

CRITICAL MASS PROTOCOL – What makes a good ride?

- SMILE A LOT!! This is probably the most important thing.
 - And be polite and cheerful wherever possible. It's incredibly hard for aggression to be maintained in the face of a smile and happiness. Angry people don't hate you, particularly. They hate the perceived disruption to their ordinary transport issues. Don't give them any further reason to become negative.
 - Carry banners and hand out fliers to let observers know what Critical Mass is (print from the website).
 - Keep moving. Travelling too slowly will lead to hot tempers at the back, and make it boring for the rest of the mass. Jogging pace is a speed that all people can keep up with.
- Keep together. Keeping together reduces the amount of time cars are delayed at intersections, and hence reduces confrontation. It makes a stronger visual impression to onlookers to see a dense mass of cyclists. It also means less gaps in the mass that cars can squeeze into.
 - Try to avoid letting cars into the midst of the mass. It is dangerous for the cyclists, and potentially intimidating for the driver.
 - Especially when there are no cops on the ride, it's important to have the riders at the back maintain a solid line across the road. Even the angriest motorist is not going to tangle with five or six cyclists. Having a camera is useful here.
 - At the front, let cars coming from side streets go in front of the mass. It will buy good will. Remember, individual car drivers are not the enemy.
 - When the mass catches up to stopped cars, do not slip between them, or occupy the lane next to them. Otherwise cars will become enveloped by the mass through no fault of their own.
 - If a car becomes caught in the mass, try to let it out if possible. Otherwise use corkers to stop it moving.
 - The back is where most of the agro from drivers will be seen. Despite this, do not yell abuse. Remember that we are in the public spotlight and we will win more support if we are friendly. The back should have a straight line across the road to prevent cars pushing into the mass. Always aim for: "Maximum Publicity, Minimum Agro".



Kelly's advice for virgin massers

There isn't much in critically massing that needs guidance, just ride with the main group, and remember basic road safety rules. Staying with the mass of riders ensures the mass can keep moving safely. You may not have met with corking before, a cmass "safety device" where at intersections with cars approaching, riders will pull out of the mass to park across the car's expected entry point, effectively blocking cars from interrupting the mass body.

This presents opportunity to meet antagonistic cardrivers! Respond with a brief explanation of cmass's purpose, give a flyer, thank them for waiting, and if you feel stressed, call another rider over to take your place (tag), and ride away.

A tested and happy alternative is to make yourself a sign that says "Thank you for waiting" and on the other side "Honk if you like cyclists!"



bike love
critical mass 5:30pm last friday every month
meet at hyde park fountain

