
Legal Observer Workshop Agenda

Materials:

Legal observer hat

Television, video player and tape player

Reporting Police Misconduct video

Police uniform, metal handcuffs, camera

Effective Camera Work video

Examples of good and bad audio tapes, video tapes, and photographs

Strike Fast Kick Ass photos

Gas mask, face shield, visor, swim goggles

Ziploc bags with adhesive labels, latex gloves, tissues, sterile pads

Rubber and wooden bullets, teargas canister, paint pellets, dish of ketchup

Handouts: Legal Observer Application

Packet 1:

Police Misconduct Report

Legal Observer Notes

Packet 2

Instructions for Legal Observers

Police Misconduct Report

Legal Observer Notes

Examples of good and bad Report and Notes

Demonstrations and the First Amendment

Common Charges Against Activists

Criminal Defense Guidelines

What to Say to the Police

Search and Seizure

Opening: (5 min.) Introduce presenters, define legal observing, review agenda (don't indicate that video will be shown twice), distribute applications, show hats.

Reporting Police Misconduct: (30 min.) Distribute Packet 1

(5 min.) Show Reporting Police Misconduct video.

(10 min.) Participants, in small groups, fill out Police Misconduct Report. (Participants will be somewhat frustrated, unable to remember key details which they know they saw.)

(2 min.) Explain need for concentration and for immediate note-taking. "Watch like you're a referee at a ball game. Be looking for certain words and actions. Say the play-by-play in your head, so you'll remember."

(5 min.) Show Reporting Police Misconduct video (skip intro).

(6 min.) Participants, in small groups, finish filling out Police Misconduct Report.

(2 min.) Check that participants were able to complete form successfully this time, evaluate, congratulate them.

Rights of Observers: (5 min.) Distribute Packet 2. Discuss law on obstructing an officer.

Interactions with Police: (5 min.) Presenters demonstrate two role-plays.

a. Officer bullies legal observer, ordering him/her to leave the scene. Observer is self-righteous and litigious, citing First Amendment. Officer grabs observer's camera. Observer objects, threatens to file complaint. Officer arrests observer. Observer bleats, "You can't arrest me, I'm a legal observer." Officer, handcuffing observer, replies, "So take notes."

b. Officer bullies legal observer, ordering him/her to leave the scene. Observer is calm but firm, achieves a compromise viewing distance, and is not arrested. Observer continues to take photos throughout.

Collecting Audio Material: (5 min.) Play and discuss audio tape. Refer to corresponding good and bad Legal Observer Notes and Police Misconduct Reports in packet.

Collecting Video Material: (10 min.) Play and discuss Effective Camera Work video. Refer to packet. Show Strike Fast Kick Ass sequence.

Protection from chemical weapons and "non-lethal" projectiles: (5 min.) Show rubber and wooden bullets, teargas canister, paint pellets. Show gas mask, face shield, visor, swim goggles. Discuss attire. Refer to packet.

Collecting potential evidence: (5 min.) Discuss collection and preservation techniques, and explain chain of custody. Pass tray among participants. Tray includes:

a. Collection tools: latex gloves, tissues, different size ziplock bags, adhesive labels for bags, waterproof pen.

b. Items for collection: tissues, rubber bullets, teargas canisters, wooden disks, paint pellets, unidentified liquid (dish of ketchup and packages of sterile pads).

Participants may practice collecting and labeling as the tray is passed around.

Charges and Defenses: (10 min.) Provide overview of First Amendment in relation to demonstrations, and discuss common charges against protesters along with associated defenses. Refer to packet.

Intervention: (5 min.) Initiate discussion of verbal and physical intervention during incidents of police misconduct. Brainstorm tactics such as summoning media, medical team, legal team, etc. Emphasize that if an observer's conscience requires physical intervention, s/he must abide by the action guidelines. Remind observers that if they decide to cease observing and intervene, they should remove their legal observer hats, etc.

Evaluation/Closing (5 min.)