

**North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
Traffic Engineering and Safety Systems Branch**

**STANDARD PRACTICE
for
Stopped Emergency Vehicles - Move Over or Reduce Speed**

It is the standard practice of NCDOT, based on GS 20-157(f), to install signs on the highway right-of-way to warn motorists to "Move Over or Reduce Speed for Stopped Emergency Vehicles" or "Reduce Speed for Stopped Emergency Vehicles". All signs shall be located and erected according to the standards of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the North Carolina Supplement to the Manual, and the North Carolina Roadway Standard Drawings.

CRITERIA

- "Move Over or Reduce Speed for Stopped Emergency Vehicles" signs shall be erected on all four-lane divided facilities entering the state at or near the state line.
- Locations that may also warrant signing include roadways with narrow shoulders or restricted horizontal and/or vertical alignment. Other locations that may be appropriate for these signs include Weigh Stations, Rest Areas and truck "pull-out" areas, such as I-40 EB in McDowell County east of Black Mountain.
- Signs may be erected at specific locations on the State Highway System requested by the North Carolina State Highway Patrol, the Division of Motor Vehicles or other emergency management officials, as approved by the Division Engineer.
- All requests for signs should be forwarded to the appropriate Division Engineer for approval. The request should include crash data associated with vehicle crashes involving emergency or law enforcement vehicles along with any other pertinent data, such as records of arrests or results of targeted enforcement associated with aggressive driving.
- The "Move Over or Reduce Speed for Stopped Emergency Vehicles" sign shall be used only on four-lane divided highways or multi-lane facilities with two (2) or more travel lanes in the same direction.
- The "Reduce Speed for Stopped Emergency Vehicles" sign shall be used only on two-lane roadways.
- All costs associated with the manufacturing, erecting and maintenance of any approved "Move Over or Reduce Speed for Stopped Emergency Vehicles" or "Reduce Speed for Stopped Emergency Vehicles" signing, will be the responsibility of NCDOT.

- The sign design for “Move Over or Reduce Speed for Stopped Emergency Vehicles” and “Reduce Speed for Stopped Emergency Vehicles” shall conform to the attached approved NCDOT Standards.

GS 20-157: “ Move-Over/ Reduce Speed” Law

(a) Upon the approach of any police or fire department vehicle or public or private ambulance or rescue squad emergency service vehicle giving warning signal by appropriate light and by audible bell, siren or exhaust whistle, audible under normal conditions from a distance not less than 1000 feet, the driver of every other vehicle shall immediately drive the same to a position as near as possible and parallel to the right-hand edge or curb, clear of any intersection of streets or highways, and shall stop and remain in such position unless otherwise directed by a police or traffic officer until police or fire department vehicle or public or private ambulance or rescue squad emergency service vehicle shall have passed. Provided, however, this subsection shall not apply to vehicles traveling in the opposite direction of the vehicles herein enumerated when traveling on a four-lane limited access highway with a median divider dividing the highway for vehicles traveling in opposite directions, and provided further that the violation of this subsection shall not be negligence per se. Violation of this subsection is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

(f) When an authorized emergency vehicle as described in subsection (a) of this section is parked or standing within 12 feet of a roadway and is giving a warning signal by appropriate light, the driver of every other approaching vehicle shall, as soon as it is safe and when not otherwise directed by an individual lawfully directing traffic, do one of the following:

(1) **Move the vehicle into a lane** that is not the lane nearest the parked or standing authorized emergency vehicle and continue traveling in that lane until safely clear of the authorized emergency vehicle. This paragraph applies only if the roadway has at least two lanes for traffic proceeding in the direction of the approaching vehicle and if the approaching vehicle may change lanes safely and without interfering with any vehicular traffic.

(2) **Slow the vehicle**, maintaining a safe speed for traffic conditions, and operate the vehicle at a reduced speed until completely past the authorized emergency vehicle. This paragraph applies only if the roadway has only one lane for traffic proceeding in the direction of the approaching vehicle or if the approaching vehicle may not change lanes safely and without interfering with any vehicular traffic. Violation of this subsection shall not be negligence per se. (1937, c. 407, s. 119; 1955, cc. 173, 744; 1971, c. 366, ss. 1, 2; 1985, c. 764, s. 31; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 852, s. 17; 1993, c. 539, s. 372; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2001-331, s. 1.)