

Do's and Don'ts If You Are Approached By The Police

- 1. Do** ask for a lawyer immediately upon being arrested or being placed into custody.
- 2. Do** stay calm and keep your emotions from getting the best of you. Be courteous even if the police officer is not. You will only give the officers more ammunition against you if you begin yelling, arguing or refusing reasonable directives.
- 3. Do** carry identification at all times and be prepared to produce it.
- 4. Do** keep your hands where the police officer can see them.
- 5. Do** take photographs, if you are injured, and seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- 6. Do** remember the officer's name and badge number as well as any witness information. Write down everything you remember about the encounter as soon as possible.
- 7. Don't** run.
- 8. Don't** touch the police officer.
- 9. Don't** make any statements about the incident without first having spoken to an attorney. Reiterate your right to remain silent, if necessary.

For more information contact your local NAACP Unit, which will be listed in your local telephone directory or contact the NAACP National Headquarters:

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Produced by the
NAACP Legal Department

The NAACP Real World Guide to Interacting with Law Enforcement

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While we must support effective law enforcement, we must also exercise our constitutional rights to ensure law enforcement works as it should – to protect all Americans regardless of race or ethnicity. This guide offers helpful suggestions on how to interact with law enforcement to reduce the probability of conflict.

In Your Car

1. Upon request, present your driver's license, registration and proof of insurance.
2. If you are suspected of drunk driving, and refuse to take a sobriety test the police may seize your driver's license.
3. You have the right not to consent to a search of your vehicle.
4. If the police state they have probable cause, they may begin to search your car without your consent. Do not interfere but clearly state your lack of consent.
5. If you are given a ticket, sign it. You can always fight the case in court later.

On the Street

1. A police officer may briefly stop you to ask identifying questions.

2. You are not required to answer any questions but failing to truthfully answer simple ones will make the police suspicious.
3. If requested, show your identification.
4. You are not required to consent to a search of yourself or your property.
5. If police have reasonable suspicion that you have a weapon or illegal substance, they may do a "pat-down" to check. Don't resist.
6. If you feel you have been unlawfully detained, remember the officer's badge number and all identifying information. Use your cell phone or other technology to record/photograph the interaction, if you can do so safely.

In Your Home

1. Absent a warrant or emergency circumstances, the police do not have the right to enter your home. If the police knock at your door, you have the right to deny them entrance.
2. If the police say they have a warrant, ask to see it before letting them enter your home.
3. If you are arrested in your home, the police can search you and the area around you, which usually means the room.

If You are Arrested

1. Immediately CLEARLY state your refusal to speak to the police and make a request for an attorney. Do not make any statements other than giving your name and address. You have the right to a court appointed attorney if you cannot afford one.
2. If you are under 18 years old, ask for your parents to be contacted immediately.
3. After you are arrested, you must be given the opportunity to make a local phone call. Know beforehand who you will call in a situation like this and contact them. The police may not listen in on this phone call.
4. You must be taken before a judge or magistrate within a day after being arrested.
5. If you are required to post bail after being arrested, you may request to have your bail lowered.
6. Do not make any decisions until you have spoken with your attorney. Do not allow the police to trick you into saying anything. **Remember, the police can lie to get you to confess to a crime.**

— NAACP Legal Department