

ROAD RULES

THE ROADS IN HO CHI MINH CITY MAY SEEM LIKE AN EXERCISE IN ANARCHY BUT...ERM...NO THEY ACTUALLY ARE. THE BEST SURVIVAL POLICY HERE IS TO DO AS THE LOCALS DO. **GISELLE WHITEAKER** GOES NATIVE.



ILLUSTRATION BY NACHO MADRAZO

THE LAW OF CRITICAL MASS

To cross a busy road halt at the edge of traffic until sufficient mass is attained, generally a minimum of five motorbikes. Inch forward until you are obstructing the lane of traffic. At the halfway point, repeat for the opposite lane. Once clear, accelerate and jockey for position. If you are at the rear of the critical mass advance, wait, as traffic will flow around the mass. You will need to achieve your own critical mass. Aim to be in the centre for added protection.

Where: The slipway from Phan Liem crossing Dien Bien Phu

The law: At crossroads vehicles should give way to the right, except at crossroads between a priority road and a non-priority road where priority is given to the priority road (Article 40). We suspect that without critical mass, non-priority road users would be waiting a long time.

THE WRONG WAY RULE

If going the wrong way down a one way street, enthusiastically apply the Law of Noise. If you do not, the opposing traffic will.

Where: Turning on to Ngo Duc Ke the wrong way from Nguyen Hue

The law: Fire engines on the way to extinguish a fire, military and police vehicles on emergency missions, ambulances carrying patients to hospitals (other ambulances have no priority), vehicles assigned the emergency task of protecting dykes, a motorcade led by motorcycle escort, vehicles assigned the emergency task of keeping traffic clear and funeral processions only are permitted to drive against the traffic flow and only if they signal.