
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 move out of the way for
11 the emergency response vehicles or even ignore them;
 - 12 (4) Emergency vehicle lights and sirens are effective
13 warning devices;
 - 14 (5) Travelling with lights and sirens decreases emergency
15 vehicle response and transport times, thus saving
16 lives;
 - 17 (6) The use of lights or sirens is necessary for responses
18 that are not time-sensitive;



1 (7) Driving an emergency response vehicle with lights and
2 sirens is more dangerous for the driver or the public
3 than driving without lights and sirens;

4 (8) Time-critical patients or victims can be identified to
5 justify the use of lights and sirens at the time and
6 dispatch of a 911 call;

7 (9) There has ever been a lawsuit filed in the United
8 States or Canada complaining that an emergency
9 response vehicle responded without using lights and
10 sirens when the use of the lights and sirens would
11 have been appropriate;

12 (10) The public expects the use of lights and sirens for
13 emergency response vehicles; and

14 (11) Whether it is common for a caller to request the
15 services of an emergency response vehicle without the
16 use of lights or sirens.

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

21 (1) Emergency medical services medical directors should
22 participate directly in the development of policies



- 1 governing emergency medical-vehicle response, patient
2 transport, and the use of warning lights and sirens;
- 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 pre-hospital
12 medical care require the use of warning lights and
13 sirens;
- 14 (4) Except for suspected life-threatening, time-critical
15 cases or cases involving multiple patients, response
16 by more than one emergency medical vehicle using
17 lights and sirens 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; 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 task force to determine, when an emergency response vehicle
6 responds to a call in the State, the:

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

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

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

20 (1) Impact of the use of emergency response vehicle sirens
21 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) Two members of the house of representatives to be
9 appointed by the speaker of the house of
10 representatives;
- 11 (2) Two members of the senate to be appointed by the
12 president of the senate;
- 13 (3) One member representing the department of health,
14 emergency medical services and injury prevention
15 system branch;
- 16 (4) One member representing the state emergency medical
17 services advisory committee, to be requested to serve
18 as a member;
- 19 (5) One member representing the department of
20 transportation;
- 21 (6) One member representing the department of public
22 safety;



1 (7) Four members, one each representing each of the mayors
2 of the four counties;

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

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

7 (10) Two members representing emergency medical service
8 personnel, to be requested to serve as members.

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

14 (d) The task force shall submit a written report of its
15 findings and recommendations, including any necessary proposed
16 state and county legislation, to the legislature and to the
17 council of each county, no later than twenty days prior to the
18 convening of the regular session of 2014.

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



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

2
INTRODUCED BY: *Hal Abrahams*

JAN 17 2013



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.

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