



## **VIGIL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS GUIDELINES & PLAN**

*Protests targeting 40 Days for Life*

*Protests unrelated to 40 Days for Life*

*COVID-19/Stay-at-Home Orders*

*Politics & Political Activity*

### **GENERAL PRICIPLES**

You are in control  
Know your vigil  
Plan ahead  
Monitor current events on your area  
Stay safe (See Appendix B - Commandments of Safety)  
Handle problems promptly  
Treat everyone with dignity & respect  
Do not cause or escalate a problem  
Never take the offensive or be aggressive  
If you feel you need outside security, request it

*An ounce of prevention...*

You know your community, participants & vigil best

Tailor the vigil plans for your particular situation



Review the plan with your team

Encourage your team to ask questions and make suggestions

*Don't create your own emergency...*

If you think something is or may be unsafe, it probably is

If certain coverage hours are not safe, contact your national director to alter the hours

*Create a safer environment...*

Consider having full-time filming/cameras  
Consider signs that announce that filming is occurring

If it is dark, provide lighting (check local ordinances)

Meet with local authorities in advance and get contact information and make sure that they know the peaceful, lawful nature of the Mission

Have as many participants as possible and never go alone at night

Stay off roadways

Park your vehicles nearby or in front of the vigil when lawful

Ask groups like churches and schools to attend in their corporate vehicles such as school and church buses that show insignia



*If you see something say something...*

If you see anything unsafe or illegal, call  
911

*Know your participants...*

If someone is likely to or is violating the  
Statement of Peace, address and correct it

Remove grave offenders and habitual  
offenders

*A picture is worth a thousand words...*

If you can do it safely, take video & film



## THE SHORT LIST - "WHAT IF'S"

What If...

*We feel unsafe at the vigil site?*

If you feel unsafe, you are unsafe. Leave the scene and notify your 40 Days for Life headquarters team contact and 911 if there is a crime

*Somebody is threatened, is touched, has his or her path blocked?*

Don't respond

Call 911

Get a photo or video of the aggressor and the license plate/vehicle

*There is only one volunteer at the vigil site?*

Bring a friend or recruit a prayer partner from your substitute list

*I am concerned a situation with a protester or passerby might escalate?*

Film and photograph your vigil if you can safely do so

Call 911

*Police or a government authority orders vigil participants to leave the vigil?*

Be polite

Show your permit as applicable



Comply  
Contact your 40 Days for Life  
headquarters team contact for a referral  
to legal counsel

*I find out a rally or political event will  
be taking place near my vigil site, and  
attendees or counterdemonstrators are likely  
to engage or harass vigil participants?*

Inform your participants  
Suspend your vigil until it is safe to  
resume

*I suspend my vigil, but a volunteer refuses  
to stay home?*

Tell the volunteer he/she is  
disassociated from your 40 Days for Life  
campaign

*I find out a campaign participant has been  
diagnosed with COVID-19?*

Follow valid governmental orders  
Get tested  
Do not attend vigils if sick  
Do not attend vigils if symptomatic

*A COVID-19 contact tracer asks for names and  
contact information of vigil participants?*

Refuse unless they have a valid  
governmental order



*I am asked to promote a candidate for elected office or particular law?*

Do not promote or oppose candidates for elected office, ballot initiatives, or legislation using your 40 Days for Life campaign, name, logo, email list, webpage, social media pages, or in any other way

*I want to engage in political/legislative activism?*

Do it. But keep it completely separate from your participation in 40 Days for Life. Do not wear 40 Days for Life gear or identify yourself by your 40 Days for Life role when engaging in political/legislative advocacy.

*I want to host a politician at my vigil.*

See the "Politicians at Events" section of Appendix C: Political Activities Policy and contact your 40 Days for Life headquarters team contact.

*Someone purporting to be with the media wants to interview me, but I am unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the reporter or media outlet.*

Email your 40 Days for Life headquarters team contact. You do not need to give any on-the-spot interviews.



## **PROTESTS TARGETING 40 DAYS FOR LIFE**

Every vigil deals with "counter-protestors"

*A blessing in disguise?*

PP has a policy requesting no counter-protestors - they harm PP more than we do

Counter-protestors are usually loud, obnoxious and draw far more attention than we do

Remain calm

Don't respond in kind - respond with love

Monitor the news and SM chatter and be ready

If unsafe, call 911

*What if I think I need outside security?*

Make a request to your national director.  
On a case-by-case basis 40 Days for Life may be able to provide outside security

If security is assigned, cooperate with them and let them handle potential threats and harm, that is why they are there and they have the training and experience

*What if I disagree with outside security?*



Let your national director know right away,  
with specific details





## **PROTESTS UNRELATED TO 40 DAYS FOR LIFE**

Civil unrest and violence are taking place across the U.S. and the world

Political division has given rise to protests in most cities

Monitor news, SM, law enforcement websites & community development websites for permits & scheduled protests, demonstrations & rallies near your vigil

If there is an event with the potential to lead to disruption or civil unrest that affects your vigil, suspend your vigil until the protest is finished

Suspended vigils should be moved to a church or churches for prayer and spiritual communion

Notify all of your participants

Do not mix 40DFL vigils with other protests

If an unscheduled protest comes your way, suspend your vigil until it is finished - avoid actual engagement AND the appearance of such



Do not engage other protestors - it is off mission

Do not use 40DFL media to promote or comment on other protests & rallies



## **POLITICS & POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

Recent elections have been bitterly contested—  
with abortion in the spotlight

You may be pressured to use your influence as a  
local 40 Days for Life leader to support or  
oppose candidates, ballot initiatives &  
legislation

For the protection of the 40DFL mission, it is  
critically important to keep your 40 Days for  
Life campaign completely separate from political  
and legislative activity

See Appendix C: Political Activities Policy.



## **COVID-19 and Stay-at-Home Orders**

40DFL encourages leaders and participants to follow valid governmental health orders

If a stay-at-home or other order is issued in your area and you are unsure whether and how your campaign can obey it, contact your national director, and we will discuss options or obtaining outside legal counsel to give a written opinion



## **APPENDIX A**

### **CONTACTS**

In the event of an emergency, please contact 40 Days for Life immediately (and before you go to other organizations or the media):

By contacting your appropriate 40 Days for Life contact right away, we will be best positioned to help you with:

- Answers to legal questions or referral to local counsel (if your rights are violated, you are given a citation, you are attacked by abortion supporters, you need help interpreting your legal rights, you don't understand how to comply with a stay-at-home order, etc.)
- Media interactions
- Security
- Replacement supplies
- On-the-ground support

United States and Canada:

Steve Karlen [steve.karlen@40daysforlife.com](mailto:steve.karlen@40daysforlife.com)

608-445-2063

OR

Sue Thayer [sue.thayer@40daysforlife.com](mailto:sue.thayer@40daysforlife.com)

979-595-3174



International:

Robert Colquhoun

[robert.colquhoun@40daysforlife.com](mailto:robert.colquhoun@40daysforlife.com)

011-44-7947-698195

Latin America:

Lourdes Varela [lourdes.varela@40daysforlife.com](mailto:lourdes.varela@40daysforlife.com)

+52-55-8145-6262



**APPENDIX B**  
**COMMANDMENTS OF SAFETY**

1. Stay safe, always.
2. Try to have at least two vigil participants.
3. Never be alone after dark.
4. Conduct the vigil in a safe and public or otherwise lawful location.
5. If you feel threatened, leave and call the police.
6. If your path is blocked call the police.
7. If you are touched, call the police.
8. If you can safely do so, photograph/film events.
9. If the police arrive, be polite and cooperative.
10. If you are ordered to leave by competent governmental authority, do so and contact 40 Days for Life headquarters.
11. Do not trespass.
12. Do not threaten.
13. Do not touch others.
14. Do not display or discuss weapons.
15. Do not curse.
16. Do not block anyone's path/right-of-way.
17. Obey all laws



## **APPENDIX C**

### **POLITICAL ACTIVITIES POLICY**

For the protection of the 40 Days for Life Mission, it is essential to keep 40 Days for Life and political activism completely separate. Failure to keep 40 Days for Life out of politics poses many concerns, including:

1. Revocation of 501(C)(3) charitable, tax-exempt status;
2. Fines and/or administrative or court hearings;
3. Dilution of and time away from the Mission.

#### What you CAN do:

1. Encourage everyone to "Vote prolife".
2. Encourage people to support prolife legislation in general and the defunding of all abortion.
3. Educate people on prolife issues and laws that have been passed or are being considered.
4. Forward proposed state and local prolife laws and initiatives to 40 Days for Life HQ for further guidance.

#### What you CANNOT do:

1. Endorse or encourage people to vote for a particular candidate or platform.
2. Endorse a particular political party or party platform.
3. Raise or accept money for, or give money to a political candidate, platform or party.





## No Endorsement or Opposition to Candidates/Policy Proposals

On the campaign application, every approved local campaign leader pledges "to keep completely separate from your local 40 Days for Life efforts advocating for or against any candidate for elective office and advocating for or against any proposed or actual legislation or ballot initiative."

This does not mean that local leaders may not engage any of the political or legislative process as individuals. They simply cannot do so in their capacity as 40 Days for Life leaders. They cannot use the 40 Days for Life name, mark, webpages, intellectual property, local vigils, volunteer lists, or campaign events to do so. Furthermore, it does not mean that local campaigns may not support general pro-life positions. For example, a campaign can promote defunding Planned Parenthood. However, a campaign cannot be used to rally phone calls to support a specific piece of legislation that would defund Planned Parenthood. Likewise, while a campaign can encourage supporters to "vote pro-life," the campaign should not advocate for particular candidates or political parties.

### **Politicians at Events**

Local 40 Days for Life leaders often like to have politicians speak at their vigils and campaign events.

While 40 Days for Life is not opposed to this, certain precautions must be taken. If you wish



to host a politician at a campaign event, please request written clearance from your 40 Days for Life headquarters team contact. In your request, please provide the following information:

1. What is the politician's name and political party?
2. Who invited the politician? Or did the politician make an unsolicited offer to speak?
3. Are any other politicians invited/attending?
4. Is the politician from the district where the vigil is held? If not, how far away is the district?
5. When is the politician next running for election?
6. What would the politician speak about?

A politician can never solicit votes or campaign contributions while speaking at a 40 Days for Life event.

The vigil cannot endorse the candidate or raise money.