



# Department of Justice

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**THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2003**  
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**CRT**  
**(202) 616-2777**  
**TDD (202) 514-1888**

## **JUSTICE DEPARTMENT FILES CONSENT DECREES** **CONCLUDING INVESTIGATION OF DETROIT POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Ralph F. Boyd, Jr. and U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan Jeffrey G. Collins today announced that the Justice Department has filed two consent decrees that conclude the Justice Department's pattern or practice investigation into the Detroit Police Department.

The investigation, initiated in December 2000 at the request of the city, involved three components - use of force, arrest and witness detention, as well as conditions of confinement. The Justice Department filed a complaint in federal district court alleging a pattern or practice of misconduct pursuant to Section 14141 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. The consent decrees filed today mandate widespread reform in the police department's use of force, as well as arrest and detention practices, and its administration of precinct holding cells.

"The city of Detroit and its police department should be commended for reaching a resolution in this matter," said Attorney General John Ashcroft. "This is an example of the success that can be achieved when people come together in the pursuit of a common goal. Today's consent decrees will yield lasting benefits for the citizens of Detroit."

"We recognize that consent decrees are a formal and fairly stern resolution of this matter but, as Attorney General Ashcroft recently stated, this Department will 'take very seriously abuses of civil rights,'" said Ralph Boyd. "The consent decrees we filed with the court today are an outgrowth of this mission - they will help bring an end to civil rights abuses within the Detroit Police Department."

The decrees represent a negotiated resolution of the Justice Department's investigation that would not have been possible without the cooperation and commitment of Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, Chief Jerry Oliver and the members of the police department.

Boyd praised city and community leaders in resolving the litigation, as well as the police rank and file for their continued commitment to improving the Detroit Police Department. "The rank and file understands the ground level work that is necessary to continue to build the police department into an outstanding law enforcement agency," added Boyd. "Although we believe these decrees are appropriate, we do not for a second underestimate the difficulties facing rank and file officers every day they're on the job."

Under the consent decrees, filed today in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, the Detroit Police Department will:

- implement revisions to the use of force policy and training, with an emphasis on de-escalation techniques;
- require written supervisory review of arrests for probable cause, as well as prohibit the detention or conveyance of an individual without reasonable suspicion, probable cause or consent from the individual;
- analyze trends in uses of force, searches, seizures, and other law enforcement activities that create a risk of officer misconduct;

- improve the procedures for investigating allegations of misconduct and for completing investigations in a thorough, fair, and timely manner;
- develop a comprehensive medical and mental health screening program approved by qualified medical and mental health professionals; and,
- implement a comprehensive fire detection, suppression and evacuation program in consultation with the Detroit Fire Department.

“These consent decrees between the Department of Justice and the City of Detroit will improve law enforcement,” said Jeffrey G. Collins. “It is my hope that at the end of what will likely be a long process, requiring a great deal of hard work and commitment, the citizens of Detroit will have a police department that is truly a model for the nation.”

Pending approval by the court on joint motion by the parties, Sheryl L. Robinson and Kroll Associates will serve as the independent monitor, with the duties of overseeing the implementation of the decrees and providing technical assistance to the police department. The monitor will issue regular public reports assessing the police department’s progress.

The Special Litigation Section of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division enforces the police misconduct provision of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which authorizes the Attorney General to seek equitable and declaratory relief to redress a pattern or practice of conduct by law enforcement agencies that violates federal law. The Department also has authority to file suit against law enforcement agencies that receive federal funds and engage in a pattern of discrimination.

The Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division, with the assistance of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Michigan, investigated this matter. Additional information regarding the Special Litigation Section is available on the Justice Department’s website at [www.usdoj.gov/crt/split/index.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/split/index.html).

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