

LAW HONORS TROOPER KILLED ON THRUWAY IN YONKERS

Drivers must slow down or move over near responders.

New York State Trooper Robert Ambrose was filling out a routine accident report in his cruiser, parked on the shoulder of the New York State Thruway in Yonkers.

In a flash, a speeding Jeep Grand Cherokee slammed the rear of his Crown Victoria, which burst into flames. Ambrose was dead before fellow troopers from the Tarrytown barracks arrived at the scene.

Eight years since his death, Ambrose's name is inked on a new state law that could help keep other police officers alive. The new Ambrose-Searles Move Over Act, which went into effect January 1, requires motorists to change lanes or slow down when passing an emergency vehicle stopped on the side of the road.

Ambrose's death on December 19, 2002, was hardly the first or last roadside death for a law enforcement officer in the state. The new law also carries the name of Onondaga County Sheriff Glenn Searles, who was killed along Interstate 481 on November 29, 2003. Searles was returning to his squad car for road flares when a minivan struck him and pinned him to his cruiser.

The new law amends New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law to require drivers to exercise "due care to avoid colliding with a parked, stopped or standing authorized emergency vehicle."

The law says motorists on two-lane roadways must slow down when passing an emergency vehicle on the shoulder with flashing lights. On multi-lane highways and parkways "such due care shall include but not be limited to, moving from a lane which contains or is immediately adjacent to the shoulder" where the emergency vehicle is. The law applies all emergency vehicles on duty, not just police cruisers.