

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 633 (Senators Hooper and Greenip)
Judicial Proceedings

Motor Vehicles - Rollback Vehicles - Use of Warning Lamps

This bill provides that generally, whenever a rollback vehicle is being operated to haul another vehicle, the rollback vehicle may not operate its warning lamps. However, a rollback vehicle being operated to haul another vehicle may use its warning lamps for the purpose of warning other vehicle drivers of the presence of a vehicular hazard requiring unusual care in approaching, overtaking, or passing.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to affect State government finances or operations.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A “rollback vehicle” is designed with a ramp on wheels and a hydraulic lift with the capacity to haul or tow an additional vehicle. Whenever a rollback vehicle is being operated with a vehicle being towed, the towed vehicle must be equipped to display tail lamps, stop lamps, and turn signals meeting statutory requirements.

Any motor vehicle may be equipped with:

- not more than two side cowl or fender lamps that emit an amber or white light without glare and are located at or near the front of the vehicle;

- one or more backup lamps, that may not be lighted when the motor vehicle is in forward motion; and
- warning lamps for the purpose of warning other drivers of a vehicular hazard requiring unusual care in approaching, overtaking, or passing.

Warning lamps must be mounted as specified in statute and must be visible from a distance of not less than 1,500 feet under normal atmospheric conditions at night. Every motor vehicle registered in Maryland that was manufactured after June 30, 1967 and designated as a 1968 or subsequent year model must be equipped with warning lamps, as specified. Any vehicle 80 inches or more in overall width, if not otherwise required by law, may be equipped with not more than three identification lamps showing to the front and three identification lamps showing to the rear and mounted as specified.

Warning lamps may be used by the operator of any vehicle when the posted speed limit is in excess of 45 miles per hour and the vehicle is traveling at least 20 miles per hour under the posted speed limit. The operator of any commercial vehicle must use warning lamps when the posted speed limit is in excess of 45 miles per hour and the vehicle is traveling at least 20 miles per hour under the posted speed limit. However, this does not apply to commercial vehicles operating within any business or residential district, whenever the vehicle is slowing or stopping in a lawful manner, or to any vehicle that is not equipped with warning lamps.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 23, 2004
ncs/jr

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