
Participating in a Protest? Know Your Rights

Protesting is a long-standing tradition of publicly speaking out against opinions, policies, or politics with which you disagree, or perceived injustices. Demonstration, peaceful protest, and freedom of expression of one's beliefs, is protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The First Amendment also applies to international visitors who are welcome to participate in lawful public demonstrations and protests. Before attending a public demonstration, you should prepare to ensure your safety and keep in touch with others in the event of an escalation. Please review the resources below and plan carefully.

Guidance About Free Expression and Peaceable Assembly at Yale

Yale has a deep history of fostering expressive activity. As an academic institution dedicated to free inquiry and the search for truth, the university is committed to free expression. The [guidelines about free expression and peaceable assembly at Yale](#) [1] summarize university policies, provide relevant information, and are intended to promote the exercise of free expression and the safety and security of all members of the university community.

We also encourage you to familiarize yourself with the policy on the [Use of Outdoor Spaces](#) [2], which outlines the permissions needed before groups may conduct their events in any outdoor space on campus, and the [Posting and Chalking Policy](#) [3], which states reasonable time, place, and manner for posters and chalking to provide equal access to messaging in designated places for the entire community.

Finally, before attending a public demonstration, you should prepare a plan to ensure your safety and to stay connected with others in the event of an escalation. Go with friends and have a back-up plan. Review [Yale's practical guide](#) [4] on public demonstrations and crowds.

Your Rights as a Non-Citizen

Understand that you have the right to remain silent and do not have to discuss your immigration or citizenship status with police, immigration agents, or other officials. Do your homework and read about how to [respond to immigration questions](#) [5] if you are stopped by police or other government officials (see bottom of page for translations in different languages.)

If you are fearful of getting arrested, you can [watch this video from the ACLU](#) [6] to be better informed about your rights and what to do. We encourage you to consult with an attorney before talking to the police.

Your Risks as a Non-Citizen

It is important for you, as a non-citizen, to be aware that if you are arrested, charged, or convicted while participating in a protest, this could impact your current and future immigration status, any future immigration or visa applications, and your interactions with immigration and consular authorities. While participating in a protest, if the law enforcement officials give any instruction to end activities or leave the area, you should comply with those instructions to avoid an arrest or charge. There is a risk of an arrest or charge if you become disrespectful, ignore instructions from law enforcement personnel, and/or violence is imminent.

In addition to considering the possible immigration consequences in the U.S., we encourage you to also consider how your actions could be interpreted in your home country and what, if any, consequences may result when you return home. Each country has its own laws and expectations regarding what is acceptable speech both at protests and when posting on social media and online.

Comfort with Crowds

If you decide that you are not comfortable participating in person in a demonstration, remember that there are many ways you can make a difference from home. There are many great resources for direct action which have already been collectively gathered and shared by our community. A good place to begin researching New Haven community groups is [Yale's Dwight Hall](#) [7].

Additional Resources

- [National Immigration Law Center: Know Your Rights](#) [8]
- [A Toolkit for Organizations Responding to Mass Worksite Immigration Raids](#) [9]
- [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#) [10]
- [American Immigration Lawyers Association](#) [11]
- [ACLU VIDEO: What to do if stopped by police or ICE](#) [6]
- [National Lawyers Guild of Chicago](#) [12]

Source

URL: <https://oiss.yale.edu/campus-community-life/for-students/legal-considerations/know-your-rights/participating-in-a-protest-know-your-rights>

Links

[1] <https://secretary.yale.edu/student-life/guidance-regarding-free-expression-and-peaceable-assembly-yale> [2] <https://secretary.yale.edu/student-life/use-outdoor-spaces> [3] <https://provost.yale.edu/policies/university-postering-and-chalking-policy> [4] <https://secretary.yale.edu/student-life/how-stay-safe-and-healthy-public-demonstration> [5] <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/immigrants-rights/#law-enforcement-asks-about-my-immigration-status> [6] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lj48MJoBUCs> [7] <https://dwiththall.org/programs> [8] <https://www.nilc.org/get-involved/community-education-resources/know-your-rights/> [9] <https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Raids-Toolkit-web-2019-05.pdf> [10] <https://www.ilrc.org/red-cards> [11] <https://www.aila.org/advo-media/tools/psas/know-your-rights-handouts-if-ice-visits> [12] <https://nlgchicago.org/>