

From the Office of the Sheriff: "Is your Blinker on?"

Many of our crash investigations occur at intersections, several due to failure to clearly signal the intended turn, others due to a vehicle conducting a wide turn. So let's discuss turns, right-of-way, and directional.

Let's start with your turn signals. Do they work? Nothing is more frustrating than following a vehicle down the state highway to a point where they slow to a crawl, then turn left or right without signaling the turn, or even worse turn on the directional after you begin the turn. I also propose that manufacturers install an audio warning for those who travel for miles without knowledge their directional is blinking, confusing all other motorists. There are several state statutes which regulate turns. Statute 346.35 states a driver may only complete a turn from the proper position upon a highway and must give the appropriate signal. For most of us making a right or left turn the appropriate signal is a continuous signal that lasts 100 feet traveled before the turn. Should you be operating a bicycle, the distance is reduced to 50 feet.

Should you be operating upon the highway with a vehicle not equipped with electronic signaling devices you must give the appropriate hand and arm signal in lieu of signals and hopefully everyone remembers them from bicycle or motorcycle safety. Violations of this statute will cost you \$175.30.

Motorists are also required to be in the proper position on the roadway prior to executing a turn. Proper position includes lanes with painted arrows or signs. In the absence of proper markings stay as close to the curb as possible for right turns, or for left turns, from the lane farthest to the left which is moving in the same direction.

Everyone has been in downtown Beaver Dam when you are confronted with a semi truck on Front Street at North Center or North Spring. Many a motorist have found themselves in the right lane alongside of a 80,000 pound truck who is also turning right from the left lane – you will loose that battle! Or, you are at the stop light and the semi begins their turn and you are the lead vehicle in a row of ten behind you and the trucker wants you to back up! What do you do?

First and foremost understand the in both situations the turn the trucker is making is legal. State Statute 346.33 allows for these wide turns based upon the size and length of the vehicle making the turn. This is why most semi trailers have a directional alongside the trailer halfway to the rear so YOU understand the driver's intentions and do not get squished against the curb when he turns. I suggest when you see the side directional blinking, stay in your lane but remain behind the rear of the trailer. Should you be the unfortunate one parked at the stop light and find yourself face to face with the semi tractor, be reasonable, avoid the road rage and do what you can to move your vehicle so the truck can safely complete the turn.

We can all do more each and every day to ensure our roads and highways remain safe. Thanks for listening tnehl@co.dodge.wi.us