

# Signed Form for Consent Searches | Policy Model from Fayetteville, North Carolina

Black and brown people are disproportionately stopped and searched by police. Searches too often lead to unjust harmful or deadly police force. Requiring written forms for consent searches helps hold police accountable and informs individuals of their right to refuse. Using written consent forms is just one item on Emancipate NC's policy menu for local policing reform. View the full menu of local policy models [here](#).



*[The data] addresses the question we initially raised regarding the inordinately large number of Blacks that were being stopped and no reasons were given."*

Jimmy Buxton, President  
Fayetteville Branch NAACP

## Consent Search Rights

A police officer may search a person or vehicle without a warrant if the individual or driver consents. But, that right is often not made clear by law enforcement.

Fayetteville [traffic data](#) from 2009 and 2010 shows that Black drivers were three times more likely to be stopped and searched by police.

When this data came to light, community leaders worked with the [National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives](#) to bring evidence-based reform to the department. The use of written consent forms was one of 24 recommendations made to address the disparity.

Though significantly fewer stops and searches were conducted in the two years after the use of written consent forms, Black and brown individuals are still [disproportionately stopped](#) compared to white drivers.

### 3x more likely

Black drivers were three times more likely to be stopped and searched than white drivers, according to 2009-2010 data.

### March 2012

Fayetteville Police Department started using written forms to consent search in March 2012.

### 50% decrease

Traffic stops decreased by fifty percent over a three year period, coinciding with requiring signed forms for consent searches.

### 60% decrease

Searches of vehicles, drivers and passengers decreased by sixty percent over the same time period.

## Tips on how to Adopt Policy

- Look at the North Carolina Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Policy instructions on how to craft a [sample policy](#).
- Provide information for your community. Asheville implemented a similar policy and published [FAQs for drivers](#).
- Lobby your city council and get involved with local organizations. [This article](#) discusses advocacy efforts taken in Greensboro that could be mimicked elsewhere.
- Reference demographic data from the [NC State Bureau of Investigation](#), which collects information about drivers and passengers who are searched, including sex, race, and ethnicity.
- Review a [report](#) by North Carolina's Criminal Justice Analysis Center, which reveals that Black drivers were disproportionately searched between 2009 and 2019.