

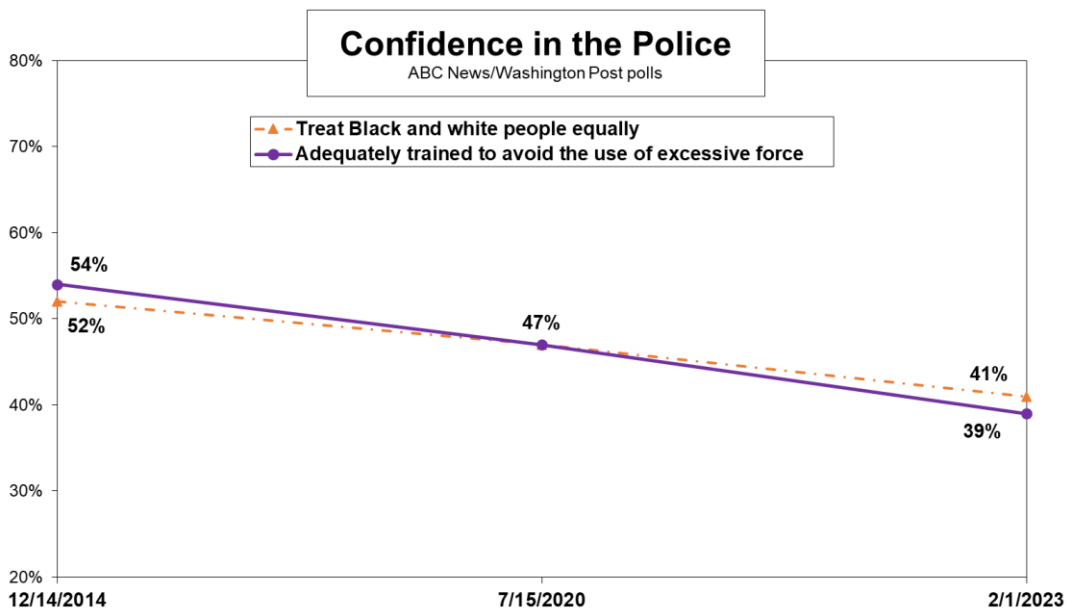
# Confidence in Police Practices Drops to a New Low

Americans' confidence in how police are trained and their treatment of Black people both have fallen to new lows in ABC News/Washington Post polling.

Following the death of Tyre Nichols after his beating by Memphis police Jan. 7, just 39 percent of adults in the national survey are confident that the police in this country are adequately trained to avoid the use of excessive force. And just 41 percent are confident the police treat Black and white people equally.

Both are lows since first asked in ABC/Post polls nearly a decade ago.

The decline has been striking. In 2014, 54 percent of adults expressed confidence that the police are adequately trained to avoid excessive force; that's since tumbled by 15 percentage points. Fifty-two percent said the police treat Black and white people equally; that's 11 points lower now.



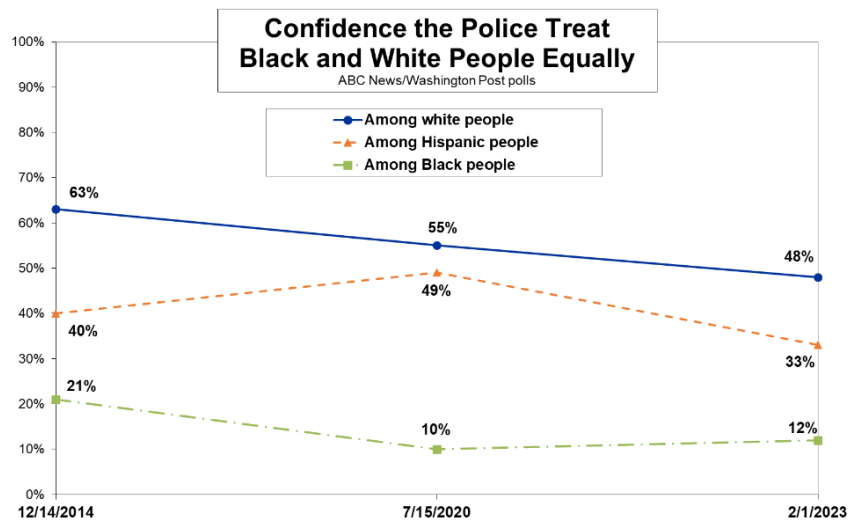
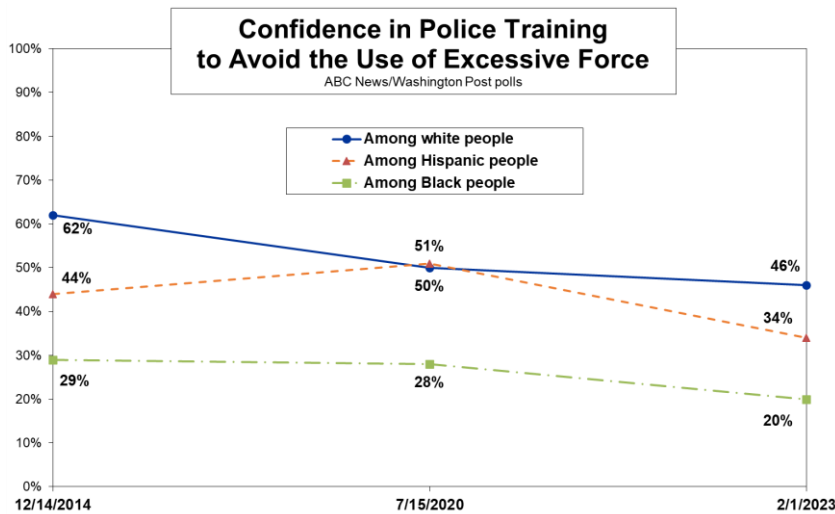
Indeed, this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds that 38 percent are “not confident at all” that the police treat Black and white people equally, while just 15 percent are very confident of this. On avoiding excessive force, 34 percent are not at all confident, vs. 12 percent very confident.

These polls were conducted across a long period of police killings of Black people and subsequent protests, from the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014 to the murder of George Floyd by police in May 2020 and now the death of Nichols, in which five Memphis officers have been charged with murder. His funeral was Wednesday.

An ongoing [analysis](#) by the Washington Post finds that police officers fatally shot at least 1,096 people in 2022, with Black people more than twice as likely as white people to be killed.

**RACIAL/ETHNIC GAPS** – While confidence in the police is down overall, wide gaps across racial and ethnic groups remain. Forty-six percent of white people think the police are adequately trained on excessive force, compared with 34 percent of Hispanic people and only 20 percent of Black people.

On equal treatment, the gap in perceptions between Black and white people is wider: While 48 percent of white people think the police treat Black and white people equally, just 12 percent of Black people say so. (It’s 33 percent among Hispanic people.)



That said, the biggest shift in these views has come among white people. The sense among white people that the police are adequately trained to avoid using excessive force has dropped by 16 points since 2014, compared with 10 points among Hispanic people and 9 points among Black people, both within the margin of error for these groups.

Similarly, the share of white people who say the police treat Black and white people equally has fallen by 15 points, compared with 9 points among Black people and 7 points among Hispanic people (again, within sampling error in the latter two groups). This is the first time fewer than half of white people (48 percent, as noted) say the police treat Black and white people equally.

Notably, while 33 percent of white people and 32 percent of Hispanic people are not confident at all that the police treat Black and white people equally, this soars to 72 percent among Black people.

**OTHER GROUPS** – There also are wide partisan and ideological differences in these views. On treating Black and white people equally, 72 percent of Republicans are confident in the police, falling to 40 percent among independents and just 14 percent of Democrats. On avoiding the use of excessive force, confidence in the police runs from 60 percent of Republicans to 39 percent of independents and 20 percent of Democrats.

One reason is that 29 percent of Democrats are Black people, dropping to 9 percent of independents and 3 percent of Republicans.

Attitudes divide similarly on the basis of ideology. Confidence in the police to treat Black and white people equally ranges from 68 percent of conservatives to 38 percent of moderates and 9 percent of liberals. Confidence on excessive force is 55-40-15 percent across these groups, respectively.

<b>Confidence in Police Practices</b> <i>ABC News/Washington Post poll</i>				
	<b>Avoiding excessive force</b>		<b>Treating Black and white people equally</b>	
	<b>Confident</b>	<b>Not confident</b>	<b>Confident</b>	<b>Not confident</b>
<b>All</b>	39%	60%	41%	57%
<b>Black people</b>	20	80	12	88
<b>Hispanic people</b>	34	66	33	66
<b>White people</b>	46	53	48	49
<b>Democrats</b>	20	80	14	84
<b>Independents</b>	39	59	40	58
<b>Republicans</b>	60	39	72	26
<b>Liberals</b>	15	85	9	90
<b>Moderates</b>	40	59	38	60
<b>Conservatives</b>	55	43	68	29

Among other groups, on equal treatment, confidence is far lower in urban areas, 35 percent, as opposed to rural areas, 57 percent; it's 42 percent in the suburbs. Gaps are similar on avoiding the use of excessive force.

Women are 10 points less confident than men on the question of equal treatment by the police, 36 vs. 46 percent. And confidence on this item is a slight 7 points lower in the Midwest and South than in the Northeast and West.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Jan. 27-Feb. 1, 2023, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,003 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 percentage points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 26-25-40 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#), with sampling and data collection by Abt Associates of Rockville, Md. See details on the survey's methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com. Join our [mailing list](#) to get updates on all new poll releases.

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Full results follow.

Q1-12, 14-18, held for release. \*= less than 0.5 percent.

13. How confident are you that the police in this country [ITEM] - very confident, somewhat confident, not so confident or not confident at all?

2/1/23 - Summary table

	--- More confident --			---- Less confident -----			No op.
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Not at all	
a. Treat (white) and (Black) people equally	41	15	26	57	18	38	3
b. Are adequately trained to avoid the use of excessive force	39	12	27	60	25	34	1

Trend:

a. treat (white) and (Black) people equally

	----- Confident -----			----- Not confident -----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Not at all	
2/1/23 All	41	15	26	57	18	38	3
White people	48	19	30	49	16	33	3
Black people	12	2	10	88	15	72	*
Hispanic people*	33	10	23	66	34	32	1

\*2/1/23: Caution, small sample size (n=90)

7/15/20 All	47	17	30	52	23	29	1
White people	55	19	36	44	23	21	1
Black people	10	1	9	89	23	66	1
Hispanic people	49	22	28	50	24	25	1
12/14/14 All*	52	21	31	46	22	24	2
White people	63	26	37	36	19	17	1
Black people	21	3	18	77	20	57	1
Hispanic people	40	15	25	57	29	29	3

\*2014 "(whites) and (Blacks)"

b. are adequately trained to avoid the use of excessive force

	----- Confident -----			----- Not confident -----			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Not at all	opinion
2/1/23 All	39	12	27	60	25	34	1
White people	46	14	32	53	22	31	2
Black people	20	4	16	80	29	51	0
Hispanic people*	34	13	21	66	35	31	0
*2/1/23: Caution, small sample size (n=90)							
4/21/21 All	44	16	28	55	25	30	2
White people	50	19	31	48	25	23	2
Black people*	20	3	16	79	25	54	1
Hispanic people	34	12	22	65	30	35	1
*4/21/21: Caution, small sample size (n=88)							
7/15/20 All	47	17	30	52	25	27	2
White people	50	19	31	48	25	23	2
Black people	28	7	21	71	19	52	1
Hispanic people	51	19	32	48	30	17	1
12/14/14 All	54	20	34	44	23	21	2
White people	62	23	39	36	20	16	2
Black people	29	4	25	71	30	41	0
Hispanic people	44	22	22	52	25	27	4

\*\*\*END\*\*\*