

## 3PointTurn – Episode 5: Move Over

### **FLHSMV:**

You're listening to 3PointTurn, a driver safety podcast presented by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. In promotion of a safer Florida, FLHSMV offers this educational series as a supplemental resource to the Florida Driver License Handbook. For more information on the topics presented in this podcast, please visit [FLHSMV.gov](http://FLHSMV.gov).

On this episode, the FLHSMV team talks about Florida's Move Over Law and the aspects of protecting people and vehicles pulled over on the side of the road.

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### **Derek Perez:**

Welcome to 3PointTurn. I'm your host, Derek Perez. We have a new guest for our next four episodes. Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw is a 29-year veteran of the Florida Highway Patrol and the Public Affairs Officer for Troop H based here in Tallahassee. Welcome to this discussion.

### **Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

Good morning, Derek. Thank you for having me.

### **Derek Perez:**

Corporal Shaw, you have an extensive background with FHP. You've worked in a traffic homicide investigation section, been a troop training coordinator, and currently, you're working on a doctorate in business and criminology. I'm sure you can answer our questions today. What does the general topic of driver safety as it pertains to new and teen drivers mean to you?

### **Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

Well, when you're dealing with teen drivers, you think of the biggest thing, their inexperience. They get out there, they don't have a plan and based on their inexperience, it turns into a lot of different things.

### **Derek Perez:**

Well, with that, let's dive into some ways our young drivers can handle situations they haven't experienced before. I know it's in the Florida Driver License Handbook, but why don't you explain Florida's Move Over Law for our listeners.

### **Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

It helps not only law enforcement officers, it helps emergency vehicles, tow truck drivers. It also helps the motorist in public. If they're pulled over on the side of the road, you have to move over one lane, if you can do so, but there's instances when you're on the interstate and that's impossible. If that is the case, the speed limit on the interstate is 70 miles per hour. You have to drop your speed 20 miles per hour below the posted speed limit. That assures the safety of whoever's on the side of the road as far as the law enforcement officer and the violator that they have stopped.

### **Derek Perez:**

Excellent. Well, it sounds like in Florida, that the law requires us, as I heard you say, to move over a lane for stop law enforcement. You also mentioned emergency vehicles, but it also includes, correct me if I'm

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wrong, sanitation and utility vehicles, or even tow trucks and wreckers, much less the rest of the motoring public. Is that correct?

**Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

Exactly. It includes all of them, but as a good point as a motoring vehicle traveling roadways, if you see a disabled vehicle and you see a pedestrian around it, it's a good idea to move over also.

**Derek Perez:**

Thank you for that. Now, just to enumerate some of the situations where you may not be able to, so let's say the interstate has congested traffic, you said then if I can't move over, I'm required to drop my speed by 20 miles per hour, right?

**Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

20 miles below the posted speed limit. So if it's 70, you need to drop your speed to 50.

**Derek Perez:**

I got it. Now, Corporal Shaw, you've worked in areas with high traffic and you've also worked in more rural areas with only smaller state and country roads. What are some ways a driver can safely move over?

**Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

The biggest thing is checking your blind spots for the left or the right before you move over, making sure that the is clear before you travel into the other lane.

**Derek Perez:**

And although it sounds a little heavy here, what are some of the punishments for violating the Move Over Law? I assume there were fines, fees. Care to elaborate?

**Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

It all depends on what part of the state of Florida you're in. The fines differ, but the minimum fine is about \$120. It carries also three points in your license. With Florida, if you have 12 points within a 12 month period, you'll license goes suspended.

**Derek Perez:**

Well, that is certainly food for thought. It sounds like points on your driving record would be a very serious thing to consider. I imagine not just for the future of your driving, but also for maybe your insurance costs.

**Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

Oh, yes. With the insurance companies, when you report that you've received the citation, depending on what insurance company you have, some of them look at you for forgiveness the first time. Some of them do not, and they raise your rates. The best thing to do if you're inexperienced on anything, just get out. Have someone that can help you to make sure that you're safe on the roadway.

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### **Derek Perez:**

Thank you so much. When we return after a quick break, we'll dive into the nuts and bolts of the Move Over Law.

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### **Derek Perez:**

Welcome back. Corporal Shaw, what is your perceived level of danger from a car or truck driving past you whenever you pull someone over and have to get out of your vehicle?

### **Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

It's a major fear not knowing whether the people are focused on what they are doing. Most of the drivers here in the state of Florida, they focus on you when they see the blue lights or the red lights going, instead of focus on what's in front of them.

### **Derek Perez:**

And I think most drivers do know to move over one lane when they see law enforcement on the shoulder. The car's certainly have the visuals, but there are quite a few other vehicles motorists should move over for. Would you mind running through a few of those, Corporal?

### **Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

Well, you have us, the law enforcement officers. You also have your fire rescue units. You have your sanitation vehicles, you have your tow trucks, you have different types of emergency vehicles. Even a part of that is if you have your utility trucks that are working on the light poles on the interstate or any of the roadways. You have those vehicles also.

### **Derek Perez:**

It sounds like you've hit all of our points here, but just as a reminder for our listeners, we have law enforcement and emergency personnel. This includes: police, fire trucks, rescue vehicles and ambulances. We mentioned sanitation trucks, including garbage and recycling. Utility service trucks, and tow trucks were also mentioned. Working on a car alongside a busy highway can be very dangerous. Imagine trying to change a tire while your back is turned to cars racing a few feet away at 70 miles per hour. Utility service vehicles also include people working on light posts, cutting trees and surveying for construction as Corporal Shaw mentioned. Corporal, what do you do when people are mowing interstates and highways, both in the median and on the shoulders?

### **Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

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Well, when you have the mowing crew out there, it makes it kind of hard to do the move over if they're covering the median and the shoulder. So your best bet on that one is just to slow down, reduce your speed the 20 miles below the posted speed limit to assure the safety of yourself and them. Also to add on that is just like I said earlier, with just the disabled vehicles, people that are just broke down, it's a good idea to move over for them also. Focusing on them could cause you to rear end them or cause damage to anything or cause injury to a person.

### **Derek Perez:**

That's some really good information, Master Corporal Shaw. After another quick break, we'll wrap up this conversation with a look at the real-world impact of the Move Over Law.

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### **Derek Perez:**

Point number three. Corporal Shaw, if a driver doesn't move over, there can be some major consequences. Let's discuss some of these so our listeners understand why we're so adamant people pay attention to this law.

Since 2015, there have been over 1000 crashes where a driver was cited for failing to move over. Over 30 were serious crashes. And unfortunately, a couple of fatalities have occurred. In 2019, there were actually 183 crashes. Corporal, what's your personal experience with a move over crash?

### **Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

Well, with traffic homicide and being in that unit still helping the guys out there, one of our troopers was on State Road 20. While he was on State 20 on a traffic stop, he was writing the citation. He had completed the citation and was about to get out of his vehicle. He had slightly opened the door and the vehicle that was coming up behind him, not focused on him, and not focused on what they were doing, focused on the lights and everything in the surrounding of what the trooper was doing, that driver took out the whole entire side of the trooper's car, even that door being partially open, folded it back to the other side. Never moved over, nothing.

And unfortunately for us, we're having to deal with situations like that where drivers don't move over and it could cost that trooper's life. It could even cost a motorist's life if they stop. Our biggest thing to avoid crashes is to focus on what you're doing while you're driving. Focus on your driving. Make sure you're putting everything aside and make sure you're watching what's in front of you, to the side of you, and to the rear.

### **Derek Perez:**

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You mentioned citations. In 2019, 20000 traffic citations were issued to drivers in Florida who failed to move over. The primary offender age group is 20 to 29, so not our first time youngest drivers, but still a very young and inexperienced demographic. Corporal, what would your advice be to our new young drivers regarding the Move Over Law?

**Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

Well, the first thing I would tell the inexperienced driver, since you are inexperienced, before you even drive off, to have a plan, to know where you're going, put your phone, put everything aside, making sure that you focus on what's in front of you, making sure that plan that you've executed is to arrive alive. That's the biggest thing is if your inexperienced, just focus. Stay focused on what you're doing. Don't pay attention to what's out there, what's around you. Knowing what's around you is a good idea, but you need to make sure your focus, you're within the posted speed limit, you're driving within your lane, you're watching your surroundings making sure you're adhering to all the laws.

**Derek Perez:**

Drivers who violate the Move Over Law will on average, pay \$120 in fines, but could pay up to \$500. They will also incur three points on their driving record. But honestly, these are the least of the penalties one could face. Corporal, besides the obvious tragedy of loss of life and grievous bodily harm, what are some of the other penalties a driver might face for violating the Move Over Law?

**Master Corporal Patricia Jefferson-Shaw:**

Well, when you're dealing with the Move Over Law and it involves a fatality, now you're looking at the suspension of driver's license. Depending on what the actions of that driver is, you could incur jail time. So it can cost you fines. So that \$120 to \$500 is just the basic. When you're dealing with death, you're taking it to a totally different level. At that totally different level, you don't know what you're going to expect. From a six-month driver's license suspension to 18 months, to your license being permanently revoked based on the circumstances. So the best thing, as far as move over, if you understand the law, just move over. Save the life.

**Derek Perez:**

Thank you so much. Corporal Shaw, you have been a pleasure to have here in the studio. We should have a very good time over our next three episodes talking about a few other subjects you're particularly passionate and knowledgeable about. Until next time, drive safe, Florida.

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**FLHSMV:**

On the next episode of 3PointTurn, the FLHSMV team chats about Choice vs. Consequence as it breaks down DUIs, speeding, and Florida's distracted driving law.

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