

# KNOW WHAT To Do Pocket Guide

## SMART

Sikh Mediawatch and Resource  
Task Force  
PO Box 1761  
Germantown, MD 20875-1761

Tel: (877)91-SIKHS  
Fax: (202)318-4433  
Email: [info@sikhmediawatch.org](mailto:info@sikhmediawatch.org)  
Web: [www.sikhmediawatch.org/](http://www.sikhmediawatch.org/)

**Protecting the rights and  
freedom of Sikhs in America.  
Committed to empowering  
Sikh Americans.**

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE STOPPED BY THE POLICE

1. **Stay calm and show respect.**
2. **Do no argue, resist or run.**
3. **Keep your hands visible at all times.**
4. **Comply with all requests** for identification.
5. **If you are about to be searched** and you are carrying a *kirpan*, alert the officer that you are wearing an article of faith known as a *kirpan*. Do not pull out the *kirpan* to show the officer unless you are instructed to do so.
6. **If you are arrested, make no statements to the police**, immediately ask for a lawyer (and/or your parents). Thereafter you have the right to meet with a lawyer before and during questioning by the police.
7. **Write down all you can remember right away.** Include the incident, officer's names, badge number, patrol car numbers and tags, witnesses' names, and other important things. Note any discourtesy or physical intimidation or contact.

### IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF HATE CRIME

1. **Seek safety immediately** if you feel your personal safety is at risk.
2. **Document the incident** as soon as possible after it occurs by writing down every relevant detail. Do not forget to **get the names and phone numbers of witnesses.**
3. **Call the police and file a report.** Obtain a copy of the report for your records. If you are an immigrant and are uncertain about your status in the US, consult an immigration attorney prior to filing a report. You may additionally report the incident to the FBI or the Department of Justice.
4. **Contact** the municipal, county and/or state **prosecutor's** office about the incident and request that the matter be investigated and prosecuted expeditiously.
5. **Contact the bias crime or human rights office** at the county, state and federal levels and request assistance with your case.
6. **Report the incident to SMART.**

### IF FACED WITH WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

Even if you are not a citizen, you have the right to be hired, and to work at your job, without discrimination based upon your race, gender, religion, or nationality. State and federal laws guarantee these rights. If you are a victim of such discrimination, make sure to:

1. **Inform your supervisor and** human resources department in writing about the discriminatory incidents.
2. **Document the discrimination** by keeping a detailed journal, saving memos, noting the presence of witnesses, and the dates.
3. **Report the discriminatory action in writing** to the company management.
4. **Contact local county, state civil rights agencies and/or EEOC** to educate yourself about legal options.
5. **Contact an attorney** to discuss your case.
6. **DO NOT sign any document or resign** without consulting an attorney.
7. **Contact SMART** to file a report.

### IF FACED WITH HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

You have the right to rent, purchase, sell, and finance a home or apartment without discrimination based upon your race, gender, religion, or nationality.

1. **Inform in writing** all agents involved, including the realtor company and the lender/bank, in the housing transaction about the incident.
2. **Document the discrimination** by saving all evidence of the housing transaction at issue and keeping a detailed journal of each incident, and the dates of the activity.
3. **Contact local county or state civil rights agencies, or the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** to educate yourself about your options.
4. **Contact an attorney** to discuss your case if you wish to file a lawsuit.
5. **DO NOT sign any document** without consulting an attorney.
6. **Contact SMART** to file a discrimination report.

### YOUR RIGHTS AS AN AIRLINE PASSENGER

As an airline passenger, you are entitled courteous, respectful and non-stigmatizing treatment by airline and security personnel. You have the right to complain about treatment that you believe is discriminatory.

1. **Ask to speak to a supervisor.**
2. Inform the supervisor that it is against federal law to discriminate, and ask if you have been singled out because of your looks, dress, race, ethnicity, faith, or national origin.
3. **Ask for the names and ID numbers** of all persons involved.
4. **Ask witnesses** to give you their names and contact information.
5. **Write down a statement of facts** immediately after the incident. Be sure to include the airport, flight number, the flight date/time, and the name of the airline.
6. **Contact SMART and FAA to file a report.** If you are leaving the country, leave a detailed message with the above information at this toll-free number 1-877-917-4547.

### HOW TO RESPOND TO ANTI-SIKH INCIDENTS

1. **Act quickly.** Each incident must be dealt with when it happens, not when it is convenient.
2. **Determine all facts of the case.** Try to get a response from the other party.
3. **Mobilize community support** by informing the local *gurdwara* and community members.
4. **Decide on the appropriate action to be taken:** Meet with appropriate officials, issue a statement from community leaders or local *gurdwara*, hold a press conference, or organize a letter writing campaign.
5. **Ask for attainable results** like issuing a public apology or committing to change their policy.
6. **Stay on top of the situation** by following up and keeping everyone involved informed with regular updates.
7. **Announce results.** When the incident is resolved, make an announcement to all people and organizations involved. Send thank you notes to all individuals and officials who helped.
8. **Contact SMART** for help or guidance.

### What is SMART?

Founded in 1996 to promote the fair and accurate portrayal of Sikh Americans and the Sikh religion in American media and society, the Sikh Mediawatch and Resource Task Force (SMART) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots membership organization.

SMART is dedicated to combat bigotry and prejudice, protect the rights and religious freedoms of Sikh Americans, and provide resources that empower the Sikh American community.

### How can I help?

Membership in SMART is open to individuals, *gurdwaras* and Sikh organizations that share our goals and mission. You can help achieve our goals by: 1) becoming a member, 2) responding to media misrepresentation of Sikhs and Sikhism and reporting them to SMART, and 3) donating generously to help defray the expenses involved in this work.

© 2001 Sikh Mediawatch and Resource Task Force (SMART). All Rights Reserved.