

Dept. of Transportation: Crashes involving State Patrol cruisers a reminder of Move Over laws

Posted on Wednesday, Dec 8, 2021

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New state law strengthens protections for responders

Two on-duty Wisconsin State Patrol troopers escaped injury this week after drivers hit their cruisers.

A trooper was pulled over on the shoulder of I-94 in Dane County on Monday afternoon when an inattentive semi tractor-trailer sideswiped his cruiser. The trooper was sitting inside the vehicle assisting with a traffic stop at the time. The semi driver did not move out of the right lane or slow down when passing the cruiser.

On Wednesday morning, a driver on I-41 in Winnebago County lost control while traveling too fast in icy conditions and passing a crash scene. A trooper was outside checking on the people involved in the initial crash when the vehicle rear-ended his cruiser that was pulled over on an off ramp.

No one was hurt in either crash, but they were close calls for those involved.

“Our troopers are lucky to have survived these incidents. They put their lives at risk to help keep our roads safe,” Superintendent Anthony Burrell said. “We need every driver to recognize the dangers first responders face and move over when their

emergency lights are activated.”

Emergency lights were activated in both incidents, which means drivers should have moved over or slowed down to protect the responders and the public.

The state’s [Move Over law](#) requires drivers to move out of the lane closest to stopped law enforcement vehicles, ambulances, fire trucks, tow trucks, utility vehicles, or highway maintenance vehicles with warning lights activated. If a car cannot move over, drivers must slow down.

Governor Evers recently signed a [new law in Wisconsin](#) that officially defines an emergency or roadside response area and creates a new crime and penalty for traffic violations that lead to injury in an emergency zone. Fines may double for certain violations.

Violations of the Move Over law can result in a citation of \$263 or more if someone is hurt or killed. There were 632 convictions for Move Over law violations in 2020.

In the incidents that happened this week, citations are pending investigations by Dane and Winnebago counties.

Wisconsin State Patrol leaders encourage everyone to keep first responders in mind when out on the roads. Buckle up and put the phone down while driving. Every trip, every time.

As winter settles in, be weather aware. Always drive for current conditions. Slow down and leave extra distance between the car ahead.