

Faslane 365

Trackers Briefing

Once people are taken into custody, Legal Support keeps track of where they are until they are released.

There are a number of ways to do this but basically you need to

- record the names of people arrested,
- work out where they are being held and
- know when they are released.

You can do this on a computer using a spreadsheet or database or on big sheets of paper.

You will need to have the Registration Forms filled in by all the people at the action and you can move them around in piles to help you see what is going on.

Your media team will also want to know every so often how many arrests and if local dignitaries, etc. have been arrested. You should not have to talk directly to the media though, that's what your media team is for!

One Way Of Doing It:

(This is how we have done legal support for Big Blockades)

Prepare in Advance

- Have sheets of paper ready to record information as it is phoned in. You can scrawl it down quickly because Legal Observers at the action may have to be fast to save mobile batteries.
- Have a big table ready (on a computer or paper) with the following column headings:
Name, time arrested, charge, police station, time released, court, solicitor, notes.
- Have the registration forms ready in two piles, separated into men and women and in alphabetical order.

When You Get Calls From Your Legal Observers

- Write down:
 - Who they have listed as being arrested, and any other info (e.g. injuries).
 - Note which groups of people left in the same police vans.
 - Note who phoned, what time and which gate they were at.
- Once you have the information transfer it from the rough notes into the table and mark the rough notes to indicate this.
- Pull out those people's forms and put them in a separate pile.

You might have some idea of where people are being taken from the Legal Observers but wait until you get confirmation from police stations before filling it in on the table as sometimes they get diverted somewhere else on the way. It can be quite a long while

(possibly some hours) before the police phone because they might hold people in vans for some time and then processing at the station can be very slow.

Check forms to see if anyone has asked that their friends or family are told of their arrest and whether anyone is on medication.

When The Police Office Calls

When police stations start to phone to inform you that they have someone in custody write down everything they tell you.

- Ask for the name of the officer and, if it's your first call from that station, check the phone number you would ring to contact them (if possible get a direct line or extension number although Strathclyde Police are operating a joint switchboard now and you may need to go through this every time, asking for the police station you need).
- Explain that you will be able to arrange lifts for people when they are released so you need a bit of warning.
- If they phone you about someone whom you know from their form is on medication — particularly for something like epilepsy — check that the police are aware of it.
- Tell the police officer that you can help by confirming people addresses. This will mean that you need to read out the addresses from the forms. They may not accept this and instead check with peoples local police which can take a long time.

At this stage you can sort the forms into separate piles for each police station. Although the police are only supposed to tell you about people who have asked for you to be informed you can develop a rapport with the officer you are dealing with and often find out a bit more. If you haven't heard about someone try asking the police station where the others in the same police van were taken. Offer to help if they are having trouble confirming addresses etc. You will be talking to the 'Custody Officer' or sometimes they are called the 'Bar Officer'. (The Custody area in a Scottish Police station is called the Charge Bar or Bar Office). There will be a shift change every 8 hours so an unhelpful officer could be replaced with someone much more co-operative. The reverse is also true!

If people have asked for solicitors then make contact with the solicitor and confirm this. If it is a Duty Solicitor then you may need to briefly explain your role.

When People Are Released

When the police tell you they are starting to release people contact the drivers from your group so that they can go and pick people up. Police estimates of release times can be inaccurate.

When you or someone from your group (e.g. driver) has confirmed **with the person themselves** that they have been released fill in the rest of the table. It is a good idea to check with the police stations which have been used that they have no one else left in custody except people being kept for court.

If People Are Held For Court

Find out which court they will be in. If people are held on warrants for courts further afield then try to contact people who can get there to support them. Try phoning the Faslane 365 Legal Support Working Group if you need help.