

Frequently Asked Questions for Celebrating Safely

Where can I go to celebrate?

The safest place is in a residence, restaurant or other public establishment. If you decide to go outside you may celebrate on public property so long as you do not violate the law and do not obstruct vehicle or pedestrian traffic.

How can I celebrate without getting arrested?

While there are no guarantees, if you follow the guidelines listed here and on the Spartans Celebrate with Class/Need-to-Know document, you should be able to avoid getting arrested.

Can I have open alcohol containers in public?

It is illegal to have any open alcohol containers on any public streets or public property within the city of East Lansing and on the MSU campus. Individuals under the age of 21 cannot legally possess and/or consume any type of alcohol, either on public or private property.

When does a gathering become an unlawful assembly and/or a riot?

A gathering becomes a riot when a crowd - five or more people - becomes violent and harms people, damages property or throws rocks and bottles at the police. A riot is determined by the actions of the crowd.

What behaviors could lead to my getting arrested during an unlawful assembly or riot?

- Throwing objects · Discharging fire extinguishers · Deploying fireworks · Damaging public property or private property that is not your own · Starting a fire or placing combustible items on a fire.
- Committing indecent exposure · Wearing a mask to hide your identity · Wearing protective gear for the purpose of meddling with deployed riot-control agents.
- Participating in chants/taunts directed at police · Obstructing the police in the discharge of their duties · Refusing/failing to leave a public street or sidewalk after an order to do so is given.
- Remaining on a street, sidewalk, or other public property or returning within two hours to public property where an announcement has been made of an unlawful assembly and/or a riot control agent has been deployed · Engaging in a physical fight.
- Cheering or encouraging any of the above listed items during an unlawful assembly or riot. Remember, *even just observing is participating!*

What do I do if I find myself in the middle of a declared unlawful assembly?

Leave! Encourage others to do the same. Even if you are only observing you could still be arrested. Follow any directions given by the police. If approached by a police officer, comply with the directions they give you. The majority of crowds tend to gravitate towards the middle of the street, so work yourself away from the middle of the street and walk towards open areas for escape.

What is “blocking a street?”

When a public street designed for vehicle traffic is partially and/or totally blocked by persons, objects, vehicles, etc, which inhibit and/or prevents safe passage of motor vehicles traveling on the roadway. This includes, but is not limited to standing in the street and crossing the street outside of pedestrian cross walks.

What actions will be taken if I block a street?

Police officers will have person-to-person contact with individuals blocking the streets. Repeated announcements may be made to facilitate this effort. If the streets continue to be blocked, the police may utilize a progressive use of force to clear the streets. If necessary this may include the use of chemical agents outlined within department policies.

How do I approach an officer for help?

Always approach a police officer in a calm manner and state your reasons for approaching them. During large crowd activities is not the time to become argumentative or discuss your constitutional rights. If an officer tells you to do something during this time, comply and do it. If you feel your constitutional rights have been violated by a police officer, obtain the officer's badge number and consider filing a formal complaint at a later date.

How do I file a complaint if I believe my rights have been violated?

To file a complaint on-line:

- MSUPD <http://www.police.msu.edu/contact.asp>
- ELPD <http://www.cityofeastlansing.com/>

How do I get emergency medical attention?

Move away from the crowd. Call 911 or ask a friend to do so. All police personnel will be able to summon emergency assistance and/or ambulances should that be required by any individuals. In addition, all East Lansing firefighters are trained paramedics and will be able to assist should first aid be necessary.

What to do if exposed to tear gas?

Do not rub your eyes! Move to an area that is not exposed to the chemical agents/tear gas. Face into the wind and allow the wind to remove the particles from your clothing and body. Use plenty of cold water to wash the exposed areas of the body and flush the eyes with plenty of water. After washing the exposed areas, use paper towels to pat the areas dry. The effects could last for as long as two or three hours. If you live in an area where tear gas has been released, immediately close your windows.

What are the consequences of being arrested, detained, violating laws, etc?

You will be subject to all of the penalties and sanctions associated with the related crime that you commit. If you are convicted of any offenses related to riotous behaviors, then you could also be subject to being banned from attending any state college or university for up to two years. Remember that these types of events are often being documented thoroughly (photos, videos, etc.) by you, your friends, the media, the police, and fellow celebrants. You are not anonymous!

Relevant Laws/Ordinances/Policy

- East Lansing: <http://www.municode.com/resources/gateway.asp?pid=13690&sid=22>
- MSU: <http://trustees.msu.edu/ordinances>