

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 621

(Senator Raskin, *et al.*)

Judicial Proceedings

Environmental Matters

Vehicles Laws - Emergency Vehicles - Motorcades and Escorts

This bill authorizes the driver of an emergency vehicle, as specified, that is registered in the State or a local jurisdiction of the State to exercise specified privileges while performing motorcade or escort duty if the motorcade or escort duty involves homeland security, a funeral, a dignitary, or facilitating the safe movement of vehicles or pedestrians that are or will be near the motorcade or escort. The bill authorizes the driver of a specified emergency vehicle to travel through any local jurisdiction in the State as required to perform and return from motorcade or escort duty. The driver of an emergency vehicle is prohibited, however, from using flashing lights or a bell, siren, or exhaust whistle while returning from a motorcade or escort. Before exercising any of the privileges set forth, the jurisdiction that employs the driver of the motorcade or escort must provide notice of the motorcade or escort to any jurisdiction that the driver will enter while performing or returning from the motorcade or escort duty.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal reduction in general fund revenues due to the bill's exemption of emergency vehicles in motorcades or acting as escorts from specified traffic regulations. Notification and enforcement requirements can be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: Minimal reduction in local revenues due to the bill's exemption of emergency vehicles in motorcades or acting as escorts from specified traffic regulations. Notification and enforcement requirements can be handled with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: An emergency vehicle means those vehicles that are designated as entitled to specified exemptions and privileges that are set forth in Maryland law for emergency vehicles. “Emergency vehicle” means ambulances and vehicles of (1) federal, State, or local law enforcement agencies; (2) fire and rescue squads, fire departments, and volunteer fire companies; (3) the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems and the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute; (4) the State used to respond to oil or hazardous materials spills; (5) the Commissioner of Correction designated for emergency use; and (6) the federal State and local governments funded by these entities and used for emergency or rescue purposes in the State.

The driver of a specified emergency vehicle registered in any state may exercise the privileges set forth while responding to an emergency call, pursuing a violator or suspected violator, or responding to (but not returning from) a fire alarm. Under these circumstances, the driver of an emergency vehicle may (1) park or stand notwithstanding existing parking restrictions; (2) pass a red or stop signal, stop sign, or yield sign, but only after slowing down as necessary for safety; (3) exceed any maximum speed limit, as long as the driver does not endanger life or property; and (4) disregard any traffic control device or regulation that governs the direction of movement or turning in a certain direction.

The aforementioned privileges apply only while the emergency vehicle is using audible and visual signals that meet specified requirements; however, an emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle does not need to be equipped with or display visual signals. Also, the privilege to park or stand may only be exercised while the emergency vehicle is using visual signals that meet specified requirements. The driver of an emergency vehicle may not use flashing lights or a bell, siren, or exhaust whistle while returning from an emergency call or fire alarm, except that the fire apparatus that carries standing firemen may use flashing lights that are only visible to the rear. While parking or backing up the emergency vehicle to a fire or rescue station, however, the driver may use flashing lights within 100 feet of the entrance.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 889 (Delegate Malone) - Environmental Matters.

Information Source(s): Dorchester, Garrett, Harford, and Montgomery counties; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 18, 2013
mc/ljm

Analysis by: Karen D. Morgan

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510