WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2006

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ENROLLED

House Bill No. 4437
(By Delegate Swartzmiller)

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Passed March 8, 2006

In Effect Ninety Days from Passage
AN ACT to amend and reenact §17C-15-26 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to authorizing West Virginia Department of Agriculture emergency response vehicles to utilize red flashing warning lights.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That §17C-15-26 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and reenacted to read as follows:

ARTICLE 15. EQUIPMENT.


(a) Any lighted lamp or illuminating device upon a motor vehicle other than head lamps, spot lamps, auxiliary lamps or flashing front-direction signals which projects a beam of light of an intensity greater than three hundred candlepower shall be so directed that no part of the beam will strike the level of the roadway on which the vehicle stands at a distance of more than seventy-five feet from the vehicle.
(b) No person shall drive or move any vehicle or equipment upon any highway with any lamp or device thereon displaying other than a white or amber light visible from directly in front of the center thereof except as authorized by subsection (d) of this section.

(c) Except as authorized in subsections (d) and (f) of this section and authorized in section nineteen of this article, flashing lights are prohibited on motor vehicles: Provided, That any vehicle as a means for indicating right or left turn, or any vehicle as a means of indicating the same is disabled or otherwise stopped for an emergency may have blinking or flashing lights.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, the following colors of flashing warning lights are restricted for the use of the type of vehicle designated:

(1) Blue flashing warning lights are restricted to police vehicles. Authorization for police vehicles shall be designated by the chief administrative official of each police department.

(2) Except for standard vehicle equipment authorized by section nineteen of this article, red flashing warning lights are restricted to ambulances; firefighting vehicles; hazardous material response vehicles; industrial fire brigade vehicles; school buses; West Virginia Department of Agriculture emergency response vehicles; Class A vehicles, as defined by section one, article ten, chapter seventeen-a of this code, of those firefighters who are authorized by their fire chiefs to have the lights; Class A vehicles of members of ambulance services or duly chartered rescue squads who are authorized by their respective chiefs to have the lights; and Class A vehicles of out-of-state residents who are active members of West Virginia fire departments, ambulance services or duly chartered rescue squads who are authorized by their respective chiefs to have the
lights. Red flashing warning lights attached to the Class A vehicles shall be operated only when responding to or engaged in handling an emergency requiring the attention of the firefighters, members of the ambulance services, or chartered rescue squads.

(3) The use of red flashing warning lights shall be authorized as follows:

(A) Authorization for all ambulances shall be designated by the Department of Health and Human Resources and the sheriff of the county of residence.

(B) Authorization for all fire department vehicles shall be designated by the fire chief and the State Fire Marshal’s office.

(C) Authorization for all hazardous material response vehicles and industrial fire brigades shall be designated by the chief of the fire department and the State Fire Marshal’s Office.

(D) Authorization for all rescue squad vehicles not operating out of a fire department shall be designated by the squad chief, the sheriff of the county of residence and the Department of Health and Human Resources.

(E) Authorization for school buses shall be designated as set out in section twelve, article fourteen, chapter seventeen-c.

(F) Authorization for firefighters to operate Class A vehicles shall be designated by their fire chiefs and the State Fire Marshal’s office.

(G) Authorization for members of ambulance services or any other emergency medical service personnel to operate Class A vehicles shall be designated by their chief official, the Department of Health and Human Resources and the sheriff of the county of residence.
Authorization for members of duly chartered rescue squads not operating out of a fire department to operate Class A vehicles shall be designated by their squad chiefs, the sheriff of the county of residence and the Department of Health and Human Resources.

Authorization for out-of-state residents operating Class A vehicles who are active members of a West Virginia fire department, ambulance services or duly chartered rescue squads shall be designated by their respective chiefs.

Authorization for West Virginia Department of Agriculture emergency response vehicles shall be designated by the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture.

Yellow flashing warning lights are restricted to the following:

(A) All other emergency vehicles, including tow trucks and wreckers, authorized by this chapter and by section twenty-seven of this article;

(B) Postal service vehicles and rural mail carriers, as authorized in section nineteen of this article;

(C) Rural newspaper delivery vehicles;

(D) Flag car services;

(E) Vehicles providing road service to disabled vehicles;

(F) Service vehicles of a public service corporation;

(G) Snow removal equipment; and

(H) School buses.
(5) The use of yellow flashing warning lights shall be authorized as follows:

(A) Authorization for tow trucks, wreckers, rural newspaper delivery vehicles, flag car services, vehicles providing road service to disabled vehicles, service vehicles of a public service corporation and postal service vehicles shall be designated by the sheriff of the county of residence.

(B) Authorization for snow removal equipment shall be designated by the Commissioner of the Division of Highways.

(C) Authorization for school buses shall be designated as set out in section twelve, article fourteen, chapter seventeen-c.

(e) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, any vehicle belonging to a county board of education, an organization receiving funding from the state or federal transit administration for the purpose of providing general public transportation, or hauling solid waste may be equipped with a white flashing strobotron warning light. This strobe light may be installed on the roof of a school bus, a public transportation vehicle, or a vehicle hauling solid waste not to exceed one-third the body length forward from the rear of the roof edge. The light shall have a single clear lens emitting light three hundred sixty degrees around its vertical axis and may not extend above the roof more than six and one-half inches. A manual switch and a pilot light must be included to indicate the light is in operation.

(f) It shall be unlawful for flashing warning lights of an unauthorized color to be installed or used on a vehicle other than as specified in this section, except that a police vehicle may be equipped with either or both blue or red warning lights.
That Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

_Chandy White_
Chairman Senate Committee

_Carl Todd_
Chairman House Committee

Originating in the House.

In effect ninety days from passage.

_Douglas Roberson_
Clerk of the Senate

_Craig J. Skipper_
Clerk of the House of Delegates

_Carl Ray Towler_
President of the Senate

_Robert E. Flax_
Speaker of the House of Delegates

The within is approved this the ___ day of April, 2006.

_George E. Allen_
Governor