

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE STOPPED BY THE POLICE

- Be **polite and respectful**. Never bad-mouth a police officer.
- Stay **calm** and **in** control of your words, body language and emotions.
- **Don't get into an argument** with the police.
- Remember, **anything you say or do** can be used against you.
- **Keep your hands** where police can see them.
- **Don't run. Don't touch** any police officer.
- **Don't resist** even if you believe you are innocent.
- **Don't complain** on the scene or tell the police they are wrong or that you are going to file a complaint.
- **Do not make any statements** regarding the incident.
- **Ask for a lawyer** immediately upon your arrest.
- Remember **officers' badge and patrol car numbers**.
- **Write down everything** you remember ASAP.
- Try to find **witnesses** and their names and phone numbers.
- If you are injured, **take photographs of the injuries** as soon as possible, but make sure you **seek medical attention first**.
- If you feel your rights have been violated, **file a written complaint** with police department's internal affairs division.

IF YOU ARE STOPPED IN YOUR CAR:

1. Upon request, show them your driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance. In certain cases, your car can be searched without a warrant as long as the police have probable cause. To protect yourself later, you should make it clear that you do not consent to a search. It is not lawful for police to arrest you simply for refusing to consent to a search.
2. If you are given a ticket, you should sign it; otherwise, you can be arrested. You can always fight the case in court later.
3. If you are suspected of drunk driving (DWI) and refuse to take a blood, urine or breath test, your driver's license may be suspended.

IF YOU ARE STOPPED FOR QUESTIONING:

1. It's not a crime to refuse to answer questions, but refusing to answer can make the police suspicious about you. You can't be arrested merely for refusing to identify yourself on the street.
2. Police may "pat-down" your clothing if they suspect a concealed weapon. Don't physically resist, but make it clear that you don't consent to any further search.
3. Ask if you are under arrest. If you are, you have a right to know why.
4. Don't bad-mouth the police officer or run away, even if you believe what is happening is unreasonable. **That** could lead to your arrest.

IF YOU ARE ARRESTED OR TAKEN TO A POLICE STATION:

1. You have the right to remain silent and to talk to a lawyer before you talk to the police. Tell the police nothing except your name and address. Don't give any explanations, excuses or stories. You can make your defense later, in court, based on what you and your lawyer decide is best.
2. Ask to see a lawyer immediately. If you can't pay for a lawyer, you have a right to a free one, and should ask the police how the lawyer can be contacted. **Don't say anything without a lawyer.**
3. Within a reasonable time after your arrest, or booking, you have the right to make a local phone call: to a lawyer, bail bondsman, a relative or any other person. The police may not listen to the call to the lawyer.

Prepared by the Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights Training Component.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: Jaribu Hill, 662-334-1122