

## Building Your Emergency Response Plan

The Emergency Response Campaign has helped stall federal raids on patients and caregivers in states with medical marijuana laws. If there is a raid in *any* medical cannabis state, we will respond as a national grassroots movement! The Emergency Response Campaign works because we demonstrate the nation's outrage at the federal government's interference with patients' rights.

The Emergency Response Campaign only works if we are prepared on the local level to respond quickly. The Campaign includes day of activities, day after, and a national follow up response. With a network of activists across the country, we can respond to make sure the feds are held accountable.

### I. Be prepared

1. **Make a Plan:** When planning your local action, what scenario do you think would get the most attention? What can you do even better than the last time to make your action interesting and inspiring? What materials, props, puppets, and street theatre would you like to have prepared? A giant Mt. Rushmore-type puppet of George Bush, Cheney and Rove? A circle of people blockading the front doors of the DEA office? Some hemp seed 'gardening' in front of the federal building? A banner tied on a busy overpass? Your imagination's the limit for smart, visual, clear actions! Figure out your plan in advance and let us know what you have in mind.
2. **Assign Roles:** It is important to assign roles ahead of time so that everyone in your group knows how to act when your emergency response plan is put into action. Some roles to consider filling are media liaison, media spokesperson, legal observer, and head of the phone tree.
3. **Have Signs and Materials Ready:** Prepare visuals ahead of time so you can quickly bring signs to the site of a raid. Have flyer and press templates ready so that information can be plugged in.
4. **Organize Your Lists:** Make an emergency contact list of all activists who are committed to defending patients' access to medical cannabis. Set up a listserve of all the email addresses you have, a phone tree, and a short list of media contacts, friendly politicians, and other ally organizations you would want to contact if a raid happens. Make sure the national ASA office has a copy of these lists to help you alert your local Emergency Response Network - send them to [Sonnet@SafeAccessNow.org](mailto:Sonnet@SafeAccessNow.org)

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#### Headquarters

1322 Webster St, Suite 402, Oakland, CA 94612  
PHONE: 510.251.1856 FAX: 510.251.2036

#### National Office

1730 M Street NW, Washington DC 20036  
PHONE: 202.857.4272 FAX: 202.857.4273

#### General Information

WEB: [www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org](http://www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org)  
TOLL FREE: 1.888.929.4367

5. **Prepare Your Media:** Make lists of local media outlets now, line up your spokespeople, and get a media working group in place. Print out and adapt the sample press release to your local situation. Be prepared to make your own media as well. For media resources, see ASA's Activist Media Manual at [www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/MediaManual](http://www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/MediaManual).
6. **Build Support for Your Plan:** Figure out who your natural allies are and ask for their support and involvement, and find out what they would like your support in doing. We need to broaden our base, from patients, to the medical community, to the social justice and human rights movements, and so forth.
7. **Plug into ASA National Office:** Stay in consistent contact with the ASA office to keep up-to-date on raids and emergency response plans. One of the best ways to do this is to join our national and local email lists, where we announce any raids that occur. To subscribe, visit [www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/EmailLists](http://www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/EmailLists) Also, if hear a rumor about a raid, please call the ASA office to alert us and/or to confirm: (510) 251-1856.

## II. Day of a Raid

1. **Confirm that a Raid IS Happening:** Often, activists call the ASA office in a panic about a raid. Sometimes, a raid is occurring, but at other times, it is a false alarm. Please be sure to check your facts before sounding the alarms. Keep in mind that police presence at a dispensary or collective does not mean that a raid is occurring. Local police sometimes visit dispensaries for other reasons, including regular inspections as part of a local permitting process.
2. **Gather Facts:** Once you have confirmed that a raid is occurring, try to gather the answers to the following questions:
  - a. Who is being raided?
  - b. Where are they located?
  - c. Which agency or agencies are involved?
  - d. Has anyone been detained or arrested?
3. **Call ASA National Office:** Call the ASA office in Oakland at (510) 251-1856 and relay the information you gathered. Once you call us, ASA staff will activate a portion of the emergency response network, including sending out an email to our lists, alerting the media, and calling on the support network of the facility being raided.
4. **Go to the Site of the Raid to Observe & Show Support:** It is important to witness a raid to show the police we are watching them and to demonstrate to

media present the extent of support for medical cannabis providers. Legal observers watch and record the actions of the cops. Legal observers may help keep people safe by discouraging police attacks. The information collected can be useful in criminal defense or in suing police.

- a. **What to Bring:** Scratch paper or a notebook. Mark pages "Privileged and Confidential". Bring several pens with waterproof ink. Optional: tape recorder, camera, video camera.
- b. **Tips for Legal Observers:**
  - i. Legal observers tend to be more likely to risk arrest, so don't carry anything illegal.
  - ii. Carry ID.
  - iii. Do not engage in violence either oral or physical. Do not damage property.
  - iv. Don't get physically involved.
- c. **Maintain Close Proximity to Police:** Legal observers should try to get as close to the incident as possible. In doing this observers should try to maintain a calm demeanor and make no sudden movements that could be construed as threatening.
- d. **Take Detailed Notes & Call ASA Office with Updates:** Your notes should include time and location of the raid, listing of law enforcement agencies conducting the raid, description of police activities, and circumstances that led up to the incident. Rewrite your notes later when the incident is still fresh in your mind and call the ASA office with updates throughout the incident. Here is a check list of details to write down:
  - i. Names, badge numbers and other identifying characteristics of all law enforcement and government agencies present. If they refuse to supply you with these, or if they are not visible, make note of these.
  - ii. The manner in which the officers are identified. If there is no identification supplied, make note of this.
  - iii. Who is in charge. If they refuse to tell you who's in charge, make note of this.
  - iv. Name(s) of person(s) arrested and/or detained.
  - v. List of any evidence that is seized.
  - vi. Any unusual circumstances, force used, injuries, sweeps.
  - vii. Names of media present.
  - viii. Names of people with cameras.
  - ix. Always track time in your notes.
  - x. Note other facts that seem important.



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5. **Make Media Calls:** Call local media during the raid to encourage them to go to the site of the raid. Prioritize television news media because they are more likely to want footage of the raid occurring. Next, call print and radio media contacts.
6. **Activate Your Phone Tree:** During the raid, activate your phone tree to gather a critical mass of supporters at the site of the raid. After the raid, call your phone tree again to ask them to participate in an emergency response action in coming days.
7. **Meet with Your Response Team About Next Steps:** Meet with your core team to determine next steps. Alert the ASA office about any plans for an upcoming response action.

### III. Day After a Raid:

1. **Arraignments:** Attend the arraignments of those who were charged. Please see ASA's guide to court support for further information: [www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/CourtSupport](http://www.AmericansForSafeAccess.org/CourtSupport)
2. **Work with ASA to Create National Response:** Through ASA's national alert listserve, we will notify folks of DEA raids as soon as they happen. To keep the pressure on, we need to respond to these raids FAST. We encourage sustained resistance to these events through creative non-violent tactics. From phone calls to sit-ins to spontaneous street theater, we'll work to support your local action planning with a national network of assistance and support. E-mail [Sonnet@SafeAccessNow.org](mailto:Sonnet@SafeAccessNow.org), or call (510) 251-1856 for anything else you may need to make this a successful action.

### IV. Continued Support:

If any of the raid victims were charged, they will need continued support. Over 100 defendants are currently facing federal charges, and it is important to sustain support for them, even as new raids continue to occur. Please refer to ASA's court support guide for more information on doing effective court support.