

# California “Move Over” Law

## *Protecting Public Safety Personnel on the Highways*

Effective July 1, 2007, California motorists are now required to take specific action when approaching an area on the freeway where emergency vehicles are present and displaying emergency lights. Known as the “Move Over” law, motorists are now required to either move over to a lane not adjacent to the emergency vehicles or vehicle. If not practical or safe to do so, the motorist must slow down to a reasonable or prudent speed that is safe for the existing weather, road, and vehicular or pedestrian traffic conditions.

Enacted in 42 states, this law is intended to protect emergency workers and personnel at the scene of an emergency incident or other situation where public safety personnel are present.

Information on “Move Over” laws in other states and the National “Move Over America” campaign can be found at: [www.MoveOverAmerica.com](http://www.MoveOverAmerica.com)

The following is section 21809 of the California Vehicle Code:

**21809.** (a) A person driving a **vehicle** on a freeway approaching a stationary authorized emergency **vehicle** that is displaying emergency lights, or a stationary tow truck that is displaying flashing amber warning lights, shall approach with due caution and, before passing in a lane immediately adjacent to the authorized emergency **vehicle** or tow truck, absent any other direction by a peace officer, proceed to do one of the following:

(1) Make a lane change into an available lane not immediately adjacent to the authorized emergency **vehicle** or tow truck with due regard for safety and traffic conditions, if practicable and not prohibited by law.

(2) If the maneuver described in paragraph (1) would be unsafe or impracticable, slow to a reasonable and prudent speed that is safe for existing weather, road, and vehicular or pedestrian traffic conditions.

(b) A violation of subdivision (a) is an infraction, punishable by a fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50).

(c) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2010, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2010, deletes or extends that date.