


**Festival Welfare Services**  
**61B Hornsey Road**  
**London N7 6DG**  
**Tel: 071 700 5754**



# FESTIVALS A SURVIVAL GUIDE



This booklet has been produced by FWS and this is its fourth edition. Thanks to all who helped with and funded this and earlier editions; in particular, to the National Outdoor Events Association, Baring Foundation, Aimcarve Limited, Lyndhurst Settlement and The Drayton Trust.

FWS is a registered charity co-ordinating organisations who provide welfare facilities on festival sites, such as St John Ambulance, the Red Cross, Samaritans, etc. The range of services includes first aid, lost children's tent, information tent, counselling and advisory services, lost property, etc.

Festivals bring people together to enjoy themselves; to celebrate; listen to music; relax and meet friends. Most events are organised in advance although some free festivals without organisers are not planned and have few facilities laid on. Most events have to be licensed and have minimum standards. If you aren't happy with the facilities, you can write to the organisers or the local authority.



Apart from entertainment a festival should have:

- water for drinking and washing
- food.
- toilet facilities
- first aid
- information point
- children's play area  
(where children are attending)



# FESTIVALS

## Things to bring

It is important that you come to a festival prepared to provide for your own requirements. Even one-day events where you may be in an open arena for several hours need some pre-planning.

Here is a list of things we feel it is essential for anyone to bring to a long festival:

- a warm blanket or sleeping bag
- some sort of waterproof cover, if not a tent
- a change of clothing – summer can be wet
- water container with a secure lid
- food, money or something to trade
- necessary medicines and toiletries

Other useful things are a torch, toilet paper, a local map, some cooking equipment, matches, rubbish bag, earplugs.

## Some suggestions and ideas

If you are going to meet friends at a festival, arrange a good place beforehand and have an emergency plan – make sure that they haven't got all the things that you'll need, in case you never meet up with them. It can be difficult to find someone at a very large festival and people get very distressed if they are separated from friends. At most festivals it is impossible to get a message over the stage PA system for missing people. Site plans and facilities do change from year to year – so don't arrange to meet at the RELEASE Tent!



Some events are not geared in any way for small children or animals and large crowds might be intimidating. Try to find out as much as you can about the festival before you set off, including travel and transport arrangements afterwards. (If you are going by coach, be sure to check with the driver where and when you will find your coach at the end.)

If you bring children or animals, you should bring **everything** that they need. Don't forget plenty of nappies and a spare feed bottle if you have one. For women, if you think that you might have a period during the festival, bring your own tampons, or whatever you use.

Especially at commercial one-day events you may not be allowed to take bottles, cans, cameras or recording equipment into the arena. Check details on your ticket or with the promoter (if possible) before you set off, as there may be nowhere to leave your valuables when you arrive. If you bring valuable things, e.g. cameras, sounds, etc., you'll have to look after them carefully, so bring only what you really need. Belongings have been stolen at festivals and it is rare to find a Left Luggage Lock-up at a festival.

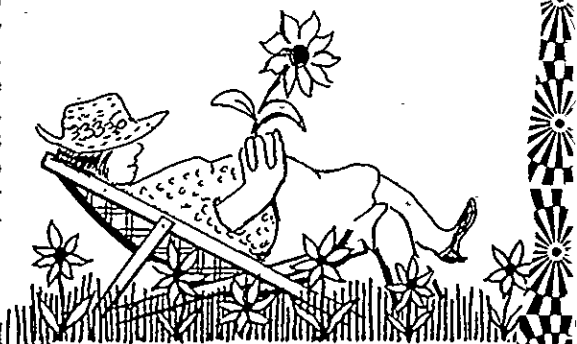
When pitching your tent or parking, remember that access roads need to be kept open for emergencies – ambulances, fire engines, etc. Leave space between vehicles and tents.

# THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Some of the problems which arise in connection with festivals result from the reactions of local villagers and townfolk. It is important to be considerate towards the local inhabitants – they have to live in the area all year and don't want to be faced with piles of rubbish left by the festival.

Local residents may be very surprised at a sudden and unexpected influx of people and may be very scared of the prospect. Tell them why you're there.

If you are courteous and sensible, you will find that many people will be only too happy to help and support you. Don't abuse the local village; treat the shopkeepers fairly; if you use the pub, remember that it is somebody else's local. People in the country usually go to sleep early and get up early – let other people sleep even if you don't want to.



If you are unwell, see the welfare team at the festival before going to a local GP or casualty department. The welfare team will probably have made arrangements for festival goers to be treated if it is necessary.

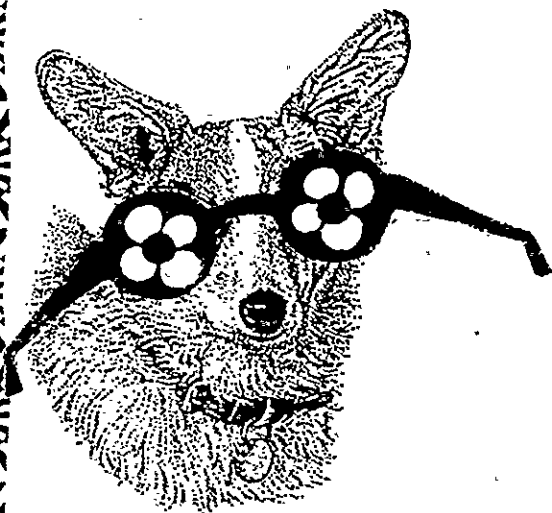
Don't assume that because a festival site was available one year, it will be available the next. Check festival details before you go.

# CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

There is not a lot of the countryside left, and we need to look after what there is carefully – our lives depend on it. The rural land is beautiful and precious, and a lot of enjoyment can be had very simply in walks to seek out the different flowers, fungi and trees. For instance, there is still an abundance of plants to be seen that have been used since ancient times in the art of healing. Local libraries have books that will help you identify the wildlife. Many festivals are situated near sites of historic or scientific interest.

## Follow the Country Code

- Close and fasten all gates
- Avoid crops and keep to the paths across farmland
- Don't frighten animals
- Don't contaminate water supplies
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Avoid damaging hedges, fences and walls
- Go carefully along country roads and lanes
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees. Some flowers, even primroses, are rare, so don't pick them at random and don't take birds' eggs.



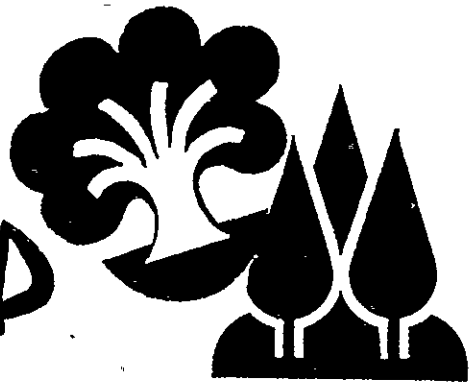
If you bring your dog to a festival, it is vital for you to care and look after its welfare, as dogs have needs just as we do.

You should:


- Bring adequate food to the festival for your pet.
  - Make sure that water is available, as dogs generally drink a fair amount, especially if it's hot.
- 
- Encourage your dog to crap, etc., away from the festival site, as children can contract deadly diseases as well as worms from animal crap.
  - Keep your dog on a lead. Even if your dog is quite docile, it can become nervous and terrified when there are masses of people around. Sometimes dogs run away or become over-excited and vicious and dogs have been stolen at festivals.
  - It's a good idea to put a label on your dog's collar, describing where you are camping.
  - Make sure your dog has been fully inoculated before bringing it to a festival. Virus diseases such as distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis and parvovirus are dangerous to your animal's welfare. You can enquire about these inoculations at your nearest RSPCA or Blue Cross Clinic.
  - Keep dogs well under control, especially near other animals. If your dog worries sheep, it could be shot by the farmer.



# FIREWOOD



Don't cut living wood – trees grow very slowly. **Live wood doesn't burn.** Pick up dead wood from the ground, as it is usually in burnable lengths and dry. People have been arrested for stealing wood near some sites.



Even if there appears to be no firewood in the vicinity, don't break down fences. This is not only breaking the law, but could endanger farm animals. Firewood is sometimes available on site for a minimum donation, so ask first.

## TREES ARE NICE - LET THEM LIVE TOO

If you have a fire, make sure that it is well away from tents, crops, cars and anything else inflammable.

Keep fires small – it is not necessary to dig a vast fire pit. Be careful if the grass is dry. The Forestry Commission gets understandably worried in dry, hot weather.

Don't burn plastic if you can avoid it – it stinks and pollutes the air we breath.

Several people, including children, have died as a result of tent fires at festivals – caused by camping gas cylinders exploding and candles/lanterns falling over. Take great care not to be too close to a naked flame when changing gas cylinders, and never leave a candle or burner unattended or with children in a tent.

Flares can be dangerous too, especially in the wind, so don't leave them burning outside a tent. The wax sometimes drips, so mind how you hold them.





# TOILETS

If there are toilets or a trench on site, then please use them and help to keep them clean. Try to wash your hands after you've been and dispose of sanitary wear either by burning or wrap and place in bins allocated for this purpose.

If you arrive at a festival to find that there are no toilets or a toilet trench, don't panic! Spades and shovels are always available somewhere on site. You could be the person to organise the digging of a toilet trench. If you are unable to dig a toilet trench at the time, all you have to do is dig a small hole to use. Try and dig your hole away from tents and please bury the paper as well – don't leave it lying around.

Don't just crap in the nearest bushes or woods – imagine treading in it in bare feet and the mess when the festival finishes. Humans can and do transmit some diseases to animals, so choose your spot carefully. Human crap can contain blood from piles.

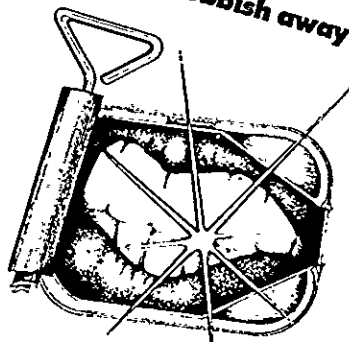
Remember – most festival toilets are not lit at night, so a torch is very useful; and most don't have any paper supplied.

# RUBBISH

Please keep sites tidy – litter gets blown all over the place in strong winds and broken glass, tins, ring pulls and used 'equipment' (needles, syringes, spoons etc.) are dangerous to people and animals. Also, animals die from eating polythene and sheep can get their noses stuck in cans. Don't bury glass, cans etc., as they re-appear later and cut the feet of animals.

Some of the worst publicity for festivals is the untidy state that sites are left in. Clean up your own area and possibly someone else's as well. Take litter home or bag all rubbish, tie the bags and put them in one place when you leave the site. This will make it easier for volunteers or local authorities who collect the rubbish during the festival or at the end. Open bags spill or the litter gets pulled about by dogs. It is advisable to wear some form of footwear to give you protection against misplaced rubbish, dog and human crap.

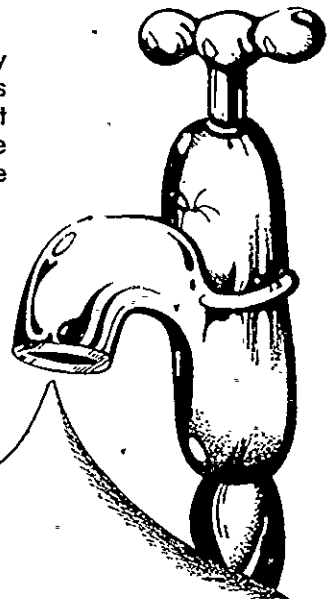

*Take your rubbish away*





Polythene, especially large sheets used for temporary tents, doesn't rot. If you leave a site and have things you don't need, give them to someone else, don't just leave things lying around. Cans, bottles, etc., should be recycled to prevent harmful waste – and raise some money.

# WATER



If water comes from a standpipe at a cattle trough (take water from the pipe, not the trough), a tap or a well, then it is usually safe to drink. If in doubt, **don't drink it**. Try to find out if it is OK first. If there is a welfare team on site, ask them; if not, ask a local person.

Springs and rivers are sometimes OK, but never assume they are, whatever the signs. People or animals might have pissed in them upstream.

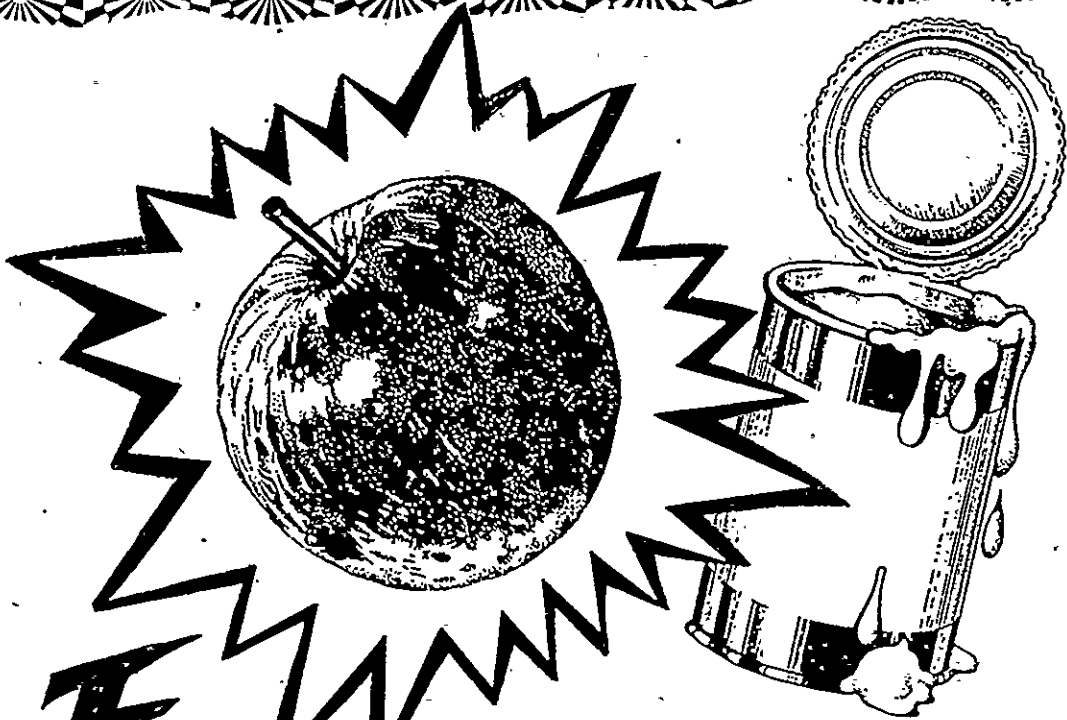
Please remember that just boiling water is not necessarily going to make it fit to drink. Some bugs can live at high temperature and give you the runs after you've drunk the water.

If the water is still, has a scum on top and smells, don't drink it. If the water flows through industrial areas or mine workings (e.g. lead), then definitely don't drink it. Bear in mind also that farmers spray crops with poisons which drain into streams and rivers etc., so please **do be careful**.

On sites where there is no water supply or very little, people often organise trips to collect water and share the costs.

Whatever you do, **use water sparingly** and always turn off taps properly.





# FOOD

There is always going to be food on sale at the festival or in the nearest village, although this may be several miles away.

Hygiene on festival sites varies from kitchen to kitchen. The storing of meat and cooked rice, especially without proper facilities, can cause problems.

Food from festival traders is usually reasonably priced, so bring enough money for at least one good meal a day. Enjoy the different kinds of food available. There may be 40 different sorts of flapjack at a festival, but try to eat more than just flapjacks, especially at the longer festivals.

Like everything else, stash your food well. There are germs, dogs and hungry people about. If you are on a special diet, e.g. for diabetes, remember to bring the right food with you.

You can't rely on there being a free food kitchen, but if there is one, be prepared to lend a hand in the preparation of cooking. They depend entirely on donations, so be generous.

If you're doing your own cooking over an open fire, make sure all pots, pans and kettles are properly supported. Burns are nasty and can be avoided.

At commercial one-day events the food on sale may be very expensive, and the choice may be limited, especially for vegetarians, so you might prefer to take your own supply.

# WELL-BEING - WELFARE



- Keep warm and dry.
- Try to sleep sometimes, and respect other people's need to sleep.
- Don't take anything if you don't know its effect.
- Try to wash your hands before preparing food and after having a crap.
- Wash your food before preparing it.
- Help to stop accidents - drive very slowly on site, especially at night. Watch out, as children and animals can get squashed. Only drive round the site when necessary - why waste petrol?
- Have adequate fuel in your vehicle, as petrol stations in the country are often few and far between, and closed at night and on Sundays.
- Stealing does happen, so look after your belongings. Try to stop rip-offs; get to know your neighbours. Be nice to each other and share things.
- Sometimes lost/stolen items are handed in to the police or Information Tent on site. Check with them and leave your name, address and description of the missing item. If you find something on site, hand it in to the welfare team.
- Arrange to meet your friends somewhere when you arrive, in case you get separated.
- Label your children with their name and where they are camping. If you see children wandering alone, please intervene.
- If you find someone who is ill, do something about it - contact the welfare team on site.
- If things go wrong and you are feeling lonely, scared, miserable or suicidal, there is often a Samaritan's tent on site where you can find someone to talk to.
- HIV (the virus that can cause AIDS); there are only two likely ways that HIV could be passed on at a festival. First, if people inject drugs and share injecting equipment (needles, syringes and whatever the drugs are mixed in, e.g. spoons), when one person has an infection (including HIV) anyone who shares the works could get it too. Second - sex. Anal or vaginal sex can pass on a wide range of infections and diseases, including HIV.  
If you would like to know more about the virus there may be information available on site or someone to talk to about any questions or worries you may have.
- If you are going to have sex, always use a condom. The welfare team *might* have some free.



# FIRST AID

If you don't feel well, seek help. Don't just crawl into your tent and hope that it will go away. The welfare team on site won't mind if it is a false alarm. If there's no welfare team on site, there are usually people who have nursing or first aid experience. Seek them out, but never hesitate to contact the emergency services if necessary.

If you suffer from any constant illness, such as diabetes, epilepsy or asthma, make sure that you are carrying a card explaining your illness; moreover, make sure you have a sufficient supply of essential medicines with you.

**Breathing:** If you find a person has "gone blue":  
- extend the neck (push head back);  
- whether trained or not, attempt to give mouth to mouth resuscitation. Cover the person's mouth with yours, pinch their nose and blow into their lungs. Take your mouth completely away to let air expire. Repeat until help arrives.

**Unconsciousness:** If you find someone unconscious **don't panic** - turn them on their side in the recovery position. Make sure their mouth is clear, push head back and send for help at once.

If someone has been vomiting a lot and wants to sleep, it is very important to make sure they lie on their side in the "recovery position", otherwise they can inhale their own vomit and choke (to death). It is also essential that you loosen their clothing and make sure that the air passages (mouth and nose) are clear.

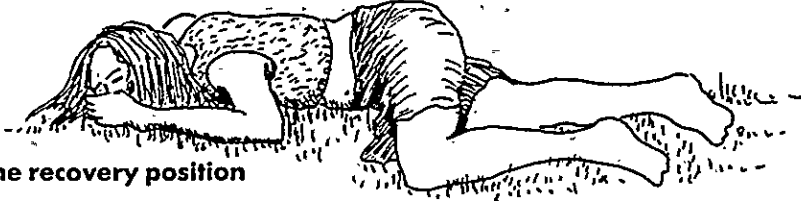
**Burns:** The only thing for burns is cold water - lots of it. **Never** put grease or fat on it unless you want to fry. If the burn or scald is under clothing, don't remove the clothing, pour water over it.

**Serious burns:** Apply cold water for as long as possible (until an ambulance arrives or you reach hospital) - it both soothes and stops damage from burn to skin, which continues to happen up to half an hour after the burn.

Burns and scalds are the most common accidents seen by welfare teams at festivals, so be careful.

**Bleeding:** If bleeding from an open wound, pinch edges of wound together and apply firm pressure. If no dressing is available, use your hands.

**Nosebleeds:** Lean head forward and pinch above bridge of nose.



This is the recovery position

# AND MORE

**Bad Cuts:** Keep clean, stop bleeding by pressing on the wound. Put the wound above the heart – let gravity help stop the bleeding. See the first aid team to get the cut properly dressed to avoid infection. If you think that there is a sharp object still in the wound (e.g. glass) apply pressure around the object with a ring pad.

**Fractures and broken bones:** If you think someone has a broken bone, don't move them. Get a first aider.

**Runs:** Don't eat, but drink plenty of liquid in order to avoid drying up. Don't share things with other people if you have the runs or vomiting. See the welfare team on site. This applies especially to children.

**Sunburn:** This should be taken seriously and can be avoided. If it is hot, don't sit too long in the sun and definitely don't fall asleep in the sun. For mild sunburn, use calomine. Treat bad sunburn as any other burn.

**Eye Complaints:** Don't rub, poke or pick. Cover lightly with a soft, clean cloth and see the welfare team.

## Learn Some First Aid Yourself



Headgear for sunbathing



## If your friend is freaking out...

If you think the freak-out is drug induced, remind them of that. It won't last forever. The effect always wears off.

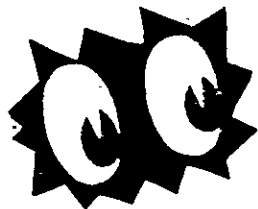
Don't give other drugs to bring people down. It's better to work through freak-outs than to artificially end them (even non-drug induced ones).

You probably know your friend best and you will be able to help and comfort them best, but if you can't cope, see the welfare team on site.

There may be a Samaritan Tent on site where you can go and sit quietly and talk to people.



# ADVICE



Most parts of the country have Citizens' Advice Bureaux and advice centres for young people. They may be able to help with health, housing and legal problems. Check the local phone directory or write to the co-ordinating organisation for young peoples' counselling and advice centres. (NAYPCAS), 17-23 Albion Street, Leicester LE1 6GD.

There may be local centres specifically to help people with drug-related problems. The Standing Conference on Drug Abuse will be able to give you the local phone number or address: SCODA, 1/4 Hatton Place, Hatton Garden, London EC1N 8ND. Not all drug agencies will want you to stop using, but can offer harm reduction advice.

HIV/AIDS: The National AIDS Helpline gives confidential and personal free advice and have local contacts. Phone 0800 567 123 (free calls).

# THE LAW

The owner of the land on which a festival is held is entitled to evict people. If the festival is not over, you will normally be entitled to have the ticket price refunded. Eviction requires a court order and the process usually takes at least 3 to 4 days (although it can be done in two). Court papers giving you the date of the hearing should be delivered to the site. If you have a defence then someone must go to court to explain it. Otherwise the court bailiffs will tell you when you have to go. If you fail to leave, the police may arrest you for obstructing the bailiffs.

Eviction without a court order is possible if the land was occupied without the owners consent by people bringing at least 12 vehicles. The owner must have told you to leave by a specified time and that time must have passed. The police can then give you a new time to leave and arrest you if you do not go (Public Order Act 1986, Section 39).

If you have any eviction problems try contacting the Travellers Aid Trust (0722 73 662).

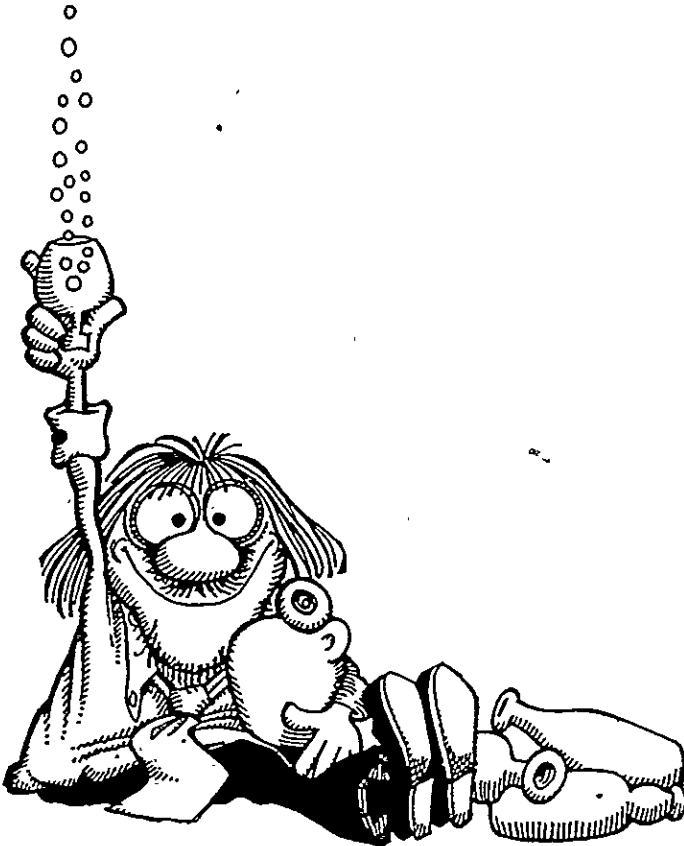
You may be stopped and searched by the police, usually looking for prohibited drugs. They must have reasonable grounds to do this - going to a festival, clothing, etc., are not reasonable grounds. The police are obliged to explain why they are searching you and to make a record of the search.



If you are arrested it is usually best to give your name and address and say nothing else. You have the right to silence. You also have the right to have someone informed of your arrest, such as RELEASE (071 377 5905) 10am-6pm, Mon. to Fri. or Emergency Number 071 603 8654 (Operator referral). There are fixed time limits for detention, depending on the nature of the charge. If you confess to anything, whether in writing or not, you may be convicted without any other evidence, so **SAY NOTHING** without legal advice. Make notes on what happened - you can use them in court.

**Learn about your rights before you have to use them.**

# NOTES





---

**The co-ordinating  
organisation for  
welfare services at festivals**

---

**If you want to talk about any of the  
things mentioned in more detail, come  
and see us at a festival or contact:**

**Festival Welfare Services  
61B Hornsey Road  
London N7 6DG  
Tel: 071 700 5754**

**Designed by Joan Curtis  
Typeset by MtoN Typesetters  
Printed on recycled paper by  
Trojan Press  
Fourth revised edition  
ISBN 0 946035 13 X**

**HAVE A GOOD  
FESTIVAL  
YEAR!**