

Edinburgh Critical Mass ride on Saturday will highlight today's changes to Highway Code

The Highway Code changed at midnight, and Edinburgh's cyclists are riding through the city centre en masse on Saturday to celebrate and raise awareness of the changes. (may be weather dependent)

The ride is led by [Edinburgh Critical Mass](#), whose monthly rides have grown during the last couple of years and now attract hundreds of riders.

The changes to the [Highway Code](#) represent a fundamental shift in favour of pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists at the bottom end of the scale. The new rules place the burden of responsibility onto the person in charge of the vehicle which carries with it the greatest capacity to do harm. The code is now in line with similar codes in many other countries.

This is the route we will follow; it is about 8 km, and we will be riding at a very slow pace. Starting at Middle Meadow Walk at 2pm, and finishing around 3:30pm at Bristo square.
pic.twitter.com/6v3dWdPQNV

– Critical Mass Edinburgh (@EdCriticalMass) [January 19, 2022](#)

Details of the code

1. Drivers of large passenger vehicles and HGVs now have 'the greatest responsibility to reduce the danger posed to other road users'
2. Drivers at a junction should give way to pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross a road that they are turning into
3. Drivers should give way to pedestrians waiting to cross a zebra crossing, and pedestrians and cyclists waiting to cross a parallel crossing
4. Cyclists should give way to pedestrians that are using shared-use cycle tracks
5. Drivers should not cut across cyclists going ahead when turning into or out of a junction or changing direction or lane
6. New 'Dutch Reach' technique tells road users how to open the door of their vehicle while looking over their shoulder

Critical Mass point out the relevance of the new rules in Edinburgh

- Scotland [committed](#) to become net zero 5 years earlier than the rest of the UK – the council in Edinburgh will have to take the new highway code seriously in order to encourage more cyclists, which will be a big part of achieving this.
- Edinburgh's population is expected to increase by 20% by 2040 – we need a [safe climate of cycling](#) as more and more cyclists take to the roads
- The number of young adults aged 17-19 acquiring driving licences fell from 39% in 1995 to 31% in 2017 in Scotland. Cycling is an empowering tool for young people

and the highway code changes are designed to make them feel safer

Critical Mass cyclists say:

“This change to the highway code is long overdue and brings a degree of confidence to vulnerable road-users. Finally, common sense is reflected in the law, especially with respect to the burden of responsibility being on cars.

“The new highway code will not however bring about safe cycling by itself and Edinburgh Council needs to implement safe, segregated cycle lanes.” Aaron McFaul

“These updates to the Highway Code feel like a long awaited move in the right direction and a step toward making cycling a safer means of transport on increasingly busy roads. Every change like this makes cycling a more viable option for more people.” George Williamson

A [Critical Mass](#) cycle takes place on the final Saturday of each month.

