

DID YOU KNOW???

DRIVERS – WAKE UP, LEARN THE RULES OF THE ROAD!

Strong headline? I hope so – it needs to be. If you come upon an inoperable traffic signal at an intersection, what does NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) mandate that you must do? If you are sure that you know the answer to this question, you don't need to read the rest of this article. The answer is that, by law, you **MUST STOP**, no matter what street or road you are on – yes, even if you are on Main St. in Malone – as if the intersection is controlled by **ALL-WAY STOP SIGNS**.

Now, for those of you that are still reading this article, please learn the correct procedure to follow, and next time, do it.

On Sunday morning, November 22nd, strong winds took down a large pine tree on Franklin St. (Route 11B) in the village of Malone, knocking out power to hundreds of homes and businesses, and vital traffic signals at several major intersections, including Franklin St. and Finney Blvd. and Finney Blvd. and W. Main St. (US Route 11).

At the corner of W. Main and Finney Blvd., one of the busier and more complex intersections in Northern New York, I watched briefly as driver after driver on W. Main St. sailed through this intersection at close to 30 mph as if they had a green signal or *assuming* that they had the right of way and Finney Blvd. traffic, a very busy street in itself, would just stop for them, even though there were no red or green lights for anyone.

Drivers – this shouldn't even have to be a law – it's common sense. But then, do drivers really have any common sense? Why should you assume that all other drivers will stop for you??? The point is, this has been law in NYS and most, if not all, other states, Ontario, Quebec, and most everywhere, for years – why do you not know about this?

I have written about this law numerous times over the past nine years, usually after a power outage occurs and I witness the blatant violations, which is exactly why this article is being written yet again to address this issue. Interestingly, I inquired of a number of people on the day of the power outage (Sunday, November 22nd), most of whom I know, if they were aware of this law – unfortunately, about half of them didn't know the applicable action to take. So, for the purists, here is VTL section 1117:

S 1117. Traffic-control signals; malfunction. Except when directed to proceed by a police officer, every operator of a motor vehicle approaching an intersection governed by a traffic-control signal which is out of service or otherwise malfunctioning shall stop in the manner required for stop signs set forth in section eleven hundred seventy-two of this title, and proceed according to the rules of right of way for vehicles set forth in article twenty-six of this title.

The reference to section 1172 is about stop signs and who yields to whom. The basic rule is that, for an inoperable traffic signal, treat it as an all-way stop intersection. It's not complicated, providing everyone knows what to do and complies with the law.

For more information on traffic law and traffic safety, visit the Traffic Safety Board web site at: www.franklincony.org and go to Traffic Safety Board under "Departments". Visit us on Facebook as well. You may also contact me by email at: dwner151@verizon.net or call me at 483-1882.

Drivers – Wake Up, Learn The Rules of the Road!

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