

“We just want to talk to you about _____.”

What you may do if government agents—police officers, FBI agents, etc.—want to talk to you about yourself, your friend, roommate, family member, co-worker, tenant, or someone else you know.

Your legal rights:

YOU DON’T HAVE TO ANSWER THE DOOR.

- If government agents are at the door, you don’t have to answer.
- If they say that they have a warrant, you may ask them to slide it under the door so that you can review it to make sure it is accurate (correct address, etc.) before opening the door. Even if the warrant is correct, you may still tell them that you do not consent to a search. If they have a search warrant, they do not have to wait for you to open the door and can legally break down the door under certain circumstances.

IF THEY’VE ALREADY APPROACHED YOU...

- If you’ve opened the door before discovering that they are government agents, you may step outside and completely close the door behind you. **YOU DO NOT NEED TO LET THEM INSIDE** and **YOU DO NOT NEED TO CONSENT TO A SEARCH**. If they have a valid warrant they may enter and search without your consent. By providing consent you waive your legal protections.
- If they’ve approached you on the street, at work, or somewhere else outside of your home, you do not need to go anywhere with them unless they arrest you, and you may make sure that they do not follow you anywhere.

WHAT YOU CAN SAY:

- **“I DO NOT WISH TO SPEAK WITH YOU” OR “I WISH TO REMAIN SILENT.”**
- **“I WANT TO SPEAK TO AN ATTORNEY.”** (you do not need to provide the name of attorney)
- **“MAY I HAVE YOUR CARD?”***

*If they don’t have a card to give you, you can take note of their names and the government agency to which they belong as soon as they leave.

AFTER THEY LEAVE

- You may write down everything you remember as soon as possible—questions asked, who and how many of them, etc.
- You may notify the person that they were trying to ask you about (if it was someone other than yourself) and give them all of the information you wrote down and any cards for them to give to their attorney. Electronic communications (phone, email, etc.) are monitored by the government..
- Consider whether it is appropriate or not talk to third parties about the visit without the consent of the person being asked about.

FINAL POINTS:

- Police officers and other government agents are ALLOWED to lie to you, and they make regular use of this tactic. You do not need to trust what they tell you about the person or their reason for asking about that person.
- You have the RIGHT not to answer any questions.
- You NEVER have to consent to a search or any type. If a search situation arises, you may state: “I do not consent to a search.”

The government investigates people for a variety of reasons—including political beliefs and constitutionally protected activities, not necessarily because someone did something wrong.

If you have any questions or would like more information about your legal rights, visit cldc.org.

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