

189.940 Exemptions from traffic regulations.

- (1) Except as provided in KRS 189.920, the speed limitations set forth in the Kentucky Revised Statutes do not apply to:
 - (a)
 1. Emergency vehicles when responding to emergency calls;
 2. Police vehicles when in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law;
 3. Ambulances when transporting a patient to medical care facilities; or
 4. Any vehicle used by an organ procurement organization while transporting a human organ or tissue for the purpose of organ recovery or transplantation in an emergency situation involving an imminent health risk; and
 - (b) Emergency vehicles when the driver thereof is giving the warning required by subsection (5)(a) and (b) of this section.

No portion of this subsection shall be construed to relieve the driver of the duty to operate the vehicle with due regard for the safety of all persons using the street or highway.

- (2) The driver of an emergency vehicle, when responding to an emergency call, or of a police vehicle in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law, or of an ambulance transporting a patient to a medical care facility and giving the warning required by subsection (5) of this section, upon approaching any red light or stop signal or any stop sign shall slow down as necessary for safety to traffic, but may proceed past such red or stop light or stop sign with due regard for the safety of persons using the street or highway.
- (3) The driver of an emergency vehicle, when responding to an emergency call, or of a police vehicle in pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law, or of an ambulance transporting a patient to a medical care facility, or a vehicle used by an organ procurement organization transporting a human organ or tissue, and giving warning required by subsection (5) of this section, may drive on the left side of any highway or in the opposite direction of a one-way street provided the normal lanes of traffic are blocked and he or she does so with due regard for the safety of all persons using the street or highway.
- (4) The driver of an emergency or public safety vehicle may stop or park his vehicle upon any street or highway without regard to the provisions of KRS 189.390 and 189.450, provided that, during the time the vehicle is parked at the scene of an emergency, at least one (1) warning light is in operation at all times.
- (5) The driver of an emergency vehicle desiring the use of any option granted by subsections (1) through (3) of this section shall give warning in the following manner:
 - (a) By illuminating the vehicle's warning lights continuously during the period of the emergency; and
 - (b) By continuous sounding of the vehicle's siren, bell, or exhaust whistle; unless
 - (c) The vehicle is an ambulance and the driver is of the opinion that sounding of

the siren, bell, or exhaust whistle would be detrimental to the victim's health. In the event the driver of an ambulance elects not to use the siren, bell, or exhaust whistle he or she shall not proceed past red lights or drive in the opposite direction on a one-way street or in oncoming lanes of traffic unless no other vehicles are within five hundred (500) feet of the front of the ambulance. The driver shall not extinguish the warning lights during the period of the emergency.

- (6) No driver or operator of any emergency or public safety or other vehicle shall use the warning lights or siren, bell, or exhaust whistle of his or her vehicle for any purposes or under any circumstances other than those permitted by KRS 189.910 to 189.950.
- (7) KRS 189.910 to 189.950 does not relieve the driver of any emergency or public safety vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property upon the highway.
- (8) The driver of a public safety vehicle which also meets the definition of a slow-moving vehicle under KRS 189.810 and any vehicle acting as an escort for the slow-moving vehicle may travel at a speed that may impede or block the normal and reasonable movement of traffic if:
 - (a) The vehicle is being operated in an official capacity;
 - (b) Operation of the vehicle is in compliance with all state and local government policies; and
 - (c) It is necessary for the safe operation of the vehicle.

Effective: July 14, 2022

History: Amended 2022 Ky. Acts ch. 35, sec. 1, effective July 14, 2022; and ch. 126, sec. 12, effective July 14, 2022. -- Amended 2011 Ky. Acts ch. 99, sec. 3, effective June 8, 2011. -- Amended 1980 Ky. Acts ch. 371, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1980. -- Amended 1974 Ky. Acts ch. 308, sec. 36. -- Created 1970 Ky. Acts ch. 93, sec. 4.

Legislative Research Commission Note (7/14/2022). This statute was amended by 2022 Ky. Acts chs. 35 and 126, which do not appear to be in conflict and have been codified together.