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# Protesters guide to the Olympics vs. the Bloy Wonder

By Tom Hawthorn  
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The events no one wants to see at the Olympics are the barricade steeplechase, the truncheon two-step or the freestyle taser.

Last month's launch of the torch relay in Victoria offered a hint of the ugly possibilities of confrontation between demonstrators and security forces.

The protesters blocked a street, forcing the torch convoy to take a detour. It was reported marbles were tossed, a danger to police horses, though the culprit was never identified. No arrests were made.

Some good people were inconvenienced, notably those runners whose turn with the torch was interrupted.

There are plenty of reasons to oppose the Olympics, but the behaviour of protesters in Victoria is unlikely to win converts to their point of view. How about this for a slogan: No chanting expletives within earshot of schoolchildren on native land, stolen or otherwise.

With an Olympic history suggesting little tolerance for security threats, understandably so in the wake of the 1996 bombing at the Atlanta Games and, especially, the gruesome murder of Israeli athletes at Munich in 1972, the potential exists for demonstrations to descend into street clashes.

Vancouver also has the unsettling history of the RCMP attacking Asia-Pacific conference protesters in 1997, the infamy of the RCMP's quick-spraying Sgt. Pepper and the joking dismissal of the incident by the then prime minister.

With 72 days to go before the start of the Games, Vancouver lawyer Leo McGrady has issued a revised version of a manual describing how to exercise your rights when dealing with the police at a public demonstration.

An online version of the Protesters' Guide to the Law of Civil Disobedience in British Columbia: Olympic Edition can be found at the Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada website [<http://www.lrwc.org>].

The guide began as a three-page sheet distributed in 1970 to help protect those demonstrating against the Vietnam War. Mr. McGrady came up with the idea after "one of my pals got himself involved in a scuffle that was unnecessary and could have been avoided."

The first revision came in 1973 to aid those protesting American involvement in the coup in Chile. The guide has since expanded to 43 pages, including entries on what to bring to a demonstration (identification, water bottle, prescription drugs in original packaging) and what to leave at home (illegal drugs, contact book, anything resembling a weapon).

The guide's purpose is to outline ways of engaging in civil disobedience without violating bylaws, or the Criminal Code.

"You do respect the law," Mr. McGrady said yesterday. "If there is any violation of the law, you accept the consequences. That's part of the tradition of civil disobedience and what makes it so successful a tool for change."