

Marshaling 101 for Marches & Events

Thomas Merton Center

- **Please arrive 30 minutes before your shift begins to allow for parking if at all possible.**
- **The role of the police during an action/march/event (permit or not)**
 - *To protect property from damage;*
 - *To contain demonstrators; keep us from making a commotion.*
 - *To make marchers/attendees/protesters feel uncomfortable*
- **What does a marshal do?**
 - As a marshal, you are not keeping order, you are facilitating it. Marshals have no power or authority over other protestors/attendees.
 - Wears a reflective vest or some other identifier (in this case a vest).
 - Helps ensure the march stays within the set physical parameters and keeps people safe.
 - Watches out for people and dynamics
 - Stays aware of their surroundings
 - Distribute themselves throughout the march: Front, Mid Way Front, Center, Mid Way Back, Back
 - Communicate with other marshalls (we will set up a signal chat)
 - Communicate with song/chant leaders if announcements need to be made.
 - Helps de-escalate situations by bringing down the energy of the people who are escalated
 - Ask folks with signs containing offensive or off-message language to take them down, leave (worst-case scenario), or try to distract them away from the event
 - Stays cool-headed and calm during any escalation or signs of trouble
 - Only takes commands from the marshaling captain OR police liaison.
- **What doesn't a marshal do?**
 - "Police" marchers or do the job of the police
 - Talk to the police
 - Carry signs or banners (you need to keep your hands free)
 - NEVER touch a police officer.
 - NEVER touch a march goer/attendee/disrupter
 - Get distracted and lose track of their role or get pulled into other roles

- **Power Dynamics**
 - Be mindful of how some people are more vulnerable than others. Black, Brown, Trans, and undocumented folks have a much greater risk at marches from either the police and/or disrupters/agitators.
 - Keep in mind that a disrupter could also be a member of a marginalized community and you need to use compassion and understanding when they are agitated by their bus being delayed/feelings of opposition/etc.
- **What do you do if someone is being disruptive/disorganizing?**
 - Use your body as a nonviolent barrier between the march and an outside heckler
 - Converse, LISTEN empathetically, and guide disruptive people who are inside away from the march/event
 - Let the marshall text thread know what you're doing/ask for help if you need it
 - In the worst-case scenario and there is violence, let the text thread know immediately, keep yourself safe, and guide marchers (attendees) away from the scene.
- **Disorganizing Person Strategy**
 - One person, usually the marshal captain or whoever is closest to the person causing a disruption(disrupter), will go up and talk to the person (disrupter)
 - Ask them questions - anything that distracts them from what they're doing.
 - Examples:
 - What brought you out here today?
 - How are you feeling? Why?
 - Do you know why we're organizing?
 - Talk to them about our goals
 - Talk to them about our targets
 - Talk to them about why you're there
 - When you're talking you should do 20% of the talking while letting them dominate the conversation
 - Do you have any family in the area?
 - Ask them further questions about their family
 - Ask them about their friends if they say no to family
 - Do you feel uncomfortable with what's going on? Why?
 - Did you need help getting somewhere?
 - Can we help you walk to where you need to be/catch your bus?
 - As stated above, use your body to guide them away while listening to them (the disrupter) empathetically.
 - Put their back to the march/event
 - Face the march/event once you stop moving

- As they are being guided away, two other marshals will stand far enough away to give the marshal lead enough space to talk one on one with the disrupter, but close enough to hear/see through body language if they need to move in.
 - Usually once a marshal talks to the disrupter away from the march/event they will move along.
 - In case the disrupter is unrelenting and turns away from the marshal lead, that is when the two to three positioned marshals that were standing behind the lead marshal and disrupter will wall off the disrupter.
 - At this point, the marshal lead will attempt to distract the person again. The disrupter is generally persuaded to leave the march/event once they see a trio or more folks boxing them in.
 - Should the disrupter not leave and attempt to move back into the march/event, that is when one person should take out their phone and begin to record the disrupter making sure to get their face on camera, stating out loud that you are recording them, and keeping a distance from them.
 - Remembering the above to never put your hands on a disrupter.
 - ***Should you feel unsafe at any point you absolutely should prioritize your concerns and should verbalize that you are removing yourself from the situation and then text the marshal lead that you are leaving a disrupter situation and to give details of what is happening for the event organizers to make a decision about the disrupter. ***
- **What to do at street intersections:**
 - Marshalls block traffic by forming a line across intersecting streets;
 - (Many times the police will block traffic for us, but even if the police do this, then line up between the cops and the marchers).
 - Groups of marshalls need to get to the intersection first (leapfrog other marshal lines to get to the intersection).
 - Groups of 4 or 5 wait for the red light (when cars have stopped) and quickly slide out, holding hands, and FACE THE CARS.
 - When the march has gone by, don't dissolve until there is another red light to protect marshalls.
 - —When you're rushing to get to the next intersection, make sure it doesn't seem as if you're not panicking.
 - **In Case of a Medical Emergency**
 - Marshaling captain contacts medics
 - Text the marshaling text thread
 - One marshal remains with the injured person until a medic arrives
 - **What will happen on the day before the march**
 - Incredibly important to arrive on time

- Everyone huddles with the marshalling captain
 - introduce yourselves to one another.
 - Assign roles: Front, Mid Front, Center, Mid Back, Back for best left and right of march
 - Get on one text thread
- **What will happen at the end**
 - You move people off of the streets and back onto the sidewalk
 - (Nice to do, but not required) You make sure everyone gets to their cars safely/doesn't walk alone to their cars.
 - Help spread any messages that the organizers need to let marchers know
 - Do a quick debrief of what went well, what could be improved, and what people enjoyed.
- **Questions:**
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