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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           (1) Whether emergency response vehicle sirens are audible  
6           by motorists;
- 7           (2) Whether motorists can see emergency response vehicle  
8           flashing lights;
- 9           (3) Whether motorists give low priority to moving out of  
10           the way of emergency response vehicles or even ignore  
11           them;
- 12           (4) Whether emergency response vehicle lights and sirens  
13           are effective warning devices;
- 14           (5) Whether travelling with lights and sirens decreases  
15           emergency response vehicle response and transport  
16           times, thus saving lives;
- 17           (6) Whether the use of lights or sirens is necessary for  
18           responses that are not time-sensitive;



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

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

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

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

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

18 (b) In 1994, the National Association of Emergency Medical  
19 Services Physicians, together with the National Association of  
20 State Emergency Medical Services Directors, published official  
21 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:

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

10 (2) The relative effectiveness of the use of emergency  
11 response vehicle lights instead of the use of sirens  
12 at night,

13 when an emergency response vehicle responds to a call in the  
14 State.

15 SECTION 2. **Temporary emergency response vehicle noise task**  
16 **force.** (a) There is created a temporary emergency response  
17 vehicle noise task force within the department of health, to  
18 examine the use and effectiveness of lights and sirens by  
19 emergency response vehicles. The task force shall specifically  
20 determine:

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



1 enhances the safety of first responders and the  
2 public; and  
3 (2) The 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;

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

7 (11) One member representing the blind community to be  
8 appointed by the director of health.

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.

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



**Report Title:**

Emergency Response Vehicle Noise Task Force

**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. (HB90 HD2)

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