Progressive Safety Alliance
Safety Recommendations
September 2025

Recent months have brought left movement organizers wave after wave of crisis: attacks on organizations non-profit status, climate disasters, the deployment of the National Guard in multiple cities, and ICE raids that escalate police violence, state-sanctioned attacks on reproductive justice and Trans liberation. Vision Change Win holds tight to the truth that community safety and liberation are not abstract ideals, but daily practices. They live in how we show up for each other, in the infrastructure we build together, and in the courage we cultivate against despair. That means creating grounded risk assessments and building collective safety plans that can hold us through the storms ahead.

Now is not the time to shrink or organize from reactionary fear. This moment calls for courage, clarity, and imagination, and for commitments deeper than fear. We must strengthen our infrastructure of protection and look out for each other. And while none of us can carry this moment alone, together we are more than capable of weathering and reshaping it. VCW is proud to rise up in solidarity with organizers on the front lines of immigrant rights, Trans liberation, Palestinian freedom, and Black liberation struggles. Now is the time for bold, brave organizing.

The following are safety recommendations for organizations created by Safety and Security experts at the <u>Progressive Safety Alliance</u> to bolster the safety of our movement work, our leaders, and our organizations.

⚙ Take a moment to breathe

Major safety incidents can cause our bodies to move too quickly sometimes from a place of trauma, fear, or anxiety. While these responses are natural, they can encourage us to move faster or slower than what is needed. Take time to ground yourself before building a plan. For more information on grounding practices, check out the <u>Embodiment Institute.</u>

⚙ Take stock of known and unknown information

It's important to identify what information is known about potential threats, and what is unknown and or speculation. It's also important to take stock of what information is known and documented about your organization's security support and capacity and what is unknown. Take time to write down a few lists including: known risks and assumed risks.

⚙️ Don't let fear lead

Fear is a normal response to safety incidents. But when we let fear lead us it can cause us to make ungrounded or reactionary plans that do not accurately assess risk and/or don't meet the current need. Fear will often encourage groups to isolate, under communicate, and take on safety planning independently in a moment when we need robust, collective safety plans.

⚙️ Conduct a Risk Assessment

The first step in developing a safety plan is to assess what kind of risk or harm is most likely to occur. A risk assessment surveys the current political landscape to assess conditions so that groups may develop a grounded understanding of which threats are likely and which ones are not. Making a plan without having a clear sense of your risks can cause us to move from a reactionary practice and make ungrounded security protocols and practices. Updating your risk assessment supports you in prioritizing the likely risks and developing a plan that is rooted in your values. For more information on building a risk assessment check out the VCW risk assessment mini toolkit.

⚙️ Review or create security protocols

Security protocols are an agreed upon list of practices or responses an organization has decided to take if and when a likely safety threat occurs. Protocols are developed before a safety threat happens so that there is a clear plan of action for addressing and intervening in threats. After conducting a risk assessment develop safety protocols based on what you have assessed is both likely to happen to your group and have a high impact on your group's work. For more information on how to create safety protocols check out the Organizational Safety Planning section starting on page 28 of the VCW Get in Formation Toolkit or attend the VCW Get In Formation Training Series

⚙️ Make a decision on your risk tolerance

It is impossible to be 100% safe from every possible risk. When we try to protect for highly unlikely risks, we can waste valuable time, money and resources. Over time this can reduce organizational effectiveness. We must be strategic with our limited capacity so that we can dedicate our resources to pushing back against authoritarianism and fascism. Once you have your risk assessment in place, make a decision on what forms of safety planning are possible and reasonable.

Internally track safety incidents

Designate one person or a small committee of people on your team to track safety incidents or potential threats. Develop a system for people within your organization to share incidents. This can include threats against coalition partners, neighboring organizations, or against your organization. Review the reported threats and talk to a security practitioner when patterns emerge to build or revise your plan.

Be intentional about what you post

Information on social media is being heavily surveilled by both state and non state entities. This surveillance has led to an increase in online intimidation, doxing, and harassment. Be mindful about what you post, considering that information may be later be used against you and/or your affiliated organizations. For more information on preventing and addressing doxing, check out this guide by Information Ecology.

Verify Information/Incidents before sharing

Verify information/incidents before sharing out information to others within your organization or ecosystem. Mis and disinformation can create unnecessary alarm or panic and can sometimes lead to increased vulnerability to safety threats. When receiving new information, clarify where the information originated from.

Address internal conflict & harm

Community safety and security is not only about outside threats. Harassment, bullying, or abuse of power within organizations can undermine trust and collective capacity. Include clear processes for addressing internal harm as part of your overall safety planning so that people can organize from a place of integrity and care.

Prepare for narrative defense

Alongside physical and digital risks, movements increasingly face disinformation, hostile media coverage, and political smear campaigns. Develop simple protocols for how your group responds to false or harmful narratives, including who speaks publicly, how to correct misinformation, and how to protect members from targeted harassment.

⚙ Secure legal defense

Make sure your organization identifies legal resources and allies and has legal support in advance of the need. Talk with your legal counsel and allies around specific safety scenarios to develop the most well-informed security plan. Scenarios may include door knocks from the state, investigations, personal and staff safety, and bail support. Having legal readiness in place can reduce panic and strengthen your ability to respond quickly.

Resources

These recommendations are designed to be used alongside VCW's deeper resources, including the Org Safety Planning Guide (2024) and the Safety Toolkit (2020). While those guides offer comprehensive frameworks and step-by-step tools, this document provides immediate reminders and practices for navigating the urgent threat of this moment.

To support left movement groups in building safety infrastructure, Vision Change Win will be hosting free Organizational Safety trainings on Wednesday September 24, 2025 and Wednesday, October 22, 2025, 2-4pm EST. Register for the Get in Formation Training Series with the code #SafetySept25.

1. Vision Change Win Rapid Response Support
2. Vision Change Win Get in Formation Training Series
3. Vision Change Win Get in Formation Community Safety Toolkit (english) (spanish)
4. Vision Change Win Risk Assessment Mini-Toolkit
5. Vision Change Win Community Safety Recommendations for Funders and Philanthropic Organizations
6. Information Ecology Doxing Prevention Resources

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