

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

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WHEN ENCOUNTERING  
LAW ENFORCEMENT



**ACLU**

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

WHEN ENCOUNTERING  
LAW ENFORCEMENT

This booklet addresses what rights you have when you are stopped, questioned, arrested, or searched by law enforcement officers. This booklet is for citizens and non-citizens with extra information for non-citizens in a separate section. Another section covers what can happen to you at airports and other points of entry into the United States. The last section discusses concerns you may have related to your charitable contributions and religious or political beliefs.

This booklet tells you about your basic rights. It is not a substitute for legal advice. You should contact an attorney if you have been arrested or believe that your rights have been violated.

## I. QUESTIONING

**Q: What kind of law enforcement officers might try to question me?**

**A:** You could be questioned by a variety of law enforcement officers, including state or local police officers, Joint Terrorism Task Force members, or federal agents from the FBI, Department of Homeland Security (which includes Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol), Drug Enforcement Administration, Naval Criminal Investigative Service, or other agencies.

**Q: Do I have to answer questions asked by law enforcement officers?**

**A:** No. You have the constitutional right to remain silent. In general, you do not have to talk to law enforcement officers (or anyone else), even if you do not feel free to walk away from the officer, you are arrested, or you are in jail. You cannot be punished for refusing to answer a question. It is a good idea to talk to a lawyer before agreeing to answer questions. In general, only a judge can order you to answer questions. (Non-citizens should see Section IV for more information on this topic.)

**Q: Are there any exceptions to the general rule that I do not have to answer questions?**

**A:** Yes, there are two limited exceptions. First, in some states, you must provide your name to law enforcement officers if you are stopped and told to identify yourself. But even if you give your name, you are not required to answer other questions. Second, if you are driving and you are pulled over for a traffic violation, the officer can require you to show your license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance (but you do not have to answer questions). (Non-citizens should see Section IV for more information on this topic.)

**Q: Can I talk to a lawyer before answering questions?**

**A:** Yes. You have the constitutional right to talk to a lawyer before answering questions, whether or not the police tell you about that right. The lawyer's job is to protect your rights. Once you say that you want to talk to a lawyer, officers should stop asking you questions. If they continue to ask questions, you still have the right to remain silent. If you do not have a

lawyer, you may still tell the officer you want to speak to one before answering questions. If you do have a lawyer, keep his or her business card with you. Show it to the officer, and ask to call your lawyer. Remember to get the name, agency and telephone number of any law enforcement officer who stops or visits you, and give that information to your lawyer.

**Q: What if I speak to law enforcement officers anyway?**

**A:** Anything you say to a law enforcement officer can be used against you and others. Keep in mind that lying to a government official is a crime but remaining silent until you consult with a lawyer is not. Even if you have already answered some questions, you can refuse to answer other questions until you have a lawyer.

**Q: What if law enforcement officers threaten me with a grand jury subpoena if I don't answer their questions? *(A grand jury subpoena is a written order for you to go to court and testify about information you may have.)***

**A:** If a law enforcement officer threatens to get a subpoena, you still do not have to answer the officer's questions right then and there, and anything you do say can be used against you. The officer may or may not succeed in getting the subpoena. If you receive a subpoena or an officer threatens to get one for you, you should call a lawyer right away. If you are given a subpoena, you must follow the subpoena's direction about when and where to report to the court, but you can still assert your right not to say anything that could be used against you in a criminal case.

**Q: What if I am asked to meet with officers for a "counter-terrorism interview"?**

**A:** You have the right to say that you do not want to be interviewed, to have an attorney present, to set the time and place for the interview, to find out the questions they will ask beforehand, and to answer only the questions you feel comfortable answering. If you are taken into custody for any reason, you have the right to remain silent. No matter what, assume that nothing you say is off the record. And remember that it is a criminal offense to knowingly lie to an officer.

## II. STOPS AND ARRESTS

**Q: What if law enforcement officers stop me on the street?**

**A:** You do not have to answer any questions. You can say, “I do not want to talk to you” and walk away calmly. Or, if you do not feel comfortable doing that, you can ask if you are free to go. If the answer is yes, you can consider just walking away. Do not run from the officer. If the officer says you are not under arrest, but you are not free to go, then you are being detained. Being detained is not the same as being arrested, though an arrest could follow. The police can pat down the outside of your clothing only if they have “reasonable suspicion” (i.e., an objective reason to suspect) that you might be armed and dangerous. If they search any more than this, say clearly, “I do not consent to a search.” If they keep searching anyway, do not physically resist them. You do not need to answer any questions if you are detained or arrested, except that the police may ask for your name once you have been detained, and you can be arrested in some states for refusing to provide it. (Non-citizens should see Section IV for more information on this topic.)

**Q: What if law enforcement officers stop me in my car?**

**A:** Keep your hands where the police can see them. You must show your drivers license, registration and proof of insurance if you are asked for these documents. Officers can also ask you to step outside of the car, and they may separate passengers and drivers from each other to question them and compare their answers, but no one has to answer any questions. The police cannot search your car unless you give them your consent, which you do not have to give, or unless they have “probable cause” to believe (i.e., knowledge of facts sufficient to support a reasonable belief) that criminal activity is likely taking place, that you have been involved in a crime, or that you have evidence of a crime in your car. If you do not want your car searched, clearly state that you do not consent. The officer cannot use your refusal to give consent as a basis for doing a search.

**Q: What should I do if law enforcement officers arrest me?**

**A:** The officer must advise you of your constitutional rights to remain silent, to an attorney, and to have an attorney appointed if you cannot afford one. You should exercise all these rights, even if the officers don’t tell you about them. Do not tell

the police anything except your name. Anything else you say can and will be used against you. Ask to see a lawyer immediately. Within a reasonable amount of time after your arrest or booking you have the right to a phone call. Law enforcement officers may not listen to a call you make to your lawyer, but they can listen to calls you make to other people. You must be taken before a judge as soon as possible—generally within 48 hours of your arrest at the latest. (See Section IV for information about arrests for noncriminal immigration violations.)

**Q: Do I have to answer questions if I have been arrested?**

**A:** No. If you are arrested, you do not have to answer any questions or volunteer any information. Ask for a lawyer right away. Repeat this request to every officer who tries to talk to or question you. You should always talk to a lawyer before you decide to answer any questions.

**Q: What if I am treated badly by law enforcement officers?**

**A:** Write down the officer's badge number, name or other identifying information. You have a right to ask the officer for this information. Try to find witnesses and their names and phone numbers. If you are injured, seek medical attention and take pictures of the injuries as soon as you can. Call a lawyer or contact your local ACLU office. You should also make a complaint to the law enforcement office responsible for the treatment.

## III. SEARCHES AND WARRANTS

**Q: Can law enforcement officers search my home or office?**

**A:** Law enforcement officers can search your home only if they have a warrant or your consent. In your absence, the police can search your home based on the consent of your roommate or a guest if the police reasonably believe that person has the authority to consent. Law enforcement officers can search your office only if they have a warrant or the consent of the employer. If your employer consents to a search of your office, law enforcement officers can search your workspace whether you consent or not.

**Q: What are warrants and what should I make sure they say?**

**A:** A warrant is a piece of paper signed by a judge giving law enforcement officers permission to enter a home or other building to do a search or make an arrest. A *search* warrant allows law enforcement officers to enter the place described in the warrant to look for and take items identified in the warrant. An *arrest* warrant allows law enforcement officers to take you into custody. An arrest warrant alone does not give law enforcement officers the right to search your home (but they can look in places where you might be hiding and they can take evidence that is in plain sight), and a search warrant alone does not give them the right to arrest you (but they can arrest you if they find enough evidence to justify an arrest). A warrant must contain the judge's name, your name and address, the date, place to be searched, a description of any items being searched for, and the name of the agency that is conducting the search or arrest. An arrest warrant that does not have your name on it may still be validly used for your arrest if it describes you with enough detail to identify you, and a search warrant that does not have your name on it may still be valid if it gives the correct address and description of the place the officers will be searching. However, the fact that a piece of paper says "warrant" on it does not always mean that it is an arrest or search warrant. A *warrant of deportation/removal*, for example, is a kind of *administrative* warrant and does not grant the same authority to enter a home or other building to do a search or make an arrest.



**Q: What should I do if officers come to my house?**

**A:** If law enforcement officers knock on your door, instead of opening the door, ask through the door if they have a warrant. If the answer is no, do not let them into your home and do not answer any questions or say anything other than “I do not want to talk to you.” If the officers say that they do have a warrant, ask the officers to slip it under the door (or show it to you through a peephole, a window in your door, or a door that is open only enough to see the warrant). If you feel you must open the door, then step outside, close the door behind you and ask to see the warrant. Make sure the search warrant contains everything noted above, and tell the officers if they are at the wrong address or if you see some other mistake in the warrant. (And remember that an immigration “warrant of removal/deportation” does not give the officer the authority to enter your home.) If you tell the officers that the warrant is not complete or not accurate, you should say you do not consent to the search, but you should not interfere if the officers decide to do the search even after you have told them they are mistaken. Call your lawyer as soon as possible. Ask if you are allowed to watch the search; if you are allowed to, you should. Take notes, including names, badge numbers, which agency each officer is from, where they searched and what they took. If others are present, have them act as witnesses to watch carefully what is happening.

**Q: Do I have to answer questions if law enforcement officers have a search or arrest warrant?**

**A:** No. Neither a search nor arrest warrant means you have to answer questions.

**Q: What if law enforcement officers do not have a search warrant?**

**A:** You do not have to let law enforcement officers search your home, and you do not have to answer their questions. Law enforcement officers cannot get a warrant based on your refusal, nor can they punish you for refusing to give consent.

**Q: What if law enforcement officers tell me they will come back with a search warrant if I do not let them in?**

**A:** You can still tell them that you do not consent to the search and that they need to get a warrant. The officers may or may not succeed in getting a warrant if they follow through and ask the court for one, but once you give your consent, they do not need to try to get the court’s permission to do the search.

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

**Q: What if law enforcement officers do not have a search warrant, but they insist on searching my home even after I object?**

**A:** You should not interfere with the search in any way because you could get arrested. But you should say clearly that you have not given your consent and that the search is against your wishes. If someone is there with you, ask him or her to witness that you are not giving permission for the search. Call your lawyer as soon as possible. Take note of the names and badge numbers of the searching officers.

## IV. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR NON-CITIZENS

In the United States, non-citizens are persons who do not have U.S. citizenship, including lawful permanent residents, refugees and asylum seekers, persons who have permission to come to the U.S. for reasons like work, school or travel, and those without legal immigration status of any kind. Non-citizens who are in the United States—no matter what their immigration status—generally have the same constitutional rights as citizens when law enforcement officers stop, question, arrest, or search them or their homes. However, there are some special concerns that apply to non-citizens, so the following rights and responsibilities are important for non-citizens to know. Non-citizens at the border who are trying to enter the U.S. do not have all the same rights. See Section V for more information if you are arriving in the U.S.

### **Q: What types of law enforcement officers may try to question me?**

**A:** Different kinds of law enforcement officers might question you or ask you to agree to an interview where they would ask questions about your background, immigration status, relatives, colleagues and other topics. You may encounter the full range of law enforcement officers listed in Section I.

### **Q. What can I do if law enforcement officers want to question me?**

**A:** You have the same right to be silent that U.S. citizens have, so the general rule is that you do not have to answer any questions that a law enforcement officer asks you. However, there are exceptions to this at ports of entry, such as airports and borders (see Section V).

### **Q: Do I have to answer questions about whether I am a U.S. citizen, where I was born, where I live, where I am from, or other questions about my immigration status?**

**A:** You do not have to answer any of the above questions if you do not want to answer them. But do not falsely claim U.S. citizenship. It is almost always a good idea to speak with a lawyer before you answer questions about your immigration status. Immigration law is very complicated, and you could have a problem without realizing it. A lawyer can help protect your rights, advise you, and help you avoid a problem. Always remember that even if you have answered some questions, you can still decide you do not want to answer any more questions.

For “nonimmigrants” (a “nonimmigrant” is a non-citizen who is authorized to be in the U.S. for a particular reason or activity, usually for a limited period of time, such as a person with a tourist, student, or work visa), there is one limited exception to the rule that non-citizens

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

who are already in the U.S. do not have to answer law enforcement officers' questions: immigration officers can require nonimmigrants to provide information related to their immigration status. However, even if you are a nonimmigrant, you can still say that you would like to have your lawyer with you before you answer questions, and you have the right to stay silent if your answer to a question could be used against you in a criminal case.

## **Q: Do I have to show officers my immigration documents?**

**A:** The law requires non-citizens who are 18 or older and who have been issued valid U.S. immigration documents to carry those documents with them at all times. (These immigration documents are often called "alien registration" documents. The type you need to carry depends on your immigration status. Some examples include an unexpired permanent resident card ("green card"), I-94, Employment Authorization Document (EAD), or border crossing card.) Failure to comply carry these documents can be a misdemeanor crime.

If you have your valid U.S. immigration documents and you are asked for them, then it is usually a good idea to show them to the officer because it is possible that you will be arrested if you do not do so. Keep a copy of your documents in a safe place and apply for a replacement immediately if you lose your documents or if they are going to expire. If you are arrested because you do not have your U.S. immigration documents with you, but you have them elsewhere, ask a friend or family member (preferably one who has valid immigration status) to bring them to you.

It is never a good idea to show an officer fake immigration documents or to pretend that someone else's immigration documents are yours. If you are undocumented and therefore do not have valid U.S. immigration documents, you can decide not to answer questions about your citizenship or immigration status or whether you have documents. If you tell an immigration officer that you are not a U.S. citizen and you then cannot produce valid U.S. immigration documents, there is a very good chance you will be arrested.

## **Q: What should I do if there is an immigration raid where I work?**

**A:** If your workplace is raided, it may not be clear to you whether you are free to leave. Either way, you have the right to remain silent—you do not have to answer questions about your citizenship, immigration status or anything else. If you do

answer questions and you say that you are not a U.S. citizen, you will be expected to produce immigration documents showing your immigration status. If you try to run away, the immigration officers will assume that you are in the U.S. illegally and you will likely be arrested. The safer course is to continue with your work or calmly ask if you may leave, and to not answer any questions you do not want to answer. (If you are a “nonimmigrant,” see above.)

**Q: What can I do if immigration officers are arresting me and I have children in my care or my children need to be picked up and taken care of?**

**A:** If you have children with you when you are arrested, ask the officers if you can call a family member or friend to come take care of them before the officers take you away. If you are arrested when your children are at school or elsewhere, call a friend or family member as soon as possible so that a responsible adult will be able to take care of them.

**Q: What should I do if immigration officers arrest me?**

**A:** Assert your rights. Non-citizens have rights that are important for their immigration cases. You do not have to answer questions. You can tell the officer you want to speak with a lawyer. You do not have to sign anything giving up your rights, and should never sign anything without reading, understanding and knowing the consequences of signing it. If you do sign a waiver, immigration agents could try to deport you before you see a lawyer or a judge. The immigration laws are hard to understand. There may be options for you that the immigration officers will not explain to you. You should talk to a lawyer before signing anything or making a decision about your situation. If possible, carry with you the name and telephone number of a lawyer who will take your calls.

**Q: Do I have the right to talk to a lawyer before answering any law enforcement officers’ questions or signing any immigration papers?**

**A:** Yes. You have the right to call a lawyer or your family if you are detained, and you have the right to be visited by a lawyer in detention. You have the right to have your attorney with you at any hearing before an immigration judge. You do not have the right to a government-appointed attorney for immigration proceedings, but immigration officials must give you a list of free or low-cost legal service providers. You have the right to hire your own immigration attorney.

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

**Q: If I am arrested for immigration violations, do I have the right to a hearing before an immigration judge to defend myself against deportation charges?**

**A:** Yes. In most cases only an immigration judge can order you deported. But if you waive your rights, sign something called a “Stipulated Removal Order,” or take “voluntary departure,” agreeing to leave the country, you could be deported without a hearing. There are some reasons why a person might not have a right to see an immigration judge, but even if you are told that this is your situation, you should speak with a lawyer immediately—immigration officers do not always know or tell you about exceptions that may apply to you; and you could have a right that you do not know about. Also, it is very important that you tell the officer (and contact a lawyer) immediately if you fear persecution or torture in your home country—you have additional rights if you have this fear, and you may be able to win the right to stay here.

**Q: Can I be detained while my immigration case is happening?**

**A:** In many cases, you will be detained, but most people are eligible to be released on bond or other reporting conditions. If you are denied release after you are arrested for an immigration violation, ask for a bond hearing before an immigration judge. In many cases, an immigration judge can order that you be released or that your bond be lowered.

**Q: Can I call my consulate if I am arrested?**

**A:** Yes. Non-citizens arrested in the U.S. have the right to call their consulate or to have the law enforcement officer tell the consulate of your arrest. Law enforcement must let your consulate visit or speak with you if consular officials decide to do so. Your consulate might help you find a lawyer or offer other help.

**Q: What happens if I give up my right to a hearing or leave the U.S. before the hearing is over?**

**A:** If you are deported, you could lose your eligibility for certain immigration benefits, and you could be barred from returning to the U.S. for a number of years or, in some cases, permanently. The same is true if you do not go to your hearing and the immigration judge rules against you in your absence. If the government allows you to do “voluntary departure,” you may avoid some of the problems that come with having a deporta-

tion order and you may have a better chance at having a future opportunity to return to the U.S., but you should discuss your case with a lawyer because even with voluntary departure, there can be bars to returning, and you may be eligible for relief in immigration court. You should always talk to an immigration lawyer before you decide to give up your right to a hearing.

**Q: What should I do if I want to contact immigration officials?**

**A:** Always try to talk to a lawyer before contacting immigration officials, even on the phone. Many immigration officials view “enforcement” as their primary job and will not explain all of your options to you, and you could have a problem with your immigration status without knowing it.

**Q: What if I am charged with a crime?**

**A:** Criminal convictions can make you deportable. You should always speak with your lawyer about the effect that a conviction or plea could have on your immigration status. Do not agree to a plea bargain without understanding if it could make you deportable or ineligible for relief or for citizenship.

## V. RIGHTS AT AIRPORTS AND OTHER PORTS OF ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES

**REMEMBER:** *It is illegal for law enforcement officers to perform any stops, searches, detentions or removals based solely on your race, national origin, religion, sex or ethnicity. However, Customs and Border Protection officials can stop you based on citizenship or travel itinerary at the border and search all bags.*

**Q: What types of officers could I encounter at the airport and at the border?**

**A:** You may encounter any of the full range of law enforcement officers listed above in Section I. In particular, at airports and at the border you are likely to encounter customs agents, immigration officers, and Transportation and Safety Administration (TSA) officers.

**Q: If I am entering the U.S. with valid travel papers, can law enforcement officers stop and search me?**

**A:** Yes. Customs officers have the right to stop, detain and search any person or item. But officers cannot select you for a personal search based on your race, gender, religious or ethnic background. If you are a non-citizen, you should carry your green card or other valid immigration status documents at all times.

**Q: Can law enforcement officers ask questions about my immigration status?**

**A:** Yes. At airports, law enforcement officers have the power to determine whether or not you have the right or permission to enter or return to the U.S.

**Q: If I am selected for a longer interview when I am coming into the United States, what can I do?**

**A:** If you are a U.S. citizen, you have the right to have an attorney present for any questioning. If you are a non-citizen, you generally do not have the right to an attorney when you have arrived at an airport or another port of entry and an immigration officer is inspecting you to decide whether or not you will be admitted. However, you do have the right to an attorney if the questions relate to anything other than your immigration status. You can ask an officer if he or she will allow you to



answer extended questioning at a later time, but the request may or may not be granted. If you are not a U.S. citizen and an officer says you cannot come into the U.S., but you fear that you will be persecuted or tortured if sent back to the country you came from, tell the officer about your fear and say that you want asylum.

**Q: Can law enforcement officers search my laptop files? If they do, can they make copies of the files, or information from my address book, papers, or cell phone contacts?**

**A:** This issue is contested right now. Generally, law enforcement officers can search your laptop files and make copies of information contained in the files. If such a search occurs, you should write down the name, badge number, and agency of the person who conducted the search. You should also file a complaint with that agency.

**Q: Can my bags or I be searched after going through metal detectors with no problem or after security sees that my bags do not contain a weapon?**

**A:** Yes. Even if the initial screen of your bags reveals nothing suspicious, the screeners have the authority to conduct a further search of you or your bags.

**Q: What if I wear a religious head covering and I am selected by airport security officials for additional screening?**

**A:** You have the right to wear religious head coverings. You should assert your right to wear your religious head covering if asked to remove it. The current policy (which is subject to change) relating to airport screeners and requiring removal of religious head coverings, such as a turban or hijab, is that if an alarm goes off when you walk through the metal detector the TSA officer may then use a hand-wand to determine if the alarm is coming from your religious head covering. If the alarm is coming from your religious head covering the TSA officer may want to pat-down or have you remove your religious head covering. You have the right to request that this pat-down or removal occur in a private area. If no alarm goes off when you go through the metal detector the TSA officer may nonetheless determine that additional screening is required for non-metallic items. Additional screening cannot be required on a discriminatory basis (because of race, gender, religion, national origin or ancestry). The TSA officer will ask you if he or she can pat-down your religious head covering. If you do not want the TSA officer to touch your religious head covering you must refuse and say that you would prefer to pat-down your own religious head covering. You will then be taken aside and a TSA officer will supervise you as you pat-down your religious head

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

covering. After the pat-down the TSA officer will rub your hands with a small cotton cloth and place it in a machine to test for chemical residue. If you pass this chemical residue test, you should be allowed to proceed to your flight. If the TSA officer insists on the removal of your religious head covering you have a right to ask that it be done in a private area.

**Q: What if I am selected for a strip search?**

**A:** A strip search at the border is not a routine search and must be supported by “reasonable suspicion,” and must be done in a private area.

**Q: If I am on an airplane, can an airline employee interrogate me or ask me to get off the plane?**

**A:** The pilot of an airplane has the right to refuse to fly a passenger if he or she believes the passenger is a threat to the safety of the flight. The pilot’s decision must be reasonable and based on observations of you, not stereotypes.

**Q: What do I do if I am questioned by law enforcement officers every time I travel by air and I believe I am on a “no-fly” or other “national security” list?**

**A:** If you believe you are mistakenly on a list you should contact the Transportation Security Administration and file an inquiry using the Traveler Redress Inquiry Process. The form is available at <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/customer/redress/index.shtm>. You should also fill out a complaint form with the ACLU at <http://www.aclu.org/noflycomplaint>. If you think there may be some legitimate reason for why you have been placed on a list, you should seek the advice of an attorney.

**Q: If I believe that customs or airport agents or airline employees singled me out because of my race, ethnicity, or religion or that I was mistreated in other ways, what information should I record during and after the incident?**

**A:** It is important to record the details of the incident while they are fresh in your mind. When documenting the sequence of events, be sure to note the airport, airline, flight number, the names and badge numbers of any law enforcement officers involved, information on any airline or airport personnel involved, questions asked in any interrogation, stated reason

for treatment, types of searches conducted, and length and conditions of detention. When possible, it is helpful to have a witness to the incident. If you have been mistreated or singled out at the airport based on your race, ethnicity or religion, please fill out the Passenger Profiling Complaint Form on the ACLU's web site at <http://www.aclu.org/airline-profiling>, and file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Transportation at <http://airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/DiscrimComplaintsContacts.htm>.

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## Other Resources:

### **DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**

[http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/structure/editorial\\_0373.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/structure/editorial_0373.shtm)

Investigates abuses of civil rights, civil liberties, and profiling on the basis of race, ethnicity, or religion by employees and officials of the Department of Homeland Security. You can submit your complaint via email to [civil.liberties@dhs.gov](mailto:civil.liberties@dhs.gov).

### **U.S. Department of Transportation's Aviation Consumer Protection Division**

<http://airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/problems.htm>

Handles complaints against the airline for mistreatment by air carrier personnel (check-in, gate staff, plane staff, pilot), including discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, or disability. You can submit a complaint via email to [airconsumer@ost.dot.gov](mailto:airconsumer@ost.dot.gov)—see the webpage for what information to include.

### **U.S. Department of Transportation's Aviation Consumer Protection Division Resource Page**

<http://airconsumer.ost.dot.gov/DiscrimComplaintsContacts.htm>

Provides information about how and where to file complaints about discriminatory treatment by air carrier personnel, federal security screeners (e.g., personnel screening and searching passengers and carry-on baggage at airport security checkpoints), airport personnel (e.g., airport police), FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Border Patrol, Customs and Border Protection, and National Guard.

## VI. CHARITABLE DONATIONS AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

**Q: Can I give to a charity organization without becoming a terror suspect?**

**A:** Yes. You should continue to give money to the causes you believe in, but you should be careful in choosing which charities to support. For helpful tips, see Muslim Advocates' guide on charitable giving—<http://www.muslimadvocates.org/docs/Donor-Guidance101106.pdf>.

**Q: Is it safe for me to practice my religion in religious institutions or public places?**

**A:** Yes. Worshipping as you want is your constitutional right. You have the right to go to a place of worship, attend and hear sermons and religious lectures, participate in community activities, and pray in public. While there have been news stories recently about people being unfairly singled out for doing these things, the law is on your side to protect you.

**Q: What else can I do to be prepared?**

**A:** You should keep informed about issues that matter to you by going to the library, reading the news, surfing the internet, and speaking out about what is important to you. In case of emergency, you should have a family plan—the number of a good friend or relative that anyone in the family can call if they need help, as well as the number of an attorney. If you are a non-citizen, remember to carry your immigration documents with you.

## REFERRAL CONTACT INFORMATION

**American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC):**  
(202) 244-2990  
<http://www.adc.org/>

**American Immigration Law Foundation (AILF):**  
(202) 742-5600  
<http://www.ailf.org/>

**American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA):**  
(800) 954-0254  
<http://www.aila.org/>

**Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF):**  
(212) 966-5932  
<https://www.aaldef.org/>

**Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR):**  
(202) 488-8787  
<http://www.cair.com/>

**Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF):**  
(213) 629-2512  
<http://www.maldef.org/>

**National Lawyers Guild (NLG):**  
(212) 679-5100  
<http://www.nlg.org/>

**National Immigration Law Center (NILC):**  
(213) 639-3900  
<http://www.nilc.org/>

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