

## Keep Our Movements Safe

**Phones:** Remove the finger print and facial recognition unlock features. Use an encrypted text service like WhatsApp or Signal. Take notifications off of your home screen. Turn off location services.

**Email:** Use strong passwords and two factor identification. Remember that most mainstream email services are not secure and can be turned over to law enforcement. Emails can also be used as evidence in court.

**Social Media:** Law enforcement routinely watches social media. Do not post pictures, videos, or statements about illegal activities. Do not post photos or videos of other people without their consent. Remember every post can be evidence in court. Deleted posts are never truly "deleted" and can still be resurfaced.

**Relationships:** Build healthy trusting relationships with the people around you. If someone in your group or community is acting in ways that are harmful or suspicious, approach them about the issue immediately.

**Rumors:** Avoid spreading rumors, as they are an efficient and powerful tool to break up activist efforts. People can face charges because of rumors. Others have had their lives ruined because they were falsely accused of working for law enforcement. Spreading rumors can create division and spread misinformation. Rumor control is key!



If you have been  
contacted by the  
FBI or law  
enforcement for  
protest  
activities  
contact Colorado  
NLG

720-822-5893

[resist@nlgcolorado.org](mailto:resist@nlgcolorado.org)

[www.nlgcolorado.org](http://www.nlgcolorado.org)

# An Activist Primer to Police & FBI Questioning



Assembled by the  
Colorado National  
Lawyer's Guild  
July 2020





Every social movement has faced state repression. Since the beginning of their existence, local police and FBI have used many tactics to spy on, infiltrate, and provoke activists. **These strategies work, not only to cause great harm and disruption to individuals, but to make people afraid to take action in social movements.**

Activists cannot control how or when law enforcement may decide to start investigating, spying, pressing charges, or using other tactics to interfere in activist work. However, we can understand how tactics are used, know our rights, and be prepared to respond when the worst happens. **The more proactive and informed we are, the less effective police and FBI strategies will be.**

### **If you are stopped on the street...**

Ask "Am I free to go?" In Colorado you must provide your name and/or an ID. Otherwise do not answer any questions until you have a lawyer present.

### **If the police or agents want to perform a search...**

Law enforcement can perform a pat down if they believe you may have a weapon. If you are under arrest, law enforcement can search your immediate surroundings (your clothing, car, bags, or things around you). When any law enforcement agent searches you or your possessions, say "I do not consent to this search."

### **If police or the FBI come to your home...**

Do not open the door. Ask them to pass their cards under the door and state you want to speak to a lawyer before answering any questions. If the officers ask to come in or search, ask if they have a warrant. Do not let officers in unless they have a valid warrant with the correct name, date, and address. If the warrant is correct you could be arrested for refusing a search. If you are contacted by the FBI it is important to contact an experienced lawyer familiar with activism immediately.

### **If you receive a grand jury subpoena...**

Grand juries hear evidence to decide whether to issue criminal charges; grand jury proceedings are secret, and witnesses can be forced to answer questions about lawful personal and political activities. Witnesses who refuse to comply with grand jury subpoenas can be held in contempt of court and jailed to force their cooperation. If you receive a grand jury subpoena you should immediately contact a lawyer who understands how grand juries are a tool of repression and can advise you regarding your rights and defenses.

### **Remember!**

- Lying to the police or the FBI is a crime.
- Law enforcement can lie to you about many things including the evidence they have against you in order to pressure you to answer questions. Do not answer questions until you have talked to a lawyer!
- Assume everything you say in jail can be overheard or recorded. All jail calls are recorded
- It is best to avoid sharing information about any potential legal issues with anyone who is not your lawyer.
- Agents may pressure you to become an informant. Contact the NLG and speak to experienced lawyer familiar with activism if you are approached to become an informant.