

House Study Bill 189 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE _____
BY (PROPOSED COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION BILL BY
CHAIRPERSON BEST)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to lighting devices and other equipment
2 on authorized emergency vehicles, providing penalties,
3 making penalties applicable, and including effective date
4 provisions.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 321.423, subsection 2, paragraph f, Code
2 2021, is amended to read as follows:

3 *f.* A flashing white light, including a flashing headlamp, is
4 permitted on a vehicle pursuant to subsection 7.

5 Sec. 2. Section 321.423, subsection 3, paragraph a,
6 subparagraph (3), Code 2021, is amended to read as follows:

7 (3) An authorized emergency vehicle, other than a vehicle
8 described in paragraph "a", subparagraph (1) or (2), ~~if the blue~~
9 ~~light is positioned on the passenger side of the vehicle and is~~
10 ~~used in conjunction with a red light positioned on the driver~~
11 ~~side of the vehicle.~~

12 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. **321.424 Authorized emergency vehicle**
13 **lights.**

14 Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary:

15 1. An authorized emergency vehicle may be equipped with
16 a combination of interior and exterior lights, flashing
17 headlamps, and flashing tail lamps as provided in this section
18 and in this chapter.

19 2. An official law enforcement, fire department, emergency
20 medical services, or emergency management vehicle owned by the
21 state or a municipality, as defined in section 670.1, may be
22 equipped with flashing headlamps.

23 3. An authorized emergency vehicle owned by the state,
24 a municipality, as defined in section 670.1, or a private
25 emergency medical services company delivering services to the
26 state, a municipality, or a hospital pursuant to a written
27 contract, or a privately owned vehicle designated as an
28 authorized emergency vehicle pursuant to section 321.451, shall
29 be equipped with a combination of operational red and blue
30 lights. However, a towing or recovery vehicle, unless owned
31 by the state or a municipality, shall not be equipped with red
32 and blue lights.

33 4. An authorized emergency vehicle equipped with an
34 interior or exterior light bar must have the light bar
35 positioned such that front and rear facing red lights are on

1 the driver's side of the vehicle and front and rear facing blue
2 lights are on the passenger's side of the vehicle.

3 5. An authorized emergency vehicle equipped with an
4 interior or exterior light bar with red and blue flashing
5 lights may be equipped with flashing or solid white lights
6 scattered among or between a clear or colored lens that
7 displays a red or blue flashing light.

8 6. An authorized emergency vehicle may be equipped with one
9 or more lights capable of emitting a split red and blue steady
10 or flashing light, which may be mounted on or in the vehicle.

11 7. An authorized emergency vehicle may be equipped with one
12 or more lights on the side of the vehicle capable of emitting
13 red and blue light, red and white light, or blue and white
14 light.

15 8. An authorized emergency vehicle may be equipped with one
16 or more lights with a clear or colored lens.

17 9. An official law enforcement, fire, rescue, emergency
18 medical services, or emergency management vehicle may be
19 equipped with lights or light bars containing one or more rear
20 zone amber lights or amber directional arrows, which shall
21 be in addition to any other required lighting equipment. An
22 authorized emergency vehicle shall not be equipped with an
23 amber light positioned on the front or side of the vehicle.
24 However, an aerial fire apparatus may be equipped with amber
25 flashing lights on the outriggers of the apparatus.

26 10. An authorized emergency vehicle may be equipped with
27 one or more steady, oscillating, or flashing white lights,
28 flashing headlamps, or flashing reverse lamps, which shall be
29 in addition to any other required lighting equipment. A light
30 bar shall not be equipped or used to display flashing white
31 lights visible from the rear of the vehicle. This subsection
32 shall not be construed to prohibit an authorized emergency
33 vehicle owned by the state or a municipality, as defined in
34 section 670.1, from being equipped with or using a spotlight or
35 exterior light bar capable of displaying a steady white light

1 for use as a work light, alley light, search light, or take
2 down light.

3 11. An authorized emergency vehicle owned by a state or a
4 municipality, as defined in section 670.1, that is primarily
5 used as an incident command vehicle may be equipped with one
6 or more steady or flashing green lights, which shall be in
7 addition to any other required lighting equipment. A steady
8 or flashing green light equipped pursuant to this subsection
9 shall not be activated unless the vehicle is being used as
10 a stationary incident command post at the location of an
11 emergency incident, an official training exercise, or for
12 maintenance or demonstration purposes.

13 12. An official fire department or emergency medical
14 services vehicle purchased, delivered, or refurbished on or
15 after July 1, 2021, shall be equipped with a master warning
16 switch to activate all emergency lights on the vehicle, in
17 addition to one or more switches to separately activate or
18 isolate the front, side, and rear warning lights.

19 Sec. 4. Section 321.433, Code 2021, is amended to read as
20 follows:

21 **321.433 Sirens, whistles, and bells prohibited.**

22 1. A vehicle shall not be equipped with and a person shall
23 not use upon a vehicle any siren, whistle, or bell, except as
24 otherwise permitted in [this section](#). It is permissible but
25 not required that any commercial vehicle be equipped with a
26 theft alarm signal device which is so arranged that it cannot
27 be used by the driver as an ordinary warning signal. Any
28 authorized emergency vehicle may be equipped with a siren,
29 whistle, or bell capable of emitting sound audible under normal
30 conditions from a distance of not less than five hundred feet,
31 but the siren, whistle, or bell shall not be used except when
32 the vehicle is operated in response to an emergency call,
33 an incident dangerous to the public, an official training
34 exercise, for maintenance or demonstration purposes, or in
35 the immediate pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of

1 the law, and the driver of the vehicle shall sound the siren,
2 whistle, or bell when necessary to warn pedestrians and other
3 drivers of the approach of the vehicle.

4 2. A towing or recovery vehicle, unless owned by the state
5 or a municipality, as defined in section 670.1, shall not be
6 equipped with a siren.

7 Sec. 5. Section 805.8A, subsection 3, Code 2021, is amended
8 by adding the following new paragraph:

9 NEW PARAGRAPH. *Oac.* Section 321.424... § 45.

10 Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act, being deemed of immediate
11 importance, takes effect upon enactment.

12 EXPLANATION

13 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
14 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

15 This bill allows authorized emergency vehicles to be
16 equipped with a variety of lighting devices, including flashing
17 headlamps, flashing or solid white lights, split red and blue
18 steady or flashing lights, and lights or light bars containing
19 one or more rear zone amber lights or amber directional arrows.
20 The bill requires authorized emergency vehicles to be equipped
21 with a combination of operational red and blue lights, and
22 if equipped with a light bar, requires the light bar to be
23 positioned such that the front and rear facing red lights are
24 on the driver's side of the vehicle and the front and rear
25 facing blue lights are on the passenger's side of the vehicle.
26 The bill also requires an official fire department or emergency
27 medical services vehicle purchased, delivered, or refurbished
28 on or after July 1, 2021, to be equipped with a master warning
29 switch to activate all emergency lights on the vehicle, in
30 addition to one or more switches to separately activate or
31 isolate the front, side, and rear warning lights. In addition,
32 an incident command vehicle may be equipped with one or more
33 steady or flashing green lights. However, a towing or recovery
34 vehicle, unless owned by the state or a municipality, is
35 prohibited from being equipped with red and blue lights and a

1 siren.

2 Under current law, a violation of Code section 321.423 or
3 321.433 is punishable by a scheduled fine of \$45. The bill
4 provides that violations of Code section 321.424 are also
5 punishable by a scheduled fine of \$45.

6 The bill takes effect upon enactment.