

ENROLLED

HB 1335

2004 Legislature

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to emergency lights on vehicles; amending s. 316.2397, F.S.; requiring wreckers to display amber rotating or flashing lights in certain situations; amending s. 316.126, F.S.; requiring drivers who are approaching a wrecker performing a recovery or loading on the roadside to take certain precautions; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (3) of section 316.2397, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

316.2397 Certain lights prohibited; exceptions.--

(3) Vehicles of the fire department and fire patrol, including vehicles of volunteer firefighters as permitted under s. 316.2398, vehicles of medical staff physicians or technicians of medical facilities licensed by the state as authorized under s. 316.2398, ambulances as authorized under this chapter, and buses and taxicabs as authorized under s. 316.2399 are permitted to show or display red lights. Vehicles of the fire department, fire patrol, police vehicles, and such ambulances and emergency vehicles of municipal and county departments, public service corporations operated by private corporations, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as are designated or authorized by their respective department or the chief of police of an incorporated city or any sheriff of any county are hereby authorized to operate emergency lights and

ENROLLED

HB 1335

2004 Legislature

sirens in an emergency. Wreckers, mosquito control fog and spray vehicles, and emergency vehicles of governmental departments or public service corporations may show or display amber lights when in actual operation or when a hazard exists provided they are not used going to and from the scene of operation or hazard without specific authorization of a law enforcement officer or law enforcement agency. Wreckers must ~~may~~ use amber rotating or flashing lights while performing recoveries and loading on the roadside day or night, and may use such lights while towing a vehicle on wheel lifts, slings, or under reach ~~only~~ if the operator of the wrecker deems such lights necessary. A flatbed, car carrier, or rollback may not use amber rotating or flashing lights when hauling a vehicle on the bed unless it creates a hazard to other motorists because of protruding objects. Further, escort vehicles may ~~will be permitted to~~ show or display amber lights when in the actual process of escorting overdimensioned equipment, material, or buildings as authorized by law. Vehicles of private watch, guard, or patrol agencies licensed pursuant to chapter 493 may show or display amber lights while patrolling condominium, cooperative, and private residential and business communities by which employed and which traverse public streets or highways.

Section 2. Subsection (1) of section 316.126, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

316.126 Operation of vehicles and actions of pedestrians on approach of authorized emergency vehicle.--

(1)(a) Upon the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle, while en route to meet an existing emergency, the driver of every other vehicle shall, when such emergency

ENROLLED

HB 1335

2004 Legislature

vehicle is giving audible signals by siren, exhaust whistle, or other adequate device, or visible signals by the use of displayed blue or red lights, yield the right-of-way to the emergency vehicle and shall immediately proceed to a position parallel to, and as close as reasonable to the closest edge of the curb of the roadway, clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed, unless otherwise directed by any law enforcement officer.

(b) When an authorized emergency vehicle making use of any visual signals is parked or a wrecker displaying amber rotating or flashing lights is performing a recovery or loading on the roadside, the driver of every other vehicle, as soon as it is safe:

1. Shall vacate the lane closest to the emergency vehicle or wrecker when driving on an interstate highway or other highway with two or more lanes traveling in the direction of the emergency vehicle or wrecker, except when otherwise directed by a law enforcement officer.

2. Shall slow to a speed that is 20 miles per hour less than the posted speed limit when the posted speed limit is 25 miles per hour or greater; or travel at 5 miles per hour when the posted speed limit is 20 miles per hour or less, when driving on a two-lane road, except when otherwise directed by a law enforcement officer.

(c) The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles shall provide an educational awareness campaign informing the motoring public about the Move Over Act. The department shall

ENROLLED

HB 1335

2004 Legislature

provide information about the Move Over Act in all newly printed driver's license educational materials after July 1, 2002.

This section shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using the highway.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2004.