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# OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research  
and Drafting

Legislative Budget  
Office

**H.B. 468**  
**136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**

## Bill Analysis

**Version:** As Introduced

**Primary Sponsors:** Reps. McNally and Rader

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### SUMMARY

- Designates the following Ohio Public Utilities Commission (PUCO) and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) vehicles as public safety vehicles, thereby exempting them from certain traffic laws:
  - Vehicles used by the PUCO's Hazardous Materials Transportation Enforcement Section for the enforcement of orders and rules of the PUCO or when responding to hazardous material emergencies; and
  - Vehicles used by the OEPA's Environmental Emergency Response Unit when responding to hazardous material emergencies or other pollution incidents that affect human health or the environment.
- Appropriates \$1,315,000 from the GRF in FY 2025 to the OEPA's Emergency Response fund to be used to purchase and upgrade equipment used by its Office of Emergency Response.

### DETAILED ANALYSIS

#### Public safety vehicle designation expansion

The bill designates the following Ohio Public Utilities Commission (PUCO) and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) vehicles as public safety vehicles, thereby exempting them from certain traffic laws, as discussed below:

1. Vehicles used by the PUCO's Hazardous Materials Transportation Enforcement Section for the enforcement of orders and rules of the PUCO or when responding to hazardous material emergencies; and
2. Vehicles used by the OEPA's Environmental Emergency Response Unit when responding to hazardous material emergencies or other pollution incidents that affect human health or the environment.

Under current law, ambulances, law enforcement vehicles, vehicles used by fire departments, PUCO vehicles used by their Motor Carrier Enforcement Unit, and properly identified vehicles used in response to fire emergency calls or to provide emergency medical service to ill or injured persons are designated as public safety vehicles.<sup>1</sup>

Drivers of designated public safety vehicles are exempt from certain traffic laws, and thus the bill exempts the specified PUCO and OEPA vehicles from certain traffic laws. For example:

- When responding to an emergency call, a public safety vehicle driver must slow down as necessary for safety to traffic when approaching a red or stop signal or any stop sign, but may proceed cautiously past the red or stop sign or signal with due regard for the safety of all persons using the street or highway.<sup>2</sup>
- A public safety vehicle driver who is responding to an emergency call is exempt from traffic rules under R.C. Chapter 4511, including speeding and following an emergency vehicle or another public safety vehicle too closely, if the vehicle is equipped with and displaying at least one flashing, rotating, or oscillating light visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of 500 feet to the front of the vehicle and if the driver of the vehicle is giving an audible signal by siren, exhaust whistle, or bell. However, the driver of a public safety vehicle is not relieved from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property upon the highway.<sup>3</sup>
- A public safety vehicle driver may use an electronic wireless communications device in the course of the person's duties.<sup>4</sup>
- A public safety vehicle driver may allow the motor vehicle to stand unattended without first stopping the engine, locking the ignition, removing the key from the ignition, effectively setting the parking brake, and, when the vehicle is standing upon any grade, turning the front wheels to the curb or side of the highway.<sup>5</sup>
- A public safety vehicle may operate, move, or park upon, or permit to stand within the right-of-way of any public street or highway a vehicle or equipment that is equipped with and displaying a flashing red or a flashing combination red and white light, or an oscillating or rotating red light, or a combination red and white oscillating or rotating light.<sup>6</sup>

Drivers of motor vehicles, when approaching a public safety vehicle, must do one of the following:

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<sup>1</sup> R.C. 4511.01(E).

<sup>2</sup> R.C. 4511.03, not in the bill.

<sup>3</sup> R.C. 4511.041, 4511.24, 4511.37, 4511.451, and 4511.72, not in the bill.

<sup>4</sup> R.C. 4511.204, not in the bill.

<sup>5</sup> R.C. 4511.661, not in the bill.

<sup>6</sup> R.C. 4513.17(D), not in the bill.

1. Proceed with due caution and, if possible and with due regard to the road, weather, and traffic conditions, change lanes into a lane that is not adjacent to that of a stationary public safety vehicle if the driver is traveling on a highway that consists of at least two lanes that carry traffic in the same direction of travel as that of the driver's motor vehicle.
2. If the driver is not traveling such a highway or if the driver is traveling on a highway of that type but it is not possible to change lanes or if to do so would be unsafe, proceed with due caution, reduce the speed of the motor vehicle, and maintain a safe speed for the road, weather, and traffic conditions.<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, when a public safety vehicle approaches a motor vehicle, the motor vehicle driver must yield the right-of-way, immediately drive if practical to a position parallel to, and as close as possible to, the right edge or curb of the highway clear of any intersection, and stop and remain in that position until the public safety vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by a police officer.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, when a public safety vehicle approaches a pedestrian, the pedestrian must yield the right-of-way to the public safety vehicle.<sup>9</sup>

## OEPA appropriation

The bill also appropriates \$1,315,000 from the GRF to the OEPA's Emergency Response fund to be used to purchase and upgrade equipment used by its Office of Emergency Response. However, the appropriation is for FY 2025, which has passed.<sup>10</sup>

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## HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	09-23-25

ANHB0468IN-136/sb

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<sup>7</sup> R.C. 4511.213, not in the bill.

<sup>8</sup> R.C. 4511.45, not in the bill.

<sup>9</sup> R.C. 4511.452, not in the bill.

<sup>10</sup> Sections 3 through 5.