



When the world has gone crazy
And it's all becoming clear
When they're gunning
down our comrades
And it seems the end is near
As they're loading
up the launchers
For the tear gas grenades
We can take off our bandanas
(for a moment)
And kiss behind the barricades

They will try to break our spirit
And at times they may succeed
But our love for the world
Is stronger than their greed
When the building is surrounded
And hope begins to fade
In my final hour
A kiss behind the barricades

When it's madness all around
You can see this at a glance
We will cry and we will sing
And we will laugh
and we will dance
As they shout
their marching orders
Beneath the helicopter blades
We will seize the moment
For a kiss behind the barricades

As the movement grows
There will be hills and bends
But at the center of the struggle
Are your lovers and your friends
The more we hold each other up
The less we can be swayed
Here's to love and solidarity
And a kiss behind the barricades
-David Rovics

Every action tells a tale, and we carefully craft the tale we want to tell. We steer away from the old tales of martyrdom and virtue. What we're saying is "Look! A new force is rising in up in the world, so creative, so vital, so full of life and passion and freedom that no system of control can withstand it. And you can be a part of it. Yes, you'll face great risks and danger, but you will have friends with you, amazing, wonderful, mythical, magical comrades all around the globe. And **you will be part of creating the most amazing transformation the world has ever seen.**" Empowering Direct Action looks for ways to embody our vision in the face of power, to get in the way of its workings, to interrupt its consolidation with our embodied alternatives. The movement has already begun experimenting with new forms of resistance that may be **the first steps along the path that leads to the morning.** Reclaim the Streets throws a party in an intersection and takes back urban space. The fence at Quebec is contested with a carnival: a catapult lobs teddy bears over the chain links. The White Overalls create moving barricades of inner tubes and balloons, padding themselves to walk through police lines. The Pagan Cluster moves as a Living River through the streets. The pink bloc dances through the tear gas of Genoa. The Zapatistas deplore the necessity of carrying arms and issue mystic communiqués. Protesters snake-march through the streets of Toronto, outflanking the police while avoiding clashes. Gas masks are covered with glitter and rhinestones. **All of these actions change the categories and challenge our expectations.** They favor mobility, surprise, and creativity over static, predictable tactics. They may involve risk of arrest, but getting arrested is not the goal and protesters may actively seek to avoid it. They maximize respect for life in its fullness: erotic, angry, joyful, loving, wild, and free. **And they are only the beginning of the experiment.** No matter how we may stumble in the cold of night, the sun must eventually illuminate a new path that we can walk with joy and courage in our bodies of earth and flesh and desire.

-Starhawk

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DIRECT



ACTION



SURVIVAL



GUIDE

Staying Safe & Sensible in an Action:

Scott Weinstein

A demonstration where police might attack requires a higher level of tactical awareness than your run-of-the-mill picket. Here are some generally applicable suggestions to help you stay safe and effective in the streets.



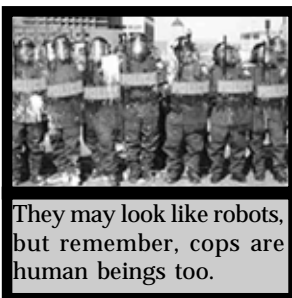
Don't let them box you in. Stay mobile and out of jail.

Always have a safe space in mind. All demonstrators need to be aware of a safe place to get to if a situation grows out of hand. You define "safe" and "unsafe" for yourself. For some, safe is among the locked arms of fellow activists, right on the front lines; but there's no shame in a lower threshold, for any number of reasons. Safe spaces change depending on movement and barriers by other demonstrators and the police, etc. In some cases they include wide open spaces or public areas. Other times they may take the form of an alleyway or similar hiding spot. There's no hard and fast rule about finding a safe space, but the time to have one in mind is *before* the shit hits the fan.

Similarly, you should **always have an exit in mind.** Assess how to leave a bad situation. Maybe it is best to be in a large group for protection. But if the police are herding you like cattle, then the large crowd is their focus and you may need to break up and leave in small groups. Getting away one moment might be your only chance to be active the next. Arrange with your buddies how to leave, and how to re-connect if you get separated.

Use the buddy system and move in a group. If at all possible, make sure to have a partner you can trust, to whom you will always stay close. That way, at least one person always knows your whereabouts and condition. Working in small groups of people, all of whom you know well and trust with your own safety, is another important factor. Even if you are not part of an organized affinity group with a plan of action, it is helpful to at least be with folks you can rely on.

Be aware of crowd dynamics and dangers. You need to know what is going on - not just in view, but around the corners and a few blocks away. Pay attention to the mood of the crowd and the police. Certain actions like property destruction and violence will likely be caused by or result in violent behavior on the part of police. Be aware of police movement and different groups of protestors entering or leaving an area. Try to monitor the vibes and focuses of friends and foes at all times.



They may look like robots, but remember, cops are human beings too.

Know what is going on out of view by **regularly sending out scouts to investigate what the police and other demonstrators are up to.** Since the situation at a dynamic protest will change frequently and rapidly, scouts need to check around and report back often. It's a good idea to appoint a pair of group members as scouts.

Don't Act on Rumors. It's common at demonstrations for someone to approach a group of activists shouting, "The riot cops are coming!" As often as not, of course,

Solidarity in Practice: Making Solidarity Real

Drafted in September 2001 in Washington DC Revised 9/23/03

We are very different groups. We are not necessarily immediate allies nor are we each other's greatest enemy. There are many things on which we do not agree. But, we will be in the streets together during the FTAA protests in Miami. We know that the police and media are trying to divide us in order to crush our movements. Solidarity is the way in which our diversity becomes our strength, we build our movements and we protect each others' bodies, lives and rights. We believe we have some things in common. We believe in basic human rights and the need to live with respect and dignity. We believe we must protect this planet - our air, water, earth and food or we will all die. We believe these global corporate and political institutions are serving only the interests of the rich. We all agree it's time for fundamental and radical change. As we take to the streets together, let us work to be in solidarity with one another. The following suggestions offer ways in which we can make our solidarity real.

Personal

- * Challenge and critique other groups and individuals in constructive ways and in a spirit of respect
- * Listen without getting defensive. Be open in thinking, not rigid in positions
- * Avoid assumptions no matter what a person looks like or what groups they belong to
- * Don't assume tactics are the only way to measure militancy or radicalness
- * Refrain from personal attacks, even with people whom strongly disagree. (Focus on how you feel, not what they did.)
- * Understand that even though we may disagree we have come to our politics, strategies and choice of tactics through thoughtful and intelligent consideration of issues, circumstances and experiences.

Street

- * Do not intentionally put people at risk who have not chosen it
- * Do not turn people over to the police
- * Do not let people within our own groups interfere with other groups
- * Respect the work of all medics, legal observers, independent media people
- * Share food, water, medical and other supplies
- * Support everyone who is hurt, gassed, shot or beaten.
- * Respect other groups' rights to do a certain type of protest at certain times and places. If you choose to participate, do so within the tone and tactics they set. If you do not agree, do not participate in that protest or bring another protest into that time and space.
- * Understand that our actions and tactics have repercussions that go beyond ourselves and our immediate groups. And that some tactics overrun the space of others.
- * If you choose to negotiate with the police, never do so for other groups to which you are not a part.

MEDIA

- * Do not denounce other demonstrators.
- * Talk about your strategy, not others.
- * Acknowledge other groups' existence and role they play in creating change
- * Acknowledge that we sometimes disagree about strategy and tactics.
- * Avoid using the word violence
- * Condemn police repression and brutality
- * Share media contacts and do not monopolize the media's attention

Jail Solidarity: No one is free until everybody is free.

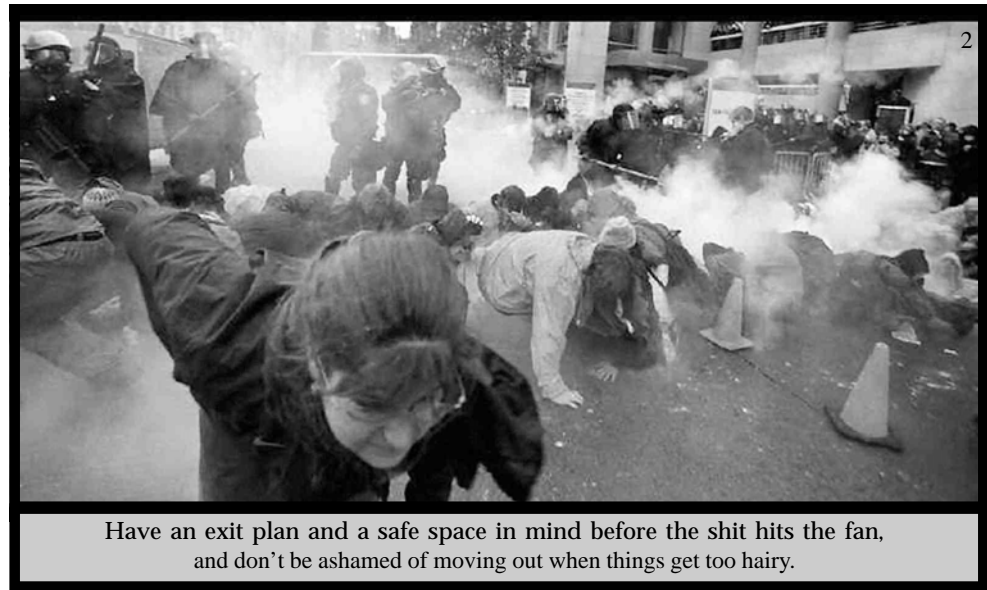
13 ESSENTIAL AFFINTY GROUP QUESTIONS

Here are some questions that all Affinity Groups should ideally discuss well before an action. It's important that each person give an honest and thoughtful answer to make sure that everyone is on the same page. You don't all need to agree one hundred percent, but you do need to know what your friends are thinking, so you know what to expect when tense situations arise. If there is a big enough rift in opinion, maybe you should consider forming separate affinity groups.

1. Are you (a) able and (b) willing to be in situations that may involve (a) risk of arrest or (b) police violence?
2. Do you have any reasons why you absolutely, positively CANNOT go to jail (ie: risky immigrant status, probation, prior offences)?
3. If you are arrested, will you give the police your name or will you remain anonymous? Will you participate in jail solidarity, or will you try to get out as soon as possible? Do you have any medical conditions that need to be known about if you go to jail?

Here are some scenarios that your affinity group may face, and it is a good idea to discuss them before you get in the streets. Seriously. We can stress this enough!

1. The energy is high as protesters have torn down the fencing surrounding the trade meetings, and the crowd is surging forward. Do you follow?
2. You are in a moving group. You go up to a line of police. The police block your path and tell you to immediately disperse, or face arrest. What do you do?
3. You are in a moving group. You go besides a line of police. An undercover agent in your group points out someone; the police then jump in and capture that person(s). The undercover agent may even help in the capture. What do you do?
4. The police are hitting people with batons, pepper spraying people, launching tear gas into the crowd, spraying water, firing plastic bullets, launching concussion grenades, charging with their horses, &/OR arresting selective people. What do you do in each situation?
5. You are part of a group that is in a space. The police arrive. As they start forming around you, what do you think they might do? What would you do?
6. Your group unfortunately is about to get arrested. How would you act?
7. The police are in front of your group that is occupying valuable territory. They are putting on gas masks. What do you think they might do? What do you do?
8. The police attack a crowd. Some people start throwing debris at the police. What do you do? How is this situation going to unfold?
9. You go to an action without a firm plan, but a general sense of what you could do. At the action, an opportunity unfolds, and some other protesters ask you to help them with an action with a higher level of risk. What do you do? What information do you need?
10. Your blockade needs more people involved. A labor march is passing several blocks away. The marshals are diverting the march away from the real action where you are. What can you do to increase union membership in your local blockade?
11. The situation is dynamic. A charismatic person makes recommendations for collective action that you think unwise, but seems to be well supported. What steps can you take?
12. The situation is dynamic and quick decisions must be made by representatives from the various affinity groups at a spokes council meeting in the middle of the street. How is your affinity group prepared to participate in the spokes council in an efficient and democratic way?
13. Your affinity group is arrested, and the police are separating people by gender. Are you prepared for this? Do you have a buddy of your own gender, or will you be alone?



Have an exit plan and a safe space in mind before the shit hits the fan, and don't be ashamed of moving out when things get too hairy.

there are no police coming at all. These people may simply be panicking, or they may be agents trying to confuse you. Acting on bad information is disruptive at best, and often dangerous. All critical information needs to be verified. If the person conveying info can't claim to have witnessed something directly, or if he or she is a stranger, then that information is unreliable.

Assume the riot cops *may be coming*. While acting on rumors and fear-mongering can be disruptive and dangerous, it shouldn't be surprising when the "authorities" do decide to blockade, surround, penetrate or break up a demonstration. This happens frequently, and the key to not being caught off guard is to *know* we are still living in a police state, which means: stay prepared.

Don't panic; help others stay calm. Sometimes at actions, the situation grows just plain frightening. But panic reduces critical judgment, adapting and coping abilities, and it can spread rapidly. Our best defense in a crisis is our collective cool - keeping each other centered & focused. If you can't stay focused and centered, then you need to quit the demo to chill. Similarly, if someone else can't be calmed down, they need to leave.

Be prepared to be photographed. If you don't want to be photographed by the police or media at an action, the only sure antidote is to not attend. There is simply no guarantee that you will not be later identified, almost no matter how you attempt to disguise yourself. Police place high priority on photographing and filming protesters.

Often, the police strategy at a protest they want to end is to disperse the participants. They tend to operate in coordinated units, and use the following tactics: **Show of force**



Don't let yourself or your buddies be a victim of **police snatch squads**: stay together and use your 360 degree vision as often as possible.



Tear gas canisters can be thrown away from the crowd, but be careful. They are extremely hot, and can burn your hands.

to intimidate and scare people away; **Surprise attacks** by troops hidden in reserve; **Surround and Isolate Entire Crowds** – Sometimes not allowing people to leave or enter.

They may also try to divide the crowd by moving into it at its weakest point. If you see the police about to attack your weak spot, try to **reinforce it**. When dispersing demonstrators, they may try to drive them like cattle towards certain areas and away from other areas. Your affinity group can avoid the cattle drive dynamic by splitting off from the crowd. This can be effective if the police are operating as small units and not splitting up to deal with smaller groups outside the crowd.

Police will often use **Snatch Squads to perform surprise arrests of individuals** they have chosen at random from the crowd, or whom they identify as “leaders” or “troublemakers”. Snatch Squads often are made up of, or collaborate with undercover agents, and can strike at any time. Always be on the look-out for where your friends are, and be ready to act clearly and sensibly at a moment's notice.

Your best offense and defense is being part of a solid affinity group. Affinity groups combine various skills and powers. Savvy affinity groups practice often, & plan and develop amazing strategies and tactics that are beyond the abilities of individuals. They have the numbers to do the various tasks: act, scout, medical, communicate with others, security, etc, yet they are small enough to act quickly.

Know your options, and what you and your companeros intend to do, in case of arrest. This document cannot cover the various paths you may choose in case you or someone in your group is detained or arrested during an action. In order to be aware of how to prepare for and respond to such situations, you should seek training and advice from the team providing legal services to activists at a particular demo. This information changes from city to city, so always make sure you have current and applicable legal advice.

Be aware that your perception of risk and your willingness to take it will change constantly during the action.

Be aware that police behavior is meant to intimidate you and make you afraid. While they do bite, they do *way* more barking.

Be aware that if we let our fear win, we let this system win.

As Hop Hopkins says in *this is what democracy looks like*: “That fear you’re feeling is your **first taste of freedom**.”



about accountability to the group? These are all questions your affinity group will have to deal with. What follows is how our affinity groups have dealt with some of these issues.

Hierarchy: Although efficient, hierarchy is no way to challenge the current structure. We all have skills that we can share with each other as well as to teach each other. If we embody this principle, we cannot rely on one person to have the final say in any decision. Rather, all voices become important in making a final decision. Affinity groups not only serve as a place in which we can learn and teach new skills but also as a place that all of our voices are important and can be heard. Hierarchy does not allow this to happen, and for that reason becomes useless.

Inclusive Group Interaction: Each and every voice within the affinity group has something meaningful to say, to add to the conversation. The process of how a meeting works is as important as what is accomplished. Remember why you are preparing to travel thousands of miles? To confront some institution or group of people that holds sway over our lives in an undemocratic process. The powerful have their voice heard while the less powerful struggle to be heard. And the marginalized? We are kept outside raising a ruckus to be heard while the powerful pay us no heed. If our meetings and organizing replicate this structure, we haven't accomplished anything.

- **Pay attention to who is speaking:** is one person (or a few) dominating or constantly leading the conversation? Particularly watch this in terms of race and gender.
- **Leave space for the less-heard voices**
- **Do not force anyone to speak**
- **Step up/step back:** if you speak a lot, watch for opportunities to step back (when a lot of people seem to have things to share). If you do not speak that often, watch for opportunities to step up (like when you feel really strongly about an issue)



11 What is an affinity group?

From nonviolence.org and uproot.info

An affinity group is a small group of 5 to 20 people who work together autonomously on direct actions or other projects. Affinity groups generally consists of like minded people who come together to get something done. They collectively establish their own goals, structure and group culture. If you are on your way to a major direct action protest, forming an affinity group is one of the best ways to be effective and accomplish amazingly beautiful acts of resistance that are beyond the capability of individuals.

How to start an affinity group:

An affinity group could be a relationship among people that lasts for years among a group of friends and activists, or it could be a week long relationship based around a single action. Either way, it is important to join an affinity group that is best suited to you and your interests.

If you are forming an affinity group in your city or town, find friends or fellow activists who have similar issue interests, and thus would want to go to similar actions. Also, look for people who would be willing to use similar tactics - if you want to do relatively high risk lockdowns, someone who does not want to be in that situation may not want to be in the affinity group. That person could do media or medic work, but it may not be best if they are completely uncomfortable around certain tactics of direct action.

What is a Cluster?

A cluster is a grouping of affinity groups that come together to work on a certain task or part of a larger action. Thus, a cluster might be responsible for blockading an area, organizing one day of a multi-day action, or putting together and performing a mass street theater performance. Clusters could be organized around where affinity groups are from (example: Texas cluster), an issue or identity (examples: student cluster or anti-sweatshop cluster), or action interest (examples: street theater or black bloc).

What is a Spokescouncil?

A spokescouncil is the larger organizing structure used in the affinity group model to coordinate a mass action. Each affinity group (or cluster) empowers a spoke (representative) to go to a spokescouncil meeting to decide on important issues for the action. For instance, affinity groups need to decide on a legal/jail strategy, possible tactical issues, meeting places, and many other logistics. A spokescouncil does not take away an individual affinity group's autonomy within an action; affinity groups make their own decisions about what they want to do on the streets.

Affinity Group Issues:

If our goal is to challenge undemocratic institutions/structures, the affinity group model provides us the opportunity to operate more democratically, which is a direct confrontation to the structures we are challenging. This means that the process that your affinity group uses is as important as the end product. If you think the world should be more democratic, why not make sure that your affinity group is as democratic as possible. This means many things and can be very challenging. How does hierarchy affect your affinity group? Does it allow for group inclusivity? What

MEDICAL INFORMATION!

4

From the Black Cross Health Collective



Use Your Head

---**Plan Ahead:** For essential needs, care and supplies. Know what to expect. Know how to get assistance. Plan how to re-contact your friends if separated.

---**Attitude:** You are powerful. You can easily withstand most of what the police throw at you, and you are fighting for justice. Remember, pain is only temporary and we are extremely strong.

---**The #1 Police Weapon is Fear:** Once you control

that, their other weapons become manageable.

---**Common Sense:** Keep your wits, and constantly assess what's going on and what needs to be done.

---**Be Calm and Focused when things get most intense.** React to danger or warning signs sooner, not later. Watch for signs of physical and mental problems in yourself and others. Cool down others who panic.

---**Document** police actions, brutality, and injuries.

What To Wear

---comfortable, protective shoes that you can run in

---clothing covering all your skin to protect from sun and pepper spray exposure.

---shatter-resistant eye protection (i.e. sunglasses, swim goggles, or gas mask)

---bandana to cover nose and mouth soaked in water or vinegar, it can aid in breathing during chemical exposure

---weather-related gear (i.e. rain gear, sun hat, winter clothing)

---heavy-duty gloves if you plan to handle hot tear gas canisters

---fresh clothes in plastic bag (in case yours get contaminated by chemical weapons)

---a cap or a hat to protect you from the sun and from chemical weapons

What To Bring

---lots of water in a plastic bottle with squirt top, to drink and to wash off your skin or eyes

---energy snacks

---identification and/or emergency contact information ONLY if you want to be cited out of jail in the event of arrest

---just enough money for pay-phone, food, transportation

---watch, paper, pen for accurate documentation of events, police brutality, injuries

---water- or alcohol-based sunscreen

---inhaler, epipen, insulin or other meds if applicable

---several days of prescription medication and doctor's note in case of arrest

---menstrual pads, if needed. Avoid using tampons - if you're arrested you may not have a chance to change it (tampons left in more than six hours increase your risk of developing toxic shock syndrome)

What NOT To Do

---Don't put vaseline, mineral oil, oil-based sunscreen or moisturizers on skin as they can trap chemicals.

---Don't wear contact lenses, which can trap irritating chemicals underneath.

---Don't wear things which can easily be grabbed (i.e. dangly earrings or other jewelry).

---Don't go to the demo alone, if you can help it - go with an affinity group or friends you know well.

---Don't forget to eat food and DRINK LOTS OF WATER.

Never walk alone! Even when you think things are safe!
Always have a buddy!

5 PROTECTION AGAINST TEAR GAS AND PEPPER SPRAY, 101

The first thing to remember about exposure to these chemical weapons is that it is not the worst thing that could happen to you. The hype and fear surrounding them is enormous, but in reality, if you are careful and smart, you should survive it with little problem.

What They Are:

Tear gas (also called CS, CN, or CX) and pepper spray (OC) are chemical compounds that are weapons designed to be used by the military and police to disperse crowds and subdue individuals. They are mucous membrane (the inside of your mouth and nose, among other places, are lined with mucous membranes) and skin irritants. They are mixed with solvents, and delivered through the use of propellants. Some of these solvents are registered with the US Environmental Protection Agency as causing cancer, birth defects and genetic mutations.

How They Are Deployed:

Tear gas and pepper spray can be sprayed from small hand-held dispensers or large fire-extinguisher size tanks. Pepper spray also comes in plastic projectiles, which are fired at the chest to knock the wind out of a person, who then takes a deep breath, of pepper from the burst projectile. Tear gas is most commonly deployed via canisters, which are fired into crowds, sometimes directly at people. It's important that you know not to pick up the canisters without gloves, as they are extremely hot. Be aware that the time it takes you to throw it back will allow you to be heavily exposed.

How They Affect You:

Both tear gas and pepper spray are skin irritants, causing burning pain and excess drainage from eyes, nose, mouth and breathing passages. Pepper spray is more popular with authorities as an agent of control because of its immediate pain-causing qualities. It is harder to remove from the skin and has the capacity to cause first-degree burns.

If you are exposed to either, you may experience:

- stinging, burning in your eyes, nose, mouth and skin
- excessive tearing, causing your vision to blur
- runny nose & increased salivation
- coughing and difficulty breathing
- disorientation, confusion and sometimes panic
- intense anger from pepper spray exposure is a common response; this can be useful if you are prepared for it and are able to focus it towards recovery and returning to the action.

The good news is that this is temporary.

Discomfort from tear gas usually disappears after 5-30 minutes, while the worst pepper spray discomfort may take 20 minutes to 2 hours to subside. The effects of both diminish sooner with treatment. Because pepper spray penetrates to the nerve endings, its effects may last for hours after removal from the skin.

There are many myths about treatment and prevention. Much of this misinformation is potentially dangerous. Some of it, if applied, could greatly increase or prolong a person's reaction to exposure, or at the very least provide a false sense of security.

things like: cutting fences, painting messages, dismantling train tracks, etc. The penalties for 10 property damage almost always include fines and/or restitution, as well as incarceration. The laws vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. For example, in the federal system, property damage of over \$100 is a felony. The bill for even a little graffiti cleanup is often well over the felony limit.

Lawyers...what's the use?

In a mass direct action, our best protection is solidarity. However, lawyers are useful for passing messages between groups of protesters who are being held in different places (different institutions or different cells in the same jail), or for dealing with problems (like getting medication in jail). When a lawyer arrives, make sure to use good meeting techniques. Select a facilitator or two among the protesters to organize questions and proposals.

How do we use our legal team?

Call as soon as you can. Call when you're about to be arrested; when you're on the bus to jail; when you get to jail. When the legal team visits you in custody, they will be expecting the facilitator to take the group through the following legal visit agenda:

-Are there emergencies that must be dealt with before we can proceed with other topics?

-Do you want a report on what other groups of arrested protesters are doing and on the state of negotiations with the authorities?

-Have you made decisions about solidarity tactics or demands which you want communicated to other groups of protesters or to the authorities?

-Is there any legal information you need which will help you make decisions? Organize your questions and directions in advance, to make the best use of the meeting time.

Police: When dealing with the police, keep your hands in view and don't make sudden movements. Also, avoid passing behind them. Never touch the police or their equipment (vehicles, flashlights, animals, etc.) When we are involved in or observing an interaction with the police, we should always note what is said and by whom. Record the officers' names and badge numbers. Immediately after the police interaction, get a copy of a Police Misconduct Report from the legal collective and fill it out. Do it promptly so you can remember important details clearly. Familiarize yourself with the Police Misconduct Report in advance so you'll know what to look for.

Questioning

Whenever law enforcement officers ask us anything besides name and address, it's legally safest to say these Magic Words: **"I am going to remain silent. I want to speak to a lawyer."** Remember, anything we say to the authorities can **and will** be used against us and our friends in court. There's no way to predict what the police might try to use or how they'd use it. Plus, the police might misquote us or lie altogether about what was said. So it's good to make a habit of saying only the Magic Words and letting everyone know that this is our policy.

Be aware that the authorities are legally allowed to lie when they're investigating, and they are trained to be manipulative. Insist upon speaking with friends and lawyers before you answer any questions or produce any documents.

If you don't think you'll remember the Magic Words when you need them, write them on your body, preferably with something that won't wash off too easily (permanent markers work well.) Make sure that when you're arrested with other people, the rest of the group knows the Magic Words and promises to use them.

CAUTION!

The police or jail authorities frequently lie and say there isn't a lawyer there for us or that we must name a specific lawyer. Very often there's a lawyer from our legal team waiting anxiously to talk to us, who won't be allowed in until we exert pressure through solidarity tactics. It helps if our lawyer knows our names or jail identification numbers, but we don't have to know a specific lawyer's name. We can just demand to see "someone from the legal team."

9 The use of jail/court solidarity should not deter anyone from participating in the action. Pressure for everyone to conform is counter to the spirit of solidarity. People who employ jail/court solidarity tactics need to leave plenty of room for those who do not wish to join them. Not everyone can stay in jail. Not everyone can go to court. But then, not everyone has to participate in order for solidarity tactics to work. The strength of solidarity comes from the voluntary agreement of everyone who takes part in it, and from the support from those who cannot.

Much of the time, we're working in coalition with people who hold varying political beliefs. Often the larger group includes people of different races, classes, ages, sexual orientations, etc. It's far easier to reach consensus on solidarity tactics if we listen closely to all points of view before launching proposals.

We must never let the police, the jail authorities or any lawyers push us into rushed decisions. If we're being rushed, we just have to bargain for more time. After all, it's simpler for the authorities to give us another fifteen minutes to come to consensus than for them to carry a bus-full or room-full of limp bodies to jail.

Crime and Punishment: Frequently Asked Questions

What crimes could we be charged with?

CAUTION!

If you bring weapons (including your trusty pocket knife or Leatherman tool) or illegal drugs to the action, you are likely to get additional charges-maybe very serious ones. Double-check your pockets and bags. It creates hassles for everyone and puts a major strain on solidarity if you get busted for drugs or weapons.

Protesters are usually charged with infractions (a crime usually not punishable by jail time) or misdemeanors (a crime punishable by a year in jail or less). Typical infractions are jaywalking or driving beyond the speed limit. Typical misdemeanors are trespassing, blocking the road, causing minor property damage or resisting an officer. Sometimes activists are charged with felonies (a crime punishable by prison time), such as conspiracy or major property damage. However, in past mass civil resistance, these felony charges have typically been dropped. Prosecutors tend to use them as a scare tactic or bargaining tool and will often pile up multiple charges, in order to be able to say: "We're charging the defendants with damaging property, resisting an officer, and trespass; but we'll drop the first two charges, if they'll plead guilty to the trespass charge."

Can the charges against us be changed?

Charges which police write down when they arrest us are not necessarily the charges a prosecutor uses. The arresting officer's charges are a suggestion. It's the prosecutor who decides the real charges, and s/he can change them up until we actually start trial. Charges are a matter for negotiation using solidarity.

Is it really a crime merely to touch a police officer?

Yes. Simply touching an officer with our fingers is usually an "assault" or "battery." Officers can lay hands on us, but we must not initiate contact with them with any part of our bodies or our belongings. Don't touch police vehicles, dogs, horses or other equipment. They are considered extensions of the officer.

What exactly is resisting an officer?

Resisting an officer is physical, not verbal. Even passive physical resistance, such as going limp, is legally considered resisting an officer. However, refusing to answer questions is not resisting, because you always have the right to remain silent.

What if we give names other than our "legal name?"

It is a misdemeanor to give a false name or other false information to a police officer, under both state and federal law.

What happens if we damage property?

Property damage which has occurred in previous mass civil resistance actions has included

Prevention:

For most healthy people, the effects of tear gas and pepper spray are temporary. However, for some people the effects can be long-lasting and life-threatening. People with the conditions listed below should be aware of these risks and may want to try and avoid exposure. Please be aware that in intense actions, police behavior can be unpredictable, and avoidance is not always possible. **Extenuating Conditions:**

- Folks with respiratory problems, such as severe asthma, emphysema, etc. risk exacerbation, or permanent damage if exposed.
- Anyone with chronic health conditions or those on medications that weaken the immune system, (ie: chemotherapy, Lupus, HIV, or radiation) risk exacerbation of illness, intensified response and possible delayed recovery.
- Women who are or could be pregnant, or who are trying to get pregnant, may be at risk of spontaneous abortion, or increased risk of birth defects.
- Nursing mothers risk passing toxins on to their infant.
- Folks with skin conditions (ie: severe acne, psoriasis, or eczema) and eye conditions (ie: conjunctivitis or uveitis) risk an intensified response.
- People wearing contact lenses may experience increased eye irritation and damage due to chemicals being trapped under the lenses.

Protection:

Avoid use of oils, lotions and detergents because they can trap the chemicals and thereby prolong exposure. Wash your clothes, your hair and your skin beforehand in a detergent-free soap (such as Dr.Bronner's or most eco-friendly products).

We recommend using a water or alcohol-based sunscreen (rather than oil-based). If your choice is between oil-based or nothing, we advocate using the sunscreen. Getting pepper sprayed on top of a sunburn is not fun. We also recommend minimizing skin exposure by covering up as much as possible. This can also protect you from the sun.

Gas masks provide the best facial protection, if properly fitted and sealed. Alternatively, goggles (with shatter-proof lenses), respirators, even a wet bandana over the nose and mouth will help.

Remedies

We recommend a solution of half liquid antacid (like Maalox) and half water. A spray bottle is ideal but a bottle that has a squirt cap works as well. Always irrigate from the inside corner of the eye towards the outside, with head tilted back and slightly towards the side being rinsed. It seems from our trials that it needs to get into the eye to help. This means that if the sprayed person says it's okay you should try to open their eye for them. They most likely won't be able/willing to open it themselves, and opening will cause a temporary increase in pain, but the solution does help. It works great as a mouth rinse too.

How to deal:

-If you see it coming or get a warning, put on protective gear.
 -If able, try to move away or get upwind.
 -*Stay Calm.* Panicking increases the irritation.
 -Breathe slowly and *remember it is only temporary.*
 -Blow your nose, rinse your mouth, cough and spit. Try not to swallow.
 -If you wear contacts, try to remove the lenses or get someone to remove them for you, with *clean*, uncontaminated fingers.

For the skin:

We recommend canola oil followed by alcohol. Carefully avoiding the eyes, vigorously wipe the skin that was exposed to the chemical with a rag or gauze sponge saturated with canola oil. Follow this immediately with a rubbing of alcohol. Remember that alcohol in the eyes hurts A LOT. Anyone whose eyes you get alcohol in will not be your friend.

Secondary treatments can include: spitting, blowing your nose, coughing up mucous (you don't want to swallow these chemicals!), walking around with your arms outstretched, removing contaminated clothing, and taking a cool shower. In fact, it is essential to shower and wash your clothes (this time in real detergents—no eco-friendly stuff here) as soon as you are able. This shit is toxic, and will continually contaminate you and everyone around you until you get rid of it. Until then, try not to touch your eyes or your face, or other people, furniture, carpets etc. to avoid further contamination. *Remember, it is only temporary, and we are extremely strong.*

A FEW HOT TIPS ABOUT GAS MASKS, & OTHER GEAR

The best protection against chemical weapons is a gas mask. Prices range from \$10-50. Any kind of mask should be tried on and sized before you're in the streets fumbling with unfamiliar straps. When paired with goggles, respirators make an excellent alternative to gas masks. It is necessary to do some homework beforehand and find goggles that are shatterproof, don't fog up, and that fit tightly on your face with the respirator. Respirators can be purchased at safety supply or welding supply stores. Ask for filters for particulates and organic chemicals and tell the clerk what you're filtering to double check. Costs range between \$18-24.

A bandanna soaked in water or vinegar and tied tightly around the nose and mouth is a last resort. It is far better than nothing, but remember that it is merely a barrier and not a filter and so won't do much for long-term protection. You can keep it soaking in a plastic bag until ready to use. Bring several, as multiple uses will render a bandanna as gassy as the air around you.

For protecting your eyes, swim goggles work well as they have a tight seal. Shatter-resistance is very important (a rubber bullet to the eye can be disastrous). Most goggles have air holes to prevent fogging—fill these with epoxy. Covering these holes with duct tape can work in a pinch against an initial attack, though not for long term protection. Try them on with your respirator or bandanna to ensure that they are compatible and that both will provide a tight seal.

FINALLY:

Take care of yourself. If you are grounded, well-rested, fed and watered, you will have much more fun in the action. Dressing appropriately and preparing for the weather is key. Think water, comfy shoes, rain gear/sun protection, more water. Think mobility and comfort. Think creative energy and sustainability. Remember that we do this work because it is important and fun, and that at least some danger is essential to life.

You should be aware that whatever protection you choose will be visually quite powerful. Gas masks work the best; they also look quite scary and intimidating and can be alienating to others. They can also make us targets of police violence. Think carefully about your impact on others when you decide how to protect yourself.

Jail and Court Solidarity - *(prepared by the Midnight Special Law Collective)*

Jail/court solidarity is the name for a variety of tactics we use to take care of each other while we're in the legal system. Jail/court solidarity involves a combination of non-cooperation techniques and collective bargaining. Although jails and courts are designed to make us feel powerless, through solidarity we can gain better control over what happens to us, by making decisions as a group; by acting in unity with each other; and by committing ourselves to safeguard each other's well being. Jail/court solidarity has been used effectively in the civil rights, peace, environmental, and other movements to protect activists who were arrested. Every time there's a choice in the legal process, activists can either cooperate or make things more difficult for the authorities. Solidarity tactics mean that people non-cooperate as a group, unless the authorities agree to their demands. People who've been arrested could demand that everyone receive the same charges and the same sentence, instead of some people (i.e., leaders, minorities, anarchists) being singled out for harsher treatment. People in custody could demand that a sick or hurt person be given immediate medical treatment. People in jail may want to demand that any person the authorities locked up separately be brought back and held with the rest of the group. Types of non-cooperation include:

Physical Non-Cooperation Techniques

- refusing to follow orders (they say stand, we sit; they say line up, we mill about)
- refusing to walk, to hold still, to stop singing or dancing, to eat, to wear clothes

Procedural Non-Cooperation Techniques

- not bringing ID and refusing to give name or answer other questions (which forces the authorities to keep us locked up, clogging the jail system)
- refusing to promise to appear in court (which also forces the authorities to keep people locked up, clogging the jail system)
- demanding to have the court appoint a free attorney to defend every low-income defendant (which creates a vast amount of paperwork for the court and prosecution, as well as a huge expense for the authorities)
- refusing to plead guilty (which forces the authorities to hold trials, clogging the court system)
- refusing to waive time for a speedy trial (which forces authorities to bring everyone to trial within a month or so of our first court appearance, as opposed to scheduling trials to start long after, at the authorities' convenience)
- fighting the case vigorously before trial by submitting a lot of motions (written legal arguments, to which the prosecutor will need to respond) and requiring lots of hearings in court

Remember that physical non-cooperation—as opposed to procedural non-cooperation, could potentially result in charges of resisting an officer—but that's often just threatened and not actually imposed. There are many creative ways to non-cooperate beyond this short list, and it's good to mix-and-match. Groups should make sure to talk in advance about which solidarity demands and which types of non-cooperation they might want to use. It's not necessary for everyone in the group to participate in a given non-cooperation tactic in order for it to work. And sometimes one or two people may choose to non-cooperate in a particular way by themselves, as their own political statement. (For example, perhaps just one or two people want to go limp when they're arrested, or fast when they're in jail.) However, to use noncooperation as a solidarity tactic effectively you need enough people participating to overwhelm the authorities, forcing them to agree to demands.