

Pretextual Stops of Bicyclists

(Last Updated – May 2009)

Recommendation	Status
The District Government should replace mandatory, police-based bicycle registration with voluntary registration through a national registry.	Adopted. The Bicycle Registration Reform Act of 2008 was signed by the Mayor on January 24, 2008, and became effective on May 1, 2008. The Act does not require a person to register a bicycle in the District. Instead, MPD will check the identification number of any bicycle recovered by MPD against the National Bike Registry.
MPD should collect bike stop data as part of the department’s Biased Policing Project to assess the issue of racial profiling in bicycle stops.	Adopted in part. On November 1, 2005, MPD informed OPC that it was collecting this data on the MPD Form PD 76, which is the same form being used to record motor vehicle stop data for the department’s racial profiling study. This data was collected but not analyzed by MPD, and the department stopped mandatory collection of data in December 2006.
MPD should provide better training for officers and recruits regarding the scope of the bicycle laws.	Adopted. On December 20, 2007, MPD reported that recruit training now includes a week-long class addressing traffic enforcement and safety. Recruits are trained on what is needed in order to make legal bicycle stops. These issues are reinforced in the laws of arrest, search and seizure, and traffic lessons. In addition, there has been a renewed emphasis on traffic enforcement and safety in roll-call training.
The District Government and MPD should take steps to better inform bike riders of their duties under the law.	Adopted in part. On December 20, 2007, MPD reported that information for the public will be updated following the adoption of the legislation to eliminate the registration requirement. MPD previously linked information about the helmet laws to the “Traffic Safety” section of its website.