PROTEST GUIDE

A 'KNOW YOUR RIGHTS' RESOURCE FROM FREE PRESS ACTION

THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO



DESIGNATE AN EMERGENCY CONTACT

Choose someone who will not be at the event. Let them know where you will be and when. Memorize their phone number in case your device is confiscated. Have a post-event meetup/contact strategy in place.



ID AND MEDICINE

Carry a valid ID. Ensure that you have any needed medicine with you with its original prescription label intact. Carry your know-your-rights card in case an ICE officer stops you.



CARE-TAKING OBLIGATIONS

If you are arrested at an event, you may be detained overnight. Ensure that people and animals who rely on your care are looked after.



SECURE YOUR DIGITAL DEVICES

Before you take action, protect yourself from surveillance:

- Use a VPN (or Virtual Private Network) to secure your internet connection. VPNs encrypt data between devices to prevent third parties from monitoring your online activity, and provide security against potential cyber threats and the sale of your data. VPNs like NordVPN enhance your online security.
- Use privacy-protected browsers like DuckDuckGo or Tor.
- Block trackers using Ghostery.
- Chat or call using encrypted apps like Signal.
- Disable biometric passwords such as fingerprints, facial recognition or voice-activated passwords.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ACLU ⟶ Know Your Rights: Protest Guide

National Lawyers Guild ⟶ Know Your Rights for Campus Protests

PEN America ⟶ Guide for Combating Protest Disinformation

We Have Rights ⟶ Videos and Resources to Prepare for Encounters with ICE
(This appears in several languages.)

Free Press Action

DISCLAIMER: This is not legal advice. Free Press Action is a nonpartisan organization that does not support or oppose any candidate for public office. We fight for equitable access to technology, diverse and independent ownership of media platforms, and journalism that holds leaders accountable and tells people what's actually happening in their communities.

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By taking strong collective action, communities can make our voices heard and destabilize Trump's rising authoritarian power grabs. The First Amendment provides broad protections for our rights to protest and hold government officials accountable.

It's important to know your rights so you can safely assert them. However, there is no way to guarantee that law enforcement will respect your rights when you participate in demonstrations. On the ground, the First Amendment cannot protect you from being harassed or even arrested for attending a protest or attempting to film the police.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

- **You have the right to organize and attend a protest in public spaces, like streets or sidewalks.** You may need a permit if you plan to block streets, assemble at certain hours, use sound equipment, or have a large gathering in places like parks or plazas. These rights generally do not protect you on private property unless you have the property owner's consent. Residential areas often have heightened restrictions.
- **You have the right to document demonstrations and other activities in public spaces — and that includes filming law enforcement (police/ICE).** Filming and photographing do not, by themselves, constitute interference.
- **The First Amendment protects everyone's right to protest. However, individuals face varying degrees of risk.** Even permitted protests can end with police conducting arrests. While those arrests might not lead to charges, arrests alone can have significant consequences depending on your job status, immigration status or prior legal record.



IF POLICE STOP YOU AT A PROTEST

- Do not resist and keep your hands visible to the officers. Ask if you are being detained. If they say no, you can walk away. If they say yes, ask "why?"
- You do not have to answer any questions (in some states, you may be required to identify yourself). Do not provide false information. Instead, assert your right to remain silent. You do not have to consent to a search of your body or belongings. If police carry out a search anyway, state clearly and calmly that you do not consent.

IF ICE STOPS YOU IN PUBLIC

- Do not resist and keep your hands visible to the agents. Ask if you are being detained. If they say no, you can walk away. If they say yes, you can exercise your right to remain silent (and you can acknowledge this right out loud).
- You do not have to answer any questions. If they ask where you were born or how you entered the United States, you can remain silent and refuse to answer. Show your know-your-rights card to the agent. You may refuse to show documents that say what country you are from. You may refuse a search (agents may "pat" your clothes, if they suspect you have a weapon). You have the right to speak to a lawyer (if you don't have one, tell the agent you want to speak to one).
- You can refuse to sign any document.

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