



City of
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California

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Occupy Oakland” Activity Update

Oakland, CA: At approximately 4:00pm this afternoon, “Occupy Oakland” protesters began convening in front of the Oakland Library located at 125-14th Street. The group of approximately 400 – 500 protesters began to move in the direction between 14th and Broadway, and 7th and Broadway. Protesters in the area of 7th and Broadway began throwing paint or other hazardous material at the officers who deployed gas as a defense tactic. Officers redirected the group North toward Frank Ogawa Plaza where they are currently congregating. The Oakland Police Department has declared an unlawful assembly at this time, and issued an order of dispersal.

At approximately 7:45pm, officers began to deploy gas after issuing the order to disperse. We have received no reports of injuries at the time of this release.

To help ensure that accurate information is provided to you, below is a list of questions and answers.

Q. Why was an enforcement action taken this morning?

A. From the start of the demonstration two weeks ago, the City of Oakland focused on facilitating the protesters’ right to free speech and peaceful expression while maintaining public health, safety and crowd control. Over the past weeks, the City provided multiple and frequent written notices to outline requirements to protect the health and safety of the group and of the City Hall area. After the first weekend, the City received reports of problems, and communicated to the protesters about additional health and safety concerns. But by the end of last week, it was apparent that overnight camping would have to end due to health and safety issues and continued violations of the law. On Oct. 21, Frank Ogawa Plaza was red tagged, requiring protestors to vacate. On the morning of Oct. 25, many protestors left the plaza after Police announced that they would be arrested if they did not disperse. Those who chose to stay were removed without any reported injuries.

Q. What were the exact concerns for Health and Safety?

A. There were a series of safety conditions, including numerous reports of fighting, assault and threatening/intimidating behavior. Medical responders (AMR Ambulance Company) were denied access on at least two occasions to provide medical care. Furthermore, the Oakland Fire Department and Police Department were denied access to the Plaza to respond to calls for service.

Sanitation conditions worsened with frequent instances of public urination and defecation, as well as improper food storage. The existing rodent problem on the Plaza was exacerbated and vector control was unable to implement measures to control the rat problem due to the presence of overnight campers. The Plaza was physically damaged on a daily basis by graffiti, litter and vandalism. Fire hazards

continued unabated, including cooking with open flame, improper storage of grease, inadequate fire extinguishers, density of tents and flammable materials and smoking in tents. There were reports of public drinking and intoxication. Numerous complaints from employees and businesses were received regarding concern for safety.

Q. Why did the enforcement action occur early in the morning?

A. Last Wednesday, it became apparent that the tenor of the encampment had changed and that there were increasing incidents of violence. Reports of a man seriously beaten and continued denials of access to PD & FD for calls for service were received. As such, the City could no longer preserve health and safety of the protestors or the public. As part of the planning process, the Police asked the county and state for mutual aid—which was a 5-day process. The decision to execute the enforcement action on Tuesday morning was based on the reality that fewer individuals (as part of the protest and those going to work) would be present at the Plaza at the time, thus would be safer for all.

Q. When will the plaza reopen?

A. The City remains committed to respecting free speech as well as maintaining the City's responsibility to protect public health and safety. At this time, the Plaza is closed to the public while Public Works cleans up hazardous waste and debris. For instance, it is known that there is human waste on the sidewalks and head and body lice, bed bugs that need to be cleaned and sanitized before the Plaza can be reopened to the public. Rodent/Vector will be brought in to exterminate. Once the plaza is deemed safe, it will be available for peaceful daytime assembly between the hours of 6 am and 10 pm. but no camping or overnight stays will be permitted. The City's goal is to clean up the Plaza to facilitate free assembly.

Q. When will the arrestees be released?

A. The arrestees are in process of being cleared through the County. While the goal is to release these individuals this evening, the final result will be driven by the County's workload, based on the County's criteria for prioritizing processing of arrestees. Reports indicate that they will be released tonight.

Q. Did the Police deploy rubber bullets, flash-bag grenades?

A. No, the loud noises that were heard originated from M-80 explosives thrown at Police by protesters. In addition, Police fired approximately four bean bag rounds at protesters to stop them from throwing dangerous objects at the officers.

Q. Did the Police use tear gas?

A. Yes, the Police used a limited amount of tear gas for a small area as a defense against protesters who were throwing various objects at Police Officers as they approached the area. The objects included glass bottles, rocks, pots, pans, kitchen utensils and plates at Police Officers. In addition, the protesters sprayed a Fire Extinguisher on Police Officers.

Q. Where there any injures?

A. At this time, there are no reported injuries.

Q. Where there any children arrested or reported missing?

A. No. Contrary to reports on Facebook, there were no children arrested nor have been reported missing.