Physical Safety at Protests Toolkit for Trans Activists

This toolkit empowers trans activists with essential strategies to protect themselves during protests, counter-surveillance, and mitigate the risk of violence or police repression. Safety is crucial when confronting oppressive systems and staying prepared can save lives.

1. Pre-Protest Preparation

🍀 Form a Safety Plan

Create a Buddy System:

- Never go to a protest alone. Stick with at least one other person who knows your emergency contacts and medical needs.
- Share locations using encrypted apps like Signal or Briar.

Stablish Emergency Contacts:

- Designate a trusted person who knows where you are and when to expect you back.
- Share the number of a legal aid group, such as the National Lawyers Guild (NLG).

Know Your Escape Routes:

- Familiarize yourself with nearby streets, public transit routes, and safe spaces.
- Identify multiple exit points from the protest site.

Memorize Key Numbers:

- Write emergency contacts and legal aid numbers on your arm or in a notebook.
- Avoid relying solely on your phone, as it may be confiscated or disabled.

2. Dress Strategically for Safety

Clothing Tips

Veutral and Unidentifiable Clothing:

- Avoid bright colors, visible logos, or distinctive patterns that could make you easier to track.
- Wear plain, non-branded clothing to reduce the risk of being singled out.

Cover Identifying Features:

- Use masks, scarves, or bandanas to cover your face and protect against tear gas.
- Cover visible tattoos and piercings to prevent identification.

Vear Protective Gear:

- Eye Protection: Goggles or shatterproof glasses to protect against pepper spray and projectiles.
- Gloves: Protect hands from chemical irritants and physical injury.
- Sturdy Shoes: Closed-toe shoes with good traction to allow for quick movement.

of 3. Essential Protest Safety Kit

💪 Items to Bring

Basic Supplies:

- Water (for hydration and rinsing tear gas)
- Snacks and electrolytes
- First-aid supplies (bandages, gauze, antiseptic wipes)

V Tear Gas and Chemical Protection:

- A bottle of water mixed with baking soda (for eye flushing)
- Saline solution or clean water to rinse eyes
- Face masks or respirators to filter air

Emergency Items:

- Sharpie to write emergency contacts on your skin
- Extra phone charger or portable power bank
- Wet wipes or tissues to clean skin from irritants

Legal Essentials:

- Government-issued ID (if comfortable carrying)
- Printed copy of your emergency contact numbers
- Know-Your-Rights cards or legal observer info

븛 4. Navigating the Protest Safely

🔁 Stay Aware and Mobile

Situational Awareness:

• Stay alert to your surroundings and observe police behavior.

• Identify possible exit routes and fallback positions.

Move with the Crowd:

- Blend in and move fluidly to avoid drawing attention.
- Stick to the edges of the protest where it's easier to exit if necessary.

Avoid Isolated Areas:

• Stay with the group to avoid being singled out by law enforcement or agitators.

1 5. Protecting Yourself from Police Violence

Minimize Interaction and Risk

De-escalation Techniques:

- Stay calm and avoid confrontation with law enforcement.
- If approached, remain silent and exercise your right to remain silent.

Avoid Physical Contact:

- Do not touch officers or their equipment to avoid escalation.
- If detained, do not resist physically, but state loudly, "I do not consent to this."

Be Aware of Surveillance:

• Police may use facial recognition technology or track phones. Minimize phone use and cover your face.

6. Handling Tear Gas, Pepper Spray, and Projectiles

Neutralizing Tear Gas

Immediate Response:

- Move upwind or away from the source of gas.
- Flush eyes with cold water or saline solution immediately.

🗹 Avoid Rubbing:

- Rubbing spreads the chemicals, worsening the effects.
- **Veutralizing Skin Exposure:**
 - Use a solution of water and baking soda to rinse exposed skin.

🔫 Protection from Projectiles

Shielding Your Body:

- Use hard objects (like backpacks or shields) to protect vital areas.
- Avoid standing directly in front of police lines.

1. Managing Arrests and Detention

🕡 What to Do If Arrested

Remain Silent:

- State loudly, "I am exercising my right to remain silent."
- Do not answer questions or sign any documents without a lawyer.

Request a Lawyer:

• Say, "I want to speak to a lawyer."

Know Your Rights:

• Trans activists have the right to gender-affirming housing and medical care while in custody.

Document Mistreatment:

• Record details of any abuse or misconduct during detention.

🛠 8. Post-Protest Safety and Decompression

5 Debrief and Reflect

Check In with Your Group:

- Ensure all members are accounted for and safe.
- Debrief to discuss what went well and what can be improved.

Address Trauma and Stress:

- Seek trauma-informed care or counseling if needed.
- Engage in community healing and reflection.

Report Misconduct:

• File complaints against police misconduct with organizations like the ACLU or NLG.

9. Emergency Post-Protest Checklist

Document and Review:

- Review any photos, videos, or documentation for legal and advocacy purposes.
- Share relevant information with legal aid organizations.

Follow Up with Legal Observers:

• Report instances of abuse or misconduct.

Secure Digital Evidence:

• Backup protest footage securely on encrypted platforms.

10. Trusted Resources for Protest Safety

- 1. National Lawyers Guild (NLG): Legal observers and post-arrest support.
- 2. ACLU: Legal advocacy and defense for protesters.
- 3. Digital Defense Fund: Protecting digital safety during protests.
- 4. Bail Funds and Mutual Aid Groups: Post-arrest support and legal assistance.

Protect Yourself and Resist

Protesting in hostile environments requires preparation and resilience. Protect yourself, your comrades, and your movement. Stay vigilant, stay organized, and never stop resisting.