

Two Way Left Turn Lane

All of us use the two way left turn lanes on the roadways in our city. Many of us may call it the center turn lane, or the center left turn lane, or just know it as the center lane that runs down the street where you can make a left turn. The name in itself identifies the purpose of the marked lane on the roadway - it is for left turns from and to the roadway. The state statute, TCA 55-8-140(5) applies the official name as the *two way left turn lane*. Just as people refer to it in different terms, they also use it in a variety of ways.

In accordance with the TCA where a special lane for making left turns by drivers proceeding in opposite direction has been established, there are six (6) guides;

- 1) a left turn shall not be made from any other lane unless a vehicle cannot safely enter the turn lane;
- 2) a vehicle shall not be driven in the left turn lane except when preparing for or making a left turn from or into the roadway;
- 3) a vehicle shall not use the left turn lane solely for the purpose of passing another vehicle;
- 4) a vehicle shall not use the left turn lane more than a safe distance from the point of the intended turn;
- 5) when any vehicle enters the turn lane, no other vehicle proceeding in an opposite direction shall enter that turn lane if that entrance would prohibit the vehicle already in the lane from making the intended turn; and
- 6) when vehicles enter the turn lane proceeding in opposite directions, the first vehicle to enter the shall have the right of way.

In short, the center lane is not to be used to pass other vehicles or drive down the center lane for an extended period. A driver should only enter the center lane a short distance from the intended turn or after executing a left turn onto the roadway. A short distance is recommended not to exceed 100 feet.

Any questions about this or other topics of interest should be directed to Chief Paul Blackwell at pblackwell@tullahomatin.gov or (931) 455-0530.