

Dealing with CONFRONTATION regarding anti 1080 protests

BACKGROUND

Historically, protestors opposed to the use of 1080 have targeted DOC operations or District offices. However, some staff may find themselves in a confrontational situation either at work, in public place or at their home. This is a guide to help staff avoid or manage such situations.

PREVENT CONFRONTATION IN PUBLIC PLACES:

1. Consider using a rental or unmarked fleet vehicle if travelling to areas of high risk
2. Reduce the distance between your vehicle and any place you have to walk in and out of. Park in well-lit open and public areas. Avoid places you can be blocked in, entrapped or separated from possible help.
3. Park your vehicle so you can drive away in a forward direction, leaving some room behind your vehicle to allow for reversing and manoeuvring if you are blocked in.
4. Avoid parking fleet vehicles or wearing uniform in places where intoxicated people are likely to be.
5. Pre-programme the emergency assistance feature on your phone.

PREVENT CONFRONTATION AT HOME:

1. Keep separation between work and home – ensure personal and work details are not linked.
2. Don't put your home address on your bags or keys – use a phone number or PO Box.
3. Keep doors locked even when you are at home.
4. Don't open the door to strangers calling at unusual times.

DEALING with CONFRONTATION:

1. Listen to any harmless venting. Do not enter into any debate. Remain calm and polite at all times. Be aware that you may be filmed.
2. Adopt neutral body language and tone. Try to place an object between you and the person or move back to create space.
3. Act as if you are being questioned by media. Activists can approach you in various ways and are not always confrontational. They may be seeking any opportunity to gain information from you to be used against DOC.
4. Refer any direct enquires to the Operations Manager or other appropriate role - play down your own importance, influence or knowledge.
5. Politely excuse yourself and leave at the first opportunity.
6. If any threats were made or you fear for your safety, inform the police immediately via the 111 system.
7. If confronted in a vehicle – ensure all doors are locked, remain calm and call police via the 111 system. Think about the safety of others and drive away if it is safe to do so.
8. If the activists are trespassing on your own private property, you should warn the intruders that they are trespassing as follows:

"I am the owner /occupier of this property. This is a formal warning for you to immediately leave these premises. If you do not leave these premises, then you are committing a crime and I will call the police to have you removed."

Advise your manager and Director, Health and Safety (027 691-5107) of any incident. Make a note as soon as possible after the incident, recording date, time, place, description/names (photos if any) and what was said to them and by whom, and the name of the Police (if involved). Record in Risk Manager. Most incidents will be reported to the Police.