

rights would occur if an officer conducts a traffic stop based solely on the race of the driver.

Civil liberties violations could occur if an officer were to collect the names of individuals for their nonmainstream beliefs for the purpose of documenting their identity for future reference and not because they are engaging in illegal activity.

Community Trust

Failing to protect civil rights and civil liberties can have serious repercussions for you, the individual, the public as a whole, and your department. When citizens are confident that your priority is to protect their privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties, they are more likely to act as a partner and report suspicious activity or incidents to you and your agency. Community trust is built by protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.

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Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties



BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance
U.S. Department of Justice



Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties

It is law enforcement's role to fight crime and keep Americans safe. Protecting the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of American citizens is equally important. It is law enforcement's responsibility to understand what activities are constitutionally protected. For example, most activities that are political or social in nature, regardless of their level of social acceptance, do not involve criminal activity and, in fact, are protected by the U.S. Constitution.

Building Relationships

Protecting Americans' privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties is not new to you; you learned the importance of these protections in the academy, and they are reinforced through your departmental policies, procedures, and training. Safeguarding these rights builds and strengthens the trusted relationship between the community and law enforcement.

Protecting Privacy

You protect privacy every day by ensuring that personally identifiable information is appropriately gathered, documented, used, retained, and shared. Generally speaking, personally identifiable information includes data that can be used to identify a specific individual, such as an individual's name, home address, or social security number.



Privacy violations include gathering information on individuals engaging in constitutionally protected activities, improperly accessing or sharing a subject's information, or sharing a subject's record without a valid law enforcement purpose.

Civil Rights Protections

Civil rights protections ensure that the rights of citizenship and equal protection under the law are guaranteed to all citizens regardless of race, religion, gender, national origin, or other legally protected personal characteristics. Furthermore, civil liberties are the freedoms that are guaranteed by the Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution and individual state constitutions.

Constitutionally Protected Activities

It is critical to distinguish between criminal activities and constitutionally protected activities. For example, traffic stops should be based on violations of the law or on reasonable suspicion of criminal activity. A violation of civil

