

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 114th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION - 1989

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Legislative Document

No. 1303

S.P. 482

In Senate, April 24, 1989

Submitted by the Department of Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 24.

Reference to the Committee on Transportation suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN  
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator COLLINS of Aroostook.

Cosponsored by Senator THERIAULT of Aroostook, Representative GREENLAW of Standish and Representative BURKE of Vassalboro.

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STATE OF MAINE

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IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-NINE

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An Act Concerning the Operation of Emergency Medical Vehicles.

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1       **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

3               **Sec. 1. 29 MRSA §946**, as amended by PL 1987, c. 644, §4, is  
5 further amended to read:

7       **§946. Police and fire vehicles**

9               Police, fire department, forest fire control vehicles and  
11 ambulance vehicles, when operated in response to calls, or when a  
13 police officer is in pursuit of a motor vehicle operator for  
15 which he the police officer has probable cause to believe that  
17 the operator has committed or is in the process of committing a  
19 violation of law, and vehicles of the Department of Corrections  
21 making use of a blue light or a siren shall have the  
23 right-of-way. On the approach of any such vehicle, from any  
25 direction, and when such vehicle is sounding a siren and emitting  
a flashing light, the driver of every other vehicle shall  
immediately draw his the vehicle as near as practicable to the  
right-hand curb and parallel thereto, clear of any intersection,  
and bring it to a standstill until such public service vehicles  
have passed. Ambulance vehicles shall be granted the same  
right-of-way, when the emergency medical services person judges  
that the condition of the patient dictates that the siren not be  
used, by emitting a red flashing light only.

27               **Sec. 2. 29 MRSA §946-A, sub-§3**, as amended by PL 1987, c. 644,  
29 §5, is further amended to read:

31               **3. Audible signals; visual signals.** The exemptions granted  
33 in this section to an authorized emergency vehicle apply only  
35 when that vehicle is making use of an audible signal, as may be  
reasonably necessary, as required in sections 946 and 1362 and  
visual signals as required in sections 946 and 1367-B, except  
that an authorized emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle  
need not be equipped with or display a special visual signal  
visible from in front of the vehicle.

37               **Sec. 3. 29 MRSA §1367-B, sub-§4, ¶B**, as enacted by PL 1987, c.  
39 644, §8, is amended to read:

41               B. ~~Members of a--volunteer~~ an emergency rescue squad or  
43 ~~volunteer~~ emergency ambulance service may display a red  
45 blinker or flashing red signal light of the same proportion,  
47 in the same location and under the same conditions as those  
permitted volunteer firefighters, when authorized by the  
municipal officers and countersigned by the chief official  
of the rescue squad or ambulance service.

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## STATEMENT OF FACT

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5       This bill grants ambulances the right-of-way even if the red  
flashing light is being emitted without a siren and otherwise  
allows drivers of emergency vehicles to use discretion in  
7       determining when it is necessary to use their vehicles' sirens.

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11       In addition, this bill extends the use of red flashing  
lights to the vehicles of all ambulance and rescue personnel to  
improve their access to the scenes of emergency calls to which  
they have been summoned.