

Okaloosa County News Release

- 1 – EMS New Siren & Move Over Law

Okaloosa County EMS Gets New Siren

Okaloosa County Emergency Medical Services (EMS), has added a new warning system to two ambulances. This system, called a Howler, is an adjunct to the traditional siren that gets drivers attention in a unique way. “In today’s traffic with noise dampening interiors, people on cell phones, stereo systems playing, etc., this device will be **felt** as much as heard,” stated EMS Division Chief Al Herndon. “It will definitely get your attention.”

The Howler provides deep, low frequency tones, which are able to penetrate vehicles, alerting drivers and pedestrians. The Howler adds a minimum eight second penetrating burst of low frequency siren sound for use in heavy traffic, intersections or other high ambient noise conditions.

“Not only will the new siren increase safety for the traveling public, but it will also aid in maneuvering through traffic, thereby allowing for a faster response to emergency calls,” added Public Safety Director Dino Villani. For more information, contact Okaloosa County Public Safety, 850-651-7150.

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- 2 – EMS New Siren & Move Over Law

Florida's Move Over Law

316.126 Operation of vehicles and actions of pedestrians on approach of authorized emergency vehicle.--

(1)(a) Upon the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle, while en route to meet an existing emergency, the driver of every other vehicle shall, when such emergency vehicle is giving audible signals by siren, exhaust whistle, or other adequate device, or visible signals by the use of displayed blue or red lights, yield the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle and shall immediately proceed to a position parallel to, and as close as reasonable to the closest edge of the curb of the roadway, clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed, unless otherwise directed by any law enforcement officer.

(b) When an authorized emergency vehicle making use of any visual signals is parked or a wrecker displaying amber rotating or flashing lights is performing a recovery or loading on the roadside, the driver of every other vehicle, as soon as it is safe:

1. Shall vacate the lane closest to the emergency vehicle or wrecker when driving on an interstate highway or other highway with two or more lanes traveling in the direction of the emergency vehicle or wrecker, except when otherwise directed by a law enforcement officer.
2. Shall slow to a speed that is 20 miles per hour less than the posted speed limit when the posted speed limit is 25 miles per hour or greater; or travel at 5 miles per hour when the posted speed limit is 20 miles per hour or less, when driving on a two-lane road, except when otherwise directed by a law enforcement officer.

(c) The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles shall provide an educational awareness campaign informing the motoring public about the Move Over Act. The department shall provide information about the Move Over Act in all newly printed driver's license educational materials after July 1, 2002.

This section shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway.

(2) Every pedestrian using the road right-of-way shall yield the right-of-way until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed, unless otherwise directed by any police officer.

(3) Any authorized emergency vehicle, when en route to meet an existing emergency, shall warn all other vehicular traffic along the emergency route by an audible signal, siren, exhaust whistle, or other adequate device or by a visible signal by the use of displayed blue or red lights. While en route to such emergency, the emergency vehicle shall otherwise proceed in a manner consistent with the laws regulating vehicular traffic upon the highways of this state.

(4) Nothing herein contained shall diminish or enlarge any rules of evidence or liability in any case involving the operation of an emergency vehicle.

(5) This section shall not operate to relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway.

(6) A violation of this section is a noncriminal traffic infraction, punishable pursuant to chapter 318 as either a moving violation for infractions of subsection (1) or subsection (3), or as a pedestrian violation for infractions of subsection (2).