

## PROTEST 101

### Preparation

- **Comfortable walking shoes**  
Important because you are going to be walking a lot. Also, in case of an emergency, you're going to want to be able to move and move quickly.
- **Wear layers**  
Important because marching involves a lot of both walking and standing still, you'll likely alternate from too hot to too cold very quickly.
- **Sun Protection**  
It's going to be 90° downtown this weekend.
- **Hydrate, but remember that restrooms may be few and far between.**  
People need water, but they also need to pee. Figure your own balance out. There will be porta potties available, but bring enough cash so that you can slink into a coffee shop, buy something, and use their bathroom.
- **Pack Light.**  
Necessary items: Charged phone, I.D., cash, a debit card, water, snacks and any crucial medications. Any large crowd of people is perfect for pickpockets, even protests. Keep your belongings in a zippered pocket or backpack worn squarely on your back.
- **Password protect your phone**  
so police cannot access your information. (This includes turning off Touch ID so police cannot force you to touch the home button with your finger to unlock the phone.) They are not allowed to look at your phone without a warrant.
- **Non U.S. citizens should memorize/carry record of their immigration number in case of arrest.**

### Safety

- **Be Smart, Know When to Stay, and Know When to Leave.**  
Be smart and when the time comes to leave or obey police direction, that you do so. If things get out of hand, get out of the way and away from the front lines as quickly as possible. Don't go toe to toe with the police, don't antagonize them, and don't start an altercation with opposing protesters, you'll just make trouble for everyone.
- **Buddy system**  
It's important that you always have at least one person with you. It's important

that someone knows where you are in case you get arrested or somehow fall off the grid. Also pick a meet-up point in case you get separated.

- **Keep a cool head**

However passionately you feel about the cause, it's crucial that you are in the right state of mind while at the protest. Watch for signs of physical and mental problems in yourself and others. Cool down others in your group who exhibit panic, inflammatory or unsafe behavior.

- **Hold the line.**

Stories abound of law enforcement officials going undercover to incite riots and other violent acts in order to quell a protest. Don't let the groupthink or the mob mentality take over, and if you feel unsafe near somebody, just walk away. Try not to get dragged down into being the "peace police," either. Everybody protests differently, and again, if you feel uncomfortable or otherwise unsafe, walk away.

## Your Rights

- **Where can I engage in free speech activity?**

Generally, all types of expression are constitutionally protected in traditional "public forums" such as streets, sidewalks, and parks. In addition, you may have a right to speak in other public locations that the government has opened up for unrestricted public speech, such as plazas in front of government buildings.

- **Do I need a permit before I engage in free speech activity?**

Not usually. However, certain types of events require permits. For example:

- A march or parade that does not stay on the sidewalk, and other events that require blocking traffic or street closure;
- A large rally requiring the use of sound amplifying devices; or
- A rally at certain designated parks or plazas.

Many permit procedures require that the application be filed several weeks in advance of the event. However, the First Amendment prohibits such an advance notice requirement from being used to prevent protests in response to recent news events.

- **If organizers have not obtained a permit, where can a march take place?**

If marchers stay on the sidewalks and obey traffic and pedestrian signals, their activity is constitutionally protected even without a permit. Marchers may be required to allow enough space on the sidewalk for normal pedestrian traffic and may not maliciously obstruct or detain passers-by.

- **May I distribute leaflets and other literature on public sidewalks without a permit?**

Yes. You may approach pedestrians on public sidewalks with leaflets, newspapers, petitions, and solicitations for donations without a permit. These types of free speech activities are legal as long as entrances to buildings are not blocked and passers-by are not physically and maliciously detained. However, a permit may be required to set up tables or other physical structures.

- **Do I have a right to picket on public sidewalks?**

Yes, and this is also an activity for which a permit is not required. However, picketing must be done in an orderly, non-disruptive fashion so that pedestrians can pass by and entrances to buildings are not blocked.

- **What do I do if I get stopped by the police?**

Stay calm, be polite, and don't run. Don't argue, resist, or obstruct the police, even if you are innocent or you believe that the police are violating your rights. In some states, you must give your name if asked to identify yourself, but you do not have to provide an ID or other paperwork. Make sure to keep your hands where police can see them. 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 and silently walk away. DON'T forget that police are legally allowed to lie, intimidate, and bluff.

- **And if I'm under arrest?**

Do not resist arrest, even if you believe the arrest is unfair. 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 give any explanations or excuses. Don't say anything, sign anything, or make any decisions without a lawyer. You have the right to make a local phone call, and if you're calling your lawyer, police are not allowed to listen.

- **Can I be searched?**

You never have to consent to a search of yourself or your belongings. Police may "pat down" your clothing if they suspect you have a weapon, and may search you after an arrest. You should not physically resist, but you have the right to refuse consent for any further search. If you do explicitly consent, it can affect you later in court.

- **What do I do if my rights have been violated?**

Remember: the street is not the place to challenge police misconduct. Don't physically resist officers or threaten to file a complaint. As soon as you can, write down everything you remember, including officers' badge and patrol car numbers, which agency the officers were from, and any other details. Get contact information for witnesses. If you are injured, take photographs of your injuries (but seek medical attention first). Once you have this information, you can file a written complaint with the agency's internal affairs division or civilian complaint

board; in many cases, you can file a complaint anonymously if you wish. You can also seek the assistance of an attorney or the ACLU.

- **Do I have the right to photograph or videotape during protests?**

Yes. When you are lawfully present in any public space, you have the right to photograph anything that is in plain view. That includes pictures of federal buildings, transportation facilities, and the police, even during arrest. Police may discourage you from filming and even saying it is illegal but it is not. You must say “Officer, I’m not interfering. I’m asserting my First Amendment rights. You’re being documented and recorded offsite.”

When you are on private property, the property owner may set rules about the taking of photographs or video. Police officers may not confiscate or demand to view your digital photographs or video without a warrant, nor may they delete your photographs or video under any circumstances. However, they may legitimately order citizens to cease activities that are truly interfering with legitimate law enforcement operations.

- **Do counter-demonstrators have free speech rights?**

Yes. Although counter-demonstrators should not be allowed to physically disrupt the event they are protesting, they do have the right to be present and to voice their displeasure. Police are permitted to keep two antagonistic groups separated but should allow them to be within the general vicinity of one another.

## **Best Practices**

- **Don't all clump together.**

Spread out to give the illusion of a larger group of people.

- **Social Media, social media, social media.**

This is the one occasion in life where social media is very important. Twitter often gets the story long before any media outlets are able to publish. Follow reporters who you know will be at the march and follow march hashtags because if something dangerous happens, Twitter is the first place you’ll hear about it.

Social Media is also the place where your voice will collectively be heard around the world with hashtags etc.

## **Children’s Involvement**

- By bringing your children to a protest you are helping to shape them into involved, concerned, civic-minded citizens. And with a little preparation, there is no reason why children can’t join adults in having their voices heard.

- **Take a Photo**  
One simple way to make sure you can help find your child if she gets lost is to take a photo of he/her as he/she is dressed for the march. This photo could be quickly shared with friends, on social media, or with law enforcement if a child became truly lost.
- **Crowd Sense**  
Discuss the need to pay attention and stick with your buddy. Talk about how to notice when people are getting angry or pushy, and why it's important to keep distance around yourself at all times. Talk about escape routes and remind your child to avoid confrontations between marchers and law enforcement.
- **Getting separated**  
Discuss with your child a plan of what they should do if you you get separated. For example, if they can't find anybody in uniform to ask for help, have them ask another parent with a child for help.
- **Contact Info**  
Make sure your child knows at least two different contact numbers for people who may be able to help them. This can be either memorized, tagged within their clothing or written on their bodies with sharpie.
- **For the little ones, Tag Your Kid**  
Even with the best and most attentive parenting, things sometimes happen and a child is sometimes separated from her guardians. Plan for this unlikely eventuality by tagging your child in some way. Use a simple conference style tag that clipped inside a jacket, (tag facing the child so no creepy person can read their name and lead them astray if the jacket is off). On that tag print the child's name, your phone number, two alternate numbers and your home address as well as any medically significant allergies.
- **Secret Code Word**  
Once in awhile we find ourselves in a situation where we want our kids to listen and act immediately. It's not the time for discussion, or questions, or a debate, or a demand for the reason why. When the secret word is said, it's time to shut up and do what Mom or Dad says. It is also important that the children know that if they are in danger, or need us to listen to them for a health and safety alert, they can holler, or whisper, the secret word and we'll drop everything and follow them without question.
- **Getting Kids Involved**  
Make the day of the march fun by encouraging your child to engage with other people at the march, young and old. Perhaps agree to ask interview questions, or encourage your budding activist to take some video clips of the experience, the people and what they learned.

- **Respecting your teen's privacy**

At this age, your teen is able to give and withhold informed consent. Take lots of pictures to remember the day if you wish before posting anything involving your teen to social media, especially something that identifies their political leanings or has the potential to embarrass them, talk to your teen. Respect the answer they give you.