

TIPSHEET:

Dealing With Police

WHEN COVERING PROTESTS

Wear conspicuous press credentials, even if they are just credentials created by your publication.

Bring some quarters in case the jail provides only a payphone.

Carry important phone numbers of people you'll call in an emergency, including several editors' cell numbers (keep these on a piece of paper loose in your pocket – not just in your wallet or saved in your cellphone, because the police will take those things away).

Inventory your belongings (cellphone, camera, audio recorder) in advance – you'll need as much detail as possible if you are trying to reclaim an item at the jail that's been taken from you.

Call someone trusted (editor, adviser, parent, spouse) the moment that it appears you're about to be arrested, because it may be hours before you can get access to a phone if you're jailed.

Gather all the information you can about your arrest – record or videotape the arrest if you can, make sure you know which police agency made the arrest and, if possible, get the names of all officers involved and of any witnesses.

Ask for legal representation if you are being interrogated while at the jail – and then stop the conversation completely.

Read the fine print of anything you are asked to sign – and think very carefully before you sign a “post and forfeit” bond, because that means you are agreeing to admit what you're charged with and waive a court appearance.

Demand a court appearance if you have been held for more than 24 hours without being taken before a judge or magistrate.

**CONTACT THE SPLC ATTORNEY HOTLINE FOR REFERRAL TO
AN ON-CALL VOLUNTEER FROM HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP**

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