

Hitting the Streets: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Demonstrator

Free Speech Rights:

- Generally all types of expression are constitutionally protected in “public forums” such as sidewalks and parks. This does not include speech that incites violence or is obscene.
- Free speech protection extends to statements, clothing, signs and symbolic expression, but does **NOT** include conduct otherwise illegal.
- The government may put reasonable restrictions on how, where and when you exercise your free speech as long as those restrictions are neutral toward the content of your speech.
- Free speech activity cannot take place on private property without the consent of the owner. Public streets can be used for marches, subject to compliance with the city’s permitting process.
- Control your anger, and avoid interaction with counter protestors and other provocateurs.
- Keep a professional attitude, and do your best to deliver the message in a non-confrontational way.
- Refrain from abusive, inflammatory and derogatory remarks, signs, and posters.
- If you find someone acting inappropriately, seek help from law enforcement or demonstration organizers.
- Minors should be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that minors follow all rules and regulations.

Law Enforcement Encounters:

- When dealing with officers, keep your hands in plain sight, refrain from making sudden movements, do not touch the officer or their equipment, and avoid walking behind an officer or the police line. Do not run away from or physically resist an officer.
- Follow all logistical directions given by officers. If you are uncertain as to the validity of such directions, ask for clarity, but do not argue; you may further ask to speak to the watch commander, or contact the protest organizers. Follow all orders to disperse immediately.
- If it appears that an officer is trying to gain personal information from you without a reasonable cause, it is advisable to not offer information to officers in this setting, even your name.
- Law enforcement may detain you if they have reasonable suspicion that you are engaged in an illegal activity. They may require you to provide them with personal identification, and they may “frisk” your outer clothing if they reasonably suspect that you are armed and dangerous (you may ask for an officer of the same gender for searches). Ask the officer if you are being detained. If they say no, you have the right to walk away without further comment. If they respond yes, then ask for the reason for your detention, do not consent to a search, exercise your right to remain silent and ask for an attorney.
- Officers can arrest you only if they have probable cause to believe that you have engaged in illegal activity. Remember to exercise your right to remain silent and to consult with an attorney.
- At any point, you may ask to speak with the watch commander.

Please report incidents of harassment immediately to CAIR-MN, (651) 645-7102. Write down names and badge numbers of any officers involved and the names and contact info of any witnesses

Special Thanks: National Lawyers Guild, Human Relations Commission, ACLU, CAIR-OH/LA.

SUPPORT CAIR IN ADVOCATING FOR MINNESOTA MUSLIMS:

Online: www.paypal.com, click on "Send Money." CAIR-MN phone number: 651-645-7102.

Mail: CAIR-MN, 1821 University Avenue W, Suite 220, St. Paul, MN 55104.

Monthly Deduction: Sign up for automatic monthly deductions. Call 651-645-7102 or email lsaroya@cair.com to sign up.

Your donation is tax-deductible. CAIR-MN is [zakat-eligible](#).

Your gift will help us educate decision makers and the public on the issues that matter to all of us. It will allow us to take on more cases and help more Muslims.