

DID YOU KNOW???

COLORED PAVEMENT MARKINGS HAVE SPECIAL MEANINGS

This article is a result of an inquiry I recently received concerning black dashed lines along segments of the NYS Thruway. They were used in conjunction with the dashed white lane lines separating driving lanes in the same direction on the interstate. Although not considered a marking color, black may be used in conjunction with other colors where a light-colored pavement does not provide sufficient contrast with the routine markings. In this case, the pavement is concrete, which is relatively light in color compared with the black asphalt normally used in Northern New York. Thus, black lines of the same length are sometimes used for contrast on concrete highways which is helpful during daytime driving. The black won't show up very well at night, but the white lines will.

All pavement markings, including the use of the above described black lines, are described in the national Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). We all are very familiar with the yellow and white lines used on roads in Franklin County, but let's briefly review the use of these.

When used, white markings for longitudinal lines shall delineate the separation of traffic flows in the same direction, or the right edge of the roadway (often referred to as the "fog line"). White markings may be dashed, dotted, or solid, but in all cases, they separate traffic traveling in the same direction.

When yellow markings for longitudinal lines are used, they shall delineate the separation of traffic traveling in opposite directions, the left-hand edge of the roadways of divided highways and one-way streets or ramps, or the separation of two-way left turn lanes and reversible lanes from other lanes. With the exception of reversible lanes, which are more common in large cities, we should be comfortable with all of these markings.

But, there are some other colors that you may encounter elsewhere, along with how they are used. Red raised pavement markers or delineators may be used to delineate truck escape ramps or, travel lanes that shall not be entered or used in the direction from which the markers are visible. You may encounter truck escape ramps on long downgrades on interstate highways or routes with heavy truck traffic.

Blue markings may be used in lieu of white markings for parking spaces for persons with disabilities. We find these blue markings for handy-capped parking spaces in many of our shopping centers or malls.

Lastly, you just may come upon purple pavement markings. When used, purple markings shall supplement lane line or edge line markings for toll plaza approach lanes that are restricted to use only by vehicles with registered electronic toll collection accounts, such as E-Z Pass. Unless you have an E-Z Pass account, or a similar electronic toll collection account and the associated windshield-mounted electronic device, you shouldn't enter any toll lane with purple markings.

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