

1-1 By: Vasut (Senate Sponsor - LaMantia) H.B. No. 2616  
 1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House May 8, 2023;  
 1-3 May 9, 2023, read first time and referred to Committee on  
 1-4 Transportation; May 17, 2023, reported favorably by the following  
 1-5 vote: Yeas 9, Nays 0; May 17, 2023, sent to printer.)

1-6 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-7				
1-8	X			
1-9	X			
1-10	X			
1-11	X			
1-12	X			
1-13	X			
1-14	X			
1-15	X			
1-16	X			

1-17 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
 1-18 AN ACT

1-19 relating to the operation of and lighting equipment for medical  
 1-20 examiner vehicles and vehicles operated by justices of the peace in  
 1-21 certain circumstances.

1-22 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-23 SECTION 1. Section 545.156, Transportation Code, is amended  
 1-24 to read as follows:

1-25 Sec. 545.156. VEHICLE APPROACHED BY AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY  
 1-26 VEHICLE. (a) This section applies only to:

1-27 (1) ~~[On the immediate approach of]~~ an authorized  
 1-28 emergency vehicle using audible and visual signals that meet the  
 1-29 requirements of Sections 547.305 and 547.702;

1-30 (2) a medical examiner vehicle, as defined by Section  
 1-31 547.751, lawfully using a visual signal in accordance with that  
 1-32 section;

1-33 (3) a vehicle operated by a justice of the peace for a  
 1-34 purpose described by Section 547.752 and lawfully using a visual  
 1-35 signal in accordance with that section; and

1-36 (4) ~~[, or of]~~ a police vehicle lawfully using only an  
 1-37 audible or visual signal.

1-38 (a-1) On the immediate approach of a vehicle described by  
 1-39 Subsection (a), an operator, unless otherwise directed by a police  
 1-40 officer, shall:

1-41 (1) yield the right-of-way;

1-42 (2) immediately drive to a position parallel to and as  
 1-43 close as possible to the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway  
 1-44 clear of any intersection; and

1-45 (3) stop and remain standing until the authorized  
 1-46 emergency vehicle has passed.

1-47 (b) This section does not exempt the operator of a [an  
 1-48 authorized emergency] vehicle described by Subsection (a) from the  
 1-49 duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons using  
 1-50 the highway.

1-51 SECTION 2. Chapter 547, Transportation Code, is amended by  
 1-52 adding Subchapter L-1 to read as follows:

1-53 SUBCHAPTER L-1. ADDITIONAL LIGHTING EQUIPMENT AUTHORIZED FOR  
 1-54 MEDICAL EXAMINER VEHICLES AND VEHICLES OPERATED BY JUSTICES OF THE  
 1-55 PEACE IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES

1-56 Sec. 547.751. ADDITIONAL LIGHTING EQUIPMENT AUTHORIZED FOR  
 1-57 MEDICAL EXAMINER VEHICLES. (a) In this section, "medical examiner  
 1-58 vehicle" means a motor vehicle that is owned or leased by a  
 1-59 governmental entity for use by a medical examiner or an employee of  
 1-60 an office of a medical examiner in the performance of the examiner's  
 1-61 or employee's duties relating to an inquest conducted under

2-1 Subchapter B, Chapter 49, Code of Criminal Procedure.

2-2 (b) A medical examiner vehicle may be equipped with either:

2-3 (1) mounted signal lamps that comply with the  
2-4 requirements of Section 547.702(c); or

2-5 (2) a signal lamp that is temporarily attached to the  
2-6 vehicle roof and flashes red and blue lights visible at a distance  
2-7 of at least 500 feet in normal sunlight.

2-8 (c) The operator of a medical examiner vehicle may use the  
2-9 lighting equipment described by Subsection (b) only when:

2-10 (1) necessary to warn other vehicle operators or  
2-11 pedestrians of the approach of the medical examiner vehicle; and

2-12 (2) operating the vehicle in the course and scope of  
2-13 the operator's duties relating to an inquest conducted under  
2-14 Subchapter B, Chapter 49, Code of Criminal Procedure.

2-15 Sec. 547.752. ADDITIONAL LIGHTING EQUIPMENT AUTHORIZED FOR  
2-16 VEHICLES OPERATED BY JUSTICES OF THE PEACE IN CERTAIN

2-17 CIRCUMSTANCES. (a) A vehicle operated by a justice of the peace in  
2-18 the course and scope of the justice's duties as a coroner under

2-19 Subchapter A, Chapter 49, Code of Criminal Procedure, may be  
2-20 equipped with either:

2-21 (1) mounted signal lamps that comply with the  
2-22 requirements of Section 547.702(c); or

2-23 (2) a signal lamp that is temporarily attached to the  
2-24 vehicle roof and flashes red and blue lights visible at a distance  
2-25 of at least 500 feet in normal sunlight.

2-26 (b) A justice of the peace may use the lighting equipment  
2-27 described by Subsection (a) only when:

2-28 (1) necessary to warn other vehicle operators or  
2-29 pedestrians of the approach of a vehicle operated by a justice of

2-30 the peace; and  
2-31 (2) operating the vehicle in the course and scope of

2-32 the justice's duties relating to an inquest conducted under  
2-33 Subchapter A, Chapter 49, Code of Criminal Procedure.

2-34 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.

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