AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

Domestic Travel Information for Green Card Holders

As a lawful permanent resident (LPR), you have more rights than most non-citizens — but your green card does NOT make you immune from arrest, questioning, or removal. A traffic stop in the wrong state, an old conviction, or signing the wrong form can lead to removal proceedings. Know your rights before you travel in the U.S.

What to Carry at All Times

Carry the following items with you at all times:

- **Green Card (Form I-551):** Federal law requires all green card holders 18 years and older to carry their green card at all times and present it on demand to any immigration officer. Failing to produce it is a federal misdemeanor and can result in up to a $100 fine or 30 days in jail.
  - Your green card is a TSA-accepted identification document. You do not need a separate REAL ID driver's license to fly domestically.
- **Additional ID:** Use a state-issued REAL ID or enhanced driver's license, or valid foreign passport as secondary ID.
- **Your attorney's phone number:** Write it on paper. Do not rely on having it stored on your phone.

At the Airport: TSA Shares Your Data With ICE

The TSA shares domestic passenger information with ICE, which cross-references that information against records of people with final removal orders and sends agents to the airport to make arrests. ICE is already present at many airports across the United States. **This is most likely to affect you if you have a pending order of removal, an outstanding warrant, or any criminal history. Do not fly without consulting your attorney first if any of these apply.**

Facial Recognition Scans: You Have the Right to Opt Out

DHS is consolidating the biometric databases of TSA, ICE, CBP, and USCIS, including facial recognition, into a single unified platform. In early 2026, TSA expanded facial recognition to 65 airports. For domestic flights, you currently have the right to opt out. Say: "I am opting out of facial recognition. I would like manual ID verification." Ask for a supervisor if the agent refuses. **Note that prior facial recognition scans taken at the time of lawful entry may remain in the system even if you opt out later.**

Know Your Risk Factors

- **Criminal history:** An old DUI, misdemeanor, or plea deal can make you removable. NEVER accept any criminal plea without first consulting your immigration attorney.
- **Traveling in high-risk states:** Certain states — such as Alabama, Texas, and Florida — have laws that create added risk and may result in immigration detention or arrest during a routine traffic stop. Consult your attorney before traveling through high-risk states if you have any status issues.
- **Bus & train — the 100-mile zone:** Border Patrol can board buses and trains within 100 miles of any U.S. border without a warrant. This covers significant parts of the U.S., including all of Florida, Michigan, and several states in New England, as well as vast portions of Arizona, California, Texas, and other states.

If You Are Stopped, Questioned, or Detained

- **Stay calm:** Do not run, argue, or physically resist.
- **Present your green card:** You are required by law to show it on demand. Do not refuse.
- **Opt out of facial scan:** Say, "I am opting out of facial recognition. I want manual ID verification." Ask for a supervisor if refused.
- **Remain silent:** Say, "I am exercising my right to remain silent."
- **Ask for a lawyer:** Say, "I want to speak to an attorney." Then say nothing more.
- **Do not sign anything:** Especially a "Voluntary Departure" form. Signing permanently waives your right to a hearing before an immigration judge.

This flyer is intended for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. You should not act or rely on any information in this flyer without consulting a competent, licensed immigration attorney. If you do not have an immigration attorney, you can find a licensed attorney at www.ailalawyer.com.

©2026 American Immigration Lawyers Association

Flyer last updated on 7/31/26

AILA is the national bar association of immigration lawyers comprised of over 17,000 members located in every state of the United States and worldwide.