

# MASS DEFENSE HOTLINE

mini guide



## What Is Mass Defense Hotline?

Mass Defense Hotline is a gateway to support for anyone dealing with the carceral system in Multnomah County. Whether you were booked into jail yourself, or witnessed the arrest of someone else, operators on the hotline can help you navigate the crisis.

## About Us

Mass Defense Hotline was formed in 2017 to assist Occupy protesters. In addition to being a critical resource to many protest movements since then, the hotline fields hundreds of calls per year from people in long-term holding who need help accessing information and services, including bail via Defense Fund PDX.

The hotline is an explicitly anarchist project, driven by pursuit of the abolition of prisons and the liberation of all people. Vetted and trained operators volunteer their time with the goal of 24/7 coverage, every day of the year.



## How Can the Hotline Help?

### Setting Expectations

It can be overwhelming and confusing dealing with an arrest, but hotline operators have significant experience navigating the carceral system, and can walk you through likely outcomes based on your situation. Police and prosecutor strategies are constantly evolving, and Mass Defense Hotline stays apprised of any changes by regularly engaging with arrestees and updating our information as we go.

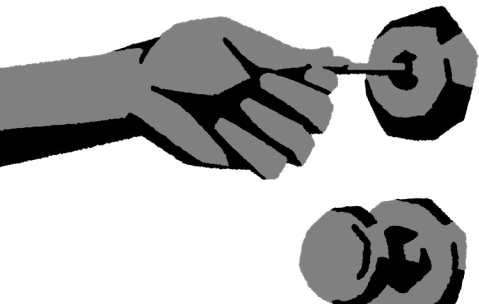


### Relaying Messages

The hotline works best if the arrestee *and* their support people call it. Whereas jail calls to outside friends require the recipient to enter their credit card information over the phone and pay for the time, calls to the hotline are unlimited and free. Opsec-conscious comrades may appreciate the layer of obfuscation that the hotline provides— You can avoid revealing your social connections to the state and still communicate pertinent information by using the hotline as a relay. Additionally, if there's someone you'd like to communicate with but you don't know their number, we can look them up using social media, data brokers, or public records.

## Coordinating Outside Care

Sitting in jail, you may be stressed about all the logistical issues caused by your detainment. Maybe your car will be towed if it isn't moved before morning, your cat needs to be fed, or you need to get your shift covered at work. Hotline operators can find solutions to these problems, minimizing the damage caused to your life by incarceration.



## Advocating for Your Needs

You may arrive in jail injured, without your medication, or without needed accessibility items. Hotline operators can call jail medical staff to advocate for you to receive care, and coordinate with your support people to have critical items dropped off at the jail.

WHEN YOU GET OUT  
*you may need...*

something  
to eat



a change  
of clothes

a ride home



something  
warm

nicotine



LET US KNOW  
*if you have*

**SPECIAL  
REQUESTS**

## Arranging Court & Jail Support

Attending court can be an isolating experience, and many people appreciate having a supportive presence in the courtroom at arraignment. With your consent, we can arrange for family, friends, or community members to sit in on your court proceedings, take notes, and wait for you in the event of a release decision.

Whether you need to attend court or not, we can keep track of your status, estimate your release time, and work to ensure that someone friendly is waiting for you with the things you may need when you walk out the jail doors.

## Sourcing Bail & Commissary

Mass Defense Hotline works closely with Defense Fund PDX, Portland's longstanding bail fund, on the monetary needs associated with incarceration. Since they have experience paying hundreds of bails per year since 2020, and have working relationships with many public defenders, they're equipped to get you out quickly, and organize your bail in such a way that the money gets returned to the bail fund, freeing more people after your case resolves.

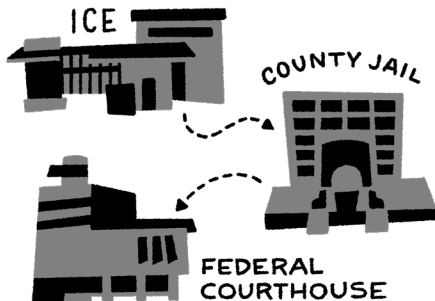
Donate: @DefenseFundPDX on Venmo

At times when Defense Fund PDX is unable to assist, we can contact your support people to help fill monetary needs.



## Tracking Through the System

With connections to legal observers on the ground at protests, we're often aware of your arrest before we get a call about it. Hotline operators will keep track of you as you're transferred between facilities, monitor developments in your court case, and work to ensure that you don't slip through the cracks, even at times when you don't have phone access.



## Any Way We Can

We strive to return some of the autonomy that incarceration steals from you, and to mitigate the trauma associated with arrest by any reasonable means. If there's something not listed in this guide that you need help with while you're inside, while you await the release of a loved one, or while you deal with the aftermath, don't hesitate to ask. If we can't assist with something ourselves, we'll do our best to connect you with other resources.

## Questions?

Call the hotline and ask!

**(971) 247-1072**

## Caller Tips

When you call the hotline, your call is routed sequentially to several operators, until it reaches someone who is available. Stay on the line, even if it feels like the phone has been ringing for a long time.

If you're unable to get through, wait a few minutes and try calling back.

Calls from jail are time-limited. Operators can't return your call if we get cut off, but you can call as often as you like.

Remember that all jail calls are recorded. Avoid discussing events leading to your arrest, or any other information that could incriminate you. We don't need these details in order to offer assistance.

## Opsec

Privacy and security are central to Mass Defense Hotline's operations.

- We get explicit consent from callers before acting on their behalf or sharing their private information.
- We discourage the disclosure of non-essential sensitive information by callers, especially anything that could pose legal risk.
- We act with consideration to digital and operational security, including end-to-end encryption for all internal communications.
- We oppose and will reject any and all collaboration with the state or the media.

*Memorize It  
using this mnemonic*

**(971)** Portland's  
next-best  
area code

**247** we operate  
24 hours  
7 days a week

**10** you're a  
perfect 10

**72** you can only be  
held for 72 hours  
without charges