

Immunity and Public Safety:

- ★ Police may intervene under any circumstances when a person appears likely to commit a crime, or in order to protect the safety and welfare of the officer or the public.
- ★ Vehicles which are inviolable cannot be searched or seized. However, they may not endanger public safety by, for example, obstructing traffic or blocking emergency exits.
- ★ Having immunity does not permit an individual to drive under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or engage in other reckless behavior while driving any vehicle.

Firearms:

- ★ Permission to possess firearms must be obtained from the local state jurisdiction where the owner resides or proposes to carry such a weapon and is valid only consistent with the rules of the issuing jurisdiction.
- ★ The DOS cannot intervene in the application/determination process of any firearms application. Also, the DOS cannot intervene if a local jurisdiction denies a firearms permit to foreign mission personnel.
- ★ The DOS considers the failure to adhere to local firearms regulations to be a serious matter and reminds all persons enjoying immunity that the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR), Article 41, and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR), Article 55, mandate that persons enjoying immunity are to “respect the laws and regulations of the receiving state.”



The United States Government is committed to the principle that foreign mission personnel are to be treated with respect and due regard for privileges and immunities to which they are entitled under domestic and international law. The State Department trusts that this information will facilitate contacts with local law enforcement officials and ensure that any such contacts are safe and appropriate.

Prepared for members of the foreign mission community by the Office of Foreign Missions, United States Department of State.



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
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Local Law Enforcement

AND

Foreign Mission Personnel in the United States

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE STOPPED BY THE POLICE





This brochure is intended to provide the foreign mission community* and their dependents with information regarding how to respond if stopped by local police so that any encounter will be as safe, and as appropriate, as possible.

Cooperating with Local Law Enforcement:

- ★ Individuals may be stopped in the interest of promoting and protecting public safety when there is a reasonable suspicion of criminal activity. This may include situations when someone is stopped for a traffic violation, fits the description of a suspect, witnessed a crime, appears to need assistance, or is in an area where a crime has just occurred.
- ★ When lights and sirens are behind your vehicle, do not slam on the brakes or stop in the lane of traffic. Slow down and safely pull over onto the right-hand shoulder of the roadway. If there is no shoulder or if it is too narrow to pull over, the driver should find the next safest location and pull over.
- ★ Regardless of why the person is stopped, the police officer needs the individual's full attention and cooperation.
- ★ Law enforcement officers cannot tell just from appearance which persons they stop may enjoy immunity. They may not be stopping an individual for the same reason the individual perceives. Law enforcement officers are trained to remain in a position which enhances their own and others' safety. They do not intend to be offensive.
- ★ When approached by a police officer, it is important to follow the officer's instructions, keep your hands clearly visible, and make movements slowly.
- ★ Please provide the police officer with your Department of State (DOS) driver's license or Identification card (ID) to assist them with verifying your identity and status.
- ★ Local police are requested to contact the DOS at the phone number listed on the back of the driver's license or ID as soon as possible to confirm immunity.
- ★ If you do not have your DOS driver's license or ID, ask the law enforcement officer to call the DOS Diplomatic Security Command Center at (571) 345-3146 or toll free at (866) 217-2089 to confirm your identity and level of immunity.
- ★ While local police are expected to respect immunity, they will also submit detailed reports of all incidents involving individuals claiming immunity to the DOS.

**This pamphlet is addressed to foreign mission members and their dependents, including those who may enjoy less immunity than diplomatic agents, such as consular personnel, administrative and technical staff, and members of international organizations and other foreign missions, as well as their recognized family members.*

Traffic Citations and Parking Violations:

- ★ If pulled over by local police while driving, remain seated and do not get out of the vehicle unless instructed to do so.
- ★ If it is dark out, turn on the interior light prior to the officer approaching. Keep hands visible. Produce your DOS driver's license, ID, and vehicle registration upon request.
- ★ Verbally inform the officer of your immunity status and wait for specific instructions.
- ★ The initial stop and issuance of a traffic citation related to the stop do not constitute an arrest or detention and therefore do not compromise inviolability.
- ★ If you refuse to sign a traffic citation, the traffic violation will still be recorded and sent to the DOS.
- ★ All foreign mission personnel are required to resolve all tickets for parking violations, moving violations, and camera-enforced citations.

