

Motor Vehicle Division Information Memo # 19-19

2019 Legislation – Vehicles Operated by an Automated Driving System

DATE: June 17, 2019

FROM: Sara Siedsma, Compliance Officer, MVD

TO: All Motor Vehicle Division staff, Iowa County Treasurers and County Treasurer's staff

SUBJECT

This informational memo explains legislation enacted during the 2019 legislative session creating several new sections in Iowa Code chapter 321 governing vehicles operated by an automated driving system on the public highways of this state.

SUMMARY

Senate File 302 adds several new code sections to chapter 321 to outline the requirements for motor vehicles operated by an automated driving system. The legislation creates a framework to allow driverless vehicles to legally operate in the future, assuming that they can meet the conditions established in the legislation, which include the ability to obey all traffic laws and the ability to attain a minimal risk condition (for instance by pulling to the side of the road and engaging the vehicle's hazard lights) whenever the vehicle's driverless system fails. The legislation also provides broad authority for the DOT to regulate the operation of driverless vehicles in Iowa. **The legislation is effective July 1, 2019.**

LINK TO LEGISLATION

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/LGE/88/SF302.pdf>

CURRENT

Current law does not address or consider the operation of a motor vehicle on a public highway of this state without a conventional human driver present in the vehicle.

NEW

The new legislation creates a framework to allow driverless vehicles to legally operate in the future, assuming that they can meet the conditions established in the legislation, which include the ability to obey all traffic laws and the ability to attain a minimal risk condition (for instance by pulling to the side of the road and engaging the vehicle's hazard lights) whenever the vehicle's driverless system fails. The legislation also provides broad authority for the DOT to regulate the operation of driverless vehicles in Iowa.

BUSINESS IMPACT

We will be developing business requirements for how we will implement this legislation as a layer within our Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) Cooperative Automated Transportation service layer. The DOT's Traffic Operations Bureau will be leading a cross agency team to develop those requirements within the next six to nine months. In the meantime, this directive does not significantly impact the way that MVD and County Treasurers operate at this time as the legislation

did not directly require any process or procedure changes related to vehicle registration, titling, driver's licenses or driver's license sanctions. Additionally, driverless vehicles are not yet in circulation or operating on our roadways. However, we have been preparing for policy changes that will become necessary as automated driving systems progress, and those conversations have included members from across the agency.

The Iowa Advisory Council on Automated Transportation, which includes members from across the agency as well as other agencies, industry, and associations, has also been established to share ideas and identify potential policy changes and considerations for automated vehicles, including driverless-capable vehicles, to operate on the public highways of this state. The legislation does provide the DOT with comprehensive rulemaking authority, and we will be involved in any such rulemaking as it moves through the process and will issue further guidance if there are procedural impacts to MVD.