

Your rights when police arrest or call you in: a citizen's guide

When to use this

- A family member has been taken to a police station
- You received a police notice to appear
- You want to know your rights before something happens

Steps

1. Ask for the reason

A person arrested must be told the grounds of arrest. Ask politely and note the officer's name and the time.

2. Tell someone and ask for a lawyer

You can have a relative or friend informed, and you can consult an advocate. If you cannot afford one, free legal aid is available; see our NALSA page.

3. Know the 24-hour rule

A person arrested must be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours, not counting travel time. Do not sign blank or unread papers.

4. If it is only a notice

For some offences police may give a notice to appear instead of arresting. Read it, appear on the date, and take an advocate if you can.

Key facts

- The 24-hour production before a magistrate is a constitutional protection
- You can ask for a lawyer from the start
- If police do not follow these rules, an advocate can act on it; do not argue at the station

Helplines: Cyber fraud 1930 · Consumer helpline 1915 · Women 181 · Emergency 112
· Free legal aid 15100

Full guide and free action plan: shikayat.co/guides/rights-when-arrested-police-station · Updated 2026-10

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