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# Drivers Need Training in Courtesy

**D**IFFERENCE of opinion about who had the right-of-way probably causes as many arguments after traffic accidents as any other topic. Often that may be the cause of the crash.

Motorists are supposed to know enough about traffic laws and regulations to obey them. It is not known what proportion of drivers actually have read the laws they are supposed to observe. Mostly we depend upon signs and symbols posted along the way, frequently in bunches at busy points.

Larry Sizemore, a southwest Oklahoma City attorney, has brought an example of the complexity or obscurity of laws on right-of-way to the attention of the Traffic Operations Division. In a three-page letter he quotes Sec. 34-23 of an ordinance pertaining to vehicles turning left at an intersection. It goes like this:

*"The driver of a vehicle within an intersection intending to turn to the left shall yield the right-of-way to any vehicle approaching from the opposite direction*

*which is within the intersection or so close thereto as to constitute an immediate hazard. After so yielding and having given a signal when and as required by this Code, the driver may make the left turn and the drivers of all other vehicles approaching the intersection from the opposite direction shall yield right-of-way to the vehicle making the left turn."*

In his letter to the traffic department Sizemore goes into detail about how this causes problems, which he says have led to many serious and unnecessary accidents.

It might have caused even more accidents if motorists had tried to thumb quickly through a drivers manual and read the law to figure out whether or not they had right-of-way.

Many of them obviously have difficulty with such simple traffic directions as "STOP," "NO PARKING" and "SPEED LIMIT." The word "YIELD" apparently has no meaning whatever to some drivers.

Sizemore argues that drivers are allowed to approach some intersections in Oklahoma City at 40, 45 and even 50 mph. He asks "Why allow any traffic above 35 mph?" at major intersections.

"Yes, I know people are always griping because they cannot go faster and faster," the lawyer wrote, "but the elements that cause more accidents are speed, lack of attention and lack of caution as to all other traffic, and lack of courtesy."

Then he makes what might be the most important part of his case. He said that attention to driving and courtesy seem to be diminished as speed increases.

Discourtesy has become accepted as a normal way of life. You see it demonstrated in entertainment, sports, business, society, and TV commercials, but rudeness is more hazardous to human life on streets and highways than anywhere else.

It might help to draft simpler traffic laws, but it would help more if each driver had a few lessons in common courtesy.