

Know Your Rights: Airport Edition

Everyone in the U.S. has rights under the Constitution. Understanding what to expect and how to assert your rights at borders and airports can help you stay safe and prepared.

SEARCHES: CBP may search you and your belongings, including electronic devices.

- **Strip Searches:** Only allowed with “reasonable suspicion” and must be done privately.
- **Religious Head Coverings:** You may request private screening and ask to pat it down yourself, supervised by an officer of your gender.
- **Electronic devices:**

<u>US Citizens</u>	U.S. citizens cannot be denied entry to the United States for refusing to unlock devices, though it may lead to delays, questioning, or device seizure. If an officer confiscates your laptop or cell phone, get a receipt for your property.
<u>LPR</u>	Green Card holders have similar protections.
<u>Visas</u>	Visa holders and tourists risk being denied entry if they refuse to unlock devices.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONING: CBP may refer you for additional questioning.

- You may decline to answer these. If pressed, ask to speak with a supervisor. Officers may not select you for questioning based on your religion, race, national origin, gender, ethnicity, or political beliefs.

<u>US Citizens</u>	You only have to answer questions establishing your identity and citizenship (in addition to customs-related questions). Refusal to answer other questions may cause delay, but officials may not deny you entry into the U.S. if you have established your identity and citizenship.
<u>Legal Permanent Resident / Green Card</u>	You only have to answer questions establishing your identity and permanent residency (in addition to customs-related questions). Refusal to answer other questions will likely cause delay. There are limited circumstances in which green card holders may be denied entry into the US. If you have concerns, consult with an immigration lawyer about your circumstances before traveling.
<u>Visa Holders</u>	Refusing to answer questions asked by airport or border officials could cause delay and might also lead to officers denying your entry into the country.

DETENTION: If you are detained, ask to speak with a lawyer. You may not be entitled to one during routine inspections, but if you are arrested or denied entry, you should clearly state your wish to remain silent and request an attorney.

IF YOU FEEL YOUR RIGHTS WERE VIOLATED

- Ask to speak to a supervisor.
- Document everything: officer names, agencies, badge numbers, and witness contacts.
- File a complaint with the agency or seek legal assistance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [ACLU – Know Your Rights at Airports and U.S. Ports of Entry](#)
- [Guidance for LGBTQ travelers](#)