

YOUR RIGHTS WHEN INTERACTING WITH THE POLICE¹

If You Are Stopped for Questioning

- i Stay calm. Don't run, argue, resist, or obstruct the police. Think carefully about your words, movement, body language, and emotions. Keep your hands where police can see them. Always greet policemen and policewomen as "officer." Never talk back, raise your voice, or use profanity with a police officer.
- i Determine if you are free to go. Before answering an officer's questions, ask "Officer, am I free to go?" If the officer lets you leave, do so immediately. If the officer's answer is unclear, or if he asks additional questions, repeat "Officer, am I free to go?"
- i Remain silent. The only questions you need to answer are your name, address and date of birth. If you wish to remain silent, you must tell the police officer "I'm going to remain silent" and then stay quiet.
- i 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. If police detain and frisk you, you have the right to state clearly your refusal to consent to the search. You should only verbally refuse. Never physically resist.

If The Police Come to Your Home

- i You do not always have to let the police into your home. If the police knock on your door, you do not have to let the officer in, unless the officer has a signed warrant or it is an emergency situation, such as the police are chasing someone into your house or there is a cry for help coming from inside the house.

If You Are Stopped in Your Car

- i Stop the car in a safe place as quickly as possible. Turn off your car, and place your hands on the wheel. Police like to see your hands for their own safety— so wait until they request your driver's license, registration and proof of insurance before reaching for it. At night, turn on the dome light.
- i If an officer asks to look inside your car, you can refuse to consent to the search. You may politely decline a request to look in your car by saying, "Officer, I know you're just doing your job, but I don't consent to searches." If necessary, repeat your refusal.
- i 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.
- i If you are suspected of drunk driving (DWI) and refuse to take a blood, urine, or breath test, your driver's license may be suspended.

If You are Arrested

- i Do not resist arrest, even if you believe the arrest is unfair.
- i Say you wish to remain silent and ask for a lawyer immediately. Tell the police your name and address, then say "I'm going to remain silent. I would like to see a lawyer." Don't say anything, sign anything, or make any decisions without a lawyer.
- i You have the right to make a local phone call. The police cannot listen if you call a lawyer.

¹ Adapted from ACLU, WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE STOPPED BY THE POLICE information card, available at CLC.