

# Know Your Rights & Safety Tips

## Encounters With Police & Federal Agents in Washington, D.C.

### ■ Washington D.C Safety Guidance About Federal Law Enforcement

Following a presidential order, federal law enforcement agencies and the National Guard have increased their presence in Washington, D.C. This means that DC Police are operating under federal authority, and there is a visible presence of law enforcement officers and federal agents across the city. While the Marriott Marquis and other hotels are private properties, we want our community to be informed and alert, not fearful, while they are in the city.

The NMAC team is closely monitoring and rapidly gathering information as the situation evolves. You can view and download our comprehensive and bilingual safety guidance for USCHA participants. Your safety and wellbeing are our priority.

***For the latest information and updates, please check NMAC's USCHA Program App.***

*The official USCHA app will be available for download starting August 20. It will be continuously updated and is the best source for real-time information, session locations, and alerts. Search "2025USCHA" in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.*



### ■ Before Leaving Your Hotel:

- Carry at least one form of government ID with a photo with you: driver's license, Green Card, passport etc. (Note: you are not required to surrender any documents to a law enforcement officer)
- Carry your phone and a charger so you can call if you need assistance
- Let at least one person at the conference know your whereabouts and check in with them when you return

### ■ Your Basic Rights

- **You can ask officers to identify themselves.**  
Say: "Officer, may I see your badge or ID?"  
Police and federal agents carry official credentials. They may not always show them, but asking helps you document the encounter.
- **You have the right to remain silent.**  
Say: "I wish to remain silent and want to speak to a lawyer."  
You cannot be punished for refusing to answer questions.
- **You have the right to refuse a search.**  
Say: "I do not consent to this search."
- **You have the right to a lawyer if arrested.**  
Ask for one immediately and do not sign or agree to anything without legal help.
- **You, someone with you, or even someone walking by have the right to record police in public spaces**  
as long as you do not interfere with the interaction and keep a safe distance.

### ■ If You Are Stopped and/or Questioned

- Stay calm. Keep your hands where officers can see them.
- Ask: "Am I free to go?"
  - If yes, walk away calmly and silently.
  - If no, ask: "Am I under arrest? For what charge?"

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- You generally do not have to show ID to MPD unless you are driving.
  - Federal officers may require non-citizens to show proof of lawful status.

### ■ If Searched

- Say: *"I do not consent to this search."*
- Do not physically resist as this can lead to arrest.
- Police may "pat down" clothing if they suspect you have a weapon.
- Remember the officer's name, badge number, and any witnesses.

### ■ If Arrested

- Say: *"I wish to remain silent. I want a lawyer."*
- Give only your name and address if asked.
- Do not sign anything you do not understand.
- You have the right to make a local phone call; calls to lawyers cannot be monitored.
- If you are not a U.S. citizen, do not discuss your immigration status with anyone except your lawyer.

### ■ Safety Tips

- Do not lie, run, physically resist, or provide false documents.
- Do not threaten to file a complaint during the encounter, it can escalate the situation.
- Keep important documents and emergency contacts with a trusted friend or family member.
- If possible, record the encounter from a safe distance.

### ■ Traffic Stops

- Pull over safely, turn off your car, and keep your hands on the wheel.
- Show driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance if asked.
- You can refuse consent to search your car. Police may search without consent only if they believe it contains evidence of a crime.
- Both drivers and passengers have the right to remain silent.

### ■ If Your Rights Are Violated

- Ask for, and write down, the officer's name and badge number.
- Other helpful information: patrol car number, names and contact info of any witnesses, photos of injuries, and copies of medical records.
- Take photos of any injuries and keep all paperwork.
- File a complaint with the **D.C. Office of Police Complaints** within 90 days: **(866) 588-0569** or [policecomplaints.dc.gov](https://policecomplaints.dc.gov).
- Remember: You cannot fight police misconduct on the street, it's safer to comply and challenge it later.

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### ■ Quick Guide: What to Say

- "I wish to remain silent and want to speak to a lawyer."
- "I do not consent to this search."
- "Am I free to go?"
- "Am I under arrest? For what charge?"

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#### Contact Us:

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