Street Medical Info

Taking good care of yourself – eating, sleeping and drinking lots of water will go along way to keeping you focused, grounded and healthy during street actions. No matter how tight our plan of action is with our affinity group, we can never really predict what will happen in an action, how the police will (over)react to our demonstration, no matter how peaceful we may be. So the more we are physically prepared the easier it will be to respond. The Police have a wide range of “non-lethal” weapons at their disposal and we have seen that they rarely hesitate to use them. Usually their intent is to disperse us, but we know that our ability to hold political space is crucial. Here are a few tips we’ve learned along the way:

**Batons:** If they are being held horizontally to push, you can turn your back and hopefully the backpack you are carrying with extra water etc can take the blow. Or you can face them and use your hands as a soft shield. Banners and signs can also help break impact. Finally sitting down is a great way to shift the energy and thwart their ability to push is back.

If police are using them to jab, again, use pack, sign or banner as a shield. If they are swinging and you brought a helmut, now would be a good time to make sure it is on! Without, you may want to get the hell out, cover you head with your arms, if you have been hurt and go down, curl up in a fetal position and protect you head, stomach and genitals. Lie on your right side if you can to protect you liver as well.

After the police have past, apply pressure to any area that is bleeding and no doubt a medic will be there soon!

**Projectiles:** (Rubber, plastic, wooden bullets, bean bags, etc.). If the police have opened fire, turn your back to them in order to protect your face, throat and stomach. You may choose to slowly walk away, sit down or run. These projectiles are not non-lethal and several protestors have been seriously hurt by them. If you are shot and bruised, try and see a medic, but taking some Arnica, pills or rub will help with the bruising.

**Horses:** Are often used to move crowds. They are big, strong and frightening. If you have a large group of people, sitting down like a moving carpet will scare the horse, they will not walk on what seems like uneven or moving pavement. Instead of yelling you might try singing or humming and bringing an extra apples. These horses can be our allies. Be aware however, not to get behind one of them and watch your feet. If you are sitting pull you legs in close so they don’t stamp on them.

**Dogs:** If the police use dogs, it is important to keep you hands, arms, legs etc pulled in tight. Do not give them anything to sink their teeth into. Do not look at the dog, but make eye contact with the cop instead. Talk in a clear voice, tell them to restrain the dog, to shorten it’s leash, put the dog back in the vehicle etc.

**Pain Compliance** – should the police be in a position to arrest you, they will often use pain compliance holds if you are linked up / locked down in anyway. This is essentially applying pressure to certain places on your body where the nerves are close to the surface or they will manipulate your body in the opposite direction it is meant to go. While there are certain ways to minimize the pain, these are essentially torture technique and resistance may cause serious harm. At some point you will likely need to let go.
Tear Gas and Pepper Spray

PREVENTION: Wash before with unscented castille soap. Cover up with water repellent clothes & gear. Don’t wear contact lenses, make-up, moisturizers or vegetable/mineral oil-based cream. Don't use Vaseline or mineral oil as skin barrier. Use gas mask, respirators, sealed (swim) goggles, and/or vinegar or lemon juice-soaked bandanna over mouth/nose.

FOR PROTECTION
- A bandanna, soaked in vinegar or lemon juice, kept in a ziplock baggie to conserve moisture.
- And shatterproof goggles. If you wear glasses: Either find goggles to fit over or put them on a string so you can take them off and put goggles on instead.
- A paint mask or filter or gas mask.
- Water bottles with squirt tops for washing eyes.

GENERAL TREATMENT FOR TEAR GAS (CS, CN) AND PEPPER SPRAY (OC)

● Stay calm & focused. You are strong. The discomfort is only temporary & will no damage you.
● Don’t touch face or rub eyes. Get to fresh air, eyes open, arms out (if tear gas), breath slow & deep.
● Blow nose, spit out chemicals.
● Consider water to flush eyes & gargle. Water or Witch Hazel soaked gauze or cotton balls on closed eyes are soothing.
● When your body heats up (from running or panicking, for example), the irritation may increase. Part
● of the reason is that your pours will open allowing more absorption of the chemicals.
● Face wind, open eyes, hold arms out and walk around to let fresh air decontaminate you. Take slow
● deep breaths of clean air.
● Don’t touch your eyes or your face, as you may re-contaminate yourself.
● Before you assist or treat anyone, ask them for permission first! Then explain to them what you are going to do before you do it.
● Best if cleaning solutions and water spill directly to ground so as to not contaminate clean skin,
● clothes or hair.
● Store contaminated wipes in a sealed bag.
● After treatment, wash off with cold water & replace contaminated clothes.

AFTERWARDS:

● Be aware that entering into a room with contaminated clothes, hair & skin reeking of chemicals will contaminate the room.
● Make sure that you leave a plastic bag outside or near the inside of your door to put your contaminated clothes in.
● Decontaminate with a cold shower (keeps pores closed preventing chemicals from entering skin).
● Exchange contaminated clothing for fresh.
WIPES may be clean cloth, gauze, 4x4s etc. WATER may have 4 drops per quart of Rescue Remedy added. NORMAL SALINE (0.9% sodium solution) may be substituted for rinsing, cleaning water.

TEAR GAS (CS, CN) TREATMENT

- Effects last minutes to an hour.
- Fresh Air.
- Consider rinsing off chemicals with water.

PEPPER SPRAY (OC) TREATMENTS

Effects last up to 2 hours. If still wet on skin, carefully sponge off. Don't spread it around.

Fresh Air
If there is wet pepper spray on skin, pad/sponge it up with cloth without spreading it around. If you move the oily chemical around the skin, you increase the area of painful skin.

The Protester Facial: Wipe mineral oil on skin. Immediately wipe ALL off with rubbing alcohol. Mineral oil will trap chemicals, so take it ALL off!

Other Solutions are half water, half Maalox or other liquid antacid are recommended for tear gas but NOT mint-flavored!

Some Special Conditions:

- Contact lenses are dangerous to wear so wearing your glasses is usually recommended. If you wear contacts they must be removed if you are hit with tear gas or pepper spray or serious damage to your eyes can occur. Disposables are great, but still carry your glasses and/or bring a spare pair of lenses. If yours are not disposable, keep a case with you, once contaminated they may be history however.

- Asthma is seriously irritated by tear gas, and can be fatal. Try and stay out of the gas or spray and make sure you bring your inhaler.

- Pregnancy, being in this toxic environment is not advisable for you or your baby. Stay out of it if you can.

ACTION FASHION FAUX PAS
- Don't put vaseline, mineral oil, oil-based sunscreen or moisturizers on skin as they can trap chemicals.
- Don't wear contact lenses, which can trap irritating chemicals underneath.
- Don't wear things which can easily be grabbed (i.e.: dangly earrings or other jewelry, ties, loose hair)
- Don't go to the demo alone if you can help it. It is best to go with an affinity group, or some friends who know you well.