

JAN 22 2010

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EMERGENCY RESPONSE VEHICLES.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

- 1           SECTION 1. **Findings and purpose.** (a) The legislature  
2 finds that a review of procedures for emergency response  
3 vehicles is timely. Specifically, questions have been raised  
4 about:
- 5           (1) Whether motorists can hear emergency response vehicle  
6           sirens;
- 7           (2) Whether motorists can see emergency response vehicle  
8           flashing lights;
- 9           (3) Whether motorists give low priority to emergency  
10          response vehicles or ignore them;
- 11          (4) Whether lights and sirens work effectively as warning  
12          devices;
- 13          (5) Whether travelling with lights and sirens quickens  
14          emergency response and transport times;
- 15          (6) Whether the use of emergency lights and sirens saves  
16          significant time;
- 17          (7) Whether the use of lights and/or sirens is necessary  
18          for non-time-sensitive responses;



1 (8) Whether driving an emergency response vehicle with  
2 lights and sirens is riskier than driving without  
3 lights and sirens;

4 (9) Whether, by correctly using emergency response and  
5 dispatch protocols at the time of 911 calls, the small  
6 population of time-critical patients or victims can be  
7 identified to justify the use of lights and sirens;

8 (10) Whether there has ever been a lawsuit filed in the  
9 United States or Canada complaining that an emergency  
10 response vehicle inappropriately responded without  
11 using lights and sirens;

12 (11) Whether the public expects the use of lights and  
13 sirens on emergency response vehicles; and

14 (12) Whether it is common for a caller to ask for a  
15 response without using lights or sirens.

16 (b) In 1994, the National Association of Emergency Medical  
17 Services Physicians, together with the National Association of  
18 State Emergency Medical Services Directors, published official  
19 practice-setting recommendations as follows:

20 (1) Emergency medical services medical directors should  
21 participate directly in the development of policies  
22 governing emergency medical-vehicle response, patient



- 1 transport, and the use of warning lights and sirens  
2 mode;
- 3 (2) The use of lights and sirens during an emergency  
4 response and during patient transport should be based  
5 on standardized protocols that take into account  
6 situational and patient problem assessments;
- 7 (3) Emergency medical services agencies should use an  
8 emergency medical-dispatch priority reference system  
9 that has been developed in conjunction with and  
10 approved by the emergency medical services medical  
11 director to determine which requests for prehospital  
12 medical care require the use of warning lights and  
13 sirens mode;
- 14 (4) Except for suspected life-threatening, time-critical  
15 cases or cases involving multiple patients, lights and  
16 sirens response by more than one emergency medical  
17 vehicle usually is unnecessary;
- 18 (5) The use of emergency warning lights and sirens should  
19 be limited to emergency responses and emergency-  
20 transport situations only; and



1           (6) Scientific studies evaluating the effectiveness of  
2           warning lights and sirens under specific situations  
3           should be conducted and validated.

4           (c) The purpose of this Act is to determine, when an  
5 emergency response vehicle responds to a call in the State, the:

6           (1) Impact of the use of emergency response vehicle sirens  
7           in terms of noise and whether the use of sirens  
8           enhances the safety of first responders and the  
9           public; and

10          (2) Relative effectiveness at nighttime of the use of  
11          lights rather than sirens.

12          SECTION 2. **Temporary task force; duty; composition; no**

13 **compensation; report; termination.** (a) There is created a  
14 temporary emergency response vehicle noise task force within the  
15 department of health to examine the issue of the use of lights  
16 and sirens on emergency response vehicles. The task force shall  
17 specifically determine the:

18          (1) Impact of the use of emergency response vehicle sirens  
19          in terms of noise and whether the use of sirens  
20          enhances the safety of first responders and the  
21          public; and



1           (2) Relative effectiveness at nighttime of the use of  
2           lights rather than sirens  
3 when an emergency response vehicle responds to a call in the  
4 State.

5           (b) The temporary task force shall consist of:

6           (1) Two members of the house of representatives to be  
7           appointed by the speaker of the house of  
8           representatives;

9           (2) Two members of the senate to be appointed by the  
10          president of the senate;

11          (3) One member representing the department of health,  
12          emergency medical services and injury prevention  
13          system branch;

14          (4) One member representing the state emergency medical  
15          services advisory committee;

16          (5) One member representing the department of  
17          transportation;

18          (6) One member representing the department of public  
19          safety;

20          (7) Four members, one each representing each of the mayors  
21          of the four counties;



1 (8) Four members, one each representing each of the police  
2 departments of the four counties;

3 (9) Four members, one each representing each of the fire  
4 departments of the four counties; and

5 (10) Two members representing emergency medical service  
6 personnel.

7 (c) Members shall not be compensated but shall be  
8 reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred, including travel  
9 expenses, in carrying out their duties. The department of  
10 health shall provide all necessary administrative, professional,  
11 technical, and clerical support required by the task force.

12 (d) The task force shall submit a written report,  
13 including any necessary proposed state and county legislation,  
14 to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the  
15 convening of the regular session of 2011.

16 (e) The task force shall terminate on June 30, 2011.

17 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

*James M. ...*

*Ross H. ...*  
*Will ...*

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*Carol ...*  
*Erzanne ...*  
*Arvid ...*  
*...*  
*...*

**Report Title:**

Emergency Response Vehicle Noise Task Force

**Description:**

Establishes a temporary emergency vehicle noise task force to determine the impact of the use of emergency vehicle sirens in terms of excessive noise and their effect on public safety and the relative effectiveness at nighttime of the use of emergency lights rather than sirens.

