

From the Office of the Sheriff:

If you have ever been involved in a fender bender? What did you do? What should you do? What actions do you take when you see a squad car or county truck on the side of the road? What should you do? Well, let's answer all those questions.

The WI Dept. of Transportation has recently launched informational campaign on a two traffic laws. One is Wisconsin Act 258 called "If you can steer it, clear it." The law requires motorists that are involved in a crash, if the vehicle is able to be driven, and no one is injured, to move the vehicle to a location where it will obstruct traffic as little as possible. The law also permits law enforcement and other response agencies to quickly remove vehicles, crash debris and spilled materials. The law also provides immunity from civil damages to any person who, at the direction of law enforcement, removes or stores a disabled vehicle, crash debris or obstruction.

To aid in compliance with this law, it has been broken down in a couple of easily remembered steps should you be involved in a crash. 1) Remain calm, check for injuries, call 911. 2) Provide accurate information as to the location of the crash and severity of injuries, road blockage and brief description as to what happened. 3) Steer it, clear it, if there are no injuries and your vehicle can be driven, move it out of traffic. 4) Stay safe, stay inside your vehicle with your seat belt on, turn on your hazard lights or raise your hood to warn oncoming traffic. Wait for help. The intent is to provide safer conditions for motorists involved in a crash, reduce the occurrence of secondary crashes, and enable traffic flow to return to normal more quickly.

Another law, passed in 2001, that is causing some local issues is the "Move over Law." The law is designed to protect law enforcement officers, tow operators, and highway maintenance personnel who are conducting business on Wisconsin's roadways. This law requires motorists on a four-lane road to move over one lane when passing a stopped emergency vehicle until you're safely past. If you can't change lanes, you must slow down and maintain a safe speed for traffic conditions. On a two-lane roadway, it requires motorists to slow down and maintain a safe speed for traffic conditions until you're completely past the stopped vehicle.

The "Move over Law" applies to any emergency response or maintenance vehicle with its emergency lights flashing, to include squads, fire trucks, ambulances, tow trucks, and highway maintenance vehicles. Each year hundreds of hard working men and woman are injured or killed by passing motorists while working along the nation's highways. Not moving over can be painful. If you are given a ticket, you will be assessed three demerit points and fined \$249.00. In addition, if you are involved in a crash your license will be suspended, if you hurt or kill someone, you face seven years in prison.

To date, we have seen several of these citations issued and gone through our courts. Many that have received this type of citation state they never heard of such a law. I believe that the lack of knowledge or familiarity of this law is one reason some may be in violation. My hope is to bring this information to your attention to ensure you are not the next to receive a citation. Thanks for listening, see you at the fair, [tnehl@co.dodge.wi.us](mailto:tnehl@co.dodge.wi.us).