



SAFETY SKILLS by Don Gomo

Road Markings

Sure, all this may seem like old information and common sense, but ignoring it is becoming more common itself.

SINCE WE HEADED BACK TO THE BASICS WITH A REVIEW OF T-CLOCS in my last column, and a couple of readers suggested I do an article on road markings and identifications, we'll stick with some more basic information. Besides, it

never hurts to refresh ourselves on information that we may have taken for granted or pushed aside — every step toward reducing risk is a good one.

We'll start off with those painted lines on the roads we travel; believe it or not, someone actually put some thought into making a system that works. Let's begin with the basic two-lane roadway; we'll look at things from our lane of travel. With a two-lane road, you'll find the center lines (whether solid or broken to indicate passing is allowable) painted yellow and your outer lines or shoulder/edge of pavement lines white. Keep in mind that depending on the road, you may not have the white lines, and in some cases on rural roads, you may not find any painted markings. With those, you should consider some extra awareness of traffic from both directions, but the average two-lane road has yellow paint in the center dividing the lanes and white paint in a solid line will mark the edge of pavement/shoulder area.

Moving on to multilane roadways (parkways, interstates, larger state routes), once again, the outer edge will be indicated with a solid white line, but now the lanes divided in your direction of travel will be marked by either solid or broken white lines, and the lane farthest left will have a solid yellow line on its left portion indicating the edge of the lane in your direction for a multilane configuration. Keep in mind that even though a solid line is painted

white, it still designates a no passing zone unless you're in an emergency situation. Now, depending on the road configuration, there may be a double yellow line dividing the two directions or two sets of double yellow separating the lanes. You need to check with your state highway laws on the acceptability of making a left hand turn across these lines onto other roads, but in most states you cannot make any turns across a double set of solid yellow lines.

A small point of information regarding the solid white line marking the edge of pavement/shoulder on the lanes in your direction: these are also known as *fog lines*. In the event of low visibility, you can follow these lines, and they will lead you to and off the next available exit.

Corners, stop lines, and crosswalks sometimes cause a little confusion as to where to stop. If you come to an intersection or point where there is a stop sign along with a painted white line, you need to have your vehicle stopped before the line edge — not on it. Now if it's a corner with a sign but no line, you need to stop a few feet before the corner. Then there are spots where you have a painted crosswalk and no stop line, once again you need to stop before the paint. Finally, if you come to a corner with only a stop sign and no painted stop line or crosswalk but there is a sidewalk at the corner, you need to stop before the corner. This may sound confusing, but just keep

this basic rule in mind: if you're not sure, stop with plenty of room so there is no question or reason to get a ticket.

A different form of indicator for the road is the actual yellow diamond-shaped road sign alerting you to road conditions ahead. These may tell you of upcoming intersections, curves (with recommended safe speeds), or other road notifications (hills, grades, slippery when wet, etc). Most state DOTs will install these signs approximately 175' before the location of the point; this should give you sufficient time to adjust, provided you are not exceeding the posted speed limit.

Finally, when it comes to speed limits, there are some things to keep in mind. First, it isn't legal to exceed the speed limit while passing another vehicle — that excuse will not help you in court. When it comes to posted speed limits in construction zones, the speed posted is for the entire time the zone is in place, not just when construction is ongoing. You need to abide by the posted construction speed limit until the sign is removed, even if it looks as if all the work has been completed for some time.

You can always check online with your state's DOT for any further information for road markings and signs. To review: if the yellow line is on your right side, you're heading the wrong direction. Always stop earlier at stop signs if you aren't sure where to stop, and always pay attention to the information posted on the yellow road signs — you may prevent a mishap. Sure, all this may seem like old information and common sense, but ignoring it is more common itself. Don't fall into that trap; remember to SEE (Search, Evaluate, Execute) and keep it safe out there.

AIM