

Stay Safe

Don't carry weapons (including pocket knives) or illegal drugs. They can turn a simple arrest for demonstrating into a very serious case, and make it hard or even impossible to bail out.

Don't make jokes about hurting people or damaging property.

Nervous officers are more likely to over-react when someone:

- comes up behind them
- touches them, their equipment, cars, or animals
- reaches for something in a pocket or backpack
- runs or makes sudden movements

Sometimes you need to run away, especially when police are beating people, or firing tear gas or rubber bullets. But running spreads panic. And when crowds run, the kids, elders and people with disabilities can get left behind. So keep an eye on what the police are up to, so you'll know where you want to go and have time to get there safely.

What to bring:

- food and water, for yourself and to share
- medication in its original pharmacy container
- paper and pens
- emergency phone numbers (written on your body)
- government-issued photo ID

What not to bring:

- address book, phone list, planner, or journal
- old ID cards that don't match your current one
- favorite jewelry or expensive electronic devices (especially devices that store phone numbers and addresses)

Officers are more likely to interfere with protest signs whose poles are made of metal, wood, or PVC pipe. You may avoid conflict by making the poles out of cardboard tubes.

Avoid jaywalking in a city that has an army of police officers in the streets.

It's against NY state law for three or more people to wear masks in a public place, unless they get a mask permit from the police. This includes bandannas worn over your face. If you want to challenge this law in court by risking arrest, work with a lawyer to select masks that communicate a clear, specific message.

If you're convicted of an offense involving a false name, or certain other false information, you're likely to have problems with your license (if you're a teacher, medical professional, lawyer, realtor, etc.) and your immigration status (if you're a non-U.S. citizen).



Don't discuss anyone's criminal activities or immigration problems on the Internet. That includes email, instant messages, blogs, and text messages to cell phones. To make email private, use the encryption program PGP (free at www.philzimmernann.com).

Report Police Misconduct

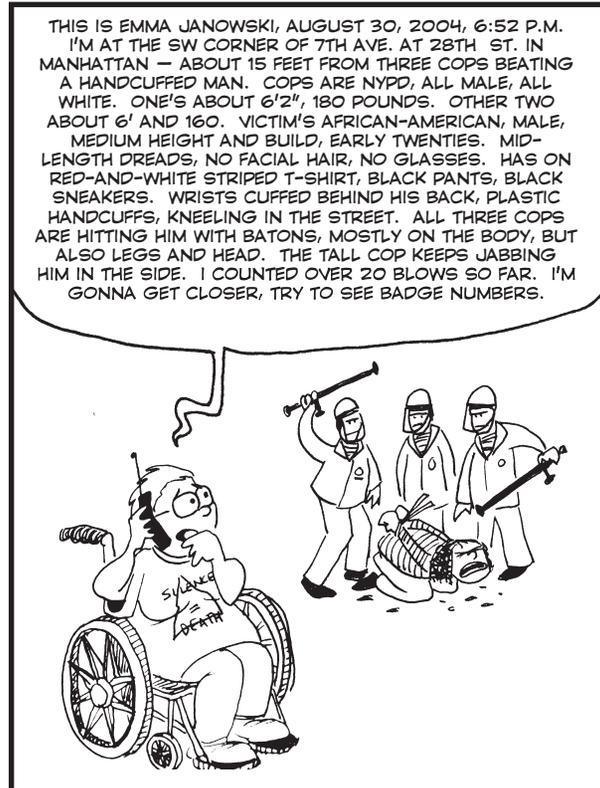
Take notes and photos of police misconduct. It's faster to talk than to write, so record your notes using a music player or cell phone (leave memos on your voice mail). Make a spare copy of your recordings, in case they're erased. Fill out the Police Misconduct Report (which you can download from www.lawcollective.org) and mail it to:

National Lawyers Guild
RNC Mass Defense
143 Madison Ave., 4th Floor
New York, NY 10016

You have the right to observe and film the police. You can stay as close as is necessary to see and hear clearly, as long as you don't interfere with the officers' "work." Include these details in your police misconduct report:

- your name and contact info
- exact date, time, and location of incident
- description of officers (badge numbers)
- description of victims
- description of incident:
 - what people did
 - what people said
- names and contact info of other witnesses
- description and photos of victims' injuries

Immediately after recording your notes, call the National Lawyers Guild and report the incident. Their number is (212) 679-6018.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Legal Information for Activists at the Republican National Convention

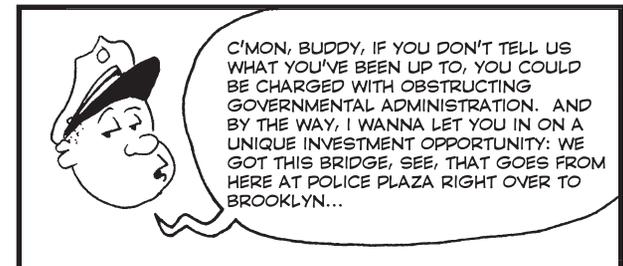
If you are arrested or you witness an arrest, call (212) 679-6018



All the rights and strategies in this pamphlet apply equally to adults and minors, citizens and non-citizens (including undocumented people).

For more information, go on the Internet to www.lawcollective.org. This website has fact sheets on a wide variety of topics relating to criminal defense, including:

- NY laws used to prosecute activists
- bail and release on recognizance
- warrants
- rights of minors
- rights of non-U.S. citizens
- civil disobedience
- solidarity tactics
- police misconduct
- government surveillance



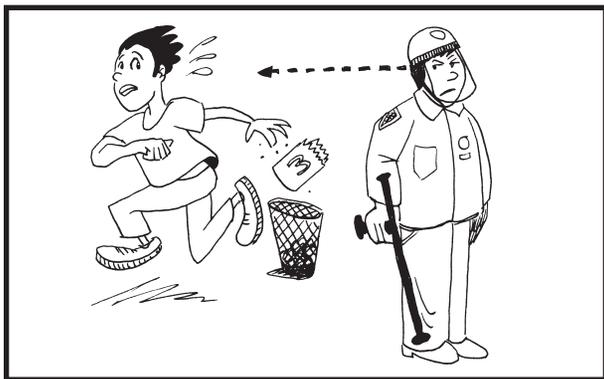
Find Out If You're Free to Go

If the police announce that you're under arrest or physically prevent you from leaving, then you know you're in custody. But sometimes an officer just stands in front of you making it seem that you can't leave, without really saying so. Usually, the officer doesn't yet have grounds to take you into custody, but is hoping that you'll say or do something to provide an excuse. So ask: **Am I free to go?** If the officer doesn't clearly tell you to stay, you should calmly walk away. Don't get into a conversation—that's likely to give the police the very evidence they need to arrest you.



Avoid the kind of "suspicious behavior" that officers write about in their police reports to justify having detained a suspect:

- noticing police officers and then running away or hiding
- crossing the street or turning back to avoid police officers
- looking nervous and acting sneaky
- noticing police officers and then throwing something away



Don't Give Unnecessary Information

(1) If you're free to go, do not give your name to the police or show your ID. When an officer asks for your name or any other information, reply: **Am I free to go?** If you are free, just leave without saying anything else.

(2) If you're not free to go, the police may merely be "detaining" you while they decide if they have enough evidence for an arrest. Eventually, they'll either let you go or arrest you. During this period, say nothing except: **I'm going to remain silent. I would like to see a lawyer.** Don't answer any other questions or make any remarks.

(3) If you are arrested, you'll have to give your name and show ID to be considered for release. The police will want photo ID with your home address. Except when an officer's asking for your name or ID, say: **I'm going to remain silent. I would like to see a lawyer.** Don't answer any other questions or make any remarks.

The reason for remaining silent is that whatever you say *will* be used against you and your friends, and is likely to be misquoted or taken out of context. So if you're not free to go, the smart thing to say is: **I'm going to remain silent. I would like to see a lawyer.**



After you invoke your right to remain silent, don't talk to the police *at all*.



Don't be taken in by police trickery. Do *not* believe an officer who says:

- You're not a suspect—we just want to know what happened here.
- Since you haven't done anything wrong, what're you afraid of?
- This is your chance to tell your side of the story.
- If you can't explain what was going on, I'll have to take you to jail.
- You'll look a lot better in court, if you talk to us now.
- We got all the evidence we need, so you might as well confess.

Be Careful What You Sign in Custody

If you've been arrested, you can safely sign release papers: either a **summons** or a **Desk Appearance Ticket (DAT)**. These are forms on which you promise to appear in court, and they specify the courthouse, date, and time. Don't sign any other form until a criminal defense lawyer has checked it for you. Never make a written statement. Never sign a form that mentions your rights to remain silent or to see an attorney (it's a trick to get you to give up those rights). Don't sign a property voucher either—there might be something in your property that could be used against you in court. Keep the voucher, but don't sign it.

Never Consent to Searches

When the police ask to search, you're in the position of power. To use it, all you have to do is say: **I don't consent.** Since an officer's "request" can sound a lot like an order, ask for clarification.



If you're detained—not free to go, but not yet arrested—the police can do a pat search, to feel for weapons. If they don't find evidence of a crime just from patting you, they have to get *your* permission to do any further searches. So when they ask you to show them what you've got in your pockets or bag, say: **I don't consent.** That's your last, best chance to walk away from trouble.

Don't be fooled when the police ask: "What've you got to hide?" You can safely refuse consent to searches and questioning, because these constitutional rights have built-in protection: the police are *not allowed* to use your refusal as an excuse to search or arrest you.