



So it's your first protest?

A Guide to Staying Safe at Public Protests and Demonstrations

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The First Amendment to the US Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.



Before You Go

- ☐ **Dress like you're going to an outdoor sports game or concert.** Wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes and bring enough layers. Insulating wool socks are great for the cold. If you'll be outside for a long time, consider bringing hand or foot warmers. Don't forget sunscreen and sunglasses!
- ☐ **Charge your phone.**
- ☐ **Keep everything lightweight.** To make signs easier to hold, mount them on cardboard paper towel or wrapping paper tubes.
- ☐ **Bring a \$20 bill and write the number of your local National Lawyers' Guild hotline in sharpie on your arm.** In the unlikely event that you are arrested, this will allow you to call a lawyer. Local hotlines are listed at <https://www.nlg.org/massdefensecommittee> Lawyers for areas that don't have hotlines are listed at <http://www.nlg.org/referral-directory/>



Before You Go, Continued

- ☐ **Plan to go with a group if possible, and swap phone numbers with all your group members (or set up a group text).** Have a plan for when and where you will meet back up after the protest, in case you get separated during the march itself.
- ☐ **Download the planned route onto your phone or, better yet, print out a paper copy.**
- ☐ **Know what kind of protest activities are happening.** Will there be speeches? Teach-ins? "Direct action" usually means some kind of civil disobedience. If those are happening -- and lots of protests keep it strictly legal -- make a plan ahead of time about how close you're comfortable being to direct actions. If this is your first protest, it's a great idea to hang back.
- ☐ **Parking may be tight near the start of the protest site.** Plan in advance to park farther away and walk, take a shared ride, or use public transit.



At the Protest

- ☐ **When you're protesting in a public space, like in the streets or outside a federal building, you can take photos and videos of anything in plain view.** Everyone's behavior helps to set the tone for the protest.
- ☐ **Show your respect for the people around you by not littering and by keeping chants positive.**
- ☐ **Families of all ages may be at the protest.** Help the kids around you have a good time!
- ☐ **Enjoy!**



The vast majority of protests are planned to be peaceful, and you can expect them to stay that way. Just use common sense and trust your instincts. If you see someone yelling and stirring up the protestors or police, or you have a gut feeling that something is not right, alert your group and make a group decision as to whether or not to leave together.