

## Trans Army Field Guide: Responding to Arrest & Detention (2025 Edition)

### LEGAL DISCLAIMER

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### ⚠️ Context: Arbitrary Arrest in 2025

Authoritarian regimes escalate by criminalizing dissent. In the U.S. of 2025, arbitrary arrest is being normalized—especially for trans people, BIPOC, immigrants, activists, disabled folks, and protestors.

### 📊 Key Trends

- Anti-protest laws in 30+ states criminalize blocking roads, wearing masks, or organizing without permits
- Border zones allow for warrantless stops within 100 miles of any U.S. boundary
- ICE, local police, and deputized militias now collaborate in some jurisdictions
- Arrests of trans people under “disorderly conduct,” loitering, or bathroom bills are rising

### 🔒 Know Your Rights (and Limits)

#### 👮 During a Stop or Arrest

- You have the **right to remain silent** (say: “I am invoking my right to remain silent.”)
- You do **not have to answer questions** about immigration status, gender, or political affiliation
- Ask: “Am I being detained or am I free to go?”
- **Do not consent to searches** (say: “I do not consent to a search.”)

#### 👊 Police Tactics to Expect

- “Voluntary conversations” meant to get you to self-incriminate
- Pretextual stops using minor infractions
- Pressure to reveal identity, affiliations, or unlock your phone

## Mental Scripts & Actions

### If Approached:

- Stay calm, hands visible
- Say: “Am I free to go?” — if yes, walk away slowly
- Record the interaction if safe (or signal to someone to do so)

### If Arrested:

- Don’t resist physically — but clearly state: “I do not consent to this search/arrest.”
- Repeat: “I am invoking my right to remain silent, and I want a lawyer.”
- If you have health needs (disability, meds, trans-specific care), state them and ask to speak to a supervisor

### In Custody:

- You have the right to **one phone call** — memorize a legal number or jail support line
- Give only basic ID info; do not talk about the incident, affiliations, or others

### Arrest Survival Kit

- Written emergency contact & lawyer number (in shoe or wallet)
- Med list, allergies, disability needs (laminated card)
- Small cash for phones/transport on release
- Gender affirming documents or medical letters
- Trans Lifeline/legal hotline numbers (tattooed, memorized, or hidden)

## **Support Structures**

### **Before Action:**

- Form affinity groups with a designated “jail support” comrade
- Use buddy systems: always have someone tracking you
- Write legal info on skin in Sharpie
- Leave emergency plans with someone you trust

### **After Release:**

- Document injuries, names, badge numbers, statements
- Get medical/mental health care ASAP
- Debrief with your group: emotional processing, lessons, next steps
- Consider legal aid for filing abuse complaints or civil rights lawsuits

## **Tools & Resources**

- **Apps:** Mobile Justice (ACLU), Signal, Bystander, Legal Observers Toolkit
- **Hotlines:** National Lawyers Guild, Trans Lifeline, Immigration Legal Defense Fund
- **Training:** Know Your Rights teach-ins, roleplay arrest scenarios, mental health first aid
- **Zines:** “What to Do If You’re Arrested,” “Jail Support 101,” “Queer Legal Self-Defense”

## **Final Message**

They want to disappear us. But we are not alone.

Every arrest is a spark. Every jail door they close echoes with our defiance. When they come for one of us, we build support webs that reach into the walls.

*Know your rights. Keep your people safe. They can cage a body, but not the movement.*