

Stop and Search

Criminal Justice

A high-volume power, and the gap between what is claimed and what is found.

What is claimed

- Deters carrying of weapons and drugs
- Disrupts offending in high-crime areas
- Produces arrests and intelligence
- Reassures the public where crime is high

What research finds

- Effects on crime are small at best
- Detection per search is low
- Ethnic disparities in rates are documented
- Heavy use is linked to lower trust
- Findings vary by place and study design

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Rate disparities are measured and consistent; both their causes and the crime effect remain contested.

Educational reference. Powers, thresholds and recording rules differ by jurisdiction. Not legal advice on any stop.