



Civil Disobedience Guidelines

Power itself is not derived through violence, though in governmental form it is usually violent in nature. Governmental power is often maintained through oppression and the implicit compliance of the majority of the governed. Any significant withdrawal of that compliance will restrict or dissolve governmental control. Apathy in the face of injustice is a form of violence. Struggle and conflict are often necessary to correct injustice.

Our struggle is not easy, and we must not think of nonviolence as a “safe” way to fight oppression. The strength of nonviolence comes from our willingness to take personal risk without threatening other people. It is essential that we separate the individual from the role she/he plays. The “enemy” is the system that casts people in oppressive roles.

These direct action guidelines describe limits required for us to set a minimum level of safety for people participating in non-violent civil disobedience:

1. Safety of all participants is a priority.
2. We will try and protect each other at the demonstration site by setting up a support and advocacy structure that can react quickly if problems should arise or if arrests occur.
3. At any demonstration, we ask that participants act according to the respect and dignity that we have built for each other. Individual or group actions that endanger the physical well-being or emotional well being of other demonstrators should not be done and will NOT be accepted by Equality Action NOW
4. Bring Photo I.D.
5. If you have prescription medications keep them in the prescribed bottle with your name on it.
6. Do not engage in any physical violence directed against others, including the police, spectators and other participants.
7. Avoid situations that cause panic by abrupt gestures, yelling, pushing, running and throwing objects.
8. Maintain as much eye contact as possible. Your objectives must be reasonable. You must believe you are fair and you must be able to communicate this without saying anything threatening, critical, or hostile.
9. Do not bring weapons or anything that can be construed as a weapon to the demonstration site; weapons include but are not limited to: guns, knives, nail files, mace, letter openers, scissors, etc.
10. Remain sober and free of controlled substances other than prescription meds during all demonstrations