
COP WATCH 101

A Training Outline



The People's Response Team, Chicago, IL

1st Edition - March 2017

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Who We Are

Originally a working group of **We Charge Genocide**, the People's Response Team was inspired by the **Anti-Police Terror Project's** First Responders Team in Oakland, California. APTP's First Responders Team has committed to supporting families impacted by various forms of police brutality. The team documents abuse perpetuated by police throughout the Bay Area, and connects impacted people with resources and legal referrals after an incident.



photo by Sarah-Ji / Love & Struggle Photos

As we form our rapid response team in Chicago, it is important to note that this work is **not** new. Our communities are actively responding to police shootings in Chicago on a daily basis. Our goal is to build an infrastructure of resources to offer to families and loved ones once mainstream media turns their light onto the next story. We aim to counter mainstream media and law enforcement narratives that don't match community narratives. We also aim to offer year-round trainings that help to build our communities and weaken our dependence on the state for our daily needs. We do **not** collaborate with or talk to law enforcement. We work in partnership with Justice for Families, a working group of **Black Lives Matter-Chicago** which provides long-term support for families whose members have lost loved ones to police murder. Many of us are already organizing against police/state violence in Chicago as members of **Assata's Daughters**, the **Chicago Community Bond Fund**, **National Lawyers Guild - Chicago**, **For the People Artists Collective**, and **Organized Communities Against Deportations**.

Prepping for Training

Note: *Because the People's Response Team is based in Chicago, Illinois, our training is shaped with Illinois laws, practices, and resources in mind. We will **highlight and italicize** where we think you should research your specific state/city/town laws and resources.*

Key for Training Outline

- Checklist item - make sure you have it or do it
- Presentation Paper/Dry Erase board item - make sure you write it
- * Facilitator Tip item - make sure you read it

Goals of the Workshop

To quickly train the average person in basic cop watching laws, methods and safety considerations, and promote cop watching as a method of bystander intervention. The workshop will utilize historical context, small and large group discussions, and role-playing to better equip workshop attendees to cop watch in their daily lives.

Roles Needed

When we host our trainings, we utilize a collective effort to maximum efficiency and minimize confusion and burnout. These are the roles we typically have for each training.

- 1-2 Lead Facilitators
- 1 Note taker (jots down questions and concerns from audience to review later)
- 1 Attorney/Legal Aid (to answer the hard questions!)
- Social Media team (live-tweeting: make a hashtag for your workshop so people online can follow along for cop watching tips! Later, you can make a [Storify](#) to recap the workshop)
- 1-2 Registration/Sign-in Table Helpers
- Set-up/Break-Down Help
- Tech Support (projectors are always hard)
- Food and Snacks Delivery

Materials

- Sticky, presentation paper (Post-it Self-Stick)
 - or, utilize dry erase boards, chalkboards, or pre-made poster boards
- Markers, Pencils, Pens
- Cop Watching Tips handout (see Resources)
- Feedback forms (see Resources)
- Projector, laptop, cords needed to project

Room Setup

This training works best with a minimum of 10 attendees and a maximum of 50.

We typically set up the room auditorium-style with presenters at the front. It's helpful to have an aisle splitting the room down the middle. Make sure there is enough room for folks in wheelchairs to easily move around the space, especially during activities that require movement around the room.

■ **Know Your Rights:** With sticky, presentation paper, or dry erase boards, prep the room with useful info to place on the walls that you won't have time to review thoroughly during the workshop. Include a **"Know Your Rights: Key Phrases"** sheet and any useful phone numbers in your city or town. **In Chicago, we have the First Defense Legal Aid Hotline (1-800-LAW-REP-4), which provides free, 24-hour legal representation to people in Chicago Police Department custody and educates Chicagoans about how to utilize their rights.**

■ **Legal Questions:** During the workshop, if someone has a complicated or specific legal question, they can write it on the paper without disturbing the training flow (maybe even with post-it notes). If you have a lawyer/legal aid present, they can occasionally check the paper and research answers during the training. You will re-visit the questions at the end of the workshop.

■ **Safety Considerations for Cop Watching** (see page 12)

Workshop Outline

We highly recommend 2 - 3 hours for this training. You will find that training attendees will have lots of questions, concerns, and experiences with police violence and cop watching to share. We believe it is crucial to make time for those shared experiences in order to fully make sense of the gravity of cop watching in our communities, and all of the complexities that come with it.

- ▶ Introductions (20 minutes)
- ▶ Disclaimers and Workshop Goals (5 minutes)
- ▶ History of Cop Watch (10 minutes)
- ▶ Group Activity: KYR Spectrum (20 minutes)
- ▶ KYR Review and Videos (10 minutes)
- ▶ BREAK (5-10 minutes)
- ▶ Partner Activity: Cop Watching experiences (15 minutes)
- ▶ Cop Watching: Safety Considerations (10 minutes)
- ▶ Filming Cops (10 minutes)
- ▶ Bystander Intervention (10 minutes)
- ▶ Role Plays (20 minutes)
- ▶ Closing (5+ minutes)

Introductions

20 minutes

- Who are you (facilitators)? Pronouns? What is your organization? What is your cop watching experience, if any?
- Who is the People's Response Team? Why are you using this training outline?

Now ask attendees:

- **Who are you?** (Name, pronoun, organizational ties, if any)
- **What is one thing you're hoping to get out of this training?**

- *Write their responses on board/presentation paper to re-visit throughout the training.*

NOTE: This works for less than 20 people. If there are more than 20, it takes too long to go around. In this case, popcorn a handful of answers out of the attendees.

Disclaimers & Workshop Goals

5 minutes

- Clarify whether you are centralized or decentralized.
 - ▶ Centralized = you're trying to build a cop-watching cadre or team in your city or town, or your organization is trying to create a cop-watching team.
 - ▶ Decentralized = you're just offering tools to community members on how to safely and legally cop watch on their own terms and time.
- We are neither the first nor the last. Community cop watching has happened everywhere, in the past, in the present, and certainly in the future - as long as police exist.
- We are not experts; we are just sharing our experiences and the things we've learned from our experiences. No one knows everything. Together, we know a lot.
- Watching cops has the potential to escalate.
- Cop watching is part of a broader movement to end police violence. Cop watching alone does not end police violence.
- Cop watching is a form of community self-defense. Police often target Black, Brown, and indigenous people for abuse and harassment. Cop watching becomes a practice for our communities to keep each other safe.

***** *TIP: Come up with room agreements on photography, videography, and audio recording during this time. People like to take photos of the notes on the board if they can't keep up with note-taking. Communicate whether or not you mind getting your photo taken. Write room agreements somewhere visible so late-comers can see.*

■ You can write the following on presentation paper or a dry erase board, too, for attendees to reference:

Workshop Goals (3 P's)

1. PROVIDE resources and tools
2. Offer space to PRACTICE what we preach
3. One piece of our commitment to love and PROTECT one another

Cop watching Goals (3 D's)

1. To DOCUMENT
2. To DE-ESCALATE and deter an escalation of police violence
3. To DETERMINE that the person(s) will stay safe until the end of encounter

What this workshop is:

- To build confidence for situations where you are witnessing police violence & harassment
- To share tips and use our collective knowledge in order to gain ideas for handling scary and unpredictable situations

What this workshop is not:

- A training that will give you all the answers
- The solution to white supremacy, anti-Blackness, islamophobia etc - this is just a tiny step to build our capacity to act. Organizing for systemic change is also needed.

History of Cop Watching

10 minutes

Black Panther Party: Panther Patrols (Oakland, 1966)

- ▶ Panther Patrols followed police around their neighborhoods with a camera, a law book, a tape recorder, and guns.
- ▶ Worked in conjunction with local, anti-police campaigns.
- ▶ Community eventually began to call Panther Patrols instead of police to settle domestic disputes.
- ▶ See **Resources** (last page) for links to information on the Black Panther Party's Panther Patrols.

Copwatch (Berkeley, 1990)

- ▶ First recorded cop watching activist organization in the U.S.
- ▶ Copwatch began street patrols to document police harassment of homeless people on Telegraph Ave in Berkeley, California.
- ▶ They created a newsletter, a Know Your Rights training, and actively and publicly demanded police accountability in specific incidents of police violence.
- ▶ Still active today!

De-centralized cop watching (2014)

- ▶ We Charge Genocide started the hashtag #chicopwatch to be used on Twitter for anyone to tweet when they witnessed police harassment in Chicago communities.
- ▶ Decentralization deemed necessary as a response to targeted harassment of centralized CopWatch groups. It was an effort to encourage everyone to feel empowered to respond to police harassment in some capacity.

*** Is there history of a CopWatch organization in your city/town? Do some research before the workshop and/or ask the attendees if they know any history, too.**

“We need more cop watchers, not cops with cameras” -
WeCopwatch

KYR Spectrum Activity

20 minutes

Quickly review basic Know Your Rights laws. Revisit the list you made earlier in the room and go over it together.

Again, make sure the room is set up so that folks can move around from one side to the other. On one side, place a sign that says “True” and on the other side that says “False.” Prompt the following statements and have the attendees move around the room towards the signs that reflect their beliefs. Let them discuss amongst themselves for a few minutes, then hear from 1-2 persons from each group. An “in-between/confused” group might also form and that’s great. Ask them why they’re in the middle.

* Again, make sure there’s enough space for folks in wheelchairs to move around easily.

1. “It is illegal for police to lie to you.”

(False)

The lies told by the police to a suspect under questioning do not render the confession involuntary per se. Mere trickery alone does not invalidate a confession. The court must look to see whether the deception is reasonably likely to produce a false confession.

2. “If you invoke your right to remain silent while in custody, and then a police officer asks you if you want water and you say yes, you must now re-invoke your right to remain silent if anything else is asked again.”

(True)

In a 2010 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court indicated that a person who is in custody, who has received the Miranda warning, and who says nothing in response hasn’t invoked the right to silence. To the Court, the person’s silence doesn’t invoke the Fifth Amendment rights –if, after remaining silent for a period of time, they provide a statement, that statement is likely admissible. [Berghuis v. Thompkins, 560 U.S. 370 (2010).]

3. “Police can trick you into giving them your DNA by giving you a cup of water.”

(True)

If you are arrested for a serious felony (read: violent crime), a DNA swab is now part of the normal booking routine. However, the police may also try and trick you into surrendering your DNA by offering you a soda, cup of water or coffee. A positive DNA match to an active crime scene is usually sufficient for an arrest and a charge. Police are even allowed to go through your garbage to obtain your DNA and other evidence. However, it should be noted that these DNA tests still take time, and are usually performed off-site. So if they tell you right away that your DNA proves you guilty, they're lying. Remain silent.

4. Insert your own True or False statement! Some other statement options you can research to include:

- Legality of filming the police in your state
- Legality of touching/placing your hand on an officer
- Legality of having your car searched without a warrant in your state
- Legal requirements for students (youth) to talk to principal or school officer

Know Your Rights Video

First Defense Legal Aid (FDLA)

Know Your Rights When Stopped and Frisked:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kLMhJCKr3U&t=3s>

***FDLA is specific to Chicago. FDLA provides free, 24-hour legal representation to people in Chicago Police custody and educates Chicagoans about how to protect their rights. Does this sort of thing exist in your city? If so, try to utilize their video or KYR info that's relative to your city or town.**

5 Minute Break!

Partner Activity

15 minutes

Have attendees pair up with the person next to them and share a time when they've cop watched.

- ▶ What strategies did you use?
- ▶ What went well and what didn't go well?
- ▶ If you chose not to cop watch in a situation, can you say why?
- ▶ If you've never cop watched before, what would be your first instinct?

Make sure you have them switch at around 3 minutes so that one person isn't talking the entire time. After about 6 minutes, go back to the full group and have people share out their experiences.

Start a new presentation paper (or write on the dry erase board) "Tips for Cop Watching" to begin adding helpful tips people bring into the room. The aim is to share collective knowledge! Again, no one knows everything, but together, we know a lot.

Safety Considerations

10 minutes

We highly recommend that you do NOT cop watch alone.

Why? Because then if something happens to you, there's a high chance that no one is watching for you in case you need help!

Also, because cop watching increases your chances of interacting with police and potentially being arrested.

■ Write up some of the risk factors to consider in a moment when folks are cop watching:

- ▶ Possession of drugs, alcohol, knife (over 3 inches)
- ▶ Parole/probation/warrant

- ▶ Immigration status
- ▶ Race, gender presentation
- ▶ Having different IDs
- ▶ Staying at a shelter, curfew
- ▶ Living in public housing, section 8 (also affects people who live with you)
- ▶ *Any others?*

Just because you have risk factors, doesn't mean you can't ever cop watch. We can get creative and think of alternative roles in cop watching

Discussion:

- What are some tips for cop watching if you happen to be alone?
- Cops are dangerous and unpredictable. They can be violent even if you do everything “right.” What are some ways to decrease the risk of physical violence from cops?
 - *Some answers you're looking for: keep your hands visible, don't approach from behind, be polite, maintain a calm voice, avoid sudden movements, make eye contact.*

Filming Cops

10 minutes

You CAN record cops in public in Illinois - and almost every state in the United States.

- A recent Supreme Court decision in 2012 deems that it is legal to film cops in IL.

- See: <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/98/SB/PDF/09800SB1342ham006.pdf>

- No exact distance to record is noted.

Recommendation for distance is “grabbing distance + a step” but you might even want to be further than that. [*Demonstrate*]

Cops can't charge you with filming, **but** they can arrest you on something else if they decide they want to arrest you.

- Case in point: <http://www.fightbacknews.org/2015/12/29/chicago-opponent-police-crimes-arrested-filming-cop-assaulting-woman>

Filming specifics

*** 2 people or more - critical for safety**

1 person filming

1 person engaging - stays between cops & person filming/camera

1 person filming:

*** Record all the way through the incident.**

- ▶ Narrate what you're seeing. Say the date and time.
- ▶ Show and say the location (intersection).
- ▶ Film police, NOT the person(s) they're harassing
- ▶ Try to film and state the license plate number, cop car number, badge numbers, etc.

1 person "engaging":

*** Stay in between the camera person and the police**

- ▶ If you are able to safely, let the person being harassed know who you are.
 - ▶ "Hey, are you alright? Do you need any help? I'm just here making sure you're okay. I'm just here making sure your rights aren't being violated."
- ▶ Try to shout out vital KYR info
 - ▶ "Hey, you don't have to consent to a search."
 - ▶ "Do you want to talk to them? Because you don't have to talk to them without a lawyer if you don't want to. That's your right."

- ▶ “Can I call anyone for you?”
- ▶ **If it appears that they’re definitely getting arrested, try to shout out local number to call for attorney help once in jail (in Chicago, for example, you call 1-800-Law-Rep-4 for FDLA)**

More people:

- ▶ Second camera person (this person can be more discreet, zooming out and recording whole incident from across the street)
- ▶ Old-fashioned note taker (describing the whole scene, writing vital info down)
- ▶ Social media - live-tweeting (**Don’t use** Facebook live, and only photos you’re absolutely sure don’t endanger the people being harassed. Think about what the goal is of your live-tweeting. Is it going to help this person, or do more harm?)
- ▶ Legal aid (i.e. a green hat - NLG)

Legality of recording private security (i.e. in youth spaces):

- ▶ It is fine if you are in a publicly accessible space where there is no expectation of privacy
- ▶ It is generally legal to film anyone in public in a non-invasive way
- ▶ More often than not, private security are off-duty cops.

Legality of recording campus police:

- ▶ Same answer plus they have actual police powers provided by the government and thus same First Amendment rights would also apply.

If you are being told you are “interfering with an investigation” by the police, you can say..

“I am just making sure no one’s rights are being violated.”

“I am watching from a reasonable distance.”

If an officer gets closer to you, you can say...

“I am a safe distance away. You are now violating my rights.”

If asked to step back...

Take one step back while saying and repeating:

“I am exercising my right to record and document police activity.”

Bystander Intervention

10 minutes

Are police telling you that you’re interfering with them by trying to talk to the person being harassed?

▶ Talk to your friend or another person nearby loudly using Know-Your-Rights lines.

Example:

Person 1: “Hey Ashley, did you know you don’t have to consent to a search?”

Person 2: “I did not know that, Monica! Did you know that you can call xxx-xxx-xxxx and they can give you a free attorney when you’re in custody?”

▶ Pretend to be on the phone.

This is a helpful strategy if you are alone and want to stay near a situation but don’t want to draw attention to yourself.

▶ Ask the person being harassed/arrested if they would like you to contact anyone for them.

Ex. Mom? Friend? Someone else? Have them shout the phone number to you.

▶ *(Chicago-specific advice)* Ask the person being harassed/arrested for their name and date of birth and call FDLA on their behalf.

Get as much information as possible from them. When you call, share their name, location, and time of the arrest. This can help FDLA track them down in the system and get to them faster. If you can’t get their name, or DOB, even the location, time and description of person can help FLDA find them.

- ▶ If you feel it is safe for you to do so, ask the people around and/or the cops themselves what the problem is. Engage them in a conversation, driven by curiosity.

These steps are especially important if you have institutional power, for example, if this is happening on a campus where you are a teacher, or in a store where you are an employee or manager.

Role Plays

20 minutes

Let's put our collective knowledge to the test! For each scenario, you'll need 2 "cops," 2 cop-watchers, and 1 person being harassed. Gather your role players and review the scenario together. Assign roles. Make sure that the 2 "cops" check-in with the 1 person being harassed and ask if it's okay to have physical contact during the role play. For example, ask "is it okay if I grab your arm, or would you rather I place my hand on your back instead?"

- * Scenario #1: You're walking down the street and notice the cops walk up to a young person and begin to search their person and property (backpack). It is day time and you are in a crowded area. What do you do?
- * Scenario #2: Someone who appears to be homeless is sitting outside of a 7-11 and the cops walk up and tell them they need to leave. The manager of the 7-11 has no problem with them being there. It is nighttime and you are alone. What do you do?

Questions/Close Out

10 minutes

At the end of the workshop, refer back to the presentation paper labeled "legal questions".

- *If a lawyer is present*, have them quickly answer any lingering questions from paper.
- *If a lawyer is not present*, let attendees know that you will take these questions to your legal team and will send answers in a follow-up email soon.

- Create and hand out some feedback forms for attendees to anonymously fill out and leave behind. This can help you better prepare for the next training.
- Let people know you'll be sending out a follow-up email with notes from the training and possibly some next steps or even the next trainings
- Remind attendees that we just reviewed a **ton** of information and it makes sense if they're feeling overwhelmed or not ready to cop watch yet.
- Encourage everyone to pair up with someone from this workshop and commit to meeting up over coffee and reviewing what they learned together.

Training Handouts

Cop Watching Pro-Tips handout

<http://bit.ly/copwatchprotips>

Do's and Don'ts of Bystander Intervention handout

<http://bit.ly/PRTbystander>

Resources

Movement to 'Police the Police' Started With the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense:

<http://countercurrentnews.com/2015/09/movement-to-police-the-police-started-with-the-black-panther-party-for-self-defense/>

The Black Panthers' Lesson for Jamaicans on Police Violence:

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/The-Black-Panthers-Lessons-for-Jamaicans-on-Police-Violence-20161201-0008.html>

Berkeley Cop Watch | History

<http://www.berkeleycopwatch.org/history>

Police Departments Retaliate Against Organized “Cop Watch” Groups

<http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/26527-police-departments-retaliate-against-organized-cop-watch-groups-across-the-us>

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<http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/26527-police-departments-retaliate-against-organized-cop-watch-groups-across-the-us>

‘Cop Watch’ Groups Monitor Police in South Bronx

<https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20130925/mott-haven/cop-watch-groups-monitor-police-south-bronx>

Here’s How to Cop Watch

<https://www.thenation.com/article/heres-how-to-cop-watch/>

A workshop on ‘cop watching’ shows Chicagoans how to safely document police stops

<http://www.chicagoreader.com/Bleader/archives/2016/12/20/a-workshop-on-cop-watching-shows-chicagoans-how-to-safely-document-police-stops>

Chain Reaction: Alternatives to Calling the Police

<http://www.alternativestopolicing.com>

Smartphone App Allows Citizens to Depend on Each Other for Emergency Services Instead of Police

<http://truthvoice.com/2015/12/smartphone-app-allows-citizens-to-depend-on-each-other-for-emergency-services-instead-of-police/>

Contact PRT

Email: peoplesresponseteam@gmail.com

Website: peoplesresponseteamchicago.org

Facebook: facebook.com/peoplesresponseteam

Twitter: @ChiCopWatch

Copwatch Training - Feedback Form
DATE OF TRAINING: _____

What's one thing you learned?

What did you find challenging?

How are you feeling as you leave?

What was missing from the training?

What would you do differently if you led this training?

Anything else?