

SENATE
STATE OF MINNESOTA
EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION

S.F. No. 3575

(SENATE AUTHORS: NIENOW)

DATE	D-PG	OFFICIAL STATUS
04/21/2016		Introduction and first reading Referred to Transportation and Public Safety

1.1 A bill for an act
 1.2 relating to transportation; governing vehicle lights and sirens during emergency
 1.3 response by certain responders; amending Minnesota Statutes 2014, sections
 1.4 169.64, subdivision 3, by adding a subdivision; 169.68; repealing Minnesota
 1.5 Statutes 2014, section 169.58, subdivisions 2, 3.

1.6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.7 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 169.64, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

1.8 Subd. 3. **Flashing lights.** (a) Flashing lights are prohibited, except:

1.9 (1) on an authorized emergency vehicle, school bus, bicycle as provided in section
 1.10 169.222, subdivision 6, road maintenance equipment, tow truck or towing vehicle, service
 1.11 vehicle, farm tractor, self-propelled farm equipment, rural mail carrier vehicle, or funeral
 1.12 home vehicle, ~~or~~;

1.13 (2) on any vehicle as a means of indicating a right or left turn, ~~or~~;

1.14 (3) in the presence of a vehicular traffic hazard requiring unusual care in
 1.15 approaching, overtaking, or passing; or

1.16 (4) as authorized in this section.

1.17 (b) All flashing warning lights ~~shall~~ must be of the type authorized by section
 1.18 169.59, subdivision 4, unless otherwise permitted or required in this chapter.

1.19 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 169.64, is amended by adding a subdivision
 1.20 to read:

1.21 Subd. 6a. **Flashing lights for volunteer responders.** (a) For purposes of this
 1.22 subdivision, "emergency responder" means:

1.23 (1) an active member of a volunteer fire department authorized by or contracting
 1.24 with any city, town, or township in this state;

2.1 (2) an emergency medical first responder;

2.2 (3) an ambulance crew member; and

2.3 (4) a certificated volunteer ambulance driver.

2.4 (b) An emergency responder may operate a motor vehicle that is equipped with an
 2.5 activated warning light, if the person (1) possesses a valid permit from the commissioner
 2.6 of public safety; and (2) is responding to an emergency call in connection with duties as a
 2.7 volunteer responder or has parked the vehicle in a location that poses a hazard to other
 2.8 traffic in conjunction with duties as a volunteer responder.

2.9 (c) A warning light authorized under this subdivision:

2.10 (1) must be the color red or amber, or between the colors red and amber;

2.11 (2) may be solid, flashing, oscillating, alternating, or rotating;

2.12 (3) may be displayed to the front or rear of the vehicle, or both; and

2.13 (4) must meet the requirements of the commissioner under section 169.65.

2.14 (d) The commissioner of public safety may issue a permit under this subdivision
 2.15 upon application, in the form and manner prescribed by the commissioner, of an eligible
 2.16 emergency responder. An application must include a certification that the applicant is an
 2.17 active volunteer or member, made by the chief of the fire department, ambulance director
 2.18 or manager, or similar person with overall supervisory responsibility.

2.19 (e) A permit under this subdivision expires immediately upon termination of
 2.20 volunteer membership or employment or when the person ceases operations as an
 2.21 emergency responder. The chief of the fire department, ambulance director or manager,
 2.22 or similar person with overall supervisory responsibility must immediately notify the
 2.23 commissioner of public safety of the expiration.

2.24 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 169.68, is amended to read:

2.25 **169.68 HORN, SIREN.**

2.26 (a) Every motor vehicle when operated upon a highway must be equipped with
 2.27 a horn in good working order and capable of emitting sound audible under normal
 2.28 conditions from a distance of not less than 200 feet. However, the horn or other warning
 2.29 device must not emit an unreasonably loud or harsh sound or a whistle. The driver of a
 2.30 motor vehicle shall, when reasonably necessary to insure safe operation, give audible
 2.31 warning with the horn, but shall not otherwise use the horn when upon a highway.

2.32 (b) A vehicle must not be equipped with, and a person shall not use upon a vehicle,
 2.33 any siren, whistle, or bell, except as otherwise permitted in this section.

3.1 (c) It is permissible, but not required, for any commercial vehicle to be equipped
3.2 with a theft alarm signal device, so arranged that it cannot be used by the driver as an
3.3 ordinary warning signal.

3.4 (d) All authorized emergency vehicles must be equipped with a siren. A vehicle
3.5 operated by an emergency responder under section 169.64, subdivision 6a, may be
3.6 equipped with a siren. A siren under this paragraph must be capable of emitting sound
3.7 audible under normal conditions from a distance of not less than 500 feet and be of a type
3.8 conforming to the federal certification standards for sirens, as determined by the General
3.9 Services Administration. However, the siren must not be used except when the vehicle
3.10 is operated in response to an emergency call or in the immediate pursuit of an actual or
3.11 suspected violator of the law, in which latter events the driver of the vehicle shall sound
3.12 the siren when necessary to warn pedestrians and other drivers of the vehicle's approach.

3.13 (e) It is permissible, but not required, for a bicycle to be equipped with a horn or bell
3.14 designed to alert motor vehicles, other bicycles, and pedestrians of the bicycle's presence.

3.15 Sec. 4. **REPEALER.**

3.16 Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 169.58, subdivisions 2 and 3, are repealed.

169.58 IDENTIFICATION LAMPS.

Subd. 2. **Red lamp; permit for volunteer emergency responders.** Upon obtaining a permit from the commissioner of public safety, any motor vehicles operated by an active member of a volunteer fire department authorized by or contracting with any city, town, or township in this state, an emergency medical first responder, or an ambulance crew member may be equipped with a lamp emitting a red light to the front of such vehicle. The lens of such lamp shall be not more than three inches in diameter. Such lamp shall be lighted only when the member of the volunteer fire department, ambulance crew member, or emergency medical first responder is responding to an emergency call in connection with duties as a volunteer firefighter, ambulance crew member, or responder. The commissioner of public safety is hereby authorized to issue permits on applications of a member of a volunteer fire department properly certified to by the chief of said volunteer fire department, and on applications for emergency medical first responders or ambulance crew members. The commissioner of public safety must be notified immediately upon the termination of membership in a volunteer fire department or when an ambulance or permitted emergency medical first responder ceases operations.

Subd. 3. **Volunteer ambulance driver.** The commissioner of public safety, upon application therefor, may issue a permit to any certificated volunteer ambulance driver authorizing the driver to equip any privately owned motor vehicle operated by the driver with a lamp emitting a red light to the front of the vehicle. The lamps shall conform to specifications adopted by the commissioner. The lamp shall be lighted only when the driver is proceeding to the location of an ambulance in response to an emergency call. The application shall be in the form prescribed by the commissioner and shall contain verification satisfactory to the commissioner of the applicant's status as a certificated volunteer ambulance driver. Any permit issued shall expire immediately upon termination of the permittee's employment as a volunteer ambulance driver.