

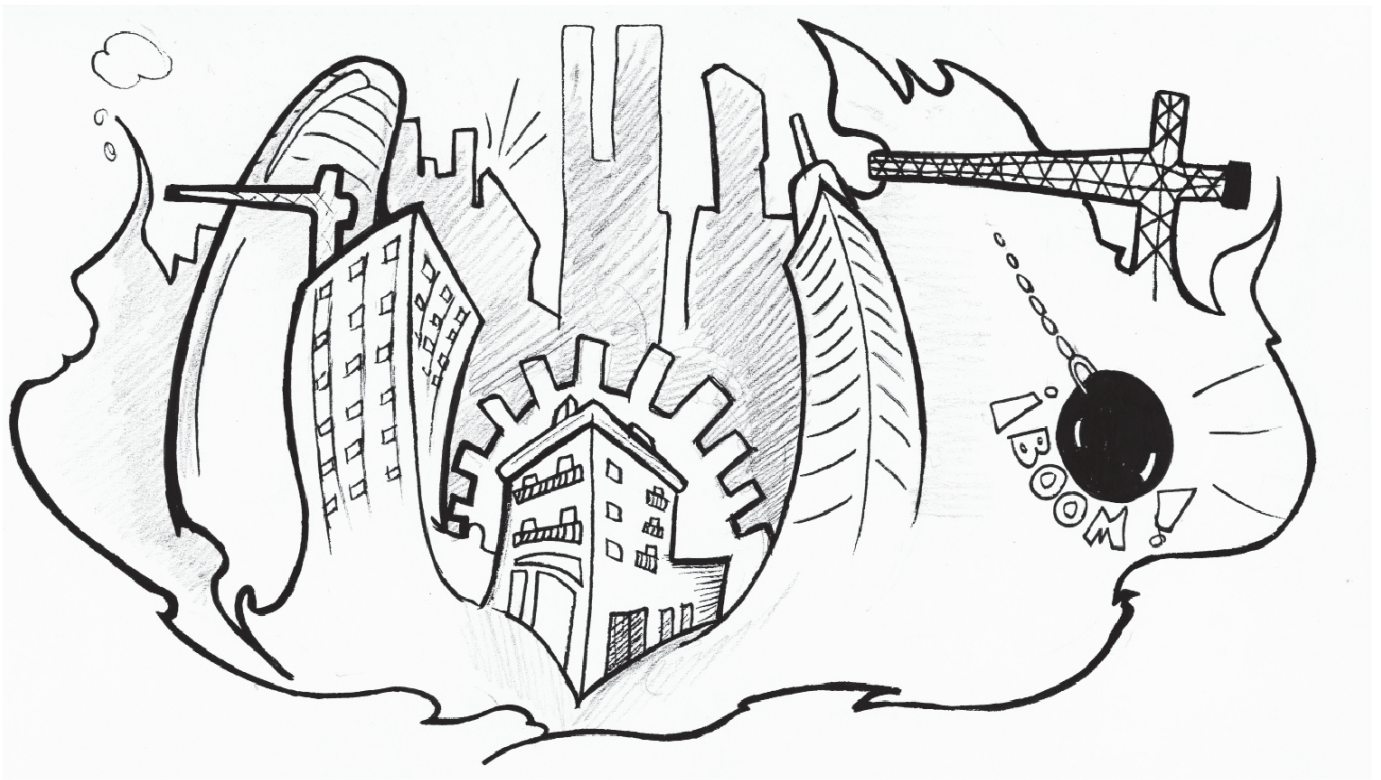
Despegando

Squatting Manual Vol. 1



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INTRODUCTION

The squatting office of Barcelona

Here you have a brief manual about squatting in Barcelona, constructed from personal experiences, legal resources and texts from the Squatting Office. The purpose of the OfiOk is tackling legal and technical problems regarding squatting abandoned places, keeping in mind the political significance of the action, as well as the social aspects. We have chosen to make a practical manual as a quick reference and for mass distribution.

If you have any question, visit the OfiOk or send an email to oficinaokupacio@sindominio.net, look for other manuals or consult other squatters.

Good luck and happy squatting!

What is squatting?

It is the process of entering an abandoned space with the intent of living there, or using it without the permission of the owner. People squat for many reasons, from personal necessity, the desire to live communally, or out of political convictions. Within the Spanish state, squatting began as a movement at the end of the '70s out of the necessity for social spaces and the lack of affordable housing inside cities. Barcelona is home to more squats than any other city of Europe. In the past, squatters have had to defend their rights through protesting, physical confrontations and legal battles. Today, the fight continues against the police, landowners, the state and the justice system in order to make squatting possible.

It is important to squat responsibly, be well informed, organize and pay attention to the local environment and the legal aspects, to have a good defense strategy, seeing as this can have effects on other squats, it can give a positive legal or social precedent and can encourage other

people to continue squatting. Be prepared when squatting and if you do not know how; find someone who could help you. Communicate with other squatters in the city!

The laws regarding squatting are complicated. Some of them are used against squatters, while others can be used to their benefit. In Spain, different proceedings can be applied, depending on who is the owner of the building or land, and on who interprets the law and how they interpret or apply it (judges, real estate companies, local governments, private owners). Before squatting, it is advisable to investigate the law, the building and the property, and the manner of performing a squatting action.

A few of the aspects to keep in mind are:

Legal aspects: What they can accuse you of, identifying to the police or not, the difference between legal and illegal evictions, the more common legal practices.

Practical aspects: Locating a house, investigating the property, the local urban plan.

Physical aspects: how to organize the action, how to enter the house, how to barricade, how to remain in your new home and make it livable.

With this manual we hope to give basic answers to these questions.



POLITICAL IDEAS IN SQUATTING

For many people squatting is a political act, a form of resistance against capitalism and authority, and an important part of their lives. In Barcelona housing, real estate speculation and gentrification are extremely crucial themes. The international investment of billions of euros has transformed the city into a tourist paradise, destroying whole neighborhoods, expelling the locals, the poor, and the migrants.

It is important to be aware of other struggles which are going on around you, as well as squatting.

Autonomy and the right to a home.

There are many philosophical points of view regarding political occupation. The main school of thought regards squatting as a form of direct action, reclaiming the assets of the proprietor class in order to gain control of basic necessities and open free and autonomous spaces aimed at creating free culture. In this way, squatting is a part of the revolutionary struggle against capital and the state.

Other points of view have to do with campaigns for the right to a home. They point out the injustice of the fact that many buildings remain abandoned while many people cannot obtain a home. They see squatting as a protest against this situation, a provisional response to the basic need of a roof over your head and as a way to demand accessible and dignified housing from the government.

There is some kind of tension between these two schools of thought. In Barcelona, this generates the discussion about the possibility of 'legalizing' a squat (which means that it will be recognized by the government and that a sales or rent contract will be signed for the building).

Even though the process of legalization is common practice in the squatting movement in other countries, inside the Spanish state it is a rare occurrence and is considered to be an act of weakening the movement.

Friends and enemies

It is vital to create good relations with other squats as well as with the neighbours who are not squatting. These are the relationships that help us survive. The press works hard at separating squatters from the common people, implying that direct action against private property is not 'normal' and that people who do not squat have no reason to fight against capitalism. It is important not to cooperate with mass media and to respect the neighbours, creating common ground and participating in other struggles that are not necessarily directly related with squatting. The CSOs (Centro Social Okupado – Squatted Social Centers) have offered their spaces for other social struggles which include workers struggles, women's struggles, queer and trans struggles, environmental struggles, prisoner causes... And these other struggles have also shown their support for squatting.

On the other side, those who squat also make enemies: the police, the judges, the politicians, the mass media, those who support the torture and abuse of squatters as well as other activists. Some of them see us as enemies while others think that they are making the best of a hard but necessary job. Addictive drugs and sexual aggressions tend to prejudice the squatting movement. In certain countries, the police have made hard drugs circulate within the movement because addiction causes serious problems. And it is because we live in a patriarchal society that sexist violence continues to extend inside squatted spaces, until we take real action in order to combat it. It is everyone's responsibility to confront these problems.

Deals with owners

For decades, political squatting has faced social repression: judges, arrests, evictions, new laws that protect the same people – the Spanish constitution recognizes the right to a home, while civil laws make it easier

and easier for eviction court cases to finish, making defense much harder; the liberalization of the property law triggered the real estate bubble; article 33 of the civil code limits the right of using property for social means, while those who keep houses empty do not have any restrictions once they have regained the use of the property-. Always keep in mind the fight that has been going on to defend the possibility to squat, making deals with the owner renders the autonomy that has been gained in Barcelona irrelevant.

In certain cases, owners offer money to the squatters for them to leave. The reasons they have for proposing deals are unknown to us: maybe there are certain legal irregularities about the property and for this they cannot go to the court-house, or maybe they just don't have a good legal strategy. Research your particular case. What's sure is that the course of action that involves making a deal is the fastest way to get a place evicted and to kill a project. Usually, those who squat do not gain much from the deal, except the fact that they get to live in the house for a short period of time, or they get a bit of money that would allow them to rent for some months. On the other side, they are giving up a dream and it is possible that the empty house would make millions for the owner on account of speculation.

One recurring version of a deal with the owner is when the squatters are informed that the owner needs the place in a specific moment and offers not to denounce the squatters if the house becomes empty on the agreed date. On too many occasions, land owners are speculating, they have houses which they leave abandoned for many years and for this it is important to be well informed of the actual situation before starting because if not, you are basically helping the owner continue speculation. Remember that you are in a position of power; you are the person living inside the space, the person who is giving it life and who lives amongst the neighbors. If you are removed and the house remains vacant again, left in ruins or is turned into an empty lot, we all lose. Without wanting to, you are contributing to the impoverishment of the neighbourhood.

If you accept the money from the owner or strike a deal, this can negatively impact on others who are squatting and make it easier for owners to keep abusing their power as well as making evictions easier. Do not accept money and do not make deals with owners. If you go, do not take out the cables, the pipes, the sinks, or the copper that you find inside the house, because this is known as 'burning it'. This means that

you make the situation harder for reoccupation and you make it easier for the owner to decide to destroy it. You are helping the owner with speculation again.

When you are squatting, you are not in a bad position; generally you can live inside the house until the court-case is finished.

Solidarity

When we are squatting, we are counting on a complex social network as well as a collective infrastructure to support us. We are not alone. Think in terms of pulling your weight in order to support these networks. Is there an anti-repression group in your neighbourhood? Can you help with the squatting office or with InfoUsurpa? At this moment there are many who've been taken prisoner because of their radical politics and also many who are about to go to prison. Who would help you if you got arrested? It is important to contribute to organizing solidarity actions and to gather funds for fighting against repression.

We are all together in this!



LOOKING FOR A HOUSE

Before squatting it is important to know what kind of space you require. For example: a small house for a small group, or a large building which could be used as a social center as well as a living space, or an empty lot for establishing a garden. You can start looking in different areas of the city for abandoned places and write down all the addresses of the places that are possible to squat. Make a file with all the information you gather.

How to recognize an abandoned space.

You will definitely have to spend some days or weeks watching the place of interest to make sure that it is abandoned.

Some tricks to know if the space is empty or not are: pass by the house at different times of the day, check to see whether the lights are on at night, if the windows are being used, try the doorbell, look around the entry door and see if there is any dust accumulated, flyers, trash. There are some ways to determine if someone is using the access points of the house: by placing a sticker or a piece of tape between the door and the frame. You can also use paper or a piece of cardboard to place in the door crack that will fall off in case someone opens the door. It is also a good thing to check the mailbox: according to the accumulation of mail you can deduct if the owner is passing by or how much time has passed since anyone checked the house. If the bills have been paid or not could also indicate the level of interest from the owner regarding the house.

Even so you could find yourself in the situation that someone is doing all of these things, opening and closing the doors, turning on and off the lights, etc., to simulate that the space is being used. This is not something that is common and can be easily discovered if you

spend enough time investigating the space.

You can also speak with the neighbours, but be very careful, you cannot always rely on the information that they provide, it may be rumors or they might not be very supportive of squatting. You can try and see what the neighborhood's association is about, however it is not a good idea to tell the neighbors that you are thinking to squat because they might tell the owner. It is better to wait until you are already inside. The solidarity between squats is essential, visit the CSO from the neighborhood. Perhaps they might have info about the spaces that you are interested in.

It is recommended to make a folder with all of the information that you obtain, that contains a detailed list of all the places that you are interested in with the information you think is important such as: how many entry points there are (doors, windows), in what state they are in, what is around them (bus stop, etc.), pictures, paperwork from the “Registro de la Propiedad” and from the Department of Urban Planning, plans of the neighbourhood and of the building, how are the buildings around it, the date you were first there to see the space, the date when you marked the space...

The next step concerns inspecting the particularities of the building you have found and chosen.

Information about the property.

A space that was not used in the last years, that no one is doing any maintenance on, without any type of management and is basically a dead space in the neighborhood can be considered abandoned and favorable to squatting. After choosing which one of the potentials is the one, it's time to find out details about the owner and if there is any urban planning in the way. If it is possible, find out how much time has passed since anyone used the space.

Find out the next info:

Cadastral (Catastro). Check out the Cadastre on the internet. Find the building by searching for the address.

Registro de la Propiedad (Property's Ownership History). Ask for *Nota Simple* (Property Titles), which includes the following information: physical description of the space, who is the owner, if there are any charges such as mortgages, unpaid taxes, repossessions... Depending on the type of property we can distinguish between two categories: public and private.

Public property: Properties of the Town Hall, councils, governments, universities.

Private property: owned by real estate agencies, building companies, foundations, different societies (churches, anonymous societies etc.) and private owners.

Remember that in Catalonia it is not mandatory to register the ownership or titles of the property so it may happen that the building is not in the records. In this case, try the Town Hall in the neighbourhood. You can ask for the information they have stored in the archives and registries that are of public use (art. 13d Law 39/2015). You can also try and search on the internet; you might find even more information there.

It is very important to find information about the space you are interested in; it is good to be prepared for all possible scenarios. Some of the real estate agencies are known for using bodyguards (matones) for illegal evictions, others have a lot of legal resources for speedy eviction processes. We also have our own ways. Other type of documentation that you can search for are: changes in ownership, irregularities that may have happened, fraudulent buys, etc, legal claims that have to do with the space, complaints, attempts of illegal evictions. In the case that the owner is a company, you can check in the Commercial Registry to obtain information about the company in question. Investigating the space (especially in the case of real estate agencies or building companies) can provide us with favorable odds for maintaining the squatted space. As a matter of fact, any type of information about the space or building that we are squatting always makes us stronger (on a political and legal level) against a possible eviction and even though it may not seem so, could prolong the eviction.

In any way, as much as we might investigate, we cannot always find info that is truly useful so each person has to decide how much time and effort they want to/can dedicate to it.

The next step is to investigate what plans the owner has for the space.

The urban planning status

To know the future projects involving the space you can go to the Technical Services Department belonging to the district, with a very clear idea of what questions you will ask. Try to find out the status of the space, if there are any construction permits. If there are any, what are the approval dates and the completion dates, because all permits have expiry dates. You can as well ask if there is any ruin decree (if the building is legally not fit for living) or if there are any demolition permits or if there are any complaints. More, they could provide you with a map of the space and the overall zone where there are more concrete details stated such as number of gardens, stairways etc.

It's useful to have a look at the urbanistic or municipal plans to check if the space is affected by any of them, the way it is affected and what are the dates concerning it. For this you have to go to the department of Urban Planning of the Town Hall. There you can also check if the building is declared as a heritage site. You can get even more information by checking the official bulletins (BOPB, DOGC, BOE).

If you want to know if the owner is paying maintenance taxes, water or electricity you can find out in their respective offices. Even though this info is private, you can still try to find out. Go crazy with your imagination!

Having the maximum amount of information about the space you plan to squat and keeping it well organized can only bring good things. A lot of squatting actions have failed because of not having had enough information. Even though the success of squatting does not depend entirely on these factors, they might give us a clearer idea of the state of abandonment of the space. Keep in mind the basics and go with it!

What type of spaces are there?

Once we've completed the investigation, we can find ourselves in different situations depending on the characteristics of the space and who the owner is.

Inheritance conflicts. The space is empty due to a family conflict regarding inheritance. The inheritors do not agree with the fate of the space and this produces a paralyzed status of abandonment until the conflict is resolved. Keep in mind that it might not be the only space the family owns and that they might not intend to give it an immediate use. There are also cases where the property is in a conflicting situation that has nothing to do with inheritance.

Urbanistic plan. If the building is affected by an urbanistic plan. There are many different steps of execution (depending on the terrain's qualification). The building will remain abandoned until the date of execution of said plans. In these cases, the property can remain in possession of a private owner or go through an expropriation. What you need to pay attention to is the date of the execution plan that affects the building. There are cases in which the building is in abandoned while waiting for demolition permits.

Illegal Construction. The space does not comply with the norms of the use that it was originally designed for. For example, an apartment complex destined for selling or renting where the height of the building is higher than stipulated, encroaching on public space or on terrain that is not qualified as urbanistic. This makes the selling or renting of the building impossible. A long time could pass before a resolution is reached.

Speculation. The owner is speculating: keeping the building unused and waiting for a better price in the market. We might also be faced with mobbing (real estate harassment), in the case that it is a building where there are still tenants, who are pressured to leave the property with speculative interests on the part of the owners.

Historical heritage. Buildings that are classified as a heritage site may have different qualifications. Mainly, these buildings are protected and cannot be knocked down. Another detail to note is that these buildings (and depending on the degree of protection) deserve certain attention that may not be taken care of by the owners.

Unregistered buildings. These buildings are not registered in the Registry of Property. Some of these spaces could have bureaucratic irregularities that could favor squatting or the legal defense.

Other places to Squat.

Empty Lots or Terrains. Land free of construction that can be given different purposes if squatted: to plant a garden, create a caravan-parking, set up circus tents, to carry out anti-speculation actions, to have activities with political and social character...

Public spaces. Public spaces such as squares or streets are sometimes temporarily, for one or several days, with the purpose of making workshops, public activities, concerts... and reestablishing communication with neighbours in the street.

Ultimately the most important thing is that the chosen place is really in disuse. If you have several possibilities value both the state of deterioration and the legal situation regarding the property. Here enter political issues and personal and/or collective priorities specific to each group.



PREPARING THE ACTION

Practical aspects of the building

There are some questions to consider before acting:

- Is anyone entering the building often? Maybe it's in use.

- Does the space have neighbours? If so, what type: families, young people, grandparents, shops, bars, other squats? This can

indicate around what time to enter and how silent the action has to be.

- Is it possible to enter from the back of the building, or through the terrace or balconies of the neighbours?

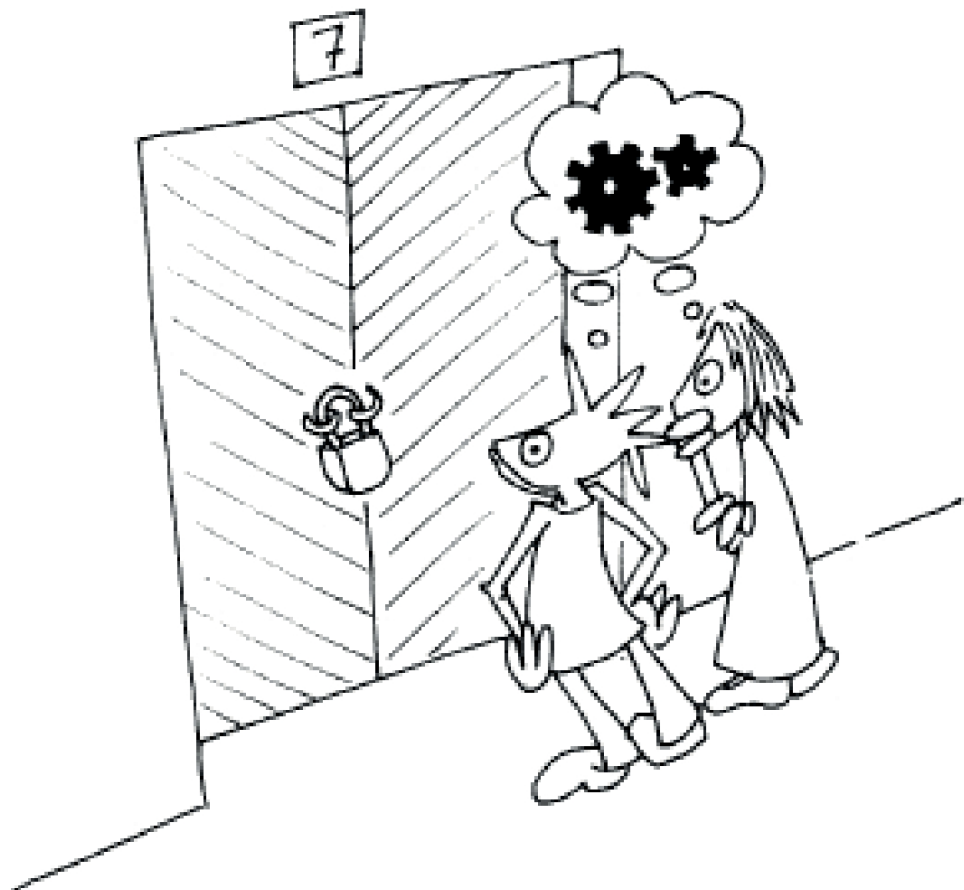
- What type of door does the building have? Is it made of wood, metal, is it a garage type of door?

- Does the door open from the inside out or viceversa? Is it from the right side or the left side?

- What type of locks are there and how many?

- What other ways may the door be closed, is it welded? Can you push it a little to see if it moves and where the door is weaker.

- Are there indications that there is a security system: stickers, alarm



box, lights on the facade? If there are, are they working? Do they come to watch the building from time to time?

- If the building is boarded up, is it only the first floor or all the floors, also the roof doors? Is it possible to see if the original main door is still in place?

- If you are going to enter the building with a ladder, how high should the ladder be?

- Do you know a place nearby where you can store the ladder? Avoid walking at night with it to not raise suspicions.

- Is there a squat nearby? Can they allow you to use the space as a meeting point to prepare the action?

- At what distances are the nearest police stations?

- What is the best way to get to the house? Keep in mind busy streets, bars open all night ...

With having the notes and photos, the group can prepare the strategy best suited. If it is decided to visit the house beforehand - for example to check that the roofs are in good condition - you have to be very careful as there is a risk to be caught in that moment. This could lead to people being identified and a possible accusation of breaking and entering, robbery, theft, damage or for other crimes, depending on who makes the complaint (police, owners, neighbors or other parties). For this reason you should have arguments prepared that absolve you from these accusations. That's in the worst case scenario. Therefore in case the police stop you in the street, you will already know what you are going to say.

Ways to enter

Depending on the type of access there are different ways to enter. Some ideas are:

Window. In most cases it is the easiest option. If you enter through a window, to open it you need a crowbar(metal bar) and, to break the glass, a hammer or a blunt object. To avoid cuts, put adhesive tape on the glass beforehand and use a cloth to muffle the noise. If the window

is the only option and has bars, you can separate the bars with a mechanical jack. If the window is on the first floor and you need a ladder, you can calculate the height by taking a picture from the other side of the street with someone located next to the building to make an estimate of the height of the building.

Padlock and chain. A bolt cutter can be used to cut a link in the chain or the arc of the padlock. Bigger pieces of metal can be cut with a battery powered angle grinder.

Lock. There are different tools and techniques to remove the cylinder of a door lock, such as a wrench, with a metal bar, or by drilling metal screws into the cylinder and forcefully pulling them out with a crowbar. It helps a lot to have this shown to you before you try it, and it's incredibly important to practice first. Ask local squatters to show you.

Metal garage doors with padlocks. You can try to open with a crowbar (if you have experience) or go through the padlock with bolt cutters, a battery operated drill, or a battery operated angle grinder.

Bricked/boarded up. If all the access points of the building are bricked up, there is no other option but to open it from the outside and preferably in the day time. In this case we recommend that you do it with a good support group or if you are few, you can disguise yourself as a workers by wearing work clothes. You will need hammers and chisels.

About locks

Before entering you should do some tests. If you want to check if the door has more than one lock try to scrape between the door and the frame with something flat (an x-ray or a credit card). Observe the original lock and get a similar one that fits in the hole. Make sure the size is right because locks are not standard. You can find second-hand locks in markets like Els Encants (Glòries). You can bring a keyless lock to certain locksmiths and they make you the key, it is cheaper than a new one. You can also ask them if they have any old lock to recycle. Changing the lock and fixing the door is a safety-priority. When you are inside the building look for keys and try them on the locks of the house. Consult the specific manual.

Tools and necessary materials.

- Lock that fits on the door and keys. One or more locks to secure the door if you have not found a key.
- Screwdrivers, different types and sizes. Screws, Pliers, Wrench.
- Battery-operated drill (initially there might not be electricity).
- Flashlights.
- Hammer. Nails
- Crowbar.
- Bolt Cutter. Bow saw.
- Mallet, Wooden Pole, Chisel
- Ladder.
- One or more metal construction poles for barricading – puntales- (it is very important to secure the building after entering).
- Metal or wood plates to use with the metal poles.

List of basic objects and products for the first moments:

- Sleeping bags and camping mats for spending the night there
- A bucket and a rope – they are useful for bringing stuff in and taking stuff out without having to open the door
- A small first aid kit
- Cleaning and disinfecting products, such as brooms, mops, plastic bags and sacks
- Water for drinking and cleaning
- Food
- Candles, toilet paper
- A pen and paper, a book, a radio
- A banner stating the occupation
- Support telephone numbers, a trustworthy lawyer, etc
- A mobile phone with credit and battery
- A camera for taking pictures of the initial state of the building
- ID / passport

List of things to not bring inside

- Anything you would not wish to lose or you would not wish that the police would find
- Animals
- Illegal substances and objects

Be careful! Minors who participate in the action must be accompanied or have the authorization of a legal guardian

You need to have someone constantly inside at least for the first ten days and keep the doors barricaded.



THE ACTION

One thing we've learned from years of practice and from people in different situations is that squatting has the best results when it is done in a group, with well-prepared people who are determined and ready to cooperate. There are different ways to do it, depending on the group necessities, the situation and location of the house or the political objectives. There are a few strategies to consider: are we a small group of people who need a home? Is it better to silently go in during the night? Are we a large group of people from the neighborhood looking to open a social center? Do we want to make a public gathering? Is the house completely bricked up? Could we do the action during the day?

Concentrating details

The decision of how the action should be carried out has to be taken by the group which has investigated the place and which will participate in the action, taking into consideration the specific circumstances: the neighborhood, the owner, the building, your intentions, etc. Depending on how you plan to enter the house, you might need a support group, to whom you must clearly explain what your plans are, what the risks are and the level of security available. It's the responsibility of the people squatting to inform the people who collaborate with the action. They must all know the way things work and they must all have taken a conscious decision to participate. Meet all the people who will take part in a safe spot.

What do you need to know?

- A plan of the action, where you will go, what you will do and why
- What is the history of the building, who is the owner, what are the plans for the building

- Group basics: who is responsible for each situation, how to reach consensus. You must specify exactly who will enter, who will remain to live there, who will be a lookout, who will barricade, and in case you decide on this, who will spread info flyers and who will mediate with the neighbors, the police or the media.
- If you have more mediators who will talk with the owner or the police, you must decide who will provide their ID. You have to know who and if the people inside will identify or not.
- Everyone is informed about their rights in case of identification or detention as well as all other legal aspects of the action.
- The phone number, first and last name of your lawyer whom you've talked to previously for legal advice.
- A plan for when the police arrives, or for the cases when people who want to forcefully kick you out arrive, to be able to handle the possible aggressions of these groups.

Be careful with your personal security and that of the house: build good barricades, don't forget about your alarm list and be alert!

Take and post a banner or paper which states the squatting action in a visible place because this might later come in handy in dismantling robbery charges, for example. Without a doubt the police will take these off when there is an eviction, which will not eliminate all their effect.

In the moment of squatting, you must take certain precautions. The most problematic part is that of entering and the best option would be any place that would avoid causing damage to locks (yards, open windows, etc). Don't try to force open a well secured front door without having tried other options, and in case you need to use tools, try to bring the minimum possible and get them away from the place once they've been used. When opening the door, be careful not to damage it because this can be used against you. If the door is bricked, you have to make sure that once you 'unbrick' it, you already have a working door and barricade ready in order to protect yourselves from an eviction attempt. Sometimes there is more than one gate that you would need to open to enter. Don't forget to bring more than one latch, one chain and one lock.

It's good to have a plan B and be prepared for unforeseen situations, like for example if you find valuable things inside the building or, if you can't enter through where you were thinking of doing it, or if the neighbors or owner oppose the action in a problematic way.

After entering, make sure that the place is actually empty and not in use. Sometimes you might find storage spaces which, although they have useful things inside, they are abandoned. If you decide to remain inside the space, bring in your materials, barricade and secure the access points.

Remember that you're building barricades in order to protect yourself, you have to construct them in an easy way, so you can take them down easily from the inside and hard from the outside. You have to be prepared for the situation in which the police, angry neighbors, people who want to illegally evict you or other people who you don't want inside would arrive.

When the police arrives, the most usual is that they attest the squatting action (through a police registration), which they call usurpation, which is stipulated as a light offence in the Penal Code. Try to get in contact with the owners and insist that they file a complaint at the police station.

The support group must be available and on alert in case anything goes wrong.

Silent Action

When squatting during the night, you should make as little noise as possible. Be very careful when entering in case there are holes in the floor, broken glass, loose electricity cables or other risks. When you are already inside, make sure there aren't lots of valuables inside and that the place is indeed abandoned. Look for letters with dates on them and other indications that the space is not being used. Barricade first, as silently as possible, all of the entrances and windows, without forgetting the door that leads to the roof terrace. The following day you should follow up with more barricading and putting up the note that announces the occupation (Advertencia Legal). Fix and secure the door before doing this. This is a moment of exposure so you need people outside watching. Make sure you have a fast way of closing the door. Keep the barricades on for at least the first two weeks and never leave the house empty. During this first period you always need to have a few people inside.

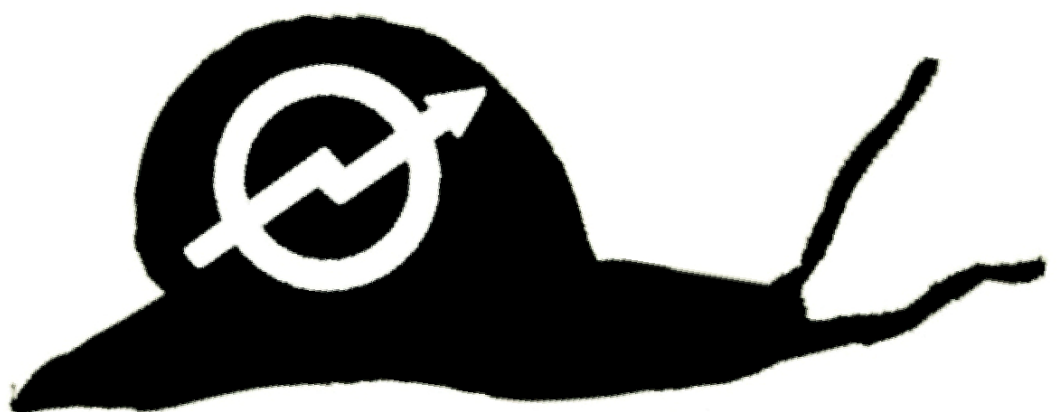
In case the owner shows up, you could be faced with a few situations. In case he starts making threats, then you would need your support group to mobilize outside to back you up. In other cases, he may come

stating that there are objects of value inside or that the building is being used. You should give them a moment to assess the situation. Again, in the first days and weeks it's very important to have the barricades up and be on alert in case the owner sends thugs to clear you out or in case undercover police are watching the place. Many squats got evicted because the people opened the door before looking around or because they did not have good enough barricades and it was possible to evict them illegally.

If it looks almost impossible to enter without making noise and alerting the neighbors, it may be a good idea to try and get their support.

Public action

If the group decides to go forward with a public action, they should think about a large group of people 15, 30, 50.. One idea is to summon people in one spot of the neighborhood and make an anti-speculation walk (A sort-of a parade walk around the neighborhood with the intention of raising awareness, passing out information leaflets and speaking to the neighbors) that ends in squatting of the chosen house or in some cases, depending on the number of people, opening the doors and starting some kind of public happening – dinner, talk, concert. In this case maybe the police follow the “walk” and try to intervene in the squatting of the house. Try to keep the group together. Also it's possible to enter the previous night and wait for the “walk” to pass by and in that moment put up a squatting banner. It can happen if you have a group outside that the police will ask for identification from that group. This doesn't influence the people inside and a squatting charge will not apply for the people outside. Further in the manual advice about identifying and your rights during an arrest will be included.



THE FIRST DAYS

Material to collect once inside

All documents and graphic information that you can get about the building will be very useful, both on a practical level (how to make the place better) and a legal level (to present valuable proof in a court case). Even though at first it might seem completely useless and unnecessary it's good to collect and document all the changes that happen in the building from day one of squatting. All this collection is useful when you have to show the state of neglect that the building was in and to show the 'good' work that squatters do once they're inside.

Just after squatting, take photos or a video if possible of all the corners of the house especially things that are in a bad state or look unfinished. Try to make the photos as clear as possible and as detailed as possible, (the full size of the crack in the wall, for example). Also it's important to make a proper information sheet about the restoration, to document with pictures and text all the work that you do to make the house better (fixing the kitchen and repairing the toilet of any leaks, fixing the beams of the roof, the construction of any things necessary to the house. The fact that we are able to show, with images, that the building was in a state of misuse and abandon comes to our favor. Contact with an architect who you know that can come and write a paper on the state of the place. This will help us know the conditions of the place we are using and know which are the key points for starting work. If it is possible, try to obtain an official paper, detailing

the current state of the house and the urgent work that needs to be done. Like this, you will have guidelines for the renovation work and a legal document for your defense in court, in case you've made improvements. If you don't know an architect, ask in the Squatting office and we can put you in contact with "Architects without borders".

In the first day everything can happen, a fast eviction, visits from the owner, an illegal eviction, neighbors who would like to meet you and might bring you food or furniture. It's important to be prepared for all of these situations

Some things to organize before and during the squatting

BARRICADES. It's very important that your barricades are easy to open from the inside but very strong and hard to break from the outside. You can use puntales, metal plates or construction boards, metal chains, U-locks, bars on the windows and doors. The barricades have to be strong enough to resist hits without moving or breaking.

SUPPORT GROUP. These are the people who collaborate with certain tasks, and for whom it would be useful to assign roles. They can hold the information that you don't want to have inside, be in contact with other people, and contact the lawyer if necessary.

ALARM LIST. It is very important to have a list with phone numbers of people you trust in the neighbourhood or that live close by and know about the action and the situation.



The alarm list can work like a chain: when you call one person, they can call another three and so the chain starts and the call branches out. It's also possible that there is a neighbourhood alarm phone that you can send a message to, explaining the situation clearly, so the message can be forwarded to the neighbourhood list. Always have a phone with credit and battery in the house that everybody knows how to use. Also it's very important that all the people on the alarm list know that you might be calling them in the first weeks of squatting. If the police enter to evict think about hiding the sim card or destroying it.

STAYING IN THE HOUSE. During the first 2 or 3 weeks there should be quite some people inside and the house should never be left alone. If the police come with the owner they can try to enter and take the house back if there is no one there. You can make a shift plan for whom to stay in the house.

FIRST TASKS. How to make the house more comfortable? Is it possible to connect the water and electricity? It's recommended to take photos of the state of the house when you enter, of the empty spaces or the mountains of trash or the destroyed walls or broken windows. Also to take photos of the first renovations you do, write down your costs, the time and description of the work done. You can put this information in a sheet about the squat and use it later for legal defense in case of a court case.

PRESENT YOURSELF TO THE NEIGHBOURS. If you want to have a relationship with the neighbours, inform them about the project and in this way you can get support for the squatting and improve your situation. If not, anyhow you will meet in street all the time. Give out leaflets explaining the action, explaining the situation about the building, how long the building has been empty for, what are the reasons for squatting. Like this, you contribute to eliminating prejudices about squatting. You can invite the neighbours to communicate with you



before they call the cops for every small thing. For sure you will encounter people that don't have the same opinion but you can show your point of view and dismantle some of their worries.

YOU CAN'T DO IT ALONE!

UTILITIES AND COMFORTABILITY. Don't expect the new house to be comfortable, with painted walls, a roof without leaks, electricity cables, a shower etc. You need to invest time, energy and materials in making the house livable. You can start straight away with cleaning, repairing and constructing. It is very positive and motivates the group as well as showing the neighbours that you are serious about living in the house. A lot of things seem harder than they are, but don't freak out! You can ask other squatters for help or information when you need to fix something you are not sure about. You can make one room into a tool room and once you have this you could share it with other squatters. Another way of meeting the neighbourhood and neighbours is to invite them for a work day or to invite them for a meal.

MUTUAL RESPECT. Loud music, hammering and grinding after 12 o'clock, bicycles blocking the sidewalk, are not good ways to get close to the neighbours. It is important to respect where you live and your surroundings. It's impossible to know the outcome of the squatting action, every building is different, but one thing that they have in common is that, in general, the owners and other people interested in the building are not going to be very happy. Sometimes they try to evict you themselves. This does not mean that you have to leave the house.



ANNEX



Preperation for Squatting

Property:

Name of the Owner:.....

Owner's Address:

Owner's Phone Number:

Is it a public propert or a private property? If private, is the owner an individual or a real estate company?

Registered Office of the Company:

Information about the owner (involvement in property speculation and bullying of residents?)

Do they have many properties?

Details about the building:

Address:

How long is it abandoned?

Dimensions of the building:.....

Number of floors, apartments, rooms, windows and doors:

Is the building included in urbanistic planning? Are there permits for construction or demolition? When were they obtained? When is the date the work is scheduled to start?

Is there electricity, water, gas, or the possibility to connect them?

What is the situation in the neighbourhood? In what state are the surrounding buildings? What attitude do the neighbours have towards Squatting?

Preperation for Squatting:

How is the lock? Can it be changed easily?
.....

How can you enter the building? Number of possible entries and level of difficulty for each:

List of contacts. Phone numbers of people who will be available and closeby in case of emergency:

List of tools which you'll need:

Type of action: Public and open or Silent?:

Support groups for the squatting action: 1. Legal help team. 2. Inside group. 3. Support group within the neighbourhood:

Letter to the neighbours?

Info for the Legal Team:

Lawyer:

Legal notice: Attach a copy of the *ADVERTENCIA LEGAL* to the front door, facing the street. This is a text explaining the legal right to not have one's home broken into.

Keep with you a printed copy of your legal rights during squatting actions, and any public action. Keep the rest of the team informed about those rights.

Barricades:

Number of doors and windows to barricade, their dimensions and their position within the building. Materials and tools needed for barricading:
.....

List of Useful Addresses

The Rubi squatting office
ateneuanarquistalahidra@riseup.net

The rurban Can Masdeu office
canmasdeu@canmasdeu.net
www.canmasdeu.net

Info*Usurpa
usurpa@riseup.net
www.usurpa.squat.net

The property registry of Barcelona
(for obtaining the Nota Simple of the desired building)
Paseo Zona Franca 109
(Torre Marina building)
<M> L10S

The registry of commerce
(information about companies)
Gran Vía de les Corts Catalanes
184 - FF.CC. L8 Magoria-La Campana
www.registromercantilbcn.es

The urbanization department
(information about urbanistic plans)
www.bcn.es/urbanisme www.bcn.es/guia/bcnpicc.html
Av. Diagonal 230, 2o - <M> L1 Glorias

Servicios Tecnicos
(information about work permits, buildings declared as 'in ruin') The government building of the corresponding district

Citizens service office
<https://w30.bcn.cat/APPS/portaltramits/portal/channel/default.html?&stpid=20100001515&style=ciudadano>

The general land distribution office
(cadastral reference, description of the building, building blueprint) <http://www.catastro.meh.es/>
<https://www1.sedecatastro.gob.es/OVCFrames.aspx?TIPO=CONSULTA>

Endesa
(electrical company): customer service
Av. Vilanova 12-14 - <M> L1 Arco de Triunfo
<https://www.endesaclientes.com/llars/atencio-client.html>

Water administration office of Barcelona
<https://www.aiguesdebarcelona.cat/oficinaenxarxa/web/ofex> (oficina en red)
<http://www.aiguesdebarcelona.cat/oficinas-de-atencion-presencial> (oficina presencial)

Architects without borders
(in case of courtcase, they make inspections and emit legal papers about the state of the building)
C/ Murcia 24, bajos <M> L1 Navas
<http://asfes.org/>
<https://construintdrets.wordpress.com>

Websites of interest in rural areas

<http://pamapam.org/ca>

<http://rie.ecovillage.org/es/projects>

<https://colectivosrurales.wordpress.com>

The geographical information about agricultural land system.

SIGPAC (Tool used to geographically identify agricultural land plots)

<https://aplicacions.agricultura.gencat.cat/sigpac2/visorh5/>

The courthouse of Barcelona and Hospitalet de Llobregat

Gran Vía de les Corts Catalanes, 111

Citizens support telephone number: 935548600

08075 Hospitalet de Llobregat

<M> L1 sta. Eulalia-Ciudad de la justicia

District Court

(Juzgado de primera instancia):

Building C (brick colour) Deanary (Decanato). District Court 1 to 7.

Trial Court (Juzgado de instruccion) 1 to 5: Building H

Information. Incidents. Trial Court.

Night Court (Juzgado de guardia): Building I (green colour).

Penal courthouse: Building P (smoke colour)

Mediation Services: Building F

The courthouse of Barcelona and Hospitalet de Llobregat

Av. Carrilet 3

<M> L1 sta. Eulalia-Ciudad de la justicia

The procedure of free justice service.

Legal counseling: Building D

Tel: 93 422 15 45 (from 9 to 14)

[http://sac.gencat.cat/sacgencat/AppJava/organisme_fitxa.jsp?](http://sac.gencat.cat/sacgencat/AppJava/organisme_fitxa.jsp?codi=5249)

www.icab.cat

Detainee assistance

(Information about people who've been arrested):

Building D

Tel: 902 123 365 - 93 297 43 99 - 93 487 13 50

torn@icab.cat

Model letter for the neighbours.

¡Apreciadas vecinas y vecinos!

Nos dirigimos a vosotras para informaros que hemos okupado esta casa de la calle n° Esta es una acción en respuesta a la gran problemática de la especulación en la ciudad de Barcelona que genera unos precios abusivos y una gran dificultad al acceder a una vivienda.

Somos un grupo de personas, algunas estudiantes, otras trabajadoras o en paro que no podemos pagar los elevados precios de los alquileres de los pisos y, únicamente queremos vivir con dignidad y tranquilidad. No queremos causaros ningún problema ni ser fuente de conflicto.

Hemos okupado esta casa porque sabemos que desde hace ya demasiado tiempo está vacía y pensamos que no es justo que haya casas abandonadas mientras hay muchísima gente, como nosotras, que no podemos o, simplemente no estamos dispuestas a pagar cantidades prohibitivas. Tenemos muy claro que poder acceder a una vivienda digna debería ser un derecho y no un privilegio.

Nos gustaría tener buena relación con todas y todos vosotros y poder establecer un clima de respeto mutuo y de convivencia.

Para cualquier aclaración, problema o curiosidad, ya sabéis dónde encontrarnos.

¡Muchas gracias!

ADVERTENCIA LEGAL sobre el uso abusivo del “delito flagrante” y la vulneración de la inviolabilidad del domicilio por parte de particulares o cuerpos policiales

1. Este es —al menos provisionalmente— NUESTRO DOMICILIO, y no tenemos intención de marchar de aquí. Invitamos a cualquier persona física o jurídica que cuestione nuestro derecho a permanecer en esta casa, a recurrir a la vía judicial para que sean los tribunales quienes resuelvan lo que estimen oportuno.

2. El ordenamiento jurídico vigente defiende la INVIOLABILIDAD DEL DOMICILIO, excepto en tres casos: delito flagrante, orden judicial, o consentimiento de sus habitantes (artículos 545 y 553 LECr.).

3. Para que se dé el supuesto que se esté cometiendo un delito flagrante, según el Tribunal Supremo, sería necesaria la percepción sensorial directa por parte de los agentes de seguridad de la comisión de un delito y el carácter de evidente urgencia e inmediatez en los supuestos siguientes:

- Que la percepción sea directa y no basada en deducciones o informaciones de terceras personas.
- Inmediatez del delito. Que se esté cometiendo en ese mismo momento.
- La presencia de las personas que están cometiendo el delito en posesión de los instrumentos para cometerlo.
- Y la existencia de necesidad urgente de intervenir para evitar la fuga de los delincuentes o por la producción de una lesión grave contra los bienes jurídicos.

4. Hasta que un Juzgado no disponga lo contrario o encontremos otro alojamiento alternativo, nos quedaremos aquí, y por tanto la entrada sin nuestro permiso a este domicilio sería DENUNCIADA, ya que se incurriría en un presunto delito de ALLANAMIENTO DE MORADA tipificado en el artículo 202 del CP y castigado con pena de prisión de seis meses a dos años, en caso de ser cometido por particulares; o de VIOLACIÓN DE DOMICILIO, tipificado en el artículo 534 del CP y castigado con pena de inhabilitación de 2 a 6 años, en caso de ser cometido por autoridad o funcionario público.

Legal Advice

Advice in case of identification

You are not obligated to have your I.D on you. If you don't have it on you they can bring you to the police station to find out your identity.

The security guards from security companies cannot ask you for your I.D. They can detain you with force while waiting for the police.

Depending on the motive for identifying you, it can be considered an illegal detainment.

Remember that when they identify you, they have to specify the motives for which they do it, under what suspicion and what crime they think that you have committed.

If they bring you to the police station they have to write down the motives for the identification in a book of registration.

Remember that you are NOT arrested. The only thing that you are forbidden is the freedom of movement. At this stage, they are not accusing you of anything, they are only identifying you.

You are not obligated to answer any questions.

You are not obligated to sign anything.

There are no limits for how long they can keep you, but according to the law it has to be the least possible time.

In this situation stay calm and show them that you know what they are doing to you and what they cannot do to you. Remember that they are playing intimidation games, relying on your lack of information and trying to scare you.

Finally, it is useful to say that the Citizen Security law provides a compensation system for the damages that could be received during the transportation for your identification. In order to ask for it, a written document must be presented to the government office. We are talking about a long and hard procedure.

Advice in case of detention during an eviction

When they arrest you and take you to the police station (only if it's not concerning the antiterrorist law, in which case you have no rights at all, not even talking to a lawyer who you trust), you have the following rights:

1. That someone you trust will be informed of your arrest. You have to give the phone number of this person to the police.

2. Receiving medical care

3. A translator (in case you don't know the language)

4. To appoint a lawyer who you trust, or to ask for a state lawyer (so they can assist you in the police station for free, although they would not be obligated to take your entire case, if it reaches that point).

5. Not to respond to the questions that the police ask you. This is very important: when your lawyer reaches the police station, he cannot talk to you before you declare, in his presence, before the police. You just have to give them your information (name, DNI, address) and say what exactly you want to declare in front of a judge; like that, before declaring, you could privately meet with your lawyer, who could advise you.

6. In order to appeal against the arrest, you or your lawyer could file a "habeas corpus". If the judge accepts this, they have to release you because the detention would be considered illegal.

Next we will provide a bit of basic advice about declaring in front of a judge. It's certain that you will pass the night in the police station (legally, the cops can hold you up to 72 hours, although they have to justify every minute that they keep you under arrest) and that the next day they take you to the courthouse (Art. 17.2 CE). You must remain calm; it's a matter of a lot of patience.

Advice for declaring in front of a judge

You can make two types of declarations:

1. Say that you do NOT live in the house and that it was by accident that you were there that day. In this case they would ask you what you're doing there or in this city (you could tell them that you're studying, on vacation, etc.). They will ask what income you have. You always must say that you knew NOTHING ABOUT NOT BEING ABLE TO STAY INSIDE THE HOUSE. As you said that you don't live there, if they ask you specific questions (like for example when it was squatted) you say that you do not know anything. You also have the right to say that you refuse to answer (ideological questions, for example). You have to give a legal address so you can receive citations and notices from the courthouse.

2. Admit that you do live in the house. In this case, you could say that you weren't there the day that the house was entered but that you know that it was abandoned for many years, thus directly explaining the social function of the property. You can say that the reason that you were in the house is because of a lack of economic income for renting, and so you are squatting out of necessity and with the purpose of demanding the right to dignified living; and most important of all: that you were fixing up the house in order to live there because it was in a state of total abandonment and that NOBODY EVER TOLD YOU THAT YOU CANNOT BE THERE, They will ask you what you're doing inside the city, what income you have. They will ask if there is water and electricity in the house (DO NOT ADMIT IT IF THESE WERE STOLEN / BILLS UNPAID). It's better either to say that you don't have any or that when you got there, these were already working. If they ask you anything else, more concretely, you could say that you don't know or, if they are ideological (like for example, if you are part of the 'okupa' movement) you can deny answer.



This manual and the texts which appear in it are for informational purposes only.

The authors assume no responsibility for actions which may result from, or occur in connection to the use of this information.

The Karcelona Squatting Office is an open space which is constantly changing. It is not represented by any person or group in particular. It's principle objective is to provide legal advice.

HOSPITAL

A L'EIXAMPLE, 10
ANYS ABANDONAT.
C/.HELSINKI #50



ÁTIC AL POBLENOU, A BLOC
AFECTAT PEL MOBBING
C/.BURBALLA #33

TXALET AMB PISCINA!!

A ESPLUGUES, C/. LLUÇ
#71. MOLT DETERIORAT

LA FLORESTA

¡QUE ME LA QUITAN DE LAS
MANOS! CASETA DE 2 PUN-
TES AMB POU I JARDÍ
GRAN. DESALLOTJADA
FA 5 ANYS I TAPIADA.

FLOTIN

FÀBRICA DE FLOTADORS
-BOIDA DES DEL 97 -
C/.CONDOL #136.
IMMENSE, CAL MOLT CORROL

BLOC D 6 PISOS

20 ANYS ABANDONAT

C/. MAILLOL #60
PLANTA BAIXA TAPI-
ADA, FÀCIL ACCÉS PEL
BALCÓ, POCs VEÏNS

CASA UNIFAMILIAR
C/. BARRAGAN 32-34
AMB JARDÍ, SOSTRES
EN MAL ESTAT. 6
ANYS ABANDONADA.

PALACETE EN SARRIÀ

-TAPIAO HASTA LAS TRANCAS-
EL PROPIETARIÓ MURIÓ Y
SUS HIJOS NO SE ACORDAN.



MASIA A L'HOSPI
(ZONA INDUSTRIAL)
C/.LIANERES #35
AMB JARDÍ GRAN, POU
ESTABCE I TARINERS

BLOC DE 4 PISOS
C/.ÚRSULA #9, 3.
ANYS ABANDONAT,
MOLT DETERIORAT.

LOCAL EL BAVAL

ANTIGA MATALASSERIA.
EMBARCAT AL PROPIETARI
DES DE FA 4 ANYS.
PORTA TAPIADA, FINE-
STRES AMB BARROTS I
SENSE TAPIAR. C/.CAR-
MEN SEVILLA #70.

ZULILLO ACOLLIDOR
A PEDRALBES.
AV. PEARSON #13

The Squatting Office
a.k.a

Oficina per l'Okupació

Karcelona 2019