

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

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 to clear up. A golf cart has a maximum speed of 20 mph and it does not meet street legal specifications.

Vehicles that are 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. 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 will then classify it as an LSV.

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

- Manufacturer’s Statement of Origin - a basic standard that meets safety requirements
- A Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)
- A minimum threshold of 20 mph and a top speed of 25 mph
- Head, Tail, Stop, and Turn Signal lamps (lights)
- 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)
- Type 1 (lap belt) or Type 2 (shoulder belt)

Alabama State law specifies that a LSV cannot be driven on a roadway where it impedes traffic and this is generally interpreted as being on a roadway with a maximum Speed Limit of 35 mph.



An LSV is a vehicle and is to be driven 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 a personal vehicle, apply to an LSV!
- Like a vehicle, an 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 the city jurisdiction, are subject to the rules of the road and State regulations regarding the use of those roadways.

This is an abbreviated version of the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards 49 CFR Part 571.

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