the respondent was a driver, traffic stops

where the respondent was a passenger, street stops, arrests, and other types of contact where the police approached the resident, such as accidentally going to the wrong house or asking the resident about a crime. Resident-initiated contacts include the respondent reporting a crime or suspicious activity, reporting a non-crime emergency, and reporting a noncrime, nonemergency event, participating in a neighborhood or block watch where police were present, and contact where the resident sought help from police for another reason, such as for assistance with a lost pet. Respondents are also asked about contact with police as the result of a traffic accident.

The PPCS questionnaire is divided into several sections. The contact screener questions ask respondents if they experienced any of these types of contact. Respondents are then asked more detailed questions about their most recent contact. For those whose most recent contact was a traffic stop or a street stop, there are questions about the characteristics of the stop, as well as characteristics of the police officers. Respondents are also asked about the outcome of the stop. Those whose most recent contact with police was voluntary are asked about the outcome of the contact. Finally, all respondents are asked about the behavior of police and their perception of police.

PPCS can provide national estimates of a variety of topics including:

- Use of nonfatal force, including excessive force
- Police misconduct
- Resident conduct or actions toward police
- Legitimacy of police stops
- Complaints against police
- Satisfaction with police.

For additional information, see the PPCS page on the BJS website <https://bjs.ojp.gov/data-collection/police-public-contact-survey-ppcs>. Here, the user can find information about the methodology of the PPCS, download PPCS questionnaires, and access BJS publications and products that use PPCS data. Users can also access a link to the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD) where they can download the PPCS datasets and codebooks.

To view other Knowledge Corner videos, please go to YouTube to view the playlist. For more information about the NCVS, see the NCVS data collection page on the BJS website. Please email askbjs@usdoj.gov with any questions and your email will be forwarded to BJS statisticians with topical experience. Thank you.

Thank you.