

Motor Vehicle Division Informational Memo # 18-11
2018 Legislation – Rescue Vehicles in Emergency Situations

DATE: June 12, 2018

FROM: Sara Siedsma, Compliance Officer, MVD

TO: All Office of Vehicle & Motor Carrier Services (OV&MCS) staff, Bureau of Investigation & Identity Protection staff, Iowa County Treasurers and County Treasurers' staff.

SUBJECT

This informational memo explains legislation enacted during the 2018 legislative session regarding rescue vehicles used to assist and rescue persons in emergencies or support emergency personnel in the performance of their duties.

SUMMARY

House File 2302 amended Iowa Code section 321.1 to also include a motor vehicle that is equipped with hazardous materials or emergency management equipment to the existing definition of “rescue vehicle.” The bill also added rescue vehicle to the list of vehicles in Iowa Code section 321.231 permitted to disregard certain parking and traffic signals in emergency situations. **The legislation is effective July 1, 2018.**

LINK TO LEGISLATION

2018 Iowa Acts, House File 2302:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/LGE/87/HF2302.pdf>

CURRENT

Under current law, a “rescue vehicle” is defined as a motor vehicle which is equipped with rescue, fire, or life support equipment used to assist persons in emergencies or to support emergency personnel in the performance of their duties. Also, while rescue vehicles are permitted to disregard certain parking signs under current law, they are not otherwise permitted to disregard traffic signs or signals or speed limits. Currently, only fire department vehicles, police vehicles, and ambulances are permitted to disregard stop signs, red light signals and exceed speed limits when responding to an emergency situation.

NEW

The legislation provides that a “rescue vehicle” is now defined to also include a motor vehicle equipped with hazardous materials and emergency management equipment, and also adds rescue vehicles to list of vehicles authorized to disregard red stop signals, stop signs and exceed speed limits while exercising necessary safety precautions and using an audible or visual signal, such as a siren or light, when responding to an emergency situation.

BUSINESS IMPACT

The legislation expands the permitted actions of a rescue vehicle operating during an emergency situation. The department does have a role in certifying private vehicles as rescue vehicles under Iowa Code section 321.451, and while the legislation does not directly impact the way OV&MCS functions, it is important to understand that a vehicle we certify as a rescue vehicle may now have expanded authority when responding to an emergency situation.