



PROTESTS: Critical Safety and Legal Information

An NPPA Quick Checklist

WELL IN ADVANCE OF PROTEST:

Purchase – and get comfortable with – a set of personal protective equipment.

- Impact-rated Helmet
- Eye Protection (Rated "Z87+")
- Respiratory Protection (Rated "P100")
- Body Armor (Soft armor "Level IIIA" or higher)
- Groin Protection (Regardless of gender)
- First-Aid Kit (with tourniquet, chest seal, gauze, and bandages)
- Sudecon Chemical Decontamination Wipes

NOTE:

Always make sure your equipment is designed to be used in the way you intend to use it, and is in compliance with relevant local and state laws.

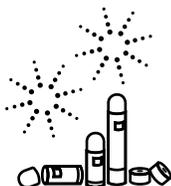
If possible, get to know local law enforcement.

If you know a protest is approaching, reach out beforehand and talk about dispersal orders, curfews, and rules of engagement. Ensure journalists are listed as "essential personnel" in executive orders establishing curfews.

Familiarize yourself with crowd control equipment that may pose a hazard:



Horses or bikes may be used to manage protestors, but can also pose a threat to journalists' safety.



"Less lethal munitions", such as foam projectiles or pellets, can still pose a deadly hazard: especially if used incorrectly by law enforcement officers.



Proper respiratory protection may filter out tear gas, which is actually a very fine powder.

IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO PROTEST:

Equip yourself appropriately to the circumstances.

- Consider the ambient temperature and expected duration of the protest to choose your gear.
- Wear all cotton! Avoid synthetic fibers, which can lead to serious injury if exposed to high heat or fire.
- Dress rehearsal! Practice donning all safety equipment; make sure everything fits and works properly.

Print important documents, including:

- Local laws specific to journalists and coverage rights.
- Journalistic exemptions to curfews for essential workers.
- Maps of local areas.
- Press credentials or passes.
- Your NPPA member ID.
- Phone numbers for NPPA legal team.

NOTE:

Write important phone numbers on your arm using **indelible marker** in the event you are detained!

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Use the buddy system: work with a colleague or security staff to create a plan of action.
Make sure you have at least one partner in the field!

- Share emergency contact info.
- Communicate your role clearly with another journalist.
- Establish contingency plans in case of separation or loss of communication.



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DURING PROTEST:

① Always exercise situational awareness! Use all your senses!

Behavior of law enforcement:

- What riot gear are officers carrying? How are officers behaving?
- Does the situation seem under control or likely to deteriorate into violence? Are officers flanking, using long-range acoustic devices (LRAD), donning respirators, kettling, or other maneuvers that signal the potential use of force?

Behavior of protestors:

- Are protestors friendly or hostile to journalists? Are protestors armed with improvised weapons that might pose a threat?

② De-Escalate!

With law enforcement:

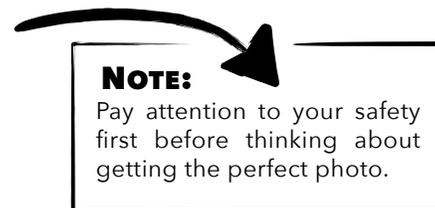
- Comply with law enforcement orders in the moment; do not become "another protestor". Maintain a professional and calm demeanor at all times.

With protestors:

- Be mindful of "social media baiting" (people trying to catch journalists acting poorly); keep a low profile and move on. It's not worth a fight, even if you know you're "right".

③ Document Everything.

Outside your journalistic role, documenting your experience allows you to capture instances where press are targeted or harmed by law enforcement or others.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT...

- An **excellent explanation of "less lethal munitions"** in use by law enforcement
- Practical, actionable **recommendations for police-media interactions**
- Solid advice for **covering high-profile news stories**
- A comprehensive **guide to personal protective equipment** for journalists

REACH OUT:

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