

# TAMIR RICE SAFETY HANDBOOK

Being stopped by police is a stressful experience that can go bad quickly. In any situation you can only control one thing—your own actions. Even when you do everything right, things can still go wrong. These tips can help you protect yourself.

Know that police can lie and ask trick questions. If they tell you they already talked to your friend, or that you won't be arrested if you talk, they may be lying.

**ACLU**

Ohio

# 1. IF YOU'RE STOPPED BY THE POLICE

## ON THE STREET OR AT SCHOOL



- **Stay calm.** Don't run. Don't argue or resist. Keep your hands where police can see them.
- **Ask if you're free to leave.** If the answer is yes, calmly and silently walk away from the officer.
- **If the officer puts their hands on you, don't resist.**
- **You have the right to remain silent.** That means you do not have to answer the officer's questions. If you do, anything you say could get you in trouble later.

## IN YOUR CAR

- **Stop the car in a safe place as quickly as possible.** Turn off the car, turn on the internal light, open the window part way, and place your hands on the wheel.
- **When asked, show police your driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance.**

- **You can ask the officer if you can call your parent.** If they say yes, ask the officer if you can take out your cell phone. Do not reach for it until they say yes.
- **If an officer asks to look inside your car you can refuse.** But if police believe your car contains evidence of a crime, they can search it without your consent.
- **Both drivers and passengers have the right to remain silent.** If you're a passenger, you can ask if you're free to leave. If yes, silently leave.
- **If the officer issues you a ticket, you must sign it.** Otherwise, do not sign anything.

## 2. IF POLICE ASK YOU QUESTIONS

- **If police ask you to identify yourself, you must provide your name, date of birth, and address.** If you are driving a car, you must show your driver's license, registration, and insurance.



- **Besides telling police this information, you do not have to answer other questions.** Tell the officer you want to have a lawyer or parent/guardian (or both) with you before you answer questions.
- **You also have the right to refuse to write or sign a statement.** But if you do give a statement, anything you say, write, or sign can be used against you.

### 3. IF POLICE WANT TO SEARCH YOU

- **You can ask the officer if you can call your parent.** If they say yes, ask the officer if you can take out your cell phone. Do not reach for it until they say yes.
- **You can refuse to give your consent (agree) to be searched by the police.** State calmly and clearly that you do not consent (agree). This may not stop the search, but this is the best way to protect your rights if you end up in court.



- **However, police may pat down your clothing if they suspect a weapon.**
- **Don't consent to a phone search; police need a warrant to search your phone.**
- **If the officer begins searching you or your belongings (even if you refused consent), do not resist. Calmly say you do not consent.**

## **4. IF POLICE BEGIN TO ARREST YOU**

- **Stay calm.** Do not resist, even if you feel you did nothing wrong.
- **Do not fight or flee from an officer who is arresting you,** because that could lead to the officer hurting you or pressing charges against you.
- **Say you wish to remain silent, and ask for a lawyer immediately.**
- **Before police question you, you have the right to have your parent**



**and/or a lawyer with you.** If you request your parent and/or a lawyer, the officer must stop questioning you until your parent and/or the lawyer arrives. If the officer continues to ask questions, you must continue to remain silent and ask for a parent/lawyer.

## **IF POLICE COME TO YOUR HOME**

- You do not have to let police into your home unless they have a warrant that is signed by a judge. (An arrest warrant is a paper that allows police to enter the home of the person listed on the warrant if they believe the person is inside.)
- If police say they have a warrant, ask them to show you the warrant.
- Officers can only search the areas and for the items listed on the warrant.
- Even if officers have a warrant, you may remain silent. If you choose to speak, step outside and close the door. Anything you say can be used against you.

**SROs:** Remember, you should still be very careful when talking with School Resource Officers (SROs). Even though SROs have a different name, sometimes they share information with the police or even have all the same powers as police do.

## **CAN TEACHERS SEARCH MY STUFF?**

**Phone or backpack?** Yes, but only under certain circumstances: if the school believes you are violating a law or school rule.

**Lockers?** Yes, almost always, since lockers are usually considered school property.

**FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS:** If the police want to question your child—even if the child has been arrested—your family has the right to get help from a lawyer before you talk to police. If your family cannot afford a lawyer, the court will get you one for free.

To find a lawyer, you can contact your local bar association to find out if they offer a lawyer referral service. Don't say anything, sign anything, or make any decisions without a lawyer present.



*In loving memory of Jamir Rice*



*Tajai Rice, 2016*

*This information is not intended as legal advice.  
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