

IF THE POLICE START TAKING YOUR FOOD

If the police start taking your food or arrest the servers we found that dividing the meal into thirds and only sharing one third at a time works well. We put the soup and salad in 5 gallon plastic buckets with lids.

1. Tell those people who are waiting for food that they are welcome to stay after the first food is taken because more food is on the way. Let them know that the police are only taking part of the meal. This will help calm the crowd. If those waiting to eat feel that the police are taking their meal the crowd can become very angry and give the police a chance to start fights with the hungry.

2. After the police have left the area bring out more food but still leave some hidden so if the police come back you will still have more to share.

3. Vert rarely do the police come back a third tine because they are already feeling very foolish by the second time.

4. If the police stay and guard the area you can often get them to leave by sharing a token amount of food. After they try to stop the serving a few times they realize that it's better to leave the area than stay and show that their authority can be successfully challenged.

5. If you continue to stick to your serving schedule the government will give up and you will build the respect of the people. Don't stop because of the police. Make each meal an event in support of the right to share food and invite the media and community members to attend. Call our toll free number as soon as you feel the police threaten to stop your meals.



Food Not Bombs

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RESPONDING TO THREATS TO OUR FREE MEALS AND LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION

If environmental health officials or the police come to tell your group that you must have a permit to share free meals in public there are several things you can do.

1. Politely explain that sharing free food is an unregulated gift of compassion and that you will continue with your meal.
2. Videotape and photograph the exchange with the authorities. Make sure you include images of your meal, Food Not Bombs banners, and information table so the viewer understands the threat. Post these images to social media.
3. Continue to share your meal as scheduled at your visible public location.
4. Announce that your next meal is an action in support of the right to share food with the hungry. Invite the community and media to this meal.
5. Plan to divide food into three portions and choose who will risk arrest. Make sure those not risking arrest know about what you might need like the feeding of pets and calling of employers if you are one who could be arrested.
6. Contact local attorneys and the local National Lawyers Guild to be legal observers.
7. Post images and announcement of your action to other Food Not Bombs groups social media sites.

It is unlikely that anyone will be arrested if your group follows these suggestions. In most cases, the authorities never return once you announce that your next meal will be an action in support of the right to share food with the hungry. This trend could change under the current political climate and the increase in the number of people seeking food so please be prepared.

It is important to always display a Food Not Bombs banner and literature at your meals to make sure it is clear was are a free speech event. This helps in our First Amendment legal defense.

Attempts to stop the sharing of free meals nearly always results in an increase in volunteers, food donations and people attending your distribution and provides a powerful example of the failure of our institutions to address hunger.

Several states are considering changes in Environmental Health regulations like those passed in California so united noncooperation in defense of the right to share food without government interference can have a global impact.