

“Under the Trooper’s Hat”

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This winter season has been dangerous for North Dakota Highway Patrol (NDHP) troopers on North Dakota roadways. Numerous NDHP squad cars have been struck by passing motorists while troopers were assisting another motorist or conducting a traffic stop. Fortunately, no deaths or serious injuries have resulted from these crashes.

Being parked or standing alongside the road is one of the most dangerous places for emergency responders and maintenance personnel. Every year, numerous police officers and emergency responders are injured or killed by approaching motorists while working alongside the highway. According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) from 2003 to 2013, 138 law enforcement officers were struck and killed on our nation’s highways. All fifty states have passed laws designed to protect law enforcement officers, emergency responders, tow truck operators and highway maintenance personnel who are conducting business on roadways. Many of these laws are called the “Move-Over Law”.

North Dakota Century Code states all vehicles must move over to an opposite lane and shall proceed with caution when an emergency vehicle (police, fire, ambulance, tow truck or NDDOT truck) is stopped on a multilane road or on the Interstate outside the limits of a city. The emergency vehicle must have a flashing, revolving or rotating amber, blue, white or red light activated. If the approaching vehicle is unable to move over due to traffic conditions, the driver shall reduce their speed and proceed with due caution when passing the emergency vehicle(s). When approaching a stopped emergency vehicle on two lane road, such as a state highway or county road, drivers must slow their vehicles to a safe speed and proceed past the emergency vehicle/s with due caution for the conditions.

A rule of thumb is, if you see emergency vehicles and flashing lights, reduce your speed, move over and proceed with caution.

The fine for violating North Dakota’s Move-Over Law is \$50.00 and two points assessed to your driver’s license.

The North Dakota Century Code regarding motor vehicles can be found at: <http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t39.html>. Specific information on the Move-Over Law is contained in 39-10-26.

The mission of the North Dakota Highway Patrol is to make a difference every day by providing high quality law enforcement services to keep North Dakota safe and secure. NDHP invites you to Like our Facebook page for more traffic safety, tips and North Dakota Highway Patrol news: www.facebook.com/northdakotahighwaypatrol/.