

The Ultimate Busking Setup & Legal Checklist

This checklist is designed to help street performers prepare for their performances and understand their basic legal rights. Always consult local ordinances for specific rules in your area.

Setup Checklist

Essential Gear

- ☐ Instrument(s) / Performance Props
- ☐ Tip Jar / Collection Receptacle
- ☐ Small, clear sign for contributions (max 12x12 inches, no set fees)
- ☐ Portable Amplifier (if allowed and permitted) and extra batteries
- ☐ Microphone (if applicable)
- ☐ Weather-appropriate clothing (hat, sunscreen, rain gear)
- ☐ Water and snacks
- ☐ Comfortable shoes
- ☐ Small first-aid kit
- ☐ Hand sanitizer

Optional Gear

- ☐ Portable stool or chair
- ☐ Lighting for evening performances
- ☐ Business cards or QR code for digital tips/social media
- ☐ Small tarp or mat to define performance space

Legal & Safety Checklist

Know Your Rights

- ☐ **Freedom of Speech:** Busking is generally protected as free speech in public forums, but this right is not absolute and can be subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions.
- ☐ **Local Ordinances:** Always research and understand the specific busking laws, permits, and noise ordinances for each city you plan to perform in.
- ☐ **Permits:** Determine if a permit is required for your type of performance (acoustic, amplified, vending) and location. Obtain necessary permits in advance.
- ☐ **Identification:** Carry a valid ID.

What to Do if Approached by Authorities

- ☐ **Be Polite and Cooperative:** Remain calm and respectful.
- ☐ **Ask for Clarification:** If asked to move or stop, politely ask for the specific ordinance or reason.
- ☐ **Do Not Argue:** Avoid arguing or becoming confrontational. Compliance is generally the best approach in the moment.
- ☐ **Document:** If you believe your rights are being violated, discreetly note down details (officer's badge number, time, location, specific instructions given).
- ☐ **Contact Legal Counsel:** If you receive a citation or feel your rights were violated, consult with a lawyer specializing in civil liberties or street performance law.

Safety Tips

- ☐ **Stay Aware:** Be aware of your surroundings and any potential hazards.
- ☐ **Keep Exits Clear:** Ensure your setup does not block emergency exits or pedestrian flow.
- ☐ **Secure Valuables:** Keep your money and personal belongings secure.
- ☐ **Avoid Conflict:** If confronted by aggressive individuals, disengage and move to a safer location.
- ☐ **Emergency Contacts:** Have emergency contacts readily available.

Remember, being prepared and informed helps ensure a positive and safe busking experience for everyone. Happy busking!