

# RISK MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

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Information Maryland Local Governments Need to Know

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## Seeing the Light – What Do the Different Colored Lights on Vehicles Mean?

We are all familiar with certain color lights indicating the specialized vehicles that we encounter on the road. Beyond the standard blue, red, white, and amber lights that we commonly see, there is a new color we need to familiarize ourselves with – **green**. With the use of green lights becoming more prevalent, we thought a review of what the different lights signify would be helpful.

**For the purposes of this bulletin, all lights described are flashing and forward-facing.**

**Green lights** – Have two distinct applications. They are used to designate a stationary emergency vehicle serving as a mobile command unit or command post. The U.S. Departments of Homeland Security and Transportation, as well as some fire service vehicles, use green lights for this purpose. They are also used along with amber flashing lights on highway maintenance and service equipment for the protection of highway maintenance workers and snow removal. Drivers are not required by law to yield or stop for a vehicle with green lights, but you should use caution and pull over to let it pass, or slow down, change lanes, and pass it safely.

**Red lights** – Are required by law on emergency vehicles, typically law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services vehicles, as well as school buses. Drivers are required by law to stop or yield for an emergency vehicle with flashing red lights and to stop for a school bus with flashing red lights.

**Blue lights** – Most commonly associated with law enforcement. Drivers are required by law to yield or stop for a vehicle with flashing blue lights.

**White lights** – Ordinarily provide contrast when used with colored lights, but are found by themselves on postal delivery trucks, and other government vehicles, including those that service trains and railroads. Drivers are required by law to yield or stop for a vehicle that has flashing white lights and flashing red or blue lights but are not required to yield or stop if the vehicle only has flashing white lights.

**Amber lights** – Are considered a warning light and are associated with school buses, public transit, and slow-moving vehicles, typically wide-load tractor-trailers, trash trucks, snowplows, and roadside assistance vehicles. If a school bus has activated its flashing yellow lights, it is preparing to stop, and you should do the same. Drivers are not required by law to yield or stop for slow moving vehicles with flashing amber lights, but, if possible, it is safer to slow down and give these vehicles extra room.

LGIT insures thousands of vehicles and the employees that drive them. We encourage you to drive defensively, slow down, increase following distance, and be aware of your surroundings when you are driving. To schedule driver training please go to: [Defensive Driving Course \(DDC\) Request](#).

Ref: MD Code Ann., Transportation Article, § 22-218.

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