

TALKING WITH POLICE

How people with disabilities
can stay safe and get the
accommodations they need


Presented by *The Arc*
Northern Virginia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEtyMy8Qk8Q>

What to do if stopped by a police officer

3 Don'ts:

- Don't run
- Don't fight
- Don't argue

3 Do's:

- Stay calm when police approach or talk with you,
- Stay where you are
- Do exactly what the police tells you to



What to do if stopped by a police officer

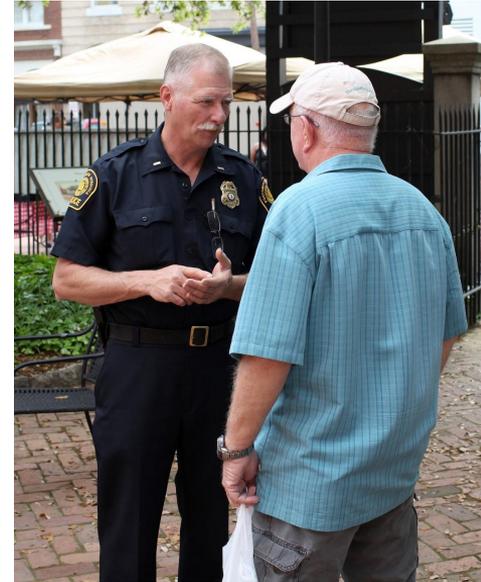
Remember follow directions.

No hands in pockets.

Say, "I have a disability" or "I'm disabled" or "I'm autistic"

Ask for an accommodation, such as:

- Could you please talk slowly?
- Could you give me one instruction at a time?
- Could write things down?
- Can I call my emergency contact?
- Can my support person help me answer questions?





I HAVE A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY

I may have difficulty understanding and following your directions, or may become unable to respond. I may become physically agitated if you prompt me verbally, touch me, or move too close to me. I am not intentionally refusing to cooperate.

I may need your assistance.

Please see the back of this card.

Fold Here

HOLDER INFO	First and Last Name
	123 Main Street, Anytown, VA 12345
	DOB: MM / DD / YYYY

Emergency Contact: Contact Name

Phone: (xxx) yyy-zzzz

Additional Information:

Provide any information that a first responder may need when interacting with you or your loved one with a disability.

Sample
Card to
consider
carrying

People with disabilities have ADA rights when talking to the police to make sure things are fair and easy to understand.

1. Right to an interpreter

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can have a sign language interpreter when the police ask you questions.



2. Right to accessible documents

If you have trouble seeing or are blind, you have the right to get papers in a way you can read them, like in Braille or large print.

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3. Right to communication aids

You can use tools like communication boards or speech-to-text devices when talking to the police.



4. Right to reasonable accommodations

Laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) make sure the police give people with disabilities the help they need to be part of the legal process. This means you can get extra time or support, during interviews or questioning.

<https://innocenceproject.org/know-your-rights-disability-police-interrogation/>

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5 Right to remain silent

You have the right to stay quiet and not answer questions that could get you in trouble. This right is protected by law. To use this right, you must clearly tell the police, like saying, **“I want to stay silent.”**

6. Right to a lawyer

You have the right to have a lawyer with you when the police are asking you questions. A lawyer helps protect your rights and makes sure everything is done the right way. If you ask for a lawyer, the police must stop asking you questions until the lawyer arrives. You should clearly say something like, **“I want to talk to a lawyer”** to make sure your rights are protected.

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The police might not always remind you of your right to stay silent or have a lawyer (these are called your “Miranda” rights). If you’ve already agreed to talk, you can still change your mind at any time and ask for a lawyer or stay silent.



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If you are stopped for questioning, DO...

- DO ask **“Am I free to go?”** If they say ‘yes,’ leave calmly. If they say ‘no,’ DO ask to know why by saying, “Can you tell me why you are stopping me?”
- DO exercise your right to remain silent. Say **“I want to remain silent.”** You cannot be arrested or detained for refusing to answer questions. But it can look suspicious to the police if you answer questions and then suddenly stop. Make it your practice to always remain silent.
- DO make sure the officer knows you do not agree to be searched (they might search you anyway, but make your opposition known). Say **“I do not consent to a search.”**
- DO, if you are being given a ticket, give your name and birth date, and sign the ticket. If you don’t, you may be arrested.

This information is from <https://www.aclunc.org/home>

If you are stopped for questioning, DON'T...

- DON'T disrespect a police officer. Although you have a constitutional right to do so, it could lead to your arrest.
- DON'T run away or physically resist a “pat-down” or search. Say **“I do not consent to a search.”**
- DON'T lie. Tell the police you don't want to talk to them. Say **“I want to remain silent.”**
- DON'T forget that police are legally allowed to lie, intimidate, and bluff.
- DON'T discuss your citizenship or immigration status with anyone other than your lawyer.

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