



ADVICE

Tips for Combatting Home Harassment

Targeting animal research community members at their private homes is not a new animal rights tactic. Scientists and animal care technicians have repeatedly been subjected to “home protests.” If your family is concerned about the possibility of home harassment, here are a few tips to become better prepared.

Speak with local police

Families concerned about the likelihood of home protests should consider contacting local authorities and having their addresses flagged. Doing so will inform dispatchers that emergency calls from the house are more urgent.

Prepare family members

Of course, one of the biggest concerns when it comes to home harassment, is the impacts it can have on young children. In cases where activists announce plans to protest at a family home, parents should consider having kids stay with friends or family. In any case, special care should be taken to avoid unnecessary stress for young children. This often includes talking to them about the issue and what is going on.

Consider temporary “No Trespassing” signs

No trespassing signs, even those erected just prior to an announced home protest, can assist police in enforcing trespassing laws.

Create a written statement

If you think protestors may knock on your door, have a printed statement prepared that can be handed to them. The document can explain that their presence is not welcome and that your family considers their actions threatening. Again, in some states, documented warnings such as these can assist police in enforcing the law. If possible, speak with legal counsel about this option and the language required to conform to state laws.

Consider the impacts of press coverage

While public opinion is somewhat split on animal studies, most reasonable people are opposed to the harassment of families in their homes. Consider whether working with the media to pressure activists might be beneficial.

Document protests

If you are being harassed at home, via social media, email or over the phone, document everything. Take computer screenshots of all threatening posts and save emails and letters. Take photos from within the home if protestors appear outside, but only if it can be done safely.

Don't approach the activists

People get understandably upset when protestors come to their family homes. However, it's never a good idea to approach the activists or confront them. This is one of the reasons why AMP proposes a written statement that can be handed to protestors IF they come to the door. One of the activists' goals for home protests is to generate an emotional reaction from a member of the research community, which can be filmed and later used against them in court or online. Stay in the house and let police handle the activists.