

## CCOP Safety Address

Greg Carey, Chief of Patrol  
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Recent Internet stories have caused many of us to live in trepidation. It is important to sort fear mongering from real dangers, as many rumors are highly embellished or outright hoaxes. It's tricky to find the balance between vigilance and paranoia, but it can and must be done as we learn how to take better care of ourselves, our friends and our community. "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" can help us with this advice: **"DON'T PANIC"**



Castro Community on Patrol was founded 10 years ago with more than 100 volunteers patrolling the streets to say, "This will not continue" within a few weeks of learning of several violent street robberies. Our ranks shrunk when the original problem dissipated, but a few of us continued patrolling, sensing new dangers could appear at any time. That time is now. More volunteers let us schedule more street patrols to improve safety. Our next training is Saturday; January 21<sup>st</sup>. Go to [castropatrol.org](http://castropatrol.org) to reserve a seat and have your friends do the same. Our patrol area is restricted to the Castro and Duboce Triangle by our insurance, but we are ready to help other groups get started South of Market or in the Tenderloin or in other cities. Contact [info@castropatrol.org](mailto:info@castropatrol.org) for details.

It is essential to carry a safety whistle on your key chain. if you are in trouble or if you see someone else in trouble, **DON'T PANIC**. Blow it 3 times, over and over. If you hear a whistle, investigate from a safe distance, call 911 if needed, and then lend assistance if it is safe to do so. Harvey Milk taught us to do this instinctively in the 1970's and we need to do learn to do it again.

CCOP has formed alliances with many other groups. For example we work with the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and about 80 Castro merchants in the Stop The Violence program. When you see this sign in the window of a store, you have found a place of safe-haven. If you have been assaulted or robbed or need an ambulance, **DON'T PANIC**. Instead step into the store and ask the merchant to dial 911 and then wait until the police or medics arrive.



Now more than ever, we need to work with the police. I know that some of you mistrust or fear the police; either because of personal encounters or because of historical events. Please learn to work with law enforcement for three reasons: 1) Our enemies are heavily armed, 2) They are bullies who enjoy hurting others, and 3) They are driven by hate and do not respond to reasoning. If you are still angry that that the SFPD marched to the Castro to break the windows in the bar that is now called “Harvey’s” after the White Night Riots, please **DON'T PANIC**; much has changed in the police department in the past 40 years.

Castro Patrol works with the police command staff through the LGBT Forum to insist every officer responds respectfully to LGBT crime victims. The recent investigation by the Federal Department of Justice found a very small number of the 1700 cops harbor LGBT resentments, and they are being dealt with. If you should experience poor treatment, record the details (including time, location, and the officer’s badge number or name) and contact us so that we can address it with the precinct Captain or Chief Chaplin if necessary.

Report every crime, because legally, no crime occurred without an identified victim, and the police must release the suspects, allowing them to repeat their violence. Testify if you are a witness, because without witnesses juries often acquit even the guiltiest criminals, emboldening them to escalate their mayhem. Understand that hate language by itself is not a Hate Crime. However, if the DA can convince a jury that hate was a motive for an assault, arson, vandalism, and so on, it can result in harsher sentencing. Tell the officers if you suspect a Hate Crime motive, so they can add that detail to their report for the DA to investigate.

We all have seen spectacular beat-downs on YouTube with the blows and the blood and the bully running from the scene. Unfortunately, nobody called the cops, so they never arrive. If you come upon a crime-in-progress **DON'T PANIC** but make a difference. **FIRST** use your smart-phone AS a phone and dial 911. Only turn on your camera after you know help is on the way. Even if your video doesn't get a million hits on the Internet, it might serve as evidence.

Finally, at the national level our community might lose some personal freedoms that we worked so hard to gain over the past 5 decades. ACLU has already promised to be very observant. Locally, our groups must work together to save lives. Please, do not let philosophical differences among organizations cause them to turn against each other or our allies. I am not a political leader, so I don't know how to make this happen; I just ask those in positions of leadership to build coalitions, set priorities and work together to protect each other.

- Will there be violence against us in the next months? **Probably**
- Can we stop them all? **Probably Not**
- Can a unified, visible safety presence make a difference? **Absolutely**

And above all: **DON'T PANIC**