

DID YOU KNOW???

INTERFERENCE WITH TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES ILLEGAL

In early March an article in the Malone Telegram reported that several traffic signs have been disappearing from roads in the Town of Chateaugay. Town highway superintendent Roger LaBombard allegedly reported to the town Board that several STOP signs were missing, apparently removed by vandals.

Removing a STOP sign is obviously a very dangerous act; it is also illegal to interfere in any way with official traffic control devices, railroad signs or signals, and other highway appurtenances. Section 1115 of Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) makes it illegal to “alter, deface, injure, knockdown, cover, remove, or otherwise interfere with any official traffic control device or any railroad sign or signal”. An official traffic control device is any official sign, signal, or pavement marking.

To “deface” any traffic control device includes, but is not limited to, to damage, destroy, disfigure, erase, ruin, distort, spoil or otherwise change the external appearance of an object by use of chalk, crayon, paint, stain, ink or other similar material. Note, on the picture of the “stop” sign accompanying this article, a sticker has been placed on the bottom of the sign. This would be illegal, as it defaces the sign.



“Altering” a traffic control signal includes, but is not be limited to, changing or attempting to change the signal indications by use of a traffic control signal preemption device. A “traffic control signal preemption device” is any device designed or used to change or attempt to change the signal indications of a traffic control signal. The presence in a vehicle of a traffic control signal preemption device connected to a power source and in an operable condition is presumptive evidence of its use by the driver.

VTL section 1115 goes even further. It also makes it illegal to in essence do anything physical to any appurtenance on a highway right-of-way, including any monument, lamppost, telephone (utility) pole, fence, walk, curb, tree, rock cut, or basically anything within the right-of-way, which includes shoulders, ditches, and beyond to the end of the right-of-way.

Some examples of violating this law would include, in addition to removing a stop sign like was done in Chateaugay, marking in any way any traffic sign, altering any pavement marking, even putting a “Garage Sale” sign on a utility pole.

Penalties for violating this section of VTL include a fine of up to \$150 and/or up to 15 days in jail, plus the mandatory surcharge for a first offense.

For more articles on traffic law and safety, go to the traffic safety board’s web site at: www.franklincony.org and click on “Traffic Safety Board” under departments then look for Did You Know articles under “services”. You may also email me at: dwerner151@verizon.net