



Common Sense Safety at Demonstrations

# Common Sense Safety at Demonstrations

Staying Safe at Public Protests & Large Gathering

Practical awareness.

Calm decision-making.

Community safety.





# WHY THIS MATTERS

**Public demonstrations are part of civic life.**

- **Large crowds**
- **Heightened emotions**
- **Rapid changes**
- **Unexpected risks**

**Preparation — not fear — is our focus.**

# BEFORE YOU GO

- Attend with a buddy
- Tell someone where you'll be
- Charge your phone fully
- Bring water & essentials only
- Identify exits & meeting points

**Preparation — reduces panic.**



# DRESS & PACK FOR

- Wear closed-toe shoes you can run in!
- Avoid loose jewelry and hair pony tails
- Carry minimal valuables: ID and credit card
- Use a cross-body bag
- Bring ID & emergency contacts

**Mobility matters.**



# WHAT TO BRING FOR SAFETY



## Whistle

- **Why:** Draw attention, emergency signal
- **How:** Use in short blasts for help



## Phone

- **Why:** GPS, contact help
- **How:** Keep fully charged, share your location



## Walkie-Talkie

- **Why:** Reliable group communication
- **How:** Set channel, stay in contact



## Water Bottle

- **Why:** Hydration, tear gas relief
- **How:** Drink regularly, wash eyes if exposed



## First Aid Kit

- **Why:** Treat minor injuries
- **How:** Include bandages, antiseptic, eyewash



## Eye Protection

- **Why:** Protect eyes from debris, irritants
- **How:** Wear if there is smoke, chemicals, gas



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# WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

It is important to stay alert and aware of your surroundings, especially in crowded situations, to detect signs of danger or discomfort early.

## WHY DO I NEED TO?

- Identify potential threats
- Make informed decisions
- Recognize when to exit safely



# SITUATIONAL AWARENESS IN CROWDS

- Stay near edges when possible
- Watch for sudden movement
- Avoid bottlenecks
- Trust your instincts early

**Discomfort is enough reason to leave.**



## WHAT ARE HARMFUL ACTORS LOOKING FOR?

In crowded or chaotic environments, harmful individuals often look for:

- **Isolation** – Someone separated from friends
- **Distraction** – Head down, unaware of surroundings
- **Impaired judgment** – Intoxication or emotional overwhelm
- **Confusion** – Sudden crowd movement or panic
- **Easy access** – Open bags, loose phones, visible valuables
- **Escalation opportunities** – Arguments they can inflame

## WHAT DO THEY DO?

- Create or exploit distractions
- Move people toward less visible areas
- Test boundaries with small behaviors first
- Target those who appear unsure or overwhelmed
- Blend into chaos to avoid attention

## HOW TO REDUCE YOUR RISK

- **Stay with your group**  
Maintain close contact, keep track of each other
- **Stay aware**  
Lift your head, keep alert, look purposeful
- **Limit valuables**  
Travel light and keep belongings securely tucked away
- **Respond early**  
Notice and move away from discomfort quickly
- **Remain confident**  
Strong body language can signal you're not an easy target



Predators look for opportunity, not strength. Awareness, proximity to others, and confident movement reduce risk significantly.



# EMOTIONAL SAFETY = PHYSICAL SAFETY

- Do not engage agitators
- Avoid confrontations
- Step back if energy shifts
- Focus on safety, not arguments

**Calm is a safety tool.**



# UNDERSTANDING SELF-DEFENSE LAW

AT A PROTEST OR DEMONSTRATION



## PRINCIPLES OF SELF-DEFENSE LAW



### Reasonable Belief

You must reasonably believe you are in imminent danger of harm.



### Escape Routes

Know your exits in case you need to leave quickly



### Proportional Response

The force used in self-defense must be proportional to threat.



### Duty to Retreat (Varies by State)

Some states require you to retreat if possible before using force.



### Castle Doctrine

Right to use force to defend your home against unlawful entry

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS



### Escape Routes

Know your exits in case you need to leave quickly



### Legal Rights

Understand local laws on self-defense and protests



### De-Escalation

Whenever possible, try to calm situations first



### Disturbing the Peace

Beware of additional charges during chaotic events



**Know your rights and stay safe**



# WHEN SHOULD THEY BE USED?



## Whistle

- Danger arises



## Walkie-Talkie

- Groups get separated



## First Aid Kit

- Injuries occur



## Phone

- Help is needed



## Water Bottle

- Heat or tear gas exposure



## Eye Protection

- Smoke or debris present



Film situation only if you are safe



# KNOW WHEN TO LEAVE

Leave immediately if you observe:

- Crowd surges
- Aggressive behavior nearby
- Property damage zones
- Heavy police movement
- Confusion or loss of control

**Leaving early is smart.**



# DEFEND BY RESISTANCE



**Running or  
Moving Away**



**Yelling  
or Shouting**



**Striking  
Sensitive Areas**



**Make Barriers  
or Shields**



**Escape Routes  
Safety Tools**



**Using  
Environment**



# AFTER THE EVENT

- Check in with a trusted contact

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- Travel home with others

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- Reflect and decompress

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**Safety includes recovery.**



# Common Sense Safety Reminder

We do not promote political positions.

We provide nonviolent personal safety education for individuals attending large public gatherings of any kind.

Empowerment is common sense.

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