

Got Rights? Protecting Yourself & Your Family at Home & at the Airport

CBP Airport Screening Tips

1. Know what to expect. Be prepared for a search.

Customs and Border Protection agents have the right to search and seize your property. Agents can ask questions to verify your identity and to ensure you're not bringing prohibited items into the U.S. However, they should not ask for detailed information about loved ones overseas, or about your religious or political views.

2. Let agents know if you think questions are inappropriate.

If agents ask about your religious practices or political views, calmly state that you don't think the questions are appropriate or within their authority. Assert your First Amendment rights to religious freedom, your political views and your associations with family & friends.

3. If necessary, ask for a supervisor.

If you feel you're being treated unfairly because of your race or religion, stay calm and politely ask to speak with a supervisor.

4. Keep a record of what's happening and file a complaint later.

Write down the names, departments and badge numbers of each agent who questioned you or searched your belongings so that you can later file a complaint. Ask if any of your files have been copied and get a receipt for any property that's seized. Be sure to write down a complete statement of facts immediately after the incident.

FBI Home Interview Tips

1. Always talk to an attorney before answering questions.

You don't ever have to answer questions. Refusing to answer questions cannot be held against you. Moreover, answering questions without an attorney can be very risky since the FBI may lie to you, and any omissions (even inadvertent gaps) in your answers can be construed as lying to federal agents – which is a crime.

2. Don't allow authorities into your home without a search warrant.

Greet authorities outside your door. If they ask to enter your home, politely ask to see a search warrant. If they have one, look to see what the court has allowed them to search and what items they are allowed to seize. Ask what the visit is about, take their business cards and tell them your lawyer will contact them. Remember: warrant or not, you don't have to answer questions.

3. Express yourself.

The freedom to express your opinions, join groups, and practice your religion as you wish is a fundamental constitutional right. Express yourself.

Please visit www.MuslimAdvocates.org to tell us about your experiences with law enforcement.