

Know Your Rights

Here's what everyone should understand—and share—about what to do if ICE appears at your door, your workplace, or stops you on the road.

1. Stay calm and protect your words

You do not have to answer questions about your birthplace, citizenship, or immigration status. Say clearly and calmly:

"I am exercising my right to remain silent."

Do not argue, run, or physically resist. If officers come close or use force, repeat calmly:

"I am not resisting."

ICE agents wear body cameras, so your calm and clear statements become part of the record. If you are injured or hurt in any way, say it out loud:

"I am hurt."

This ensures that your condition is documented for their body cams and any recordings from bystanders.

2. State your name clearly

Say your full name so witnesses or anyone recording know exactly who you are. This simple act helps protect you and creates accountability in the moment.

3. Ask if you are free to leave

If agents approach, calmly ask:

"Am I free to leave?"

If they say yes, walk away safely. If they say no, you are being detained—ask for the reason but stay silent after that. Anything you say can be used against you, even if you are a U.S. citizen.

4. Do not consent to searches

Unless ICE shows a judicial warrant signed by a judge or clear probable cause of a crime, say:

"I do not consent to a search."

Keep your door closed. Ask agents to slip their warrant under the door or show it through a window. Most ICE paperwork is an administrative warrant, which does not give agents authority to enter your home—only a judicial warrant signed by a judge does.

5. In vehicles and workplaces

In a vehicle: Drivers must share license and insurance but do not have to answer questions about immigration status, citizenship, or birthplace. Passengers do not need to speak or provide identification.

At work: ICE can only access public areas. To enter private employee spaces, they need a judicial warrant or the employer's permission.

6. If you witness an ICE encounter

The best way to help is to record, not interfere. Filming is legal under the First Amendment as long as you do not obstruct the agents' actions. From a safe distance:

Record faces, vehicle numbers, and badge names.

Ask calmly, "Can you state your name for the record?"

Note the time, date, and location for documentation.

Avoid physical involvement—interference could escalate the risk for everyone. Your footage and account can later provide crucial evidence for accountability and legal action.

7. If detained or witness abuse

If detained, request a lawyer immediately and refuse to sign anything without legal advice. If you are a U.S. citizen detained in error, you may pursue a civil claim for damages under the Federal Tort Claims Act.

If you witness a violation, document the incident and reach out to trusted groups such as the ACLU of Texas, immigrant rights coalitions, or local civil rights attorneys who can assist victims in filing official complaints.

8. A message for our communities

We must continue to protect one another with calm courage. Document what you see, tell the truth, and help those who cannot speak for themselves—without endangering yourself or them. Knowledge, unity, and accountability are our strongest defenses.