

?Move Over? charges double

For the second consecutive year, the OPP is reporting one of the highest numbers of charges laid in recent history against drivers who failed to slow down and/or move over for emergency vehicles.

In 2016, the OPP laid 2,443 Move Over (and related) charges, surpassing 2015 which also saw a significant increase over previous years. The number of charges has steadily increased since 2011 ? a clear sign that many drivers still fail to consider the well-being of the roadside emergency workers the law aims to protect.

OPP Move Over Charges [Highway Traffic Act (HTA) Section 159 (2)(3)]:

2011 ? 1,181

2012 ? 1,346

2013 ? 1,404

2014 ? 1,593

2015 ? 2,050

2016 ? 2,443

The OPP reminds that there are two equally important parts to this law:

? HTA Section 159(2) requires drivers to slow down when approaching a stopped emergency vehicle from the same side of the road with its lights flashing.

? On multi-lane highways, HTA 159(3) requires drivers to move over a lane, if it can be done safely.

Drivers are also being reminded that the law was amended in 2015 to include tow trucks parked on the roadside with their amber lights flashing.

?With the Move Over law now 15 years old, it has long shed its label as 'Ontario's little known law', making driver ignorance a poor excuse for non-compliance. In light of all efforts on the part of the OPP, our policing partners and the media to raise awareness about this law every year, it is unacceptable to see drivers mark the last two years with some of the worst compliance on record,?

Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair, Provincial Commander of Traffic Safety and Operational Support.

?To keep emergency responders safe, slow down and move over when emergency vehicles are stopped on the side of the road. Not only is it the right thing to do ? it's the law,? said Marie-France Lalonde, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services

?The safety of our emergency vehicles is critical, and it is the duty of all road users to ensure they are aware of their surroundings and drive responsibly. It's the law to slow down and move over for emergency vehicle operators and staff, including tow trucks.

Those who disobey this law can face a possible fine of up to \$490,? adds Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation.

In 2016, there were at least eleven incidents in which an OPP vehicle was stopped/parked on the roadside and was struck from behind while its emergency lights were activated.

This law carries a \$400 to \$2,000 fine, plus three demerit points upon conviction.

Subsequent offences (within 5 years) carry a \$1,000 to \$4,000 fine, possible jail time up to six months and possible suspension of your driver's licence for up to two years.