

Final Note

Underground direct action is, by far, the most effective action anyone can take to help animals. Bar none. Period. If every social media addict would just go out and do one real action for the animals, the world would be such a better place. One act of sabotage or liberation is among the most impactful actions you can take and the risk is minimal to the activist!

Over the last 50 years, there have been thousands of acts of illegal direct action, and those who have ever gone to jail are very few and far between. Almost everyone who ever went to jail went there because they boasted about what they did, or their comrades turned them in. (Snitches get stitches!) NEVER talk about breaking the law. TO ANYONE. EVER. The animals need us all free so we can keep helping them get free. Now get going!

More information at:

- animalliberationpressoffice.org
- finalnail.com
- arlo.riseforanimals.org
- counterglow.org

The Guide:

What is Direct Action and How Do I Get Started?



BY ANONYMOUS
(WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE LIBERATION OF
FUR-BEARING ANIMALS)

Activists and sympathizers frequently ask how they can join the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), a clandestine group that utilizes illegal direct action to fight the oppression of non-human animals. This action can consist of the physical liberation of animals or economic sabotage against those who profit from animal abuse. Although the ALF has a policy of not harming anyone, human or non-human, other underground organizations do not. Notably, the *threat* of physical harm to those who exploit animals has been an effective tool in several efforts.

Included here are a few hints and directions on how to utilize direct action on behalf of oppressed animals, at which time any vegan can then consider themselves a member of the ALF. Remember, direct action is not merely a tactic— it is a moral imperative. It is the unwavering resolve of ordinary individuals, people just like you, who refuse to look away from animal suffering. You, too, can be part of this transformative movement! When you get off your computers and phones and take action, you don't just make a statement— you change lives.

Underground actions do not rely on large numbers of participants the way demonstrations do. One person can liberate thousands of animals and cause hundreds of thousands of dollars in economic damage in a single action. The fewer people who know who committed an act of sabotage or liberation, the safer that person is. Many activists have gone to prison on the testimony of their “friends” who sold them out to law enforcement. Moral of the story: Be careful whom you trust, or better yet, trust no one. The animals are the only ones who you can be sure will never tell anyone you broke the law.

The safest tactic is always to work alone and never say a word to anyone about it.

You may consider making an exception if you want to bring in a trusted friend who you have known for years, and who you know can stand up to interrogation by the police and threats of prison. But even if they never talk, involving another person can and has resulted in the feds charging activists with “conspiracy” if they get caught.

Having someone else with you can result in faster work and more animals liberated, and may even make you less likely to get caught in the act if one of you acts as a lookout. Be aware that working with others does carry unique risks.

Choosing a Target

Any direct action that inflicts economic damage on an industry that exploits animals can be considered an ALF action, but some actions are much more effective than others. Your action(s) should be designed for maximum impact and minimum risk. Causing a fur farm to shut down permanently will save countless animals' lives; smashing the windows of a McDonald's will not. Supporting effective above-ground campaigns with direct action can be the most impactful of all tactics. For example, a fur designer targeted by an above-ground campaign has a chimney that can be flooded, a lock that can be glued, or a window that can be broken. .

Everything from that point is outside your ability to influence. Any developments will come from the work of your attorney and the normal judicial process.

Should you be held without bail until trial, discuss with your attorney the pros and cons of soliciting support from the animal liberation movement (in the form of letters, commissary money, lawyer donations, and visitors). In nearly all instances, prisoners have opted to welcome support. However, there may be specifics of your case that make lying low more strategic.

Few are ever arrested for direct action and arrests are always very unlikely.

Note

If you are known as an above-ground activist, you may already be under some amount of surveillance, especially if you are an organizer or the cops/feds identify you as a leader of some sort. The more active you are, and the more militant the demos you attend, the more this applies. This does not mean you should avoid taking direct action, but it does mean that you are operating at a higher level of risk and should take even more precautions than you normally would. Known above-ground activists have been followed and caught in the act liberating animals.

Keyword: known. In order to be known, you have to be positively identified. If you are not, to your knowledge, already on the radar of the authorities, keep it that way. If you want to participate in demos, it's best to conceal your identity. Use a bandanna and a hat or sunglasses and a hat or even a full on mask. Keep tattoos or other unique features covered. If cops are present and they try to question you, remember that you do not have to give your name or show ID unless you are actually under arrest.

Ideally, if you participate in illegal direct action, you should refrain from doing above ground actions, including participating in protests.

It should be mentioned that this mostly applies to demonstrations. Vegan outreach carries very little risk of surveillance.

Inspect your car before an action. Tracking devices are slightly larger than a quarter these days, so be thorough. Check any place underneath where someone could have fit their hand into. Counter-surveillance with the help of a friend has occasionally been useful.

Any action you take should be far, far away from where you live.

Most communiques are sent by email, and this is probably the safest way. First create an anonymous email account, preferably at protonmail.com but any place will do. This ideally should be done from a computer that is not your own (see notes above about finding public computers) but a minimum of a VPN and non-personal wifi connection is mandatory. After creating the new email (don't use your real name or identifying information), write the communique and send it to animallibpressoffice@protonmail.com. You can just write what happened, or you can write about how great it felt to be helping animals in such an effective manner. Just think, all those thousands of people spending their lives on social media, who could be inspired by actions like this. Feel free to provide any background information you might have on the target and their vile business of abusing animals.

Add photos or video if possible to the email, as these make it easier to show people what has happened and why. You will need to have a dedicated camera for this, as you should NEVER bring your mobile phone to an action. There are plenty of free apps out there that will scrub meta data (such as time, date, and location) from images, but the Press Office will repeat that process before publishing the images.

Again, no one has ever been arrested for sending a communique, photos or video, but still be careful.

After sending the communique, NEVER access that email again.

If You Are Arrested

The #1 rule of getting arrested is to say nothing. Provide your name and birthdate, and request to speak to an attorney immediately. Even the smallest "small talk" can hurt you. Other than identifying yourself, never speak one syllable to police.

It is possible you believe you're under arrest when you are merely being detained. This happens when the police lack the evidence to arrest you. If you are uncertain if you are under arrest, ask. If you are not under arrest, ask if you are being detained. Police can legally detain you for a finite amount of time. If they are not detaining you, ask if you are free to leave. If they say no, then you are in fact being detained.

At every stage, from being detained to being arrested, it is common to assume the police know more than they do. Make no assumptions and operate under the assumption: If you don't talk, you will walk.

Once you are booked, you will be placed in a holding cell, which will likely have a phone. If not, ask for a phone call at every opportunity. You should have a phone number memorized or written on you. Call the person, tell them you are arrested, where you're being held, and ask them to bail you out. If that is not possible, ask them to send a lawyer to see you. Do not share any details on the phone about what you are accused of other than what police communicated to you directly. Speak in terms of "I am accused of" or "I am charged with" and nothing else.

It is very common for other prisoners to be used as informants, so do not speak to them about your case. Again, tell them what you're charged with and nothing more.

You can start with small actions as practice if you don't feel you are ready for big ones, but small actions accomplish little for animals. A couple of resources for finding potential good targets are finalnail.com, arlo.riseforanimals.org and counter glow.org.

The Plan

Your action, whether it is animal liberation or sabotage or both, should be designed to do maximum damage. Liberate as many animals as possible. Sabotage as much infrastructure as you can. Ideally, you want the target to be completely unable to harm animals ever again after your visit.

Take action at night, 10 pm-3 am or so. Get your work done early. Make sure you will have plenty of time before dawn, you do not want to put yourself in a position where you are racing against the rising sun. This will not only put you in danger, but could possibly not give the animals enough time to get away before the action is discovered.

A couple things you should NOT do:

- Do not use your phone to look up directions to the place of action, or anything about it. Use public computers for that, ideally ones that are out of view of security cameras. Good places to find these are libraries, hotel lobbies, and colleges/universities. Use Google terrain maps to recon the target in detail. Memorize the map, memorize the address. Do not keep either on you when you visit the target.
- One thing that can keep you relatively anonymous and safe is a burner phone. There are several brands, but paying cash for a TRAC smartphone at Walmart (\$50-80), along with the requisite activation card (\$45 for a month, unlimited data) is a good option. Wifi is required for activation (most coffee shops). This allows you to use the phone for directions and even some research, but it should not be activated or used near your home or from your car, especially if your regular phone is active at the same time. When the action is complete, the phone and SIM card can be discarded separately in distant locations.
- Do not bring your personal phone, laptop, Apple watch, or anything else that tracks your location. Better to use a car that does not have GPS. If your car does, and you don't have access to one that doesn't, locate and disable the GPS.

On The Way

Mandatory stuff to bring:

- mask, ideally a balaclava
- thick gloves, ideally cut-resistant gloves
- black clothing, ideally with pockets that zip or button up. Don't wear clothing with animal rights logos. (Duh!)
- plastic bags for disposal of clothes
- a change of clothes
- phone number of a trusted supporter, either written on your arm or memorized, in case of arrest. This person should not have any connection to the action and not have any ability to implicate you in any way.

Tools you'll probably need:

A black backpack, a trusty pair of bolt cutters, wire cutters, a small shovel, a headlamp, and (if you can get your hands on them) night vision goggles/binoculars should be enough to get the job done. Sometimes you won't even need that much, depending on what physical barriers are or are not present at the farm. If your goal is arson or another form of sabotage, you may need additional items, such as sledgehammers and accelerants.

Also, if lockpicking is in your repertoire you may want to bring a lockpick set, though this is rarely necessary on farms.

If you bring a headlamp make sure your headlamp has a red or blue setting you can keep it on so it is less visible. Wipe all of your tools down with a clean cloth and alcohol before-hand. You shouldn't be leaving anything behind, but if the unexpected happens and you drop something, you want it to at least be free of fingerprints.

You might also want to bring treats and/or pepper spray in case you encounter dogs or are attacked by other animals.

You may want to consider a late night visit to a junkyard or antique store before the action to steal a license plate. A front plate often goes unnoticed if removed from a car on the street with 2 plates. Using a fake plate can give you an extra layer of protection against having your car identified at or near the farm.

Things to keep in mind:

- You will need to be extremely careful not to leave your DNA at the scene. No hair, no blood, not even skin cells on any surface. You should take every precaution not to, but if you get cut somehow, wipe away any blood that may have fallen, apply pressure until the bleeding stops, and then get out of there. You can't risk leaving your DNA behind.
- Your clothing will contain your DNA, so get all the clothes you plan to use at a secondhand store, so that they have DNA from many other people on them. Use them only that night. Get new gloves and use them only that night.
- Make sure you have clothing that will cover any part of your body that has hair on it.



Some farms are very large and it would take hours to open every cage. Remember that time is not on your side. Save what lives you can, but don't push your luck.

Sabotage

The animals should be the first priority, but if you have the luxury of being able to open every cage while making sure they have multiple ways out, while remaining undetected and still having time before the sun comes up, you should consider disabling vehicles/equipment that you find. The more damage the place suffers, the less likely they will be able to remain in the business of killing animals. Keep in mind, this phase will be the noisiest and, especially in the case of arson, will guarantee your action will soon be noticed. Make sure the animals have had a little time to get away, and that YOU will be able to get away.

On The Way Out

Make sure you did not drop or forget anything. A trail of empty cages and destruction is the only thing you should be leaving behind.

Get back to your car. Strip off all your clothing, stuff it in the plastic bag, and seal it tightly. Put on fresh clothes, start your car and get out of there. Do not drive by the front of the property you just visited if you can help it. Do not stop until you are at least a couple of hours down the road, except briefly to replace or uncover your license plate.

After

- Throw away everything you used, but NOT at your house. Find a random dumpster somewhere that is not under surveillance. This means all the clothes you had on (including the shoes you wore) and whatever tools made contact with any surface at the action.
- Wash and vacuum out your car.

Even if you are taking all precautions, it isn't wise to go after the same industry in the same area again soon after. The cops and feds will be on alert. Either lay low for a bit or target a different industry or the same one in a different part of the country.

Sending Communiques, Photos, and Videos

Sending an anonymous communique about the act of liberation or sabotage is almost always a good idea. It can inspire others to action and help combat the propaganda put out by the animal profiteers. Communiques sent to the North American Animal Liberation Press Office are always widely circulated, and press releases are provided to local and national media sources. The profiteers suffer when the animals' side of the story is publicized, and they hate it.

There is little additional risk to activists involved in sending a communique, if it is done properly. In more than 20 years of operation, no one has ever been caught for sending a communique. That said, there are a few precautions to take.

Some examples of what motion detectors can look like:



When You Make It To The Animals

Sometimes cages will need to be opened with bolt or wire cutters, but usually they can simply be opened by hand. The animals may or may not jump out immediately or react as you thought they would. They are often going to be afraid of you. Don't worry about it; your job is just to open the cage, they will come out when they are ready. The animals also might try to bite you, which is why your gloves should be thick. Open each cage as fast as you can. Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Also, try to give the animals as many ways out of the farm as possible. Usually, this means cutting multiple holes in the fence or digging multiple holes under it, always done before opening the cages.



- Make sure you fill up your gas tank a good distance before you get there. You don't want to run out of gas and it's risky to gas up anywhere close to where you are going, as you will be seen by the attendant and/or cameras.
- Obviously, you want to be sure you aren't followed. If you are pretty sure someone is following you, abort the action and turn back.
- Obey all traffic laws on the way there and **ESPECIALLY** on the way back. Do not give any cops in the area a reason to pull you over.
- Stay sober. You have to have a clear head while you are on an action, and again, you can't give the cops a reason to pull you over/arrest you.
- Have a cover story ready just in case you are pulled over (which you shouldn't be).

Remember:

- Anxiety is normal, and it won't last. Once you get there, it goes away and all that is left is the task at hand.
- Assuming you are working alone, you haven't committed any crime until you are actually on the property.
- Be careful, but keep moving forward. Stay focused, stay alert and be smart and you will be alright.
- Countless other liberators have done all this before and almost none of them ever got caught in the act.
- You can always turn back if you have to.

The Approach

Just like in everyday life, parking is often a nightmare. Ideally, you will need to find a spot for your car that is out of sight of any house or business and not too close to where you are going. Better to have to walk some distance than to have your car identified. Make sure you find a good secluded spot.

At the very least you should cover your license plate with tape or remove it altogether when approaching the target. Also cover your VIN and anything else that can be used to identify your vehicle. If you have a fake plate, the time to put it on is when you make it to the town where the target is.

Once you get out of your car, make sure you have everything you need and nothing you don't. You should have already removed all jewelry and piercings and emptied your pockets and backpack of everything other than tools you will need. Double check they are empty. The one thing you might want to bring is your car keys, but **ONLY** if you have a pocket to put them in that zips or buttons up. If you do not, either leave them in the car and leave the car unlocked, put them in your backpack, or hide them in the wheel well or somewhere near the car. You cannot risk them falling out of your pocket. If you do bring them, make sure they don't make noise.

Keep your face covered and stick to the shadows on the final approach. If you are traveling along a road and hear a car coming, hide until it passes.

The Target

If your target is a fur farm, remember that the farmer usually, though not always, lives on the property. Assume you are tiptoeing around a sleeping enemy.

Do not approach from the front. If there is a fence along the perimeter, this is the time to either use your wire cutters or dig a hole under the fence. You don't need to try to scale it and you shouldn't if there is barbed or especially razor wire, and cutting or digging a hole will allow the animals a way out.

Sometimes the fence will be electrified or have sensors that can detect when it is touched, so you will have no choice but to dig under. Rarely, there will be an invisible perimeter of infrared beams that will trip an alarm if the beam is broken, either instead of or in addition to the fence. Night vision goggles can help you see these.

Example of fence sensor:



Examples of infrared sensors:



Sometimes the animals will be housed in an actual barn, sometimes it will just be an open air "shed" with no walls. If the former, there are usually multiple ways in. Sometimes they have no floor, which means you can dig underneath the wall. Sometimes they have "windows" that are like cage walls you can cut your way through. Sometimes the door is unlocked. If all else fails, you can force the door by kicking it in or smashing the doorknob with a hammer or picking the lock, but going through the door is a last resort since it could be alarmed.

There are a number of things you may encounter that might cause you to be paranoid but aren't necessarily enough reason to abandon the action entirely. Don't be reckless, but also don't overreact. The animals need you to stay out of prison, but they also need you to have the courage to take those last final steps to their cages. You can always use the tactic of retreat, hide, wait. If you see or hear something that concerns you, retreat back to the fence or beyond it, crouch down or find a tree to hide behind, and wait and see if anything further happens that might indicate you have been detected.

Things that might put you on alert are:

- Ambiguous noises. There are lots of little noises on a farm at night. Most of them are made by the animals themselves. You want to be cautious, but just because you hear something that sounds like footsteps or a voice, don't necessarily assume it's a human.
- Dogs. Be aware that sometimes the farmer will keep dogs on the property. This can definitely be a problem if they are free to roam the property, less so if they are chained up but they can still bark and sound the alarm. Be alert and avoid them if you notice them before they notice you. If they notice you and they are not chained up, you might have to bribe them with treats, or even abort the mission.
- A security camera. This is not common on farms, and not all security cameras you see will actually be functional, but assume that it is if you see one. You definitely want to retreat, hide and wait if you notice one and it is pointed in your direction. If you notice one and it is not pointed at you, find a way around it.
- The noise the animals might make when they see you, when you open their cages, or when they leave the cage. It will probably seem loud. But the noise itself will not necessarily give you away, even if it is heard, because they will often make noise at night even when there is no one around. Still, use your judgment and retreat if you think it is too much noise.
- The noise you yourself make. Even when you are trying to be as quiet as possible, there are always dead leaves, snapping twigs and the like that will probably seem like they are giving you away. You will also inevitably make some noise when you open the cages. Keep in mind that what sounds loud to you is probably inaudible inside the farmer's house.
- Motion detectors. These can trip lights or alarms. The alarms might be silent, so you will have to watch out for things that look like sensors. This is where having night vision goggles can help you survey the property and spot security measures like this.
- Unknown objects you fear may be alarms. Animal abuse environments can be full of unfamiliar objects. When operating in a high-stress situation, it's easy to default to assuming anything unknown is an alarm. Rather than take premature flight, take a few seconds to get closer and confirm before aborting the action.