

Note: As of 6/15/2020 this is a draft document and may be edited from time to time.

Recommended Safety Tips for Peaceful Protesting

Protests and Rallies are an invaluable part of our movement. While most protests remain peaceful, it can be valuable, whether it's your first or five-hundredth rally, to keep some safety tips in mind...

Prepare Before:

1. Have a Buddy System. Find a buddy or a group of folks to attend together. Make sure you all maintain contact and check in with each other throughout the event.
2. If heading to the event solo, identify an offsite contact that knows your plans and make arrangements to keep them posted on your status and safety during and after the event. (Where you will be; How you will get there; Where you intend to go in an emergency; Your government-registered name, emergency contacts and date of birth; and, What time you intend to get back).
3. Prepare a go bag & plan your outfit!
 - a. Pack a small backpack or waist bag with key supplies: Water, high-protein snacks, sunscreen, required meds. You may wish to bring a small first aid kit or battery pack—but remember your phone may not get service at the event.
 - b. Take supplies to protect from and safely remove chemical irritants (face mask/covering, glasses or goggles, milk of magnesia, towelettes). If you use contacts, consider glasses instead for the protest.
 - c. Determine the appropriate level of body-cover for your participation (ie: do you want to cover tattoos, wear a hat, remove high-profile earrings that may get caught/snagged, etc.).
 - d. Memorize or keep on your body 1-2 emergency contact numbers.
4. Have a solid understanding of the environment. Before you go, you should know:
 - a. The local terrain: download a protest or event map, and/or a Google Earth screenshot of the venue and surrounding areas.

- b. Multiple routes into and out of the protest area.
- c. Several predetermined meeting points where you'll meet your group if you get separate

Protests and a Pandemic

For those of us able to activate in-person, in public spaces, here are some tips to help you do so with safety precautions in mind. Only you can determine your risk tolerance and if you choose to show up, consider these tips!

- Do NOT go if you are feeling sick. Get well first, and protest later to protect the community.
- Wear a mask—and take extra if you can to offer others
- Attempt to maintain social distancing at all times--lots of leaders have included this request in their asks.
- Wear eye protection to prevent injury and virus spread
- Use hand sanitizer, often!
- Consider signs and noisemakers vs yelling—yelling spreads virus
- Sanitize everything once home (launder clothing)
- If you live with high-risk people, or folks that did not attend the protest, consider self-isolating for 14 days if you think you may have been exposed

While There:

- 5. Follow these simple, yet effective safety and security best practices
 - a. Maintain 360°“situational awareness” at all times. Know what is going on around you, above you and below you.
 - i. Be alert to suspicious persons, packages, activity, and vehicles: Stay away from unattended bags, backpacks, boxes, or other packages. Avoid public containers such as trash cans, dumpsters, mailboxes, and newspaper stands.
 - ii. If you see something you think is a problem, get away, keep others away, and consider alerting event leaders or safety monitors if any.

- b. As you move, keep multiple points of egress in mind: both conventional (gates, openings in fences, etc.) and unconventional (jumping a fence, dashing in to a building, or crawling through a ditch)
- c. Know the difference between “cover” and “concealment”
 - i. Cover: something that will stop a bullet (i.e. heavy concrete wall or flower bed, car or truck, ditch, a building)
 - ii. Concealment: something that would prevent an assailant from observing you (i.e. bushes, shrubs, signage, banners, etc.)
- d. **Be extremely alert if rallying on a roadway or other surface large enough for vehicle traffic**
 - i. Stay on the edges of the crowd & watch for unusual vehicles or traffic
 - ii. Listen for and react quickly to the sound of revving engines or squealing tires
 - iii. Look for other vehicles, telephone poles, or other objects that could protect you from an oncoming vehicle
 - iv. Move quickly and decisively at right angles to an on-coming vehicle. **DO NOT RUN IN THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL OF THE VEHICLE**

If violence erupts:

Chemical Agents Dispersed:

- Know which way the wind is blowing
- Quickly move up-wind if possible
- Use water, not milk, especially in your eyes to remove irritants once safe to do so.

Gunfire:

- Be prepared to move quickly to “cover” if gunfire erupts
- Get low – then go to cover. If you can’t find cover, move to concealment until you can safely egress

Explosion:

- Get out quickly via the safest and fastest route

- Assume that a “secondary” device may have been planted nearby – BE ALERT, MOVE QUICKLY, DELIBERATELY, AND SAFELY.
- Go to your predesignated rally point and account for your group.

If you are not able to show up in person, for whatever reason you have, look for other ways to offer support.

More resources

Check out these links to learn more about your rights & resources for safety:

- ACLU [Know Your Rights - Protesters Rights](#)
- [Video](#) from ACLU
- Amnesty International [Safety During Protest](#)
- Guidance from CNN [Rights of Protesters](#)
- NAACP [Legal Defense Fund](#)

These tips are general guidance to consider for your personal participation in any protest or rally. If as an individual you intend to participate in civil disobedience, have a plan beforehand. At a minimum, [know your rights](#), prioritize safety, and have a plan for legal and cash-bail support. Participation in civil disobedience in an official capacity representing Sierra Club requires Board pre-approval.