

# Your Life, Your Rights

## Chapter 10:

# Being Stopped by Police

Easy Read Guidebook



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*This easy read guidebook has been designed using images from Flaticon.com*

# How to Use This Guidebook



This Guidebook is about the rights you have when you work with law enforcement.



Law enforcement is made up of people whose job is to carry out laws, like police officers.



You may come across police officers if you call for help or if they stop you.



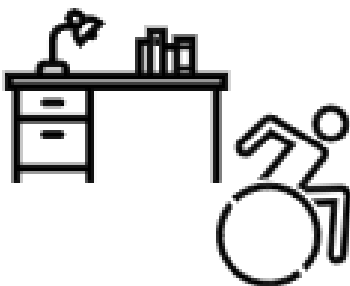
This Guidebook will explain what your rights are and how you can protect them.



Some of this information may make you sad or upset.



Stop reading this guidebook and ask for support if you start to feel upset.



You do not have to read this guidebook all at once.



It is okay to take breaks as you read this guidebook.

# Part 1: Being Stopped by Police



Every person living in America has rights no matter if they are a citizen or not.



This is true no matter the situation a person is in, including ones that involve police.



Working with police can be stressful and make people nervous.



It may be helpful in these situations to know what your rights are.

# Your rights when stopped by police:



**1. Get info in ways you understand and can use.**



Police should communicate with you in ways that work best for you.



This may include communication aids, writing a message down, and more.



This is part of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



This helps make sure you understand info shared with you so you can get the help you may need.



It is important to note that there may be some situations when this may not happen.



Police may not do this if it would cost them too much money, be too hard to do, or changes the service.



To learn more about police and the ADA, visit [ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov).



## 2. Be given accommodations if you need them.



Accommodations are changes to a system so it is open to more people that can use it.



This can be changes that make it easier to access physical spaces, like buildings.



This can also be changes to programs or services so more people can access them.



The [ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov) website shares examples of accommodations police should offer, such as:



- Talking slow and giving instructions about what they want you to do.



- For someone who uses sign language, putting handcuffs in front instead of behind their back.



- Getting you to a hospital if you need it, including for mental health care.



Another example of an accommodation is an interpreter.



An interpreter helps two or more people who speak a different language talk to each other.



You have the right to a trained, certified interpreter if you need one.



The interpreter should not be one of your friends, family members, or a police officer.



### 3. Stay quiet even if you are asked questions.



This is known as your “right to remain silent.”



Though you must give the police your name if they ask, you do not have to answer other questions.



You do not have to answer questions like where you are going or what you are doing.



You also do not have to answer questions like where you live or where you are from.



You must let the police know if you choose to stay silent.



For example, you can tell the police “I am going to use my right to remain silent.”



Your right to remain silent protects you from saying things that may be held against you.



#### **4. Say no to having yourself or your things searched.**



This means you do not give the police permission to search your body, things, car, or home.



The police may want to do this search to check if you have a weapon.



If you do not want police to do this, then you must tell them “no, I do not agree to a search.”



The police may still search your body for a weapon by patting you down.



Sometimes they may still search your things even if you say no.



If this happens, you may not have a choice but to let the police do the search.



Once the situation ends, you can file a complaint with the police department if you want to.



**5. Get a lawyer even if you can not afford one.**



You have the right to a lawyer if you are arrested for some reason.



You must ask for a lawyer right away if this happens.



If you can't afford a lawyer, then you can get a government-appointed lawyer.



A government-appointed lawyer is a lawyer the court offers you that you do not have to pay.



It is best not to say or sign anything until you talk to your lawyer.



When you talk to your lawyer, the police can't listen to what you are talking about.



Your lawyer's job is to try to get you out of legal trouble.



**6. Not sign anything without your lawyer there.**



Your lawyer will guide you through legal problems.



Part of their job is to give you advice and help you make choices that can get you out of trouble.



Signing things that you have not talked to your lawyer about first can result in big problems.

## EXAMPLE

For example, you may make a mistake and sign a piece of paper that says you confess to crimes that you didn't commit.



This could lead to the court finding you guilty of crimes you didn't do.



If this were to happen, the court could order you to pay money or even go to jail for the crimes.



Always talk to your lawyer before you sign anything.



**7. Record the meeting you have with the officer.**



You have the right to record things in public places.



You can record a conversation you are having on the phone or in-person.



If you are in private, at least one other person in the conversation must agree to the recording.



**8. Make a phone call if you are arrested.**



You can call someone to help you if you are arrested.



The police can listen to your phone call if you call anyone other than a lawyer.



The police cannot listen to your phone call if you call a lawyer.



## 9. File a complaint for broken rights and bad treatment.



Your complaint should be a detailed story about what you remember from the event.



It should share what happened, who the police officers where, and if other people saw the event.



You can make the complaint at the police department.

# Part 2: Advocating For Fair Treatment



It is important to know what your rights are when you meet with police.



Knowing your rights is the first step to advocate for yourself.



**Advocating** for yourself means to stick up for yourself.



Advocating for yourself brings you closer to living the life you choose.

# Part 3: Protecting Your Rights



You are the best person to protect your voting rights



To learn more, or to get help, contact the [American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\) of Rhode Island](#).



You can also get legal help from places like [Disability Rights Rhode Island](#).

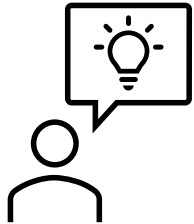


Remember, you have the right to fair treatment and to live your best life.

# Part 4: Resources



In this section you will find a list of websites that were used to make this guidebook.



You can explore these websites to learn more about your rights.



There is always more to learn about your rights.



Knowing your rights helps you protect them better.

# List of websites to learn more:

## 1. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

- **Webpage:** [Know Your Rights: Get a Court Interpreter](#)
- **Summary:** Visit this webpage for details about your right to an interpreter.

## 2. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

- **Webpage:** [Know Your Rights: Stopped by Police](#)
- **Summary:** This webpage shares info about your rights if you are stopped by police. The rights you have in five different situations are explained.

## 3. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Rhode Island

- **Webpage:** [Know Your Rights: What to do if You're Stopped by Police, Immigration or the FBI](#)
- **Summary:** This webpage shares your rights when stopped by police. You will learn what your rights are if you are stopped in different situations.

## 4. Disability Rights California

- **Webpage:** [Your Rights! People with Disabilities and Law Enforcement](#)
- **Summary:** Even though this website is for a law office in California, it has helpful information. It shares your right to accommodations, and what you can do if police stop you. It also shares your rights if someone calls the police for you.

## 5. Innocence Project

- **Webpage:** [Know Your Rights: What to Do if You Have a Disability and Are Questioned by Police](#)
- **Summary:** This webpage shares info about your rights if the police question you. It lists 6 rights you have.

## 6. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

- **Webpage:** [Know Your Rights](#)
- **Summary:** Visit this webpage for a list of your rights, including if you encounter police. The webpage also shares tips on how to stay safe during encounters with police.

## 7. Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

- **Webpage:** [Rhode Island: Reporter's Recording Guide](#)
- **Summary:** Visit this webpage for details about laws on recording.

## 8. RI Public Defender

- **Webpage:** [Representation: Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- **Summary:** Visit this webpage to learn about legal services. The webpage shares details about two types of lawyers people can work with if they are arrested.

## 9. U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (ADA.gov)

- **Webpage:** [Criminal Justice](#)
- **Summary:** This webpage gives a summary on criminal justice agencies and the ADA. It shares ways these agencies must follow the ADA. Criminal justice agencies include police.

## 10. U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (ADA.gov)

- **Webpage:** [Commonly Asked Questions About the ADA and Law Enforcement](#)
- **Summary:** This webpage shares examples about accommodations by police. The examples include times accommodations are not given but should be. The examples also include types of accommodations given.

## 11. YouTube: American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

- **Webpage:** [Marlee Matlin On Deaf And Police Interaction](#)
- **Summary:** Visit this webpage for a video on what to do if you come across the police. The video talks about your rights. It also shares tips on how to stay safe. The video is for everyone, but it shares special tips for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

# Bonus websites to learn more:

## 1. Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)

- **Webpage:** [What is Police Violence? A plain language booklet about anti-Black racism, police violence, and what you can do to stop it](#)
- **Summary:** Visit this link for a plain language booklet about police violence and how to stop it.

## 2. Police Brutality Center

- **Webpage:** [Interacting With Police If You Have a Disability](#)
- **Summary:** Visit this webpage for an overview about interacting with the police. The webpage shares tips on what people with disabilities can do to stay safe. It also shares what police can do to work with people with disabilities.