

DID YOU KNOW???

MINIMUM SPEED REGULATIONS IN VTL EXPLAINED

We all are aware of maximum speed limits, which are required to be posted along the highway, unless it is the statutory speed limit in New York State of 55 mph. However, NY vehicle and traffic law (VTL) includes a minimum speed regulation that you may not be aware of. Under VTL Section 1181 (a), “No person shall drive a motor vehicle at such a slow speed as to impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic except when reduced speed is necessary for safe operation or in compliance with law.”

So how does this play out in everyday driving situations? Here’s an example. You are an elderly driver and not comfortable driving at higher speeds. Perhaps you are also a safe driver, likely because you do drive slowly. But, while driving on a state highway with a speed limit of 55 mph, you chose to drive at a speed well below the speed limit, and because of this, a long line of vehicles backs up behind you. This creates a dangerous situation, as impatient drivers may take unnecessary risks to pass. Assuming there is no compelling reason to drive at a speed well below the normal speed of traffic, like inclement weather, you could be arrested under this law for driving too slowly (impeding traffic), which carries a fine of up to \$150 and up to 15 days in jail, plus a surcharge of \$88-\$93. You would also receive two penalty points on your license.

I’m guessing this article will spur some “I told you so” comments from drivers that know someone that actually does drive much too slowly and truly impedes other drivers.

Section 1181 (b) in VTL describes another condition where you could be arrested for driving too slowly. This section basically says that “whenever a minimum speed limit has been established as authorized, no person shall drive at a speed less than such minimum speed limit except when entering upon or preparing to exit from the highway, or when necessary for safe operation”. This minimum speed limit posting is normally found on interstate highways, where the maximum speed limit is usually 65 mph or higher and there is also a minimum speed limit posted, say at 40 mph. This infraction carries the same sanctions as 1181 (a).

These laws are rarely enforced, but should you cause a crash because of driving too slowly, you risk a potential ticket. That just might also trigger a “road test” imposed by the Dept. of Motor Vehicles.

If you find yourself constantly being passed by numerous other vehicles, you should consider the possibility that your best driving days are behind you and that it might be time to consider alternatives to driving.

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: d Werner151@verizon.net or call me at 483-1882.