

go beyond a frisk to search your bags, pockets, or underclothes.

- **You should** repeat, **“I don’t consent to this search,”** but to stay safe and avoid escalating the situation, you should physically cooperate with the officers.

IF YOUR RIGHTS ARE VIOLATED

- **Ask for, and write down,** the officer’s name and badge number. Other helpful information includes: the officer’s patrol car number, the name and phone numbers of any bystanders, and any pictures of or medical records about any injuries you suffer.
- **File a complaint** with the D.C. Office of Police Complaints (OPC). Its hotline number is (866) 588-

0569. The complaint is due to OPC within **90 days** of the incident.

REMEMBER

- **When interacting with the police,** you shouldn’t lie, physically resist, run away, or threaten to file a complaint. These types of acts could escalate the situation and/or result in your arrest. You can’t fight police misconduct on the street: it’s safer to comply and challenge the officer’s actions later.

intake@acludc.org
(202) 601-4269
www.acludc.org

Thanks to:

Black Lives Matter DC
Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100)
#KeepDC4Me
Law 4 Black Lives DC
Stop Police Terror Project DC
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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:



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IF POLICE APPROACH AND QUESTION YOU

- **Police can** lawfully ask you questions if you're in a public place. You don't have to answer their questions.
- **You should ask "am I free to leave?"** If the officer says yes, you can walk away calmly. If the officer says no, ask "why" but don't leave.

IF POLICE STOP YOU

- **What is a "stop"?** When police act in a way that would make a reasonable person feel not free to leave, for example, by ordering you to stop or physically halting you, that is considered a "stop" under the Fourth Amendment.

- **To clarify** whether you are being questioned, stopped, or arrested, ask "**am I free to go?**" and, if the officer says no, ask "**am I under arrest?**"
- **Is the stop legal?** Police can stop you only if they have "reasonable suspicion" that you're involved in a crime. Reasonable suspicion must be based on specific facts. For example, police can stop you if you match the description of someone who just committed a crime. Police cannot stop you for a vague reason (because you just "look suspicious") or for a biased reason (because you are, for example, Black or transgender).
- **Police can ask questions.** They even can lie to extract information. You don't have to answer their questions and can say "**I don't**

want to talk to you" or "**I don't want to answer that.**"

- **If police ask for ID:** MPD officers cannot force you to show ID (except for a driver's license if you're stopped while driving). However, federal immigration officers can force you to show immigration documents and disclose your immigration status.
- **If police ask to search or take a look at your person or belongings,** you don't have to consent and you should say, "**I don't consent to this search.**" Note that, even if you refuse to consent, officers may still have authority to search you (see next section).
- **If you are arrested,** ask to speak with a lawyer.

IF POLICE FRISK YOU

- **A frisk** occurs when the police pat or sweep the outside of someone's clothes to check if they have weapons.
- **Police can** lawfully "frisk" you if you consent, or even without your consent if they have "reasonable suspicion" (that is, a specific, fact-based reason for believing) that you have a weapon.
- **Police can't** reach into your pockets and clothes or squeeze your body or pocket contents while frisking, unless they feel something like a weapon, or something else that is obviously illegal, based solely on their touch. Without your consent or "probable cause" that you have committed a crime, police can't