



# **REBEL STARTER PACK CHICAGO**

**BASED ON NYC**

# WHAT IS EXTINCTION REBELLION?

Extinction Rebellion (XR) is an international movement that uses **nonviolent civil disobedience** to achieve radical change in order to minimize the risk of **human extinction and ecological collapse**.



## WHY WE REBEL

We are living in the midst of a sixth mass extinction. Unregulated industry and commerce has exceeded the bounds of what the world can sustain. The resulting crisis is so immense that scientists have begun comparing it to those prehistoric events that wiped out much of life on Earth. About 200 species are going extinct each day, a hundred times above the normal rate. Sea ice is melting, oceans are rising and of the last 20 years, 19 are the hottest on record. According to the latest UN report, “We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.”

This isn’t news. In 1988, NASA senior scientist James Hansen delivered his landmark testimony to the United States Congress, confirming the rise of greenhouse gas emissions and accurately predicting the dire effects of climate change. Carbon emissions have gone up 60% since then. They continue to rise.

The science is clear and the facts are incontrovertible. If governments will not act to stop the climate crisis, we will.

We work together with love, compassion, resilience and peace. We honor the spirit of all those who fought for freedom and justice before us. On behalf of ourselves, our children and all humanity, on behalf of animals, plants and our living planet: we commit ourselves to nonviolent direct action.

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# WHO WE ARE

In November 2018, XR UK stunned Britain when a thousand people occupied 5 bridges in London. In January XR NYC carried out a dramatic and widely-publicized action and banner drop at Rockefeller Center. XR has since grown to almost one hundred chapters in the US, and over 400 worldwide. Our first international uprising began on April 15<sup>th</sup> and lasted two weeks. Over 1,500 protestors were arrested around the globe: 1,000 in London, and 62 in New York. Every major media outlet covered the remarkable scenes. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, the British government, sensing the tide had shifted on climate, declared a national climate emergency. Here in New York, Councilman Costa Constantinides and others agreed to sponsor a Climate Emergency Bill. XR had won again – and we’re only just beginning.

At the core of XR’s philosophy is nonviolent direct action. We favor the radical methods that the scientific community is now calling for. When polite protests fail, we disobey our country’s laws. We are asking people to find their courage. We don’t want or need everyone in XR to get arrested - we want as many people as possible supporting nonviolent direct action however they can. By disrupting ‘business as usual,’ we push the climate crisis to the center of public discourse. When ten, or a hundred, or a thousand brave rebels offer up their bodies, the media pays attention, and the government acts.

Extinction Rebellion is the brainchild of Roger Hallam and Dr. Gail Bradbrook, activists in the UK’s Rising Up! Movement. They and others conceived the name and messaging, created the branding and initiated the first wave of protests in the UK in 2018. Neither they nor anyone else is in charge of Extinction Rebellion. XR is a decentralized self-organizing system, not “leaderless,” but “leaderful.” Anybody in the world, from any background, can act in the name of XR, as long as they follow the basic principle of nonviolence and our stated values and goals.



# EXTINCTION REBELLION

## U.S. DEMANDS

### **#1 Tell The Truth:**

We demand that the Government tell the truth about the climate and wider ecological emergency; that it reverse all policies not aligned with that position and work alongside the media to communicate the urgency of change, including what individuals, communities and businesses need to do.

### **#2 Act Now:**

We demand that the Government act now to halt biodiversity loss, enact legally binding policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025, and take further action to remove the excess of atmospheric greenhouse gases. Furthermore, it must cooperate internationally so that the global economy runs on no more than half a planet's worth of resources per year.

### **#3 Citizens' Assemblies:**

We demand a Citizens' Assembly to lead the government on decisions regarding climate and ecological justice, as the government clearly cannot be trusted to make just decisions without such leadership.

### **#4 Climate Justice:**

We demand a just transition that prioritizes indigenous sovereignty and the most vulnerable people; establishes reparations and remediation led by people of color and poor communities in compensation for years of environmental injustice; establishes legal rights for ecosystems to thrive and regenerate in perpetuity and repairs the effects of ongoing ecocide to prevent the extinction of humankind and all species of animal and vegetable life, in order to maintain a livable, just planet for all.

# XR CORE PRINCIPLES

## **WE HAVE A SHARED VISION OF CHANGE**

Creating a world that is fit for generations to come.

## **WE SET OUR MISSION ON WHAT IS NECESSARY**

Mobilizing 3.5% of the population to achieve systemic change.

## **WE NEED A REGENERATIVE CULTURE**

Creating a culture that is healthy, resilient and adaptable.

## **WE OPENLY CHALLENGE OURSELVES AND THIS TOXIC SYSTEM**

Leaving our comfort zones to take action for change.

## **WE VALUE REFLECTING AND LEARNING**

Following a cycle of action, reflection, learning, and planning for more action. Learning from other movements and contexts as well as our own experiences.

## **WE WELCOME EVERYONE AND EVERY PART OF EVERYONE**

Working actively to create safer and more accessible spaces.

## **WE ACTIVELY MITIGATE FOR POWER**

Breaking down hierarchies of power for more equitable participation.

## **WE AVOID BLAMING AND SHAMING**

Recognizing that we live in a toxic system, but no one individual is to blame.

## **WE ARE A NONVIOLENT NETWORK**

Using nonviolent strategy and tactics as the most effective way to bring about change.

## **WE ARE BASED ON AUTONOMY AND DECENTRALIZATION**

Collectively creating the structures we need to challenge power.

*Anyone who follows these core principles and values can take action in the name of Extinction Rebellion US!*

# XR ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

## **SLOW DOWN YOUR YES**

Don't say you're going to do something if you can't do it.

## **“THREE PIRATE RULE”**

Three people who have been through the 101-level XR training can create XR messaging. The demands and philosophy of XR began in London, but its soul is everywhere.

## **PRODUCTIVE & REGENERATIVE MEETINGS**

Movements fail or succeed based on the quality of their meetings. Activists who are too eager to talk and too impatient to listen have slowed down many movements. We strive for productive and regenerative gatherings:

- Actively listen to others. When someone makes a point, repeat what you heard, and summarize.
- Small meetings are best: ideally between 6 - 15 people and not longer than two hours.
- Regenerative practices, including check-ins and check-outs, are the manna of this movement.

## **NO PUBLIC CALLING OUT**

Issues with individuals must be reconciled in person, or via an audio or video call, not over text or email. Praise in public, correct in private. Facilitators and coordinators may set limits or ask a person to leave if they are actively disrupting a meeting or event.



# XR FAQ

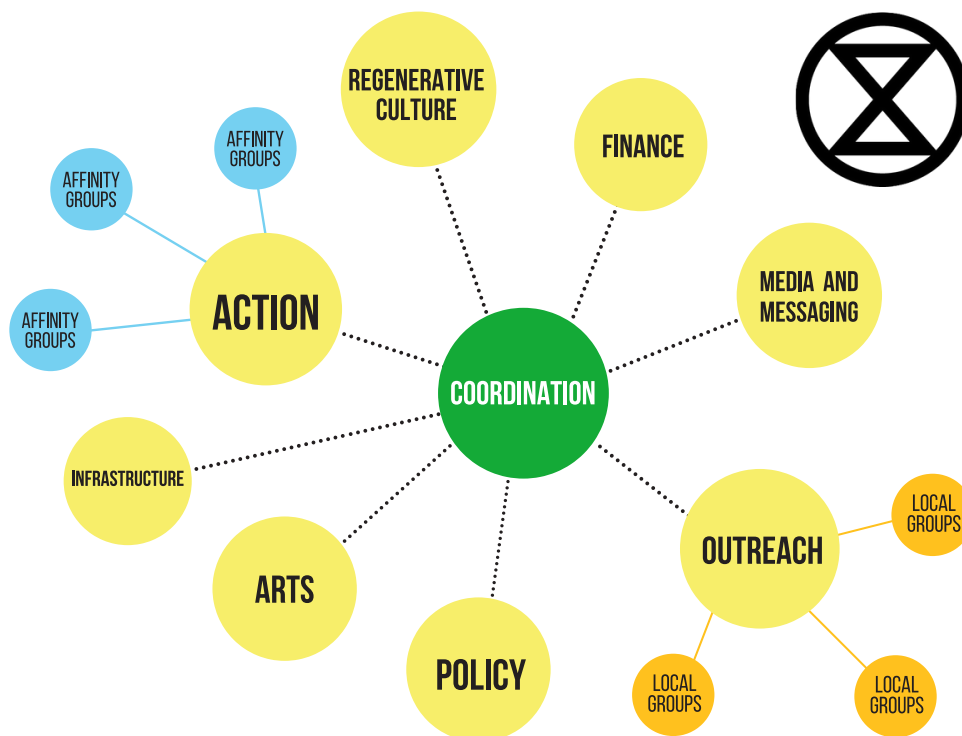
## 1. XR STRUCTURE & HOW TO GET INVOLVED

### Are you really grassroots?

Yes. We are ordinary people who care deeply about the world and want to do whatever we can to stop the destruction of life on Earth. There are no big companies or major donors hiding in the shadows. In the U.S., we are funded exclusively by small donors. To date (6/6/19), we've raised about \$7,000. Our expenses include the costs of orchestrating ambitious, transformative actions. Every action we stage requires things that cost money - posters, flyers, banners, as well as a lot of unpaid volunteer work!

### How are you organized?

Our autonomous working groups include Media and Messaging, Outreach, Finance and Fundraising, Art, Actions, Infrastructure, Regenerative Culture and Policy.



### **How do you make decisions?**

In the Self-Organizing System, individuals are assigned ‘mandates,’ or ambits of responsibility. Within their ambit, individuals are autonomous. They report back to the Working Group within which their mandate falls. Each Working Group has a mandate as well, one that encompasses the mandates of the individuals who comprise it. No central executive or executive committee tells Working Groups what to do. Rather, each Working Group has one or two ‘coordinators,’ who meet with the coordinators of the other Working Groups so that the movement as a whole can, surprise surprise, coordinate its actions.

## **2. NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION**

### **What is NVDA?**

Nonviolent direct action (NVDA), also known as civil disobedience or civil resistance, is the use of targeted and symbolic law-breaking to draw attention to injustice, and exert moral pressure on authorities. The logic of NVDA is fairly simple: disrupt the ordinary working of things, so that decision-makers have to take notice.

A good historical example is the lunch-counter sit-ins of the Civil Rights era. In direct violation of racist Jim Crow laws, brave black men and women sat at lunch counters marked, “Whites Only.” This put the authorities in what is known as a “dilemma situation”: either they could let the protestors eat their lunch in peace, which would have been tantamount to admitting that segregation was unjust, or they could forcibly remove the protestors – which they did, giving the media unforgettable images of oppression in the process.

### **Why is your direct action nonviolent?**

Ignoring the obvious moral considerations, XR uses nonviolent direct action because it is more successful than violent action. According to research on conflicts between state and non-state actors around the world between 1900 and 2006, it was found that 53 percent of nonviolent campaigns were successful, as opposed to 26 percent of campaigns that used violence. Moreover, in the aftermath of the violent campaigns that led to regime change, 95 percent of the countries involved had descended into dictatorship or totalitarian rule within five years.

When the time is right, and the public is primed – and the most recent polls suggest that a large majority of Americans are *very* concerned about Climate Change – a large body of research suggests that NVDA campaigns can be very successful. Some of the biggest reforms in recent history owe their existence to NVDA: the victories of the Civil Rights Era; the termination of America’s military involvement in Vietnam

the change in policy relating to the AIDS crisis and the destigmatization of LGBTQ people; and the overthrow of dictators and imperial overlords, from Gandhi's India to the former Soviet Republics. Brave protestors willing to risk arrest formed the backbone of all these successful movements.

### **How are you different from Greenpeace?**

Greenpeace is a large NGO whose policy limit their willingness to engage in the mass mobilization of people involved in civil disobedience. While their tactics are limited to small teams of people, XR believes that *mass* civil disobedience is the only way to obtain vital and inspiring change on the scale necessary.

## **3. CRITICISMS**

### ***1. Tactics & Strategy***

#### **How can you justify the inconvenience caused as a result of your actions?**

We wish inconveniencing people wasn't necessary, and it's not something we do lightly. Extinction Rebellion is made up of people who themselves have jobs and responsibilities, and we would prefer that no one be inconvenienced as a result of our actions.

But the reality is we will all suffer because of government inaction on climate collapse and biodiversity loss. The government is failing us and as a result, all our lives, jobs and homes are at risk. Credible commentators (such as environmentalist and filmmaker David Attenborough) say that the economy will collapse on a heating planet, and society along with it. We encourage anyone who is angered or inconvenienced by our actions to find out more about the severity of the Climate Crisis.

It should be noted that our actions also "inconvenience" the engaged volunteers who take part in XR demonstrations and put their own wellbeing at risk. We view inconvenience less as a burden on others and more as a tool for awakening.

#### **Won't your members burn out from getting arrested, going to court, etc.?**

XR is very serious about promoting a regenerative internal culture. We have an entire Working Group dedicated exclusively to the task of preventing activist burnout. Their responsibilities include conflict resolution, meeting facilitation, and action and jail support. We take care of all our activists, collecting emergency contact information and valuables before each action, tracking them once they have been arrested, advocating for them if the police are being rough or discriminatory, securing their early release if there is a family emergency, and greeting them with food, drink and love upon their release.

XR does not wish to minimize the potentially traumatic experience of going to jail. If you do go to jail as a result of your participation in NVDA, the Regenerative Culture group will do everything in its power to make the experience as tolerable and morally fulfilling as possible.

**Aren't you alienating a lot of the people that you should be working with?**

Social movements historically have often been unpopular – one of their jobs is to create uncomfortable conversations about pressing issues. People who do not understand, or who deny or reject the gravity of the situation presented by leading scientists, may find it easy to disagree with our actions and find us alienating. We do not, of course, aim to alienate people. But when it comes to the climate crisis, we would rather people pick sides than ignore it altogether.

**Is there always clear demarcation between arrestables and non-arrestables ?**

Yes, to the degree possible. If things get out of hand, there is a small chance that the police will start rounding up people who have not previously committed to arrest. But so far, our actions have proceeded in a more or less orderly fashion and there has been a very clear separation between those who want to be arrested and those who do not.

## ***2. Class & Privilege***

**Aren't you just a group of middle-class left-wing activists?**

Extinction Rebellion is made up of people of all ages and backgrounds from all over the world. From teenagers to octogenarians, there are tens of thousands of people of every class, ethnicity and gender identity willing to put their liberty on the line to fight the climate and ecological emergency. Many of us have made significant personal sacrifices to follow our convictions and help others. No one is paid as “staff.” We care deeply about the situation in which we find ourselves and many of us have oriented our lives in the service of improving that situation.

**The fact that you are using mass arrests as your basic tactic reveals your white privilege. Don't you realize that if people of color were arrested for your cause, they may receive far worse treatment than you would?**

We are aware of the structural racism inherent in the American policing and legal system. We give people information about the arrest procedure prior to demonstrations, and those of us who are white acknowledge our privilege and the likelihood that we will be treated differently than our colleagues of color.

We think it's important for white people to use their privilege for tactical purposes. The ecological crisis currently afflicts people of color more than it does white people; environmental activists of color in other countries have been killed for defending their land and their values. Historically, people of color have faced drastically higher risks, including genocide, in defending their land and the environment, both here in the US and around the world. It is time for white people to take risks, too, so that people of color, threatened by structural racism, do not have to be subjected to disproportionate oppression as they fight for justice.

That said, it is not fair to claim that we are excluding activists of color by using arrest as a tactic. A person of color who doesn't want to risk arrest can still play an important role in XR. Furthermore, there is a long history of liberatory movements in which people of color have risked arrest on behalf of causes they believe in. Black Lives Matter, and, before that, the civil rights movement, are powerful examples of people of color willing to put their lives and bodies at risk in order to combat injustice.

### **Why do you talk to the police when they aren't to be trusted?**

We take a "no blaming and no shaming" approach to all individuals, including police. In line with our disciplined commitment to nonviolence, we agree to treat the police with respect, as human beings. However, we recognize the crimes the police have committed against activists and communities in the U.S. and elsewhere, and we recognize the systems of surveillance, mass incarceration, and racial discrimination that have resulted in those crimes.

We are making the strategic decision in some countries (including the UK) to liaise with the police. We have a dedicated police liaison team that is in charge of this. We encourage the rest of our activists not to engage with the Police.