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RM News & Notes

Tip of the Week:



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Where the Children Are

Are you fully stopping and waiting for school buses loading and unloading children.

Children may dart out, such as to chase paper blown by wind, so traffic must stop and wait as a precautionary measure.

Children expect traffic to stop.

The stopping requirement reduces exposure of motorists to risk of liability for negligence in striking a child who cannot be held as negligent under civil law.

Those who would fully stop and wait for school buses loading and unloading children may consider passing stopped school buses illegally a kind of reckless driving or aggressive driving.

Message from the Risk Manager

I know we've had several newsletters concerning driving behaviors and although I try to make sure each one is targeting a different individual topic, you may begin to feel like I'm beating you over the head with defensive driving information. Well, there is a reason for that: vehicle accidents continue to be the number one cause of all claims and damages. Plus, I'm out there on the roadways too. I see some of the bad driving and unnecessary risks that people are taking. Defensive driving isn't difficult, but it is something that you need to consciously work on, so I plan to keep the reminders coming. Additionally, to be a good driver, you have to understand the laws and follow them. I expect most of you know how to react when you encounter a stopped school bus or have an emergency vehicle approaching. However, I've witnessed violations of these laws and also heard enough conversation in our defensive driving classes to realize that not everyone understands what they are supposed to do in these situations. So take a minute and review these laws to make sure you are operating your vehicle safely, defensively and legally.

Darlene

Safety Officer News and Notes

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§ 40-6-74. Operation of vehicles on approach of authorized emergency vehicles

(a) Upon the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle or a vehicle belonging to a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency making use of an audible signal and visual signals meeting the requirements of Code Section 40-6-6, the driver of every other vehicle shall yield the right of way and shall immediately drive to a position parallel to, and as close as possible to, the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in such position until the authorized emergency vehicle or law enforcement vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by a police officer.

(b) This Code section shall not operate to relieve the driver of any authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway.

Whether approaching from behind, at an intersection or coming toward you; Whether two lanes or more: you don't get to decide whether or not you are in the way. The law requires you to pull to the right and **STOP. You don't know where the emergency vehicle is trying to go. It may need to turn in that driveway right in front of you, or make a u-turn, or drive into oncoming lanes to get around other traffic, etc.**

§ 40-6-163. Duty of driver of vehicle meeting or overtaking school bus; reporting of violations

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section, the driver of a vehicle meeting or overtaking from either direction any school bus stopped on the highway shall stop before reaching such school bus when there are in operation on the school bus the visual signals as specified in Code Sections 40-8-111 and 40-8-115, and such driver shall not proceed until the school bus resumes motion or the visual signals are no longer actuated.

(b) The driver of a vehicle upon a highway with separate roadways need not stop upon meeting or passing a school bus which is on a different roadway, or upon a controlled-access highway when the school bus is stopped in a loading zone which is a part of or adjacent to such highway and where pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.

(c) Every school bus driver who observes a violation of subsection (a) of this Code section is authorized and directed to record specifically the vehicle description, license number of the offending vehicle, and time and place of occurrence on forms furnished by the Department of Public Safety. Such report shall be submitted within 15 days of the occurrence of the violation to the local law enforcement agency which has law enforcement jurisdiction where the alleged offense occurred.

It doesn't matter how many lanes or even if there is a center turn lane: if you are on the same road as a stopped school bus with the red lights flashing and the stop sign out, you must stop. You must wait until the sign is put down and the lights are off or the bus starts forward before you can proceed.

KEEP THEM UP!

A few weeks ago, I was reviewing a parcel and as I drove down the driveway two dogs greeted me. One of the dogs was a Rottweiler, but I don't know the breed of the second dog. It looked like a white German shepherd. Anyway, I was sitting in my truck looking at the property and verifying the information we had, making sure it was correct. As I sat there, I looked up to watch the dogs to see what they were doing. The white dog had ran away and come back with a toy in his mouth. He stood there barking at me with the toy still in his mouth. I laughed. The Rottweiler was running back and forth playfully wanting to play with the other dog. I became rather warm so I turned my heat down and rolled the window all the way down. A few seconds later, the Rottweiler was standing at my window with his front paws on the door. I spoke to him for a second and put the card in my hand under his nose and he licked it and started whining. I told him to get down and go play-he did just that. Well, I was writing some notes on the card so I was looking down and all of a sudden I had half of a Rottweiler in my truck!!!!!! I SCREAMED and pushed him backwards out of the window and rolled my window up. I looked at him to make sure he was okay, and he looked at me as if to say "Why did you do that for?" Fortunately, I had no scratches on me WHATSOEVER. The only thing that was frayed was my nerves!! Moral of the story: ALWAYS keep your windows up NO MATTER WHAT!

