

DID YOU KNOW???

FATALITIES, INJURIES CONTINUE IN SPITE OF MOVE OVER LAWS

Slow Down, Move Over laws were first introduced in the United States in 1996, when the first "Move Over" law was introduced in South Carolina following the death of a paramedic who was struck at a crash scene. In 2012, Hawaii was the final state to enact such a law. New York was somewhere in between.

Often the most dangerous part of an officer's job is stepping out on the side of the road, whether for a traffic stop, or to investigate a crash. In an effort to protect those who protect us, every state has "Move Over" laws, requiring drivers to move over and/or slow down when approaching stopped emergency vehicles. In New York State, this law has been expanded to include flashing or rotating amber lights such as found on highway maintenance vehicles working along the roadside and utility vehicles including National Grid, Verizon, Spectrum and others. It even includes rural mail carriers as well.

Despite "Move Over" laws in all 50 states, officers in the line of duty are increasingly losing their lives on our nation's roads because motorists fail to move over when they come upon a vehicle on the side of the road with its emergency lights flashing. Just last month (May), a New York State Trooper was critically injured after his patrol car was hit by another vehicle driven by a 78-year-old NJ man along a western NY highway. The collision demolished the rear of the trooper car (see picture), which then hit the vehicle that the trooper had stopped. In 2015 in the US, 52 officers were killed in traffic-related incidents in the line of duty -- a 13-percent increase from 2013.



The U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has reached out to state and local highway safety partners to help get the word out to every motorist: *Move Over. It's the Law.* "It's far too common that those who protect us are unnecessarily put in harm's way," said State Highway Safety Office professionals from Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska and Arkansas in a joint statement. "Emergency personnel work in dangerous situations all the time, but motorists increase that risk when they drive by and ignore the flashing lights. Moving over is not just an optional courtesy, it's the law."

"Emergency personnel can only do so much to keep themselves safe when they pull over on the side of the road. The rest of the responsibility falls on other motorists," added Susan DeCourcy Regional Administrator NHTSA, Region 7. "So remember, next time you see those flashing lights on the side of the road, *Move Over. It's the Law.*"

While on the subject of safety for those jobs requiring work along our roads and highways, similar laws are in place requiring motorists to slow down and move over when passing by bicyclists and pedestrians.

Information for this article is courtesy of the National Sheriff's Association, Franklin County Sheriff Kevin Mulverhill, and Troop B Traffic Sergeant Brian Goetz.