



Know Your Rights Protest Do's & Don'ts

Protesting can be an intimidating and confusing experience. Peaceful demonstrations are an important form of social action, making your opinion heard in a calm but effective manner. You must understand your rights and limitations to ensure that your protest is constructive and not destructive. Learn more below using this **DOs** and **DON'Ts** guide to plan a powerful, but legally protected protest.

DO

- **Know** your rights: The First Amendment protects peaceful protest, free speech, and assembly in public spaces.
- **Name** and shame perpetrators of violence and anti-Hindu hate without generalizing to their entire communities
- **Stay** on sidewalks or public parks unless you have a permit to march in the street.
- **Remain** calm, respectful, and nonviolent—even if others aren't.
- **Bring** essentials: ID, water, snacks, cash, and any medical needs.
- **Find** out if your protest needs a permit beforehand (for large or organized events).
- **Ask** for a lawyer immediately if you're arrested. Remain silent until they arrive.
- **Stick** to the rules laid out by the local organizer that are specific to your rally/protest.
- **Give** a heads-up to law enforcement ahead of time as a courtesy to let them know about the peaceful protest.
- **Take** extra precautions if you are a foreign national in the US on a green card, H1B, or other visa. Recent events illustrate that arrests, charges, or convictions, even for minor offenses, can lead to loss of visa status or even deportation. US law requires foreign nationals to carry proof of registration and immigration status at all times.

DON'T

- **Block** traffic unless you have a permit, as doing so can lead to arrest.
- **Trespass** on private property. Owners can ask the police to remove protestors.
- **Carry** anything that could be considered a weapon (including multitools).
- **Physically** interfere with police activity, even while filming.
- **Lie** to the police. You don't have to answer questions, and can just say "I'm remaining silent."
- **Give** the police your phone without a warrant. They cannot delete your content.
- **Run** from law enforcement or resist arrest, even if their actions feel unjust.
- **Incite** violence, damage property, or engage in looting. These are not protected acts.
- **Protest** alone if you can avoid it. There's safety in numbers, and it makes your message more effective.
- **React** if other groups attempt to provoke you with words, photos, recordings, or violence. Call law enforcement in case of any emergency.