



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Law Passed for Increased Safety Around Collection Vehicles

New Braunfels, TX — As of September 1, 2019, Texas’ “Move Over or Slow Down” law was expanded to include municipal solid waste collection vehicles, highway maintenance or construction vehicles, and utility service vehicles. Adding vehicles to the existing law seeks to increase safety for workers that are often stopped on the side of the road while traffic continues at normal speeds, as well as passing motorists.

As stated in the Texas Transportation Code §545.157 (Act 2019), when passing certain vehicles, a motorist must either slow down to 20 miles per hour below the posted speed limit (when the speed limit is 25 miles per hour or more), or move out of the lane closest to the vehicle and into an adjacent lane to keep traveling at its current speed. If the posted speed limit is less than 25 miles per hour, a motorist must either reduce their speed to five miles per hour or move out of the lane closest to the vehicle and into an adjacent lane to keep traveling at its current speed. These rules apply when passing any of the following:

- An emergency vehicle with its lights flashing;
- A stationary tow truck using its equipment (even if its lights are not flashing);
- A TxDOT or highway maintenance or construction vehicle with its lights flashing (unless it is separated from the roadway by a traffic control device);
- A utility service vehicle with its lights flashing;
- A stationary solid waste collection vehicle while it is picking up (even if its lights are not flashing).

Violation of this law is a misdemeanor and the severity of the misdemeanor and its punishment would be up to \$200.00 if no damage occurred but could be more depending on the extent of damage when it occurs.

Texas is among 30 states that have adopted Slow Down to Get Around (SDTGA) legislation to reduce injuries and fatalities among solid waste and recycling workers. Fifty-seven collection-related fatalities occurred in the U.S. in 2018, as well as numerous instances of severe injury. Being struck by a motorist is the leading cause of death for waste and recycling collection employees, which is completely preventable.

The Solid Waste and Recycling Division of Public Works has begun outfitting its trucks with new reflective signs to encourage SDTGA. “Increased safety on the road benefits everyone,” said Mike Mundell, solid waste manager. “We want to provide a safer working environment for our employees on the route and for citizens, which means we all have to be vigilant and take precautions.”

When you see a trash or recycling truck stopped or slowed, remember to:

- Slow down when approaching a garbage or recycling truck making its rounds.
- Look for workers before attempting to pass the truck.
- Check for traffic approaching from the opposite direction before attempting to pass the truck.
- Avoid prohibited activities like texting and talking on the phone, and other distractions like adjusting your entertainment system, or programming your GPS, while driving near a garbage truck.

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