

This week I received a request for information from the Anna Fire Department on a question they received from an area citizen regarding emergency vehicles operating on FM 455. In short, the citizen seemed to believe that emergency vehicles operating on FM 455 should refrain from using their lights and sirens because it may frighten drivers, in particular senior citizens, because the driver has nowhere to go to get out of the way.

Any Emergency vehicles that are using their emergency lights and sirens are assumed to be trying to respond to a reported emergency as quickly as possible, hence the law that grants emergency vehicles the right of way to other vehicles. No, the Officers are not on the way to the doughnut shop, late for lunch, nor are they seeing how many other drivers they can scare out of their wits (I had to beat my friends to the usual police and fire jokes).

I want to give you all the information that the law requires you to do when an emergency vehicle approaches. Let's read Texas law regarding what a driver must do when an emergency vehicle approaches:

- (1) Yield the right-of-way;
- (2) immediately **drive to a position parallel to and as close as possible to the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway clear of any intersection;** and
- (3) **stop and remain standing** until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed.

As you can read, a driver need not panic upon the approach of an emergency vehicle because of a lack of space, as the law does not require the driver of another vehicle to get off of the roadway. What it does require is that all motorists, including those travelling in opposite directions on the same roadway, pull as far to the right as possible and stop. If all drivers do that, an emergency vehicle should be able to get through without problem.

Emergency vehicles have been operating on the traffic ways of this country since their invention. They should be something we are all used to. When driving, stay alert, keep your eyes moving, check your mirror regularly, and slowly pull over and stop until the emergency vehicle passes, and then carefully proceed. Follow those simple rules and you will find an encounter with a siren-emitting vehicle to be much less stressful.

***Phone numbers: Emergency???? Dial 911.** To have a police officer sent to you in a non-emergency, call 972-547-5350. During normal business hours, the APD number is 972-924-2848.

If you have a question or comment, please email: kjenks@annatexas.gov