What is a Legal Observer?

Legal observers are trained volunteers who support the legal rights of activists. They provide basic legal guidance and are independent witnesses of police behaviour at protests.

Legal observers are independent from the protest and do not participate as activists. They support protestors by:

- **Distributing bust cards and briefing activists about their rights.**
- **Keeping notes about the actions of the police on protests, which may be later used to challenge the police on their behaviour. Our training tells Legal Observers NOT to film protesters.**
- **Monitoring arrests, including collecting witnesses and helping to connect the arrestee with support in the police station.**

Legal observers can be identified on actions by their orange hi-viz vests that say “Legal Observer”.

Legal observers have no official legal status or privilege, but the police are often aware of the role, and legal observers may act as a deterrent to police wrongdoing.

Legal observers are not:

- **Lawyers**
- **Medics**
- **Media spokespeople**
- **Stewards or police liaison: legal observers may occasionally speak to the police to find out information, but will not pass messages between police and activists.**

Contact the Independent Legal Observer Network if your group is planning an action that may need legal observers – please try to give as much notice as possible, preferably at least two weeks.

If you are interested in being trained as a legal observer, you can see future training dates and sign up here.