

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

In the state of Tennessee, it is a class E felony to sleep on public property between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. At the end of 2024, several people were charged under the felony law, especially in downtown Nashville, so it's more important than ever to know your rights. Even if you're *charged* with a felony, it doesn't mean you'll be *convicted* of a felony. You still have rights and there are advocates who want to support you!

IF YOU'RE UNHOUSED AND STOPPED BY THE POLICE, HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER:

If you are stopped by the police, identify yourself by name (and birthdate, if requested) and ask if you are being detained or if you're free to go. You can say, "Am I being detained or am I free to go?"

If the police tell you you are free to go, walk away from the police and do not make any additional statements to them. If the police follow you or try to keep speaking with you, you can say, "I will not answer any other questions and would like to speak to an attorney."

If you're being detained, or if the police do not specifically tell you that you are free to leave, you have the right to remain silent and you don't need to answer any other questions, though you are required to provide identification if you have it. You have the right to speak to an attorney and can say, "I will not answer any other questions and would like to speak to an attorney." Any additional information you share can be used against you or others in prosecution.

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You have the right to record a police encounter. Try to get the names of any officers who harass, threaten, or mistreat you or others. Get the names and contact info of other people who could serve as witnesses.

You do not have to consent to your belongings being searched without probable cause or a warrant. You can simply say, “No” or “Please do not search my things.” They may do it anyway, but saying no allows your attorneys to fight this later.

Don't resist arrest. If a police officer says that you are under arrest, follow their instructions or they could bring additional charges.

Police officers should not throw away your belongings. If this happens, do your best to document what items were not returned to you and contact Open Table Nashville at india@opentablenashville.org.

If you're arrested in Nashville, contact the Public Defender's Office at 615-862-5730.

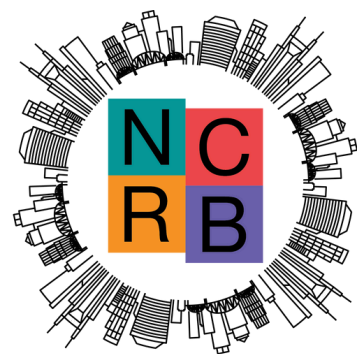
If you have had or are having an issue with a Metro Nashville Police officer, submit a complaint to Nashville's Community Review Board online at <https://www.nashville.gov/departments/community-review> or via their 24 Hour Complaint Line at 615-880-1801. You can also contact Open Table Nashville at india@opentablenashville.org or 615-972-9680 (call or text).



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