



**If you don't know your rights, you don't have them.**

No one is obligated to tell you what your rights are, so it's up to you to understand and defend them. CAIR has developed a comprehensive guide of many applicable rights that you have as an American and how you should defend those rights in various situations that you might encounter.

**Contents**

**Know Your Rights:**

• [As an Airline Passenger](#) • [When Faced with Discrimination On the Job](#) • [As an Employee](#) • [As a Student](#) • [If The FBI Contacts You](#) • [When Confronted by Police](#)

**Tips For:**

• [Mosque Safety](#) • [Reacting to Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes](#) • [Writing a Letter to the Editor](#) • [Getting Involved Locally](#)

**Know Your Rights As An Airline Passenger:**

\* As an airline passenger, you are entitled to courteous, respectful and non-stigmatizing treatment by airline and security personnel.

\* You have the right to complain about treatment that you believe is discriminatory. If you believe you have been treated in a discriminatory manner, immediately:

- Ask to speak to a supervisor.
- Ask if you have been singled out because of your looks, dress, race, ethnicity, faith, or national origin.
- Ask for the names and ID numbers of all persons involved.
- Ask witnesses to give you their names and contact information.
- Write down a statement of facts immediately after the incident. Be sure to include the flight number, the flight date, and the name of the airline.
- Contact CAIR to file a report. If you are leaving the country, leave a detailed message, with the information above, at 202-488-8787. You may also file on-line at [www.cair.com/FileaComplaint.aspx](http://www.cair.com/FileaComplaint.aspx)

**When Faced With Discrimination On The Job:**

\* Most employers are very accommodating to various religious practices. However, reports of workplace discrimination constitute the largest group of complaints that we receive here at CAIR. If you are ever faced with workplace discrimination, follow these guidelines:

- Remain calm, do not aggravate the situation.
- Inform the offending party that you believe his/her actions are discriminatory, and report the discriminatory action in writing to company management.
- Begin documenting the discrimination by saving memos, keeping a detailed journal, noting the presence of witnesses, and making written complaints (keep copies). Create a "paper trail."
- Contact an attorney to discuss your case.
- DO NOT sign any documents or resign without an attorney's advice.
- Ask to be transferred to another department or job site.
- Ask for mediation.
- Contact CAIR and learn about your rights and legal options.

**Your Rights As An Employee:**

\* Federal law makes it illegal for an employer to discriminate against an employee on the basis of religion, race, or national origin. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act guarantees your right to:

- Reasonable religious accommodation - The failure of an employer to reasonably accommodate your religious practices constitutes discrimination. "Religious practices" includes modest dress, prayer on the job, and going to Jummah prayer.
- Fairness in hiring, firing, and promotions - Your employer is prohibited from considering religion when making decisions affecting your employment status.
- A non-hostile work environment - Your employer must ensure that you are not subjected to anti-Muslim insults, harassment or unwelcome, excessive proselytizing.
- Complain about discrimination without fear of retaliation - Federal law guarantees your right to report an act of alleged discrimination. It is illegal for your employer to retaliate against you for your complaint.

**Your Rights As A Student:**

\* Unfortunately, young Muslims are sometimes the target of bullying or discrimination at school. Knowing your rights can help prevent this. As a student, you have the right:

- To inform others about your religion. You have the right to pass out literature or speak to others about Islam, as long as it is not done in a disruptive manner.
- To wear religious clothing. You also have the right to wear modest clothing and clothes with a religious message, as long as other clothes with messages are allowed.
- To organize student-led prayer on campus, as long as the service is not disruptive.
- To attend Friday prayer. The Supreme Court has upheld the right of states to allow students "release time" to attend religious services.
- To be excused from school for religious holidays. You should inform the school that you will be absent.
- To form an extracurricular Muslim student group.
- To be free from bullying and a hostile environment. If you are a victim of anti-Muslim bullying, DO NOT respond with jokes or threats. If you experience bullying, have your parents file a complaint with school officials immediately so that a record is established, then contact CAIR and setup a meeting with school officials.

**If The FBI Contacts You:**

\* American Muslims support strong law enforcement. We also treasure civil rights. Your right to be politically active and to hold different beliefs/views is protected by the Constitution. If you are visited by the FBI, remember:

- You do not have to talk to the FBI, and have no obligation to talk to the FBI, even if you are not a citizen. Never meet or answer any questions with them without an attorney present. Refusing to answer questions cannot be held against you.
- You do not have to permit them to enter your home or office. FBI agents must possess a search warrant in order to enter your house. If they say they have a warrant, demand to see it before allowing them to enter. Even if they have a warrant, you are under no obligation to answer questions.
- Never lie or provide false information to the FBI. It is better to refuse to answer any questions. Lying to an FBI agent is a crime. Contact CAIR for advice.
- If you agree to an FBI interview alongside an attorney, always video record it for your protection.

**If Questioned by Police:**

\* You may be questioned by police officers when they are trying to obtain information about you and/or an event (crime, accident, etc).

\* Things to remember when talking to police:

CAIR's mission is to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

- The police will never remind you of your rights beforehand.
- Never lie or exaggerate to the police.
- Remain calm and respectful; never become physical.
- You are not admitting guilt by refusing a police search, it is your 4<sup>th</sup> amendment right.
- Never sign anything that you have not read.
- You are not required under any circumstances to answer irrelevant questions about your religious or political beliefs; if any question makes you uncomfortable, politely decline.
- If you feel there has been police misconduct, write down everything that happened and record the officer's name, badge/vehicle number and time of incident so you can file a complaint.
- There are different **levels of custody** with the police that you should know:
  - **Questioning** occurs when a law enforcement officer needs some information about you and may ask questions for your identification, where you are going, or inquire about a particular event in question (crime, accident, etc). You should answer these questions, but once you provide the information, you can ask if you are free to leave.
  - If the officer does not permit you to leave, then he or she may detain you. **Detainment** is not the same as being under arrest, but the officer may ask further questions and also has the right to pat you down, regardless of gender. However, the officer may only detain you for a "reasonable" amount of time and you should not answer any more questions and should request an attorney. Even if the officer offers to keep whatever you say "off the record," you should not answer any questions beyond the simple ones regarding your identity mentioned above under "questioning."
  - The officer may request to perform a **vehicle search**. Always politely refuse a vehicle search unless the officer has a warrant.
  - If you are put **under arrest** for any reason whatsoever, stop talking and ask for an attorney.

### Mosque Safety Tips:

*\*Follow these safety tips to ensure that your Mosque does not become a target of hate crime:*

- Install perimeter floodlights and video cameras outside the mosque.
- Install fire and burglar alarm systems.
- Replace hollow core doors with more secure solid wood or sheet metal faced doors.
- Trim shrubs and vines to reduce areas of concealment for criminals.
- Join a neighborhood watch program.
- Meet with neighbors & law enforcement officials to discuss security.
- Educate mosque workers or volunteers about dealing with phone threats and bomb searches. Have written instructions for when threats occur. (Available from CAIR)
- Call authorities about any suspicious package or letter received by mail. DO NOT touch the object.
- Document descriptions of suspicious people or vehicles noticed near the mosque.
- Make duplicates of all important papers, computer disks and records in the mosque, and store them elsewhere.
- Remove potential fire hazards, such as trash and debris, from mosque grounds.

### Reacting To Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes:

*\*If you believe you have been the victim of a hate crime, you should:*

- Report the crime to your local police station immediately. Ask that the incident be treated as a hate crime. Follow up with investigators. Inform CAIR immediately even if you believe it is a "small" incident.
- Document the incident. Write down exactly what was said and/or done by the offender. Save evidence. Take photographs.
- Act quickly. Each incident must be dealt with when it happens, not when convenient.
- Decide on the appropriate action. Consider issuing a statement from community leaders, holding a news conference, organizing a protest, meeting with officials, or starting a letter writing campaign.
- Mobilize community support. Contact CAIR and a local mosque or organization.
- Stay on top of the situation.
- Announce results. When the incident is resolved, announce it to the same people and organizations originally contacted.

### Writing A Letter To The Editor:

*\*Most letters to the editor do not get published. To increase your chances of publication, be sure to follow the following guidelines:*

- Keep your letter to no more than 150-250 words.
- React quickly to news, negative coverage, or views you support. If possible, have the letter in the hands of an editor on the same day.
- Be authoritative. Speak on behalf of an organization, even if you have to create that organization to work on that issue.
- Pick one thought and resist the temptation to include other points.
- Format the letter according to the specific guidelines of the newspaper.
- Be passionate or even controversial, but avoid rhetoric/defamation.
- Give background information on the issue. Cite impartial sources.
- Offer a solution.

### Getting Involved Locally:

*\*Get involved locally; inserting yourself into the life of the surrounding community will help build strong relationships with community members and enable you to get the most out of what the community has to offer:*

- Get involved with your neighborhood association.
- Join your child's school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA).
- Donate well-written books or multimedia about Islam to the local public and school libraries.
- Register and vote.
- Support your local CAIR chapter.
- Attend school board meetings and city council meetings. Check newspaper calendars.
- Put together a Ramadan or Hajj display at a local school or library.
- Submit an opinion piece to your newspaper about an issue of local importance.
- Invite local officials and the public to a mosque open house. (Contact CAIR for tips)
- Host public events such as blood drives and health fairs at your mosque.
- Get yourself and your mosque involved in local issues, make proactive, positive contributions to your community.

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