

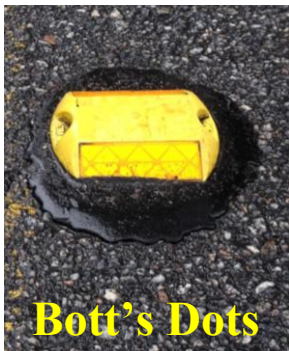
Just the Basics – 5 - Know Your Cars Dimensions

Knowing your cars dimensions is not being able to say my car is 173.5 inches long, 49 inches wide, 56 inches high, etc. You need to know where your car ends when you are in the driver's seat.

Most people have a fairly good idea where their car ends on the driver's side, a marginal idea where their car ends in the front, and basically no idea where it ends on the right side or rear.

This will take some practice, so here is some homework.

The best and easiest way to check out where your front and rear ends are is to check it in a parking lot. Come up to turtles (the tire stops), or a wall, and stop about 1 foot from where your bumper is. Get out of the car and see how close you are. Move the car to the one foot position. Check your position again. When you reach that one foot mark, get back in the car and look to remember where that one foot mark is.



The best way to learn the width of your car is while driving. Most cars have around 1½ feet of overhang front and rear. On the sides a few inches beyond the tire and then about 6 - 8 inches for the side mirror. If you can determine where your tires will pass, you can approximate where the side of the car is.

One method of figuring out where your tires are is to aim for the Bott's dots. They are frequently placed on both the yellow paint on the left side of the road and on the white right side. You know you have hit one when you hear the familiar "Tha-dup".

The blue ones you see in the middle of the lane indicate that a fire hydrant is directly opposite, on that side of the road.

They will not damage you tires or wheels, as long as they have sufficient air in them. You can hit them without getting out of your driving lane, but as always make sure there is no oncoming traffic. It tends to freak people out when they see someone coming into their lane. Don't know why....



There are now a lot of grooves or 'rumble strips' cut into the edges of the roads on major roads. These sound like rumble strips we have at the track, with a "brrrrrrp" sound when you run over them. Again, there is no risk of tire damage.

There is a BIG potential problem if you run over the yellow 'turtle' on the right. These are concrete and are about 2" tall. They have a large indentation where the reflector is. If you hit this, especially with low profile tires, you can blow out a tire AND damage the rim. I've seen it happen. This is at the exit of the main gate to Hilton Head Plantation. So stay away from these!



Practice using these tricks until you can tell exactly when you will touch them. By knowing where your tires are, and the width of your car, you can avoid many potential problems. You can easily avoid debris in the road, pot holes and possibly even avoid an accident.