



**SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS.**

Eugene S. Pulliam National Journalism Center  
3909 N. Meridian St., Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46208-4011  
317.927.8000 | [spj.org](http://spj.org)

May 30, 2020

An open letter to police officers and protesters:

The [Society of Professional Journalists](http://Society of Professional Journalists) represents close to 6,000 journalists around the country. We are sending this open letter to you asking that you please let us do our jobs in covering the protests surrounding George Floyd's death in Minneapolis.

Protesters, we hear you. We understand the pain you are feeling and the anger you have toward not only the police officers whose actions contributed to the death of Mr. Floyd, but the injustices you have endured for decades.

We are a diverse membership. Many of our members have experienced life in the same way you have and carry the same feelings of anger, fear and frustration. And yes, there are some of us who haven't endured those injustices. We understand our privilege, but that doesn't mean we don't hear your story. We do our best tell all sides of the story and keep our own opinions out.

To all police, military personnel and all public safety officers, we understand the stress and the dangers of your job, especially during these protests and riots. We understand that at times it is difficult to make decisions in the face of the crisis. We just ask that you take a moment and think before you take action against a journalist there to do their job. Treat us with the same respect and dignity that you would want. These are very volatile situations and we do our best to cover these stories under the same conditions you are.

The attacks of journalists by police or protesters in [Minneapolis](#), [Washington, D.C.](#), [Louisville](#) and other cities across the country should have never happened. We are sure you would agree, now that you have been able to see the videos.

These actions only reflect badly on officers and people claiming to keep the peace. Let us not forget, reporters, producers, videographers and photographers are humans too. Trying to make a living. Trying to flesh out the truth. We should not be put in any danger for doing our jobs.

As you well know, journalists have a constitutional right to cover these stories and the public has a right to know what is happening in their backyards. If you are a protester, do what you feel is right, but don't stop us from doing what we know is the job we have to do for the public. Please do not target, intimidate, humiliate or block our efforts from reporting the news during this historic time.

Before taking any aggressive actions toward us, take a moment, take a breath, and decide to do the right thing and let us do our jobs.

It is our hope that the groups involved can find a way to co-exist, share their viewpoints, make sure everyone is safe, and cover these stories in a peaceful, mutually respectable manner.

Sincerely,

The Society of Professional Journalists