

# Car Caravan Protest Tips

This guide provides tips, and links to resources, for organizing car caravan/parade protests and moving public education events.

This information comes from several Internet resources especially from a good organizing guide by American Friends Service Committee.



## Organizing a Car Caravan

American Friends Service Committee has an excellent guide on organizing caravans. It includes good tips on creating an effective message and other general organizing do's and don'ts plus things to consider. It covers many details that could easily be overlooked such as “avoiding left hand turns,” and “decide in advance when to end.” See: **How to plan a car caravan/noise demo during COVID-19**

<https://www.afsc.org/freethemall/toolkit/how-to-plan-car-caravan-noise-demo-during-covid-19>

## Value of Car Caravan Events



COVID-19 has limited having protests, marches, and in-person events. One successful alternative has been car caravan/parades. These are socially-distanced events. This kind of event can be effective at attracting attention to an issue much like a march.

**CAR CARAVANS CAN BE A GOOD PROTEST TOOL ANY TIME!**

Car caravans have other positive aspects which may be better than traditional stationary events.

- **TAKE YOUR MESSAGE TO THE PUBLIC.** Caravans are better than hoping the public will come to your protest, rally, or teach-ins. Large signs, honking, using flags, waving from sunroofs, etc can generate a lot of attention for the message.
- **MAKES YOUR EVENT LOOK BIG.** Using large signs on top of vehicles, utility trailers with even larger signs, on vans, trucks, or RV's can create a large visual impact.
- **TAKE YOUR MESSAGE TO MORE PLACES.** Both because you can cover more distance and because you can access usually restricted or difficult locations (areas with high pedestrian traffic like mall parking lots, neighborhood shopping strips, or tourist areas). More on this below\*\*.
- **GETS YOUR MESSAGE BEYOND THE “CHOIR.”** Too often protests don't get the attention of many of the general public even with 30 seconds on the evening news.
- **PARADE PERMITS NOT REQUIRED.** Simple driving on public streets cannot be prohibited and no fees can be assessed. This applies, however, to events that obey normal traffic laws.
- **MOVING EVENTS ARE HARD FOR POLICE TO BREAK UP.** Assuming the caravan is not blocking traffic or ignoring traffic regulations, the police have no reason to intervene. Honking and sign waving is not grounds for intervention. See below\*\*\*.
- **CARAVANS ARE SAFER AND LESS CONFRONTATIONAL.** Moving car caravans are less susceptible to interference from opposing groups. It greatly reduces the possibility, as so often happens in tense picket-lines, that an errant shove or a sharp word snowballs out of control.

**NOTE on time and place.** A public education message campaign does not have to be limited by time and place. People can leave signs on their cars while going about their normal activities. Like bumper stickers, these can be temporary or long term advertising of your message.



\*\*Malls and business strips have historically prohibited events on their “private property.” But public streets or access roads cannot be restricted and it would be difficult to limit access to parking lots when the event is constantly moving. If the caravan did not hinder access to stores or confront shoppers there would be little management could do.

Another gambit could be to park (with highly visible signs on top of vehicles) while members of the event entered the mall. It would be difficult to ticket, arrest, or tear gas “customers” for parking in the parking lot.

\*\*\*Honking or portable sound systems can amplify the message but may create problems with “disturbing the peace” However, there are no laws against honking and caravan activity would be little different from wedding processions, jubilant sports fans after the big game, or similar public displays.

Mobilization Against War and Occupation (Vancouver CA) offers these tips from their experience with car caravans

- They suggest staying together as much as possible
- Don't go thru yellow lights – stay together
- They don't honk to avoid disturbing the peace
- They are using COVID distancing and masking
- Don't block rear window of driver visibility
- Have a cell phone contact number
- Have a lead and trailing car
- Don't get out of cars until caravan is over

**HAVE FUN!! CAR CARAVANS ARE MUCH LIKE STREET THEATER. GET CREATIVE!**



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Written May 2021