

A View on the Rear View

By Rick Aslley

Most of our members will have learned to drive long before door mirrors were common and certainly before they were easily movable from inside the car. As to whether or not there is an absolutely right or wrong way to adjust them, I don't know, and I certainly wouldn't presume to instruct anybody on the matter. However, the magazine *Popular Mechanics* certainly seems to think it knows the right way and after trying the method suggested by an unnamed writer in a recent supplement to the magazine, I thought it worth passing along. I actually saw the article while in my eye-doctor's waiting room and instead of committing the sin of tearing out the page, I made sketches and notes, so the following is not exactly as per the original.

In the illustrations, the interior mirror's cone of view is depicted in yellow, while those for the door mirrors are blue. Most people, the article suggested, correctly adjust the interior mirror by sitting in their normal driving position and moving it so that they can see straight back along the road behind them. Remaining in the same position, they then adjust the door mirrors so that they can just see the side of their car. This essentially duplicates the view seen from the interior mirror and is not only redundant, but results in a dangerous blind spot. Note how as car B1 passes car A1, it leaves the view of the A1's door mirrors for at least a car's length before it can be seen from the driver's door window.

If, however, the door mirrors are adjusted by first moving the head and torso over to the left until the head touches the window glass (and the article notes that most will think this extreme) and adjusting the left mirror until the left fender can barely be seen, the blind spot will be eliminated. Note how car B2 now remains in the mirror view of car A2 until it is fully visible in the side window. The passenger mirror is adjusted by leaning over a similar distance to the right. ■

