

DID YOU KNOW???

DRIVER COURTESY TRIGGERS YET ANOTHER CRASH

Monday morning, August 5th, saw yet another crash caused by a driver who thought they were doing a good deed, something Chief of Police Chris Premo says occurs too often in Malone. I have written at least three of these weekly articles based on this problem over the past 12 years.

As drivers, most of us get a good feeling when we do something nice for another driver. There is a place for courtesy on our streets and roads, but not everywhere or not all the time. This practice can and does put other drivers in danger.

This latest incident occurred when a westbound driver in the outside (right) lane on four-lane E. Main St. in Malone stopped to let another vehicle exit from Kinney Drugs.

However, a pickup truck, also westbound but in the inside (left) lane, hit the car that was exiting Kinney's. The pickup truck driver couldn't see the car exiting because of the car that had stopped to allow the car to enter the street and the driver of the car exiting Kinney's apparently wasn't aware that there might be another vehicle in the other lane.

The driver that pulled out from Kinney's was at fault for failure to yield the right-of-way and was issued a ticket for that violation, but the crash was initiated by the driver that stopped to allow the car to exit. However, the driver exiting should NOT have moved into the street unless he/she was 100 percent certain that it was completely safe to do so. That driver should have motioned the courteous driver to move on, and then waited for a safe time to enter the street no matter how long it took. What began as a thoughtful gesture triggered a collision.

In situations like this it's best to not be a "Mr. nice guy", and let the other driver follow the rules of the road and enter the street or road when it is safe to do so. It may take 20-30 seconds but that's part of driving.

Some other examples of where it's best not to indicate to someone to proceed ahead of you when VTL requires them to yield the right-of-way to you include;

1. Waving a pedestrian across a street in the middle of a block, where a pedestrian must yield the right-of-way to all vehicles (the pedestrian may get hit by another vehicle that is not expecting anyone to cross at that point).
2. Indicating to a pedestrian to cross an intersection against a "Don't Walk" pedestrian signal or a red traffic signal.
3. Waving a motorist opposite you that is signaling a left turn at a red light, to proceed ahead of you.

Courtesy is important when driving and there is a place for it, but there are many places where it can create a very dangerous situation, such as in the Malone incident previously described. In most cases, it is best to just drive according to the vehicle and traffic laws in NYS and to not try to assist someone only to put them or others in a more dangerous situation because of your actions.

