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NJ Traffic Incident Management Task Force reminds motorists to Slow Down, Move Over to Save Lives

Twenty-two emergency responders killed on roadways in 2021

(Trenton) – New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti and New Jersey State Police Superintendent Colonel Patrick Callahan, along with a coalition of transportation agencies that comprise the NJ Traffic Incident Management (NJTIM) task force, today announced the launch of a bumper sticker and poster campaign to raise public awareness of the Slow Down, Move Over Law.

The Slow Down, Move Over Law requires motorists who are approaching authorized vehicles displaying emergency lights to slow down or move over one lane away from the incident when it is safe to do so. The law was designed to help protect the lives of essential workers, including police, fire, emergency responders, highway operations crews, tow truck operators, and Safety Service Patrol staff, when working along the highway.

“The Slow Down, Move Over campaign is not just a catch phrase. For the emergency responders and others who serve the motoring public, the highway is their office,” NJDOT Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti said. “We want everyone to get home safe, every night. The goal is to remind drivers approaching stopped emergency or work vehicles to please slow down and if it is safe to do so, move over. That simple act could save a life.”

This bumper sticker and poster campaign is timed to coincide with the start of the busy summer driving season. The stickers will be placed on the bumpers of NJDOT and participating emergency response vehicles across the state.

The florescent pink color of these bumper stickers is not only meant to catch your eye, but they match the emergency incident sign color used at roadway incident scenes across the United States. These warning signs indicate to motorists that they are approaching an emergency scene and need to slow down, and if it is safe to do so, move over.

In addition to seeing these bumper stickers on state vehicles, Quick Chek, is partnering with the NJTIM coalition, and will be displaying the Slow Down, Move Over posters in the windows of 72 of their New Jersey stores and at 67 gas stations.

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"Troopers receive thousands of hours of academy training and have a multitude of tools at their disposal to protect them as they perform their duties on a daily basis, but there is no training or piece of equipment that can protect a trooper or first responder on the side of the road from a distracted driver," said Colonel Patrick J. Callahan, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police. "The 'Move Over Law' was designed to save lives. The sacrifice of Trooper Marc Castellano, who was struck by a car and killed on June 6, 2010, remains a constant reminder to the State Police family of the consequences of distracted driving. The purpose of this campaign is to remind motorists that when a vehicle has emergency lights activated on the side of the road, they should slow down and move over if feasible to allow police, fire, medical, and emergency services personnel to do their jobs safely."

Donna Setaro, the mother of State Trooper Marc Castellano, who was killed by a speeding vehicle while assisting during a roadside investigation, has made it her life's mission to share the Slow Down, Move Over message with the public. "The event is just two days prior to the eleventh year anniversary of my son, Trooper Marc Castellano's, tragic accident. This campaign to educate the public is **NOT** about the ticket or fines, but about the life you could save by following the law," said Setaro.

There have been 22 emergency responders and highway workers struck and killed throughout the United States in 2021 as reported by the Emergency Responder Safety Institute, www.ResponderSafety.com. This number does not include injuries.

"Our law boils down to simple courtesy and the care and caution we should all inherently be showing the folks that are working on and around our roadways," said Eric Heitmann, Director of the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety. "These folks already have a dangerous job – and we can all do something to make it safer for them – simple courtesy."

The Move Over Law was first enacted in 2009. Governor Murphy further strengthened the law in January of 2020 by imposing two motor vehicle points in addition to the fine that ranges between \$100 and \$500 per incident.

Traffic Incident Management Training

New Jersey is a leading state in Traffic Incident Management (TIM) responder training provided by NJDOT. It brings police, firefighters, medical personnel, transportation, towing, and other incident responders together to engage in interactive, hands-on incident resolution exercises. In New Jersey, more than 20,000 first responders have completed NJDOT's TIM training.

For information about New Jersey's Traffic Incident Management (TIM) program, or for responders looking to receive this free training, visit NJTIM.org.

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