



# Contents:

Getting started.....24

Affinity groups.....24

Planning an action.....30

*Recces & other research....33*

*Pulling your plan together. 35*

*Tasks and roles.....38*

*Exit strategy & legal plan..41*

Why take direct action?...3

Ideas for action.....6

Banner Drops.....7

Office occupations;  
ethical shoplifting.....8

Shareholder actions;  
counter-recruitment actions.....9

Occupations.....10

Blockading techniques.....11

*Using your body.....11*

*Superglue, handcuffs.....12*

*Harris fencing; padlocks;  
d-locks.....13*

*Vehicle lock-ons.....15*

*Arm tubes.....16*

*Concrete lock-ons.....18*

*Disposable cars; bikes.....19*

*Tripods; transport actions...20*

Digger diving.....21

Sabotage .....22

Building something better...23

Preparing for action. 42

Buddying up.....42

Things to prepare.....43

Personal preparation, what  
to take & not take .....44

Media coverage.....45

Making Actions Work....46

Quick consensus decision  
making.....46, 47

Preventing and de-escalating  
tension.....48

Dealing with the police.....49

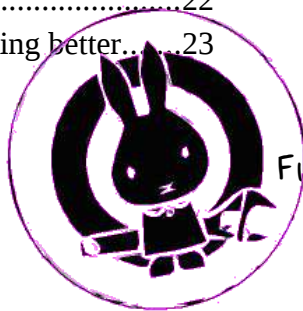
*If you get stopped.....49*

*If you are arrested.....50*

*You are entitled to.....50*

*Getting free legal advice. 52*

Further Resources.....53



# Why take direct action?

## It's empowering

**Direct action means getting on with sorting something out yourself, rather than asking someone else to fix it for you. There's no better way to take back control of your own life or to make change in the wider world.**

For many people it's not just an effective campaign tactic, it is also the philosophy that underpins how they live. For example, you might not only obstruct building work on the new supermarket in your town, you might also start up community allotments so you don't have to depend on those supermarkets for your basic needs.

## It works

The use of direct action in ecological and social justice campaigns in Britain has had many successes. In the 90s actions and land occupations cut the government road building programme by 80%, some 500 schemes were cancelled. In the late 90s and early 00s people pulling up genetically modified crops stopped the commercialisation of GM in its tracks, and helped remove GM products from shop shelves despite pressure from the worlds most powerful seed and chemical companies.

## Why direct action?

**When was the last time you felt you made a difference at the ballot box? Or by writing a letter to your MP? Over a million people marched against war in Iraq, and still the government didn't listen. This isn't a reason for us to give up hope. It's a reason to raise our game.**

Direct action is common sense. If you see someone being mugged in the street you don't set up a petition to ask the mugger to leave.

We live in a world that assumes we need leaders and laws to keep us in check; that we're incapable of making hard decisions and implementing them without being told how. Direct action is a way of challenging these myths, and challenging the people who think that money and status buy them the right to do what they like to the rest of us. It means refusing to accept the power those people hold, and taking responsibility yourself for the things that you know need to change, not pressurising existing power-holders to make better decisions on your behalf.



## *What about the consequences?*

**It is natural to be concerned about the consequences of taking action. The authorities rely on it! They provide other avenues for our frustration and desire for change that aren't 'illegal'. If enough of us buy the right stuff or vote for someone different at the next election it'll all be OK. Yeah right!**

If you believe that these approaches will create real change, you'd better be able to hold your breath for a very long time. Do we have that long?

Direct action doesn't have to involve breaking the law. However, if you want to challenge powerful vested interests, such as corporations and governments, then you can be sure

there will be laws in place to protect them. If we are going to be effective then some people will have to break these laws.

The law says war and exploitation of people and planet are fine, but dissent through peaceful protest is not. The law is an ass.

Many of the world's most celebrated people are 'criminals'. Gandhi had a record as long as your arm. Martin Luther King, the Suffragettes, Aung Sang Suu Kyi, the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela - all of them are well known individuals representing the thousands who made their struggle work. People just like you and me.

It is difficult to second guess precisely the legal, economic and social consequences of taking part in an action. One thing we can be sure

of is that they pale into insignificance compared to the consequences of no one taking action at all. There are groups (see the resources section at the back) who offer advice, support and ideas about likely personal outcomes of different actions depending on your circumstances.

Always find out your legal rights before taking action. Knowledge is power, don't let the authorities get one over on you because you didn't do your homework.

## *Different approaches to DA*

**From the outside, direct action might seem like quite a minority interest activity. On the inside, it involves a melting pot of people with strongly held, and differing ideas about what is ethical and effective.** This section provides a taster for some of these ideas, and provides a bit of a jargon buster for some of the words that are used differently in an activist context.

### *Nonviolence*

For some the decision to use nonviolent methods is a matter of believing that if you want to build an ecological, peaceful and co-operative future you do it here and now using ecological, peaceful and co-operative tools. Others might have a more tactical approach to the choice of nonviolence. The state and corporations are willing and able to use more violence than we can, so it may be unwise to engage with them in a game they will almost certainly win.

People taking direct action have many different definitions of “violence” and “nonviolence”. For instance, is breaking into a factory making weapons of mass destruction and smashing it up as much as possible violent or non-violent? It is important you can talk about your thoughts on violence and nonviolence so you can find a group to take action with that suits your beliefs.

## Accountable / unaccountable actions

In an accountable action you plan to face the legal consequences - the word 'accountable' refers to the fact that this gives you the chance to justify what you did, to the courts, the media and your friends. For some actions this is unavoidable: if you are planning to use your body in a human blockade and the police arrest you on the spot then you have very few chances to claim it wasn't you wot dunnit! For some people being accountable is an ethical choice and even where it might be possible to 'get away with it' they choose not to.

An unaccountable, or covert action is one where you do something illegal but plan not to get caught. For some people this can be a more sustainable way of working - it means you are free to carry on as an activist without all the time, money, and stress involved in court cases. This isn't always the easy option though – you can get arrested without having 'planned' to, and keeping secrets can involve time, stress and money too.

## Open and closed groups and actions

If a group or action is open then anyone can join and it is widely publicised. This makes it much easier to involve new people, but harder to avoid unwanted police attention.

If an action or group is closed then the inverse is true - new people can't join in and often don't find out about it either. This can make it possible to do things without the target finding out first, but in the long term doesn't provide entry points for new people.

For many people open and closed is a sliding scale depending on the level of risk involved and what the aims of the action are. Equally, many people choose to be involved in more and less accountable actions depending on the situation.

## Activist security

'Security' in this context, means taking preventative measures so you can do your actions without your target finding out you are coming, and in some cases, without anyone ever knowing who did it. For some people, it also

involves making it harder for intelligence gatherers to collect information about their day to day life – who their friends are and where they travel to regularly, for instance. Avoiding this kind of long term profiling can make it much easier to pull off secret actions in the future.

Some security measures can take a lot of time and effort, and may not be necessary depending on your situation. Also, be aware that if security is badly handled then the atmosphere of secrecy can lead to some people feeling excluded while others get kicks out of being part of the in crowd - in other words it can contribute to informal hierarchies within your group. On the other hand, paying good attention to security can be what makes your action happen, and / or save you all the time and energy involved in court cases.

The decisions each individual takes about security impact on everyone else they work with – there's no point one person being consistently and painstakingly careful if no-one else is. The important thing, therefore, is that people share the information they have about security with the rest of their group, and that members then come to collective decisions about the security measures they think are necessary in the long term and for each action.

This handbook includes some basic security tips, but look at [www.activistsecurity.org](http://www.activistsecurity.org) for more detailed information.



**In April 2009 114 people were arrested in Nottingham** in what the police described as a 'pre-emptive raid on climate activists.'

The police undoubtedly gathered information to launch this raid through a mixture of group infiltration, and intercepting emails and phone calls. Not only did this prevent people from carrying out any actions they may have planned, but those people who were charged got landed with a costly and exhausting legal case that dragged out for well over a year.

Check this Indymedia UK article for more details:

[www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/nottinghamshire/2009/04/427421.html](http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/nottinghamshire/2009/04/427421.html)

# Ideas for action

**Below is a collection of some of the ideas used by activists, mostly in Britain, mostly over the last 20 years. Don't feel bound by them – they're here to provide inspiration, not to define what direct action is.** Not many of these tactics are 'direct' in themselves, it depends what you are trying to achieve. Some, such as banner drops, are usually just publicity stunts. They're there because they can help enhance other work.

The key is to think about what you are trying to achieve, and build your tactics from there (see the action planning section for more thoughts on this). Running at a different target every day with bicycle D-locks in your hands without considering the wider context is unlikely to get you very far. On the other hand, a well planned, strategic direct action campaign with lots of new action ideas to keep the authorities guessing can really get the goods.

Innovation is our best ally. Our opponents are usually big organisations that take a long time to react to and deal with change. The more we throw new tactics at them the more they have to play catch up. Look out for their vulnerabilities and be creative.

*Are you planning to win?*

**For long term effectiveness you need more than one off brilliant action ideas, you need to play a longer game. It can be hard to sustain the energy for a long running campaign.** However, if we take a little time to analyse the situation and to develop a plan of action we can increase our effectiveness and maintain our enthusiasm.





Making a plan for how you will win can help you choose the most vulnerable targets and most suitable tactics at the right time. A plan can also help make the best use of people's time and energy, reduce burnout and stop you from getting disillusioned half way through. Long-term planning means you can chart your successes, large and small and celebrate them.

For more ideas and supportive planning tools, have a look on Seeds for Change's website and in the resources section at the back of this handbook.

## *Banner Drops*

Banners have been hung from motorway bridges, the House of Commons, power station cooling towers and many other places. The more inaccessible, the longer the message stays in place. Some banner hangs require specialist climbers, many don't. There is also an auditory equivalent – blasting a building with sound equivalent to the aircraft noise suffered by residents living near airports, for instance.

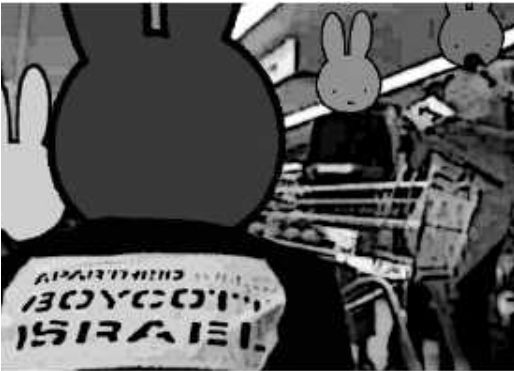
## *Office occupations*

A classic 'disruption' action. Activists enter a relevant building and occupy some area of it. Sometimes this is just the main doors or the foyer (wedging yourself into a panel of a rotating door with some door wedges can work well), Sometimes it will involve getting further into the building and taking over a specific office.



You can use occupations as an opportunity to talk to staff and as a valuable information gathering exercise. Explore filing cabinets and computer files. Paperwork can be discretely refilled creating days of work. People find it hard to concentrate if you lock onto their filing cabinets and sing badly. Anti-GM campaigners were able to occupy Monsanto's offices and take over the customer information line themselves.

Headquarters of major companies are likely to have security barriers and swipe card doors. Blag your way in by making an appointment, or get someone to distract the guard while you vault the barriers, then wait discretely with paperwork, or overalls and a tool box for someone to come by who you can follow through a door. See details in the recce section for ways of getting in and talking your way through.



## *Ethical Shoplifting*

Involves removing unethical goods from the shelves of retailers and returning them to their rightful owners. Forest activists took illegally logged tropical hardwood off DIY superstore shelves and handed it in to police stations,

reporting the retailers for their complicity in the illegal timber trade. Anti-war campaigners have filled trolleys with products from the occupied territories.

## *Shareholder Actions*

Usually take place at a company's AGM. Share-owning activists (you only need to own 1 share) join with other shareholders and take the opportunity to ask the board awkward questions, disrupt presentations by senior staff, hand out 'alternative' annual reports, or shut down the AGM altogether. This has been done by invading the stage, setting off fire alarms, removing plugs from the PA and AV equipment, attaching rape alarms to helium balloons and sending them floating to the ceiling, etc. These techniques can also be used at conferences and trade fairs.

# Counter-recruitment actions

Have been used against the military and corporate recruitment events, especially on university campuses. These have included: pasting 'cancelled' signs over posters advertising the event; booking up all the places and then not turning up; attending the talk/stall and loudly asking awkward questions; setting up a spoof stall or event in the same building.

## Occupations

Involve using bodies to occupy a key area, to disrupt, or create a space for debate. Sometimes it's necessary to barricade yourself in. Students have occupied university rooms to protest against the attacks in Gaza. Workers struggling to save their jobs in the Vestas wind turbine factory on the Isle of Wight, took up residence to try and get their factory nationalised. Land is often squatted to prevent road and airport expansion, or open cast mines.

These occupations can be extended by the use of treehouses, tunnels and lock-ons (see **Road Raging** for a more detailed introduction). The die-in is a form of short term horizontal occupation, and involves lying down in public, usually covered in fake blood.



# Blockading Techniques

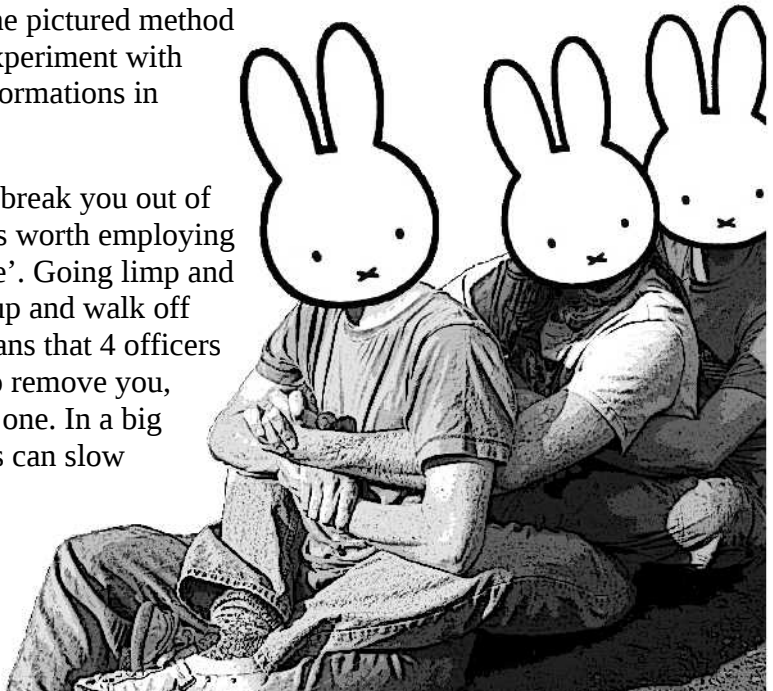
**Blockading is about using human bodies to close a place down. It usually lasts much longer if you also have some kind of a 'trick' to make you harder to remove, like having climbed up high or locking yourself to something.** Blockades often involve shutting off access points, but it doesn't always have to mean standing in front of the main gate. Think creatively – e.g. stopping a key vehicle could prevent all the others from working.

Blockades usually involve putting yourself in a vulnerable position, so it's vital to think about safety when you're planning. At the very least anyone who is locking themselves to something should have some supporters to look out for them.

## Using your body...

If you have nothing else to hand then you can blockade somewhere just by putting your own body in the way. Sitting or lying down makes it much more difficult for security guards or police to push or move you away from the place where you want to be. Linking arms and legs with each other can further increase your effectiveness. Cuddle up and latch onto arms and legs tightly, the pictured method works well, but experiment with circles and other formations in advance.

If they manage to break you out of the group, then it's worth employing 'passive resistance'. Going limp and refusing to stand up and walk off when arrested means that 4 officers will be required to remove you, instead of just the one. In a big enough crowd this can slow up the process considerably.



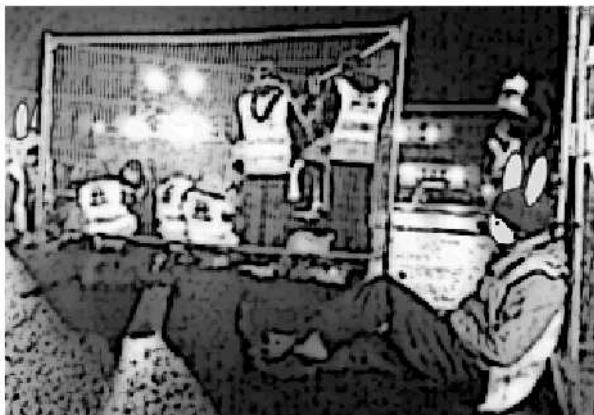
## Superglue...

Has the benefit of being able to pass through metal detectors, but is very easy to remove using hot soapy water or nail varnish remover, so be aware that you might not get to stay for long. The glue takes about 30 seconds to set, which is a long time in some situations. Don't skimp on the quality, you get what you pay for, pound shop stuff won't cut it. If you want to avoid criminal damage charges it's worth gluing yourself to yourself or a friend round an immovable object. Keep your hands down low and your palms flat if you possibly can. Practise first, it's unusual to have an allergic response, but it's best to find out over a small area in the comfort of your own home.

## Handcuffs

Handcuffs are good for carrying in your pocket unobtrusively and for locking on underneath machinery, to gates etc, but are easy to cut off as most are pretty flimsy. Loops of strong cord or tape can often be just as effective and are cheaper. Decent handcuffs are difficult to find. Army surplus or 'sex shops' sometimes sell weak ones. Most handcuffs can be undone with a standard key type, which security and police often carry. They also sometimes have a 'self release' catch that you need to saw or snap off before you use them.

## Harris fencing...



For years protesters have been obstructed by the ubiquitous slabs of cheap, 6ft, concrete footed temporary barrier known as harris fencing.

Then the good folk at the Smash Edo anti arms trade campaign figured out that if it could keep us out, it could also keep 'them' out, at least for a bit. Harris fencing is light

enough for a couple of people to carry around one panel. You will need another two people to carry each foot. You can use it as a barrier when moving through police lines, but more importantly you can use it to secure an area you want to stay in. You can secure it into a pen without the feet if you're using D-locks or chains and padlocks directly onto the fence.

For longer periods of occupation you'll want to sit down and lock the panels together with a D-lock round your neck and through the two sections, as this will take them longer to remove. Under those circumstances it's advisable to use the feet - you don't want it trying to fall over when you're holding it up by the neck. During the Stansted runway occupation people made a fence within the fence which extended the presence again.

## Padlocks...

Padlocks and chains put on gates can cause confusion and hold up work, while 'they' run around looking for the keys and then bolt croppers. Superglue or liquid metal in their padlocks means that they have to cut off their own locks and keep buying new ones.



## D-locks...

Bicycle D-locks are a classic direct action tool, their first reported use was at Twyford Down road protest camp in 1992. They fit neatly around pieces of machinery or gates and your neck and if you manage to 'lose' the key you will have to be cut out.

As with most blockading techniques, it is essential to have some assertive friends to make sure no-one tries to move you by force. It can also speed things up if you have someone who can help you fix the D-lock round your neck.



Choose your spot carefully. It is important that anything you lock onto cannot be removed or unscrewed (like a vehicle foot plate or bumper). Gates can sometimes be removed from their hinges, so consider securing the hinge side as well as the opening side.

You may want to keep a spare key about your person but they may search you for it. Hide it somewhere 'private' on your body or give it to a friend nearby who can unlock you if you really need it.

## Vehicle lock-ons...

If you are locking on under a vehicle you will need a minimum of 3 support people to communicate directly with the driver to tell them you are underneath and that they will kill or injure you if they try to move it.

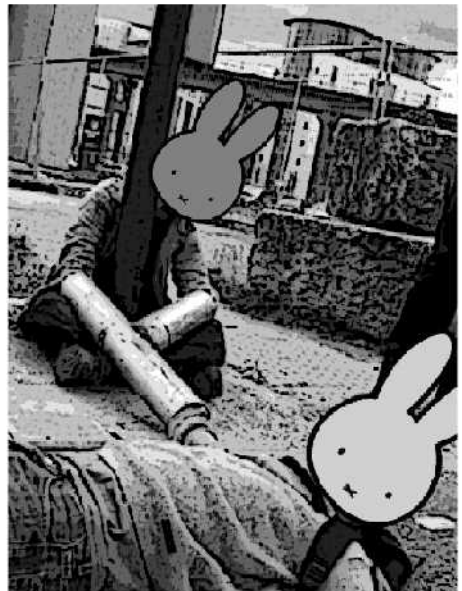
The prop-shaft under vehicles is the long pole that runs the length of body. If the vehicle has just come to a stop it will be very hot, don't lock onto it and mind your head. In advance of the action spend some time in car parks crawling around to familiarise yourself.

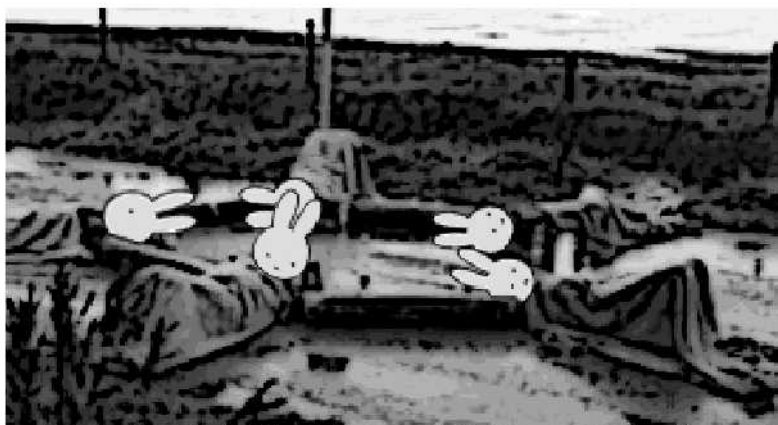
Until it's absolutely clear the vehicle's not going anywhere, have at least two people standing in front to stop it moving, carrying a big 'Stop' sign. Parking a vehicle in the way is even better as the driver is unlikely to try to drive into something which might scratch their vehicle, but they have been known to drive through a line of protesters. The third support person should then go round to the cab door and try to get the driver to switch the engine off.

Be polite and friendly, but firm. Not all lorry drivers speak fluent English, include a diagram in your leaflet showing someone locked on if you can. For more on safety see **Delia's Guide**: [www.geneticsaction.org.uk/delia.pdf](http://www.geneticsaction.org.uk/delia.pdf)

## Arm Tubes...

A popular technique for making a group of people very difficult to remove from a space. Making a chain of people stretching across a road with hands connected inside arm tubes prevents vehicles passing. Whilst your hand is 'locked on' inside a tube the police should not move you. Instead they will need to call a specialist police unit who are trained and have tools to remove each of the arm tubes - this can all take quite a long time!





Arm tubes are particularly useful when you want to block somewhere fairly wide like a road, and you don't have anything handy like a gate to do the work for you. In this case it is useful to

have something to secure the people chain to at either end – a pair of lamp posts, for instance. Arm tubes can also be used to surround things, from a large circle of people around an aeroplane, to one person locking their own arms together round the arm of a digger.

Tubes can be made from a variety of scrap materials. Heavy duty arm tubes can be made from thick metal pipe such as old cast iron drainpipes, lampost shafts, or steel pipes - this increases the length of the blockade as it takes the police team longer to cut you out. Lighter tubes can be made from plastic pipe or even cardboard. Your choice will probably depend on how you are planning to get your arm tube into place – there's no point going for the strongest tube possible if you can't carry it to where you need it.

In order to secure yourself in the arm tube you'll need a loop of strong cord, chain or tape which fits around your wrist, attached to a snap gate (sometimes called a spring clip or carabiner) which are available from most hardware stores. Chain is often used because in the past officers have put down knives on the ends of sticks to try and cut through tape. Old bike chains can be a cheap solution.



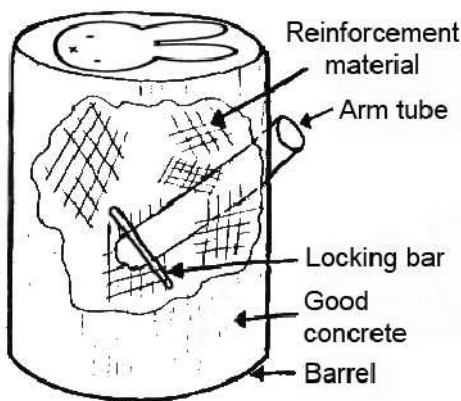
Your tube needs to be the diameter of a clothed arm and three to four feet long. Ideally the tube should have a strong metal pin welded across the middle for people to clip to – though clipping to each other is also an option.



## Concrete lock-ons...

Concrete lock-ons can be built in houses, up trees, in oil barrels, washing machines, roads, in cars and in tunnels. They are, of course, very heavy, so they are best used when you have a vehicle (or at least a shopping trolley) to get it in place, or if you are able to build it in situ (for example, if you are occupying somewhere and preparing to resist eviction).

They are constructed from arm tube(s), with a metal crossbar at the bottom, which is then set in concrete. The concrete mix is: 1 part cement to 3 parts sandy aggregate. The longer it has to set, the stronger it will be. Several months is preferable.



Pieces of chopped-up tyres and metal mesh, nuts, bolts, and scrap metal can be added to the concrete mix to hinder drilling out the concrete.

At the Birmingham Northern Relief road protest, bailiffs were particularly slow in their work when they discovered that the ashes of one of the protesters had been included in a lock on. Sorted Dave had died of a heart attack in his sleep a few weeks before, but even his family agreed that this shouldn't stop him from being part of the eviction.

When building, plan it so that the person will be in a comfortable position as they could be there for some time. To lock-on, put your arm down the arm-tube and clip your arm to the cross bar. If they can't get your arm out, they will probably use a combination of power tools. If you've done things properly, this will take quite a while, and will be noisy, dusty and a bit worrying.

Other lock ons have been built by welding metal arm tubes together in X or H formations to accommodate 4-6 people, and with one person sitting on top of the central joins to further complicate matters. You can also weld heavy objects to your lock-on to make it harder to move. Cattle-grids, steel plates, lorry wheels and dead cars have all been used, making it difficult to simply scoop you onto some wheels or lift you out of the way.



## Disposable cars...

You can buy scrap cars very cheaply, but you will get arrested if you're stopped while driving an unroadworthy, uninsured, or untaxed car. You can use cars to blockade just about anything. Immobilise the car by slashing the tyres, removing wheels, or turning it over. You could also try building concrete lock-ons into the car, welding arm tubes to the chassis or simply using D-locks to lock on to your own vehicle.



## Bikes...

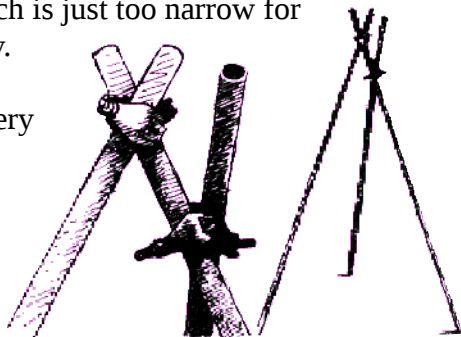
A flock of cyclists can slow traffic quite successfully either to prepare vehicles that are about to run into a static blockade, or as a blockade in themselves. It's perfectly legal for cyclists to take up all the road space as long as you keep moving. If going through inter-sections consider the 'corking tactics' used on Critical Mass bike rides. Put simply ensure that a couple of people at the front of the ride peel off and stand in front of any access roads till the mass has passed, or you risk having your group broken up by cars.



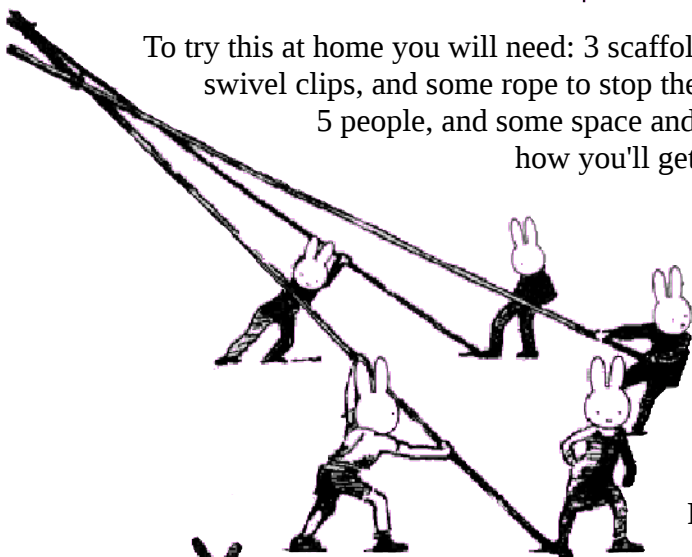
## Tripods...

Tripods are a good way for a small number of people to block a large area. Three poles are used to make a tripod which is just too narrow for a vehicle to pass through the bottom safely.

Someone then sits at the top, making themselves, and the whole construction, very hard to remove. Although much more 'efficient' than a chain of arm tubes (in a ratio of space blocked to people arrested) tripods are a fairly risky tool, and rely on a support team who are on the ball.

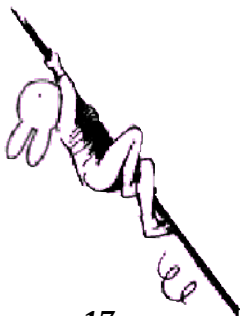


To try this at home you will need: 3 scaffolding poles, scaffolding swivel clips, and some rope to stop the base splaying. At least 5 people, and some space and time to practise. Think how you'll get the poles to the action.



Attach clips as shown and lift into position, remembering to put your feet on the bottom of the poles to stop them sliding outwards.

Practise shinning up the inside. Don't forget to take up the spanner to put the last clips in place.



## Transport actions...

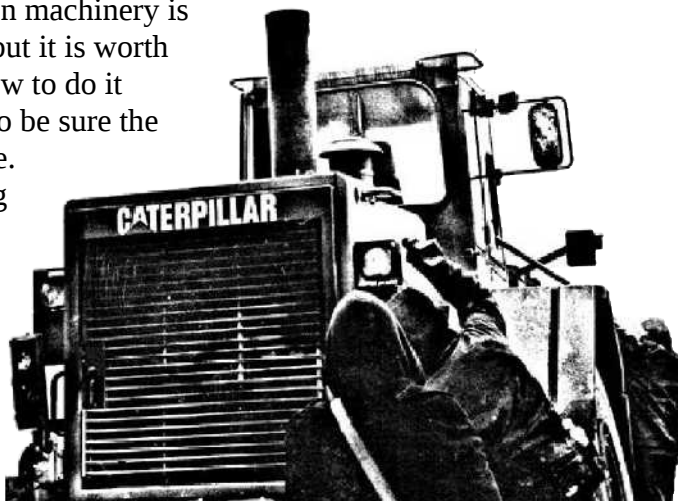
Moving things are often the weakest link in otherwise impenetrable systems. In Germany there are regular mass actions against trains carrying nuclear material, and UK activists stopped a tube line by climbing onto the roof of a carriage to prevent delegates getting to an international arms fair. Trains carrying coal have been targeted, such as one bound for Drax Power Station and another

coming from Ffos-y-Fran open cast mine. Flights have been targeted by anti-deportation activists, who board planes and then refuse to take their seats, preventing the flight taking off until they are removed from it. Near Rosspport in Ireland huge dredging ships used to lay off-shore gas pipelines have been disrupted by activists in inflatable kayaks.

## Digger diving

Digger diving involves using your body to stop vehicles from working – not just diggers, but also dumper trucks, scrapers, drill rigs and any other metal giants that are being used to trash the planet. It is a technique that has been used to delay road-building, tree-felling, open-cast mining and construction. People immobilise the machines by standing in front of them, clambering up them or locking on to them, and may choose to stay until they are forcibly removed. Alternatively, they may want to avoid arrest, and try to get away before the police come.

Stopping huge construction machinery is less scary than it sounds, but it is worth giving some thought to how to do it safely. The main thing is to be sure the driver knows you are there. They will not be expecting people on foot coming at them from all directions, and they are likely to be looking straight ahead at what their machine is doing. Approach within their line of sight, carry





**1990s: Digger diving roads protesters**

a large stop sign, and signal clearly for them to switch off their engine – don't expect them to be able to hear you shouting. Once the machine has stopped it helps to have someone ready to go right up to the drivers cabin, offering tea and cake, encouraging them to enjoy their break and making it very clear that they will hurt people if they start up again.

Meanwhile, everyone else can have fun using the machine as a climbing frame. You will be hardest to remove if you are high up such as on the arm of the digger. However, vehicles often have a flat cabin roof which makes a more comfortable seat, especially if you don't have a head for heights. Avoid the exhaust pipe which can get very hot. See ***digger diving zine***: [http://coalactionscotland.noflag.org.uk/?page\\_id=10](http://coalactionscotland.noflag.org.uk/?page_id=10)

## Sabotage

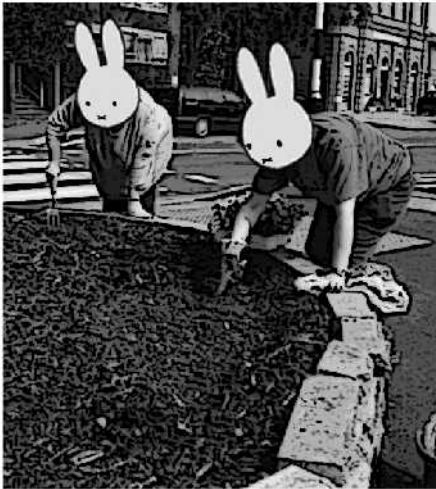
Has a long and noble tradition. American soldiers sabotaged their own ships' engines by throwing paint scrapers into the works to prevent them from sailing to Vietnam. Anti quarry activists put sand in the oil of diggers to set them grinding to a halt. Anti-war activists dug up the runways that were used to send planes to bomb Iraq.

Sabotage is sometimes one of the most effective ways of confronting a problem. Given the gross injustice present in the world, and the enormity of the ecological threats we face, most of the action we can take without sabotage is horribly inadequate.



Of course acts of sabotage that involve complex infrastructure or machinery carry risks, and unless you can research and assess these properly this is a tactic best avoided, for your own safety and the safety of others. It also carries potentially far greater penalties.

However, one of the problems with accountable actions such as blockading, is that anyone involved in them will be picked up by the authorities. This can exclude those who, through society's prejudice, are likely to get a rougher ride through the courts and therefore can't afford to get caught. Actions that revolve around a lot of arrests can also take large numbers of people out of action for a while. Uprooting of GM crop trials was only successful on a large scale because the majority was done covertly, ensuring that a relatively small number of people were able to prevent pollen spreading from hundreds of sites. If you are hoping to do something like this without getting caught, you need to think about fingerprints, DNA and other forensic evidence that could link you to the action – see [www.activistsecurity.org](http://www.activistsecurity.org) for further advice.



## *Building something better*

It's often necessary to create what you want yourself. This can be done alongside a campaign against something - like handing out free veggie burgers outside McDonalds. But you can just be out and out positive. Food not Bombs groups directly help the hungry and stop waste by rescuing 'skipped' food to cook free meals for those that need them. Groups like the guerilla gardeners set

up community plots, often on neglected public space. Crews squat abandoned buildings to turn them into art exhibition spaces and social centres. Cyclists reclaim the streets with 'critical mass' bike rides.

Setting up or joining co-ops for your housing, work or food are great ways of building something better and meeting your basic needs. Set up a squat, brew your own beer, fix your old bike and put it to use, make do and mend. These are a few simple ways of creating positive alternatives in a world that tries to turn all shelter, food and fun into commodities.

## Meetings and communication – basic security tips

**One way that your target or the police can find out in advance about what you are planning is if they are able to listen in to your meetings, or intercept your emails and phone calls.** Some people find it hard to believe that this happens. However, many activists have found bugs in their houses and cars, or discovered that their phones are tapped. Given that you can't know for sure if this has happened to you, it is safest to assume it has.

*This is **not** a reason to be paralysed! A few simple precautions can keep you one step ahead.*

Try to talk about actions and arrange meetings **face to face**. Phone, emails and letters are easily read or listened in on by police and private security bods. Even if you have worked out clever codes or encrypted your emails, they make it clear who is communicating with who. This may not seem like a big deal, but you don't know how the information might be used. For example, if one of you is arrested, the rest of you may instantly become suspects too, just because it is known that you have been planning actions together.

If you have a **mobile phone**, leave it on and at home during meetings and actions. Mobiles are not only used as listening devices, they can also be used to work out where you are. So if a group of known activists converge on a particular spot, and then all switch their phones off at the same time, it leaves big clues about where a meeting is happening and who is there. So even if you can disable your phone by taking out the

battery and sim card (and with some phones you can't), leaving it at home, or sending it for a walk with a friend is the best option.

Choose a **meeting place** that is not generally an activist hang-out. For a lower risk action, a café or the house of a not-so-known activist can be fine. Pubs often have spare rooms you can use for meetings during the day, but don't book it from your home phone or use the same place every time. If you are aiming for high security, have your meeting walking around outside, well away from buildings and places you think could be bugged.

Certain key information is best **not said aloud**. Pointing in your diaries can be a way of fixing dates. Writing things then burning the paper is an option.

Finally, be aware of **changes of behaviour** that might give away that you are planning an action – if you suddenly make lots of phone calls to the same few people, or encrypt your emails when you never have before this could be enough to raise the alert.

# Getting started

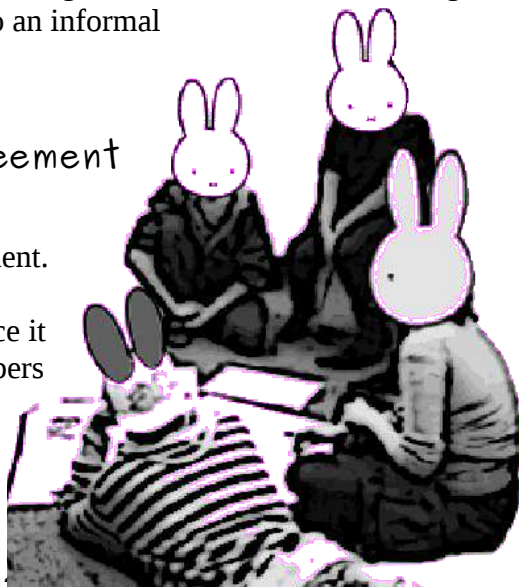
## Affinity groups

**Affinity groups are small groups of people who come together to prepare for and take direct action. Sometimes these groups are formed just for one action, but often they are ongoing groups that organise and take part in actions over a number of years.** Affinity groups work best when people have something in common (the 'affinity' bit). The ideal situation may be to have people you like, who live locally, who have a similar amount of time to take action on the same issues using the same tactics. However, even if your situation isn't perfect, this doesn't need to stop you from doing anything at all.

Taking action with an affinity group is empowering and effective. Usually 10 groups of 10 people each planning their own separate actions can achieve much more than 100 people acting together. Small affinity groups also allow you to take action with other people, without losing direct democratic control over everything you sign up to do. All important decisions can be made within the group even if you are participating with others in a larger action. Affinity groups work when everyone acts together as equals in actions and meetings. To make this possible in the long term, think about skillsharing and rotating tasks so no-one migrates into an informal leadership role.

## Working out a basic agreement

Once you've found some people it is important to work out a basic agreement. This can take time, but if you have agreed on action guidelines in advance it makes it possible for the group members to trust each other's reactions even in the heat of a stressful moment.





## Questions to consider in your affinity group:

- ◆ **Is this an open or closed affinity group?** (i.e. can new people join the group)
- ◆ **How do we make decisions?**
- ◆ **What do we each expect from the group?**
- ◆ **What is everyone's attitude to...** (criminal damage, the mainstream media, getting arrested?)
- ◆ **What are people's beliefs and definitions of nonviolence?**

## Computers – basic security tips

**Every time you visit a site on the internet, your computer is logged as having accessed that site. If you are under surveillance then looking up your target's website and maps of where you're doing the action several times could be enough for someone to work out what you are planning.** Even if you do manage to carry out the action, the records of your computer use could be used as evidence that you were an organiser.



If you want to avoid this, then one option is to do your research from an internet cafe. Choose one that isn't too near your house, (not in your town if you live somewhere small), and don't use the same one too often. Watch out for CCTV cameras above the door.

Another option is to use software such as tor, which allows you to do anonymous internet searches from your home computer. It has its limitations however. Look at [www.torproject.org](http://www.torproject.org) for more details, and ideally find someone who knows what they are doing to set it up for you, and explain how far to trust it.

# Planning

**When you know what everyone's up for you can get on to planning. For a long term group, this might mean creating a campaign strategy, for a short term group it might just be one action.**

## A basic overview

**This section provides a very basic outline that should work for planning actions and campaigns. There are more details below about important areas of action planning, such as doing a recce.**

Start with your aims. This cannot be emphasised enough. You can only work out what's effective if you know what you are trying to achieve.

Your long term aims may be to prevent climate change or to end the arms trade. Both would undoubtedly be a Good Thing, but probably more than you are likely to achieve in a one-off action or even a campaign. Break down your aims into more manageable smaller steps. In a campaign you might be trying to prevent a particular new arms factory from opening, in a one-off action you might be trying to shut down an arms fair for a morning.

You will probably start generating ideas for action before you've even thought through your aims, but try not to go too far with this until you've done your research. If it turns out that your arms fair is in a building with twenty different entrances, most delegates arrive by helicopter and the weapons are inside already you won't shut it down by blockading the main gates. Similarly, if you are targeting a company that has massive and secure profit margins then a campaign based purely on trying to inflict economic

damage on this one company might be an uphill battle.

Ask yourselves questions like: What is causing the thing you want to change? Who are the decisions makers and what approach is most likely to influence them? Is there a weak link anywhere? A financially vulnerable contractor perhaps? Who is on your side and could work well with you? How sustained would your action or campaign need to be to have an impact?

When you have worked out who or what would make a good target for your action or campaign, then you can start to look in more detail at your tactics. If you are planning a campaign, think about how you can combine different actions in a timeline to gradually increase the pressure on your target instead of starting with the action of the decade and then trailing off because you've used up all your energy and clever ideas.

Don't let all of this absorb too much time and energy. Well planned actions are much more likely to be effective, enjoyable and safe, but over-planning could mean you never go off and do anything. Sometimes it can work to just get on with it and learn from it. It's a good idea to create the time to get together and evaluate what went on during an action, think about what you achieved and how everyone felt and apply the lessons next time. Similarly, in a campaign, be sure to review your plan, check whether things are turning out in the way you had hoped, or whether you need to alter your tactics to fit the circumstances.



### Preparation – basic security tips



If you are buying **tools** then pay for them in cash, otherwise your bank statement will hold a record of what you bought where. This is the kind of information that has been used to convict people in the past.

If you are using **phones** for your action, then try to use 'clean' ones that haven't been used before by anyone connected to you or the action. Get a new phone, or one from a second hand shop, pay for it in cash, and keep the battery, sim and handset apart until you need to use it. If you need to charge it do so in a public place not connected to you, and to buy credit use pay-as-you-go top-up vouchers bought with cash. (See the *Communication and meetings* box on page 23 for why phones can be a problem).

## Doing your homework – recces and other research

**A lot of your initial research can be done online (check out the Computer Security box below for advice on how to do this without giving too much away).**

Check out your target's website, look at stories about them in media articles and industry journals. Think about which particular places might work for your aims – do you want to target a few key individuals in their offices, or do you want to cut into their profit margin by shutting their factory down?

**Once you've chosen a site you need to find out all you can about it to decide what kind of action might work.**

To begin with it's good to keep an open mind, and gather information that might be relevant to different kinds of actions. A good place to start is with the general layout & access to/from the target – get an OS map and look at satellite images from sites like google earth. For some locations google streetview can provide basic photographs.

**You will need to do a recce in person,** but you don't want to be too obvious. Have a cover story prepared in advance to explain your presence at the site. You can gain access to some

places by pretending to be lost/in need of directions/the toilet or by pretending to be meeting someone who works there or making a delivery. You can even arrange an appointment by posing as an interested student, a potential client or a journalist. Try to dress so that you fit in with the other people in the area, and take a vehicle to blend in if appropriate/necessary.

If you are planning your action for a specific time/day, do your recce at a similar time/day so that you get as realistic a picture as possible of conditions at the site. It is best to go with someone else as they may remember details you do not, and can be useful as cover.

**Be as specific as possible about details,** as these can be invaluable in planning how to carry out your action. Make sure you write down this information as soon as you can without giving away what you are doing. Taking photos of the site can be invaluable, providing you can do this without being too obvious.



## *Checklist of information to acquire*



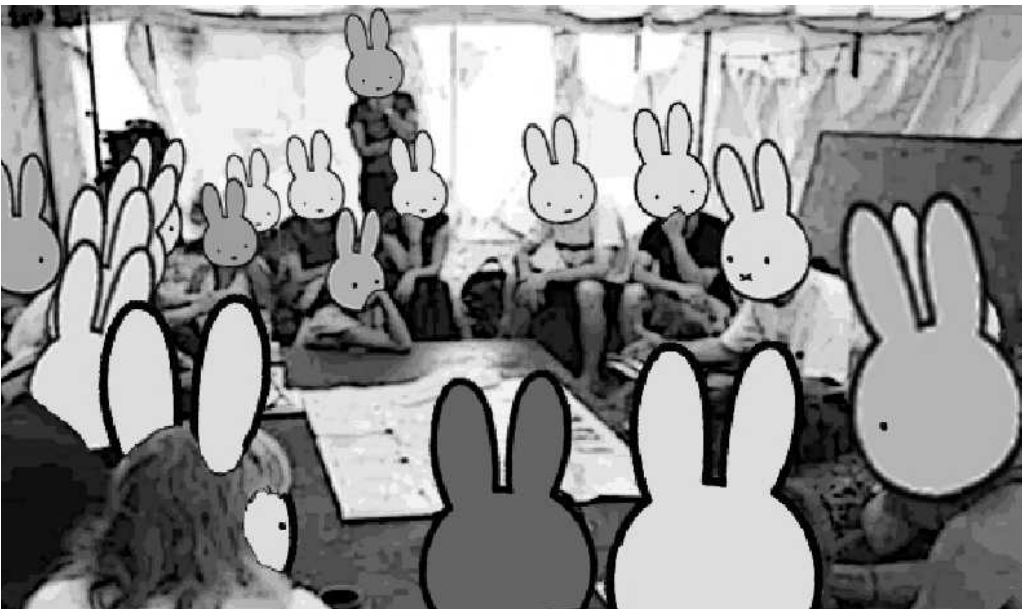
- ✓ **Access to and from the site** – roads & vehicle access, public transport, cycle and footpaths can all be useful. Where are the access points for vehicles and on foot? Where are the fire exits? Be specific – number, type and size of doors for example. Observe how most people arrive and leave, and what they are wearing – could you blend in by doing the same? Also think about your viable escape routes and where an escape vehicle could wait in the vicinity without being linked to your action, or being caught on CCTV.
- ✓ **Layout and infrastructure** – For any action it's a good idea to know the basics of the site/building layout and depending on the action you may need to access a specific part of the site. Where do you need/want to be and how would you get there? How many people would you need to blockade an entrance, could you D-lock to doors/railings etc.? Be as specific as possible – how high is the roof you want to climb to, what size banner would you need, how far apart are the handles on doors etc? Details can be estimated accurately from photographs - scale these dimensions by comparing them to objects of a known or standard size – people for example. You can also pace out distances.
- ✓ **Security and monitoring** – Can you just walk in, do you need ID/swipe card etc? Are there security guards or police on site and what are they monitoring? Are they in communication with each other? Where is there CCTV on site and on approaching roads/paths? Is it monitored live or just recorded for evidence (look for banks of screens in security cabins/reception)? Think about what security response times are likely to be for different areas and activities. Also bear in mind if security is likely to be tighter at the time of your action, where might additional security measures be put in place, how could you avoid these?
- ✓ **Police** – Are there likely to be any on site at the time? Where is the nearest police station and what is it's likely response time? Are they likely to have experience of dealing with protests, and if not how far away is the nearest specialist unit?
- ✓ **Aims and Tactics** – As you are doing the recce, think about what tactics could work to achieve the aims of your action. Also think about the choreography – would you need people to distract or block security for example?

## Pulling your plan together

**Once you've got your information together you need to work out your plan in more detail.** Gather all your information together, and choose a secure space to get together and thrash out all the details of what you will do (see the Communication and meetings box above for security tips).

### Questions to consider:

- ◆ **How do we react if...** (e.g. the police intervene, someone gets violent)
- ◆ **How do we react towards people we encounter during actions?** (bystanders, the police, company directors)
- ◆ **How opportunistic are we?** (e.g. What do we do if the plan was to hold up banners outside some office, but then there is the chance to actually get inside the building? How would that affect the group?)
- ◆ **What happens if one of us really feels the need to leave?**



Make sure you go back to your affinity group agreement and the aims you agreed upon in the early stages. Does your action still fit in with your over all campaign aims? Check in that everyone is fully happy with the plan and that it isn't just a few enthusiastic voices doing all the talking. For many people, affinity group direct action isn't just about making change in the outside world, it's about modelling a more equal and participatory way of organising inside your group too. If you aren't listening to each other's concerns, you won't be achieving that, and your plan will probably be weaker too.

In addition to all the general principles you have agreed to, try to predict what particular circumstances might arise during this action and think about how you will react. This makes it possible to take decisions quickly together, and feel safe because you trust your mates to look out for you and not do anything you'd be really uncomfortable with. It means there is a lot more in built flexibility in your plan – you're more likely to be able to take up unexpected opportunities, and you're more likely to be able to avoid things going wrong.

## Exit strategy and legal plan

**When are you going to leave, and how will you all get out safely when you go?**

**Discuss in advance what defence, if any, you might want to run if things go to court.** If people are interested in fighting any subsequent case, do they want to make sure their action will be 'severe' enough to be taken before a jury (who are more likely to be sympathetic). Most 'ordinary' protests will be heard in the magistrates courts, where it is almost impossible to win on ethical grounds. Are people prepared for the time and stress involved in fighting a legal case, or would they prefer to plead guilty to get the matter out of the way? If the group is split on this, how will you ensure you don't undermine each others approaches?

Everyone should be given a legal briefing before taking action. This booklet does not cover the issues adequately. You can get more info from the Activist Legal Support website and booklet – see the resources at the back of this booklet.

## Tasks and Roles

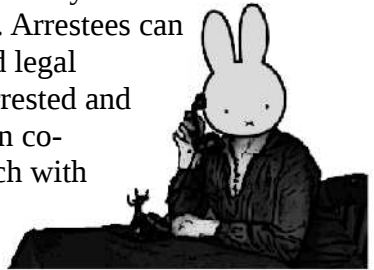


Share these out so it isn't always the same people doing the same thing. This will help everyone build up their skills and confidence and prevent informal hierarchies developing. Some of the roles you might like to think about are listed below. You will rarely need all these roles, and sometimes you'll need none of them. The most important thing is that people are aware what their role involves before they take it on, and they are prepared to stick to it throughout the action, if necessary.



- **Transport:** Many actions need vehicles, and vehicles need drivers and map-readers. In most cases drivers will need to avoid arrest, so they can drive people home as well.

- **Police Station Support:** If people are new to arrest or feeling anxious about it it can help to have someone whose job is to support them. This person stays somewhere safe and away from the action, next to a phone. They should have basic information about each member of the group: their name, contacts of anyone they want contacting if they're arrested etc. Arrestees can call this person from the police station, and legal observers pass on info about who's been arrested and where they've been sent. This way, they can co-ordinate post-arrest support, getting in touch with solicitors, and picking people up from police stations on their release.



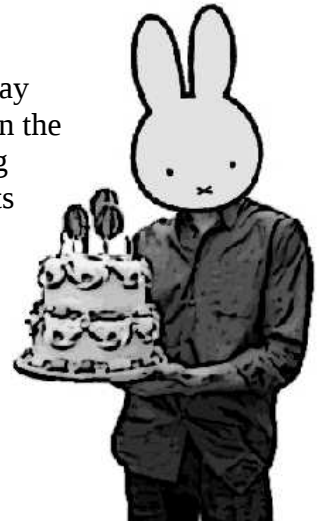
- **First Aider / Street Medic:**  
The more people who know medical care of any kind the better, but in many types of action it is wise to have at least one person who knows basic first aid.





- **Legal Observer:** Stays on the fringes of the action and is responsible for responding to calls from those taking part in the action if the police are being unreasonable or are making arrests. They should take detailed notes of interactions with police including names of anyone arrested, police badge numbers, what took place and exactly when. A camera or video recorder can be helpful. Being a legal observer is no guarantee of immunity from arrest.

- **Action support:** Provides direct personal support for arrestable people. This person may risk arrest, but tries to avoid it. Depending on the nature of the action this could mean bringing water and food supplies to action participants and keeping everyone high-spirited and informed. If people are locked on, it helps to have a support person with them who is prepared to be assertive at stopping traffic and making it clear to police, workers and security guards that they could be injured if they are moved.



- **Action Participants:** The people carrying out the actual action (climbing, locking on, sitting down etc). Should be technically prepared for everything they plan to do, and well rested, fed and calm.



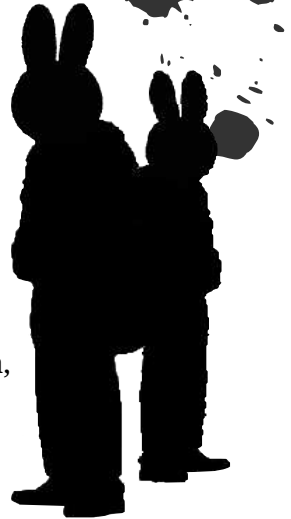
Sometimes this will be everyone and you won't need other roles, but they are last on this list for good reason – they are only able to play at being 'direct action heroes' if they have the support they need from everyone else.

# Preparing for action

## Buddying up

**Within your affinity group you might agree to split into smaller groups of 2-3, and agree to look out for each other as 'buddies'.**

Buddying should mean you are never alone on the action, you're less likely to get lost, and have someone to leave the scene with if you need to stop for any reasons.



Check in before hand and be prepared to:

- ✓ Know if your buddy has any particular (e.g. medical) needs.
- ✓ Check that your buddy is still with them whenever a group is moving around.
- ✓ Make sure your buddy is physically OK, and find food/drink/warm clothing/medical attention if they aren't.
- ✓ Keep an eye on your buddy's emotional state, and try to calm them down / comfort them when necessary.
- ✓ Leave with your buddy if they want to go, for any reason.
- ✓ Provide support if your buddy gets arrested. This could mean passing on their details to a legal support person, or arranging for someone to meet them when they get out of the police station.
- ✓ Get help if your buddy is hurt: this could be calling an ambulance, finding a first aider or asking someone with a camera to record the situation.

# Things to prepare

- **Get the tools you think you'll need as early as possible, and test them if you can.** Pay for items in cash, and avoid buying large quantities of anything suspicious in one place, as this makes it easier to trace them back to the place of purchase, and back to you.
- **If you need transport, does it have to be a van or car?** If so do you have drivers and will they need to hire - make sure they have the documentation to do this.
- **Avoid *paint-still-wet-on-the-banner* situations** (hairdryers can be handy in these situations. Or if you're really pushed gaffa tape can be good for instant lettering). If you're including props/costumes - where will you get the materials and when will you make them?
- **You'll probably need to find or write a leaflet.** Who are you aiming it at – you might write different text for a member of the public than you would for an employee of the company you're targeting. Get handy facts and figures to back up your action that can also go in your news release. Corporate Watch can give good advice on this. People have short attention spans, the more concise you can be the better.

## Security – Preparing your home

**If you are involved in an action which costs the authorities a lot of money, there is a chance they will 'raid' your home after arresting you.** Raids are used to gather evidence against you – for example about whether you were an action 'organiser', what other things you might be planning in the future, or who else might have been involved.

Warn anyone you share your house with. Legally, the police can only search areas of the property that you have access to – this includes communal areas, but not other residents' rooms, if you are living in a shared house. Make sure any computing kit (regardless of whether it's incriminatory or not) is off the premises, as it can take months to get property back. Also 'clean' your house of any action associated paperwork - burn incriminatory stuff like receipts, and arrange to store address book, campaign literature, any computing kit at a non activist friend's house. Store your phone with another friend or it may lead them to the main stash.

# Personal Preparation

## What to take

- ✓ £10 for emergency transport and change for a phonecall.
- ✓ A hat or hoodie and sunglasses - protection not only from the sun but also from intrusive intelligence gathering by the police.
- ✓ A watch, synchronised with those of your mates.
- ✓ Pockets with zips and a rucksack.
- ✓ Wear several thin layers, long trousers, raingear & sturdy shoes/boots.
- ✓ Any medication you might need. Even if you haven't had the problem for a long time. And the prescription if you can find it (otherwise the cops might take it off you). Wear a wrist band with medical issues written on it and tell your mates if you have had any problems in the past, particularly things like asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, pregnancy, heart problems, allergies.
- ✓ Supplies- plenty of food and water. If you get dehydrated, or your blood sugar is low you can get disorientated and become a liability. Snack often.



## Don't take

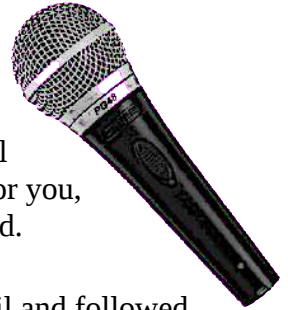
**Always empty your bags and pockets before you leave. Only take what's really necessary. Especially avoid:**

- ✗ Jewellery, tie up hair and cut nails, these all help you avoid injury. Hair can get in your eyes and offers a nice handhold for police.
- ✗ "Offensive weapons" - anything pointy or hefty (e.g. penknives/screwdrivers).
- ✗ Illegal drugs. Alcohol (impairs your judgement).
- ✗ Credit cards, ID (unless you come from a foreign country or are driving a car).
- ✗ Address books/diaries- the cops would love to have your mates' phone numbers.
- ✗ Mobile phones. Ever. Really. For goodness' sake leave them at home. They certainly carry your address book and can be used as tracking devices. They can also be used to listen to you.

# Media Coverage

**Using the media is a dangerous game, but sometimes you can increase the impact of your action by playing it. Minimise the risk by predicting their response and preparing for it well.** If getting coverage is important to you, make sure there's a good photo opportunity, and take a trusted photographer to get the crucial early shots. Make sure you have someone on hand to forward these images to interested journalists quickly- an anonymous photo-sharing account on t'internet can be handy.

Don't trust the media. If there's a risk the authorities will be able to stop your action, then it's unwise to send out a press release until after you're in full swing. You'll need someone with a phone and a computer to do this for you, and make any amendments you might not have predicted.

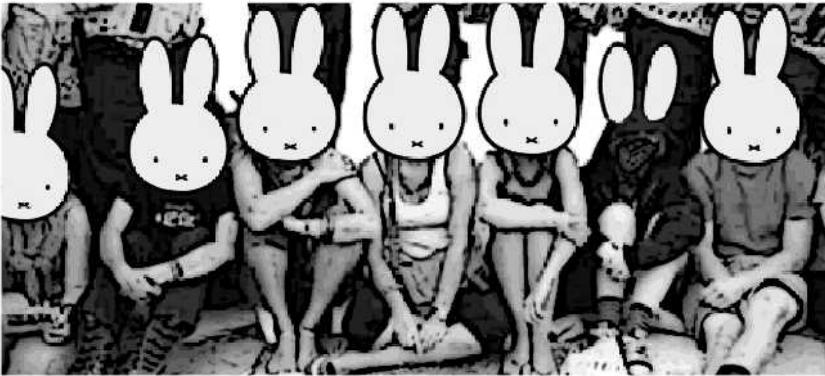


Your press release should be sent in the body of an email and followed by an encouraging phone call to ensure it's been received. Research press contacts in advance. Don't forget the non corporate media too. Press releases should be one side of A4 max. The first paragraph should explain the Who, Why, Where and What of the situation, followed by a couple of quotes that explain your messages. You should have no more than three key messages. You can put additional background and referenced details in 'Notes to the editor' at the end.

Consider having media spokespeople, who should practise question and answer sessions in advance. For more info look at the media section of the ***Genetix Snowball handbook***, available online.

# *Making Actions Work*

Actions are unpredictable, there are so many things that could be different than planned or change suddenly. Planning and preparation will help things to go well, but you should always be alert and prepared to react whilst on an action. Having a group that you have spent time getting to know and feel comfortable with will help you pull together as a team and support one another when it's needed. Here are some useful action skills to develop in your group.



## *Quick Consensus Decision Making*

**Consensus decision making** is a way of reaching decisions widely regarded as one of the most participatory and empowering processes available to activist groups. However, it can take time, and often in an action time is exactly what you haven't got. If the police are threatening arrest at any moment, or you have spied an opportunity that you need to take quickly or miss altogether, you may only have seconds to decide what to do.

Quick consensus is a way of making collective decisions in situations where time is very limited. It aims to find a solution that everyone can support. These decisions might not be perfect, but at least everyone had the chance to agree or disagree, and everyone bears equal responsibility whether things go well or badly. Quick consensus works far better if the group practices the process before going on an action.

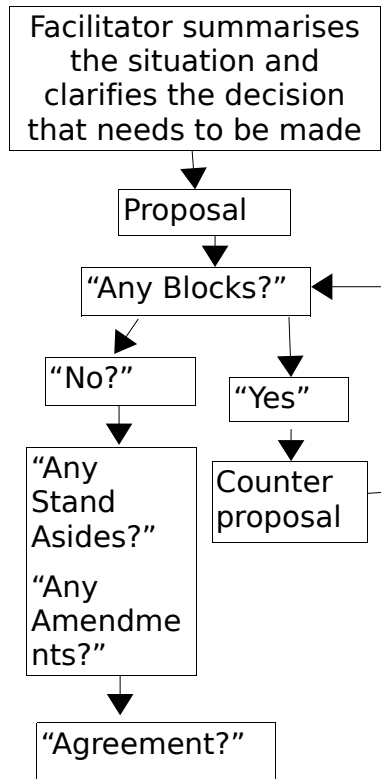
## Quick consensus decision making: the process

1. Appoint a facilitator in advance to save time. Facilitator outlines the situation. "We've been given 2 minutes to move or we'll all be arrested. I think we should make the decision in one minute. Any proposals?"

2. "Yeah, I propose we link arms and sit down".

3. "OK, it's proposed that we sit in the road and link arms. Any blocks?" "No". "Any stand asides?" "Yeah, I'll lose my job if I get arrested, I want to get away." "I'll come with you." "OK, we've got 20 seconds, any amendments?" "Yeah, I propose we link arms and legs to make ourselves harder to move." "OK, so the proposal is that we sit in the road with our arms and legs linked. We have two stand asides, does everyone else agree?" Everyone signals their agreement.

4. Make sure everyone knows who is doing what – then get on and do it!



A block means:

"I can't support this decision, and want to stop the group going ahead with it." It is usually used when you think a proposal is dangerous or unethical. The group needs to find another proposal, and fast.

A stand aside means:

"I don't want to do this, but I'm happy for the group to go ahead without me." Too many stand asides could mean the group needs a new proposal, depending on the situation.

# Preventing & de-escalating tension

**Quite often you're faced with aggression on actions from employees, the police, passers-by and sometimes fellow protesters.** You might 'lose it', when you see a friend being hurt. Being aware of what can lead to aggression on actions can help to avoid these situations arising, and keep the action safe.

## Stay focussed on your aims.

Work out what it is you want to achieve and how you will do this. A clear motivation and sense of purpose can help you to stay focussed in a chaotic situation.

## Stay calm, relaxed and alert.

Try to notice things before they become a problem so that you can respond in good time. If you're scared or feel your adrenalin pumping, take some deep slow breaths to help you calm down and think more clearly.

## Think of the opponent as a human being.

Even if they're not acting like one. They may also be worried or afraid. Calming them down is in your best interests.

## Keep it light.

Share a bit of banter and some tea. Sing songs they'll recognise.

## Watch body language - your own and others.

Look relaxed and open, use gentle hand movements - avoid sudden moves. Don't make fists. Use non-threatening eye contact.

## Avoid getting into people's personal space.



## Don't act submissive or frightened.

Don't plead and beg, don't fold arms or look away. At the same time don't be aggressive, threatening or insulting. Violence may make an attacker feel justified.

## Watch your language.

Keep your voice low but clear and under control. Be relaxed, but firm. Do not rush into faster and faster speech. Only interrupt if people are being personally abusive. Listen – and show that you have heard what is being said.



*Affinity group using tripod coming into contact with members of the public, workers, and police officers*

# Dealing with the Police

**You'll undoubtedly come into contact with the police at some stage, so it's helpful to spend a bit of time preparing for that.**

Make sure you know what your rights are on arrest (see below) and when you go on an action write the phone numbers of your group's legal support team and solicitor on your arm or leg, it's easy to lose a piece of paper from your pocket.



*If you get stopped by the police:*

- ✓ **Be calm and assertive.** Don't let them intimidate you. Know your rights.
- ✓ **Ask to speak to the senior officer present.** (PCs know nothing anyway)
- ✓ **Try not to lose your temper or swear** (this may be used as an excuse to arrest you).
- ✓ **Lay off the drink and drugs** (this may also be used as an excuse to arrest you).
- ✓ **The police will ask you all sorts of questions which you're not obliged to answer.** They are out to gather information. Don't give it to them, for your sake and that of your fellow protesters.

## If you are arrested:

- **Ask what you have been arrested for.**
- **You don't have to give your name and address or date of birth**, but if you don't it may delay your release from the police station.
- **Your photo, fingerprints and DNA can be taken without your consent.**
- **Answer "no comment" to all police questions** including during interviews.

## You are entitled to:

- **Have one phone call made on your behalf** informing someone of your arrest.
- **A translator** if English is not your first language.
- **Vegan or vegetarian food.**
- **Request a copy of the PACE codes** (this sets out your rights in custody).
- **Request a medical examination** if you feel unwell or have been hurt (inform the custody officer if you are on prescribed medication).
- **Access legal advice** (but it's not always free, see below).



## Getting free legal advice:

**If you are arrested for a non-imprisonable offence** (eg. obstruction of the highway, s5 Public Order Act, minor road traffic offences, breach of bail) and the police do not intend to interview you, you will **EITHER** have to pay to speak to a solicitor of your choice, **OR** you will be given the opportunity to get free telephone advice from a legal adviser at a call centre known as CDS Direct (these advisers are not necessarily sympathetic to activists).

**If you are arrested for a more serious offence**, or an offence for which you are to be interviewed, you will be entitled to speak on the phone or meet with a solicitor of your choice for free, provided the police can contact your solicitor within two hours. If your solicitor can't be contacted, you will be offered the duty solicitor. Their advice will not be tailored to activists. It may be better to say 'no comment' throughout your time in custody and then get legal advice from an activist - friendly solicitor later.

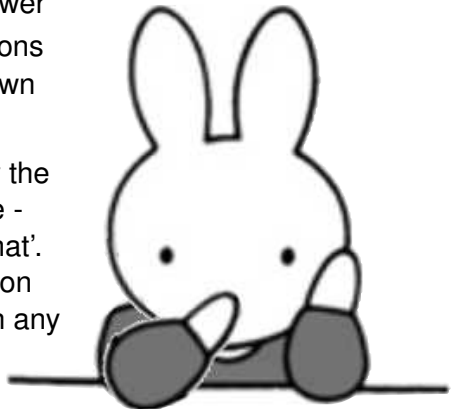
## This is not a full legal briefing.

For more information on offences, the arrest process and what happens on your release see: [www.activistlegalproject.org.uk](http://www.activistlegalproject.org.uk), [www.yourrights.org.uk](http://www.yourrights.org.uk), [www.freebeagles.org](http://www.freebeagles.org).

### The Right to REMAIN SILENT

We strongly recommend that you answer **"no comment"** to all police questions including during interviews, for your own benefit and that of others.

From the moment you are stopped by the police, everything you say is evidence - there is no such thing as a 'friendly chat'. The police are trained to get information out of you, so stay strong. Do not sign any statements.



# Further Resources

## Action Trainers

[www.seedsforchange.org.uk](http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk)

[www.tripodtraining.org](http://www.tripodtraining.org)

[www.turning-the-tide.org](http://www.turning-the-tide.org)

Email: [actiontraining@lists.aktivix.org](mailto:actiontraining@lists.aktivix.org)

## Activist Collectives

[www.actionmedics.org.uk](http://www.actionmedics.org.uk)

[www.activist-trauma.net](http://www.activist-trauma.net)

[www.activistsecurity.org](http://www.activistsecurity.org)

## Activist guides and resources

[www.networkforclimateaction.org.uk/toolkit/resources.html](http://www.networkforclimateaction.org.uk/toolkit/resources.html)

[www.uhc.org.uk/webpages/toolbox/index.htm](http://www.uhc.org.uk/webpages/toolbox/index.htm)

[www.rantcollective.net/article.php?list=type&type=17](http://www.rantcollective.net/article.php?list=type&type=17)

[www.earthfirst.org.uk/actionreports](http://www.earthfirst.org.uk/actionreports)

[www.rootforce.org/da/](http://www.rootforce.org/da/)

## Info on legal rights

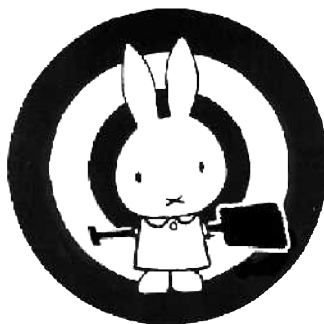
[www.activistslegalproject.org.uk](http://www.activistslegalproject.org.uk)

[www.scalp.noflag.org.uk](http://www.scalp.noflag.org.uk)

[www.freebeagles.org](http://www.freebeagles.org)

[www.yourrights.org.uk](http://www.yourrights.org.uk)

[www.shac.net/features/legal.html](http://www.shac.net/features/legal.html)





anti-copyright  
use and share this book