

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**LEGISLATIVE BILL REVIEW FORM: 2013**

**Bill Number:** H.31 **Name of Bill:** Motor vehicles; emergency vehicles; enforcement vehicles; colored lights; permit

**Agency/ Dept:** Department of Public Safety – State Police

**Author of Bill Review:** Lt. Michael C. Macarilla

**Date of Bill Review:** January 29, 2013      **Status of Bill: (check one):**

Upon Introduction       As passed by 1<sup>st</sup> body       As passed by both bodies       Fiscal

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**Recommended Position:**

Support       Oppose       Remain Neutral       Support with modifications identified in #8 below

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**Analysis of Bill**

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1. **Summary of bill and issue it addresses.** *This bill proposes to authorize the operators of ambulances and fire department vehicles to use blue and amber lights visible from the rear of the vehicles by permit and to authorize the operators of law enforcement vehicles to use red and amber lights by permit.*
  
2. **Is there a need for this bill?** *There is in fact a need for this bill. Far too often our law enforcement officers, firefighters and EMS professionals are struck and injured or killed by motorists while at the scene of emergencies or traffic incidents on our highways. We have a responsibility to insure that our emergency service professionals are provided every opportunity to be safe while responding to the care of another..*
  
3. **What are likely to be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for this Department?**  
*There should be no mandatory fiscal implications of this bill. The bill does not require a police, fire or EMS agency to install an alternate color light on the rear of the vehicles they operate but only provides them with the opportunity to do so. The Vermont State Police through its Traffic Operations Unit, PIO and in coordination with the Governor's Highway Safety Program, The Professional and Volunteer Firefighters Associations as well as with the Vermont Department of Health - EMS program could engage in a public service campaign for little to no cost in order to make the traveling public aware of the change in law.*
  
4. **What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for other departments in state government, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?**  
*Other state emergency response agencies who are already permitted to utilize blue or red lights would be afforded the opportunity to add alternate colored lights to the rear of their vehicles as stated in the statute. This in no way is a mandate to do so, so any costs would be absorbed by the specific agencies budget. I know of no reason why any state agency would be opposed.*

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**5. What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for others, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?**

*The reasons and explanations stated in item four (4) above would pertain to local and county emergency response entities as well.*

**6. Other Stakeholders:**

**6.1 Who else is likely to support the proposal and why?**

*Municipal, county and state emergency response agencies because safety of their personnel while at the scene of emergencies is paramount. The addition of different lights helps improve the effectiveness of the warning lights when traffic approached from the rear.*

**6.2 Who else is likely to oppose the proposal and why?**

*I know of no entity that would be opposed to this bill.*

**7. Rationale for recommendation:**

*Due to the change in human vision from cones during the day to rods at night, the design of police, fire and medical emergency vehicle light bars continues to favor combinations of red and blue lamps as an effective means to achieve optimum lighting performance (conspicuity) with reduced side effects (i.e., glare and masking) for both daytime and nighttime operations. Furthermore, It is important to note that the colors used must be recognized by the public as emergency warning lights. (Corporation, Federal Signal, 2012)*

**8. Specific modifications that would be needed to recommend support of this bill:**

*It is clear in reading this bill that these changes in statute would only be for the rear of vehicles. Additionally it is clear that the changes are for authorized law enforcement and ambulance as well as municipal fire department vehicles. The State of Vermont, Hazardous Material Response Team operates state owned vehicles and should be included in this statute.*

*It should be made clear in statute or by rule that light permits will NOT be issued to display a blue light to the rear on vehicle personally owned by a firefighter or EMS professional.*

**Reference**

Corporation, Federal Signal. (2012). *Risk Reduction for Emergency Response*. Oakbrook: Federal Signal Corporation. Retrieved from [http://www.fedsig.com/docs/FS\\_Risk\\_Reduction2\\_12.pdf](http://www.fedsig.com/docs/FS_Risk_Reduction2_12.pdf)

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