



KANSAS

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New Move Over Law intended to protect roadside workers

Orange vests, hard hats and flashing lights can't always protect roadside workers as traffic whizzes by just feet away. In an effort to reduce the danger, the Kansas Legislature passed a Move Over Law that requires motorists to switch to the lane furthest from any stationary vehicle displaying flashing lights. The new law goes into effect July 1, 2006.

"People tend to not understand the danger workers face when working on roads," said Deb Miller, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Transportation. "Inattentive drivers have crashed into cones, barrels, signs, and even workers, causing injuries and fatalities that could have been avoided."

The Move Over Law only applies on four-lane roads or highways. The law requires motorists traveling on two-lane roads to slow down and proceed with caution when passing a stationary vehicle displaying flashing lights.

The number of crashes involving roadside workers has been increasing in Kansas. In 2002, 1,637 crashes involving roadside workers were reported compared to 2,164 in 2004.

(More)

The Move Over Law was enacted following the deaths of two members of Kansas Department of Transportation public works crews who were killed in traffic incidents in 2005.

The bill was modeled after legislation passed in 2000 to protect law enforcement and emergency workers. That law came in the face of grim FBI statistics, which revealed that traffic crashes claimed the lives of more police personnel than any other cause of death in the line of duty, including shootings. In 2005, 49 law enforcement officers died in crashes; 13 were struck and killed by passing vehicles while they worked outside their patrol cars.

Violators will receive only warnings until July 1, 2007. After that, violators can be fined \$90 for failure to move over. Kansas joined more than 30 other states in adopting legislation aimed at protecting public works crews and other roadside workers. Some bills passed in other states feature fines as high as \$1,000.

“The Move Over Law is meant to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities to police officers, paramedics, firefighters, tow truck operators and highway maintenance workers,” said Miller. “Reports show emergency vehicles of all types have been struck while parked beside Kansas highways, even while their emergency lights were flashing.”

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