

EMERGENCY LIGHTS

Updated September 2023



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Phil Murphy
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Kimberly J. Holmes, Acting Commissioner

DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY

Richard J. Mikutsky, Director



EMERGENCY LIGHTS

BLUE LIGHTS

39:3-54.7. Member of a volunteer fire company or first aid or rescue squad: emergency warning lights on motor vehicle

An active member in good standing of any of the following organizations may mount and operate, on a motor vehicle operated by that member, an emergency warning light or lights as provided in P.L.1977, c.223 (C.39:3-54.7 et seq.):

- (1) a volunteer fire company or a volunteer first aid or rescue squad recognized by and rendering service in any municipality; or
 - (2) any county or municipal volunteer Office of Emergency Management recognized by and rendering service in any county or municipality, provided the member's official duties include responding to a fire or emergency call.
- b. The Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission shall not require the member to specify on which motor vehicles the emergency warning light or lights may be mounted.

39:3-54.8. Time of operation

Emergency warning lights may be operated only while the vehicle is being used in answering a fire or emergency call.

39:3-54.9. Specifications

Emergency warning lights shall be removable or permanently attached, of the flashing or revolving type, equipped with a blue lens and controlled by a switch installed inside the vehicle or shall be blue of the light bar type, in accordance with the specifications prescribed by the chief administrator.

39:3-54.10. Placement on motor vehicle

No more than two emergency warning lights shall be installed on a vehicle. If one light is used it shall be installed in the center of the roof of the car, or on the front of the vehicle so that the top of the emergency warning light is no higher than the top of the vehicle's headlights, or in the center of the dashboard. It may be a low profile light bar of the strobe, halogen or incandescent type, or a combination thereof. If two lights are used they may be placed on the windshield columns on each side of the vehicle where spotlights are normally mounted, or on either side of the roof at the front of the vehicle directly back of the top of the windshield. Under no circumstances may one light be placed on the roof and one on the windshield column in the spotlight position. Light elements shall be shielded from direct sight or view of the driver.

39:3-54.11. Identification cards; issuance; use

a. The Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission shall prepare suitable identification cards bearing the signature of the chief administrator which, upon the request of the mayor or chief executive officer of any municipality recognizing and being served by a volunteer fire company or a volunteer first aid or rescue squad on a form and in a manner prescribed by the chief administrator, shall be forwarded to the mayor or chief executive officer, to be countersigned and issued by the mayor or chief executive officer to the members in good standing of the volunteer fire company or first aid or rescue squad.

b. Identification cards issued pursuant to this section and sections 5 and 6 of P.L.2005, c.34 (C.39:3-54.22 and C.39:3-54.23) shall be considered permits to mount and operate emergency warning lights as provided for in P.L.1977, c.223 (C.39:3-54.7 et seq.) and shall apply to any motor vehicle driven by the member of a volunteer fire company, a volunteer first aid or rescue squad or a volunteer Office of Emergency Management. Emergency warning lights shall not be mounted

prior to the issuance of the identification cards. Each member of a volunteer fire company, a volunteer first aid or rescue squad or a volunteer Office of Emergency Management must carry the identification card while an emergency warning light or lights are operated on the vehicle.

39:3-54.12. Rights of motor vehicle with light in operation

Nothing contained herein is intended to grant to any member of a volunteer fire company, a volunteer first aid or rescue squad or a volunteer Office of Emergency Management any privileges or exemptions denied to the drivers of other vehicles, and such members operating emergency warning lights shall drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and shall obey all the traffic laws of this State including R.S.39:4-81, provided, however, that the drivers of non-emergency vehicles upon any highway shall yield the right of way to the vehicle of any member of a volunteer fire company, a volunteer first aid or rescue squad or a volunteer Office of Emergency Management operating emergency warning lights in the same manner as is provided for authorized emergency vehicles pursuant to R.S.39:4-92

39:3-54.13. Violations; penalty

Any person authorized to operate emergency warning lights pursuant to P.L.1977, c.223 (C.39:3-54.7 et seq.) who willfully operates such emergency warning lights in violation of the provisions of P.L.1977, c.223 (C.39:3-54.7 et seq.) shall be liable to a penalty of not more than \$100 and the person's privilege to operate such emergency warning lights may be suspended or revoked by the Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission. A person who is not authorized to operate emergency warning lights who willfully operates such emergency warning lights shall be liable to a penalty of not more than \$200.

RED LIGHTS

39:3-54.15. Red emergency warning lights on motor vehicles owned by active volunteer fire chief or first assistant chief

A current chief or first assistant chief of a volunteer fire company, or chief officer of a first aid or rescue squad, recognized by and rendering service in any municipality may mount and operate on a motor vehicle owned by him and registered in his name a red emergency warning light or lights, a siren, or both, as prescribed in P.L.1985, c.171 (C.39:3-54.15 et seq.). The size and type of lights and siren, and the location of their controls, shall be determined by the Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission.

39:3-54.16. Placement of red emergency warning lights

All red emergency lights shall be mounted on the exterior of the motor vehicle. No more than two red emergency warning lights shall be installed on a vehicle. If one light is used it shall be installed in the center of the roof of the vehicle, or on the left windshield column in a position where a spotlight is normally located. If two lights are used they may be placed on the windshield columns on each side of the vehicle where spotlights are normally mounted, or on either side of the roof at the front of the vehicle directly back of the top of the windshield. Under no circumstances may one light be placed on the roof and one on a windshield column in the spotlight position. They shall be operated only while the vehicle is being used by the registered owner chief or first assistant chief in answering a fire or emergency call.

39:3-54.17. Placement of sirens

All sirens shall be mounted under the hood of the motor vehicle and shall be operated only while the vehicle is being used by the registered owner chief or first assistant chief in answering a fire or emergency call.

39:3-54.18. Identification cards for chief or first assistant chief; issuance; purpose

The Director of the Division of Motor Vehicles shall prepare suitable identification cards bearing the signature of the director, which, upon request of the mayor or chief executive officer of any municipality recognizing and being served by a volunteer fire company or a volunteer first aid or rescue squad, on a form and in a manner prescribed by the Director, shall be forwarded to the mayor or chief executive officer to be countersigned and issued by the mayor or chief executive officer to the chief or first assistant chief of the volunteer fire company. Identification cards issued pursuant to this section shall be considered permits to display and operate red emergency warning lights, sirens, or both, as provided for in this act, and no lights or sirens shall be mounted prior to the issuance of the identification cards. Each chief or first assistant chief of a volunteer fire company shall carry the identification card while red emergency warning lights, or sirens, or both, are displayed on his vehicle.

39:3-54.19. Operation of motor vehicles with red emergency warning lights or sirens; yielding right of way

This act shall not grant to any chief or first assistant chief of a volunteer fire company any privileges or exemptions denied to the drivers of other vehicles, and persons displaying red emergency warning lights, sirens, or both, shall drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and shall obey the traffic laws of this State; but drivers of nonemergency vehicles upon any highway shall yield the right of way to the vehicle of any chief or first assistant chief of a volunteer fire company displaying red emergency warning lights, sirens, or both, in the same manner as is provided for authorized emergency vehicles pursuant to R.S. 39:4-92.

39:3-54.20. Unlawful use of red emergency warning lights or sirens; penalty

Any person authorized to display red emergency warning lights, sirens, or both, pursuant to this act, who willfully displays or uses the lights or sirens in violation of the provisions of this act, shall be liable to a penalty of not more than \$50.00 and his privilege to display the lights or sirens may be suspended or revoked by the Director of the Division of Motor Vehicles.