

Our Transportation System is in Crisis – 318

Do the Police know or care what is happening on the Chaguanas Main Road every night between the Flyover and Busy Corner? There is more traffic there every night than in the daytime. Illegal DVD vendors come out in numbers, and often customers park on the road and scan the many offers on the sidewalk. My concern is not with the copyright issue, but with the traffic congestion occurring every night. Imagine Sunday night traffic at that location is worse than on a peak period weekday!

If there were other urgently needed interchanges to bypass this area, I am sure most people would not be concerned, but the motoring public have no choice, but to travel in that tremendously constrained area in the Chaguanas urban centre, and so the vending trade capitalises on this.

Does somebody have to beg the Police to enforce the traffic delays and unnecessary constraints at that location? Does this action require extra duty for the Police? Who else can the motoring public depend on for relief?

Next, why do the Police on extra duty conducting chaperone work with extra-large vehicles, behave like bad dogs? If they are insecure in their knowledge of this type of traffic control, then they should let those who do take the assignment. But their lack of traffic control knowledge is often betrayed by their actions, and then they, in turn, display arrogance and hoggish attitude to the already confused motorists. Whoever is doing this type of Police training should insist that only the quality graduates are offered for this type of extra duty, and that the training must be well-flavoured with good public behaviour.

Is the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) only concerned with occupational health and safety issues within their

plants? If not, why, when they are replacing or repairing street lights in the middle of the Churchill-Roosevelt Highway on the right lane, they feel it safe to simply place two traffic cones just behind their truck. Highway work zone techniques a minimum specified decision sight distance for the respective operational speed of the highway to be adhered to. In addition, how come the Police do not insist on mandatory Police support on the highway for T&TEC as they do when the Ministry of Works does anything on the highway?

The decision sight distance is defined as the distance required for a driver to detect an unexpected or otherwise difficult-to-perceive information source or hazard in a roadway environment that may be visually cluttered, recognize the hazard or its threat potential, select an appropriate speed and path, and initiate and complete the required manoeuvre safely and efficiently.” According to

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the decision sight distance requires about 6 to 10 seconds to detect and understand the situation and 4 to 4.5 seconds to perform the appropriate manoeuvre.

Drivers develop expectations on how to drive a roadway through experience, training and habit. At times these expectations are in error because they use inappropriate informal information, or the formal information provided is not proper or gives mixed messages. Formal information includes the traffic-control devices and the geometric design features of the roadway, but does not include the roadside features such as ditch lines, guardrail, and other street furniture. Informal information includes roadside features and also land use features, such as brush lines, tree lines, fences and information

signing. Often, the information at a location is conflicting, and drivers who are familiar with the location will read traffic conditions differently than unfamiliar drivers. Increased perception reaction time is needed to allow time for drivers to make the proper decision when information conflicts and driver expectancy may be in error. Further, high volume and high speed conditions require longer decision times and compound any problems arising from driver expectancy.

Decision sight distance for a highway ranges between 150m and 300m for highway design speeds of 50 kmph to 100 kmph, respectively.

On many mornings on the northbound carriageway on the Uriah Butler Highway just past the entry ramp to the highway from the Caroni Bird Sanctuary Interchange, there is a motorcycle Police officer with his bike parked just outside the edge of the right lane, and he is standing between either the right and middle lanes, or the middle and left lanes. Does he not realize that he is causing traffic impedance? The traffic slows to an unnecessary crawl, and he just has to turn around to see that the traffic dramatically speeds up past him. What is the purpose of his action? In addition to the traffic impedance, it is a very unsafe action by him that could have serious consequences, because he is only seen when near to him.

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