

DID YOU KNOW???

CENTER LINE RUMBLE STRIPS NOW FIVE YEARS OLD

Center line Rumble Strips were first installed on state highways in Franklin County five years ago this summer. The first highways to get them were Route 37 between Ft. Covington and Hogansburg, and Route 30 between Tupper Lake and the Hamilton County line, in 2013. Now a significant percentage of state highways throughout NYS have this safety feature.



Roadway departures continue to account for more than half of U.S. roadway fatalities annually and nearly 40 percent of serious injuries, making such crashes a significant safety concern. A roadway departure crash is defined as a crash which occurs after a vehicle crosses an edge line or a center line, or otherwise leaves the traveled way. From 2014 to 2016 an average of 18,779 fatalities resulted from roadway departure, which is 53 percent of all the traffic fatalities in the United States

Improving pavement friction, alerting drivers with rumble strips, enhancing delineation along horizontal curves, and improving nighttime visibility are effective practices that FHWA encourages agencies to explore in order to keep vehicles on the roadway. **Center line rumble strips** are an effective countermeasure to reduce head-on collisions and opposite-direction sideswipes (often referred to as cross-over or cross-center line crashes).

Center line rumble strips are placed as a countermeasure for driver error, rather than roadway deficiencies. They are designed primarily to assist distracted, drowsy or otherwise inattentive drivers who unintentionally stray over the center line. For this set of drivers, the audible and vibratory warning produced by center line rumble strips greatly improves the chances of a quick and safe return to their lane. Where drivers don't safely recover, the warning created by rumble strips often improves driver reaction, reducing crash severity.

Research has shown that installing rumble strips can reduce severe crashes. On rural two-lane roads, which is primarily what we drive on in Franklin County, the reduction in crash frequency from before to after rumble strip implementation for head-on and opposite direction sideswipe fatal and injury collisions is 45 percent according to information from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Aside from cost considerations, some drivers object to the noise rumble strips cause. In NYS, they are not normally installed within cities or villages and most likely in hamlets as well. So, even if you aren't thrilled with them, accept them for what their purpose is – to prevent or mitigate crashes from drivers crossing over the centerline when they don't want to.