

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

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A legal guide to help you take your first steps



## Black Justice Navigator Program

Empowering Black families through legal knowledge



Department of Justice  
Canada

Ministère de la Justice  
Canada

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# Understanding Your Rights With Law Enforcement



## Learn your rights

Everyone has basic rights when interacting with law enforcement. If the police stop you, you have the right to ask why you are being stopped. You can also ask whether you are free to leave. If you are not under arrest or legally detained, you may calmly walk away. You also have the right to remain silent when questioned by police. You can clearly say that you choose to remain silent and want to speak with a lawyer.

In most cases, police need a warrant, your consent, or a legal reason to search you or your belongings. You have the right to say that you do not consent to a search. If you believe your rights are being violated, try to remain calm and do not physically resist. Instead, try to remember important details such as the officer's name, badge number, location, and time.

Legal help may still be available even if you do not qualify for legal aid. Contact us and we'll connect you with free or low-cost legal advice and support.



### **What are my rights if the police stop me and ask questions?**

You have the right to ask why you are being stopped and whether you are free to leave. You also have the right to remain silent and can say, "I choose to remain silent and would like to speak with a lawyer."



### **Can the police search me or my belongings without permission?**

Police usually need a warrant, your consent, or a legal reason to search you or your belongings. You have the right to say clearly, "I do not consent to a search."



### **What should I do if I believe my rights are being violated?**

Stay calm and do not physically resist, even if you believe the situation is unfair. Try to remember or write down details such as the officer's name, badge number, location, and time so you can report it later.

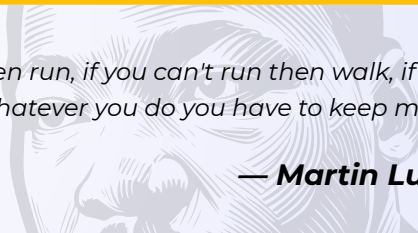


### **Can I find affordable legal help quickly if I am arrested or charged?**

Yes! You can ask the police or court to help you contact duty counsel, who provide free legal advice to people in custody or at court. Contact us at our address, email or phone number below and we'll connect you with lawyers who offer low-cost or pro bono services.

*"If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward."*

**— Martin Luther King Jr.**





## Do I have to show ID if the police ask for it?

In most situations, you do not have to provide ID unless you are driving, under arrest, or being issued a ticket. You can ask: “Am I required by law to provide identification?”



## What are my rights if I am arrested or detained?

You have the right to be told why you are being arrested or detained. You also have the right to remain silent and to speak with a lawyer without delay.



## Can the police enter my home without permission?

Police usually need a warrant to enter your home. However, they may enter without one in urgent situations, such as to prevent harm or when in “hot pursuit” of a suspect.



## Can I record my interaction with the police?

Yes. You are generally allowed to record police in public spaces as long as you do not interfere with their duties. Keep a safe distance and remain respectful.



## Can I have access to a lawyer if I do not qualify for legal aid?

**Yes!** Contact us at our address, email or phone number below and we'll refer you to organizations or lawyers that provide low-cost legal advice or offer payment plans or brief consultations at reduced rates.



You aren't alone.  
**CONTACT US**



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