

Action Kits – Creating your own “Clean-up Crew”!

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Check out [CYCC's Operation Oil Change](#) (Logo, Fall 2011)

*Oil has seeped into our government's decision-making machinery
and we must clean-up the mess to prevent further contamination...*

Concept:

The Canadian Government has increasingly been acting as a lobbyist and mouth-piece for the oil industry inside Canada as well as in other countries. Canada's position at the UN climate negotiations in Durban is slated to be no exception to that rule.

This document is meant as a callout to people across Canada, including those who participated in the September 26th Ottawa Action, to organize “Oil Clean-Up Crews” during Durban. Ideally, people would mobilize in most major Canadian cities. The “Oil Clean-up Crews” would consist of 5 or more individuals with “cleaning gear and supplies” such as overalls, work boots, brooms, mops, pails, sponges, emergency cones/signs, hard hats, etc., who would target their local Conservative constituency offices or symbolic government buildings (such as a foreign affairs office and Environment Canada office) and seek to clean up the oil infiltration which is happening in that given place, at the expense of our government's accountability to its people.

As many civil society organizations are mobilizing themselves for the UN climate talks in Durban, this action is meant to be complimentary to efforts by groups such as the Council of Canadians, which is working to bring groups together to pressure our government on these issues, as well as the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition's Operation Oil Change and the efforts of the Canadian Youth Delegation in Durban.

Objectives:

- Target conservative government officials as being too cozy with the oil industry, and ignoring and shutting out civil society and the people of Canada
- Redefine accountability, the role of government and the relationship our government maintains with multinational corporations
- Clearly put to light Canada's position going into the Durban climate change negotiations.
- Mobilize concerned individuals to take action in many Canadian urban centres
- Have fun!

Creating your own Clean-up Crew:

If you are interested in doing something to support this, organize it! Find a few people that are interested (friends, fellow activists, etc.) and set up an initial meeting. All you need to do is decide the LOCATION of the action, the TIMING of the action, what PROPS you need on the day of the action and decide what kind of PROMOTION you want to do. A few additional meetings might be needed to finalize things. Below you will find guidelines and tips to help you make this action a success!

Preparing for the action

Choosing the location

As mentioned before, depending on the city you are in, these are the suggested locations:

- Conservative constituency office
- Foreign affairs (DFAIT - international climate change and tar sands lobbying goes through here)
 - Target Canada's position on climate change, its negative influence over the UN climate negotiations
 - Target the Harper government lobbying efforts in Europe and the US, promoting tar sands to the detriment positive action on climate change
- Environment Canada (climate related jobs are being cut, overall budget is being cut, while subsidies still endure)
 - Target the Harper Government's agenda with regards to Environment Canada, how policies that are friendly to oil companies are prioritized, while budget and environmental programs are being cut, and jobs are being cut.
 - Target Canada's position and inaction on climate change.

In most major cities you should be able to find either an environment Canada office or a conservative constituency office. You should choose the location based on the relevance of to the action but also to the ease of access (geographically & distance – Walking? By bus? Driving?)

Choosing a time and date

The ideal time for this action would be during opening hours, which usually means on a week day. You might want to check with them or visit ahead of time to double check if they are open on a

specific day, or what their schedule is. However, it might not be ideal timing for everyone in the group. This action can also be done on the weekend with relative success. Discuss the most appropriate timing with your group. Lunch time during the week can be an option. Don't forget to take into account how much time it will take most people to get to the location of the action.

The UN conference on climate change will be held between November 28th and December 9th. During this time period, there is only one weekend: December 3rd and 4th, but you could also choose to do it on the 26-27th weekend. It would ideal to hold the action within the first 7 days of the climate conference, to get people talking about it.

Assembling and creating visuals

Below are suggested visuals. Don't hesitate to be creative and find other props or signs to accompany the action.

- 1) Signs: We suggest that you bring at least two signs, one that says: "Closed due to contamination" and the other is a document titled: "Oil Contamination Prevention Guidelines". Another suggestion is using signs that say: "Warning: Oil Contamination".
- 2) Outfits and props: The basic concept is that of the Clean-up Crew. So find elements of a costume that represent "cleaning up". Examples: Overalls, work boots, hard hats, fluorescent orange vests, orange warning cones, warning signs (Like the one at the top of this document!), mops, brooms, etc.

Outreach and Communications

Use traditional outreach to garner support for your action: Facebook, postering, emailing people. Get people motivated and involved! Propose that this action will be fun!

Media – You might want to try and tip off your local media about the action. This can mean calling a few of them up the morning of (early) and/or sending out a short press advisory about where, when, what is going on the day before or the morning of.

Documenting – We suggest that someone be in charge of taking pictures and/or video tapping the action. You should then share this widely online, and blog about it. Be sure to send info to our [facebook](#) page.

The issues:

- We do not want the Canadian Government to weaken or neutralize international efforts to take meaningful action on climate change as it has at the last UN climate negotiations.
- The government needs to be taking meaningful action on climate change and towards a green energy future.
- We must restore some accountability into the Canadian Government structure: the multi-billion dollar oil industry must not have a direct influence on our foreign policy and on Canadian national policy and regulatory framework.

- The government is there to act responsibly, for the people of this country, not to ensure corporations make their millions.
- The government must stop lobbying on behalf of oil companies and must stop encouraging foreign countries to weaken their climate change policies.
- The Canadian government is the only one in the world to sign and ratify the Kyoto Protocol and then openly announce that they have no intention of honoring their commitments.
- It is the only government in the world to return from the Copenhagen climate negotiations (COP15) and announce that they were weakening their GHG reduction targets.
- It is also the only country that has allowed the only major federal program supporting renewable energy to run out of money while maintaining over a billion dollars a year in subsidies to oil companies.

The Action

REMEMBER that the target is the oil industry's influence on the Harper Government as a whole, not on the workers at these departments.

There are two suggested avenues for this action:

- 1) *Theatrical action* – Globally, the action would be theatrical meaning that you would pretend to be a clean-up worker and pretend that there is an important oil contamination problem at the determined location (oil companies having more influence on government than people and civil society groups), and use the visuals to talk about the issues in that sense. A more theatrical action might be better if the office is open (weekday) and you have to deal with staff and can potentially go inside. You also want to pretend to be cleaning up by setting up warning signs, using your cleaning gear, and showing the “Oil Contamination Prevention Guidelines”..

Also, not everyone needs to participate in a theatrical action, others can support the action, staying outside, finishing off the rally with chants, talking about the issues to passersby.

These kinds of actions should be filmed as much as possible.

- 2) *Non-theatrical action* – If you aren't sure how to do the more theatrical action or aren't comfortable doing it, we still recommend that you use as many visuals as possible. You don't need to dress up, but props such as cones, mops, and especially signs would work nicely. The main idea here is to declare this area contaminated with oil, proceed in explaining how the location is affected by the issues (see Issues section above), and you can come up with some chants as well. It also involves posting on the door, or delivering the “Oil Contamination Prevention Guidelines” to staff inside.

Use the ISSUES section to help define what you will talk about and how you will frame the action.

Share information!

Keep us in the loop about what how your action went, share any images and videos you have. Let us know that you organizing this action. You can get in touch with us by emailing and we'll try and help as much as possible: ottawaaction@gmail.com. Never forget to have fun! Share and ask questions on [facebook](#) as well!

Oil Contamination Prevention Guidelines

- A government must always put the public interest before the interests of oil corporations
- It is imperative to keep an appropriate distance between oil industry interests and government's decision-making structures
- A government must be accountable to its population
- No single oil corporation should have unfettered access to decision-makers, no matter the power and money they have
- A government must not subsidize an industry with billions of dollars when it is destroying ecosystems and livelihoods while still reaping millions in profits yearly
- A government must not act as a lobbyist for the oil industry
- A government must not put the interests of oil corporations before those of future generations

WARNING - Failing to follow these guidelines will almost certainly result in massive oil contamination of our decision-makers and policies.