

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST

NJSA 39:3-54.7, et seq; repeals 39:3-54.1 to 54.6

Laws of 1977 Chapter 223

Bill No. A645

Sponsor(s) Deverin, Orechio, Gregorio

Date Introduced Pre-filed

Committee: Assembly Municipal Gov't

Senate Law, Public Safety & Defense

Amended during passage: Yes No Amendments during passage denoted by asterisks

Date of passage: Assembly Dec. 6, 1976

Senate April 18, 1977

Date of approval Sept. 16, 1977

Following statements are attached if available:

Sponsor statement Yes below

Committee Statement: Assembly Yes

Senate Yes

Fiscal Note No

Veto message No

Message on signing Yes

Following were printed:

Reports No

Hearings No

Sponsor's statement:

The purpose of this bill is expressed in its title.

MAY 1977

10/4/76

[OFFICIAL COPY REPRINT]

ASSEMBLY, No. 645

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 1976 SESSION

By Assemblymen DEVERIN, ORECHIO and GREGORIO

AN ACT relating to emergency warning lights for members of volunteer fire companies and volunteer first aid or rescue squads, ***[and]*** supplementing chapter 3 of Title 39 of the Revised Statutes **and repealing P. L. 1971, c. 352**.

1 BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
2 *of New Jersey:*

1 1. An active member in good standing of a volunteer fire com-
2 pany or a volunteer first aid or rescue squad recognized by and
3 rendering service in any municipality may display on a motor
4 vehicle owned by him and registered in his name an emergency
5 warning light or lights as provided in this act.

1 2. Emergency warning lights may be operated only while the
2 vehicle is being used in answering a fire or emergency call.

1 3. Emergency warning lights shall be **temporarily attached,*
2 *removable lights** of the flashing type, not more than 7½ inches
3 in diameter, equipped with a ***[red]*** **blue** lens and a lamp of
4 not more than 21 candlepower and shall be controlled by a switch
5 installed inside the vehicle.

1 4. No more than two emergency warning lights shall be installed
2 on a vehicle. If one light is used it shall be installed in the center
3 of the roof of the car, or on the left windshield column in a position
4 where a spotlight is normally located. If two lights are used they
5 may be placed on the windshield columns on each side of the vehicle
6 where spotlights are normally mounted, or on either side of the
7 roof at the front of the vehicle directly back of the top of the wind-
8 shield. Under no circumstances may one light be placed on the
9 roof and one on the windshield column in the spotlight position.

EXPLANATION—Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

1 5. The Director of Motor Vehicles shall prepare suitable identi-
2 fication cards bearing the signature of the director which, upon
3 the request of the mayor or chief executive officer of any munici-
4 pality recognizing and being served by a volunteer fire company
5 or a volunteer first aid or rescue squad on a form and in a manner
6 prescribed by the director, shall be forwarded to said mayor or
7 chief executive officer, to be countersigned and issued by said mayor
8 or chief executive officer to the members in good standing of such
9 volunteer fire company or first aid or rescue squad. Identification
10 cards issued pursuant to this section shall be considered permits
11 to display and operate emergency warning lights as provided for
12 in this act, and no emergency warning lights shall be mounted prior
13 to the issuance of such identification cards. Each member of a
14 volunteer fire company or a volunteer first aid or rescue squad
15 must carry such identification card while an emergency warning
16 light or lights are displayed on his vehicle.

1 6. Nothing contained herein is intended to grant to any member
2 of a volunteer fire company or a volunteer first aid or rescue squad
3 any privileges or exemptions denied to the drivers of other vehicles,
4 and such members displaying emergency warning lights shall drive
5 with due regard for the safety of all persons and shall obey all the
6 traffic laws of this State, provided, however, that the drivers of
7 non-emergency vehicles upon any highway shall yield the right of
8 way to the vehicle of any member of a volunteer fire company or
9 a volunteer first aid or rescue squad displaying emergency warning
10 lights in the same manner as is provided for authorized emergency
11 vehicles pursuant to R. S. 39:4-92.

1 7. Any person authorized to display emergency warning lights
2 pursuant to this act who wilfully displays or uses such emergency
3 warning lights in violation of the provisions of this act, shall be
4 liable to a penalty of not more than \$50.00 and his privilege to
5 display such emergency warning lights may be suspended or re-
6 voked by the Director of Motor Vehicles.

1 *8. P. L. 1971, c. 352 (C. 39:3-54.1 et seq.) is repealed.*

1 ***[8.]*** *9.* This act shall take effect immediately.

ASSEMBLY, No. 645

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 1976 SESSION

By Assemblymen DEVERIN, ORECHIO and GREGORIO

AN ACT relating to emergency warning lights for members of volunteer fire companies and volunteer first aid or rescue squads, and supplementing chapter 3 of Title 39 of the Revised Statutes.

1 BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
2 *of New Jersey:*

1 1. An active member in good standing of a volunteer fire com-
2 pany or a volunteer first aid or rescue squad recognized by and
3 rendering service in any municipality may display on a motor
4 vehicle owned by him and registered in his name an emergency
5 warning light or lights as provided in this act.

1 2. Emergency warning lights may be operated only while the
2 vehicle is being used in answering a fire or emergency call.

1 3. Emergency warning lights shall be of the flashing type, not
2 more than 7½ inches in diameter, equipped with a red lens and a
3 lamp of not more than 21 candlepower and shall be controlled by
4 a switch installed inside the vehicle.

1 4. No more than two emergency warning lights shall be installed
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3 of the roof of the car, or on the left windshield column in a position
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7 roof at the front of the vehicle directly back of the top of the wind-
8 shield. Under no circumstances may one light be placed on the
9 roof and one on the windshield column in the spotlight position.

1 5. The Director of Motor Vehicles shall prepare suitable identi-
2 fication cards bearing the signature of the director which, upon
3 the request of the mayor or chief executive officer of any munici-
4 pality recognizing and being served by a volunteer fire company
5 or a volunteer first aid or rescue squad on a form and in a manner

6 prescribed by the director, shall be forwarded to said mayor or
7 chief executive officer, to be countersigned and issued by said mayor
8 or chief executive officer to the members in good standing of such
9 volunteer fire company or first aid or rescue squad. Identification
10 cards issued pursuant to this section shall be considered permits
11 to display and operate emergency warning lights as provided for
12 in this act, and no emergency warning lights shall be mounted prior
13 to the issuance of such identification cards. Each member of a
14 volunteer fire company or a volunteer first aid or rescue squad
15 must carry such identification card while an emergency warning
16 light or lights are displayed on his vehicle.

1 6. Nothing contained herein is intended to grant to any member
2 of a volunteer fire company or a volunteer first aid or rescue squad
3 any privileges or exemptions denied to the drivers of other vehicles,
4 and such members displaying emergency warning lights shall drive
5 with due regard for the safety of all persons and shall obey all the
6 traffic laws of this State, provided, however, that the drivers of
7 non-emergency vehicles upon any highway shall yield the right of
8 way to the vehicle of any member of a volunteer fire company or
9 a volunteer first aid or rescue squad displaying emergency warning
10 lights in the same manner as is provided for authorized emergency
11 vehicles pursuant to R. S. 39:4-92.

1 7. Any person authorized to display emergency warning lights
2 pursuant to this act who wilfully displays or uses such emergency
3 warning lights in violation of the provisions of this act, shall be
4 liable to a penalty of not more than \$50.00 and his privilege to
5 display such emergency warning lights may be suspended or re-
6 voked by the Director of Motor Vehicles.

1 8. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

The purpose of this bill is expressed in its title.

ASSEMBLY MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 645

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 20, 1976

Assembly Bill No. 645 would authorize members of volunteer fire companies and of first aid and rescue squads to display and use emergency warning lights on their cars. Such emergency warning lights could be used only in answering emergency and fire calls. The bill specifies the nature, number and placement of such lights. The Director of the Division of Motor Vehicles is directed to prepare identification cards under his signature to be forwarded to the mayor or chief executive of the municipality. The mayor would countersign and issue the cards to such volunteer members, who would be required to be in possession of the cards while using the warning lights and may not mount such lights without having received such a card. Persons possessing these lights are not entitled to any privileges or exemptions denied to other drivers and shall obey all traffic laws. Persons possessing these lights shall, however, be yielded the right of way as other emergency vehicles are. The bill provides for a \$50.00 fine and for the revocation by the Director of Motor Vehicles of the privilege to display such lights, if such lights are willfully misused.

Under P. L. 1971, c. 352 (C. 39:3-54.1 et seq.), volunteer firemen and first aid and rescue squad members are entitled to display on their cars, one special identification light. This is a flashing blue light required to be displayed on the front of the car, no higher than the car's headlights. This light is authorized by certificate of the chief officer of the volunteer fire company.

The committee amendments reflect the committee's belief that warning lights for volunteer firemen and first aid and rescue squad members should remain blue in color in order to avoid confusion with fire and police vehicles displaying red warning lights. The committee also determined that such lights should be temporary in nature, and easily removable. The committee did, however, believe that the restrictions placed upon the use of these warning lights in this bill are superior to those contained in P. L. 1971, c. 352, and, therefore, chose to repeal that statute.

The committee acknowledged that volunteer firemen and first aid and rescue squads members should be able to respond quickly to calls, and that more prominently displayed warning lights, under the proper safeguards, would promote this ability, while reducing traffic confusion and hazard.

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 645

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

ADOPTED MAY 20, 1976

Amend page 1, title, line 3, omit "and".

Amend page 1, title, line 3, after "Statutes", insert "and repealing P. L. 1971, c. 352".

Amend page 1, section 3, line 1, after "be", insert "temporarily attached, removable lights".

Amend page 1, section 3, line 2, omit "red", insert "blue".

Amend page 2, section 7, after line 6, after "Vehicles.", insert new section as follows:

"8. P. L. 1971, c. 352 (C. 39:3-54.1 et seq.) is repealed."

Amend page 2, section 8, line 1, omit "8", insert "9".

SENATE LAW, PUBLIC SAFETY AND
DEFENSE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO
ASSEMBLY, No. 645

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 21, 1977

This bill would authorize the use of blue lens emergency warning lights by bona fide members of voluntary fire companies or volunteer first aid or rescue squads. The bill provides that such lights may only be used while answering a fire or emergency call and specifically enumerates how they may be mounted on the vehicle.

The Director of the Division of Motor Vehicles is required to prepare identification cards for distribution by municipalities as permits to display and operate the light authorized by the act. Persons must have a permit on them while displaying such lights.

Drivers of nonemergency vehicles under the act are required to yield the right of way to any member of a volunteer fire company or volunteer first aid or rescue squad displaying such light in the same manner as provided for authorized emergency vehicles in R. S. 39:4-92.

Willful display of emergency lights in violation of the act by persons authorized to display subjects the offender to a fine of not more than \$50.00 and the Director of the Division of Motor Vehicles may suspend or revoke his privilege to display.

An Assembly amendment provides for the repeal of P. L. 1971, c. 352 (C. 39:3-54.1 et seq.).

The purpose of the bill is to permit a new and easily identified emergency warning device to be used by emergency volunteers on their own vehicles in order to assist them in getting to emergencies more easily.

SEPTEMBER 16, 1977

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANNE BURNS

Governor Brendan Byrne today signed into law A-645, sponsored by Assemblyman Thomas J. Deverin, D-Middlesex, which allows volunteer firemen and first aid or rescue squad members to use emergency warning lights on their own cars.

The bill specifies the maximum size and candle power of these lights. The bill also requires that the temporary removable lights be used only while the vehicle is being used to answer an emergency call.

Prior to this legislation, only members of volunteer fire companies were permitted to use these lights. That law allowed only one light to be used and required that it be placed at the front of the vehicle on the grill of the car.

This legislation permits the lights to be placed either on the roof of the car or on the windshield columns.

The bill also provides for a \$50 fine for anyone who willfully violates the provisions of this act.

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