

## ACLU `bust card' reads you the other rights

[1,2,3 Edition]

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### Document Text

For chart see end of text.

Thanks to Joe Friday, "NYPD Blue" and other cop shows, most people know that they have the right to remain silent if arrested and that everything they say can and will be used against them in a court of law.

But did you also know that if a police officer writes you a ticket, you must sign it or be arrested?

Or that a law officer can't arrest you for refusing to identify yourself on the street?

Officials of the American Civil Liberties Union think many people don't fully understand their own rights or the legal rights of law enforcers. They hope to rectify this by offering a "bust card" with information they think people should know.

"Everyone benefits from learning their rights," said Ira Glasser, the national ACLU's executive director.

"Problems with the police often arise when there is confusion on either side. If we don't understand our own rights and responsibilities, then our relationship with the police becomes a one-way street."

The wallet-size card details what a person should do when stopped or arrested by police, including information about the individual's rights and what a police officer can legally ask.

The bust card is available on the Internet and can be downloaded from [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org) or from the ACLU's San Diego office at (619) 232- 2121.

The most important right a person can exercise when dealing with police is to remain silent beyond asking for a lawyer, according to Michael Crowley, a San Diego attorney who has volunteered with the ACLU for more than 10 years.

Second is never to argue with a law enforcement official. Both are among the guidelines listed on the bust card.

ACLU representatives from the national headquarters in New York stress that both sides need to be respectful to keep a situation from escalating.

"At the same time, you should be assertive of your rights," said Emily Whitfield of ACLU headquarters.

The San Diego Police Department foresees no problems arising from the bust card. In fact, the department put out similar cards a few years ago, said spokesman Bill Robinson.

"People should know their rights; we want them to know their rights," Robinson said.

Officials at other San Diego County law enforcement agencies said they were unaware of the ACLU's card but didn't expect it to cause any problems.

The Northern California ACLU office put out a similar card 15 years ago called "Practical Suggestions for Dealing with Police" in three languages. The new card is modeled on that one and several others distributed locally.

"The card is our most requested public education material," said John Crew, director of the Police Practices Project in the Northern California office.

Crew said one person pulled out one of the cards only to have the police officer pull out his own ACLU card.

What to do when stopped by police

These are among the guidelines the American Civil Liberties Union offers citizens in its "bust card," which outlines the rights people have in encounters with law enforcement officers.

Be polite, respectful and calm. Don't argue.

Keep your hands in plain sight.

Don't run away

Avoid complaining and don't resist, even if you believe you are innocent.

Never touch the officer or deputy

Remember that anything you say or do can be used against you

Make mental note of officers' badge and patrol car numbers

If you are arrested, ask for a lawyer immediately

If you're given a traffic ticket, sign it. You can always fight the case in court later.

SOURCE: American Civil Liberties Union

Credit: Heather McRea is a Union-Tribune student intern.

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#### **Abstract** (Document Summary)

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