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Peaceful Protest Protocol

DeKalb County Georgia's Guide to Peaceful Protest





DeKalb County Peaceful Protest Protocol

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Video Introduction



Letter from the CEO

Dear DeKalb County Residents,

The right to peacefully protest is one of the cornerstones of our democracy. It is a reflection of our shared values—free expression, civic participation, and the pursuit of justice. Whether advocating for change, raising awareness, or standing in solidarity with others, protest is a powerful tool in shaping the communities we all deserve.

As CEO of DeKalb County, I believe it is our responsibility to support your right to be heard while also ensuring that all demonstrations occur safely and lawfully. That's why we've created this **Peaceful Protest Protocol (P3) Toolkit**—a guide to help you organize or participate in protests with clarity, confidence, and respect for the law.

Inside, you'll find information on your rights, safety guidelines, and the role of law enforcement. This resource was developed with input from county departments, public safety officials, and community members, all with one goal in mind: to empower peaceful civic engagement.

We are committed to protecting the voices, safety, and well-being of our residents. Thank you for making DeKalb County a place where democracy thrives.

With respect and solidarity,



Lorraine Cochran-Johnson
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia



Video from the DeKalb County Police





**In DeKalb County,
we respect your right to protest —
and we want to help you do it safely
and lawfully.**



Do...

- ✓ Seek approval for use of any public space from lawful owner.
- ✓ Notify local law enforcement of protest date, time, and route.
- ✓ Have a readily available point of contact on file with law enforcement.
- ✓ Keep to public spaces and sidewalks unless permitted otherwise.
- ✓ Get a permit if you plan to march in the street.
- ✓ Cooperate with law enforcement officers.
- ✓ Follow commands from law enforcement during protest.
- ✓ Follow dispersal notices or traffic redirection during protest.
- ✓ All participants, including media, must follow lawful orders.
- ✓ Stay peaceful and nonviolent.

Don't...

- ✗ Block roads or entrances without a permit.
- ✗ March in the street if you have not obtained a permit.
- ✗ Bring weapons or objects that could be seen as weapons.
- ✗ Engage with agitators or incite violence.
- ✗ Disregard police instructions or safety guidelines.
- ✗ Cover face with scarves, bandanas, or fabric coverings (not including medical masks).
- ✗ March down highway ramps.

Your Right to Protest: What the Law Says

- The **First Amendment** of the U.S. Constitution protects your right to peacefully assemble and express your views.
- In Georgia, your right to protest is upheld—but may be subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions.
- Local ordinances may require permits for marches or use of amplified sound.



Permits & Planning: When and How to Get a Permit



- A **permit is required** for marches that block traffic, large public gatherings, and events using amplified sound.
- Apply through the **DeKalb County Police Department**, depending on the protest location.
- Provide details such as date, time, route, number of attendees, and a point of contact.
- Apply **at least 10 business days in advance** when possible.

SCAN QR CODE TO
APPLY FOR PERMIT



The Role of Law Enforcement in Peaceful Protest



Law enforcement is present to:

- Ensure the safety of protestors and bystanders.
- Manage traffic and public space access.
- Respond to emergencies or unlawful activity.

Note:

Participants and media must follow lawful orders, including dispersal notices or traffic redirection.

Note for Media:

Members of the press are welcome, but must:

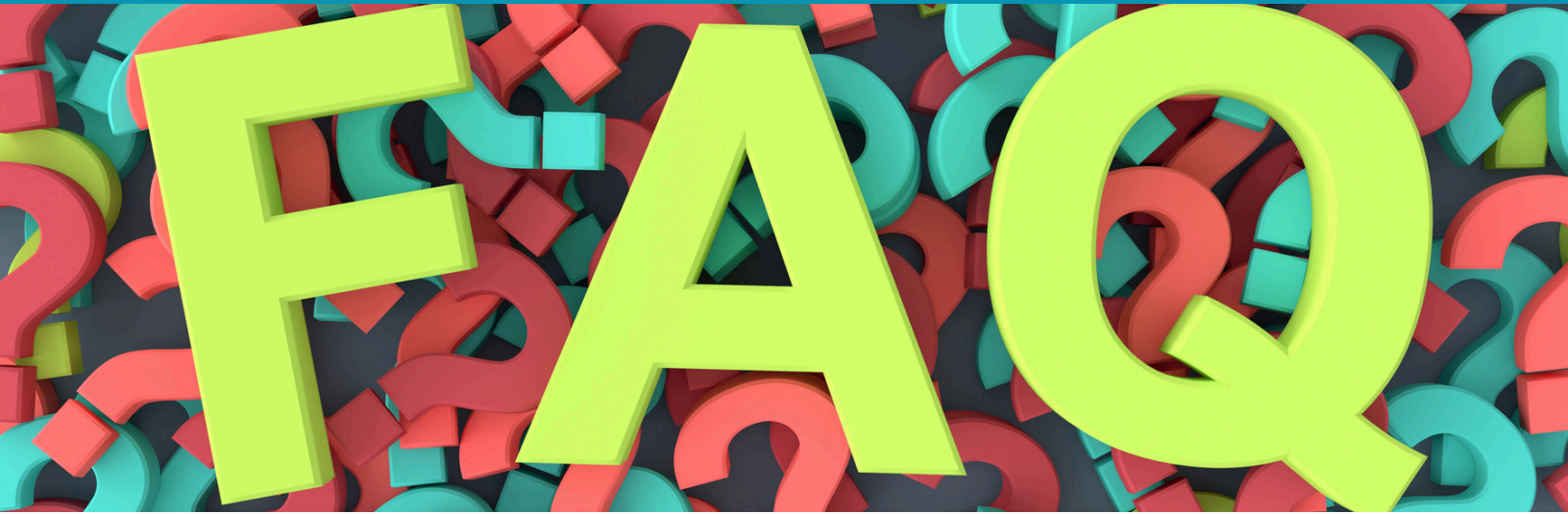
- Avoid restricted areas or interfering with police operations.
- Follow any orders issued by law enforcement.
- Comply with law enforcement and public safety instructions.

How to Plan a Peaceful Protest: A Step-by-Step Checklist



- ✓ Clarify your purpose.
- ✓ Assemble an organizing team (e.g., point of contact, logistics, safety, etc.).
- ✓ Choose a location, date, and time.
- ✓ Apply for necessary permits.
- ✓ Plan your route and notify all appropriate authorities.
- ✓ Promote your event responsibly.
- ✓ Prepare a safety plan.
- ✓ Do not engage in combative behavior.
- ✓ Have a point of contact on file with law enforcement.
- ✓ Be organized in your approach to maximize effectiveness.

Frequently Asked Questions



Q: Do I need a permit to protest in a park?

A: Yes, regardless of the size of the crowd.

Q: What if someone at my protest becomes violent?

A: Encourage participants to remain calm and peaceful. Notify law enforcement immediately.

Q: Can I record police activity?

A: Yes, if you do not interfere with their ability to perform their duties.

Q: What if I get arrested?

A: Stay calm. Do not resist. Ask for legal representation and note the arresting officer's name and badge number.

Q: Can I park at retail shopping centers, schools, or churches while I protest?

A: No, you must always seek permission to use private property if you are not there to conduct business at the location.

Who to Contact in DeKalb



Police Department Special Events Contacts

MPO Gale Karabeika

Phone: 404.392.5059 | Email: gtkarabeika@dekalbcountyga.gov

Sgt. Tanisha Moore

Phone: 678.524.3970 | Email: tjmoore@dekalbcountyga.gov

Office of Public Information.

For media inquiries: Dionna Smith, Chief Communications Officer

Phone: 470.889.7360 | Email: dasmith@dekalbcountyga.gov

Civil Rights & Legal Aid Resources

DeKalb County Legal Aid | 404.377.0701 | www.atlantalegalaid.org

American Civil Liberties Union | 404.523.2721 | www.acluga.org

DeKalb Probono | 404.373.0865 | www.dekalbprobo.org

CASA | 404.858.7466 | www.wearecasa.org

The Tahirih Justice Center | 470.481.4700 | www.tahirih.org

Latin American Association | 404.638.1800 | www.thelaa.org

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | 404.585.8446 | www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org



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Empowering Safe, Lawful, and Impactful Demonstrations