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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 necessary to address issues of current concern to  
4 the public. Specifically, the issues that have been raised are  
5 whether:

6           (1) Emergency response vehicles sirens are audible by  
7           motorists;

8           (2) Motorists can see emergency response vehicle flashing  
9           lights;

10          (3) Motorists give low priority to moving out of the way  
11          for the emergency response vehicles or even ignore  
12          them;

13          (4) Emergency vehicle lights and sirens are effective  
14          warning devices;

15          (5) Travelling with lights and sirens decreases emergency  
16          vehicle response and transport times, thus saving  
17          lives;



- 1 (6) The use of lights or sirens is necessary for responses  
2 that are not time-sensitive;
- 3 (7) Driving an emergency response vehicle using lights and  
4 sirens is more dangerous for the driver or the public  
5 than driving without using lights and sirens;
- 6 (8) Time-critical patients or victims can be identified to  
7 justify the use of lights and sirens at the time and  
8 dispatch of a 911 call;
- 9 (9) There has ever been a lawsuit filed in the United  
10 States or Canada complaining that an emergency  
11 response vehicle responded without using lights and  
12 sirens when the use of the lights and sirens would  
13 have been appropriate;
- 14 (10) The public expects the use of lights and sirens for  
15 emergency response vehicles; and
- 16 (11) It is common for a caller to request the services of  
17 an emergency response vehicle without the use of  
18 lights or sirens.
- 19 (b) In 1994, the National Association of Emergency Medical  
20 Services Physicians, together with the National Association of  
21 State Emergency Medical Services Directors, published official  
22 practice-setting recommendations as follows:



- 1           (1) Emergency medical services medical directors should  
2           participate directly in the development of policies  
3           governing emergency medical-vehicle response, patient  
4           transport, and the use of warning lights and sirens;
- 5           (2) The use of lights and sirens during an emergency  
6           response and during patient transport should be based  
7           on standardized protocols that take into account  
8           situational and patient problem assessments;
- 9           (3) Emergency medical services agencies should use an  
10          emergency medical-dispatch priority reference system  
11          that has been developed in conjunction with and  
12          approved by the emergency medical services medical  
13          director to determine which requests for pre-hospital  
14          medical care require the use of warning lights and  
15          sirens;
- 16          (4) Except for suspected life-threatening, time-critical  
17          cases or cases involving multiple patients, response  
18          by more than one emergency medical vehicle using  
19          lights and sirens usually is unnecessary;
- 20          (5) The use of emergency warning lights and sirens should  
21          be limited to emergency responses and emergency-  
22          transport situations; 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 establish a temporary  
5 emergency response vehicle noise task force to determine, when  
6 an emergency response vehicle responds to a call in the State,  
7 the:

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

12 (2) Relative effectiveness of the use of emergency  
13 response vehicle lights instead of the use of sirens  
14 at night.

15 SECTION 2. **Temporary task force; duty; composition; no**  
16 **compensation; report; termination.** (a) There is created a  
17 temporary emergency response vehicle noise task force within the  
18 department of health, to examine the use and effectiveness of  
19 lights and sirens on emergency response vehicles. The task  
20 force shall specifically determine the:

21 (1) Impact of the use of emergency response vehicle sirens  
22 in terms of noise and whether the use of sirens



1 enhances the safety of first responders and the  
2 public; and

3 (2) Relative effectiveness of the use of lights rather  
4 than sirens at night,

5 when an emergency response vehicle responds to a call in the  
6 State.

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

8 (1) One member of the house of representatives to be  
9 appointed by the speaker of the house of  
10 representatives;

11 (2) One member of the senate to be appointed by the  
12 president of the senate;

13 (3) One member representing emergency medical services;

14 (4) One member representing the state emergency medical  
15 services advisory committee, to be requested to serve  
16 as a member;

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

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

21 (7) One member representing all of the mayors of the four  
22 counties;



1 (8) One member representing all of the police departments  
2 of the four counties;

3 (9) One member representing all of the fire departments of  
4 the four counties; and

5 (10) One member representing emergency medical service  
6 personnel, to be requested to serve as a member.

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 of its  
13 findings and recommendations, including any necessary proposed  
14 state and county legislation, to the legislature and to the  
15 council of each county, no later than twenty days prior to the  
16 convening of the regular session of 2014.

17 (e) The task force shall terminate on June 30, 2014.

18 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

Emergency Response Vehicle Noise Task Force; Established

**Description:**

Establishes a temporary Emergency Response Vehicle Noise Task Force to determine the impact of the emergency response vehicle sirens in terms of excessive noise, the effect on public safety, and the relative effectiveness of the use of emergency lights instead of the use of sirens at night. Effective July 1, 2050.  
(HB90 HD1)

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