

SAFETY TIPS FOR EVENTS

Adapted from *Up in Arms: A Guide to Oregon's Patriot Movement* by the Rural Organizing Project and Political Research Associates



Event Framing

Be clear in all publicity that your event is meant to be peaceful.

Call local law enforcement and let them know about the action. If possible, communicate with any law enforcement that you have a previous or good relationship with. Ask for a direct number to call if there are any confrontations. Assign one person to be in charge of this phone number. That person is to call the number if:

- protesters are obstructing your event or movement to or within the event
- protesters surround or block anyone at the event
- protesters verbally or physically threaten anyone

Build your local security team. Recruit security folks who are calm, good at de-escalation, and committed to keeping everyone calm and safe. These people should not be the event organizers or play any other role in the event.

Set up a security meeting ahead of time. Come up with your plan, talk through roles and scenarios, and exchange cell phone numbers so that you can reach each other before, during, and after the event. Here are some roles and considerations:

- Have at least two people who can focus on keeping eyes open at all times for any right-wing protesters or anyone lurking about. These people should visibly move between the protesters and your event, never turning away from protesters, even if it means their backs are to the event. Stay at least a yard away from any threatening people. Keep your hands up in a ready, but nonthreatening way. Do not argue or debate. Do have a few catchphrases pre-programmed, such as, "I think I understand how you feel, but this is not the place," and "We are just going to keep things peaceful here."
- Have a few people who are obviously providing security and a few others, who are less obvious, in the group.
- You may be followed after an event. If you are able, designate a public meet-up spot after your event, like a restaurant. Have a few security team members plan to be there for an hour afterward. Let people know this location and that they can go there if they think they are being followed.
- Have one person assigned to photograph protesters and their vehicle license plates in an unobtrusive way.



During the Event

Have security people and/or the MC tell everyone to absolutely not engage with protesters or people looking for a confrontation. Do not talk to them. Do not shout at them. If they try to talk to you, just walk away or say, "I will not engage. Please stop talking to me." Stay focused on your own event.

If your rally or vigil features speakers, coach them ahead of time not to stop if protesters are trying to disrupt or interrupt. Otherwise, the disrupters are rewarded and will continue. This is a situation where security's role of keeping the protesters separated from the event is key.

After the Event

Debrief with your security team. What went well? What could be done better? If your event went without a hitch, congratulations! But do not think your security preparations were too elaborate. The presence of visible security can deter the protesters.