

Prepare for Action (PfA) Street Script

Accessibility Guide - please read beforehand

Please note: this is a **very** reduced version of the full Prepare for Action training, designed to be used for street training only. Please ensure your participants are aware that they should still attend a full **PfA** training and read [Know Your Rights](#). Signpost people to relevant training:

[Prepare for Action](#) or [Rebellion Academy](#) (self-directed learning) or find training on the [Movement Calendar](#). You can also use the QR codes at the bottom of the script.

This street talk is designed to be given:

- by anyone
- with no prior speaker training
- with minimal preparation, simply read it out
- for a group of listeners - public and/or rebels

Take pauses to breathe and allow people time to absorb the information. **Guidance, timings and links will be in blue texts.**

Remember, this talk could be people's first experience of XR.

Be open. Encourage responses and dialogue with participants. Make them feel welcome in our movement. If there are a lot of questions, ask people to hold on to them until the end.

Get one or two buddies to help you with outreach, rounding up a crowd, circulating sign-up forms and QR codes.

Some links are included in the talk in case you want to pre-read background information.

Outline

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome | 3 minutes |
| 2. XR Strategy | 10 minutes |
| 3. Security and De-escalation | 5 minutes |
| 4. Next Steps / Signposting | 2 minutes |

Welcome [3 min.]

Give a warm welcome and thank people for coming to learn about how to prepare for action and why it is essential that we practice nonviolence

Check-ins

Introduce yourself and your helpers.

Explain check-in:

- **The task** is to introduce yourself, then give one word for how you're feeling.
- Turn to a person next to you and speak for around 30 seconds, then swap. (one minute in total).
- The listener should actively listen, in other words give the speaker their full attention and not interrupt or think about what you might say next.
- To manage the time we will use a **hand high in the air** [Giraffe] at 30 seconds and at one minute. When you see us or anyone else making the gesture, stop talking and raise your hand until the whole group quietens.

Housekeeping

- Signpost to toilets, First Aid, etc.
- Access requirements - they can speak to a helper or yourself. For example, is anyone hard of hearing or has mobility issues?
- **Hand signals:** Use a cupped **hand to ear** gesture if you can't hear you, **one Finger** to ask a question and a **Letter 'C'** for a clarification question. We will use **Wrap up** (steady circular hand movement) to indicate time has run out.

Just a taster - Learn more

- What you will hear today is just a snapshot of the full Prepare for Action workshop. A crucial part of your preparation for any kind of is that you understand both how and why we practice **nonviolent direct action**. We recommend that you sign up for a full **PfA workshop** and also read the **Know Your Rights** guidance. If you want to know more about the science you can sign up for the **'Heading for Extinction and what to do about it'** talk. We will circulate QR code links to these courses at the end.
- But for this session we will focus on preparing you to take part in an action.

The Thinking: Part 1 - XR Strategy

NVDA and Civil Disobedience [4 mins]

Extinction Rebellion is an international mass movement that uses Nonviolent Direct Action (**NVDA**) and Civil Disobedience to demand that governments around the world take action on our climate and ecological crises. And to minimise the risk of social collapse that will happen if urgent action is not taken.

Disruptive law-breaking, and law-bending action is fundamentally what defines XR. It is what sets us apart from other green non-government organisations [N.G.O.s], campaign groups and political parties who may share many of our aims and values. Most people at XR actions don't get arrested, but it's important that we all know being arrested is possible

XR's understanding is that NVDA and Civil Disobedience have **four essential elements**.

They are :

- **Respect:** shown towards other activists, the wider public, police, politicians, everyone
- **Disruption:** so that we cannot be ignored and we force the conversation
- **Sacrifice:** we demonstrate both our personal commitment, and the seriousness of issues impacting us all.
- **Dilemma:** whether the police and the state tolerate XR's disruptive actions, or crackdown, we benefit. If they don't react we get our message across. If they crackdown with full force, the public recognises our commitment, identifies with our sacrifice and listens to our message. We inhabit the [sweet spot](#) in the middle. [\[video for speaker to watch for background info pre-delivering a talk\]](#)

Nonviolence [2 mins]

Violence v nonviolence

- XR has drawn inspiration from the Indian Independence movement and the American Civil Rights movement. At the time that these great historic movements were taking action they were vilified by their societies, but they are now seen as beacons of hope and to have achieved great things.
- XR practises nonviolence for tactical, strategic and ethical reasons
- This does not mean that everyone in XR **is or needs to be** a principled pacifist as long as they practise nonviolence during our actions.

- Nor does it mean XR cannot stand in solidarity with people in other struggles who use physical force in self-defence and out of necessity e.g. Indigenous people and Earth Protectors facing attacks, torture, intimidation and murder.
- We recognise our privilege in our relative safety from state violence as activists in the Global North and the UK. We also acknowledge that movements in much more oppressive circumstances than our own have courageously used nonviolence to great effect.

Nonviolence is effective because...

- Violence gives the State an immediate excuse to crack down with the full force of violent repression. Nonviolence makes it considerably harder for this to be justified.
- Using violence will inevitably alienate significant portions of the population, and potentially turn them actively against us.
- But if we remain nonviolent in the face of State violence, we are more likely to win people to our side (because we expose the violence built into the system, show our commitment and willingness to sacrifice, and people are more likely to connect with our purpose).
- **So by being nonviolent we limit as much as possible any backlash by the state, alienate less people and win them over to our cause.**

It's important to understand that nonviolence only describes our behaviour and actions, not the overall situation.

- We cannot control others, only ourselves. The behaviour of the wider public, police or security guards, etc. is beyond our control.
- But **our reactions** to them are.

Injustice [4 mins]

There are many injustices and inequalities built into our justice system

- We must always practise nonviolence, because violent movements usually only attract able-bodied young men. Older people, young people and marginalised people are excluded because they would not be safe. They are denied their voice. Violence alienates the public and makes things worse.

- People from marginalised groups (people of colour, especially those racialised as black, as well as migrants, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, etc.) are consistently treated worse by the police, courts and prison system.
- We try hard in XR to be inclusive and so there's no place in our movement for systems of oppression and privilege such as racism, sexism, classism, ableism, or the oppression of young people.
- Because we need everyone. Our planet needs everyone.

So, how do we deal with the police?

Our approach towards the police is **Non Oppositional and Non Cooperative**.

We are '**non-oppositional**' towards the police because:

- Police officers are not our ultimate enemy. Put simply they are the **enforcers** of a system that is destroying our planet
- They are a diverse group of people. However, in uniform they are unable to make their own moral judgements. And they represent a state that is failing to keep us and our children safe.
- As such XR maintains a working relationship with them, for example, they know we will always move for blue lights. But they are not our allies.
- Successful system change will require at the very least, security forces to refuse to follow orders to crack down harshly.
- Until we reach this point we should recognise that, as the enforcement arm of the State, the police are working to counter the effectiveness of our movement.

We are '**non-cooperative**' towards the police

- We push boundaries,
- We are respectful but refuse to follow instructions,
- We do not cooperate, but importantly our non cooperation is passive rather than active. We do this by going floppy, refusing to move, refusing to answer questions
- We challenge the power of the State, through disruption and non-cooperative resistance.
- We always take individual responsibility for our actions and accept the consequences.

Part 2 - Security Briefing

Security Briefing [3 mins]

Here are some basic tips to remember if you are taking part in an action:

- The police will always be wearing body cameras and collecting evidence.
- Don't talk to them, every conversation is evidence gathering. Leave it to **Protest Liaison (maroon tabard)**.
- **Avoid identifying organisers** or planners, it could put them at risk of serious prosecution.
- Don't put others at risk by **calling out their names**
- If people choose to use code names, use them.
- Your phone contains information about your life. It could be used to incriminate you and others and may be kept as evidence. If you can, bring a burner phone with a Pay-As-You-Go SIM card bought with cash. If not, **turn off facial and fingerprint recognition and encrypt your phone!**
- If you think you might be about to be arrested, pass your phone on to a buddy who is not.
- Use **secure communication channels** and posting information on several platforms to make it harder for the police to gather evidence. We recommend **Protonmail** and the **Signal** app. Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram are not secure.
- Never talk openly about covert actions.
- If you need prescription medicines, carry them in their original container with a label that identifies you and your pharmacy.
- Protest laws have tightened considerably: please make sure you look at **Know Your Rights** on the **Informed Dissent** website or use the QR code that we will share at the end of this session. You need to be aware of how the consequences of an arrest would affect you personally.

We are now going to talk about action support

This and other essential slides will be a part of your follow up information.

At any large action there will be some rebels trained to carry out specialist support roles and they will wear these coloured Hi-Viz.

(Read out for people with a visual impairment).

Training is available if any of these essential roles interest you..

- **Stewards** wear pink usually with the word Steward, sometimes XR insignia. They are for reporting directly observed risks or opportunities, or for access support
- **First aiders** wear green
- **De-escalators** wear white. They are for calming tense situations and speaking to angry people
- **Wellbeing** wear blue and offer support for rebels' physical and emotional needs
- **Outreach** wear light purple and talk to the public
- **Protest Liaison** wear burgundy and negotiate with the police, security and other parties.
- **Road Takers** wear yellow and manage roads during marches
- **Legal observers** wear orange. They witness arrests and police actions against rebels. They are independent and not a part of XR
- **British Sign language interpreters** wear red.
- **Media Liaison** wear cyan or turquoise
- **Lead Steward** will wear pink and yellow, and coordinates stewards
- **Special steward** will wear pink and blue and take on special tasks such as radio operator

Legal information

There will be links in the follow up email to the best sources of legal info regarding protests.

- Rebellion Academy
- Green and Black Cross website.

Bustcards

Bustcards with basic legal info, contact details for protest law solicitors and the XR back office number are handed out at all actions. You will find Bustcards for other regions and nations on Informed Dissent. <https://informeddissent.info/bustcard>

As the police have been given much stronger powers to deal with protests. It is a good idea to know the 5 key messages on the front of your bust card off by heart.

It is easier to remember them if you think of four no's and a what.

5 Key Messages

- No Comment
- No Caution (this is an admission of guilt and will be on your record)
- No Duty solicitor (contact a solicitor specialising in protest law)
- No Personal Details. Arrestee and legal support have advised that antisocial behaviour is an exception to 'no personal details'. They advise that 'If the police mention this power you should ask what you have done that is antisocial and if they have a plausible answer (like causing a noise nuisance in a residential area) you should give their details. For more information checkout the Know Your rights training on the [Rebellion Academy](#)
- What Power (under what legal power are you doing this?)

You need to know these even if you were not planning to be arrested. The police choose who to arrest, not us. There will be a link to more info in the follow up email.

De-escalation [2 mins]

We all need to understand and practice de-escalation when faced with an angry or negative reaction.

Whether this is from members of the public, police, security guards, or workers, effective de-escalation techniques are really important to maintaining **our** nonviolence and keeping situations as safe as possible. Training is available and on an action de-escalators will be wearing a white tabard, or you can call on a steward in a pink tabard.

- **Remain calm**, confident, and firm in voice and body language
- **Control the volume and pitch of your voice.**
- **Avoid shouting, speaking harshly or aggressively**
- **Don't gesticulate wildly**; this can feel threatening to others
- **Empathy before education.** Do not try to educate people right there and then; this can feel demeaning and patronising. Instead, show empathy and understanding of where they are coming from. Engage people in conversation about the wider issues only if they seem genuinely interested.
- **Active listening**; don't interrupt; demonstrate understanding by reflecting what people have said back to them.

Next steps/ Getting Involved [3 mins]

We are facing an unprecedented global emergency. Life on Earth is in crisis: scientists agree we have entered a period of abrupt climate breakdown, and we are in the midst of a mass extinction of our own making.

We are unprepared for the danger our future holds. We face floods, wildfires, extreme weather, crop failure, mass displacement and the breakdown of society. The time for denial and delay is over. **It is time to act.**

Conventional approaches of voting, lobbying, petitions and protest have failed because powerful political and economic interests prevent change. Our strategy is therefore one of non-violent, disruptive civil disobedience – a rebellion.

We need you; whatever your experience, whoever you are, however much time you have, whatever your skill, there is a place in XR for you. If you are new go to our website and find your nearest group. Make contact, find a buddy or bring a friend and join us. Our vision of change involves mass participation. Help build a powerful movement. **Together we're unstoppable.**

Signposting [1 minute]

We ask you now to step up and join us in whatever way you can. There is something for everyone to do, whatever your circumstances, this movement needs you. If you are unable to join actions in-person you can still take action from home. Go to <https://digitalrebellion.uk/>

You can expect some excellent training in many aspects of our work and the support of a crew who really care. Any questions, come and have a word after we have finished.

At the end: engage people with next steps:

- Is there an action nearby for them to join, or a street talk, e.g. Introduction to XR, Know Your Rights or Science talk, also happening?
- Can you sign them up to our mailing list ?
- Can they make a donation? (see QR code sheet at the end of the doc for an easy way to do that from a phone.)

[Pass round the QR code and sign-up sheets - see below]

<p>Sign up for a full Prepare for Action workshop https://xrb.link/Cf5LLj1</p>	
<p>Join XR https://extinctionrebellion.uk/join-us</p>	
<p>Sign up to XR news https://extinctionrebellion.uk/join-us/#sign-up-form</p>	
<p>Donate to support XRUK! https://xrb.link/O46PD14W7PE</p>	
<p>Informed Dissent- Know Your Rights https://informeddissent.info/knowyourrights</p>	

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