



AAP Supplement in the Philippine Daily Inquirer

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How Road Signs and Markings Save Lives

Every time we hit the road, we see road signs and markings along the way but not all of us know what they mean. Some think that the white markings and lines on the road are simply for decoration while others ignore traffic signs. This lack of knowledge about traffic signs and road markings and/or disregarding them are the most common causes of the increase in road traffic crashes that kill and injure road users, according to the World Health Organization. For this reason, non-profit, public service-oriented non-government organizations like the Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) are focused on promoting road safety.

Over the years, AAP, as a club member of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) together with other local private organizations has implemented various road safety campaigns to reduce road traffic injuries and fatalities. Among the road safety initiatives that AAP has taken up is the education of road users – motorists, pedestrians, motorcyclists and bicyclists -- to help them respond effectively to road signs and markings.



Some of the most commonly used warning signs.

Standardizing Traffic Signs

To ensure that road traffic signs will be instantly recognized and understood by all road users and thereby improve road safety, the United Nations requested its member countries to sign an international treaty that standardized the road traffic system for international use.

The Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals was created on November 8, 1968 during the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO) Conference on Road Traffic at Vienna, Austria. A total of 52 contracting countries including the Philippines agreed to accept the system as described in the convention. However, the Philippines adopted the system only five years later due to the failure of the Congress to ratify it. Amendments, including new provisions regarding the legibility of signs, markings, priority at roundabouts and new signs to improve safety in tunnels were formally adopted by then President Ferdinand Marcos on June 6, 1973 under Presidential Decree No. 207.



A "hybrid" road sign translates a traffic rule into the vernacular.

The Land Transportation Office (LTO) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) carry out the internationally prescribed uniform traffic rules and signs to facilitate foreign nationals and tourists whose language differences may create barriers. But since Pilipino/ Tagalog is the country's national language, the DPWH also posts "hybrid" road signs that have a Tagalog translation underneath to achieve the widest public comprehension. Although hybrid road signs are acceptable, they are not generally recommended unless absolutely necessary.

Unfortunately, some commercial establishments post road signs that have no traffic redeeming value since they only advertise products or services and/or show the way to the commercial enterprise's location. These commercial road signs only serve to distract and confuse motorists, so they do not promote road safety and therefore should be removed by the pertinent government authorities like the DPWH and Metro Manila Development Authority.

Road Signs



A commonly seen regulatory road sign.

Going back to international standard road signs, Article 2 of the Vienna Convention classifies road signs under several categories. The three most common are regulatory signs, warning signs and informative signs. The regulatory signs reinforce traffic laws, regulations or requirements which either are applied at all times or under circumstances, upon a street or highway. The warning signs on the other hand, notify road users about road condition or hazards ahead while the informative road signs inform road users of directions, distances, routes, location of services and points of interest.

The Vienna Convention also specifies the symbols and pictograms that can be used in these signs. All signs, except for those that are not needed at night, must be reflectorized enough to be visible in darkness by headlights from a distance.

Precise shapes and sizes for each sign were also provided. The octagon red shape is exclusively for the STOP sign. The equilateral triangle with one point vertically downward is especially for the GIVE WAY sign. The circle symbols are reserved for regulatory signs while the equilateral triangle with one point vertically upward is mainly for warning signs.

Road Markings



Road lane markings also convey important messages. Like road signs, road lane markings inform the road user on what action he or she should and should not be taking. They also indicate regulations for parking and stopping and generate noise to alert drowsy motorists.

Broken white center lines are the most common type of road surface markings. The white center line is used to separate traffic movements on the road. If it is solid, drivers may overtake only if it is safe to do so. If solid white lines are drawn along both edges of the road, they mean that parking is prohibited. Another type of white line markings is diagonal stripes or chevrons that are used to keep traffic lanes apart or to protect any traffic that is turning right.

Crosswalks are white lines that are used to protect pedestrians. Motor vehicles are advised to slow down when approaching crosswalks and zebra lines except when the traffic is regulated by an officer or traffic lights.

Rumble strips or sleeper lines are a series of simple troughs that is ground out of the asphalt. It is a series of white lines that when driven over by a vehicle will generate tactile vibration and audible rumbling to the wheels, then into the car body. Rumble strips are used to alert inattentive drivers of potential danger ahead or signal them when they drift from their lane.



A solid yellow line that marks the center of the road separates the traffic travelling in opposite directions. Overtaking is permitted in one direction only. If the solid yellow line becomes double, all vehicles must keep right and should not overtake unless entering or leaving a driveway or private road or to make a permitted "U" turn.

A solid yellow line at the center is used to warn motorists not to overtake while a broken yellow line means overtaking is allowed if the way ahead and the rear are clear.

Some road markings feature cat's eyes, a retro reflective safety device used to enhance lane visibility especially on roads that lack street lighting but are subject to high speeds or high volumes of traffic. Cat's eyes are made of reflective glass spheres or reflective lenses set in a plastic or polycarbonate lense box.

Road signs and lane markings can save lives if only motorists would pay attention to their purposes and meanings. Ignorance and negligence should not be an excuse for road users who got involved in road crashes. To be safe on the road, be informed and follow traffic rules as indicated by road signs and lane markings.

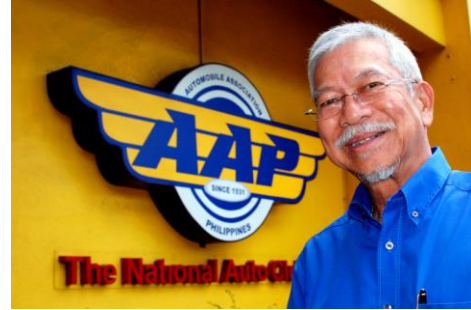


An example of double yellow lines at the center equipped with cat's eyes.

MAKING MOTORING FUN

“Ask not what ...”

By Gus Lagman, AAP President



“... your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” This phrase was popularized by US President John F. Kennedy in his inaugural speech in 1961. It had somewhat the same effect on Americans as our own President Aquino’s *“Kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap”* or his *“no wang-wang”* policy, on Filipinos.

And really, why not? Why depend on government for everything that we need? And knowing that the government is not wallowing in money, there’s more reason for us citizens to pitch in and do part of the work. Let me cite a couple of examples.

Road signs

Have you ever noticed the road signs along EDSA? To see or notice them, you need to wade through the clutter of other signs (and billboards) on the sidewalk, most of which, in the words of AAP Vice-President Johnny Angeles, have no “traffic redeeming value”. Drivers also mostly ignore them because they’re familiar with the streets and don’t need those signs.

But what about those who hardly pass this major thoroughfare? And what about tourists who prefer to drive than employ drivers? Given that we now have the “pocket open skies” that has increased the inflow of tourists; we may have more of them to care for.

In a recent AAP meeting, we thought of reviving a program that was first introduced in the 1990s – the “Adopt a Road Section” project. The idea, modified in this context, is for a company to “adopt” a section of EDSA by clearing it of useless and non-standard signs, then replacing them with signs that follow international standards and are properly located. Part of the “adoption” is seeing to it that the improvements are maintained.

AAP can help in at least two ways: coordinating with the MMDA and doing the research work on standard road signs and how to properly locate them.

Testing new drivers

It is common knowledge that many drivers can secure driving permits without going through standard written and practical testing. Not as commonly known is that many road crashes (we prefer NOT to call them “accidents” because they are, in fact, preventable) are

caused by driver errors. Don't believe them when they say "nawalan ng preno" (vehicle lost its brakes). That's just an excuse.

This situation can be traced to the sad reality that many of the drivers DO NOT really know how to drive and/or DO NOT know the rules of road traffic.

Perhaps one reason for this "relaxed" *de facto* policy is that the Land Transportation Office does not have the necessary personnel for the testing of driver-applicants. If this is so, then this is yet another opportunity for ordinary citizens/motorists to help out.

What if AAP members volunteer to take care of testing these applicants? With 20,000 regular members, even if only 5% of them volunteer half-a-day a year, working with a partner, there would be enough to take care of this task. It's much like jury duty in the US – but much easier. AAP can help in coordinating with the LTO and in training the volunteer-trainers.

Two simple ideas, but with significant impact on making motoring in the Philippines safer and more fun!

(Comments are welcome. Please email AAP at aaproadsafety@yahoo.com)

AAP moves main office to 28 EDSA Greenhills

AAP has moved its main office to an address that is more accessible and visible to its members and the motoring public at, 28 EDSA, Greenhills, San Juan City with 655 5889 as the new trunk line. Formally blessed on August 5, 2011, AAP's new office is more convenient for members, visitors and staff alike as it is near the MRT, other private and government office buildings and commercial centers.

Compared to the old building at 683 Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City where AAP housed its main office since 1983, 28 EDSA offers more space for AAP's growing activities and membership services. AAP is renting the ground floor of the Pacific Office Manachines, Inc. building at 28 EDSA and has remodeled the premises to provide a more pleasant and efficient working environment conducive to improved productivity, better membership service and greater teamwork among AAP employees.

Included in the facilities are a reception, exhibit area, training room, flexible function rooms and a board room for meetings plus free wi-fi. A desk to accept applications for AAP membership and the Philippine International Driving Permit (PIDP) will be retained at the soon-to-open AAP Goodyear Auto Care Center at 682 Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City across the old main office. However, the PIDPs will be released the next working day if application therefor is made in Quezon City. The LTO Registration Assistance service for members will also remain in Quezon City.

This is the fifth time in its 80-year history that AAP has moved its main office. When AAP, then known as the Philippine Motor Association was organized in 1931, its first office was in a room at the Manila Hotel. After World War II, it was relocated to one of the Legarda Hermanos buildings at R. Hidalgo Street in Quiapo, Manila. In 1981, the national auto club moved to Sta. Mesa, Manila and two years later AAP acquired the property at 683 Aurora Boulevard in Quezon City which became its main office for 28 years. To date, AAP has satellite offices in Makati City, Alabang, San Fernando, Pampanga, Cebu and Davao City.



AAP President Gus Lagman (left) and AAP Treasurer Jacinto Mantaring (right) sprinkle coins and candies for good luck during the blessing of the new office.

AAP and PSC coordinating to make auto racing safer

In line with its commitment to promote four-wheel motorsport in the country, the Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) Motorsport Committee chaired by AAP Director Mandy Eduque is working with the Philippine Race Car Drivers Association in drafting the 2011 Philippine Touring Car Championship (PTTC) sporting and technical regulations. The revised policy will allow faster cars with bigger engine displacements to compete on the race track.

And to make motorsport safer for everyone concerned, AAP met with Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) officials last August 3rd to discuss possible partnership with local government units (LGUs) to establish stricter safety guidelines for auto racing. AAP, as the country's sole governing body for four-wheel motorsport due to its membership in the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), will work closely with the PSC in developing and promoting auto racing.

The PSC, as the prime catalyst and advocate of the propagation of Philippine sports, will work hand in hand with AAP Motorsport by overseeing the civil aspect of auto racing and officially recognizing the various disciplines of four-wheel motorsport sanctioned and calendared by AAP. These are karting, circuit racing, slalom, drag racing, auto rally, hill climb and 4X4 off-road.

"AAP can now set and implement stricter guidelines in ensuring safety in all auto racing events with the help of the government thru the Philippine Sports Commission," Mark Desales of the AAP Motorsport Committee said. A Memorandum Circular is being drafted by PSC officials with the help and participation of other government agencies and LGUs that will take effect once approved by the working group including the AAP Motorsport Committee.

The AAP Motorsport Committee will support the 2011 PTCC and PPCC series as the promoter and organizer. The 2011 series will be held from November 2011 to February 2012 at the Batangas Racing Circuit and Clark International Speedway.

MOTORSPORT CALENDAR June-August 2011	
AUGUST	
27-28	5th Leg Karting <i>Enchanted Kingdom</i>
SEPTEMBER	
3-4	3rd Leg AKOC <i>Indonesia</i>
11	8th Leg Slalom <i>SM Southmall</i>
	4th Leg Autocross
17-18	6th Leg GT <i>Batangas Racing Circuit</i>
24-25	6th Leg Karting <i>Clark International Speedway</i>
OCTOBER	
1-2	3rd Leg AKOC <i>Indonesia</i>
9	9th Leg Slalom <i>Nova Market</i>
15-16	7th Leg GT <i>Clark International Speedway</i>

AAP welcomes new insurance partners

The Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) recently added three new insurance partners to expand its provider team. Federal Phoenix continues as the lead insurer for motor car insurance while the three new companies will focus on new product lines which will be made available to the members.

Malayan Insurance Company developed a Repatriation Insurance Coverage for AAP members who are Overseas Foreign Workers. Repatriation insurance provides for the cost of traveling back to the Philippines in the event of an accident or a defined unforeseen event in a foreign country.

After extended negotiations with FLT Insurance, they will now provide comprehensive insurance coverage for vehicles ten years old and above. This will include vintage cars. This is the first time such motorcar coverage is made available under a group program. Cars more than ten years old normally require extensive negotiations for coverage with insurance companies. AAP members will have access to this program which is not available to the public.

Direct Link through UCPG Gen will service the over thirty thousand members of PIDP for their motorcar and other non-life insurance needs. Direct Link will utilize their current outbound call center for this purpose.

AAP members who drive vintage cars or vehicles that are 10 to 20 years of age can apply for motor vehicle insurance with the FLT PRIME Insurance Corporation. FLT PRIME offers two major divisions of auto insurance coverage. The first one is physical or material damage coverage which protects the insured from loss or damage to the car itself. Examples of covered losses are collision or overturning, fire, lightning, self-ignition, external explosion, burglary, theft, malicious act other than by the insured, whilst being transported by road, rail, inland transit, lift or elevator. The second one is casualty coverage referring to liability and personal accident coverage afforded under the motor car policy. It consists of the following sub-groupings; bodily Injury liability, property damage liability and personal accident.

Under the Property Damage Liability, the insured shall become legally obligated to pay for injury and/or damage to property belonging to others caused by an accident arising from the use, ownership and maintenance of the insured vehicle, subject to policy limits. Meanwhile, the personal accident insurance covers death or injuries to occupants of the vehicle resulting from an accident while boarding, riding or alighting from the insured vehicle, regardless of liability. FLT will offer special rates for AAP members.

Other products currently being developed are packaged plans for residential fire insurance of members. The insurance group of AAP seeks to address not only the motorcar insurance needs but will offer more and more non-life products exclusively for members under a very competitive pricing scheme. A market comparison of AAP insurance rates show that we have successfully negotiated for the lowest rates for insurance in the market today.

For more details, please call the AAP main office at 655 5889 local 810, 812 and 813 or email us at aapinsurance@gmail.com.

AAP Fields Super Big Brothers for Emergency Roadside Service

AAP recently added two big Fuso crane-type tow trucks to its Emergency Roadside Service fleet.. Dubbed as Super Big Brothers, the brand new tow trucks will be used to recover cement mixers, dump trucks, heavy equipment and other large, heavy duty vehicles. They are stationed at the AAP' South Operations Office in South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) and at the Skyway O & M Corporation (SOMCO)

Like other AAP tow trucks, the recovery vehicles will be equipped with a GPS tracking device for faster deployment. The GPS tracking device allows AAP dispatchers to know exactly which ERS truck is closest to the intervention site.

AAP is the exclusive ERS provider at the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx), the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx), the Skyway and ground level expressway from Magallanes to Alabang (SOMCO), and South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) from Alabang to Carmona. For assistance, call the AAP hotlines 723-0808 or 726-0191.




One of AAP's two new Super Big Brothers


ADS:

Attention, AAP Members!
Do you want to receive an LTO Vehicle Registration Reminder?

Kindly submit your contact details to AAP Membership Department to receive a reminder via e-mail or text.



For more details, pls call AAP hotline 7230808 or visit us at 682 Aurora Blvd., Quezon City and look for Jobelle Sabellano



LTO VEHICLE REGISTRATION REMINDER

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR VEHICLE'S REGISTRATION

If you own a vehicle with license plate number ending in **8, 9 and 10**, you should renew your vehicle registration this **August, September and October**. The scheduled week of registration shall follow the middle number of your plate:

- 1, 2 & 3 : 1st week
- 4, 5 & 6 : 2nd week
- 7 & 8 : 3rd week
- 9 & 0 : 4th week

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE

If your driver's license is expiring and you are celebrating your birthday this **August, September and October**, you should renew your license a week before the date of your birth. Penalties are now imposed on late renewals even if you renew in the same month.

DON'T FORGET!



AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION PHILIPPINES

announces the transfer of its offices to
28 EDSA, Greenhills, San Juan City
(between Connecticut and Annapolis Sts)
EFFECTIVE MONDAY, JULY 25, 2011

Applications for new and renewal of memberships and international drivers permits, for immediate release will be processed at this new location; car registration services and a desk to receive membership and PIDP applications for 24-hour release will remain at our

AUTO CARE SERVICE CENTER
at 682 Aurora Blvd.

OUR NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER

655 5889

(connecting all departments)