**ACT UP Marshal Training document**

**MARSHAL TRAINING TIPS**
This information is provided as a reference and cannot replace an in-person marshal training.

**Marshaling is a form of resistance.**
Marshals help build community by helping to carry out a protest as closely as possible to the scenario planned by the protest organizers, while keeping demonstrators as informed and as safe as possible. Marshals provide a buffer between protesters and danger: counter-protesters, police, traffic.

Ideally, marshals have been involved in the action's planning: marshals have had a say in logistics; we've been to the demo site, and/or have walked the march route in advance.

**1. WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:**

**What's Legal at An Action:**
1. A moving picket on a public sidewalk, with signs and chanting.

2. A sidewalk march, with signs and chanting.

3. Handing out leaflets to passersby without blocking the sidewalk.

**What A Permit* Is Typically Needed For:**
1. Sound amplification devices: in NYC, the worst charge for using a sound device is a summons – equivalent to a parking ticket – but the police may also confiscate device.

2. A march in the street/street closure.

* ACT UP developed out of a protest movement that did not ask permission to demonstrate. Asking law enforcement to "help" us demonstrate diminishes community agency. In the ACT UP tradition, we don't advise requesting permits for protests:
1) to get a permit, we are always required to hand over information and often money,
2) a permit can be revoked by the authority that provides it, without notice. In the ACT UP tradition, we advise against creating rallies that require sound devices. They are often static and boring.

As marshals, we protect our First Amendment rights to free speech and freedom of assembly by exercising these rights: we set up our own pickets, we decide whether or not we want to go into a police "pen," and on marches, our marshals stop traffic at intersections to keep participants safer whether or not the police are "helping."

**2. THE ROLE OF MARSHALS**

- To support and facilitate the action as it was planned by the people who organized it – with marshals in on the planning, whenever possible!
    - Logistics: Physically check out the planned protest site; walk the planned route of the march – any changes anticipated or needed?
- To act as an information source between planners and demonstrators
- To help demonstrators to be safer and feel good about demonstrating
- To ensure that leaf-letters can distribute information and aren't harassed
- To serve as an intermediary between police and bystanders
- To de-escalate provocations by the police and counter-demonstrators
- Best practices:
    - Marshals wear armbands distinguishing themselves, not hazard vests; no carrying signs or leafleting unless all is chill; stay off your cell phone – phones take you out of the action

**3. WHAT MARSHALS DO ON A PICKET**

- Set up the moving picket; determine picket perimeters
- Keep the picket moving and intact with marshals inside and outside the picket
- Watch the perimeters; be aware of police and others' movements
- Intervene on behalf of picketers (If the picket is barricaded there MUST be a way for people to enter and exit. This is your legal right.)
- Stay calm; keep demonstrators aware of what's happening
- Be responsible for negotiating with the police for First Amendment rights
- Show legal area limits, should civil disobedience occur
- Lead chants

**4. WHAT MARSHALS DO ON A MARCH**

- **Front Marshals**: lead at a very slow pace, keep the march moving steadily, watch for obstructions, help facilitate civil disobedience, if any occurs
- **Side Marshals**: block traffic at intersections (facing cars), watch perimeters, help facilitate civil disobedience, if any occurs
- **Back Marshals**: bring up the rear, set the pace, provide a buffer between marchers and police; communicate with the front of the march; make sure no one gets left behind

<u>What to do at street intersections</u>:

- At the front of the march, groups of 3 to 5 marshals wait for cars to come to a stop on a red light before entering the intersection.
- Once the cars have stopped for the red light, marshals enter the intersection and stand in a line **FACING THE CARS**.
- Making eye contact with the first driver, motion to them that it will only be a minute (or two) for the demonstration to pass.
- Once the entire march has gone by and the last demonstrators at the end of the march are up on the sidewalk across the street, marshals remain in place in the street until the light at that intersection is once again red for the cars.

- When a march is several blocks long and several intersections will need to be blocked, marshal lines should **walk quickly** to get to the next intersection (leap frogging ahead of other marshal lines who are in place stopping traffic).

When marshals are rushing to get to the next intersection, SKIP or walk quickly. Don't run. Running creates panic.
Even if the police are "helping" out by blocking traffic, marshals should form a buffer line between the cops and the marchers.

**5. WHAT MARSHALS DON'T DO**
Don't panic, ever. Don't do the police's job, ever (don't scold or threaten).

**6. THE ROLE OF THE POLICE AT AN ACTION/DEALING WITH THE POLICE AND OTHER PROBLEMS**
The role of the police is to protect property from damage, to contain demonstrators, to keep us from making "too big" a commotion, and to deal with violence that may erupt.

**Dealing with the police: Bluff and Stall**
If a cop starts hassling you, tell the cop it's legal (whatever it is that you're up to); ask what specific law you're breaking; ask how you're breaking it (remember that the police do not know the law and will not necessarily answer you truthfully).

- Keep insisting on your right to do what you're doing.
- Demand to see their superior officer; send them to see their superior officer. (Remember that the cops are bluffing and stalling as well. The police don't necessarily want to arrest people unless you push them or threaten their dignity.)
- If the cops say that there is an injunction freezing the area or the sidewalk, ask to see a copy of it. An injunction must show specific time and place restrictions.

**Hecklers and counter-protesters:** face the trouble; isolate; engage in conversation while walking a heckler away from the protesters. If you run into hecklers on a march, a marshal or two remains in conversation with them as the march goes past.

**In case of police escalation: Stop and sit.**
If the entire crowd is in danger, or people are panicking, tell everyone to **SIT DOWN.** Sitting down keeps people safer by taking control of the street and allowing demonstrators to regroup, communicate, and regain composure. Sitting down signals nonviolence at the same time.

**Bring vocal attention to police harassment, violence:** shout "Shame, shame!" "Where's your badge?!" and "NO violence!" while pointing at cops.

**In case of violence: isolate, separate, get the police. Do not intervene if there is a weapon. That's the job of the police.** In case of a medical emergency: one marshal remains with the injured person, another marshal goes to get police.

Try to stay calm during a confrontation with a cop. **NEVER** touch a police officer.

Wear sturdy shoes and comfortable clothes!