

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

This is not intended
as legal advice.

Protests Involving Federal Officials

Although you can technically protest on federal property in Wisconsin, your rights are not unlimited and can be subject to reasonable restrictions. The extent of your right to protest depends on the specific type of federal property and its purpose. **Here are several things that you should consider:**

Protesting in public areas

Your First Amendment rights are strongest in public places, such as sidewalks and parks. **The First Amendment does not apply to private property;** owners can set their own rules for speech.

You generally do not need a permit to march on sidewalks if you do not obstruct pedestrian or vehicle traffic.

You generally have the right to protest in public spaces near federal buildings, like plazas, **as long as you do not:**

- Block access to the building or interfere with its regular business.
- Obstruct pedestrian or vehicular traffic on public sidewalks or streets.
- Incite violence or threats.
- Vandalize or destroy property.
- Violate regulations and permitting rules.

Other things to consider

1. Federal authorities can impose reasonable rules on the “time, place, and manner” of protests, even in public forums. **These rules must be applied equally to everyone, regardless of their message.**
2. For larger demonstrations or those that may obstruct traffic or require amplified sound, **a permit may be necessary.**
3. Police can ask you to move to a different area for safety reasons **if you are blocking traffic.** You should not argue with or resist an officer, but you can calmly assert your rights.

Protesting on restricted federal property

Some federal property is not a public forum, and your right to protest there may be **severely limited or prohibited:**

- Inside federal buildings.
- Military bases.
- The Wisconsin State Capitol has specific rules regarding events on the grounds, which require a State Facility Use Permit from the Capitol Police.

Federal laws, state laws, and local ordinances can also apply.

In Madison, Wisconsin, permits are required for events that may obstruct traffic or use noise amplification. The City of Madison also outlines protesters' rights and responsibilities.

REMEMBER!



- You have the right to **photograph anything in plain view**, including federal officers.
- If stopped by an officer, **ask if you're free to go.** If yes, calmly walk away.
- If arrested, ask for a lawyer immediately. **Don't sign, say, or agree to anything** without a lawyer present.

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