

Move Over Law Expanded in Tennessee

Electric and other utility workers protected by Tennessee's Move Over law

NASHVILLE – Legislation signed by Gov. Bill Haslam on April 5, 2011 expands Tennessee's Move Over law to include electric and other utility vehicles. Police, fire and highway construction vehicles were already covered before the law's expansion. However, the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and its member cooperatives recognized the need to include electric and other utility vehicles.

Effective July 1, 2011 motorists approaching a utility vehicle with flashing lights are required to move over if safe to do so, creating an empty lane buffer. When changing lanes is not possible, motorists must reduce speed.

"Electric utility workers have a dangerous job," says Mike Knotts, director of government affairs for the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association, "and the expansion of the Move Over law makes their working environment safer."

Roadway crashes are the leading cause of occupational fatalities in the United States. The Tennessee Department of Safety reports that more than 100 highway and street construction workers are killed each year as a result of vehicle crashes or equipment accidents on the job. Another 20,000 are injured.

"The safety of our employees is a primary concern for us day in and day out," says Greg Williams, AEC General Manager. "Working near high-voltage lines is hazardous, but passing vehicles increases the risk. This legislation will bring new awareness to our employees and allow them to complete their important duties with an added level of protection.

The Tennessee law is the first-of-its-kind in the country. North Carolina's Move Over law includes utility workers but only during emergency situations such as storm restoration. Tennessee's law applies anytime utility vehicles are working with flashing lights.

Additional information on the Move Over expansion can be found at moveovertennessee.org.