



New York State Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Association, Inc.

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March 15, 2011

Hon. Robert K. Sweeney
NYS Assembly
Legislative Office Building – Rm. 625
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Assemblyman Sweeney:

Re: Ch. 465 Laws of 2010

We write in regard to S5593-A and A8470-A which was signed into law by former Governor Paterson as Chapter 465 of the laws of 2010. The law allows for the display of a blue light for rear projection on police and fire vehicles.

As you know, studies have shown that a rear projecting blue lights can enhance traffic safety at roadway scenes where emergency service providers are operating. We applaud your efforts to help better protect New York's emergency responders as they operate at emergency situations on highways and roadways. However, as the law current stands ambulance vehicles of independent ambulance services (including volunteer ambulance corps), municipal ambulance services, advance life support first response services, as well as county EMS Coordinators and county Deputy EMS Coordinators are not covered. Personnel and vehicles from these services also often respond to roadway and highway incidents to deliver critical emergency medical care.

In order to incorporate all of our state's emergency responders (particularly volunteer ambulance service members), into this important safety measure, we would ask your consideration of further amending the Vehicle and Traffic Law to include ambulance and EMS vehicles. This might be done by amending paragraph 4(b) of subdivision 41 of section 375 of the vehicle and traffic law to include ambulance vehicles, emergency ambulance service vehicles, advanced life support first response vehicles, county EMS Coordinators and Deputy County EMS Coordinators vehicles (possible sample language attached). This would also add consistency for all our state's emergency vehicles.

We are certain that New York's emergency medical service personnel would appreciate any assistance you might be concerning this important safety issue. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Mastrianni, Jr.
President

VTL

Section 375 – 41 -4(b)

b. In addition to the red and white lights authorized to be displayed pursuant to paragraph two of this subdivision, one or more blue lights or combination blue and red lights or combination blue, red and white lights may be affixed to a police vehicle, fire vehicle, ambulance vehicle, emergency ambulance service vehicle, advance life support first response vehicle, county EMS coordinator and county deputy EMS coordinator vehicle provided that such blue light or lights shall be displayed on a police vehicle, fire vehicle ambulance vehicle, emergency ambulance service vehicle, advance life support first response vehicle, county EMS coordinator and county deputy EMS coordinator vehicle for rear projection only. In the event that the trunk or rear gate of a police vehicle and fire vehicle obstructs or diminishes the visibility of other emergency lighting on such vehicles, a blue light may be affixed to and displayed from the trunk, rear gate or interior of such vehicles. Such lights may be displayed on a police vehicle and fire vehicle when such vehicles are engaged in an emergency operation. Nothing contained in this subparagraph shall be deemed to authorize the use of blue lights on police vehicles, fire vehicles ambulance vehicles, emergency ambulance service vehicles, advance life support first response vehicles, county EMS coordinator and county deputy EMS coordinator vehicles unless such vehicles also display one or more red or combination red and white lights as otherwise authorized in this subdivision.

c. The commissioner is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations relating to the use, placement, power and display of blue lights on a police vehicle, fire vehicle, ambulance vehicle, emergency ambulance service vehicle, advance life support first response vehicle, county EMS coordinator and county deputy EMS coordinator vehicle.

In order to add Advanced Life Support First Response Vehicles to the rear facing "Blue Light" law - Article 1 of the Vehicle and Traffic law may also need to be revised. Some suggested wording follows below:

§ 101. Authorized emergency vehicle. Every advanced life support first response vehicle, ambulance, police vehicle or bicycle, correction vehicle, fire vehicle, civil defense emergency vehicle, emergency ambulance service vehicle or bicycle, blood delivery vehicle, county emergency medical services vehicle, environmental emergency response vehicle, sanitation patrol vehicle, hazardous materials emergency vehicle and ordnance disposal vehicle of the armed forces of the United States.

{Section # - to be determined} Advanced life support first response vehicle. An advanced first response first response vehicle shall be defined as an appropriate equipped motor vehicle owned or operated by an advance first response service certified pursuant to section three thousand five of the public health law and used for the purpose of transporting emergency medical personnel and equipment to sick or injured persons.