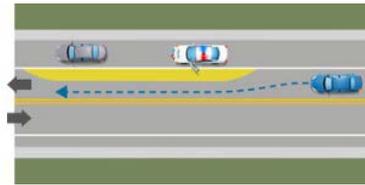


DID YOU KNOW???

SLOW DOWN, MOVE OVER LAW INCLUDES UTILITY VEHICLES

I recently met with National Grid employees from the Malone facility, and they requested that I review and explain again the “Slow Down, Move Over” law and how it applies to utility vehicles such as line trucks, telephone trucks, cable TV vehicles, tow trucks, and ANY vehicle parked, stopped, or standing along the side of the road and displaying a flashing or rotating amber light. National Grid’s request was based on their observations that few drivers seem to be aware of this Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL).

Section 1144-a (b) of VTL requires motorists to “exercise due care to avoid colliding with a hazard vehicle which is parked, stopped, or standing on the shoulder or on any portion of a highway and is displaying one or more amber lights”. Compliance with this law means slowing down to an appropriate speed (obviously lower than the posted speed limit) while passing these vehicles, and, if driving on limited access or multiple lane highways, moving over a lane if practicable. Even on two lane roads, if there are no oncoming vehicles, it is permissible to cross a solid line on your side of the road in order to give more room between your vehicle and the emergency or hazard vehicle you are passing if it is safe to do so.



A person convicted of a violation of V & T Law, section 1144-a (b) is subject to a fine of up to \$150 plus surcharges for the first offense. It also includes two points on your license.

The history of the “Slow Down, Move Over” law began with police vehicles. Shortly afterwards, fire and rescue vehicles were included under this law, and subsequent to that, utility vehicles were added. The need for these laws developed when an increasing number of police officers were injured or killed by motorists failing to slow down and give as much room as possible to enforcement personnel that were just doing their job. Fire, rescue and utility personnel were eventually added for basically the same reason that the law was intended for enforcement.

The last time I wrote about this law, which is similar in most if not all states, was in June, 2013, after completing a trip to Virginia. In that article, I mentioned that most motorists were complying, but along I-81, there are not many utility vehicles – just police enforcement displaying red, white and blue flashing lights. It was apparent that most drivers are aware that this law as applies to emergency vehicles, but may not be aware that it also applies to utility vehicles displaying amber lights.

In the case of National Grid employees, they are often high in the air working on power lines from a bucket truck. Imagine the potential for serious injuries or even death should a utility truck be struck by an errant motorist. That is the rationale behind VTL 1144-a (b). Incidentally, this law also applies to passing rural mail carriers displaying flashing amber lights.

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