

Event Risk Checklist

Assess the risks: Yes/No

If yes: Mitigate the risks

Tip to a Safety Plan

People

Do the organizers incite violence or aggression?

Be alert. It can be safer to call key sources before the event and agree on when and where to make an interview.

Don't rush to the location. Research the chain of events and plan when and where it's safest to arrive and to interview the organizers.
Start to write up a safety plan – now!

Does their track-record from previous events indicate risks?

Research previous events and mitigate accordingly.

Plan how to get close enough to cover the event. Assess: When does close become too close?

Do the supporters incite hatred, violence on e.g. social media?

Be alert – keep distance.

If relevant, pre-research the place of a gathering or the route of a demonstration. Read all Safety Plan Tips!

Are anti-demonstrations expected? Or conflicting participants?

Be alert – keep distance, plan not to get caught in between.

Be cautious with whom you associate with, others may see you as a reporter for the other side or a spy for the “enemy”

Do you expect that this event will be a heated gathering?

Be alert – keep distance, plan escape routes.

Heated gatherings are always dangerous. Security forces controlling heated gatherings are dangerous. Taking photos of heated gatherings and security forces are dangerous.

Is there a risk of looting and vandalism?

Be alert – keep distance. Beware of taking photos or showing yourself as a journalist.

It may be safer to cover the event from a position above. Beware of the danger by climbing to get a better view.

Security

May the security forces expect violence?

Ask in advance the senior officer. Be alert. Plan escape routes.

Refer to the senior officer if the police target you. Don't argue legalities in a tense situation.

Are the demonstrators aggressive towards the police or security forces or vice versa?

Be alert – don't get caught in between. Beware of the danger by being behind either line.

Identify alternative ways out, possible safe routes and safe locations. Consider a get-away car?

Is it likely that too many people turn up to fit into the venue?

Be alert – keep distance. Place yourself close to ways out or safe locations.

Be aware of becoming the focus of a crowd through your clothing, behavior, attitude or language.

Is it possible to get caught in crowd movements, bottlenecks or dead ends?

Plan ways out at any time – not to get caught for several hours, where tensions may go high.

The police may control the crowds by hindering the crowd's movements – don't get caught in such a 'kettle',

Are there any tense political and social situation in the neighborhood?

Be alert and ready to retreat. Avoid 'no-go' areas.

Don't stop to argue your rights in a tense situation – get out.

Media

Will it be risky to flash that you are a reporter, e.g., if anyone would be against or hurt by your coverage?

Come up with a plan B to postpone confrontational interviews and human-interest case interviews for after the event.

Get their number, so you can call them for a follow-up interview afterward. Plan how to protect your sources, who risk reprisals by talking with you.

Is there hostility towards your media company?

Be alert – consider not to flash your profession and affiliation, plan escape routes

Carry press ID, but only show it when it is safe. Dress discreetly.

Are you covering the event alone?

Be alert - have back-up with office.

Try to team up with other colleagues to watch each other's back. Make a WhatsApp group.