Roadtaking

Crew to ensure that marches operate smoothly by keeping traffic away from the march. Sometimes used at the start of static events

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What's Roadtaking Like?



Roadtake team (yellow High viz) with a lead Steward (Pink high-viz) holding a roadtake banner outside Farnborough Airport.

Roadtake teams usually operate as a small team with one lead (often a Lead Steward). Where available we wear yellow high-viz jackets. We work closely with Stewards who support the Roadtake teams.

Roadtaking involves stepping into the road when it is safe to do so (for example when traffic lights are red), normally holding a banner, to stop traffic entering a march or static protest site in order to keep participants safe.

We operate closely with Protest Liaison team to determine what is being covered by the Police or Authorities and what we will be doing. Roadtake teams react to circumstances, changing plans when needed to keep participants safe. The Lead Steward must always check what the police are prepared to do. It takes only 3 police to control a whole cross-road. If they are prepared to do that, let them. If they’re not, then we must jump in.

We do not direct or control traffic, that is a Police role. However, we do put physical barriers in place (banners) and explain to drivers what is happening.

Roadtaking is a physical mobile role. It is best to avoid carrying too much with you since at times you will need to move at pace from the back to the front of the march or between roadtake

positions.

Public Open Roadtake Crew Telegram chat.

Signup as Roadtake Crew.

Roadtaking Scenarios

Banners

- We have different size banners for different roads, with 5m and 8m typical.
- Place banners where traffic naturally stops - for instance stop signs, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings.
- Always have banner message facing out to the traffic that is being blocked.

Banner Placement Timing

Never Go Out Too early

- If you do, the blocked traffic may not see the march and they'll be angry at being held up for no obvious reason. That's dangerous.
- If you go out too late, the march leader will stop the march when they see no road block in place. That is the better option: stop the march. That will also concentrate the marchers, reducing gaps.
- Blocking a major intersection is not an instant event. You must send out your road blockers when the lights are red for their traffic. Another team may have to wait for the lights to be red for their traffic. So timing is crucial, but, if in doubt, delay.

Roadtake team move on once march itself is blocking intersection

- Other stewards can take over as a line, or side banners can take over.
- Unless it's a major junction and we need the physical banner presence to deter motorists.
- Be prepared for rapid switching to the next junction. Once you have finished, you will need to leapfrog the banner team in front of you waiting for the march to arrive and get ready at the junction after that.

Releasing Roadtakes

- Be careful, especially at the march rear when we release blocked traffic. Everyone should move out of the road at the same time.

Gaps in Marches

- Gaps in a march are dangerous: bikes, e-bikes, e-scooters and motorbikes will try to get through. That's when roadblockers should stay in place until a side banner comes along to block access for these pesky machines. Only then do you head off to the next intersection.
- There will be many different banners in a large march (march banners, not road-taking banners). These will want a gap so photographers can get a good shot.

Example Road Junction scenarios

These animations show a march interacting with traffic and banner teams moving into position and then releasing and moving on. It assumes other Stewards or banner teams will hold junctions as the march passes by.

Crossroads - Marching left

https://tube.rebellion.global/videos/embed/1c531e1e-d999-408c-b000-3fa30a3ead2d

Turning Left, simplest scenario
One banner to protect march as it turns
Banner out as march arrives
Blocks traffic from the right
And traffic from the top trying to turn (their right)
All other traffic keeps moving
Once march has passed, then banner leapfrogs on to next junction

Crossroads - Marching straight across

https://tube.rebellion.global/videos/embed/1a4d2e7d-47f5-458d-bcdd-92bdbff776c6

Straight on, slightly more complex
Three banners (or one 5m, one 8m)
Banner out as march arrives
Blocks traffic from the right
And traffic from the top trying to turn (their right)
Second banner blocks traffic from the left
Once march has passed, then banner leapfrogs on to next junction

Crossroads - Marching right

https://tube.rebellion.global/videos/embed/7fbb8eb8-8763-4641-b49c-2021580d9571

Turning Right, complex scenario
Three banners to protect march as it turns
Banner out as march arrives
Blocks traffic from the right
Second banner blocks traffic from top
Third banner blocks traffic from the left
Only limited traffic keeps moving
Once march has passed, then banner leapfrogs on to next junction

Minor road - Marching left at major road junction

https://tube.rebellion.global/videos/embed/0071db1a-7e74-4363-a1b8-c8ee9b7e361b

Turning Left, simplest scenario
One banner to protect march as it turns
Banner out as march arrives
Blocks traffic from the right
All other traffic keeps moving
Once march has passed, then banner leapfrogs on to next junction

Minor road - Marching right at major road junction

https://tube.rebellion.global/videos/embed/1c48157b-bbc9-4f99-9959-06b85b3c3edd

Turning right, more complex scenario
Two banners to protect march as it turns
Banner out as march arrives
Block traffic from the right
Block traffic from left
No traffic keeps moving
Once march has passed, then banner leapfrogs on to next junction

Side roads - Marching past junctions on left and right

https://tube.rebellion.global/videos/embed/979c76fa-249a-471e-9c8c-ecfe952e3e12

Passing side roads
Basically, block roads just before march arrives
Banners out as march arrives
Note how we only protect the side of road that march is on
All other traffic keeps moving
Once march has passed, then banner leapfrogs on to next junction

Narrow (one-way) streets

https://tube.rebellion.global/videos/embed/ee413bb0-68c8-4f13-9f2d-74862466ce06

Most complex scenario – we try and avoid routes like this
Needs signalling to traffic that is held up that march is approaching as drivers (and march coordinators and roadtake crews) cannot see round corners
Roads blocked for a long time as we don’t want traffic to meet march head on down a side street, so these routes often need more deescalation

Once march has passed, then open up the side roads if possible
Junction with main road is as we have seen in examples above

Roundabout - Marching right

https://tube.rebellion.global/videos/embed/f0caf4ce-974c-410e-8e9b-3f90ae749c74

Roundabout, turning right for clarity
Banners to block each entrance so that roundabout doesn’t become clogged and block march
Banner out as march arrives
Blocks traffic from the right
Then other junctions
As march arrives shift right banner
Release banners as march passes each road

Planning Roadtaking and What to Bring

For general tips check out Planning for Stewarding a March and What to bring with you when Stewarding.

But to note you will need:

- comfortable shoes
- clothing layers (you can become warm whilst moving about, colder when standing still)
- Water bottle

Note that Roadtaking is a physical mobile role. It is best to avoid carrying too much with you since at times you will need to move at pace; for example, to move from the back to the front of the march or between roadtake positions.

Roadtaking Training

We have a number of Zoom sessions where we will go through various aspects of Roadtaking and give you a chance to ask questions. We recommend all Roadtake crew also attend Stewards General Training, or a face to face session at an event.

We aim to run online training monthly and more frequently in the run up to big events

Signup to be a Roadtake Crew on XR Action Network to hear about these sessions or keep an eye on the Movement Broadcast on Telegram.

Roadtaking Training - online

- 16th October 19:00 – 20:00 - register here
- 24th October 19:00 – 20:00 - register here

Roadtaking Training Video - 35min (version includes banner placement animations and quiz)

Roadtaking Training Video - 40min (version includes Upgrade Democracy Briefing at the end)

Training materials, Powerpoint slide decs etc. are available if you want to run your own training sessions.

Roadtaking Training Materials

The material on this page is for those planning to train others as Roadtake Crew. These training slide packs are available for you to adapt as required for your own training sessions.
Materials are constantly being developed and improved so please ensure you download the latest version before use. If you find any broken links, or have edits or suggestions, please contact Stewarding@extinctionrebellion.uk.

Roadtaking Training Sessions

If you are looking to simply be trained then see Roadtaking Training for a listing of available sessions to book or watch.

Roadtaking Training Materials

Note these Powerpoint presentation sshould be downloaded and shown using PowerPoint if animations and embedded videos are to work.

Powerpoint Slides for Roadtaking Training (Google Drive)

Video of Blue Light response during Unite to Survive march, Bath Oct 2023

Stewards Roadtaking Google Drive folder with multiple videos and pivot animator files used to create the videos of various roadatking scenarios.