

WHAT

The **black bloc** is a tactic in which a mass of direct action enthusiasts and their supporters gather to engage in some level of confrontational activity. It does not refer to an individual clothing choice but is instead a tactic for collective anonymity. A black bloc is built by participants wearing black and moving together, the bloc only made powerful by its numbers. It is used to create a moment of collective power, facilitate a demonstration of rage, reclaim agency over our (militant) acts of resistance – regardless of police intimidation. A bloc occupies a grey area between overt and covert, a niche that large street protests may provide opportunities for. When you strike in bloc, strike hard and impressively, then wait for the next realistic chance to do so again.

Some goals the black bloc tactic can achieve:

- line of defence
- threat to unwelcome shenanigans
- creating a spectacle
- distraction to draw away police
- promise of solidarity
- property destruction
- rioting
- good practice for future such actions

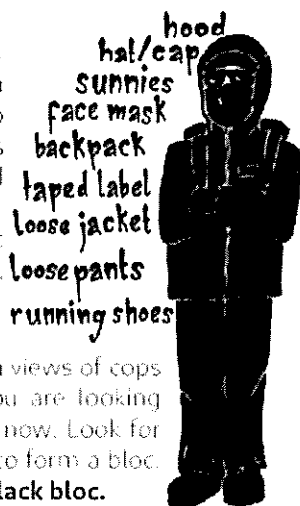


WHY

When everyone looks the same it is difficult to single out individuals and identify participants. There are countless reasons to conceal your identity at mass actions – intensified surveillance and state repression may be one of them. For some, it may be a way to engage in activities that otherwise seem impossible. However, even if you do not plan on committing any crimes and you don't mind PORT capturing your image for their files, please still consider wearing black, masking up, and joining the bloc. This will aid in increasing the number of people who are disguised and make it more difficult for the police to track individuals, doing a great service to others. Those others might not be the more militant elements of the radical left either; they might be refugees who don't want their participation in political activities to be used as grounds for deportation, or teachers not willing to risk losing their jobs. Your participation facilitates the actions of others. A black bloc breaks the culture of passive, predictable street protests where the best we can hope for is chanting weakly with the liberals.

HOW

Bring black clothes that you will only wear for this purpose and that can be hidden away easily. To avoid suspicion on the way, wear 'normie' clothes. These should be different to your usual choice of attire. A hat and sunnies work well with normie clothes, and a covid mask too. Cover tattoos with tape or band aids, take your piercings out and leave them at home. Carry your backpack in another bag. **Don't travel to the protest in all black.**



When the time is right, change in a discrete location, away from views of cops or cameras (crouched down inside a rally is good). Once you are looking fabulously fierce, find your feisty friends n stick together from now. Look for others that have made the same fresh fashion choices, join up to form a bloc. **Don't communicate in a familiar way with people not in the black bloc.**

Keep moving. Move with purpose, stay dynamic, and avoid dawdling or standing around. Keep eyes on each other at all times, make decisions together, move together, and have each other's backs. Distance between the bloc and police prevents a kettle

If someone is running in and ducking down – whether you are in the bloc or part of the broader protest – give them cover and help them change!

Keep an eye on the police. Knowing police movements is essential, don't hesitate to communicate loudly but calmly about police movements and call for action. A potential low risk role for an affinity group could be to monitor police movements and communicate them to the rest of the bloc.

Come prepared. Tools that aren't illegal to carry on you (bike chain and heavy padlock, sturdy scissors) will decrease the chances of repression should you be stopped and searched. However, a plethora of other defensive and offensive gear is well worth considering, despite some risk.

Defence

- banners
- umbrellas
- shields (disguised as puppets or placards)
- steel-toed shoes (comfy for running!)
- body armor or padding, helmet
- gas masks, goggles, rain coats
- water for pepper spray decontamination
- relevant medical supplies (medication!)



Offence

- spray paint
- projectiles, slingshots
- signs or flags on thick poles
- molotov cocktails
- bright lights (to obscure police or camera vision during night actions)
- ladders (scaling barriers)
- bolt cutters (breaching barriers)



Bail when you need to. Make sure you change out of your black clothes in a discrete location. Tracking goes both ways so leave as cautiously as you arrived. Make sure to dispose of your clothes and any lingering evidence safely as soon as possible.

BEFORE THE BLOC

A bloc made up of affinity groups can make decisions effectively and handle stressful situations without the added stress of herding a flock of confused followers. Meet up with your crew in advance, discuss what you're up for, and prepare to be a completely self-sustaining affinity group with your own set of goals. Decide on what security measures will be appropriate. Scout the location in advance as local knowledge will inform your movements and escape routes on the day. Knowing the area well will be very useful for quick decision making.

where are ...
...safe spots
... targets
... materials
... barriers
... transport options



Discuss how you will communicate. Avoid bringing phones that are connected to your persons at all costs! IMSI catchers aka fake phone towers (as used by cops) can identify you via your SIM card. Furthermore, federal law allows access to call details, location data, and more to be authorised by senior police officers rather than by judicial warrant.