



UTAH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**SHERIFF**

MICHAEL L. SMITH

**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE – July 13, 2020 \*\*\***

Subject: Acceptable and Unacceptable Activities During Protests

Sheriff Mike Smith and the Utah County Sheriff's Office are concerned about behaviors being exhibited by some of the protestors in various cities around the nation and the State of Utah. We fully support the Constitutional "right of the people to peaceably assemble", but we want to ensure that those who may desire to exercise this right understand what it entails and what it doesn't. To "peaceably assemble" means to gather as a group and, without violating any laws or violating any of the Constitutional rights of others, express a point of view. Hand-held signs, placards, and the like are allowed in order to express a point of view. Megaphones and noisemakers are allowed unless they violate a noise ordinance. Time of gathering is not a factor unless it violates an ordinance. We welcome our community members to gather lawfully in the interest of political and social discourse. When you gather in accordance with the law, we will protect and facilitate your right to do so.

What is not allowed are violations of the law, such as standing in the roadway (unless the roadway has been closed to traffic by law enforcement), obstructing the passage of pedestrians or vehicles, threatening to do violence to persons or property, damaging personal property, assaulting individuals, making excessive noise, trespassing, or other violations of laws or ordinances. It is important to point out that pedestrians in the roadway do not have right of way unless they are lawfully in the roadway. In other words, they must be in a crosswalk and crossing in accordance with traffic control devices, or in a roadway that has been closed to traffic by law enforcement. In the case of "jaywalking" (crossing in contravention of traffic signals or not in a crosswalk or at an intersection) or standing in a roadway obstructing traffic, vehicles have the right of way. There is no legally authorized method of obstructing traffic or stopping the flow of traffic. Blocking a vehicle from free and lawful movement may, in some cases, constitute unlawful detention of the vehicle's occupants. In the cases where any of these violations happens, the pedestrians will be the ones held accountable for the violations of the law.

Again, we welcome and support lawful assemblies. However, we will not tolerate any behavior that is unlawful and will hold the perpetrators accountable.

-Credit for the wording of this release goes largely to Chief Randy Watt and the Ogden Police Department and is used with their permission.