



On Black Bloc Attire

a few tips from a grumpy old anarchist

itsgoingdown.org



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First off: The black bloc is not a fashion statement or political “virtue signaling.” It is a *tactic*, used to help crowds of protesters maintain their anonymity and safety. This can be done to prevent being doxxed or surveilled, or to help members of the crowd engage in illegal actions while blending in. It takes planning, organization, and attention to detail. With that in mind, here are some helpful tips:

There is no point to wearing all black with just a covid mask on.

There is no point to wearing all black with your face uncovered.

A bandanna covering the bottom half of your face like you’re about to rob a train in 1875 Oklahoma **does not hide your identity**. It makes you look like a Labrador puppy on a bougie family Christmas card. So just, like, don’t.

Masks should probably be either a t-shirt or a ski-mask; t shirts are great cus’ they’re not weird to have on you afterwards and its nbd to ditch them.

Cover your ears.

Cover or blacken out your shoes, which should also be black, and should be a pair you don’t mind throwing in the trash if you realize you did some wild shit on camera.

Wear an indistinctive black bag **with no visible labels** (or cover them with black tape).

Don’t wear distinctive jewelry.

Wear gloves. Black latex is tempting but keep in mind they hold prints on the outside as you handle them, that can sometimes then transfer to objects you carry or touch. Cloth or thick cut-proof canvas work gloves in black are inexpensive and ideal.

Communicate ahead of time with your crew about how you plan to look, what you’re wearing, and what tools you’ll have on you. Talk about how you plan to look after you change out of bloc, so it “makes sense” that

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y’all would be walking together, etc.

Wear cheap thrift store clothes you don’t mind ditching, not your everyday street clothes that someone would immediately recognize as yours.

Typically you should aim for, whenever possible, **three distinct outfits:** 1) what you wear walking from you or your comrade’s registered vehicle to the demo, until you’re in the crowd and can change safely (aka **DON’T WALK TWO BLOCKS FROM YOUR CAR TO THE DEMO IN FULL BLOC BY YOURSELF**); 2) Your cool-guy full black ninja suit etc.; and 3) Whatever you’re changing into afterwards (or wearing underneath your black layer to make your exit. Ideally this last outfit has some intention behind it—what are other random passersby likely to be wearing at the time of day and location you’ll likely be escaping into?

We should all step up our cheap disposable wig game.

Even if you yourself are not planning on engaging in anything illegal, your appearance being uniform helps others who may be. It can also keep you from getting doxxed and losing your job or getting harassed by Nazis for fucking years. Even if you think ahead of time that “it won’t be that kind of demo,” come with a backup change of bloc clothing in case you’re wrong. Optimism is contagious!

It doesn’t make sense to be the only person or crew in bloc. If you came expecting one thing and turned out it was another, don’t put on your bloc. It just weirds people out, actually makes you *less* anonymous, and perpetuates the idea that this attire is mere political posturing. Come prepared, but just leave that shit in your bag if it turns out not to be the vibe that day. If you need to be unrecognizable in photos, but no one else is in bloc, you can wear casual street clothes with a t shirt mask.

Not all situations call for this tactic. **It is one tool in a vast toolbox.** Read the room!

Even when we think a demonstration isn’t that serious, we are always practicing for the ones that are. **Let’s take this shit seriously y’all.** You fight how you train!

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