

Move Over

Since 2011 Tennessee has joined other states enacting laws designed to provide enhanced safety measures to law enforcement officers and highway maintenance workers. Many of us know these regulations as the "Move Over Law". Tennessee Code 55-8-132 provides for any driver approaching a stationary authorized vehicle using flashing lights to "proceed with caution, yield the right of way by making a lane change into a lane not adjacent to the emergency vehicle, with due regard to safety and traffic conditions, if on a highway having at least four (4) lanes with not less than two (2) lanes proceeding in the same direction." Or, "proceed with due caution, reduce the speed of the vehicle, maintaining a safe speed for road conditions, if changing lanes would be impossible or unsafe".

In recent years the state statute was amended to include and define what are authorized vehicles to be given due regard and right of way. Currently these include; emergency vehicles (law enforcement, fire, ambulance, EMA), recovery vehicles (wreckers), highway maintenance (state, county, city, or authorized contractors) vehicles, solid waste (garbage, leaves removal, tree trimming, recycling) and utility (electric, water, telephone, gas) vehicles.

All drivers should be aware of the requirement to yield the right of way to the authorized stationary vehicles. In Tullahoma there is a combination of multi lane roads and two lane roads. Upon approaching a stationary vehicle as described above, the driver, on a multi lane road, should when possible and safely able, move to another lane. If not, reduce speed until safely beyond the stationary vehicle. If on a two lane road, the driver is to reduce speed and use due regard to safely pass the stationary vehicle. When a driver observes a stationary emergency or maintenance vehicle, care should be taken to watch for pedestrians, vehicle movement, and other unexpected activity. There are other statutes addressing pedestrians, bicycles, and parking on the road. In all instances, a driver must exercise due regard in the operation of their vehicle to recognize potential hazards. There are many other occupations that may temporarily stop on our roadways, please be a defensive driver and watch out for the other guy.

A driver that disregards the statute and provisions of the "Move Over Law" may be subject to a citation and fine of \$165 in City Court, or up to a \$500 fine in the County court. Let us all work to keep our emergency, maintenance, and utility workers safe. Any question about this or other Tullahoma Police matter may be addressed to me at (931) 455-0530 or pblackwell@tullahomatan.gov.