

Law Enforcement

Being a foreigner, can I call on
Law Enforcement for help?
Yes!

You do not have to be a legal alien in order to receive police protection and services. Your local Police Department is dedicated to keeping your community safe, on the roads and in every aspect of your life in the community.

Many immigrants have come to our community with a fear and mistrust of Law Enforcement. Some have been victims of crimes and have not come to the Police because of this fear. You have a right and obligation to call the police if you become a victim, (this includes all kinds of crimes, from things being stolen from your car or home, to more serious types of crimes where you were put in danger or injured in any way).

The police are here to help you, the Victims Advocate's office will stay by you if you must go to court and offer other forms of assistance. By reporting crimes you will be helping local law enforcement get the criminals off the street and stop them from hurting other people.

Rock Hill Victim Advocate
(803)-329-5693

York County Sheriff's Departments Victims Assistance
(803)-628-3067

If you want to report a crime, you can call 911. Either an officer will come to you to make the report or in some cases you may be asked to come to the Police Department to do the report. You will be given a card with a case number on it so you can follow the status of the case and get a copy of the report. The Police

Department and/or the Solicitors Office will contact you with updates about your case.

Domestic Violence: a person can be found guilty of this crime in South Carolina even if they only made their spouse afraid that they were going to hit them. Even more so if they did hit them or hurt them in any way.

If the police are called to your home for a domestic disturbance, it will be up to the officer's discretion to decide if someone should be charged with Domestic Violence. Once the charge has been made the spouse cannot get the charges dropped.

The accused will have their day in court to plead their case before the judge. The fine for being found guilty of Domestic Violence is up to \$1085 or up to 30 days in jail.

As a victim of domestic violence, there are many forms of support for you. We have victim's advocates who will explain your rights as a victim and support you through any court proceedings; we have shelters that will house you in a safe location and provide room and board until you no longer need their help. We have counseling. Safe Passage Incorporated, call (803) 329-3336

Traffic violations are the major reason people receive citations. Our local Law Enforcement works hard around the clock monitoring our roads to try to keep them safe. You must have a driver license and insurance, registration and license plates for your vehicle.

Driving under the Influence (DUI)

It is a serious offense to be arrested for DUI, and more so if you have an accident and/or injure someone else because of your intoxication. If you are found guilty of DUI you may have to pay a fine of \$992 or spend up to thirty days in jail. You will lose your privilege to drive for a period of time and will have to do paperwork to get your license reinstated. If you injure someone, or are stopped and cited for DUI more than once, you may face time in

prison for this. If you have been drinking--do not drive and do not let anyone else drive in that condition.

Beware of persons offering to represent you in court who may not be lawyers. If you are in need of legal representation, before you pay for their service, be sure you are hiring an accredited lawyer. We have heard many reports of bilingual people offering services as a notary to represent non-English speaking people in court. A notary here in the USA is a person who can give a notary seal on legal documents but CANNOT practice law or represent you legally in court.

Citations or Tickets that are
sometimes misunderstood

Listed below are ordinances that immigrants frequently find themselves violating without realizing they are breaking a law.

- Noise violations: Within the city limits, if someone can hear the music from your vehicle or home with the windows closed it is considered too loud and you could receive a citation for up to \$325 or thirty days in jail.
- It is required by law that the driver and all passengers wear their seatbelts. If you have children under 80 lb. they must be restrained in a child safety seat.
- Be sure that all the lights work properly on your vehicle, including the turn signal.
- You can be issued a citation if you do not come to a complete stop at Stop signs and Red lights before entering the intersection.
- It is illegal to have an open container of any kind of alcoholic beverage in a vehicle while it is being driven. You can also be charged with "open container" if there is an empty can or bottle of an alcoholic beverage in your vehicle.
- It is the driver's responsibility to be sure that the vehicle has all the papers in order before driving (this includes the vehicles registration, insurance and license plate).
- It is the driver's responsibility to be sure that everyone in the vehicle is abiding by the law.

- It is unlawful to carry concealed unlicensed weapons on your person or in your vehicle.
- It is against the law to pass a stopped school bus that has its lights flashing. Children who are either getting on or off the bus could be in danger of being hit by passing cars.
- If you are driving and see blue flashing lights behind you, find a safe place to pull over immediately, put your vehicle in park and wait in the car for the officer to approach you and follow his/her instructions.
- If you are driving and see red flashing lights from an emergency vehicle, to allow the emergency vehicle to get to their destination faster, all traffic should go to the right side of the road and stop, to allow the vehicle to pass you before you begin to drive again.
- If you are driving and see a funeral procession, you should go to the right side of the road and stop until the whole procession has passed. This is a South Carolina custom.
- If you are involved in an accident (no matter how big or small), do not leave the scene of the accident. Wait for the police to arrive and have your car information/insurance ready to show the officer. (Leaving the scene of the accident is considered a serious offense.)
- If you are being questioned for any reason by an officer, and you do not give your legal birth name, accurate birth date and local address, you could be cited for giving false information to police. It is very important to always be honest with law enforcement and cooperate with them. A dishonest answer could turn into a big problem for you and your family.

If you have information regarding a crime or criminal activity, and you would like to report what you know, you can call the Police Department and they will help you make the report and stay anonymous if you prefer.

Narcotics Bust-A-Pusher Crime Stoppers
Toll Free 1-877-409-4321

If during any conversation with an officer you cannot understand what he/she is telling you, tell them you would like to have someone interpret for you.

Winthrop Police Department-(803) 323-3333

Rock Hill Police Department-(803) 329-7200

York County Sheriff's Department-(803) 628-3059

For Spanish-(803) 325-2537