



ENACTMENT NEWS

House Bill 154

Safe bicycle passing distance; malfunctioning traffic signals

Effective March, 2017

On December 19, 2016, Governor Kasich signed House Bill 154 into law. The bill specifies the minimum distance required for a motor vehicle to pass a bicycle, and clarifies the procedures to employ when a vehicle-detecting traffic signal is inoperable. The bill takes effect in March, 2017.

Bicycle-passing distance

Current law requires that when the operator of a motor vehicle wishes to pass another vehicle, the operator shall pass “at a safe distance” from the other vehicle. R.C. 4511.27(A)(1). H.B. 154 specifies that when a motor vehicle passes a bicycle, three feet or greater is considered a safe passing distance. Failure to comply with this regulation is a minor misdemeanor.

Malfunctioning traffic signal

Current law sets forth the procedure for proceeding through an intersection that is controlled by traffic-control signals if the signal facing the driver exhibits no colored lights or arrows, or fails to clearly indicate the assignment of right-of-way. (R.C. 4511.132). The procedure is: (1) Stop at a clearly marked line or before entering the intersection; (2) Yield the right-of-way to all vehicles; and (3) Proceed through the intersection. H.B. 154 allows a driver or operator to use the same outlined procedure should the signals otherwise be malfunctioning, including a failure of any vehicle detector to detect a vehicle, such as a bicycle (that may be too light to trigger the detection sensor to change the light).