

Legal Support Person

As the fight against corporate domination becomes more effective, the system becomes more aggressive in clamping down on resistance. A legal support person helps coordinate support for those arrested in his/her affinity groups or communities. Although this handout is written with affinity groups in mind, it can also be applied to individuals who want to support their friends if they are arrested.

There are a lot of roles the legal support person can fill. Below are some examples. Don't feel like you're disqualified if you can't do them all. Just let your affinity group know your limits so they can plan ahead – and maybe someone else can help be the legal support person with you.

Before the action:

- ❖ Arrange ahead of time, *and let ALL of your affinity group members know*, a local number that accepts collect calls from jail where you can be reached, or that you will be checking regularly and frequently.
- ❖ Have everyone planning on going to the protests – even the ones who don't plan on getting arrested! – fill out the Jail Support Form below. That way you know their critical information in case they get arrested: legal name, medical conditions, other support people, etc.
- ❖ Have access to people's IDs, bail money (or sources of bail money – friends, parents, etc.).

During the action:

- ❖ *DON'T GET ARRESTED.*
- ❖ Remind people calling that phones may be tapped (the jail's and/or yours).
- ❖ Get (and keep track of) arrested people's booking and arrest numbers and upcoming court dates.
- ❖ If and when you hear from your friends in jail, contact the rest of your affinity group and others the arrested folks want informed of the situation. Update those people regularly, even if nothing's changed.
- ❖ Parents should be able to at least leave messages with the legal support person and be called back.
- ❖ Be able to arrange travel home for your arrested friends. This can mean arranging something with a friend with a car, collecting bus money...
- ❖ Be available until everyone in your affinity group is out of jail.
- ❖ Be able to get messages from the outside world to your arrested friends. This is a HUGE morale booster.
- ❖ Start a call-in or write-in campaign. Call the mayor, the police chief, and other government pawns, or write a letter to the editor denouncing police harassment, misconduct, unlawful arrests, and/or the attempt to oppress and silence people.

Once people start getting out of jail:

- ❖ Copy (and keep track of) everyone's paperwork from the cops (arrest reports, etc.), jail (booking info, property reports) and court (hearing dates, info on charges, etc.).
- ❖ Remind people about their upcoming court dates by calling, mailing and emailing them.
- ❖ Have extra Police Misconduct Report forms (available at www.midnightspecial.net) for your affinity group members to fill out at the action, or after. Police Misconduct Reports destroy the credibility of the police and thus help people's criminal defense. They also lay the groundwork for suing the cops.
- ❖ Get your misconduct reports to the legal team (sometimes they need to be hand delivered)

Small affinity group actions are catalysts for major social change. From ACT-UP in the 80's making AIDS care and awareness a national priority to Food Not Bombs visibly serving free food to hungry people, small actions make a big difference.

The more effective we are the more we risk arrest and other types of oppression. The legal system is designed to break us down and dehumanize us. Having a legal support person is just one more step toward resisting the criminal "justice" system, the corrupt government it props up, and the corporate rulers who use this system to oppress and silence us all.

Jail Support Form

This form is for everyone planning on going to the protests. Please fill it out ahead of time and give it to your legal support person. Do not bring this to the protest. This form is voluntary and you may leave any questions blank. See back page for full instructions.

1. Legal name:

2. Date of birth:

3. Address:

4. Gender Identity:

5. Citizenship/ Immigration status:

6. Email:

7. Phone # - Cell:

Phone # - Home/Other:

8. Medical concerns & details (Illnesses, Medications, Dietary needs):

9. Other concerns:

10. Who do you want me to call if you get arrested or there's an emergency?

Name

Phone #

Connection to you

What should I tell them?

Name

Phone #

Connection to you

What should I tell them?

11. People who can verify your community ties. (For getting released if you don't get cited out)

Name

Phone #

Work:

School:

Home:

Other:

Instructions for the Jail Support Form

If you plan to risk arrest at all, complete this form and give it to your legal support person. **DO NOT BRING IT TO THE PROTESTS** – we don't want this information to be confiscated by police. **The form is voluntary and you may leave any of the questions blank.** The purpose of the form is to have information available that may help if you're arrested. Don't write anything that could be used as evidence against you.

The first four questions on this form are also booking questions. Answering them in jail will probably speed up your release. For any other questions cops ask you, say, **"I'm going to remain silent. I want to see a lawyer."**

1. Legal Name (Booking) - Lawyers usually need your exact legal name or some other identifying information to visit you in jail.

2. D.O.B. (Booking) - Your legal support should not reveal your age to the arresting agency. If you're under 18 you may be moved to a juvenile detention facility, even if you'd rather stay with your friends in the adult jail.

3. Address (Booking) - A judge may release you with no bail if you give a verifiable local address. See #10.

4. Gender Identity (Booking) - Your gender will usually be assigned by what the arresting agency believes it to be. Generally you will be kept in custody with people of that gender. It is useful for your legal support to know where you may be housed. Some jails have policies regarding housing for transgender people, but most do not. If you believe that you will face discrimination because of your gender, please put this on the form.

5. Citizenship/ Immigration Status - You should never reveal this information to law enforcement, on the streets or in jail. It is part of your right to remain silent and you do not have to answer any questions regarding your immigration status. However, it can be useful to let your legal support know your status on this form. (Even if you are a US citizen, you may choose not to answer these questions to make it harder for law enforcement to single out immigrants.)

6 & 7. Email & Phone - This will help you organize legal support with the rest of your affinity group.

8. Medical Concerns - Most activists are cited and released within a few hours of arrest - but you may be in jail for days. Please indicate any other medical conditions you want your legal support to be aware of.

9. Other Concerns - If there are any other reasons your time in custody may be more complicated, or make it likely that you will not be treated like other arrestees, please let your legal support know.

10. Other people to contact - Let your legal support know if there is anyone who should be contacted if you are in custody for an extended period: your employer, childcare provider, pet sitter, etc.

11. Community ties - These are people who can verify that you have ties to the local community and are not a danger to society (employers, roommates, family, etc.). Having these contacts is useful for getting released if you are not cited out. *Note: These people may be called if you get arrested and don't get cited out.*

Note to the Legal Support Person

Collect this information before the action, and do not bring it to the protests. Once your friends are released, collect the information about their arrest and charges, and make sure to destroy this document. If your friends witnessed or suffered any misconduct, have them fill out our Police Misconduct Report from www.midnightspecial.net