



Important Transportation Bills Signed into Law

JEFFERSON CITY — With the construction of new roads and the expansion of existing ones in our state, transportation is a top priority for many Missourians. As a result, the recent signing of transportation legislation by Gov. Blunt is of particular interest. In recent weeks, the governor has signed into law stricter child-safety measures, legislation protecting construction workers and emergency personnel, and a more consumer-friendly emissions program.

Senate Bill 872 requires children of certain ages, weights and heights to be restrained by a passenger-restraint system, booster seat or safety belt. The measure requires children up to age 8 to be seated in child booster seats while in automobiles. The child-restraint requirements are specific to various height and weight classifications.

SB 872 also increases fines for various offenses that occur within highway work or construction zones and creates the crime of “endangerment of a highway worker.” In addition, the measure stiffens penalties against motorists who fail to move over when approached by an emergency vehicle or do not move over when approaching a stationary emergency vehicle. The legislation also imposes an additional fine and driving suspension on any person who fails to yield the right-of-way when the violation results in physical injury or death. Although this law imposes stricter transportation regulations, I believe it will result in safer roads for all Missouri drivers.

SB 583 decentralizes Missouri’s emissions-testing program, which applies to residents of the St. Louis metropolitan area, and loosens emissions restrictions on some vehicles. Instead of the specialized emissions-testing stations operating now, certified motor-vehicle repair workers at private repair shops would be able to perform emissions tests. With this provision, motorists will be able to have their safety and emissions inspections done at the same location.

The legislation also requires only 1996 or newer vehicles to be tested and takes advantage of onboard diagnostic technology to conduct the tests. SB 583 also adds exemptions for the four newest model-year vehicles and for vehicles driven fewer than 12,000 miles between safety inspections. The new emissions-inspection process will improve customer service and reduce the burden on motorists.

If you have comments or questions about this week’s column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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