

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE STOPPED BY

### POLICE, IMMIGRATION AGENTS OR THE FBI

We rely on the police to keep us safe and treat us all fairly, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin or religion. This card provides tips for interacting with police and understanding your rights. Separate rules apply at checkpoints and when entering the U.S. (including at airports).

#### KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

- **You have the right** to remain silent. If you wish to exercise that right, say so out loud.
- **You have the right** to refuse to consent to a search of yourself, your car or your home.
- **You have the right** to calmly leave if you are not under arrest.
- **You have the right** to a lawyer if you are arrested. Ask for one immediately.
- **You have constitutional rights** regardless of your immigration or citizenship status,

#### KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Do** stay calm and be polite.
- **Do not** interfere with or obstruct the police.
- **Do not** lie or give false documents.
- **Do** prepare yourself and your family in case you are arrested.
- **Do** remember the details of the encounter.

If you feel your rights have been violated, contact the ACLU of Michigan to file a legal complaint.



**ACLU of Michigan**  
2966 Woodward, Detroit MI  
(313)578-6800  
[www.aclumich.org](http://www.aclumich.org)

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## IF YOU ARE STOPPED FOR QUESTIONING

**Stay calm.** Don't run. Don't argue, resist or obstruct the police, even if you are innocent or police are violating your rights. Keep your hands where police can see them.

**Ask if you are free to leave.** If the officer says yes, calmly and silently walk away. If you are under arrest, you have a right to know why.

**You have the right to remain silent** and cannot be punished for refusing to answer questions. If you wish to remain silent, tell the officer out loud. In some states, you must give your name if asked to identify yourself.

**You do not have to consent to a search** of yourself or your belongings, but police may "pat down" your clothing if they suspect a weapon. You should not physically resist, but you have the right to refuse consent for any further search. If you do consent, it can affect you later in court.

## IF YOU ARE STOPPED IN YOUR CAR

**Stop the car in a safe place as quickly as possible.** Turn off the car, turn on the internal light, open the window part way and place your hands on the wheel.

Upon request, **show police your driver's license, registration and proof of insurance.**

**If an officer or immigration agent asks to look inside your car, you can refuse to consent to the search.** But if police believe your car contains evidence of a crime, your car can be searched without your consent.

**Both drivers and passengers have the right to remain silent.** If you are a passenger, you can ask if you are free to leave. If the officer says yes, sit silently or calmly leave. Even if the officer says no, you have the right to remain silent.

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## IF YOU ARE ARRESTED

**Do not resist arrest,** even if you believe the arrest is unfair.

**Say you wish to remain silent and ask for a lawyer immediately.** If you can't pay for a lawyer, you have the right to a free one. Don't say anything, sign anything or make any decisions without a lawyer.

**You have the right to make a local phone call.** The police cannot listen if you call a lawyer.

**Prepare yourself and your family in case you are arrested.** Make emergency plans if you have children or take medication.

#### Special considerations for non-citizens:

- Ask your lawyer about the effect of a criminal conviction or plea on your immigration status.
- Don't discuss your immigration status with anyone but your lawyer.
- Read all papers fully. If you do not understand or cannot read the papers, tell the officer you need an interpreter.

## IF YOU ARE CONTACTED BY THE FBI

If an FBI agent comes to your home or workplace, **you do not have to answer any questions.** Tell the agent you want to **speak to a lawyer first.**

If you are asked to meet with FBI agents for an interview, **you have the right to say you do not want to be interviewed.** If you agree to an interview, **have a lawyer present.**

**You do not have to answer any questions** you feel uncomfortable answering, and can say that you will only answer questions on a specific topic.

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