

## **Protesters' Rights**

The First Amendment protects your right to assemble and express your views through protest. However, police and other government officials are allowed to place certain narrow restrictions on the exercise of speech rights. Make sure you're prepared by brushing up on your rights before heading out into the streets.

## **I was stopped by the police while protesting**

### **Your rights**

- Stay calm. Make sure to keep your hands visible. Don't argue, resist, or obstruct the police, even if you believe they are violating your rights. Point out that you are not disrupting anyone else's activity and that the First Amendment protects your actions.
- Ask if you are free to leave. If the officer says yes, calmly walk away.
- If you are under arrest, you have a right to ask why. Otherwise, say you wish to remain silent and ask for a lawyer immediately. Don't say anything or sign anything without a lawyer.
- You have the right to make a local phone call, and if you're calling your lawyer, police are not allowed to listen.
- You never have to consent to a search of yourself or your belongings. If you do explicitly consent, it can affect you later in court.
- Police may "pat down" your clothing if they suspect you have a weapon and may search you after an arrest.
- Police officers may not confiscate or demand to view your photographs or video without a warrant, nor may they delete data under any circumstances. However, they may order citizens to cease activities that are truly interfering with legitimate law enforcement operations.

### **What to do if you believe your rights have been violated**

- When you can, write down everything you remember, including the officers' badge and patrol car numbers and the agency they work for.
- Get contact information for witnesses.
- Take photographs of any injuries.

- Once you have all of this information, you can file a written complaint with the agency's internal affairs division or civilian complaint board.

<https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/protesters-rights/#i-was-stopped-by-the-police-while-protesting>

If **arrested** and don't have an attorney, please reach out to **First Defense**. They are available 24 hours a 7 days a week.

<https://www.first-defense.org/community/>