



TASK FORCE BUTLER VETERANS FIGHTING FASCISM

Street Teams Guide

What To Do When Fascist Street Gangs Show Up

Task Force Butler's *Street Teams Guide* is designed to improve the safety and effectiveness of coordinated anti-fascist research and action by established community groups who consider themselves *experienced practitioners* in performing work against organized, fascist street gangs.

For those just getting started in researching and working against fascist street gangs, please see our [Community Resource Guide](#).

You can download your copy and check for updates of this *Street Teams Guide* at <https://taskforcebutler.org/streetteams>.

Background:

Fascist Gangs' use of Publicity Stunts to Intimidate Communities and Find Recruits

The disparate groups of fascist street gangs – neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and anti-government militia – are at a crossroads.

Faced with targeted prosecution after their roles in the January 6th insurrection, nationwide fascist gangs such as the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys have shifted tactics and focused their efforts on harassment and intimidation of local communities and elected officials at the lowest levels of government.

Neo-Nazi groups like Patriot Front and Blood Tribe have been emboldened by the resurgence of anti-Jewish conspiracy-theory mongering and the rapid expansion of anti-Jewish hate crimes.

In this climate, fascist street gangs have been casting about for ways to retain relevance and recruit new members as they try to build power.

A central part of the strategy is to rebrand themselves as self-appointed guardians of public morality. Fascist street gangs have cynically made common cause with

well-connected, well-funded “mainstream” groups like Moms for Liberty and are making appearances at local businesses, libraries, school board meetings, and Pride events.

Fascist street gangs have three primary objectives at these events:

1. **Instill fear** in targeted populations: religious and ethnic minorities, immigrants, the LGBTQIA+ community, and women.
2. **Co-opt the attention** of the media drawn by organizers and counter protestors.
3. **Recruit new members** who are sympathetic and persuadable to fascist ideology.

In the context of individual citizens, community groups, and anti-fascist researchers expressing a willingness to push back against these fascist street gangs, Task Force Butler has compiled this *Street Teams Guide*. This guide provides a baseline for local action that tight-knit community groups and researchers can take to safely monitor, document, and report the acts of intimidation that can quickly cross over into hate crimes and domestic terrorism.

Before the Event: Local Preparation

- Contact local anti-fascist researchers and community safety groups, as well as national extremism monitoring organizations ahead of your event if you have reason to believe that it'll be targeted by fascist street gangs. Being specific and presenting evidence that informs your suspicion that a fascist street gang will be present during an upcoming community event will help you get the support you may need.
- Ensure that organizers involved in the targeted event are familiar with the expected fascist street gang, their tactics, and their history of co-opting earned media to detract from community events. When enough time and resources are available, national counter-extremism organizations, your local anti-fascist researchers, and other community groups may be able to support your internal education process.
- Collaborate with the suspected targeted event's organizers to make sure that they have a plan to *safely and legally* prevent fascist street gangs from entering permitted space or otherwise ingratiating themselves with the event. If the community event is being held on private property and you know of specific individual extremists who are likely to try to disrupt it, contact your local police department or sheriff's office to have them issue “Do Not Trespass” orders to those individuals before the event.
- Review any publicly released information about the event and determine most likely avenues of approach for the fascist street gang. Militant extremist groups such as Patriot Front, Blood Tribe, and NSC-131 prefer wide, high-visibility sidewalks that they

can march on while in formation. They also frequently utilize public parks, and/or low vehicle traffic streets so that they can safely march toward the targeted community event with a police escort.

- For suspected disruption by very large groups (two dozen or more extremists operating as part of any one fascist street gang), consider metro stations and areas that can be used for rapid pick-ups by convoys of vehicles. Have a plan to have observers in place at key locations with cameras before the police lock down metro entrances or loading areas to facilitate the fascist street gang's exit.
- In the case of suspected targeting by Patriot Front:
 - This group frequently uses rented box trucks to transport dozens of their gang members to and from events. Contact local U-Haul, Penske, and other truck-rental locations, and advise them that a fascist street gang may be using their services to harass and intimidate local communities.
 - Inform nearby hardware stores/chains that Patriot Front typically makes a large purchase of galvanized pipe (conduit) to use as weapons (disguised as flagpoles), only to return them to get rid of evidence and put the cost of their flash mob activities on the backs of local business owners.
 - *Ideally this outreach is done via e-mail or recorded phone call.*
- If organizers feel comfortable approaching or coordinating with local law enforcement, informing police about the fascist street gang and their intent to intimidate or harass event participants can prevent the gang from manipulating local law enforcement's perception and response on the day of the event. Fascist street gangs seek to surprise and overwhelm police, then take advantage of law enforcement's confusion and lack of preparation. By preparing law enforcement for what is likely to happen, you can take away the fascist street gang's tactical advantage, and reduce the gang's ability to manipulate law enforcement into effectively acting against the community they're sworn to protect.
 - When preparing for your local law enforcement outreach, do your homework and arrive with documentation of the gang's tactics and prior criminal behavior from reputable, mainstream sources. Focus on preparing evidence of the gang's history of **criminal activity, especially violence and property destruction** that has been committed by the fascist gang.
 - Avoid the trap of engaging in a debate about First Amendment protected activity or the gang's deplorable beliefs with law enforcement – this is a distraction and irrelevant to the issue at hand – which is criminal activity which has nothing to do with protected speech.
 - Focus on issues related to the fascist street gang's criminal activity, and **actions police can take to ensure the physical security of people and property of**

targeted communities.

- Do not assume that local law enforcement will have prior knowledge of the fascist street gang's prior criminal behavior, especially that which occurs outside of their limited jurisdiction. Understand that local law enforcement needs to be educated and sensitized to the imminent potential threat.
- The language that you use to describe these gangs is important for framing law enforcement's understanding of the danger that they pose to your community, and how these fascist street gangs can be held accountable in a court of law.
 - Be familiar with, or bring a printed copy of the [federal definition of a gang](#) to assist you in your discussion.
 - Your state may also provide a legal definition of a criminal street gang that is important for the context of local law enforcement's understanding of and response to these events. Other local or statewide legal definitions you should familiarize yourself with include "gang member," "gang crime," and "gang-related offense."
 - Though legal definitions vary by jurisdiction, the most widely accepted include the following elements: ***"criminal street gang' means any ongoing organization, association or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of one or more of the criminal acts [...], having a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang activity."***
- Consider establishing connections with local or national journalists or anti-fascist researchers who may be interested in your community group's activities. If journalists who are present to cover your community event do not appear to know what these fascist street gangs are, or the threat they pose, encourage them to contact organizations like the SPLC, ADL, or Task Force Butler that can provide them with useful context in a timely manner.
- Ensure team members of your community group are aware of all local, state, and federal laws related to typical fascist street gang activity. Be prepared to call the appropriate authorities and cite these specific laws if you witness fascist street gangs engaging in illegal behavior. We recommend you document all interactions with law enforcement in a manner that is both consistent with local law and performed in a manner that law enforcement will not be distracted or intimidated by.
- Keep in mind that records of electronic tips to law enforcement or calls to 911 may be available via public records requests. Take steps to protect your anonymity if it is

required for your safety.

- Potentially illegal behavior that fascist street gangs frequently engage in, depending on local jurisdiction's laws:
 - Use of pyrotechnics
 - Riding in the back of a truck without seatbelts
 - Carrying weapons and wearing armor
 - Metal shields can be used as deadly striking and slashing weapons, and many of these gangs have an established history of using them to attack victims
 - Fascist street gang members often wear armor under their baseball caps
- Reach out to state or local community legal aid and engage them in a dialog to determine the full range of existing statutes that limit or address gang membership/activity. Be sure to highlight the Federal statutes and laws that may pertain to Fascist street gangs activity: [Source link - FBI](#)

- **Title 18, U.S.C., Section 249 - Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act**
- **Title 18, U.S.C., Section 241 - Conspiracy Against Rights**
 - This law states that it is *“unlawful for two or more persons to go in disguise on the highway or on the premises of another with the intent to prevent or hinder his/her free exercise or enjoyment of any rights so secured.”* Any fascist street gang that uses masks as part of their uniform and travels on the highway to attack a community event, such as Patriot Front, NSC-131, or Blood Tribe, could potentially be federally prosecuted under this statute. This law was designed to target the KKK's use of masks during their campaigns of violence and intimidation in the past, and should be applied to modern fascist street gangs as well.
- **Title 18, U.S.C., Section 245 - Federally Protected Activities**

Anticipating the Fascist Street Gang's Day-of Activity

Historically, for large-scale planned disruptions of community events by fascist street gangs, the gangs' members will gather at a makeshift campground the day prior to a planned event. There they will practice marching and melee combat using their shields and weapons disguised as flagpoles.

- Immediately before the event, fascist street gangs will utilize public transportation or travel by convoy (rental trucks or personal vehicles, often with license-plates covered) to get their personnel to the location of their planned activism.

- Activity of this nature by the fascist street gang Patriot Front typically relies on *at least* one rental truck driven by gang members to transport their weapons, shields, flags and other equipment to and from the event.
- Fascist street gangs' tactics for entry/exit of the targeted area will often change based on community defense responses to their presence.
- Fascist street gangs often utilize spotters/scouts who monitor the drop-off location and route prior to the arrival of the main group.
 - In the past, these spotters/scouts have been dressed in gang uniforms with their gaiters around their necks instead of pulled up to cover their faces.
 - They may use radios to communicate with the gang's drivers and ground commanders.
 - When targeting community events, they will likely gather within a half mile radius of the event, march in a non-direct route towards the event, and attempt to find a highly visible location in the direct vicinity of the event while using pyrotechnics and loudspeakers to spread propaganda and intimidate adversaries.
- Typical fascist street gang activism directly targets either adversarial or ideologically aligned public events.
 - For example, fascist street gangs such as Patriot Front have consistently attended the annual March For Life event in Washington D.C. and other satellite cities.
 - Fascist street gang members will actively look to antagonize adversaries and, if possible, surround and attack individuals with shields and flagpoles.
 - ***We strongly advise that individuals do not directly approach fascist street gangs members marching as a group as you will likely be physically assaulted. Local police have historically failed to enforce the law against fascist gangs, and instead direct force against communities organizing counter-protests.***
 - ***If you have not previously coordinated with law enforcement and established a clear understanding of expectations and mutual trust, you should assume they will direct force against you without provocation while they are escorting fascist street gangs.***

When conducting public en mass activism, fascist street gangs often bring at least two individuals responsible for producing visual media and propaganda for the group.

- Patriot Front's propaganda team are typically identified by their yellow construction vests over the otherwise standard gang uniform. This tends to trick law enforcement into perceiving these gang members as journalists.

- These individuals will film everyone who engages with gang members, and, in the past, this footage has been used to target or doxx their adversaries, including individual members of responding police units.
- They typically use this footage to produce video summaries of their flash-mob events, and will manipulate footage to make fascist street gangs look non-violent, and widely accepted by locals and law enforcement. If violence occurs they will present the situation in propaganda videos as if they are the victims rather than the perpetrators of violent activity, and they will seek to inspire harassment campaigns against their victims.
- Many members of fascist street gangs, including those carrying shields as weapons, also don body-worn cameras to record and produce deceptively-edited propaganda.

Law enforcement too often have a bias towards doing the *easy thing*, not the *right thing*. Patrol officers are generally blind to what fascist street gangs are doing outside of their jurisdiction, and tend to think of interactions with fascist street gangs as one-off events and temporary inconveniences that are quickly forgotten.

- Fascist street gangs frequently contact local law enforcement anonymously as “concerned citizens” to “report” their presence to effectively gain a police escort while they march on public property.
 - When fascist street gang members are arrested or prevented by law enforcement from immediately leaving the site of their flash mob, they typically carry no government issued identification and/or refuse to give their names. Their cell phones will often be kept off site to avoid police confiscation.
 - Historically, police officers are then deterred from making arrests so that they may avoid paperwork.
 - This is one of the reasons why data collection and sharing among community researchers are so important – *the identification of the gang members helps to break the cycle of their ability to anonymously terrorize our communities without facing legal consequences.*

During the Event: Your Team’s Actions

Your day-of actions will be dictated by how much prior preparation you’ve conducted, the number of individuals assisting in monitoring/countering the fascist street gang, and the complexity and size of the targeted event.

What follows is a suggested approach to real time monitoring that will increase your odds of keeping your team safe, as well as maximizing the opportunities for gathering information that can lead to accountability for the gangs and their enablers.

- Establish a team communication strategy and command-structure ahead of time. One person on the ground should be designated as the Team Leader who is charged with decision-making authority.
- One or more members of your team should be designated as your “headquarters element,” who will remain off-site in a static location where cell phone and WiFi signals are strong and won’t be compromised by crowds.
 - The headquarters element will help facilitate orderly team communications, keep an eye on social/traditional media (perform online OSINT), and monitor team members' live geo-location.
 - If headquarters consists of more than one person, the second team member can be responsible for collecting videos, photos, and updates from the ground teams. Additional members of the headquarters team can also be responsible for posting on social media in real-time to keep the community informed of the intelligence that your ground teams are collecting.
 - NOTE: any real-time/ day-of social media should be shared through organization accounts, not personal accounts, to avoid any follow-up targeting from the gang.
- Cell phone reception can be severely limited in very large crowds, compromising ground teams’ ability to use voice communication and to share their geo location. Consider additional communication methods such as handheld radios and geo-location devices such as Apple AirTags.
 - Apple AirTags utilize the entire network of all nearby Apple devices with the “Find My” app enabled. They tend to provide a more accurate and frequently-updated geo-location for those in large crowds than their iPhones do. Because they rely on the entire network of “Find My”-enabled devices, they can still be useful if issued to Android users. Use of Apple AirTags over iPhones for live-tracking geo-location of street team members will reduce the strain on their iPhones’ batteries.
- Decide on a limited number of communications methods for the team and stick to them so team members don’t miss messages. Keep in mind that team members’ having either Apple or Android phones may limit your team’s choices to mutually accessible third-party apps. Examples of potential communication protocols:
 - Handheld radio for voice, and Signal for text/images; or
 - Signal for voice, and WhatsApp for text/images; or
 - Group FaceTime for voice, and Slack for text/images
- Team members that are moving with the crowd and tracking the fascist street gang should work in pairs.
 - Ground team pairs should stay within eyesight of each other.
 - Ground teams should avoid direct engagement with gang members.

- One team member can focus on navigation and communication with headquarters and other ground teams, while the second team member is responsible for gathering video/photo evidence of the fascist street gangs' activity.
- Static observation positions do not require pairs.

One way to create outsized impact is to monitor the staging, entry and exit routes for the fascist street gang. This monitoring allows your team members to choose a safe position for their work and maximize their media collection.

- Position at least one individual near likely avenues of approach.
 - These individuals should not be visibly affiliated with the event or any political/social organizations, and should focus on alerting organizers and your team as soon as fascist street gangs are seen.
 - When fascist street gangs' members are observed as having reached the targeted community event, other individuals should move towards the group, maintaining distance to avoid detection while relaying real time location information to organizers and the monitoring team.
 - These individuals should avoid direct engagement with gang members.

- If fascist street gang members are observed using public transportation to enter an area, we suggest a team of at least two individuals immediately identify which public transit line was used and attempt to check every prior possible stop along that line to locate gang members' vehicles and to identify their rally point. If the fascist street gangs engage in criminal activity and then escape law enforcement at the targeted event, you may be able to direct law enforcement to their suspected rally point for interception.
 - Keep in mind that mass-transit systems often provide riders transportation to multiple states/cities/jurisdictions – and the mass transit system itself may have its own police force. Your team may need to anticipate interacting with law enforcement across multiple jurisdictions.

- Historically, fascist street gangs will leave at least one individual behind to monitor for attempts to discover their vehicle exchange points. The fascist street gang's parking lot guard will stage in their own vehicle wearing civilian clothing and will attempt to observe anyone who enters the parking area.
 - If a mass of vehicles is observed with license plates covered by tape or other means, immediately call 911 and report this as suspicious activity.
 - While researchers should take both videos and still photos of all suspected gang vehicles if possible, **photos should always take priority**, as they will provide clearer resolution of license plates and other identifying attributes of vehicles and drivers.
 - If it is safe to do so, be sure to capture distinguishing features such as registration

stickers and VIN stamps on windshields, as well as any bumper stickers, or unique content within vehicles.

- Remember: a license plate can be quickly replaced at the DMV, but a VIN is forever associated with the vehicle.
- Should the fascist street gang attempt to co-opt your community event, we suggest that anyone not directly monitoring and updating the group's location focus on helping event participants avoid the group by rerouting participants in transit to/ from the event in coordination with organizers.
 - Avoid engaging with the gang, as these interactions will be recorded and may be used by the gang and their supporters to target participants with threats and harassment.
- We encourage documenting as much of the gang activity as possible, with a special emphasis on recording the identifying features of individual gang members.
 - Though the similarity of their uniforms are meant to obscure their identities and create confusion by observers, each member of the gang has distinguishing characteristics/features that researchers can cross-reference with other evidence and use to identify them and map their activity.
 - Characteristics/features include: tattoos, specific sunglasses/hats combinations, type/color boots, color/fit pants, color/type belts, regional fascist street gangs patches on shirts/jackets/hats, presence and location of velcro on any of the above, etc.
 - We advise observers to use newer cell phones and high-resolution digital cameras for data collection. After the gang leaves, ensure that all evidence is centralized within a cloud database controlled by your group, and then shared with national organizations like SPLC, ADL, and Task Force Butler.
 - This documentation is vital for researchers and those seeking legal accountability to prove which specific individuals were present during specific activity.

After the Event: Debrief

A ground operation, especially a successful one, can and should be an exhilarating experience.

- Unless you witnessed criminal activity that you need to report, there's likely nothing you need to do *immediately*, other than interacting with your team.
- After the operation is concluded, the team should get together in a comfortable and social environment to discuss the day's events. If possible, the team should take notes

during this discussion to capture fleeting “eureka moments” as each person shares their unique observations and perspectives.

- Team Leaders and organizers should use this time to connect with every team member and do a check-in to ensure they are physically and mentally okay and to clearly communicate next steps and responsibilities.
 - Physical - ensure that your team is well fed, hydrated, and have a first aid kit to address blisters and muscle soreness from a long day outside.
 - Mental - the psychological and emotional weight of this work is real, so make sure people have room to privately, confidentially share with their colleagues their feelings, and have pre-designated team members prepared to provide that support function.
- Team Leaders should ensure that all photos, videos, and notes from each participant are uploaded to their central repository on the day of the event, so they are preserved for timely review and analysis in the following days.
- We encourage all participants to adopt a seven-day embargo on public sharing and encourage participants to do a security sweep of their social media accounts to ensure that they cannot be used to identify yourself, family, friends, peers, home, place of employment, and place of worship.
 - After the seven day embargo, we encourage everyone to avoid posting content that would reveal that you were present during the event, or that reveals your role in observing fascist street gang activity.
 - While the urge to share your work with your community in person and online is understandable, immediately after an activity is when fascist street gang members will be most focused on documenting their adversaries so that they can retaliate and direct harassment campaigns.
- Finally, if you have a preexisting relationship with a journalist who has covered the event, or who has expressed interest in your group’s activities, you should plan to be in touch within 24 hours of the event.

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