

Thoughts on Critical Mass

Who's in charge of this?

We all are! That means it's up to all of us to make the ride fun and safe. If you see someone doing something unsafe/inappropriate, please take it upon yourself to tell them so.

Where are we going?

I dunno. I doubt we have a map this time. If you want to have a say in this, make your voice heard and get up to the front and make it happen. I'd prefer it if we keep everyone together, don't go too fast for the slowest riders, stay in busy public areas for maximum impact, and stay safe; e.g. don't go the wrong way on one-way streets or ride the wrong way on two-ways.

Why are we here?

Why are YOU here? I'm here to ride my bike, have a blast, and show the world that cycling is fun! Celebrate cycling! Oh yeah, and to help make the point: we're not blocking traffic, we ARE traffic!

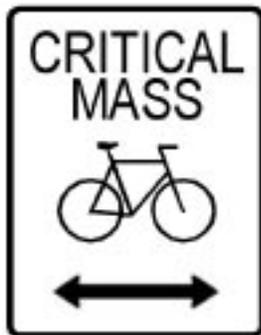
What about the cops?

Some of us have spoken with them. They will be riding with us, but they said they'd try just bike cops, warnings before citations, and allow corking. They will issue citations for egregious behavior. They asked that the mass not surround them if they issue a citation (1-2 friends is ok), and leave a lane free where possible.

Be Cool.

If we smile and are pleasant on our ride (i.e. don't try to piss off the poor sheep in their stinkmobiles) then when they harass us WE look like the victims. If we are rude, yell at drivers, go the wrong way on streets, etc. then WE look like the a**holes. See point 1.

This is all what I think. You got something to say, make yer own! It's XEROCRACY! -Ben



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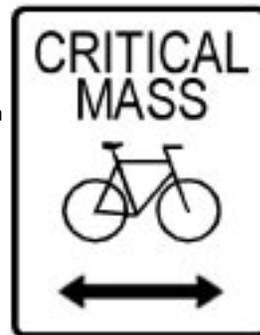
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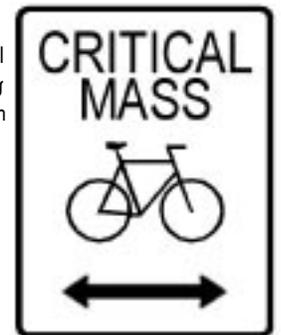
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The UnOfficial Guide to Corking

Corking is the act of protecting the mass from cars, by preventing them from passing through or into the mass, thus protecting and maintaining the structural integrity of the mass. Some riders place their bikes in front of cars to do this physically, others pull up alongside cars and engage the driver hence corking the car verbally.

The aim of corking is to ensure the smooth safe flow of the mass. Therefore it may be wise in some instances to let cars move on rather than holding them until the mass has passed.

Corking is one of the few quasi legal activities associated with Critical Mass. The others are, riding more than 2 abreast, and disobeying certain traffic signals.

Some things to keep in mind when corking:

- Don't cork too early, wait for the mass, otherwise drivers won't see why they are being stopped. On some occasions it may be better to let a car through, use your own judgement
- Always make an effort to let drivers know what is going on and try to give them a corking leaflet. This is much better than drivers encountering Critical Mass and not knowing what it is about.
- Most importantly, be nice! This will leave a much better impression on drivers.
- And lastly make sure you don't get left behind! If you have any questions, ask someone who looks like they know what theyre doing.

Remember, drivers, like us, are also the victims of 50+ years of car oriented urban development and planning. Don't take your aggression out on them! The key to getting more recognition for cyclists, is to get bums on bikes and more drivers to respect the rights of cyclists as equal road users. Aggression will not help this to happen.

The aim of Critical Mass is NOT to block traffic, rather it IS the traffic flowing swiftly and smoothly through the streets of Portland and nearly a hundred cities worldwide! So get out there, get some corking leaflets, and have a great time!

This info is from:

<http://www.vmore.org.au/~damon/cm/cork.html>

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