

EFFECTIVE DIRECT ACTION – A GUIDE



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WHY DIRECT ACTION?

Trans people have suffered in the UK and across the world, in spite of attempts to improve our standing by liberal progressive movements within the systems we find ourselves within. Over the last decade, trans people, alongside other groups such as refugees, have been utilized by reactionary groups across the world in their rise to power, from Orban's Hungary, to Trump's America, to our own Reform and Conservative and Labour Parties. The mechanisms provided to us from our oppressors – petitions, marches and debate – have been roundly ignored and have always been wholly inadequate. It is clear that appealing to the better nature of oppressors by showing them our pain, our exhaustion, and our suffering will no longer suffice.

History, both recent and distant, gives us an understanding of what should be done. Groups resisting “immigration enforcement” in the UK and US have successfully prevented raids by surrounding vehicles, obstructing officers, and exfiltrating at risk persons. The suffragettes, lauded in the UK by our government, in our schools, and in our media, won suffrage through tactics including property destruction and harassment of hostile MPs. In the heart of London there sits a statue commemorating the thousands of men and women who risked their lives and left the UK to join the International Brigades and fight fascists in Spain.

When our right to existence, an existence where all siblings in humanity are equal, is under threat, we find our only recourse is to Stand Up, and BASH BACK.

GUIDE

1) IDENTIFY A TARGET



The oppression of trans people is systemic, and thus is propagated from the top down. Ensure your target is linked directly to transphobia and that they have enough power to effect change under pressure.

Examples of good targets include offices of transphobic MPs and organisations (e.g. Sex Matters, the EHRC, Free Speech Union (FSU)), party conferences of parties that have explicitly transphobic parties, and the property of transphobic “public intellectuals”.

Ensure your target can be hit repeatedly until they desist from their activities. Bad targets would be corporations responding to the transphobic political environment by instituting transphobic policies – unless those responses are a significant enough threat to trans people to be noteworthy beyond “following guidance”.

2) UNDERSTAND RISKS

Depending on the type of action you choose to undertake, you may be open to the following charges in the event that one or more actionists are apprehended or otherwise linked to the action:

CRIMINAL DAMAGE (of a value over £5,000), or conspiring to cause such damage. Likely for actions involving smashing windows / spraypainting.

POSSESSION OF AN OFFENSIVE WEAPON, or an improvised offensive weapon, if caught with tools (e.g. wrecking bar) without any clear justification (in UK law this is also known as “going equipped”).

AGGRAVATED TRESPASS. Trespass with the intent to commit further offenses.

CRIMINAL/MALICIOUS MISCHIEF. Only in Scotland.

2) UNDERSTAND RISKS

(CONTINUED)

Many actionists from many causes and affiliated with many different groups have been charged with these offenses. As such, there is a large volume of case history for how courts rule on these charges as they relate to political protest.

Familiarising yourself with a few cases, and understanding the level of proof required for police to arrest and charge, and for CPS to prosecute, will help in evaluating the risk involved in your action and allow you and your fellow actionists to work more effectively.

IF YOU ARE ARRESTED YOU WILL BE RAIDED.

Prepare for that eventuality if you are carrying out an action, whether you are expecting to be arrested or not. Netpol have a guide for knowing your rights in the event of a raid on their website.

Even in the event you are never prosecuted or even charged, the police have broad powers to search property and seize any equipment that could reasonably be believed to be related to an offense. This usually includes most / all electronic devices, notepads, tools of any kind, and paint.

Police will leave a list of seized articles and a copy of the search warrant outlining what they are allowed to seize in a search after conducting a raid on a property.

It is advisable to know all of your important account passwords and to have your backup or primary devices stored with an unaffiliated party if you think there is a risk of a police raid.

3) EQUIPMENT

Equipment required will depend on the type of action you intend to commit and the nature of the site chosen. In general, all items involved in the action, from clothes to backpacks to hammers should be acquired with as few direct links to the actionists as possible. Steal if possible, else have someone you trust who is not known to the police purchase in cash, else purchase in cash yourself. Try to leave some time between purchase and action; most CCTV footage is only stored for between 2 weeks and 1 month. You will require at least 2 sets of clothes for each action per actionist. One should be a set of plain clothes to wear before and after the action, and one should be a set of clothes to make it difficult to tell actionists apart and that covers as much of the body as practical. Both should be easy to get in and out of, and should not be anything you are known to wear or that stands out in any way. All identifiable features (tattoos, hair, jewellery) should be covered by both sets.

All equipment for the action should be wiped down with alcohol wipes or isopropyl alcohol solution. Phones used to record the action should have a cash-prepaid sim, and both the phone and the sim should be destroyed after the metadata has been erased and the footage has been uploaded. In general, it is safer to dispose of all equipment after 1-2 uses as this reduces the amount of evidence that can be gathered by a police raid. Disposing of small amounts of equipment at a time in unsurveilled residential bins makes it difficult to tie the equipment to any person.

4) PLANNING AN ACTION

Use secure services for communication and storing action plans. Signal can be used to communicate with actionists. Signal should be configured to require a pin to unlock, your phone number should not be discoverable on signal and your signal alias should not contain your name or anything that could link the account to you, and your alias should be changed every few months. Disappearing messages should be set on. A zine guide for Signal can be found [here](#).

Cryptpad can be used to create plan documents to share. Cryptpad document names should be innocuous, and ideally only the person writing it should have access, with it being viewed on signal calls. Passwords, if required, should be memorised or stored with a password manager like KeePass.

Plans will be unique for each action and each cell but a plan could contain the following points:

- Locations for actionists to change in and out of clothes without being detected**
- Routes for actionists to take to and from the target site**
- A minute by minute outline for the action itself**
 - Roles for each actionist (e.g. Someone to smash windows, to spraypaint, to record)**
- In person reconnaissance of the site helps to clarify or identify several of these points.**

4) PLANNING AN ACTION

(CONTINUED)

Reconnaissance should be done by someone who will not be on the action, if possible. Likewise, if a safehouse is being procured (via a service like Airbnb), it should be done by someone unrelated to the action.

Make sure your action is identifiable to BASH BACK and our cause. Spray our symbol and use slogans already in use for demanding trans liberation.



Once you have conducted your action, if you wish to see it promoted, send it to our email, with photographs attached.

Email:

BASHBACKinfo@proton.me

Be sure to include “ACTION” in the subject line.

STYLE GUIDE

Our name is **BASH BACK** - all caps, not “Bash Back” or “Trans Bash Back”.

Our symbol (below) is an inverted pink triangle with “trans symbol” spokes at angles from each corner. The hexcode we use is #ff00ff, but any pink that sticks works.

Any extinguishers used should be filled with pink paint. Guides for filling extinguishers should be available online (accessed via TOR for security), but we may produce one in future and, if so, will update this document. Black spray paint is also okay (and maybe better for words), but pink for the symbol.

Some ground rules, anything that does not follow these will likely not be promoted:

BASH BACK ACTIONS ARE DESTRUCTIVE AND DISRUPTIVE: we only do actions if we believe they will cause direct harm to the transphobic status quo with a lasting effect. (Although symbol tags may get posted with less fanfare)

BASH BACK ACTIONS DO NOT HARM INDIVIDUALS: we do not condone causing physical harm to any human being.

BASH BACK SHOULD NEVER BE USED TO PROMOTE ANY POLITICAL PARTY: we do not condone party politics and only echo the words of individual politicians if they are beneficial to the cause of trans liberation.

ACTIONS SHOULD BE IDENTIFIABLE AS BASH BACK ACTIONS, even from an outside perspective.

BASH  **BACK**