

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 322 (Senators Getty and Edwards)
Judicial Proceedings

Motor Vehicles - Driving to the Right on Laned Roadways

This bill establishes that, except as otherwise specified, on an expressway or a controlled access highway, a motor vehicle must be driven in the lane nearest to the right edge or curb of the roadway when that lane is available for travel. Existing penalties apply to violations of this requirement.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal increase in general fund revenues to the extent additional people receive citations under the bill's provisions. Enforcement can be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: Enforcement can be handled with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The requirement applies unless the vehicle:

- is overtaking and passing another vehicle going in the same direction in the adjacent lane to the right of the overtaking vehicle;
- is preparing for a left turn or an exit; or
- is in a high occupancy vehicle lane if the high occupancy vehicle lane restrictions are in effect.

Current Law/Background: A “vehicle” is any device (except an electric personal assistive mobility device) in, on, or by which an individual or property may be transported or towed on a highway.

Lane Directions – Center Lane: On any roadway divided into two or more clearly marked lanes, a vehicle must be driven as nearly as practicable entirely within a single lane. The vehicle may not move from the lane or from a shoulder or bikeway into a lane until the driver has determined that the maneuver is safe to do.

On a roadway divided into three or more lanes and that allows for the two-way movement of traffic, a vehicle may not be driven in the center lane unless (1) overtaking and passing another vehicle going in the same direction and while the center lane is clear of traffic within a safe distance; (2) preparing to make a left-hand turn; or (3) the center lane is allocated exclusively to traffic moving in the same direction that the vehicle is going and the allocation is designated by a traffic control device. The driver of a vehicle must obey the directions of each traffic control device that directs specified traffic to use a designated lane or that designates those lanes for traffic moving in a particular direction, regardless of the center of the roadway.

Obedience to Lane Directions – Two-way Left Turn Lanes: The driver of a vehicle is required to obey the directions of each traffic control device that prohibits lane changes on sections of a roadway. On a roadway with two or more lanes for traffic moving in the same direction, the driver of any truck, truck tractor, trailer, or bus must obey the directions of each traffic control device that requires the vehicle to be driven in a specific lane.

On a roadway with a two-way left turn lane controlled by traffic devices, vehicles may not enter that lane unless preparing for or making a left turn from or into the roadway or when preparing for or making a U-turn. Drivers then may enter the turning lane only if the lane is clear of any opposing movement. The vehicle must be driven the shortest distance practicable prior to making a left turn or U-turn or after making a left turn. On roadways with a two-way left turn lane, left turns may only be made from the left turn lane.

Penalties: A violation of the any of the above provisions is a misdemeanor with a maximum fine of \$500. The prepayment penalty for any of these violations is \$90 and, upon conviction, one point assessed against the driver’s license. If the violation contributes to an accident, the prepayment penalty increases to \$130 and three points assessed against the license.

Exhibit 1 shows the frequency of charges for unlawfully driving on laned roadways.

Exhibit 1
Citations – Driving on Laned Roadways
Fiscal 2013

Lane Directions	<u>Open</u>	<u>Prepaid</u>	<u>Trial</u>	<u>Total</u>
Unsafe Lane Changes	1,409	2,762	5,252	9,423
Prohibited Driving in Center Lane	5	24	45	74
Failure to Obey Designated Lane Directions	255	458	981	1,694
Driver Making Prohibited Lane Changes	34	207	140	381
Failure to Obey Traffic Lane Directions (Trailer, Truck or Bus)	40	304	130	474
Unlawful Entry into Left Turn Lane	8	11	24	43
Driver in Left Turn Lane Too Long	3	19	23	45
Failure to Make Left Turn from Left Lane	38	134	160	332

Source: District Court of Maryland

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 2 (Delegate Vitale) - Environmental Matters.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of State Police, Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 23, 2014
ncs/ljm

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