

How to Safely Protest

How To Prepare For The Demonstration

PLANNING DO'S

Plan Ahead:

- Know the exact location, starting point, route, and/or destination of the demonstration.
- Know how to get assistance.
- Make a plan for reconnecting with your companions if separated.
- Eat food and drink lots of water.

Observe:

- Look for signs of physical & mental distress in yourself and others before attending.
- Calm down those who show panicked behavior.

Document:

- Be sure to inform someone who's not attending the demonstration of your plans.
- Write down the date, time, location(s), and the time you plan on leaving the event.

WHAT TO BRING

- Water in a plastic bottle with a squirt top to drink and wash off skin or eyes.
- Energy snacks.
- Identification and/or emergency contact information.
- Enough money for food, transportation, & payphone.
- Wristwatch, paper, & pen to accurately document events.
- Inhaler, EpiPen, Insulin & a few days of prescription medication. (in case you're arrested).
- Menstrual Pads. Avoid tampons; if arrested, you may not get a chance to change them.
- Basic First Aid Kit.
- Wet wipes & tissues.
- Small backpack to carry any belongings.

PLANNING DON'TS

Don't go alone:

- Go with a group/club or with friends who know you well.

Don't wear things that can be easily pulled/grabbed

- Jewelry, loose clothing, ties, loose hair, or ponytails.

Avoid wearing contacts:

- Contact lenses can trap irritating chemicals under them.

Avoid certain skincare:

- Vaseline, mineral oil, oil-based sunscreen/moisturizers can trap chemicals.
- Don't wear them if you can.

WHAT TO WEAR

- Comfortable, protective shoes that you can run in.
- Clothing that covers all your skin to protect you from sun & pepper spray exposure.
- A hat to protect you from the sun & chemicals.
- Bandana, to cover the nose & mouth, that's soaked in lemon juice or vinegar. It helps with breathing during chemical exposure.
- Fresh clothes in a plastic bag in case what you're wearing gets contaminated by chemicals.
- Shatter-resistant eye protection, such as sunglasses, goggles, or gas masks.
- N95 facemask or equivalent mask.

What To Do During a Demonstration

AT THE PROTEST

- Stay focused and aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Follow instructions from event organizers about where to go & when to move.
- Document, film, or write down events and police actions.
- Don't run. Avoid running to close gaps or move away, try to move slowly as a group.
- Stay hydrated by regularly drinking water.
- Wear a face mask & avoid touching your face.
- Avoid direct contact with the police, military, or counter-protesters.
- Be aware of undercover police that may be in the crowd. Be cautious of individuals who aggressively advocate for violence when the crowd/organizers seem peaceful. Don't engage.
- Protect your identity and the identity of others.

DEALING WITH TEARGAS

- STAY CALM; panicking increases irritation.
- DO NOT RUB IT IN.
- Flush out your eyes with water, saline solution, or LAW solution (50% unflavored liquid antacid & 50% water). Tilt head sideways & spray solution away from the tear duct, towards the side of the face.
- Blow your nose, rinse your mouth, cough & spit. Try not to swallow.
- If you're wearing contacts: remove the lenses with clean, uncontaminated hands & dispose of the lenses after.
- Rinse your body & clothing with COLD WATER. Hot water will open pores & let the chemical seep further into the skin, causing more irritation.
- Face the wind to let fresh air blow excess tear gas powder off of you.

IF THE POLICE ORDER AN ISSUE TO DISPERSE

- Shutting down a protest through a dispersal order must be law enforcement's last resort. The police can't break up a gathering unless there is a clear and present danger of riot, disorder, interference with traffic, or other immediate threat to public safety.
- If a dispersal order is issued, they must provide a reasonable opportunity to comply, including sufficient time and a clear, unobstructed exit path.
- Individuals must receive clear and detailed notice of a dispersal order: how much time they have to disperse, consequences of failing to disperse, and what clear exit route they can follow, before they may be arrested or charged with any crime.

IF YOU'RE STOPPED BY THE POLICE

- Remain calm. Make sure to keep your hands visible. Don't argue, resist, or obstruct the police, even if you believe they are violating your rights. Point out that you are not disrupting anyone else's activity and that the First Amendment protects your actions.
- Ask if you are free to leave. If the officer says yes, calmly walk away.
- If you are under arrest, you have a right to ask why. Otherwise, say you wish to remain silent and ask for a lawyer immediately. Don't say anything or sign anything without a lawyer.
- You have the right to make a local phone call. If you're calling your lawyer, the police are not allowed to listen.
- You never have to consent to a search of yourself or your belongings. If you do explicitly consent, it can affect you later in court.
- Police can "pat down" your clothing if they suspect you have a weapon and may search you after an arrest.



Knowing Your Rights & What To Do If They Are Violated

YOUR RIGHTS

- Your rights are strongest at public forums and property--streets, sidewalks, parks, plazas in front of government buildings-- as long as your not blocking access or interfering with the purposes the property was designed for.
- The government can't restrict your speech if it's taking place on your property or with the consent of the property owner. However, property owners can set rules for speech on their property.
- When you're lawfully in a public space, you have the right to photograph anything in plain view-- police, federal building, etc. On private property, the owner can set photography rules & restrictions.
- You don't need a permit to march in the street or sidewalks, provided that marchers don't obstruct traffic. Without a permit, the police can ask you to move to the side of the street/sidewalk to let others pass or for safety reasons.



ATTENDING A PROTEST

Additional Rights

- Right to Medical Assistance: If you get injured, you have the right to medical assistance without delay.
- Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Detention: If arrested, you have the right to be told the reason for your arrest & the right promptly after your arrest to access a lawyer and your family.
- Counterprotesters also have free speech rights. The police must treat protesters and counterprotesters equally. Police are permitted to keep antagonistic groups separated but should allow them to be within sight and sound of one another.



IF YOU BELIEVE YOUR RIGHTS WERE VIOLATED

- You have the Right to Complain: If your rights have been violated, you have a right to file a complaint and be provided information on how to do so.
- Write down everything you can remember: officers badge number, patrol car number, and the agency/prescient they work for.
- Get witnesses' contact information.
- Take photos of injuries or damages.
- After gathering the necessary info, file a written complaint with the agency's internal affairs division or civilian complaint board.



ORGANIZING A PROTEST

Do you need a permit?

- Certain types of events may require permits. These include a march or parade that requires blocking traffic or street closure; a large rally requiring the use of sound-amplifying devices; or a rally over a specific size at most parks or plazas.
- Certain permit procedures require applying well in advance of the planned event, but the police can't use those procedures to prevent a protest in response to breaking news events.
- A permit can't be denied because the event is controversial or will express unpopular views.
- If the permit regulations that apply to your protest require a fee for a permit, they should allow a waiver for those who cannot afford the charge.
- Route restrictions or sound equipment restrictions might violate the First Amendment if they are unnecessary for traffic control or public safety or interfere significantly with effective communication to the intended audience.



Knowing Your Rights & What To Do If They Are Violated

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

Your Rights

- When lawfully present in any public space, you have the right to photograph anything in plain view, including federal buildings and the police. On private property, the owner may set rules about photography or video.
- The police can't confiscate or demand to view your photographs or video without a warrant, nor can they delete data under any circumstances. However, they may order citizens to cease activities that truly interfere with legitimate law enforcement operations.
- If you are videotaping, be aware that there is an important legal distinction between a visual, photographic record (fully protected) and the audio portion of a videotape, which some states have tried to regulate under state wiretapping laws.

If you're stopped or detained for taking photos

- Remain calm & never physically resist a police officer.
- If stopped, ask the officer if you're free to leave. If yes, calmly walk away.
- If detained, ask the officer what crime you are suspected of committing. Remind the officer that taking photographs is your right under the First Amendment and does not constitute reasonable suspicion of criminal activity.

