

MDOT Auxiliary Lighting for Vehicles

Background: There has been discussion on the type of lighting our MDOT vehicles should have when employees are engaged in work, inspection, etc. on the roadways. This paper will identify and discuss some of the different laws that could impact any decisions about the type of lighting chosen for our vehicles.

Per the Michigan Vehicle Code:

5) The use or possession of flashing, oscillating, or rotating lights of any color is prohibited except as otherwise provided by law, or under the following circumstances:

(d) Flashing, rotating, or oscillating amber lights, placed in a position as to be visible throughout an arc of 360 degrees, shall be used by a state, county, or municipal vehicle engaged in the removal of ice, snow, or other material from the highway and in other operations designed to control ice and snow.

(f) A vehicle to perform public utility service, a vehicle owned or leased by and licensed as a business for use in the collection and hauling of refuse, an automobile service car or wrecker, a vehicle engaged in authorized highway repair or maintenance, a vehicle of a peace officer, a vehicle operated by a rural letter carrier or a person under contract to deliver newspapers or other publications by motor route, a vehicle utilized for snow removal, a private security guard vehicle as authorized in subsection (7), a motor vehicle while engaged in escorting or transporting an oversize load that has been issued a permit by the state transportation department or a local authority with respect to highways under its jurisdiction, a vehicle owned by the national guard or a United States military vehicle while traveling under the appropriate recognized military authority, a motor vehicle while towing an implement of husbandry, or an implement of husbandry may be equipped with flashing, rotating, or oscillating amber lights. However, a wrecker may be equipped with flashing, rotating, or oscillating red lights which shall be activated only when the wrecker is engaged in removing or assisting a vehicle at the scene of a traffic accident or disablement. The flashing, rotating, or oscillating amber lights shall not be activated except in those circumstances that the warning produced by the lights is required for public safety.

Work Zone Definition:

Sec. 79d.

(c) For construction, maintenance, surveying, or utility work activities conducted by a work crew and 1 moving or stationary vehicle exhibiting a rotating beacon or strobe light, is between the following points:

(i) A point that is 150 feet behind the rear of the vehicle or that is the point from which the beacon or strobe light is first visible on the street or highway behind the vehicle, whichever is closer to the vehicle.

(ii) A point that is 150 feet in front of the front of the vehicle or that is the point from which the beacon or strobe light is first visible on the street or highway in front of the vehicle, whichever is closer to the vehicle.

257.698a Vehicular traffic hazard; front and rear warning lamps.

Sec. 698a.

Any vehicle may be equipped with lamps which may be used for the purpose of warning the operators of other vehicles of the presence of a vehicular traffic hazard requiring the exercise of unusual care in approaching, overtaking or passing, and when so equipped may display such warning in addition to any other warning signals required by this act. The lamps used to display such warning to the front shall be mounted at the same level and as widely spaced laterally as practicable, and shall display simultaneously flashing white or amber lights, or any shade of color between white and

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amber. The lamps used to display such warning to the rear shall be mounted at the same level and as widely spaced laterally as practicable, and shall show simultaneously flashing amber or red lights, or any shade of color between amber and red. These warning lights shall be visible from a distance of not less than 500 feet under normal atmospheric conditions at night.

Recommendation

MDOT vehicles should have amber lights, that flash, rotate or oscillate that allow for visibility in 360 degrees.

Amber lights should have a visibility of 500 feet.

For pick-ups and other vehicles not involved in actual road maintenance, lights must be visible from the front and back of the vehicle in order to comply with the new work zone definition. Rear tail or hazard warning lights may be red or amber. Vehicles that use hazard warning lights must flash simultaneously. Alternating flashing hazard warning lights is not allowed as this can confuse MDOT vehicles with law enforcement vehicles.

Any questions about the above can be directed to Jim Gaus at 517-241-4188.

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