


Secretary

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



Homeland
Security

MEMORANDUM FOR COMPONENT HEADS

FROM: Secretary Napolitano 

Subject: The Department of Homeland Security's Commitment to
Nondiscriminatory Law Enforcement and Screening Activities

The Department of Homeland Security's mission is to ensure that the Nation remains a safe, secure, resilient place where the American way of life can thrive. As former Secretary Ridge explained in the predecessor to this policy, "In all we do to secure America, our strategies and our actions must be consistent with the individual rights and civil liberties protected by the Constitution and the rule of law."

The Department of Homeland Security's policy is to prohibit the consideration of race or ethnicity in our investigation, screening, and enforcement activities in all but the most exceptional instances. The following is the Department's official policy on this issue:

"Racial profiling" is the invidious use of race or ethnicity as a criterion in conducting stops, searches, and other law enforcement, investigation, or screening activities. It is premised on the erroneous assumption that any particular individual of one race or ethnicity is more likely to engage in misconduct than any particular individual of another race or ethnicity. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has explicitly adopted the Department of Justice's "Guidance Regarding the Use of Race by Federal Law Enforcement Agencies," issued in June 2003. It is the policy of DHS to prohibit the consideration of race or ethnicity in our daily law enforcement and screening activities in all but the most exceptional instances, as defined in the DOJ Guidance. DHS personnel may use race or ethnicity only when a compelling governmental interest is present, and only in a way narrowly tailored to meet that compelling interest. Of course, race- or ethnicity-based information that is specific to particular suspects or incidents, or ongoing criminal activities, schemes or enterprises, may be considered, as stated in the DOJ Guidance.

Except as noted below, it is DHS policy, although not required by the Constitution, that tools, policies, directives, and rules in law enforcement and security settings that consider, as an investigative or screening criterion, an individual's simple connection to a particular country, by birth or citizenship, should be reserved for situations in which such consideration is based on an assessment of intelligence and risk, and in which alternatives do not meet security needs, and

such consideration should remain in place only as long as necessary. These self-imposed limits, however, do not apply to antiterrorism, immigration, or customs activities in which nationality is expressly relevant to the administration or enforcement of a statute, regulation, or executive order, or in individualized discretionary use of nationality as a screening, investigation, or enforcement factor).

All Components should include the DHS policy stated above in all manuals, policies, directives, and guidelines regarding any activity in which the use of race, ethnicity, or nationality may arise as a security screening, enforcement, or investigative criterion. Each Component, in coordination with the Department's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, should implement Component-specific policy and procedures to implement this guidance for law enforcement, investigation, and security activities. Moreover, all Components should ensure that all law enforcement personnel, including supervisors and managers, are trained to the standards set forth in the DOJ Guidance and the DHS policy stated above, and are held accountable for meeting those standards.

Attachment: Implementation Guidance