

Rolling Coal is Prohibited but Cyclists are still Being Blasted



Photos are examples of rolling coal and not of the incidents described.

Photo credit Channel 7 News, May 22, 2017

Photo credit The Truth About Cars

There were two incidents reported recently to Bike Jeffco of cyclists in Jefferson County being blasted by a cloud of diesel smoke from pickups: one was a cyclist driving an E Trike with his passenger with ALS on the Red Rocks Challenge Ride and the other was a cyclist commuting to work down 38th Ave in Wheat Ridge. On the first incident, Zach said, "Getting choked out by a blast of black soot isn't very fun...and sadly, living in Fort Collins, this is a somewhat regular occurrence." These dangerous incidents occurred in spite of the Colorado Revised Statutes 42-4-314 (3) (a) that prohibits tampering with an emissions control device and 42-4-314 (6) (a) that prohibits engaging in a nuisance exhibition of motor vehicle exhaust. This makes rolling coal a Class A Violation.

The dangers associated with rolling coal are not benign. Besides the diesel soot cloud being considered carcinogenic and a possible crisis trigger to asthmatics and others with respiratory disorders, the dark cloud could completely obscure a cyclist's vision of the road and cause a crash.

Colorado State Patrol recommends reporting the incident just as you would with an aggressive driver incident as indicated below:

Action to take if Coal Rolled

Call: *277 (CSP) Immediately

Provide the dispatcher the following information: the violation of rolling coal, vehicle description, license plate number, location and direction of travel, driver description, and the aggressive driving behavior being demonstrated. You do not have to have the license plate to report. The aggressive driver should be avoided, not making eye contact or giving any indication of disapproval of their driving behavior.

As drivers become more aware of the law prohibiting rolling coal and cyclists are clear on how to report, we should see a reduction in these dangerous incidents that can feel like an assault.