
Bias-Free Policing

A Commitment to Bias-Free Policing

It is the policy of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) to prohibit bias-based policing, to train all sworn personnel engaged in law enforcement activities in the prohibition against bias-based policing, and to thoroughly investigate all complaints of bias-based policing.

A fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States is equal protection under the law. Along with this right to equal protection is the fundamental right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures by government agents as guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment. Citizens are free to enjoy and use Alabama's natural resources, roadways, waterways, and other public places without police interference so long as they obey the law. Citizens also expect to be free from crime and from the acts of criminals.

Bias-based law enforcement action is illegal and violates the equal protection clause and the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution. It also alienates citizens, fosters law enforcement distrust, and undermines legitimate law enforcement efforts. As ADCNR law enforcement officers perform their duties, it is imperative that all citizens are afforded equal protection under the law.

Illegal profiling, or bias-based policing, refers to a decision by an officer to stop, detain, interdict, or search an individual based on race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age, or cultural group, or any combination thereof in violation of constitutional standards. The ADCNR prohibits illegal profiling and bias-based policing as a law enforcement tactic and does not tolerate or condone its use by any of its sworn personnel in traffic contacts, field contacts, or in asset seizures or forfeiture efforts. The agency's philosophy is to assist law enforcement officers in accomplishing this mission in a way that respects the dignity of all persons and sends a strong message to lawbreakers that if they break the law, that behavior will not be tolerated and will likely result in an encounter with law enforcement.

In order to ensure ADCNR's compliance with its bias-free policing approach, the agency annually initiates a review of all complaints of bias-based policing by its officers in order to proactively address any issues or concerns, and to reinforce its commitment to bias-free policing.