

# St. Pete Beach Police Department

## Bias-Based Profiling Policy

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It is the policy of the St. Pete Beach Police Department to protect the Constitutional rights of all people, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, background, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, age, culture, physical handicap, religion or other belief system, physical or personal characteristic, and to treat each person with respect and dignity.

Discriminatory or bias-based profiling enforcement practices can alienate our citizens, foster distrust of police in the community, and invite media scrutiny. It can also lead to allegations of Constitutional and civil rights violations. In the performance of all duties, it is imperative to afford all citizens the fundamental right to **equal protection under the law**.

Part of the Mission of the St. Pete Beach Police Department is to assist and protect our community. Members of the department are required to use skills developed through training and experience in order to identify suspicious circumstances, unusual occurrences, or violations of law. We contact people who, according to that training, experience, and knowledge, are acting in a manner to suggest a crime was committed, about to be or in the process of being committed. This proactive approach aids in the detection and apprehension of criminals, maintains the safety of our streets and highways, and protects our citizens from crime, as well as the officers who serve them.

During the investigation of a crime, every legitimate tool and technique is utilized to narrow the potential field of suspects in order to identify, locate, and arrest those responsible to achieve an efficient and expedient resolution to the case. Based on knowledge and experience, all evidence of criminal activity is scrutinized, in order to identify a potential type of person or persons by characteristics which most likely indicate their possible criminal involvement. This process is known as criminal profiling, and is just one of many accepted and necessary law enforcement investigative tools and practices. However, it differs from and should not be confused with bias-based profiling.

Contacting persons in a variety of situations is not only routine but a necessary part of law enforcement activities. Bias-based profiling occurs when intentionally or unintentionally an officer applies their personal, societal or organizational biases or stereotypes when making decisions or taking police action. If the **ONLY** reason for that decision or action is based on the outlined areas in this policy rather than due to the observed behavior or the identification of the individual as being a possible suspect in criminal activity, that is considered bias-based profiling. The St. Pete Beach Police Department will not accept or tolerate bias-based profiling.