



May 2024 // Dish With One Spoon Territory // so-called Toronto

SPREAD INFORMATION NOT PANIC

Guide to communicating about police
and fascist activity at demonstrations

A NOTE ON COPS:

The threat of repression is understandably terrifying, but it is critical to remember that the police are not all-powerful. *When observing/relaying police activity, it is essential to think critically about their size/numbers, equipment, and positionality before deciding on what our own response should look like. Ask yourself:*

What are their goals?

What would they need in order to accomplish them?

Is there anything standing in their way?

As an example, the three or four campus cops on night patrol may *want* to stop students from establishing a camp at 4 AM, but there is *nothing just four cops can materially do* to prevent over a hundred people from storming into the quad. All police presence is *meant to evoke fear*, but the fact is that their actual capacity for violence is rooted only in their *material ability* to carry it out. If the cops simply don't have the numbers or resources to do what they want, they are far less of a threat than we've all been conditioned and traumatized into thinking. *Keep this fact in mind every time you are observing cops, and fight back accordingly.*

We within the belly of the imperial beast face a turning point. After seven months of a livestreamed genocide funded incessantly by so-called Canada and the USA, seven months in which our protests have utterly failed to slow the gears of the war machine, *there is nothing left to do but escalate*. It is time to embrace militancy on the ground, both as a means of keeping ourselves safer, and as a demonstration of our true commitment to the words "by any means necessary."

Keeping our eyes on the enemy and knowing their movements is essential to executing our own tactics and outmaneuvering theirs. Actions such as breaking through a kettle or mass surrounding police cars to dearrest our comrades cannot be undertaken without robust tactical info-sharing and communication about our opponents' activities, numbers, capabilities, and movements. This info-sharing is a skill we must learn.

Here is a short, introductory, incomprehensive guide to effectively relaying tactical info about police and fascist activities at actions, as well as some tips for those taking a comms or scouting role at demos.

Good tactical information must be *precise* as well as *accurate*. The term 'riot cops', for example, is vague, does not relay meaningful detail about their police unit or munitions, and instead evokes fear. A more *precise* phrase here could be 'Public Order unit cops carrying batons.' Similarly, the term 'kettle' isn't necessarily the correct way to describe lines of cops forming on both sides of a march if they are still letting people cross through: a more *accurate* description in this case could simply be 'police lines on both sides.'

Most importantly, when relaying information on cop or fascist activity, consider what information is needed to *enable comrades to take informed action*. Students in solidarity with Gaza, for example, need to know *how many* cops the university has mobilized to sweep their encampment, *where* the cops plan to attack from, and *which munitions* they're carrying, in order to arrange protective gear and to ready their defenses.

SALUTED and ALERTA are two mnemonics that may help you remember what details are essential to relay:

Share pictures wherever possible, but do not share only pictures. Pictures of cops or fascists can be a useful complement to written/verbally communicated information, but they are not an *alternative*. Photos allow comrades to verify details about size, uniforms, and equipment independently, but often relay scant information about the enemy's precise location or direction of movement. Moreover, comrades on the front line may not have the capacity to analyse everything happening within your shared photos, and may find written or oral info easier to grasp quickly.

Practice the SALUTED/ALERTA formats. One easy way to do so is to simply go to a nearby park, observe the people there, and try to describe them in detail. For example, maybe you see a group of skateboarders: try to describe to yourself how many people you see, where exactly they are inside the park, what they look like, if they're wearing any distinct outfits/insignia, and so on. *Remember, however, that the goal is not to memorize the exact SALUTED or ALERTA formats but to train your observational skills.*

ADDITIONAL TIPS:

Remain patient and careful. Wherever possible, avoid haste in your reporting, and use your judgment when discerning which cop or fascist activities are worth relaying. Make sure you're getting all the details right, particularly with regard to the location, direction of movement, and equipment, and that you're not raising accidental false alarms that may cause panic.

Learn how to identify local police and fascist insignia. Familiarize yourself with the symbols and dogwhistles used by local fascist groups, and learn to distinguish between the uniforms and gear worn by the different police units in your area. You should, for example, be able to differentiate between campus police, regular city police, and public order or hate crime units.

Scout out the demo location prior to the action. Being unfamiliar with your surroundings during an action could be a significant detriment to your ability to relay accurate location info. If you cannot find the chance to scout the area beforehand, print out a detailed map, study it carefully, and keep it with you at all times.

S **size/strength**
How many cops/fascists?

Eg: three, about a dozen, several hundred, etc.

A **activities**
What are they doing?

Eg: forming a line to block the road and halt a march.

L **location**
Where are they, precisely?

Eg: in front of the Starbucks on so-and-so intersection.

U **uniform**
What specific group, organization, division, or unit are they part of?

Eg: TPS Public Order Unit, Jewish Defense League, etc.

T **time**
When did you see them?

Eg: five minutes ago.

E **equipment**
Do they have weapons, vehicles or other notable equipment?

Eg: "Less lethal" guns, police bikes, knives, etc.

D **direction**
Where are they going, and how fast?

Eg: Southward on so-and-so road at a walking pace.

Example: "Around fifty (*size*) 'March for Life' anti-abortion protestors (*uniform*) with megaphones and graphic signs (*equipment*) were seen marching and harassing pedestrians (*activities*) at Bay and College (*location*) at 1:15 PM (*time*), headed east towards Yonge (*direction*).

ALERTA was developed by comrades in Asheville as an alternative to SALUTED to move away from a framework based on the US military, and to emphasize specific requests for response or aid.

A	activities What are they doing?	Eg: physically harassing and shoving an unhoused person.
L	location Where precisely are they, and where are they going?	Eg: southwest corner of so-and-so park, near the statue.
E	equipment Do they have weapons, vehicles, or other notable equipment?	Eg: gas masks, cop cruisers, pepper spray, e-scooters.
R	response What should your comrades do in response to this information?	Eg: Form a strong banner line on the south side of the road.
T	time When did you see them?	Eg: 2:30 pm.
A	appearance How many, and who?	Eg: Around 10 campus police special constables.

Example: "Approx 20 Public Order Unit cops (*appearance*) w/ OC spray (*equipment*) are shoving back protestors (*activities*) on the north side of Bloor and Yonge (*location*) right now (*time*), three people just got pepper sprayed, requesting medic support (*response*)."

UNHELPFUL:

"Tons of riot cops are coming!"

How many cops? Where are they? What do they seem to be doing? Are they carrying munitions?

Vague phrasing does not convey actionable information: instead, it leaves people confused and susceptible to panic.

HELPFUL:

"A line of approx. 40 Public Order Unit cops with batons in hand is currently marching south on University Ave and towards the US consulate; prepare for potential escalation."