

OPP was crack down on 'move over' law violators this weekend

The law requires motorists to move over a lane, if they can, when they are approaching an emergency vehicle parked at the side of the road with its lights activated.

But OPP are concerned with the number of people who don't obey that law.

After 10 years of education efforts, which has included more than 11,000 charges on record since the law came into effect, OPP officers are dismayed to see a slow but steady increase in the number of 'move over' charges it has laid against drivers since 2010.

Police will be looking to drivers to help them reinforce the importance of the law by setting a good example and observing this law over the upcoming Civic Day long weekend.

The Highway Traffic Act requires drivers to slow down and proceed with caution when passing an emergency vehicle parked on the side of the highway with its lights activated. If the highway has more than one lane, the law requires the driver to move over and leave one lane between their vehicle and the parked emergency vehicle if it can be done safely. Failure to do so can result in a fine of \$400 to \$2,000, plus three demerit points.

There were 1,502 charges in 2013, and the number has increased steadily since 2010, when the OPP issued 1,067 such charges against Ontario drivers. The increase suggests that many drivers may be unaware of this law aimed at keeping police and other emergency responders safe on the roadside. Since 1989, five OPP officers have been killed as a result of being struck by a vehicle while doing their job on the roadside and many more have been injured. The OPP's law enforcement and other safety partners have also lost colleagues in these situations.

'The OPP would like to see full compliance with this law indicating that drivers are fully on board with helping us keep officers and all other emergency responders safe on the roadside,' said Chief Superintendent Chuck Cox, provincial commander of the OPP Highway Safety Division. 'With the higher volumes of traffic on long weekends, police and other emergency personnel respond to far more calls for service at the roadside, making it a particularly important time to move over a lane when able to do so safely.'

Over the weekend, OPP will also be asking road users to help them keep roads safe and free of aggressive, distracted and impaired driving behaviours and by ensuring that all vehicle occupants are buckled up.