What To Do If You’re Stopped By The Police

Think carefully about your words, movement, body language, and emotions.

Don’t get into an argument with the police. Remember, anything you say or do can be used against you.

Keep your hands where the police can see them. Don’t run. Don’t touch any police officer.

Don’t resist even if you believe you are innocent. Don’t complain on the scene or tell the police they’re wrong or that you’re going to file a complaint.

Do not make any statements regarding the incident.

Ask for a lawyer immediately upon arrest. Remember officers’ badge & patrol car numbers. Write down everything you remember ASAP. Try to find witnesses & their names & phone numbers. If you are injured, take photographs of the injuries as soon as possible, but make sure you seek medical attention first.

If you feel your rights have been violated, file a written complaint with police department’s internal affairs division or civilian complaint board, or call the ACLU hotline, 1-877-6-PROFILE.

Produced by the American Civil Liberties Union.

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1. What you say to the police is always important. What you say can be used against you, and it can give the police an excuse to arrest you, especially if you bad-mouth a police officer.

2. You must show your driver’s license and registration when stopped in a car. Otherwise, you don’t have to answer any questions if you are detained or arrested, with one important exception. The police may ask for your name if you have been properly detained, and you can be arrested in some states for refusing to give it if you reasonably fear that your name is incriminating, you can claim the right to remain silent, which may be a defense in case you are arrested anyway.

3. You don’t have to consent to any search of yourself, your car or your house. If you DO consent to a search, it can affect your rights later in court. If the police say they have a search warrant, ASK TO SEE IT.

4. Do not interfere with, or obstruct the police – you can be arrested for it.

1. Upon request, show them your driver’s license, registration, and proof of insurance. In certain cases, your car can be searched without a warrant as long as the police have probable cause. To protect yourself later, you should make it clear that you do not consent to a search.

2. It is not lawful for police to arrest you simply for refusing to consent to a search.

3. If you’re given a ticket, you should sign it; otherwise you can be arrested. You can always fight the case in court later.

4. If you’re suspected of drunk driving (DWI) and refuse to take a blood, urine or breath test, your driver’s license may be suspended.

1. You have the right to remain silent and to talk to a lawyer before you talk to the police. Tell the police nothing except your name and address. Don’t give any explanations, excuses or stories. You can make your defense later, in court, based on what you and your lawyer decide is best.

2. Ask to see a lawyer immediately. If you can’t pay for a lawyer, you have a right to a free one, and should ask the police how the lawyer can be contacted.

3. Don’t say anything without a lawyer.

4. Within a reasonable time after your arrest, or booking, you have the right to make a local phone call: to a lawyer, bail bondsman, a relative or any other person. The police may not listen to the call to the lawyer.

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