



Larry Hogan
Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor
Gregory Slater
Acting Secretary

February 6, 2020

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 319 – Vehicle Laws - Move Over Safety Monitoring System - Authorization

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 319, but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

In 2010, Maryland passed the first "Move Over" law, which required motorists to move over or slow down when approaching and passing an emergency response vehicle. This law was expanded in 2018 to include service vehicles and utility vehicles. Service vehicles include bucket trucks, dump trucks, tractors, and MDOT vehicles with amber or flashing yellow lights. Utility vehicles include waste and recycling vehicles.

The MDOT State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) operates and maintains 17,000 lane miles of highway. The MDOT SHA Coordinated Highway Action Response (CHART) team is one of the longest standing traffic incident and motorist assistance programs in the nation and since 1989, has responded to over 1 million requests for service. It is estimated that MDOT SHA CHART has saved drivers an estimated \$1.5 billion in delay costs. Whether assisting motorists with a flat tire, refueling a stranded vehicle, clearing an accident scene, or patching a pothole, MDOT SHA crews work directly alongside drivers navigating the highways – often just a few inches separates their safety and serious injury or death.

Unfortunately, between 2014 and 2018, 3,461 people were injured and 46 were killed in work zone crashes. Additionally, in the past four years, 25 MDOT SHA CHART trucks have been struck at an incident scene or while assisting a disabled vehicle. Each one of these incidents represents a hard-working, dedicated state employee, whose life was in danger while performing a critical task and keeping Maryland's highways safe and navigable. Two MDOT SHA employees were struck and injured on the roadside just last week.

The MDOT SHA respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating on Senate Bill 319. Should the committee have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Department.

Sincerely,

Tim Smith
Acting Administrator
Maryland State Highway Administration
410-545-0400

Jeff Tosi
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-841-2850

The Washington Post

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Maryland drivers, please move over for emergency vehicles

By **Greg Slater**

November 15, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. EST

Greg Slater is the Maryland state highway administrator.

Being the Maryland state highway administrator is a role that requires a lot of early mornings and late nights out on the road and in communities. As I am out there, one of the things that always makes me smile is seeing one of our dedicated employees on the road helping someone in need, or getting a call, email or letter from those who were helped.

Three years ago, I was driving back from a community meeting late one night, and I heard a voice come across the radio unit in my vehicle that simply said, "I've been hit."

Our operations center responded, "Please clarify, your vehicle has been hit, or you have been hit?" There was no response.

AD

Our incident response representative was hit by a passing vehicle while he was outside his truck with its lights on. Fortunately, he was not killed that night. The time that passed until we located our team member was the longest 10 minutes of my more than 20-year career in state government.

I remember thinking about the family members involved and hoping their loved one was okay.

Fast-forward three years — on the anniversary of the expanded “Move Over” law designed to protect people from this very situation — I was preparing to go live on television when I received an alert on my phone. There was a two-vehicle crash on the Capital Beltway. Our Coordinated Highways Action Response Team driver pulled behind the crash to assist, exited his truck with lights on and was grazed by a passing vehicle. The driver did not even stop.

AD

These are just two stories that illustrate our challenge; two examples of many that happen every year to our employees on the road helping motorists or taking care of our vitally important transportation infrastructure. Two examples out of the many law enforcement officers who are struck while keeping us safe on the roads. Two examples out of many of ordinary Marylanders who are struck when they simply had a flat tire or car trouble and had to get out of their vehicle.

All of these incidents can be avoided and our personnel can go home safely and uninjured at the ends of their shifts if we all just move over, slow down and drive with great attention and care when passing a vehicle on the side of the road or when we drive through an area where people are working.

In the past year, law enforcement personnel issued more than 17,000 citations and warnings to motorists who violated the Move Over law. It requires motorists to move into the nearest adjacent lane away from shoulder activity of emergency personnel and service workers or to slow down if they cannot safely move into another lane. Violators face a maximum fine of \$750 and three points.

AD

Our courageous law enforcement officers, paramedics, maintenance crews and service responders are working within inches of vehicles traveling at high speeds. As you are traveling this beautiful state, please give these dedicated professionals who are our fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, spouses and friends the room they need to do their jobs safely and ensure they make it home. I see and experience a truly amazing and dedicated workforce every day helping people in need, taking care of our transportation system, picking up litter, cutting grass, clearing snow and ice from the system, and working to keep us a little safer. Working alongside these women and men, I see the pride they take in our mission. They deserve a safe workplace, and they deserve to get home to their families. Please, move over, Maryland.

Read more:

Robert L. Screen: Adding speed cameras on Indian Head Highway is the right step for safety

Mark Pierzchala: The Interstate 270 mess was decades in the making

The Post's View: Brace yourselves, Marylanders. Your commute could get much worse.
