



Statement Regarding Golf Carts, ATVs & Other Motorized Vehicles

What prompted this statement?

The majority of those operating non-traditional vehicles in our neighborhood do so responsibly. However, recently the following has been observed.

- Operators are running stop signs and/or not adhering to traffic laws
- Vehicles appear to be operated by underage drivers
- Vehicles appear overloaded and/or passengers are not properly seated
- The handicap spots/adjacent blue access area at the pool lot are being used by vehicles not displaying a handicap hang tag or other identifier
- Vehicles are being improperly stored in the neighborhood (front yard, back yard, etc.)

It is important to note that our streets are **NOT** private roads. They are maintained by the City of Opelika and regulated by all applicable city, state, and federal laws and ordinances. These limit the types of vehicles allowed on our streets and dictate who can and cannot legally operate or be transported by them.

It is the position of the HOA Board that it is the personal responsibility of all vehicle owners to ensure their vehicles comply with all applicable laws and ordinances and are operated in a safe and legal manner.

The Opelika Police Department provided some general guidance on what is allowed on city streets*.

- Registered "Low Speed Vehicles" (LSV) that have been issued a tag and have the required safety features
- Operators must have a valid driver's license (not a learner's permit) and be at least 16 years old
- If a child requires a car seat in a traditional automobile, the same rules apply
- LSVs must adhere to all traffic laws
- A golf cart is designed for a golf course, not a street being shared with cars, trucks, etc.

**This list is not all-inclusive and as stated, it is the personal responsibility of vehicle owners to ensure their vehicles are compliant. We recommend referencing the included OPD flyer or contacting the OPD directly for any needed clarification. (334) 705-5200*

How will the HOA respond to motorized non-traditional vehicles in the neighborhood?

- Reckless driving will be reported the same as we would for a traditional vehicle in our neighborhood.
- If a vehicle is being stored in a way that is a violation of our covenants, we will issue a violation notice to the owner of the vehicle.
- If a vehicle is parked in one of the handicap spots at the pool and is not displaying the appropriate designation or if it is obstructing a HC spot, a \$25 fine will be issued to the owner for the 1st offense and \$50 for each additional offence.

4-WHEELER, ATV, UTV, SIDE-BY-SIDE, GOLF CART & OTHER LOW-SPEED VEHICLES

Street Legal Requirements

Any vehicle originally manufactured for off-road use cannot be registered as street legal in the State of Alabama and therefore, cannot be used on any public roadway within the State.

Many residents are utilizing "golf carts" on roadways and there are many misconceptions that we would like to clear up. **A golf cart has a maximum speed of 20 mph and it does not meet street legal specifications.** What is legal are "Low-Speed Vehicles" (LSV's). A LSV differs from a golf cart in that it:

- Has a 17 digit vehicle identification number (VIN) that conforms to the National Highway Safety and Traffic Administration
- Has a Manufacturer's Statement of Origin (MSO) that states that the vehicle complies with safety standards set for LSV's. LSV's are built with greater specifications than golf carts. Also, golf carts CANNOT be retrofitted to become LSV's as they will not have this MSO from the manufacturer.

A Low Speed Vehicle must have the following in order to be street legal:

- Basic standard that meets safety requirements (the Manufacturer's Statement of Origin)
- A minimum threshold of 20 mph and a top speed of 25 mph
- Headlamps
- Front and rear turn signal lamps
- Tail lamps
- Stop Lamps Reflex reflectors: one red on each side as far to the rear as practicable, and one red on the rear
- Exterior mirror mounted on the driver's side of the vehicle and either an exterior mirror mounted on the passenger's side of the vehicle or an interior mirror
- Parking brake
- Windshield that conforms to the Federal motor vehicle safety standard (AS-1 or AS-5 composition)
- A Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)
- Type 1 (lap belt) or Type 2 (shoulder belt)



Some States have restrictions on where LSV's can be driven based on a set speed limit – most state that LSV's cannot be driven on roadways where the speed limit exceeds 35 mph. Alabama does not have a law that directly states a speed limit. However, State law does specify that a LSV cannot be driven on a roadway where it impedes traffic and law enforcement officers do interpret this as being on a roadway with a maximum speed of 35 mph.

It also important to point out that a LSV is a vehicle and is to be handled as one:

- If your child is not old enough or not licensed to drive a car, he/she is not old enough or licensed to drive a LSV
- You cannot drive a LSV on the sidewalk or stand on the side and drive– **all traffic laws that apply to your personal vehicle, apply to your LSV!**
- Like your vehicle, your LSV must be tagged/registered by the DMV and be driven by a licensed and insured driver

All vehicles discussed above, if operated on streets or highways within city limits, are subject to all of the rules of road and State regulations regarding the use of those roadways, including the requirements respecting operators or drivers licenses.

This is an abbreviated version of the Department of Transportation's 47-page document that outlines golf carts and Low Speed Vehicles: 49 CFR Part 571. This document is available on the Opelika Police Department website and mobile app.

**Some manufacturers promote "golf carts" that exceed 20 mph. If they exceed 20 mph, the manufacturer must increase the safety features according to federal code which then classifies it as a LSV.*



OPELIKA
POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Opelika Police Department
501 South 10th Street
PO Box 2485
Opelika, AL 36803-2485
(334) 705-5200
opelikapd.org