

SHIT! WE'RE GONNA GET ARRESTED!

DO THIS NOW

- **If you have legal support, have the phone # written in indelible ink on your skin.** Have any other #s you might possibly need written on you, as long as you don't mind the police seeing them.
- Your bag may get taken long before you are searched, so **put anything you want to have with you, maybe ID, medications and money, somewhere on your person.** Other things to keep: cell phone (beware of any sensitive #s in memory), food, extra clothes (protects against cold floors, good pillow), pen, paper. You'll probably get your stuff back, but no guarantees. If you can, consider giving your bag and keys to someone who won't get arrested.
- If you want to get anything past a search, this is the time to hide it. Pens, phones, and meds can fit nicely in your underwear or bra.

IF YOU ARE PUT IN PLASTIC HANDCUFFS

- Plastic cuffs have caused long-term nerve damage. **If you have pain, numbness, or tingling in your hands at any time immediately request that looser cuffs be put on.** If one officer refuses, ask another. Don't stop asking until they change the cuffs.
- **Try not to move around too much, as this can tighten the cuffs.**
- Consider requesting to be cuffed in front. Ask if anyone in your group can demonstrate how to contort yourself to get the cuffs in front.
- If after the cuffs are removed you experience pain, numbness or other unpleasant feelings have this documented ASAP by a medical professional. Get in touch with your local street medic organization and check out action-medical.net/library/aftercare/handcuffs.htm

IF YOU HAVE ANY HEALTH CONCERNS

- **If you have a medical condition that could cause problems consider telling the police now.** This may encourage them to respond faster if you start to have problems.
- **If you or anyone in your group starts having a medical problem tell the police ASAP** (with the person's consent), and request immediate professional medical attention. Do this early, as it may take a long, long, long time for the police to do anything. If you don't get a response initially keep asking until help arrives. Consider using chanting or other group tactics to get the police to respond.

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WHILE YOU ARE DETAINED

- **Stay as calm as you can.** The police may try to dehumanize and stress you out. Try yoga, singing, meditation, sharing stories, etc.
- **Remember, police lie.** Your fear is their weapon against you. They will tell you things that aren't true (that your friends have blamed you and are getting out, that you'll get out in an hour, etc.).
- **Think about what good can come of your arrest.** Can you do a skill-share with you cell mates? Learn new songs? Tell jokes?
- If police are abusive in any way (emotional, physical, violating your rights) note the officer's name and badge number. Try to remember as many details as you can. If you have a pen, write it all down!

WHEN YOU GET OUT

- **Release can be paradoxically stressful** -- suddenly you have to deal with the outside world again.
- **Try and talk about your experiences before you go to sleep,** ideally with the people you were with. If possible, recount what happened and how you felt about it. If you don't feel comfortable talking, listening to others talk about what happened can help. Research shows that if people sleep before talking about traumatic experiences they have a higher incidence of long-term emotional problems related to the trauma.
- **Try and be gentle with yourself.** Sleep (after talking), eat healthy food, relax, get friends to give you massages, indulge, BUT avoid alcohol, tobacco and other drugs as much as possible.
- **Don't go through this alone!** If your regular friends aren't sympathetic, find fellow activists or groups that can help. Some medics are trained in counseling, or you can call the International Critical Incident Stress Hotline at 410 750-9600
- Be creative – try herbal therapy, counseling, massage, Reiki, etc.
- Even if you don't feel stressed you may have nightmares, a short temper or other reactions. This is normal, and may be a sign that you could use more formal processing of the experience.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.action-medical.net general street medic site with good info and links on plastic handcuffs, emotional trauma and other health issues

BALM Squad

www.bostocoop.net/balm

bostonmedics@riseup.net

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