

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: FREE SPEECH, PROTESTS & DEMONSTRATIONS IN CALIFORNIA

FULL GUIDE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
[WWW.ACLUNC.ORG/RIGHTSOFDEMONSTRATORS](http://WWW.ACLUNC.ORG/RIGHTSOFDEMONSTRATORS)

## SPEAK OUT: ACLU TIPS

**S**peech rights are for EVERYONE. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Nobody can discriminate against you or stop your protest because of the CONTENT of your speech.

**P**lan your activity carefully. Apply for your permit ahead of time if possible. But remember, permit ordinances should allow for spontaneous demonstrations.

**E**xcessive noise or disruption, obstructions of sidewalks or doorways, or harassment of unwilling passers-by may give police grounds to end your activity.

**A**void directly advocating violence or imminent lawless activity. This may cause the police to intervene to stop your demonstration and land you in trouble.

**K**ee a valid ID and a list of phone numbers on your person. You may request an attorney and make up to three local phone calls if you are arrested.

**O**bserve traffic rules and other reasonable time, place and manner restrictions. But remember, you have a right to be heard. Officials should not direct you to a route that doesn't reach your target audience.

**U**nderstand the most common charges filed against protesters before you leave the house.

**T**here are different rules for different locations. Make sure you know who owns the venue and which rules apply before your activity begins.

Speak out, speak up, speak freely!

### RESOURCES:

**Northern California** [www.aclunc.org](http://www.aclunc.org) (415) 621-2488

**Southern California** [www.aclu-sc.org](http://www.aclu-sc.org) (213) 977-5253

**San Diego & Imperial Counties** [www.aclusandiego.org](http://www.aclusandiego.org) (619) 232-2121 x6

### HOW DO I OBTAIN A PERMIT?

See page 7 for details on when a permit is and isn't required. Be aware that permit application procedures vary by city. In general, try the special events or special activities unit, often housed under the city's parks and recreation department or police department.

## LEGAL SERVICES

**THE NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD—San Francisco Bay Area chapter** offers legal observers, on-call attorneys, a hotline for arrestees, and attorneys for protesters charged with crimes—all on a volunteer basis. Services can extend as far as Sacramento and San Jose. Request help as far in advance as possible, so that the NLG has time to line up its volunteers. A legal support request form is available on the website or call (415) 285-5067. [WWW.NLGSF.ORG](http://WWW.NLGSF.ORG)

**THE MIDNIGHT SPECIAL LAW COLLECTIVE** provides legal trainings and occasional legal support to activists and community groups. Trainings are on a variety of topics including navigating the legal system, what to do if you're called before a grand jury, and data security for activists. Trainings are on a sliding scale and take place mostly in the Bay Area. [WWW.MIDNIGHTSPECIAL.NET](http://WWW.MIDNIGHTSPECIAL.NET)

**THE RUCKUS SOCIETY** is not a legal resource but provides direct action education via training camps and community-requested trainings. Groups can request trainings in everything from choosing an action location to street theater. On the website you'll find training manuals and a training request form. Trainings are on a sliding scale and take place in many regions across North America. [WWW.RUCKUS.ORG](http://WWW.RUCKUS.ORG)

**ACLU SERVICES:** The ACLU Legal Department is not a legal aid services organization. We bring a select number of impact cases to defend and promote the fundamental guarantees of individual liberties protected by the federal and state constitutions.

If you are in Northern California and feel that your constitutional rights have been violated, call the **ACLU OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA** at (415) 621-2488 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. or go to [www.aclunc.org/about/frequently\\_asked\\_questions.shtml](http://www.aclunc.org/about/frequently_asked_questions.shtml). Volunteer counselors can bring your request to the attention of an attorney for review or give you an appropriate referral to another agency.

**IN SOUTHERN CA,** call (213) 977-5253 or go to [www.aclu-sc.org/pages/legal\\_intake](http://www.aclu-sc.org/pages/legal_intake)

**IN SAN DIEGO & IMPERIAL COUNTIES,** call (619) 232-2121 x6 or go to [www.aclusandiego.org/legal\\_item.php](http://www.aclusandiego.org/legal_item.php) and click on "request legal assistance"

**ACLU ACTIVIST TOOLKIT** contains detailed instructions on everything an activist needs, from planning a campaign to running an effective meeting to publicizing an event ([www.aclunc.org/action/activist\\_toolkit/index.shtml](http://www.aclunc.org/action/activist_toolkit/index.shtml)).

