The rules for Public demonstrations both static and mobile are covered under the Public Order Act 1986 and ECHR Articles 9, 10, 11 which form the basis of an individual’s rights to participate in peaceful protest. The right to freedom of peaceful assembly under ECHR Article 11 protects the right to protest in a peaceful way (including static protests, marches, parades and processions, demonstrations and rallies). It does not include participation in violent protests. ECHR Article 11 places both negative and positive duties on the police.

**Negative duty**

The police must not prevent, hinder or restrict peaceful assembly except to the extent allowed by ECHR Article 11(2). They must not impose unreasonable indirect restrictions on persons exercising their rights to peaceful assembly, eg, imposing a condition on the location of a protest which effectively negates the purpose of the protest. Pre-emptive measures taken by the police which restrict the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly will be subject to particular scrutiny.

**Positive duty**

In certain circumstances, the police have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect those who want to exercise their rights peacefully. This applies where there is a threat of disruption or disorder from others. This does not mean that there is an absolute duty to protect those who want to protest, but the police must take reasonable measures in particular circumstances.

**a) when is permission from the constabulary required?**

Under Section 11 of the public order act, the organisers of all planned processions are required to provide notice to the police of the events location and routes that the procession will follow. (Commonly held/customary processions, or funeral processions, whether they routinely follow the same route or a different route each time, are exempt from the requirement for notice)

**b) what details do you require organisers to provide?**

We would expect an organiser to stipulate what the subject of the protest/demonstration is, where it will be, how many people it is planned will attend and how long it will go on for. The requirements for a public assembly (static) are covered above but we would also expect a full route plan and stewarding plan for a procession. https://www.gov.uk/protests-and-marches-letting-the-police-know

**c) what other information from organisers do you find useful?**

It is also useful to know who the organisers are or what group they represent. It would be useful to know the aims/objectives of the protest/demonstration and what plans have been put in place to keep the public safe.

**d) when is no permission needed?**

Permission is not required for static assemblies that are taking place on private or public land. The permission only needs to be sought if there is a planned procession although if organisers are willing to share this information for assemblies it is appreciated.

Organisers should be aware that they will be liable as the organiser for the protest/march or assembly so it is in their interest to follow the policy/Law. Stewards at these events are essential to keep people together and on course with what you are trying to deliver. The Local authority normally work on a ration of about 1 steward for every 10-15 people but as the demo’s get larger into their hundreds it becomes more of a case of enough to keep people together and safe.
When walking on a highway you should comply with traffic lights. If they are Red then you should stop – However, once the front of the procession has gone through the green light you should continue until the whole procession is through regardless if the lights change. You should treat the procession as a long vehicle and stewards should provide a presence to ensure motorists are aware the end of the procession has not passed yet.

Conditions can be placed on Marches and Assemblies if certain circumstances apply. These would be under Section 12 and 14 of the Public order act. More can be read about legislation etc via the attached AAP link:  