



Texas Department of Public Safety

Information for the News Media

Media Relations Office

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Show you have a heart: Slow down or move over for law enforcement and emergency workers

For Valentine's Day, the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) are teaming up to remind drivers to show law enforcement officers and emergency workers they care by moving over or slowing down, not only on Valentine's Day, but every day.

TxDOT will display the move-over or slow-down message on their electronic message boards beginning after evening rush hour on Friday, Feb. 12, and ending before rush hour on Monday, Feb. 15. The message boards will read, "IF EMERGENCY VEHICLE STOPPED AHEAD, MOVE OVER OR SLOW DOWN. IT'S THE LAW."

Since the move-over or slow-down law took effect on Sept. 1, 2003, DPS has given 14,288 citations to drivers who have violated the law. Although both DPS and TxDOT have worked to educate drivers about this law, Highway Patrol troopers and other law enforcement officers continue to see drivers who do not move over or slow down for emergency vehicles. The law applies to stopped emergency vehicles with lights activated, including police, emergency medical service and fire vehicles.

In Texas, in 2009, nine crashes involved an emergency vehicle that was parked for emergency purposes, including law enforcement traffic stops. Although the number is relatively low, each crash can have catastrophic results. <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/video/news/danger/index.htm>

The move-over or slow-down law requires drivers nearing stopped emergency vehicles with emergency lights activated to either slow down or change lanes. Specifically, the law states a driver must either slow down 20 miles per hour below the speed limit or vacate the lane closest to the stopped emergency vehicle that has emergency lights activated if the road has multiple lanes traveling in the same direction. (If the speed limit is below 25 mph, the driver must slow down to 5 mph.) **Drivers should only move over if they can safely and legally do so; otherwise, they should slow down.**

"Our Highway Patrol troopers and law enforcement officers across Texas are often conducting business on busy roadways with vehicles passing them at high rates of speed," said DPS Director Col. Steven C. McCraw. "Just the slightest slip of the wheel can endanger them. This law

requires drivers to give them and other emergency vehicles the space they need to perform their duties safely.”

A violation is punishable by a maximum fine of \$200. If the violation results in property damage, the maximum fine increases to \$500.

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