

# Cut the Ties Campaign

Ongoing campaign targeting companies that underpin the fossil fuel industry, including lawyers, insurers, banks, engineers and more.

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# Introduction



## What is Cut the Ties?

Behind the fossil fuel industry lies a shady network of corporations and organisations that legitimise and enable the activities of an industry that is killing us. These can be in the form of finance, insurance, legal, engineering, construction, PR, press, pension funds, lobby groups and an almost endless number of others.

Their link to the fossil fuel industry is often hidden behind their glossy websites and claims of being Net Zero, but a closer look will reveal that they are carrying out activities that mean they continue to profit from fossil fuels.

**The size and power of some of these corporations mean if they were to Cut the Ties to Fossil Fuels others would follow.** Corporations and organisations have a moral obligation – they know what we face, they know what damage their actions cause, yet they chose to prioritise profit over everything else.

Extinction Rebellion's Cut the Ties campaign takes action against these fossil fuel enablers, shining a light on the activities they would rather keep hidden. The campaign does not disrupt the general

public but instead targets the companies responsible for propping up the fossil fuel industry.

**These corporations and organisations do not like a spotlight being shined on their activities, it damages their reputation and claims of having “Green” credentials which some promote heavily.** Previous Cut the Ties actions have had considerable coverage in the industry press, causing embarrassment to the companies targeted. Through sustained and regular actions we can change their ways – e.g. several insurance companies have withdrawn their services to the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) after a series of actions including Cut the Ties.

## Will it work?

As well as their customers & the public, **many of their own employees are unaware of all the practices their employers undertake.** These employees are an excellent action target prompting them to think twice about the role they play within these companies.

Cut the Ties aims to capitalise on increasing public awareness about the climate crisis, to embarrass these companies and use the reputational damage that this will cause to move them away from the fossil fuel industry.

## Get Involved!

Use this action pack to take the Cut the Ties actions to your local fossil fuel enablers! We want to see CUT THE TIES actions taking place frequently all over the country.

This action pack is **designed to make it as easy as possible for you to take action**, there are suggestions below to help you identify targets and help you plan actions.

Your action design could range from a non-spicy korma to a super spicy vindaloo, whatever the appetite is in your local group. We can provide the branded banners, placards, stickers and leaflets – you just tell us how many of each you’ll need. Get creative with your action designs and we will happily help produce the resources you need to make it a success!

# Who to target...

## Considerations when picking a target

Cut the Ties targets are many and varied! When choosing a target you should consider:

- What is their link to the fossil fuel industry?
- How will your messaging highlight this link?
- Is it easy to understand the link to fossil fuels? If it's hard to explain and for your local group to understand, it's going to be very hard to communicate it to the public during your action.

## Potential Cut The Ties Targets

The list below is to give you some ideas for the types of targets to look for in your area:

- **Financiers** – Banks are the obvious one here but also pension funds, venture capitals, investment platforms (such as Vanguard), institutional shareholders, pension funds, hedge funds.
- **Insurers** – The British economy is built on services such as finance and insurance and many of the fossil fuel projects around the world are insured by British companies. Check out the [Insurance Scorecard](#) to find out more about what each major insurer has and hasn't ruled out.
- **PR Agencies** – They are the fossil fuel industries spin doctors and create and maintain the veil of respectability. They are the greenwashing kings! [Find those local to you here.](#)
- **Solicitors** – Large fossil fuel projects will have an army of solicitors behind them ensuring they can “comply” with legislation.
- **Construction / engineering companies** – All fossil fuel projects need building and the major fossil fuel producers would not be able to keep going without the construction and engineering companies, many of which are complicit in enabling the fossil fuel industry.
- **Lobby groups** – These groups lobby government on the fossil fuel industries behalf. Many of our politicians came from some of the vilest of these lobby groups and their ties to the fossil fuel industry cannot be overstated. [Find those local to you here.](#)

- **Security Firms** - Big fossil fuel companies have an army of private security to protect their interests, often from protesters. Without them it would be much easier to hold the fossil fuel industry to account.
- **Regulatory authorities and bodies** – With poor regulations and even poorer enforcement, the regulatory bodies need to be held to account for their role in this worsening crisis.
- **Press** – Owned by oligarchs, they set the news agenda and ensure that the public are distracted from serious issues by celebrity gossip and trivia. Most publications give a platform to deniers and publish disinformation on the severity of the crisis.
- **Private jets, private airports** - These are an extreme example of profligate resource consumption and pollution by an elite minority. They fly - we die.
- **Petrochemicals** – Companies like Coca Cola, who are the world's biggest plastic polluter, ensure there is a huge demand for fossil fuel derived products. So much of what we consume contains single use plastic, let's show them the harm they're doing! Single use plastics, using recycling as greenwashing.

## If you have fossil fuel extraction sites locally

Use this site to check for your nearest [fossil fuel extraction sites](#). You will need to then research the companies supporting them – e.g. transport, crane hire, legal services.

Find out if there have already been campaigns against local extraction (and their outcomes) via the [Drill or Drop blog](#).

# Action Ideas



The campaign utilises **black and white branding**, which is visually striking and easily recognisable.

Eye-catching elements of previous actions include:

- **Fake oil** has played a prominent part in many Cut the Ties actions. It not only highlights and represents the damage fossil fuels cause but also adds an element of drama to the action, adds spice which means the police are likely to be called, a higher profile and reaching a wider audience. You can use this [fake crude oil recipe](#).

The oil is typically sprayed from Cut the Ties branded fire extinguishers but can also be poured. Check out



**How to Convert a Fire Extinguisher.** We'd love to hear your creative ideas of how else you could use this and will work with you to make it right for your action!

- **Black smoke grenades or flares** are also an eye-catching addition, representing smog and the damage fossil fuels cause. They look great in photos and increase the visibility of the action. [Buy smoke grenades.](#)
- **Theatrics** are a fantastic way to engage the public and several Cut the Ties actions have used these to great effect, most notably [Ocean Rebellion's action at the International Maritime Organisations](#) office, but also [this action at the Home Office](#)

Many of the previous actions have had an immediate and clear impact on the companies targeted. The speed at which some have attempted to downplay and clean up the actions shows their concern regarding reputational damage they will suffer should their customer base and wider public be aware of their activities.

## More Action Ideas

Actions can range from no spice to high spice, can be very small and personal and carried out by a very small group of rebels, or a huge action with dozens of rebels, theatre & laughter – the world is your oyster!

Here's some ideas to get the grey matter working:

- [Rebellion of One](#)
- [Dirty Scrubbers](#)
- [Banners, Placards, Leaflets](#)
- [Dirty Greenwashing lines](#)
- [Rhythms](#)
- [Fake Coal](#)
- [Black Smoke](#)
- [Die In](#)
- [Paint the Targets - Chalk Spray](#)
- [Chalk for the Planet](#)
- [Climate Crime Scenes](#)
- [Occupations](#)
- [Laughtivism - Clowning](#)
- [Delaying tactics](#)

For even more ideas, check out [Action Design Elements](#).

## Time to Plan your Action!

The [Action Planning Section](#) on the Toolkit guides you through what you need to think about when planning an action, step by step.



# Messaging & Assets

## Social media

Consider how you want to use social media to promote your action. Make this part of your action planning so on the day there is a clear plan for your M&M coordinator to follow, ensuring your action reaches the widest audience.

Don't forget to give XR UK M&M team notice of your action via the [Comms Request Form](#) to ensure they can promote it.

Here are some examples of effective social media posts from previous Cut the Ties actions:




xrwimborne

Follow



Liked by xrsoutheastuk and 36 others

xrwimborne  LIVE: CUT THE TIES WITH FOSSIL FUELS!

XR & aligned groups take action at offices of fossil fuel enablers across London

Families face a cost of living crisis BUT government prioritises the profits of companies destroying the planet

# Press Release

If you need guidance on writing a Press Release, you can find [step by step instructions \(with handy videos\)](#) here.

See an [example press release](#) from a Previous Cut The Ties action.

If you would like help specifically with including content relevant to your Cut the Ties Action, please email us at [cut-the-ties@proton.me](mailto:cut-the-ties@proton.me).

If you are happy to write and send out your own, brilliant, please cc. us at [cut-the-ties@proton.me](mailto:cut-the-ties@proton.me) when you release it.

## Embargoed Press Releases

As a rule do not send a PR for a spicy action in advance, wait until the action has started, this is good security and allows you to get word of any changes to the way the action went off and allow a last minute edit.

Email your PR out then call to follow up to ask if the story is being used, offering interviews with a spokesperson.

See [M&M Get Started](#) for further help

# Resources

Cut the Ties branded fire extinguishers & fake oil barrels have been used extensively across previous actions and are available for rebels to use again, please email us at [cut-the-ties@proton.me](mailto:cut-the-ties@proton.me) if you need any.

Download these [instructions for creating banners, stickers and flyers](#) to give you everything you need to get your assets created. Should you require any help please reach out and ask.

## Photography and videos

To have a greater impact for the press and social media, having professional photography and videos is a great tool. There is a network of XR photographers, live streamers and spokes persons across the nations and regions. If you would like one then make sure you put in a request with

plenty of notice (at least two weeks).

You can find [advice on how to make your photos and videos most effective](#) in the Media and Messages pages of the Toolkit.

# Legalities

The Cut the Ties campaign has been prominent in London and as a result the police recognise and react to our actions swiftly. Although it is not definitely the case you should be aware that rebels have been arrested on Cut the Ties actions for the crime of “coming equipped to cause criminal damage” and picked up for carrying stickers whilst walking with rebels carrying fire extinguishers. All charges were subsequently dropped but it is worth being aware of this possibility when planning your action.

- Anyone doing actions should have completed [Non Violent Direct Action \(NVDA\)](#) training and [Know Your Rights \(KYR\)](#) training. Both are regularly hosted online, and you can find out how to register via the links above.
- All groups taking action that could potentially result in police involvement should read [the guidance from XR Arrestee & Legal Support](#), and request a legal briefing from [xr-legal@riseup.net](mailto:xr-legal@riseup.net).



Should rebels be arrested during your action the table below outlines the types of charge you could be facing and the possible sentence.

| Behaviour  | Location   | Potentially relevant legal issues  |
|--|--|--|
| Assembling, occupying, being present   | Public spaces where protest conditions are in place              | Sections 12 and 14 (Protest conditions)  |
| Obstructing / occupying / squatting ('die-ins', swarming etc).   | Public roads, pavements, verges                                  | Obstruction of the Highway; Public Nuisance  |
| Obstructing / occupying / squatting ('die-ins', swarming etc)  | Private roads / private property (e.g. shops, banks, etc)        | (Civil) Trespass; Aggravated Trespass; (Civil) Private nuisance  |
| Setting up stalls and distributing leaflets (but no commercial activities or littering)  | Public spaces  | Obstruction of the Highway   |
| Banner drops   | Buildings/street railings etc                                    | Criminal Damage; Aggravated Criminal Damage  |
| Spray painting / chalk spraying  | Public or private property                                       | Criminal Damage  |
| Damaging windows (including by sticking things on them)  | Public or private property                                       | Criminal Damage  |
| Being present (in any role, including banner holding, leafleting or livestreaming) when an action is carried out, especially criminal damage actions | Public or private spaces   | Same offence as the “arrestable” activists under Joint Enterprise  |
| Flyposting (even using water-soluble paste)  | Private or public spaces (e.g. windows, bus shelters, etc).      | Flyposting offences; Criminal Damage   |
| Flyposting (even using water-soluble paste)  | Near/on roads  | See Banners and Roads - Legal Support Briefing   |
| Leaving behind objects   | Public land, or private land which is accessible to the public   | Littering; Fly-tipping   |
| Blocking entry to doors  | Private land (e.g. inside a shop or bank / outside shop or bank) | Aggravated Trespass  |
| Subvertising   | Existing advertising spaces                                      | Criminal Damage; Flyposting offences   |
| Playing loud music / samba bands etc.  | Public spaces  | Public Nuisance; Breach of copyright; (Civil) Private Nuisance Bye-laws/location-specific restrictions   |
| Use of fire / flammable objects (e.g. flares)  | Public or private property                                       | ● Criminal Damage; Aggravated Criminal Damage; ● Arson; Section 80 of the Explosives Act - see Uncommon Forms of Protest - Legal Support Briefing ● Section 22a of the Road Traffic Act - see Banners and Roads - Legal Support Briefing |
| Locking on / gluing on   | Public land (including roads, pavements etc)                     | ● Locking on ● Criminal Damage ● Obstruction of the Highway  |

| Behaviour   | Location  | Potentially relevant legal issues  |
|---|---|--|
| Locking on / gluing on  | Private land                                    | ● Locking on ● Criminal Damage ● (Civil) Trespass ● Aggravated Trespass            |
| Having lock on equipment or any item intended to be used for locking on   | Public land; private land other than a dwelling | Being equipped to lock on  |
| Any behaviour (scaling, painting, banner drops) which has the potential to injure someone else (e.g. falling objects etc) | Private or public land                          | ● Aggravated Criminal Damage   |
| Any behaviour that the police deem is obstructing them in their lawful duty   | Private or public spaces                        | ● Obstruction of a Police Officer  |
| Chanting/shouting/communicating (e.g. via banner/signs) messages which others could find threatening                      | Private / public spaces                         | ● Breach of the peace; Affray; Violent Disorder                                    |
| Obstructing a work place, such as a construction or drill site, and preventing people from working                        | Public Land                                     | ● Obstruction of the highway ● Section 241 of Trade Union and Labour Relations Act |



# Previous Cut the Ties Action Examples

## Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) – XR South West / South East

Fake oil from Cut the Ties branded fire extinguishers was sprayed over the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy whilst Rebels held placards, chanted and set off smoke grenades.



## Tufton Street – Writers Rebellion

Fake oil was poured down the steps of 55 Tufton Street, home to Institute for Economic Affairs whilst rebels from Writers Rebel read a William Blake poem.



## Eversheds Solicitors – HS2 Rebellion

Fake oil from Cut the Ties branded fire extinguishers was sprayed over the office of Eversheds solicitors, who act for Exxon Mobil and HS2. Rebels locked on in the entrance door blocking access for staff and visitors. Other rebels set off smoke grenades, held banners and gave out leaflets. Eversheds were clearly embarrassed, had the oil cleaned off within an hour and implored the police not to make arrests for fear of reputational damage.





## Ineos – Plastics Rebellion

Plastics Rebellion targeted Europe's biggest plastics manufacturer at their head office in West London. Banners were unravelled whilst rebels climbed onto the porch roof, sprayed the building with fake oil and set off smoke grenades. The latter having an unintended but very effective side effect of setting off Ineos' smoke alarms, causing all the staff to be evacuated to a muster point in front of the protest.



## BAE Systems offices - Christian Climate Action

Christian Climate Action left hand prints in fake blood and oil at the offices of Britain's leading arms manufacturer BAE Systems who supply weapons to conflicts which increase the vulnerability of people living on the front lines of climate change. The arms giant also provides military and technical support to Saudi Arabia, enabling the regime's oil production. A spokesperson said: "Through oil you have blood on your hands."





## Church House - Christian Climate Action

Christian Climate Action also protested at Church House in Westminster to highlight the Church of England's failing strategy to stay invested in fossil fuels and influence the industry as shareholders.





## JP Morgan – XR Health (Doctors)

Three doctors glued themselves to the windows of JP Morgan alongside artistic posters portraying the incongruity between the damage the climate crisis is causing and tomato soup on Van Gogh's painting of the sunflowers, asking which of these is vandalism?





## Schlumberger – XR Wales / XR Youth

Rebels sprayed fake oil over the building and poured oil over a model of the earth whilst other Rebels held banners.





Ontario Teachers Pension Fund - Sky Rebellion

Sky Rebellion protested at the London offices of the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan. The Canadian based pension fund invests in infrastructure projects including the controversial expansion of Bristol Airport which it owns. Sky Rebellion poured fake oil in front of the office, holding a banner demanding airport expansion is stopped.



## Hill & Knowlton – XR Cymru

XR Cymru splattered fake oil over the offices of public relations consultancy Hill & Knowlton Strategies. Hill & Knowlton has worked for fossil fuel companies ExxonMobil, Shell, Chevron and Saudi Aramco and recently managed communications for Egypt's presidency of the UN climate conference at Sharm El Sheikh.





## BP – XR South East

Rebels sprayed fake oil at BP's HQ in St James Square to protest against its obscene £7.1 billion profits, which it has amassed as families struggle to cope with rocketing energy costs. BP makes no secret of its strategy to continue to invest in extracting fossil fuels in the face of rapidly increasing climate breakdown and despite UN General Secretary Antonio Guterres warning that the policy is "delusional".



## Arch Insurance – Money Rebellion

Money Rebellion poured fake oil at the offices of Arch Insurance. Arch Insurance had refused to rule out insuring fossil fuel giant Total's East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), a project that will jeopardise important ecosystems, fuel climate change and pose significant risks to millions of people.





## International Maritime Organisation (IMO) - Ocean Rebellion

Ocean Rebellion carried out an extremely effective non-spicy and highly theatrical action at the office of the IMO. It included pyrotechnics, rebels dressed in black with fake oil drums for heads, pouring oil into a clean ocean. No arrests were made – showing how effective having a theatrical protest can be. The Dirty Scrubbers cleaned up the oil as part of the action.



## Edelman – XR London

Rebels put up a greenwashing line outside the public relations company Edleman's London offices, calling them out on the PR work they do for big oil companies such as Shell and Exxon.





## Worley – XR South East

Four rebels climbed onto the roof of Worley's Head Office in West London. Worley are the main engineering company for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). Chalk paint was used to graffiti "DROP EACOP" and fake oil was sprayed on their building. The rebels then played samba on the roof disrupting those working inside. A large support crew held banners and engaged with staff entering and leaving.





## The Home Office – XR South East

The Home Office was chosen to protest the decision to open the new Cumbrian coal mine. This was a theatrical action where rebels dressed as canaries were chased around by a rebel dressed as Michael Gove, while fake oil was poured at the entrance and two rebels locked on in front of the main doors. Interestingly, although the two oil pourers were arrested the police deemed the rest of the action to be proportional and left the action to continue!



## London Fashion Show – Plastics Rebellion

Rebels from Plastics Rebellion chose to target the London Fashion Show which, despite claiming green credentials, chose Coca Cola as their sponsor – the world's biggest plastic polluter! Rebels dressed in white hazmat suits rolled out a red carpet in front of the venue and poured fake oil down it from huge Coca Cola bottles. Other rebels held banners, placards and engaged with the public and people entering the venue.



