Know Your Rights: Immigration and ICE Summary

Last Updated: February 2026

This information is not formal legal advice. If you need specific and immediate legal aid, contact the Sikh Coalition. View all of our English and Punjabi resources at thesikh.co/immigration.

Remain Silent

- You have the right to remain silent.
- You never have to talk to immigration agents about your immigration status or the immigration status of others.
- Never sign anything without speaking to an attorney first.

If You Have Documentation

- Showing an official document (a U.S. passport, green card, or visa paperwork) or picture/copy of the same is the quickest way to end a conversation with an immigration agent.
- Be aware, however, that immigration agents are now detaining people of all legal status. If you are detained, remain silent and contact someone who can find you an attorney.
- Do not show foreign passports to immigration agents.

If You Do Not Have Documentation

- Carry a red card at all times.
- Exercise your right to remain silent, and do not sign anything without speaking to your attorney.
- In case of your detention or worse, have a plan in place for children or other family members who depend on you.

Agents at Your Home

- Despite recent claims by the Trump Administration, immigration agents need a warrant signed by a judge to enter your home or any other private residence.
- Ask for the warrant to be slid under the door or handed in through the window.
- ICE and other immigration agents are legally allowed to lie to you about who they are and why they are trying to enter your home. Stay vigilant.

Agents at Your Gurdwara

- The Trump Administration changed longstanding policies so that immigration agents can enter “sensitive locations,” including schools, hospitals, and houses of worship like gurdwarae.
- All doors to the gurdwara should be closed and locked when it is not open to the public, and all private areas inside a gurdwara (for example, granthi living spaces) should be marked “PRIVATE” and closed.
- Ensure that granthis, caretakers, and other sevadaars frequently at the gurdwara know their rights and have their documentation.

Agents in the Street

- You have the legal right to film immigration agents in the street. However, exercise extreme caution: Agents have hurt and killed people for engaging in entirely legal behavior.
- If you are filming, always comply with agents’ directions and speak out loud. For example, if an agent tells you to back up, you can say “I’m backing up, I’m not interfering” as you do so.

Travel

- Phone searches by customs agents at points of entry (for example, airports) are increasing. Ensure your phone has a type-in password that only you know.
- If you are a U.S. citizen or permanent legal resident, agents cannot deny you entry even if you refuse to unlock your device; if you are not, they can deny you entry.
- If you are traveling within the country, know that TSA officers do not have the right to unlock and examine your phone’s contents.