



Take Care – Your Safety

Information about personal responsibilities and health risks for the “Ende Gelände” action 2020

It's great that we are all here! Coal mining is a massive danger to the life and the health of humans – globally as well as here in the Rhenish lignite area. We at Ende Gelände care very much for the security and physical integrity of all participants. Therefore we ask you to please look deeply into all the dangers and risks in and around the coal mines, on the excavators, in the coal shelters, on the transport rails, conveyor belts and the power stations ... There will be recommendations based on our knowledge and experience, but you will be responsible for your own decisions.

Here is a summary of a few important points:

Preliminary points – Taking care of Covid-19 risks

We are fully aware of the additional burden of responsibility that Covid-19 represents for our protest action. Therefore, adherence to our Covid-19 hygiene concept is part of the 2020 action consensus [<https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/action-consensus-2020-en/>] – from the days of preparation for the action through to the period after we return home.

Please read the Ende Gelände hygiene concept [<https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/hygiene-concept-2020-en/>] thoroughly and discuss the following in your affinity group: How can we contribute to keeping the risk of spreading the virus as low as possible? How can we protect ourselves and vulnerable persons around us from infections?

The following excerpts from the hygiene concept relate specifically to the “Take Care” recommendations:

Who cannot participate this year? And whom do we advise against participating?

If you have symptoms or have had high-risk contact before the action: We strongly urge everyone who feels ill not to participate in order to minimize the risk of infection for all! Exclusion from participation also applies to everyone who has had **contact with potentially ill people** or has been in a **high-risk area** in the 14 days prior to arrival; see the [list of the Robert-Koch-Institute](#) (updates each Wednesday night).

People with pre-existing conditions and risks: We strongly advise against people who have a higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 (for example, due to age or pre-existing conditions such as respiratory or cardiovascular diseases or cancer) from participating in the 2020 action. The particulate pollution in the vicinity of the mines can lead to a higher risk of COVID-19 infection.

For everything else related to Covid-19 prevention please refer to the hygiene concept [<https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/hygiene-concept-2020-en/>].

1. Fire

The coal reserves in the mine and in the coal shelters are highly inflammable: small sparks can cause a smouldering fire and trigger an inferno profoundly threatening the life and health of many people! The same is true of fossil gas. Each fag end can lead to a catastrophe! Please keep that in mind and spread the information to everyone!

2. Any machine in operation (digger, conveyor belt, truck, coal train) poses a danger

Together with hundreds of people, we want to block the trains, diggers and fossil gas infrastructures, but in making our way to them, we might encounter trains, lorries, long conveyor belts and other machines.

Refrain from any actions on machines in operation; instead, get organized in your affinity groups within the “fingers” and decide collectively how to block the machines effectively. Pieces of rock and coal can fall off the machines and the conveyor belts.

3. Coal trains and points

The coal trains are mostly slow, but very heavy and therefore have a very long braking distances! Some of the coal trains are pushed not pulled. The drivers have little chance to see you and possible rail blockades if you try stopping the train in close proximity to it. Think carefully about your visibility and braking distance of the trains and avoid ill-considered actions that endanger you. The points of the rail system consist of movable parts. Please avoid those movable parts because surprising point settings can lead to heavy squashing of parts of your body.

4. Overhead lines on rails and power lines in the pit and near gas infrastructures

The over head lines above the rails carry high voltage. Without knowing the technical details climbing up can be life threatening. If carrying flags and big placards please keep a generous distance (over 1,5m) to the lines. Even without direct contact power can be transmitted over many centimetres. Rain and wet conditions increase the danger. Even after a short circuit the power lines can quickly carry high voltage again.

In the mines as well as in the vicinity of fossil gas infrastructures you'll find cables on the floor or near the conveyor belts. Avoid any contact. They also carry high voltage and the insulators could be defective and therefore make each contact extremely dangerous!

5. All pit edges and the terraces of the mine can be dangerous!

Please avoid standing in groups directly at the edge of the pit! Your weight may cause the pit to break, resulting in serious falls or spills.

The edges in the mines are very different from one another: some can be traversed easily, but others are very steep; sometimes you can't get across them at all and there's serious risk of injury. Landslides and sandslides are a very serious risk. In particular overhangs and steep edges are predestined to slip with severe falls as result.

The people leading the fingers (different groups penetrating the mine) will know about the area and know which edges we can cross. If you are moving around in small affinity groups, be very careful. Wear sturdy shoes to avoid slipping. Only follow paths you're sure about.

At night, the risk of slipping is even greater since safe pathways or access routes cannot be clearly identified! Depending on the weather there might be extremely muddy passages which can mean getting suddenly stuck up to the knee in mud.

6. In open-cast pit mining and in the coal shelters, fine dust is probably the highest risk.

Dust inhaled will irritate the respiratory system, containing traces of toxic substances and radioactivity. There are people working in open-cast pits for years, being exposed to this dust day-in and day-out.

However, this one-off direct action, should not cause any bigger problems for otherwise healthy people. Either way, dust masks are a sensible thing to wear and will be available at the camp. (See specific information on Corona-related facial masks above.)

7. Higher-risk groups and pre-existing conditions

People suffering from asthma, chronic lung disease or cardiovascular disease are strongly advised against entering the pit. The same goes for people who are have gastrointestinal disease; immune deficiency; (past) cancer; or strong medication. There will also be protests actions outside the coal mines which you could take part in. In addition, there are a lot of background infrastructural support structures that need your support!

Anyone who needs regular medication needs to bring it along in sufficient quantities!

8. Sun and heat, sufficient water supply

Make sure to use sun protection such as scarves, caps and high-factor sunscreen. We suggest you only apply fatty sunscreen (and similar substances) once the blockade is in place. Otherwise pepper spray or tear gas sticks to such creams, if the police uses them.

Dust protection overalls can protect you from getting too dirty, in hot weather, though, they can also add to the risk of overheating – in that case, better take them off. Please take sufficient supplies of water for drinking and if required for treating pepper spray.

9. Securities, plant protection

The task of the security personnel is to protect the site. Not all of them keep within their legal powers. You have to reckon with beating, pepper spray and other forms of physical violence. Don't move around the mining area on your own. Don't act to provoke security staff unnecessarily, stay calm and remind them of their responsibilities. If there are attacks, document them so that charges can be brought on later.

10. Place and duration of the blockade, overnight stays, lock-ons

This action can cause major stress for many participants, even if they are healthy. It is your responsibility, to define and agree for yourselves and your [affinity groups](#) how far you would like to go. The longer the action, the higher the risk to your personal health. The place where the blockade happens is also important. Your [affinity group](#) should go only where it is safe and okay to go for everyone in the group, and should stay only for as long as all of you feel comfortable. Base your decisions on a consensus and watch that nobody asks too much of him-/herself!

In Ende Gelände actions, there may also be a long blockade of the coal infrastructure. If you are preparing to stay in your finger and affinity group overnight, pay attention to warmth (warm clothes, sleeping bags, “golden” isolating blankets) and seat pads (parts of isolating mats), see [packing list](#). If you use lock-ons to make it more difficult to clear a blockade, be sure to attend a training session prior to the action. Ensure that persons in lock-on are reliably accompanied by persons in their affinity groups who are not in lock-on.

11. Emergencies, paramedics, “Out of Action”

Take a first aid kit with you in your affinity group (see [packing list](#)). Take part in the first aid training at the camp (see camp program). All off-road fingers are accompanied by paramedics walking in solidarity with them. Call them immediately in case of emergency. For the self-conception of the paramedic groups you can find information on the Ende Gelände website (see [Paramedics](#)).

Unfortunately paramedics can't always be everywhere! Therefore: In acute emergencies (e.g. shortness of breath or unconsciousness) call emergency number “112” yourself and directly.

If people have to leave the action because they are aware of their limits or have had stressful experiences, provide support in your affinity groups. There will be an “Out of Action” starting point where you will find peace and quiet and conversations with experienced people. For more on our “Out of Action” support structure, see [<https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/out-of-action-2020-en/>]

12. people under 18 years old:

It is always important that every person (no matter how old) is sufficiently informed about the action and decides for themselves whether they feel well prepared to go into the action. Nobody should go beyond their personal limits! For more information, see [https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/legal_minors/]

For activists under the age of 18, a different legal basis must be considered. Please consult the legal aid brochure (</de/rechtshilfebroschuere/>) and take part in action trainings.

In General

When making decisions within your affinity groups and meetings of representatives, make sure to consider carefully and responsibly the recommendations of the “finger tips” and the action planning.

This applies in particular for the way to the blockades and for decisions as to where and for how long we will run the action. You are responsible for your own decisions.