

Tow Truck Light Requirements and the Move -Over Law

There has been some confusion on what tow lights you can or cannot use on your tow truck. Listed are the statutes that pertain to questions we have received on lights and how the Move Over Law fits into that picture. For all the Transportation Code requirements go to: <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us>

In Transportation Code some of the laws relating to lights are:

547 - Vehicle Equipment

547.302 - Duty to Display Lights

547.303 - Color Requirements

547.305 - Restrictions on Use of Lights

547.321 - Taillights required

547.322 - Stop lamps Required

547.323 - Turn Signals Lamps Required

547.324 - Reflectors Required

547.702 - Additional Equipment Required for Authorized Emergency Vehicles.

HB 378 - "Move Over Law"

Amendment to Transportation Code 545.157 - Passing an Authorized Emergency Vehicle

Amendment to Transportation Code 545.301 - Stopping, Standing, or Parking Outside a Business or Residence District

Amendment to Transportation Code 547.305 - Restrictions on Use of Lights

HB 378 **Allows for tow trucks to covered under the "move over" statute.** As stated under the new statute:

*a) On approaching a stationary authorized emergency vehicle using visual signals that meet the requirements of Sections 547.305 and 547.702, **or a stationary tow truck using equipment authorized by Section 547.305***

In 547.305 the authorized equipment is stated as:

*(d) A vehicle **may** be equipped with alternately flashing lighting equipment described by Section 547.701 or 547.702 only if the vehicle is:*

(1) a school bus;

(2) an authorized emergency vehicle;

(3) a church bus that has the words "church bus" printed on the front and rear of the bus so as to be clearly discernable to other vehicle operators;

(4) a tow truck while under the direction of a law enforcement officer at the scene of an accident or while hooking up to a disabled vehicle on a roadway; or

(5) a tow truck with a mounted light bar which has turn signals and stop lamps in addition to those required by Sections 547.322, 547.323, and 547.324, Transportation Code.

Then when looking at 547.702 this is where it states what exact equipment meets the requirements of an Authorized Emergency Vehicle or a stationary tow truck.

*(c) Except as provided by this section, an authorized emergency vehicle **shall** be equipped with signal lamps that:*

(1) are mounted as high and as widely spaced laterally as practicable;

*(2) **display four alternately flashing red lights**, two located on the front at the same level and two located on the rear at the same level; and*

(3) emit a light visible at a distance of 500 feet in normal sunlight.

What all this means is that in order to be in compliance with any restrictions of the "Move Over Law" you **shall** be equipped with the required lights on your tow truck. This does not mean that tow trucks are Emergency Vehicles.

There are no lighting restrictions on amber lights. **Blue lights are allowed but have conditions, please see additional memo put out by TXDOT.**

TTSA Government Affairs Chair, Jeanette Rash has confirmed this with Sgt. Cottle of Texas Highway Patrol, Georgetown, TX.