

Crash NVDA Script - 14th Oct 2022

[Accessibility Guide - please read beforehand](#)

Notes for Trainers:

- This is a very reduced version of the full NVDA training with excerpts from Know Your Rights.
- Remember, this could be people's first experience with XR.
- Be open. Encourage responses and dialogue with participants. Make participants feel welcome in our Rebellion.
- At the end: engage people with the action that's about to take place. What's happening next? Where should people go?

Outline

1. Intro & Check-Ins..... 5 minutes
2. NVDA & Civil Disobedience..... 5 minutes
3. Action Briefing, Tactics & Arrest..... 10 minutes
4. Know Your Rights: Key Points..... 3 minutes
5. Check-Outs..... 2 minutes

Intro [2 mins]

- Welcome everyone.
- [\[Before you begin, check for access requirements\]](#)
 - E.g. is anyone hard of hearing, has language difficulties or mobility issues? Encourage people to speak up if struggling and allow for room to be made for anyone needing this.
- [\[Introduce yourself and the outline and objectives of this training\]](#)
 - To connect with each other and the reasons we take action
 - Understand why we use Civil Disobedience and Nonviolence
 - Get a full briefing of today's action and some of the ways of building our power and resilience in the moment
 - Learn how to interact with the police, your rights and the 5 Key Messages to remember
- Disclaimer: This is a super stripped back version of a longer and in-depth training that everyone should do. Today we're just brushing over some of the key elements of [NVDA \(Nonviolent Direct Action\)](#) and [Know Your Rights](#) training (see QR codes below to access full training). It is **your** responsibility to learn about this to take more care of yourself and those around you.

Check-ins [3 mins]

- [Invitation to the group to break into groups of 4-5.] Can each person introduce themselves to the group? Say your name (or the name you're using today) and perhaps say how you're feeling in this moment.

Housekeeping

- Hand signals: **One Finger** or hand to ask a question; **Letter 'C'** for a clarification question; **Silence**: Raised hand in the air until others copy and the group quietsens;

NVDA and Civil Disobedience [5 mins]

Extinction Rebellion is a mass movement that uses nonviolent direct-action (NVDA) and civil disobedience to demand action from the government on our climate and ecological crisis.

XR's understanding of NVDA and Civil Disobedience is that the following four elements are essential:

- **Respect**: shown towards other activists, the wider public even police and politicians
- **Disruption**: so that we cannot be ignored and force the necessary conversations
- **Sacrifice**: we demonstrate our commitment to face the seriousness of issues impacting us all and take individual responsibility for consequences
- **Dilemma**: we put the ball in the court of the State, creating difficult situations that force them to take a side, whether they tolerate XR's disruptive actions, or crackdown, this movement creates those responses

Nonviolence

- XR practices 'nonviolence' for tactical, strategic, **pragmatic** reasons, as well as on principle
- This does not mean that everyone in XR **is or needs to be** a principled pacifist; nonviolence does not mean 'not being violent', it means standing up for what's right, and confronting suffering in a way that does not cause undue harm to others.
- This does not prevent XR activists from standing in solidarity with people in other struggles who do use physical force in self-defence and out of necessity.
- We recognise our privilege of our relative safety from State violence as activists in the Global North and the UK particularly. We also acknowledge that movements in much more oppressive circumstances than our own have courageously used nonviolence to great effect.

Nonviolence only describes our **behaviour and actions**, not all situations, however. Be aware...

- We cannot control others, only ourselves. Behaviour of the wider public, police, security guards, etc. isn't under our control. Only **our reactions** to any escalation or violence are.

- We practise de-escalation to mitigate negative reactions. However, we train to prepare for the possibility that situations can turn harmful. Find a white-bibbed de-escalator if you see a confrontation getting out of hand.

Police

- We recognise that people from marginalised groups are consistently treated worse by the police, courts, prison and other bodies; people of colour, migrants, refugees, LGBT+ people, and other people with differences to perceived norms.
- Although we can appreciate the humanity and decency of individual police officers, we will not chant “we love you police” out of naivety. We understand that, particularly to certain communities, the police, as an institution, is a violent, oppressive force. We are conscious of the roles police are in and the harms this can cause fellow citizens, particularly in protests.
- Police officers are not our ultimate enemy, but **they are** the enforcers of a corrupted system that needs to change
- Officers are a diverse group of people, some are mean, some are nice, some are ignorant, some informed. They are human. However, in uniform they sacrifice their individuality and their ability to enact **their own moral judgments**. They enforce laws that are steadily killing us.
- So we maintain a working relationship with the police but we do not see them as our allies.

We are ‘non-cooperative’ to the police during protest actions and civil disobedience

- Civil disobedience happens when ordinarily law-abiding citizens take a stand against an injustice, sometimes breaking laws to force changes in laws that create greater injustices
- We push boundaries as rebels because everything else has failed: marches, letters to MPs, individual and community acts to save our planet.
- Civil disobedience is about disobeying, resisting and should rebels choose to, breaking laws, to highlight far more urgent injustices needing government attention right now that are being systematically side-lined, marginalised, ignored or trivialised.

Action Brief, Tactics & Arrest [10 mins]

Action Brief [1 min]

- The action today will involve marching from here to Downing Street with a direct message to the government that “We Can’t Afford This Anymore” - linking up the cost of living crisis to the climate and environmental crisis. We will be demonstrating our anger and refusal to obey this system by burning our energy bills, speaking out our individual testimonies of why we take action, singing together and **staying in the road until 6pm**, regardless of police response.
- At 6pm we will come back to Trafalgar Square for a collective debrief.
- If you find yourselves in a situation where the risk of arrest is high and you cannot take that risk today, we honour that, and invite you to move to the nearest safe location but to **stay with the action until the end**.

- Remember, it's not about getting arrested. **It's about not doing what they tell us to do**, and calling their bluff to prevent us from expressing the severe threat to life we all see.

Affinity Groups & Resilience [5 mins]

When we disrupt and occupy space, we demonstrate our right to protest and allow our voices to be heard. When police start coming into this space, this creates tension. Their tactic is to intimidate and scare us. But we are more powerful than they think, especially when we act together, in true solidarity with one another. None of us is here alone. When we take action, we need to be resilient and take our strength from each other. This is one of the main reasons we encourage the forming of Affinity Groups (AGs) - your AG is essentially your crew. The people you take action with, the ones you trust and count on, the ones you look out for and the ones looking out for you. Some Affinity Groups get formed and stick together for a long time and some just get formed for a specific action and then dissolve. We don't have time right now to do AG formations but we can all look out for each other and form temporary "Resilience Groups."

A lot of us here today are either new or not part of an Affinity Group and that can feel scary. A lot of us here today might have come to London on our own and not even have a buddy to take action with. For some this might be their first ever action and for some this might be their 100th action... I would like to invite everyone to remember this when you go out onto the streets and when the moment comes encourage the formation of Resilience Groups. Look around, find another 8-10 people, huddle up and check in with each other. This is now your crew. No one is here alone. Look out for one another.

I will now quickly mention a few strategies we can use to communicate and build resilience with one another, particularly when the tension is high:

- Mic-check
 - We are all crew, and everyone is empowered and invited to speak up and communicate to the crowd. Calling 'mic-check' will result in other rebels repeating what you say. You are able to make suggestions to the group, or communicate your values and testify to others when the time is right.
- Sitting Down
 - If the tension is rising and everyone sits down spontaneously, things immediately slow and calm down, and it makes it harder for the police to single out individuals and walk around the crowd. Watch out for the hand signal (demonstrate hand signal for sitting down)
- Silence

- Silence can be both powerful as well as grounding. Again watch out for the hand signal we demonstrated before (show signal again)
- Linking Arms
 - If police start trying to engage with us, we can get into our Resilience Groups and link arms (either standing up or sitting down) to make it harder for the police to separate us or drag us away. Remember to stay nonviolent!
- Singing & Chanting
 - Singing and chanting together can be really powerful when we need to build or maintain our energy and fire! It's also a great way for us to feel united and part of the same action. You can start a chant or a song in your Resilience Group or lead a bigger crowd if the moment is right. Don't be afraid to invent chants on the fly.
 - For this action, we have been encouraging people to learn the chorus from Billy Joel's "We didn't start the fire" - Any of you know it? [if you feel comfortable, teach everyone the song or ask if anyone else that knows the song wants to teach it to the group. Alternatively, just read out the lyrics and tell people to listen out for it during the day]

We didn't start the fire
 It was always burning
 Since the world's been turning
 We didn't start the fire
 No, we didn't light it
 But we tried to fight it

De-escalation [1 mins]

Effective de-escalation techniques are really important in maintaining **our** nonviolence and keeping situations as safe as possible. Longer **De-escalation Training** is available, but key techniques are:

- Remain calm, confident, and firm in voice and body language
- Avoid shouting, speaking harshly or aggressively
- Not gesticulating wildly; this can feel threatening to others
- Practice **active listening**; don't interrupt; demonstrate understanding by reflecting what people have said back to them.
- Always **ask before offering an explanation** as to why you're here. People need to feel heard before they can listen to others.

Arrest Process [2 mins]

When it comes to police coming in to start arresting people, this is the most likely scenario, based on our experience. As always, there are no guarantees! So it will most likely go something like this:

- The police will come in and start to scare people with verbal warnings, encouraging people to leave.
- Those who don't want to be arrested are encouraged to stay for as long as possible and not move after first contact with a police officer.
- **Remember they don't want to arrest all of you, all these arrests are a bureaucratic nightmare for them, and they don't want to deal with it.**
- So the first warnings are just that. They are warnings, and in these big group scenarios you will likely get an initial warning, before being returned to or given the five step approach which entails 5 questions along the lines of, 'are you aware you're breaking the law, is there anything I can do to get you to move, is there any medical reason why you can't move...' then two more and they arrest you. It's best to not answer any of those questions. So you can push it quite far before they actually arrest you.
- If you are able to risk arrest, then stay in the road.
- The last time they come back they will inform you that you are now being arrested.
- They will ask you to get up and go with them to be taken to a police station. At this point you can either choose to stand up and walk or "go floppy" by staying seated or lying down but fully relaxed so they have to use 3-4 officers to carry you to the van.
- **As always, remain nonviolent and don't resist arrest.**
- At this point, the police might de-arrest you. This happens quite often when they have to deal with a big number of people.

If you're taken to the police station:

- You will be checked in (personal details and belongings taken until you are released) and taken to a holding cell.
- You will be given food and water
- **You have the right to let someone know where you are.** They will either allow you a phone call or they will call the number you give them themselves.
- **Make sure you have a Bustcard**
- On your Bustcard you can find the **XR Back Office** number - **07749 335574**. It's recommended you call them and let them know where you are so they can make sure to send some police station support to you. Write the Back Office number on your arm / leg.
- Your friends or family who might be looking for you can call the same number to find out where you are etc.
- Police Station Support includes some amazing rebels who go to the different police stations where other rebels are being held and wait for them to be released, often with a hot cup of tea and snacks and even a hug if that's welcomed! They can also help you find your way home or somewhere safe, especially if you're not local and have been released in the middle of the night!
- Upon release:
 - You may be released with no further action
 - You may be released under investigation and then the police may not charge you.
 - You may be charged and then the charges dropped
 - You may go to court and be acquitted
- **Remember: You can change your mind about whether or not you are willing to be arrested.**

Quick Security Briefing [1 min]

Practical Measures to keep everyone safe:

- Don't put others at risk by **calling out names** of fellow rebels or **chat** with the police
- Use **code names** on actions
- Avoid identifying **organisers** or **action planners** openly
- Personal phones contain data. If you haven't today, you might choose to bring a burner phone next time
- If undertaking **arrestable actions**, pass your phone on to a buddy who is not
- It's a good idea to **change your passcode** on your phone to a long, random number so it's not easy for the police to get into
- If you are risking arrest, turn your phone off. You do not have to open your phone if a police officer asks you to
- It's a good idea to write key phone numbers on you arm or leg with a sharpie or pen

Know Your Rights: 5 Key Messages [3 mins]

This is not comprehensive. The law is currently evolving since the **Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act** and recent **Public Order regulatory changes**

Learn and remember 5 key protections.

1. No Comment

- Don't answer police questions on the street, at the station or in an interview.
- What you say can put **yourself** and also **other people** at greater risk, especially rebels seen to be organisers by the Police
- You have the right to stay silent, or say "**No Comment**", to police questions
- Especially in a formal interview, "**No Comment**" to **all** questions, **not just some**.

2. No Personal Details

- On the street, don't give the police any of your, and or anyone else's details, especially names, where you're from, what roles people have in an action, etc.
- Wait until at least the police station to give any of your details.
- Answer 'no comment' to **all** other questions to keep you and others safe

3. Under What Power?

- Ask the police "**Under what power?**", when given instructions by them
 - The police often use stop and search as an intimidation tool or illegally so make sure to:
 - ask why you are under suspicion and what they are looking for
 - Always get a receipt and report the search to Back Office.
- It reminds the police that you know that their power is not limitless
- It checks they actually **understand** the laws they are implementing

4. No Duty Solicitor

- Do **not** use the **duty solicitor** when you get to the station, even if the Police advise this

- They will not be specifically experts in **protest law**
- This may lead them to give **bad advice**, for example, to answer interview questions, or **accept a caution**
- Contact a recommended firm (these will be found on the Bustcards being handed out)

5. No Caution

- If it is a low-level or first offence, you may be offered a Caution, rather than being charged for the offence
- A Caution is an **official admission of guilt**. Once accepted you cannot take it back. This is the easiest '**win**' for the police that is too easy to fall for
- As a general rule, **do not accept a Caution if offered**, especially without advice from a **protest-experienced solicitor**

6. Stop and Search

- Stop and search is routinely used as a discriminatory tool, an intimidation tactic and for racial profiling (amongst other things).
- Being Stopped and Searched (S&S) can be hard to prepare for: it can happen unexpectedly, informally and often without good grounds.
- Under no stop and search power are you required to give your name, address or nationality.
- **The 4 Ws:**
 - **Who** are you? - Check ID number & badge or warrant card
 - **Why** are you stopping me? - Note down the legislation
 - **What** are you looking for? - Object they are searching for - in most cases, police should be looking for something specific they think you are carrying
 - **Where** are you from? - Note down the station they are based at
- **Receipt & record** - make sure you ask for a receipt which is proof of the search; see if you can get a bystander to film the search
- Hold to account - tell an Legal Observer, **ring the XR Back Office - 07749 335574**

Check Outs [2 mins]

We've reached the end of this training. Thank you so much for sticking around.

There will now be a more detailed briefing of the action and a collective reading of our Rebel Agreement. After that we will get into march formation and make our way to Downing Street.

Before we go, let's get back into our groups of 4-5 and check out. Perhaps share again how you're feeling in this moment, after this training. Thank you.

QR code for Know Your Rights training video:



QR code for NVDA training (Facebook event):

