

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: What You Can Do as a Bystander During Immigration Enforcement Actions

This page explains some actions you can take as a bystander if you see someone being detained by immigration agents (ICE). It's easy to freeze in the moment, especially if the officers are acting quickly or aggressively. Consider talking about these action items with a trusted friend or family member, and practice what you can say out loud before you need to use this information.

IF YOU WITNESS SOMEONE BEING DETAINED BY IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS

- If you have a smartphone, record video of the interaction.
- Try to record any identifying information, like:
 - Agency vests
 - Badge numbers
 - Car make and model
 - Car license plates
- If officers ask you to step back, do step back, but you can keep recording video. You have a First Amendment right to record law enforcement actions in public spaces.
- Call a deportation defense hotline to alert local advocates of ICE activity — RI, MA, and CT hotline numbers are listed on the other side of this page. Be ready to share specific information:
 - **Where** exactly are the agents?
 - **How many** immigration or law enforcement agents are there?
 - **What** are the agents doing?
 - **How long** have the agents been in that location?
 - **What**, if anything, do you know about the person being detained?
- Here are some common agency acronyms you may see on agents' vests:
 - "ICE": Immigration and Customs Enforcement
 - "ERO": Enforcement and Removal Operations
 - "CBP": Customs and Border Protection
 - "DHS": Department of Homeland Security
- Call the family and/or emergency contact of the person being detained, if you know who they are. You can be the connection to ensure their support network is alerted as soon as possible.
- Write down everything you remember about what you witnessed. Get contact information and copies of any recordings or photos from other witnesses.

See *ICE in your community?* You can call the deportation defense hotline to report ICE activity, even if someone is not being actively detained.

DO NOT INTERFERE OR ESCALATE THE SITUATION WITH FORCE

- Do not touch, push, or hit an officer.
- Do not run away; if you leave the situation, walk calmly.
- Always speak respectfully.
- Remember: ICE agent misconduct cannot be challenged on the street.

Understand what consequences you could face if you intentionally break the law, whether for civil disobedience or any other purpose, such as obstructing an arrest.

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IF POSSIBLE, PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE PERSON BEING DETAINED, AND REMIND THEM OF THEIR RIGHTS

You have a First Amendment right to talk to the person being detained. You can remind them of their rights and provide verbal support as long as you are not interfering with or obstructing the officers.

Remind them:

- “You can remain silent!”
- “You don’t have to answer questions!”
- “You have the right to call your lawyer!”
- “You don’t have to sign anything without a lawyer!”

OTHER ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- Share this resource with friends, family, and others in your community.
- Save the deportation hotline numbers in your phone contacts, so you have this information on hand if you need it.
- Always use humanizing language.
- Contact your local and state officials to advocate for pro-immigrant laws, policies, and rights. Find out more information on our website at www.riaclu.org.
- Contribute to mutual aid funds or donate to organizations working to protect immigrants and their rights.
- Talk with friends or family who are at risk of being detained about creating an emergency plan. This can include:
 - Have an emergency contact list.
 - Keep copies of all legal documents in a safe place that their emergency contact can access.
 - Consult with a reputable immigration lawyer to explore any options to attain immigration status.
 - Memorize phone numbers for family members and an immigration lawyer.
 - Get passports for children who are U.S. citizens.
 - Put together a family care plan or temporary guardianship for children, should a parent be detained.

HOTLINE NUMBERS TO CALL

• Rhode Island: 401-675-1414

AMOR Defense Line Against Deportation & Police Brutality is a multilingual (currently English & Spanish) line that connects community members to AMOR’s Case manager and community support network.

• Massachusetts: 617-370-5023

Operated by the LUCE Immigrant Justice Network of MA. The hotline is operational from 5am - 9pm every day of the week across multiple languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Haitian Creole, and Mandarin.

• Connecticut: 854-666-4472

CT Students for a Dream is an undocumented youth-led statewide organization in CT that fights and builds power for the rights and dignity of immigrants and communities of color.

ACLU of Rhode Island
128 Dorrance St., Suite 400, Providence, RI 02903
www.riaclu.org | (401) 831-7171

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The information in this brochure should not be taken as legal advice. If you have additional questions, or feel your rights may have violated, please contact the ACLU of Rhode Island by emailing info@riaclu.org, or calling (401) 831-7171.

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