

## DID YOU KNOW???

### 1/3 OF A FOOTBALL FIELD, 7 CAR LENGTHS, TURN SIGNALS

What do the above have in common? The two distance references are approximately 100 feet; the connection with turn signals is a New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) requirement – that drivers MUST **continuously** signal a turn or a lane change for a minimum distance of 100 feet.

Are drivers in Franklin County unaware of this requirement? I wonder if this is the case, as it doesn't require very much of a driver effort to just flick the turn signal on the steering column with one finger. So if this action takes such a small physical effort, why do so many drivers fail to even signal their turns or lane changes, or wait until the traffic light changes to green before turning on their turn signal?

It is so important in driving to let other drivers know your intentions before you do something. If you are waiting at a red light at a signalized intersection and you do not have your turn signal on, other drivers will logically expect that your intention is to proceed straight through the intersection upon a green signal. How surprising it is when, at the instant the light turns green, you flick on your turn signal and turn left or right. What's more, the driver that does this likely considers him/her self a good driver. Most likely they do not know the 100 foot requirement for signaling – otherwise, why wait until the light changes before signaling?

Section 1163 (b) of VTL states: "***A signal of intention to turn right or left when required shall be given continuously during not less than the last one hundred feet traveled by the vehicle before turning***". Thus, if you do not signal at least 100 feet before turning you have violated this law and have just given enforcement "probable cause" for stopping you.

There are more details in VTL relative to signaling that many drivers are also apparently unaware of, as I see violations of this daily. Whenever you start from a parked position, as when you leave a parking place along a curb in our cities or villages, or return to the highway from stopping along the shoulder, you are also required to signal. Furthermore, if you are stopped along the side of a road or highway, it is illegal to leave your right turn signal flashing, as so many drivers do.

Section 1163 (d) of VTL requires the use of signals, either signal lights or hand signals, to "***indicate an intention to turn, change lanes, or start from a parked position and not be flashed on one side only on a parked or disabled vehicle, or flashed as a courtesy or 'do pass' signal to operators of other vehicles approaching from the rear***".

So, now that you are aware of the laws requiring the use of turn signals, if you haven't been meeting the legal requirements, please change your poor driving habits to improve your compliance with VTL. When you are 1/3 of a football field, or about 7 car lengths away from your turn or lane change, **use your turn signal**. It won't tire you out, other drivers will appreciate it and you will become a better driver for it.

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