How to Work with Lasers when Striping Pavement

Technology helps contractors save time, improve job quality

**Adding a New** piece of equipment or implementing technology seems to be the dominate solution when contractors are looking to increase their productivity. When it comes to striping, LineDrivers that convert walk-behind units to ride-ons have cut the cost of striping a parking lot in half.

Additional equipment in the form of lasers are continuing to help contractors improve efficiency on every job. Here’s what to expect when buying and using these tools on a job site.

**What You’re Buying**

Lasers are layout and striping tools that aid in layout and precision stripe accuracy. Some newer striping units have lasers installed on them, but after-market units are gaining in popularity as well.

Tom Cox, principal at We Do Lines based in Chandler, AZ, had been looking at lasers for a few years based on the buzz in the industry, but pulled the trigger on the purchase this year at National Pavement Expo in Charlotte.

Cox and his team work on three Graco LineLazer walk-behind units and have purchased one green dot laser and two long line lasers from LaserLine Manufacturing that they installed on each unit.

“Graco came out with their new LineLazer V machines and incorporated the GL-1700 green dot on the Auto Machines, along with many other great improvements,” Cox says. “At NPE, we purchased the GL-1000 Laser for long lines as well.”

**Lasers & Layout**

If you ask most striping contractors what the least favorite part of their job is, they’re likely to answer “layout.” That’s because traditional methods are labor intensive and time consuming using stringlines and excessive walking.

“With the lasers you no longer need to snap chalk lines, you just set the target down, line up the machine and go,” Cox says.

Here’s how this might work on a job:

**Assume the parking lot contains 100 stalls with single rows around the perimeter and one set of double rows in the middle.**

**Step 1:** Layout using a tape measure the stop and start marks for all 9-ft. stalls in both the single rows and double rows.

**Step 2:** Measure and mark the centerline. Using a laser, mark every 50 or 100 feet of centerline depending on the flatness of the pavement. If the pavement is flat, contractors can easily mark every 100 feet because the laser easily shoots that far. If the pavement goes up and down, or if there is an object in the way, markings need to be made more frequently.

**Step 3:** Strike the single stalls all the way around the lot.

**Step 4:** With the machine backed up right to the start of the first line in the double row, line up the laser with the stop and start at each end.

With the addition of auto layout systems, contractors no longer need to even use tape to measure and layout spaces, the machine does it for you and places a dot on the ground where the lines need to go.

“With both the laser and auto layout system in place we save 40% to 60% of

**Striking at NPE 2017**

**Session:** Improve Striping Productivity Using Today’s Technology

**Speakers:** Chad Jung, Superior Striping; Scott Longton, Superior Striping

Parking lot layout has come a long way from stringlines nailed into the pavement. This how-to session will take you through “the evolution of parking lot layout” from basic tape measure layout to today’s simple-to-use computer technology that will do your calculations for you and the industry’s newest cutting-edge layout tool: lasers. Two veteran striping contractors who have evolved along with the industry and its technology, will teach you how to efficiently stripe any job, easy or difficult. You’ll learn how you don’t need two or three people to lay out a parking lot and how one person on a job can layout and stripe accurately and efficiently. More lines faster is the goal and you’ll learn how to improve productivity using today’s technology.

**Session:** Parking Lot Layout & Striping Basics

**Speaker:** Robert Liles, Robert Liles Parking Lot Service

Laying out parking lots for striping follows a series of steps that need to be taken in the right order, and this new session by a veteran striping contractor lays it all out for you — starting from the beginning. You’ll learn how to read specs and blueprints, what it means to “square up” a lot, the importance of a base line and how to find or establish one, how to create a perpendicular line and what you can do with it, how to create the various types of angled spaces — and more!

**Session:** How to Stripe the Tough Jobs

**Speaker:** Pat Mendick, Mtkton Inc.

Here’s a session with no easy angle! Now that you know striping basics, you need to learn how to handle the tough layout and striping jobs — and this session by one of the pavement marking industry’s most innovative contractors will show you how. Learn to stripe both straight-line 90-degree and 60-degree angled stalls on both inside and outside curves using simple homemade tools — and no math! Learn radius development and how to stripe curved lines; plus, take home shortcuts that will make your daily layout work easier.

**Session:** How Your ADA Expertise Can Generate Sales and Strengthen Customer Relationships

**Speaker:** Ken Goldberg, All County Paving

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is the law that guides parking lot repair, reconstruction, paving and marking — but that doesn’t mean your customers know the rules. In this session you’ll briefly review the ADA guidelines as they relate to parking lots, but that’s just the beginning. You’ll learn how you can rely on the ADA to help you break through to just about any prospect just by knowing what to look for, how to fit it and how to convey that to the buyer. Knowing, applying and marketing your ADA knowledge appropriately can generate more and larger sales and can make you an invaluable resource for your customers. Learn how to be the local “ADA expert” who can protect customers from lawsuits and fines by bringing their property into compliance!
layout time," Cox says. "As we all know, the painting is the easy part, it's the layout that takes all the time. So if you can save 40% to 60% on layout labor you are going to increase your productivity and profitability."

**Precision Stripes**

In addition to reducing layout time, striping with lasers will give you an extremely accurate line. Traditional pointer bars require constant adjusting for varying extrusion sizes and those bars can be easily kicked out of alignment.

"The biggest difference we enjoyed was the lack of a bar for employees to kick out of alignment," Jeremiah Chamberlain with Highway Graphics says. "Without a bar to line up, training

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**Simple Set-Up**

Tom Cox with We Do Lines was initially concerned about the set-up of the lasers when it came to calibration for accurate lines.

"LaserLine made it very easy to set these lasers up," Cox says. "The unit came with a battery and all the mounting accessories, it was installed in about 5 minutes."

Once the laser is attached, it must be lined up so the beam it projects is straight. Contractors say the easiest way to line the laser with the spray gun is to use the joint where asphalt pavement meets the concrete curb line because that line is generally straight.

"When I first bought the laser, calibration was my concern, but now when I arrive at a job, it takes a minute or two to ensure perfectly straight lines. Once you get the calibration done, just set up the target, line up the machine and paint a straight line."

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