



CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



**Demonstrations and Assemblies**

Eff. Date 02/25/2015

## Purpose

The Madison Police Department's (MPD) function is to protect citizens' constitutional rights to free speech, to demonstrate, and to disseminate information in a lawful and peaceful manner while protecting others' rights to free movement, privacy and freedom from violence. The MPD has an obligation to protect citizens' rights while maintaining order, protecting property and ensuring safety. The MPD and its personnel will be completely impartial and employees will make no public statement which reflects personal opinion on the pertinent issues(s) while on duty.

## Procedure

1. Planning for large pre-planned events or demonstrations will be the joint responsibility of the Command Staff of the district in which the event is to occur and the Special Events Team (SET). If possible, departmental personnel should communicate with the event organizer prior to the event.
2. In the event of a spontaneous crowd management/control incident, a patrol supervisor shall respond and assume command of the scene. District Command Staff will be consulted to determine the need to respond to establish incident command and/or additional resources. If the situation warrants (increasing crowd size, hostile crowd demeanor, property damage, etc.) the SET commander will be contacted to determine if a full or partial SET activation is necessary.
3. The SET, under the direction of a SET commander or designee, will have primary responsibility for on scene management and control of all crowd events in which any significant portion of the team is activated. Whenever two or more SET platoons are activated, or at the discretion of a SET commander, a command post will be designated and staffed. When possible, the command post will be staffed by a SET commander, a SET supervisor, an affected district commander or supervisor and a recorder.
4. Personnel involved in crowd control/management situations will at all times act in accordance with MPD use of force policy. SET members may use special tools/devices as approved by the SET commander. Such use will be in accordance with training and SET procedures. Absent exigent circumstances, protective equipment will only be used at the direction of a commanding officer.
5. Whenever possible, MPD personnel will utilize these seven principles of handling crowds and demonstrations, known as the "Madison Method."
  - a. We protect citizen's constitutional rights to assemble, petition the government and engage in free speech.
  - b. We are impartial and remain neutral regardless of the issue.
  - c. We maintain open dialogue with citizens and the news media before, during and after demonstrations.
  - d. We monitor demonstrations and marches to protect individual rights and ensure public safety.
  - e. We balance the rights of demonstrators with the rights of the community at large.
  - f. We use restraint in the use of force. We protect people first and property second.
  - g. We, as peace officers, pursue continuous improvement of our method.
6. MPD personnel may, at the direction of a commander, videotape demonstrations/assemblies. The intent of creating a video record of such events is to document evidence of criminal activity for future prosecution, deter criminal behavior, to document and improve departmental response to demonstrations and assemblies, and for other internal purposes (such as training and evaluation). Videotapes of demonstrations or assemblies will be maintained in accordance with MPD mobile video procedures.

(Reviewed Only: 01/27/2016, 12/22/2016, 12/26/2017, 01/30/2019)