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.
You should not lie to a police officer.
Ask for a lawyer immediately upon your 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 the police department's internal affairs division or civilian complaint board, or call the ACLU hotline, 1-877-6-PROFILE.

Keep this card handy! If you have a police encounter, you can protect yourself.

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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 badmouth a police officer.
2. You don't have to answer any questions, with one important exception: the police may ask for your name, address, and date of birth if you have been properly detained, and you can be arrested in Ohio for refusing to give this information. If you reasonably fear that this information may incriminate you, you can claim the right to remain silent, which may be a defense in case you are arrested anyway.
3. You should never 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.

IF YOU'RE STOPPED FOR QUESTIONING

1. You are required to provide your name, address, and date of birth if a law enforcement officer asks. You may refuse to answer any additional questions.
2. Police may "pat-down" your clothing if they suspect you are carrying a concealed weapon. You may not physically resist, but you should clearly state that you do not consent to any search.
3. Ask if you are under arrest. If you are, you have a right to know why.
4. Don't badmouth a police officer or run away, even if you believe what is happening is unreasonable. This could lead to your arrest.

IF YOU'RE STOPPED IN YOUR CAR

1. If you're stopped in a car, you must show the officer your driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance upon request.
2. Your car can be searched without a warrant if the police have reason to believe that criminal activity is likely taking place, you have been involved in a crime, or you have evidence of a crime in your car. To protect yourself later, you should make clear that you do not consent to a search.
3. Police may frisk anyone in the car they believe may be armed.
4. If the stop leads to your arrest, the police may search the area of your vehicle that is within your reach at the time and officers may search your vehicle if they believe it contains evidence related to your arrest.
5. If you're given a ticket, you should sign it; otherwise you can be arrested. You can object later in court.
6. If you're suspected of drunk driving (DUI), the police may require you to take a physical or chemical test. If you refuse, your driver's license will be suspended immediately. If you take the test and are over the limit, your license will be suspended immediately. You may appeal the license suspension later in court. If you have a prior DUI and refuse a test, you may face increased penalties if convicted.

IF YOU'RE ARRESTED OR TAKEN TO A POLICE STATION

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, address, and date of birth, if requested. Don't give any explanations, excuses or stories. You can make your defense later in court, based on what you and a 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 a lawyer can be contacted. Don't say anything without a lawyer.
3. 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 any calls made between you and a lawyer.
4. You must be taken before a judge on the next court day after arrest. Sometimes you can be released without bail or have bail lowered. Ask your lawyer about this possibility.
5. Do not make any decisions in your case until you have talked with a lawyer.

IN YOUR HOME

1. If the police ask to enter your home, you don't have to admit them unless they have a warrant signed by a judge.
2. However, in some emergency situations (like if a person is screaming for help inside or the police are chasing someone who runs into your house) officers are allowed to enter and search your home without a warrant.
3. If you are arrested, the police can search you and the area close by, which usually means just the room you are in.

We all recognize the need for effective law enforcement, but we should also understand our own rights and responsibilities, especially in our relationships with the police. Everyone, including minors, has the right to courteous and respectful police treatment. If your rights are violated, don't try to deal with the situation at the scene. You can talk to a lawyer afterwards, or file a complaint with the Internal Affairs or Civilian Complaint Board.

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