
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EMERGENCY VEHICLES.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the use of sirens by
2 emergency vehicles can be necessary to alert other vehicles and
3 pedestrians that an emergency vehicle is exercising its
4 authority to disregard certain traffic laws, such as proceeding
5 through a red light or exceeding the posted speed limit. The
6 legislature further finds that some emergency response sectors
7 have determined that there should be flexibility to not engage
8 the siren in situations where it is unnecessary, such as
9 responding at night when the streets are empty of cars and
10 pedestrians. Further, the city and county of Honolulu has
11 expressed in its ordinances that the siren should be used "as
12 may be reasonably necessary". Despite this, some emergency
13 response sectors believe that the use of the siren is mandatory
14 in all circumstances. The legislature notes that the
15 unnecessary use of a siren contributes to noise pollution,
16 especially in heavily-congested residential areas.



1 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to provide
2 flexibility in the use of sirens by emergency response vehicles
3 in certain circumstances.

4 SECTION 2. Section 291C-26, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
5 amended by amending subsection (c) to read as follows:

6 "(c) The exemptions granted in subsection (b) to an
7 authorized emergency vehicle shall apply only when the vehicle
8 is making use of authorized audible and visual signals [~~7-except~~
9 ~~as otherwise provided by county ordinance.~~]; provided that use
10 of an authorized audible signal shall not be required if it is
11 not reasonably necessary under the circumstances. This
12 subsection shall not apply to police vehicles."

13 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
14 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

15 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



Report Title:

Emergency Vehicles; Siren Use

Description:

Makes it discretionary for authorized emergency vehicles to use sirens when responding to an emergency or in other specified situations if the siren is not reasonably necessary under the circumstances. (SD1)

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