

Civil Rights Cases

A lawyer can help you file a lawsuit against the police for civil rights violations. Violations include:

- Being falsely convicted of a crime
- Police brutality and police shootings
- Searches without warrants/consent
- Wrongful arrests

It is recommended that anyone who has had these experiences talk to a lawyer before filing internal complaints, posting on social media or speaking to the press.

Finding a Lawyer

Civil rights lawyers are typically the best qualified to handle these claims. When looking for a lawyer, consider:

- What is their experience handling police misconduct cases?
- Do they answer questions and help you understand your legal issues?
- How will they charge you money (ask about consulting fee, contingency fees, court costs)? Remember that it is not possible to tell if a lawyer is more experienced or dedicated based solely on their fees.

A lawyer will have you complete a Retainer Agreement when they are officially representing you.

*Based on ethical rules, a lawyer **should not**:*

- Approach someone they know was injured to promote their services
- Advertise legal services in real time
- Distribute advertisements that are not labeled as "advertising materials"
- Promise any sort of outcome on a case

Complaints

There are many other negative interactions with the police that may not qualify for a lawsuit, but are worth reporting:

- Swearing or name calling
- Threats
- Refusing to share their name and badge #
- Preventing civilians from taking photos or video

Documenting these behaviors with the police department creates a record that is useful for holding officers and departments accountable.

Where to File Complaints

Aurora Police Internal Affairs

303.739.6072

https://www.auroragov.org/residents/public_safety/police/internal_affairs_cases

Boulder Police Professional Standards Unit

303-441-3312

mcnivena@bouldercolorado.gov

Colorado Springs Professional Standards Division

719-444-7410

CSPDCommunityRelations@ColoradoSprings.gov

<https://coloradosprings.gov/police-department/page/professional-standards-division>

Denver Office of the Independent Monitor

720-913-3306

aim@denvergov.org

<https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/office-of-the-independent-monitor.html>

Greeley Police Internal Affairs

970-350-9605

<https://greeleypd.com/internal-affairs/>

Pueblo Police Internal Affairs

<https://www.pueblo.us/449/Internal-Affairs-Section>

AN ACTIVIST RESOURCE

Arrests, Legal Representation, and Complaints against the Police



Law for the people since 1937

Help! I had contact with the police. What do I do?

WERE YOU
ARRESTED?

NO

There are a few options to take action to hold police accountable

Many police departments, including Denver, have internal review committees to report misconduct.

*Note that many lawyers recommend speaking to a lawyer before filing anything with the police. You may be able to file an internal complaint and take legal action.

Individuals, families, and their community members can organize to demand accountability. You can share your story with the media, hold a protest, circulate a petition, and contact legislators to demand justice.

*Note that many lawyers recommend speaking to a lawyer before taking public action. You may be able to organize your community & take legal action.

A civil rights lawyer may file a lawsuit for you. The lawsuit will ask a court to make a police department pay money damages and/or make policy changes (non monetary damages). Many lawyers will make a "contingency agreement" where they are paid at the end of the case from settlements or a jury award of money damages. There are also nonprofit lawyer groups like the ACLU or volunteer lawyers.

YES

Contact a criminal defense lawyer as soon as possible. You may be eligible for a public defender if you cannot afford to pay for a lawyer.

Contact a civil rights lawyer as soon as possible. You may need to wait until your criminal case is settled before taking further action.

DO NOT talk to the police, media, or anyone else about your case until you have talked to a lawyer.