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NEWS RELEASE

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New Safety Law Takes Effect January 1st
“Move Over” Law Protects Emergency Workers

Dover – On January 1st, a new law to protect emergency workers and first responders takes effect in Delaware. Called the “Move Over” law, it requires any driver approaching a stopped emergency vehicle that has its lights activated, to either move over into a lane that is not next to the emergency vehicle, or to reduce his or her speed to a “safe speed” while passing the emergency vehicle if changing lanes would be impossible or unsafe. The law applies specifically to roadways having two or more lanes going in the same direction.

“Anyone who works alongside our highways is particularly vulnerable to being hurt by inattentive and careless drivers,” said Tricia Roberts, Director of the Office of Highway Safety. “Sadly, dozens of law enforcement officers alone in Delaware have been injured and even killed by passing motorists while working outside of their vehicles.”

“Emergency workers on our highways, whether they are law enforcement officers, firefighters, or EMS personnel, depend upon all motorists to be attentive to their presence. This law is intended to enhance the safety of emergency workers in the performance of their duties on our roadways,” according to Colonel Thomas F. MacLeish, Superintendent of the Delaware State Police. State law enforcement officials pushed for passage of the law during the last legislative session. At the time, 32 other states already had “Move Over” laws on the books. That number may now be as high as 38.

The “Move Over” Law applies to law enforcement vehicles, EMS vehicles, ambulances, fire trucks, fire police and park rangers that have stopped on a roadway and have their lights activated. A law already on the books in Delaware requires motorists to yield the right of way to “moving” emergency vehicles that are using either their lights or sirens, or both.

The penalty for violating the new “Move Over” law is \$25.00 plus court costs. However, police are hoping for voluntary public compliance of the law so that they won’t have to take enforcement action.

Although the law only address roads with two or more lanes going in the same direction, Office of Highway Safety officials are hoping that on two-lane only roads, motorists will slow down to a “safe speed” anyway to ensure the safety of emergency responders on those roads.

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