



THE
SIKH COALITION

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: Immigration

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This 'Know Your Rights' resource will be updated regularly as new immigration policies continue to emerge from the Trump Administration. It was compiled by the Sikh Coalition with assistance from immigration attorneys and immigration policy experts within the sangat and from allied organizations.

Please note that this information is not intended as legal advice. If you need specific and immediate legal aid, contact the Sikh Coalition at www.sikhcoalition.org/legal-help or see our resource list below.

View our immigration guidance for gurdwarae and gurdwara committees [here](#). You can learn more about the Sikh Coalition's immigration policy principles and read our community FAQ in [this document](#).



Types of Immigration Officers

- An immigration officer works for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Under DHS, there are two types of immigration officers that can arrest people.
- One type is the “Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) Immigration Officer.”
 - CBP immigration officers are at airports, train stations, and border crossings between the United States and Canada or Mexico.
 - CBP immigration officers can stop and arrest people 100-miles near any border, airport, or port of entry.
 - CBP immigration officers can deport individuals
- The other type is the “Immigration Customs and Enforcement Immigration (ICE) Officer.”
 - ICE officers can stop and arrest people anywhere inside the United States; they can show up at your home, your place of work, or at the gurdwara.
 - Because ICE can appear in regular clothes, you should always ask for identification.
 - ICE immigration officers must show you proof that they are an immigration officer.
- A recent Trump Administration policy change now allows some other federal law enforcement agents to conduct immigration enforcement (including arrests).
 - We are still learning more about this policy and how it will work in practice.
 - For example, a recent agreement between Nassau County in New York and the federal government deputizes local law enforcement officers to act as federal immigration officials. This includes interviewing individuals about their immigration status, checking DHS databases, issuing [“immigration detainers,”](#) entering data into immigration databases, issuing [“notices to appear,”](#) making recommendations for [“voluntary departure,”](#) and transferring noncitizens into ICE custody.



If ICE Comes to Your Home

- First, **ask for identification**. Be aware that ICE [has a history](#) of not being truthful about who they are (e.g. claiming to have ‘found a lost ID,’ needing to talk to someone about ‘identity theft,’ or representing a religious community).
- If they identify themselves as ICE, do not open the door. Instead, **ask to see a warrant**. You can ask the officer to put the warrant under the door or through the side of the door.
- If the paper ICE shows you says “U.S. Department of Homeland Security” on the upper left corner, **this is not a valid judicial warrant**.
 - You have the right not to open the door.
 - You have the right to not answer any questions.
 - Tell everyone else inside your home to remain silent.
 - Tell them you will not open the door and stay inside.
 - An “administrative warrant,” which does not allow ICE to enter your home, could look like [this](#) or like [this](#).
 - If ICE does not have the right kind of warrant to enter your home, they must leave.
- If the paper ICE shows says “U.S. District Court” or the name of an actual court in your county and state, you must **check the document** to see if there is a **judge’s signature** on the document and it has **the name of someone in your home** on it.
 - If the name is incorrect or there is no judge’s signature, do not open the door.
 - If you do see a judge’s signature and your name, you must open the door.
 - A valid judicial warrant, which means you must allow ICE into your home, looks like [this](#) with the judge’s signature and your name filled in.
- If ICE pushes their way into your home, you do not need to answer their questions.
 - You have the right to remain silent: “I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions about my immigration status, or sign or hand you any documents based on my 5th Amendments rights under the United States Constitution.”
 - You do not need to open doors for them or help them if they want to search your home.
 - Do not sign anything without speaking with an attorney first.



If ICE Comes to Your Workplace

- Unless you work in a public place, ICE cannot legally enter your workplace without a judicial warrant signed by a judge or permission from your employer.
- ICE may enter areas in your private workplace that are open to the general public (such as a reception area) without a warrant, but they must observe the same rules that any member of the public would. For instance, without a warrant, ICE cannot disrupt the activities of the workplace.
- Do not run if ICE enters your workplace—they can use that as a reason to detain and arrest you.
- If ICE does not have a warrant, ask your employer or someone with authority to calmly ask them to leave. If the employer or someone with authority lets them in, ICE no longer needs a warrant.
- If ICE enters your workplace by force, state that you do not consent to a search, write down the agents' names and badge numbers, document any violence or abuse, and remain silent.
- If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to your employer and co-workers in advance to ensure they know they should not let ICE into your workplace without a warrant signed by a judge. Employers do not have to help ICE to identify or sort workers.
- Even if you work in a public place, you will have more protection in areas of the workplace that are clearly labeled “private” or “staff only.” Those areas are harder for ICE to justify entry without consent or a warrant.



If ICE Comes to Your Gurdwara

For many years, a DHS policy helped protect houses of worship (including gurdwarae) and other “sensitive locations” from ICE questioning, detaining, arresting individuals, or carrying out other immigration enforcement actions. However, as of January 21, 2025, the Trump Administration has eliminated this long-standing policy, now allowing gurdwarae to potentially be targeted by armed ICE agents.

The most important thing to remember is that if ICE comes to your gurdwara, **you still have the right to remain silent** and do not have to speak with them. For more guidance specific to gurdwarae, please [click here](#).



If ICE Tries to Arrest You

- You never have to answer questions from ICE. This is called “the right to remain silent.”
 - You can say: *“I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions about my immigration status, or sign or hand you any documents based on my 5th Amendments rights under the United States Constitution.”*
 - ICE may try to repeat their questions or scare you to answer their questions or lie to you by saying that you must answer. You do not have to answer their questions, and you can simply say *“I do not want to answer.”*

If ICE Says They Are Arresting You

- Ask the officer why you are under arrest.
- Ask for proof or ask to see what warrant or papers they have to arrest you.
- Do not sign anything without speaking with an attorney first.

If You Have Legal Status

- If you are a **U.S. Citizen**, tell the ICE officer you are a citizen. If you are over the age of 18, ICE may ask for your I.D. (identification card); you can show your driver’s license, state identification card, or copy of your passport page.
- If you are a **Green Card Holder**, you should always carry a copy of your green card on you.
 - Tell ICE you have your green card; if ICE asks for proof of your status, you must show ICE your green card.
 - If your green card is expired, you should get it renewed—but you still have legal status as a green card holder in the meantime.

If ICE Tries to Arrest You

- If you have a **current and valid visa** to be in the United States, you should tell ICE that you have immigration status. If ICE asks, show them a photo of your visa on your phone or a copy of your visa that you keep in your wallet
- If you have been granted **asylum**, you must carry a copy of the I-589 Approval Notice or the Immigration Judge's Order granting you asylum. If an ICE officer asks for proof of your status, you must show the ICE Officer a copy of the Asylum approval.
- In general,
 - If you have a nine digit "Alien Identification Number" (also called an "A number"), know that number and have it written out for your family. With this number, they can find you if ICE arrests you.
 - Presenting photos or copies of documents should be enough. It may be risky to carry original documents on your person given how hard they can be to replace.
 - Do not show ICE documents issued by foreign governments (e.g. an Indian passport), because these can be used against you.

If You Do Not Have Legal Status/Don't Know Your Legal Status

- Do not carry or show ICE a copy of your foreign passport; this can be used against you by ICE.
- Stay silent or say you want to speak with your attorney. You have the right to an attorney, but the government will not appoint one for you.
- Do not sign anything without speaking with an attorney first.
- Note that ICE can and will still arrest people who have serious medical conditions, physical handicaps, or require life-saving treatments.
 - If ICE is arresting you, you should tell them right away of any medical conditions you have and if you require medication.
 - If you take life-saving medicine, you should carry a copy of the prescription with you so you can tell ICE what medicines you need and how often.



If ICE Arrests You

- People arrested by ICE are processed at the local ICE Field Office before being transferred to a detention facility.
- You can locate people who have been arrested through this website: locator.ice.gov

If You Have Legal Status

- Show any of the documents previously described above (See “If ICE Tries to Arrest You” on pages 7-8).
- If you do not have any of those documents on you, you may be fingerprinted.
- Once you are identified as having legal status, you should be released.
- Even if you have legal status, you still have the right to an attorney—but the government will not provide one for you.

If You Do Not Have Legal Status

- Remember your rights: You have the right to remain silent, the right to have an attorney, and the right to make a phone call.
- You have the right not to answer any questions ICE asks about your identity, birthdate, or place of birth.
- You have the right not to speak about your immigration status or sign anything without your attorney present.
- Make sure you verbally inform ICE if you have fear of returning to your home country.

If You Need Help

- The Sikh Coalition is working to create a list of Punjabi-speaking immigration attorneys. Email immigration@sikhcoalition.org if you need an attorney.
- Other organizations and resources that can help you find an immigration attorney include but are not limited to:
 - Department of Justice, Executive Office for Immigration Review: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/list-pro-bono-legal-service-providers>
 - The Immigration Defense Project: <https://www.immigrantdefenseproject.org/>
 - ImmigrationLawHelp.org: <https://www.immigrationlawhelp.org/>
 - National Immigrant Justice Center: <http://www.immigrantjustice.org/>
 - American Immigration Lawyers Association: <https://www.aila.org/>
 - National Lawyers Guild: <https://www.nlg.org/>
 - National Immigration Project: <https://nipnlg.org/>
 - National Immigration Advocates Directory: <https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/legaldirectory/>



Interacting with Non-Law Enforcement Individuals

- The Sikh Coalition has heard reports of individuals not affiliated with government or law enforcement asking Sikhs about their immigration status.
- If anyone is asking you about your immigration status, you can refuse to speak to them. You can also request to see their identification.
- If they do not have identification, you do not have to engage them in any conversation and you are free to walk away.
- If their behavior escalates, repeats, or includes the threat of violence, you may be able to report them for a hate crime if you wish to do so; you can do so by calling 911, calling or visiting your local police station, or reaching out to the [Sikh Coalition](#).
- If you are reporting a potential hate crime—whether it is someone harassing you about your immigration status or something else—to any law enforcement officer and they ask about your immigration or citizenship status, you have the right not to answer. If you are asked about your immigration status while reporting a hate crime, you could say the following: *"I am here to report a crime against me. I do not wish to answer your questions about my immigration status or otherwise speak with you about that topic based on my 5th Amendment rights."*



Alternative Resources for Individuals in Need

- Individuals who are concerned about their immigration status may not seek support through official channels for fear of interrogation, detention, or deportation. Sangat can freely discuss any of the below resources with the [Sikh Family Center](#) for more support and be better informed about their options.

Suggested Avenues For Alternative Support

- The [Immigration Defense Project](#) hotline 212-725-6422
 - This hotline can be used for:
 - Limited immigration legal advice and information
 - Referrals for free immigration legal services
 - Referrals for private immigration attorneys
 - This is not a live helpline—you can leave a voicemail and they will call you back.
- The Sikh Family Center's Non-Emergency Helpline: 866-SFC-SEWA (866-732-7392)
 - This non-emergency helpline is by and for the Sikh community—it is free, private, and available in Punjabi and English.
 - You can leave a voicemail and they will call you back.
- For domestic violence, [The National Domestic Violence Hotline](#): 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)
- For suicide, the National Hopeline Network: Dial 988
- For self-Injury, [S.A.F.E. Alternatives](#): 1-800-DON'T-CUT (1-800-366-8288)
- For substance use, the [24/7 Treatment Referral line](#): 1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)



Additional Resources

- Sikh Coalition’s [Immigration Guidance for Gurdwaras and Gurdwara Leadership](#)
- [Printable versions](#) of each individual section of this Know Your Rights Guide.
- Immigration “red cards,” available [by request from the Sikh Family Center](#), can be printed and kept in your pocket; if you interact with an ICE agent, simply hand them the card to reiterate your rights.
- [Private space poster](#), designed by Muslims for Just Futures with translation support from the Sikh Coalition (scroll down for Punjabi language version), can help remind individuals of the rules around any attempt by ICE to enter a private space for searches or arrests.
- Know Your Rights 4 Immigrants App ([Apple](#), [Android](#)): This phone app, which can be used in 15+ languages (including Punjabi) can read your rights out loud to an ICE or law enforcement agent and send a message to an emergency contact. It has other resources, including the ability to look up a consulate and a sample family preparedness plan.



THE SIKH COALITION

immigration@sikhcoalition.org
www.sikhcoalition.org

**Scan the QR Code to view all of
Sikh Coalition's Immigration
Know Your Rights Resources**

